



The state of Human Development and the Afghan Millennium Development Goals

AFGHANS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Human development focuses on enlarging people's choices so that they can lead the lives they value, expanding their capabilities, enhancing their freedoms and enabling them to enjoy their human rights. This means putting people at the centre of development efforts, ensuring that they themselves become agents of change and that they are able to live in an environment conducive to the full development of their potential. Human development aims to ensure that everyone has certain basic capabilities, such as leading a long and healthy life; having a livelihood with dignity, free of insecurity; engaging in productive work; accessing information and communicating freely; and participating in the political and social life of one's community.¹

Human Development Reports, now produced in more than 140 developing countries, have shown that economic growth is a necessary—though not sufficient—condition for reducing poverty. Other human development priorities, such as investing in people's education and empowering them through democratic governance, also play critical roles in enhancing the capabilities of people, safeguarding their freedom, and improving their well-being. A major tool for measuring the concept of human development is the Human Development Index or HDI (box 1.1).

Political freedom is vital to human development—if only because human development concerns enlarging human choices. Even if states achieve a certain level of economic growth and development, the

absence of civil and political rights can result in visible signs of repression and arbitrary threats to individuals, as well as the deprivation of people's legitimate choices and their ability to achieve what they value. Political freedom entails the ability to seek to change the government through appropriate legal channels, as well as to adjust the laws of one's country. Such freedoms must be set out in the legal framework and exercised in practice.

A major tool for measuring the concept of human development is the Human Development Index

BOX 1.1

Measuring Human Development: the HDI

The expansion of human capabilities and freedoms lies at the core of human development. Measuring human development provides a yardstick against which people can assess their developmental achievements. More broadly, it can help gauge the state of human, social, and economic progress in different regions of a country, as well as in comparison to other regions or countries over a defined period of time.

One important measurement tool for human development is the human development index (HDI). While human development represents the full expansion of people's choices and capabilities, the HDI measures more specific achievements of people in education, health and economic prosperity for attaining and maintaining decent living standards. However, because the HDI does not encompass other indicators of human progress such as political freedoms, participation in the life of one's community, physical security, and the rule of law the index does not reflect the full breadth and complexity of human development.

Unlike one-dimensional indicators

Source: Fukuda-Parr 2002

of human progress, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, the human development index provides a more comprehensive picture of a society's development by integrating three basic measures: a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. It is a composite index that contains three variables: life expectancy at birth, educational attainment (measured by adult literacy and the combined gross primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratios), and GDP per capita (measured by using purchasing power parity formula: PPP). The index's measure of income serves as a proxy for a decent standard of living, as well as a surrogate for all the human choices that are not reflected in the other two factors. In most cases, the HDI is based on readily available initial data. It is simple to construct, and also easy to interpret with minimum controversy. Efforts to refine this index further have been undertaken since its inception in the 1990s, and each human development report contributes to the HDI's development.

The status of human development in Afghanistan remains poor

The rule of law, which provides for a fair trial and the independence of the judiciary from executive or legislative interference, is a key component of political freedom, freedom in a more general sense, and therefore of human development.²

According to Amartya Sen, the effort "to broaden the limited lives into which the majority of human beings are willy-nilly imprisoned by force of circumstances is the major challenge of human development in the contemporary world."³ This is equally the challenge for human development in Afghanistan. During their country's two decades of conflict, Afghans experienced an absence of freedom in which the governments in place could not even provide for the physical security of citizens. Both political freedom and the rule of law were largely absent. With the completion of the political transition outlined in the Bonn Agreement, governance institutions, including some within the judicial system, have been reformed and strengthened, but much work lies ahead. As this report argues, the relatively limited reach of the rule of law in Afghanistan continues to act as a critical barrier to human development.

Before the path to advancing human development in Afghanistan is discussed, the current state must be presented. The status of human development in Afghanistan remains poor. Nonetheless, achievements that will enhance human development have been made. Afghanistan's human development indicators reveal that the country remains one of the poorest in the world, with one of the lowest levels of human development. Gross enrollment appears to have increased since the publication of the 2004 NHDR, yet the percentage of girls attending school continues to be significantly below that of boys. Levels of malaria and tuberculosis have taken a marked fall. Health indicators for both women and children are exceptionally low. Yet a significant increase in the number of female health workers provides the opportunity for women to have much greater access to health care. Violence

against women is rampant, and they continue to lack means for redress. There is an array of challenges to upholding the rule of law in Afghanistan: the ability of the Afghanistan National Police (ANP) to maintain law and order remains weak, courts are ineffective and largely perceived as corrupt, and the penal system is inadequate. Strengthening the rule of law and access to justice in Afghanistan is critical to creating an enabling environment for progress in other key areas of human development, including economic growth, social development and political freedom. This report therefore assesses the strengths and weaknesses in the formal and informal justice systems and provides recommendations for leveraging the strong points of each system to increase access to justice, extend the reach of the rule of law and thereby foster human development. This chapter begins by presenting the current status of human development indices within Afghanistan. Because reviewing progress towards achieving the "Afghanised" Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) also provides a means for measuring key components of human development, the chapter then assesses progress towards meeting the MDGs. It concludes by describing how the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) will serve as the vehicle for advancing the MDGs and human development in Afghanistan.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT TRENDS IN AFGHANISTAN

Although Afghanistan has made great strides in raising its level of economic prosperity, along with access to health care and education, the needs of many remain unfulfilled. Afghanistan's HDI stands at 0.345, far behind those of its regional neighbors (figure 1.1). Indeed, the index for 2007 falls slightly under that of 2004 (0.346).⁴ In terms of global rankings, this places Afghanistan 174th out of 178 countries—ahead of only four other countries, all of these in sub-Saharan Africa: Burkina

TABLE 1.1
Human Development Indices of Afghanistan compared to its neighbors and some of least developed countries in Africa

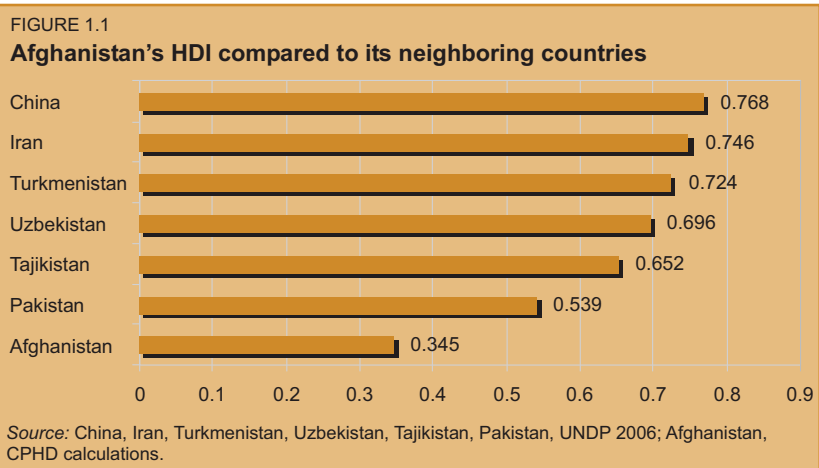
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Source: Niger, Sierra Leone, Mali, Burkina Faso, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Pakistan, China, UNDP 2006; Afghanistan, CPHD calculations

Faso, Mali, Sierra Leone, and Niger. Afghanistan's poverty is even more marked in relation to its neighbors (table 1.1).

Since the publication of the first Afghanistan National Human Development Report (NHDR) in 2004, GDP per capita has risen from \$683 in 2002 (in PPP terms) to \$964 in 2005.⁵ The gross enrolment ratio (for the primary, secondary and tertiary levels combined) has risen to 59.3 %⁶ in 2005, up from the figure of 45 % for 2002 reported in NHDR 2004.⁷ However, the percentage of girls attending school remains well below that of boys. Similarly, while levels of malaria and tuberculosis have dropped markedly, health indicators for both women and children remain exceptionally low. The female mortality rates reflect the dire conditions in which most of them live. Although a significant increase in the number of female health workers has potentially broadened female access to health care, it can never adequately treat the effects of widespread violence against women in Afghanistan. In addition, both life expectancy and adult literacy have fallen. Life expectancy at birth is estimated at 43.1 years for 2005,⁸ compared with 44.5 in 2003. Adult literacy fell from 28.7 % in 2003 to 23.5 % in 2005.⁹

Because reducing poverty is essential



to improving human development, calculating the Human Poverty Index (HPI) is vital. In contrast to the HDI, which portrays average achievements, the HPI focuses on deprivations, specifically those that limit a long and healthy life, a decent standard of living, and lack of knowledge or exclusion from the world of reading and communication.¹⁰

At 62.3, the HPI for Afghanistan is one of the worst in the world. The probability at birth of not surviving to age 40 has been calculated at 0.419.¹¹ The HPI for Afghanistan is even worse than that for Mali, whose HPI is 60.2 (Table 1.1).¹² Adult illiteracy stands at 76.5 %¹³ As many as 68 % of the

Afghan women face enormous obstacles to receiving an adequate education, to holding gainful employment, and to accessing health care

population lack sustainable access to clean water,¹⁴ and 50 % of Afghan children under five are underweight.¹⁵

While HDI measures average achievements, the Gender Development Index (GDI) adjusts this average to reflect the inequalities between men and women in the same three dimensions—a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living.¹⁶ At .310, the GDI for Afghanistan is not encouraging.¹⁷ It accurately reflects the inequality in opportunity faced by women in Afghanistan. Afghan women face enormous obstacles to receiving an adequate education, to holding gainful employment, and to accessing health care. Although the GDI acts as a useful indicator for revealing inequalities between women and men, it is not sufficiently comprehensive to reveal the human rights violations or the lack of access to justice suffered by women, as well as their limited role in governance and decision-making. Thus, it does not give a full picture of the impact of the paucity of the rule of law on women's lives. Despite a slight increase in its GDI since NHDR 2004, Afghanistan still ranks below all other countries but Niger (0.292).¹⁸ Overall, Afghanistan has progressed in its GDI and possibly regressed in its HDI and HPI scores (Table 1.2), although improvements in data collection methodologies make a full comparison between the 2002 and 2005 datasets impossible (see Annex I).

The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), which focuses on women's opportunities (rather than the capabilities measured

by GDI), cannot yet be fully calculated in Afghanistan because of data shortcomings. Nonetheless, figures currently in hand reveal gender inequality in three areas: political participation and decision-making power, economic participation and decision-making power, and power over economic resources.

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN AFGHANISTAN

At the Millennium Summit, held at the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2000, world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration, committing countries to strengthen global efforts for peace, human rights, democracy, strong governance, environmental sustainability, poverty eradication, and to promoting principles of human dignity, equality, and equity. The eight Millennium Development Goals were designed on the basis of the Millennium Declaration as measurable targets to advance development and eradicate poverty. These benchmarks oblige countries to improve the human condition through eradicating hunger and poverty, providing sufficient levels of education and health care, promoting gender equality, and protecting the environment. World leaders pledged to meet the benchmarks by 2015.

When the Millennium Summit was held in New York, Afghanistan was still writhing in the midst of conflict. After President Karzai sent a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General endorsing the MDGs in March 2004, Afghanistan began preparing to participate in this global effort. Because Afghanistan was still recovering from two decades of conflict, it was decided to modify the global calendar for achieving the MDGs and to amend the benchmarks to account for the still-devastated state of the country. Yet the Government decided to give Afghanistan only 15 years to meet the benchmarks that other countries had 25 years to achieve.¹⁹

Although the MDGs were originally

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Trend of HDI indicators for Afghanistan during 2004-2007 period

Indicators	Afghanistan HDR 2004		Afghanistan HDR 2007	
	Value	Year	Value	Year
HDI	0.346	2002	0.345	2005
GDI	0.300	2002	0.310	2005
HPI	59.3	2002	62.3	2005

TABLE 1.3

Afghanistan MDGs

Goals	Targets
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Target 1: The proportion of people whose income is less than US \$1 a day decreases by 3% per annum until the year 2020
	Target 2: The proportion of people who suffer from hunger decreases by 5% per annum until the year 2020
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	Target 3: Ensure that, by 2020, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in all levels of education no later than 2020
	Target 5: Reduce gender disparity in economic areas by 2020
	Target 6: Increase female participation in elected and appointed bodies at all levels of governance to 30% by 2020
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	Target 7: Reduce gender disparity in access to justice by 50% by 2015 and completely (100%) by 2020
	Target 8: Reduce by 50%, between 2003 and 2015, the under-5 mortality rate, and further reduce it to 1/3 of the 2003 level by 2020
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	Target 9: Reduce by 50% between 2002 and 2015 the maternal mortality ratio, and further reduce the MMR to 25% of the 2002 level by 2020
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Target 10: Have halted by 2020 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
	Target 11: Have halted by 2020 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	Target 12: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources
	Target 14: By 2020, achieve a significant improvement in the lives of all slum dwellers
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development	Target 15: Deal comprehensively and influence the provision of foreign aid through appropriate measures to enable Afghanistan develop sustainably in the long term
	Target 16: Develop an open, rules-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system that includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction
	Target 18: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
Goal 9: Enhance security	Target 20: Reform and professionalize the Afghan National Army by 2010
	Target 22: Reform, restructure and professionalize the Afghan National Police by 2010
	Target 23: All emplaced antipersonnel mines destroyed by 2015. All other explosive contaminants destroyed by 2015
	Target 24: All stockpiled antipersonnel mines destroyed by 2007. All other abandoned or unwanted explosive stocks destroyed by 2020
	Target 25: To reduce the contribution of opium to the total (licit and illicit) GDP to less than 5% by 2015, and to less than 1% by 2020

formulated by the United Nations, they must be nationally owned and driven as "people's goals" in order to be fully realized. Not only should the goals be tailored to ground realities in each country; action to meet them should be driven both by the Government along with civil society groups and local communities.²⁰ In other words,

both top-down and bottom-up approaches must be adopted to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals.

To ensure that the Millennium Development Goals accurately depict what the Afghan people sought to attain, and to adjust the benchmarks to the country's specific context, three sets of actions were

Many Millennium Development Goals nonetheless correspond to the achievement of key elements of human development

taken to "Afghanise" the MDGs. This involved extending the time period for attaining the targets to 2020, revising the global targets to make them more relevant to Afghanistan, and adding a ninth goal on enhancing security. This process enabled Afghanistan to formulate goals that accurately reflected the country's own aspirations for its people (table 1.3).²¹

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Millennium Development Goals can serve as a tool to advance human development. The detailed, time-bound indicators for each of the MDGs allow for measuring progress in a systematic fashion toward key aspects of human development. Both the Goals and the human development concept share the objectives of promoting human well-being that entails dignity, freedom, and equality for all people. Yet realizing the MDGs or making progress towards them is necessary, but not sufficient for human development. *Human Development Reports*

assert that development is intended to improve people's lives by expanding their choices, freedom, and dignity. The Millennium Development Goals are designed to ease the constraints on people's ability to make choices, but they do not encompass all aspects of human development. For instance, the Goals do not mention enhancing levels of political participation or the granting of civil or political freedoms. Many Millennium Development Goals nonetheless correspond to the achievement of key elements of human development. As discussed above, one of the most basic capabilities for human development is a healthy life. This corresponds to the MDGs for reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating major diseases. Achieving the MDGs will also advance economic, social and cultural rights, but their full realization requires a more comprehensive effort. Meeting or even working towards the Goals is, however, an important step towards fulfilling such rights.²²

Understanding progress and challenges towards meeting the MDGs, as well as continuing to monitor and gather relevant data, is essential to formulate and readjust strategies for their achievement. It is also vital to moving the human development agenda forward. An assessment of progress towards meeting the MDGs is presented below (table 1.3). It reveals the accomplishments that can be made when meticulous judgment, persistence, energy and well-targeted resources come together. This assessment also illustrates how an even more dedicated effort will be needed in the coming years for such targets to be met.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER (GOAL 1)

The Afghan economy has maintained an impressive rate of economic growth over the past few years.²³ Yet this growth has failed to significantly reduce extreme poverty and

TABLE 1.4
Some indicators of progress of AMDGs

MDG	Indicator	Kuchi	Rural	Urban	National average
1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption (%)	24	30	31	30
2	Achieve universal primary education Net enrolment rate in primary education	9	36	53	37
	Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds (%)	5	25	63	31
3	Promote gender equality and empower women Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	0.5	0.6	0.9	0.7
	Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old	0.9	0.3	0.8	0.5
4	Reduce child mortality Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles (%)	35	51	63	53
5	Improve maternal health Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (%)	7	9	52	53
6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases Use of condoms (%)*	17	8	9	8
7	Ensure environmental sustainability Proportion of population using solid fuels (%)	98	98	75	94
	Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural (%)	16	26	63	31
	Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural (%)	0	3	28	7
	Prop. HHs with secure housing tenure (%)	28	44	83	49
8	Develop a global partnership for development Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population	0.1	0.3	8.3	1.5
	Personal computers in use per 100 people	0.00	0.01	0.52	0.09
	Internet users per 100 people	0	0.01	0.18	0.03

hunger in the country; 6.6 million Afghans do not meet their minimum food requirements, with 24 % of households characterized by poor food consumption.²⁴ Based on a minimum caloric intake of 2067 kilocalories per day adjusted by sex and age, 30 % of the population eat, on average, below their daily requirement (table 1.5).²⁵ Households in urban areas are slightly more food-insecure than both rural and Kuchi populations. When diversity of diet is included in the analysis, 61 % of households are likely to be below the threshold for food insecurity.²⁶

Nearly 40 % of children under three years of age are underweight, 54 % of children under five are stunted, and 6.7 % are wasted due to malnutrition.²⁷ In general, 44 % of the population view themselves to varying degrees as food insecure. The highest percentage of households that struggled to meet their food needs lie in Nuristan province and in the central part of the country.^{28z}

ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION (GOAL 2)

Despite marked progress in primary education, over half of school age children remain out of school. The national average for attendance of children six to thirteen years of age is estimated at 37 % (table 1.6). Enrollment in urban areas is considerably higher than that in rural areas, and there is almost a 1:1 ratio of girls and boys attending primary school in urban areas.²⁹ Although the reasons for the greater level of attendance of girls in urban areas may be due to variations in cultural factors, it probably stems from greater access as well. Distance is often referred to as the most common reason for keeping girls from going to school.³⁰ The disparity in the number of boys in school compared to girls continues to be narrowed—an issue of concern that needs focused attention and energy. Girls still face significant obstacles that prevent them from accessing education, including restricted movement, a shortage of female

TABLE 1.5
Population (%) below minimum level of dietary energy consumption adjusted by age and sex

Percentage	Kuchi	Rural	Urban	National
	24	30	31	30

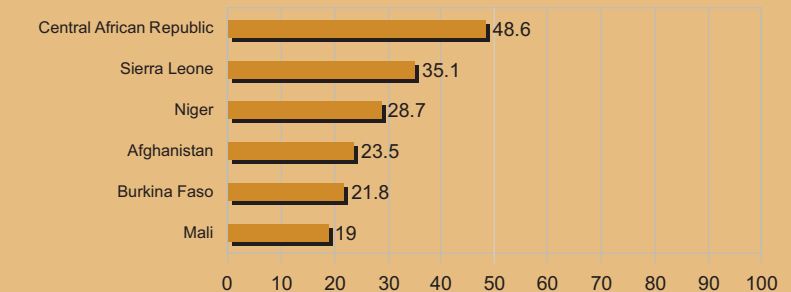
Source: NRVA2005

TABLE 1.6
Net enrolment (%) in primary education (6 to 13 years old)

Kuchi			Rural			Urban		
Female	Male	All	Female	Male	All	Female	Male	All
6	11	9	27	44	36	51	55	53

Source: NRVA2005

FIGURE 1.2
Adult literacy rate in Afghanistan compared with other countries with lowest adult literacy rates



Source: Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, UNDP 2006; Afghanistan, NRVA2005

teachers (who comprised only 28 % of teachers in 2005), poor facilities, competing demands on girls' time and the lack of value placed on female education.³¹ Such hurdles are more common in rural than urban areas.

Provinces in the South and South-east continue to exhibit particularly low levels of enrollment for girls and boys.³² Zabul (1%), Uruzgan (1%), Helmand (6%) and Paktika (9%), in the South and South-east have the lowest levels of enrollment. Insecurity has become an increasingly formidable challenge to accessing education. The number of attacks on schools, teachers, and students rose considerably into 2006.³³ While the issue of access to education remains significant, the quality of education in Afghanistan remains poor and also

Insecurity has become an increasingly formidable challenge to accessing education

An education strategy to empower Afghans

by Haneef Atmar, Minister of Education

Never before in recent history have more children been enrolled in schools in Afghanistan. Schools enrolment has grown from around 900,000 to nearly 5.4 million in the last five years, including a growth from 0 - 35 % of girls in the school-going population. In sending their girls and boys to school in their millions, parents are exercising the basic right to education that was denied to their generation during the years of war and strife. They are also demonstrating their aspirations for the future and their children.

The challenge for Government now is to honor the commitment shown by parents by delivering decent education services to all children, youth and adults—including the remaining half of school-age children not enrolled, especially girls in rural areas, nomadic children and those with special needs—hundreds of thousands of unskilled youth and young adults who are unemployed and millions of illiterate youth and adults, especially women.

It is my strong belief that a revitalized education system that is guided by the tenets of Islam is at the core of the State Building exercise. Therefore, one of the top

priorities of Government is to rebuild the education system that will "facilitate the development of a vibrant human capital by providing equal access to quality education for all and to enable our people to participate and contribute productively to the development, economic growth and stability of our country."

In addition to affirming the right to education for all citizens, the 1382 Constitution of Afghanistan obliges "the State to devise and implement effective programs for a balanced expansion of education all over Afghanistan." To fulfill this obligation and the long-term commitment made in the Millennium Development Goals, the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with its partners, has developed its first 5-year National Education Strategic Plan and will lead the delivery of an holistic education, whose content is responsive, relevant and representative, which is implemented in a sustainable, accountable and transparent manner, and which is fair and equitable in distribution across the country.

Based on this strategy, we are developing and implementing a National Education Program that comprises eight mutually reinforcing and intertwined sub-programs:

1. General Education
2. Teacher Education
3. Education Infrastructure Development
4. Curriculum Development
5. Islamic Education
6. Technical/Vocational Education
7. Literacy
8. Education Administration Reform and Development

Together these sub-programs will facilitate equal access to education for all without discrimination and will deliver a quality, broad-based education system from which students will emerge literate, numerate and technologically proficient as a basis for lifelong learning. Quality of education will be assured through a national curriculum in general, Islamic, vocational and technical studies that meets regional and international standards. This curriculum will be taught by a cadre of well-qualified and motivated teachers whose knowledge base and teaching skills are broadened by intensive training. And, education will be delivered in conducive and safe learning environments and workspaces, facilitated through an efficient, effective and accountable Ministry of Education.

Afghanistan's adult literacy rate ranks sadly among the lowest in the world

requires concerted attention.³⁴ Through its new National Education Strategy (box 1.2), the Government is committed to increase school enrollment with a focus on expanding the attendance rate of girls, while increasing simultaneously both access to and the quality of education.

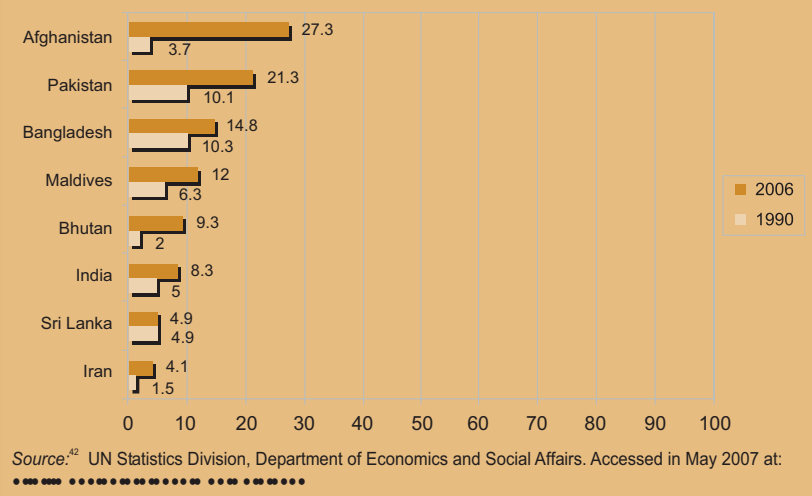
PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN (GOAL 3)

As is noted above, while girls' access to education has increased, particularly in urban areas, additional energy and resources must be focused on improving access to education for girls in rural areas. Enrollment rates for women at the primary,

secondary and tertiary levels are almost half that of men—41.8 % for females and 73.7 % for males (map 1.1). Afghanistan's adult literacy rate ranks sadly among the lowest in the world (figure 1.2). Only 23.5 % of the population 15 and older can read and write. More shocking, only an estimated 12.6 % of women are literate, compared to 32.4 % of men.³⁵ The female to male literacy ratio is 0.4 for the entire population, far lower than in neighboring countries such as Iran (0.8) and Pakistan (0.6).³⁶

There is also a large discrepancy in the estimated earned income between females (\$478) and males (\$1428).³⁷ Yet, in Afghanistan, 80-90 % of economic activity occurs within the informal sector.³⁸ Women often

FIGURE 1.3
**Female Parliamentarians as a Percentage of all Parliamentarians
 for all South Asian Countries**



The number of women participating in governance does not, however, reveal their decision-making power or to what extent their voice is heard

work at home in agriculture, livestock management and as caregivers, but such activities, while income-generating, are not remunerated. Women continue to face a number of barriers to earning their own livelihoods, inhibiting their empowerment as well as their ability to enjoy their rights. In addition, high fertility affects women in a number of ways. Frequent pregnancy often prevents women from pursuing an education or from taking part in gainful economic opportunities. Women's limited access to education further inhibits their productivity and ability to participate more widely in the economy. Cultural constraints on women's movement, as well as security concerns, also limit women's access to work outside of the home.

Whereas women's low literacy rate remains an urgent issue, the trend to empower women politically at the national is encouraging. By allocating women a minimum 25 % of the seats in the *Wolesi Jirga* (lower house) of the National Assembly, Afghanistan has taken steps to bring about gender parity in the formal representation of women in decision-making (figure 1.3). In regard to the extent of women's participation in national politics, Afghanistan fares well among its neighbors as well as among the South Asian Association for Regional

Cooperation (SAARC) members (figure 1.3). The number of women participating in governance does not, however, reveal their decision-making power or to the extent which their voice is heard.

Violence against women in Afghanistan is widely believed to have reached epidemic proportions. Yet, because the majority of cases remain unreported due to the severe restrictions women face in seeking justice or redress, limited evidence exists to confirm this perception.³⁹ Women suffer from tremendous human rights violations. One example is the high level of forced and child marriages. Between 60 and 80 % of marriages in the country are forced.⁴⁰

In contrast to Afghanistan's neighbors, male mortality is lower than female mortality for women above 24 years. This is the likely cause of the extremely poor condition in which women in Afghanistan live. Lack of access to health care, poor nutrition, and frequency of marriage before fifteen probably all contribute to this mortality rate.⁴¹

REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY (GOAL 4)

The probability at birth of not surviving to age 40 is .419 in Afghanistan.⁴³ This figure is the highest of any SAARC member country or of any of the countries surrounding Afghanistan (figure 1.4). Yet notable progress is being made in improving the health of Afghan babies; the rate of Afghans dying before their first birthday has fallen from 165 to 135 per 1,000 live births. This results in 40,000 more successful births each year.⁴⁴ Yet as available data indicates, the mortality rate for children under five remains the world's third highest.⁴⁵

Health indicators for Afghan women and children are a matter of serious concern. High mortality rates stem at least in part from a lack of access to safe drinking water, food, poor access to health care services, inadequate sanitation, and low literacy.⁴⁶ Many of the country's immunization programs have showed marked success in

recent years (Box 1.3). The measles immunization program has led to coverage for 64 % of children under twelve months of age.⁴⁷

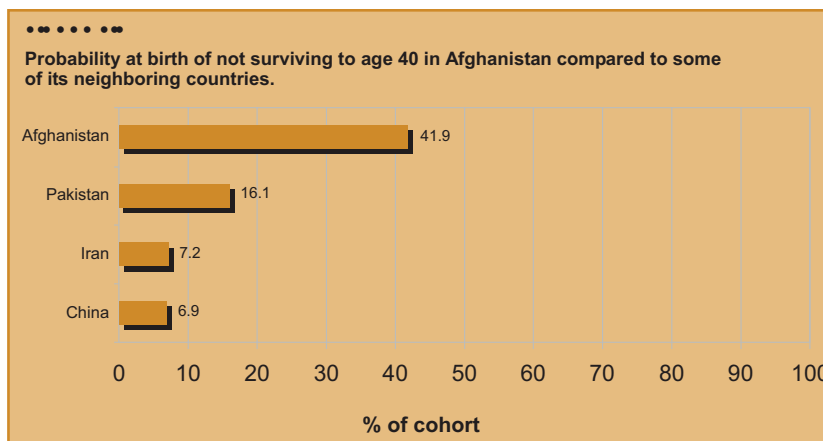
The Government initiated the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) in 2003 to address the greatest health problems within Afghanistan, particularly those of the most in need, including women and children. The BPHS is now essentially the basis for the primary care system in Afghanistan. A number of reforms have bolstered health services for women and children, including those in remote rural areas. The Package focuses on the main causes of morbidity and mortality in a cost-effective and affordable manner, and is now accessible to 82 % of the population.⁴⁸ Its success thus far provides great hope and momentum for continued progress in reducing child mortality.

IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH (GOAL 5)

Afghanistan's maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is estimated at 1600 per 100,000 live births.⁴⁹ Kabul had an MMR of 400 per 100,000, and a remote rural district of Badakhshan 6,500 per 100,000 live births. This particular local rate is the highest ever recorded, even in a country with one of the highest MMRs in the world.⁵⁰ Only a few other countries, including Angola with 1700, Malawi with 1800, and Sierra Leone with 2000 deaths per live births are comparable (figure 1.5).⁵¹

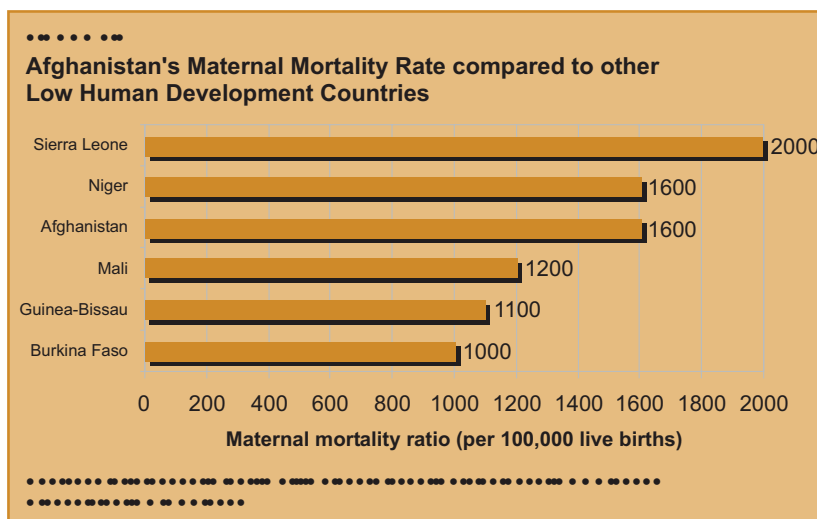
The disparity in the number of women assisted by skilled health personnel in urban and rural areas in this regard is vast. While 52 % of mothers in urban areas are assisted by skilled personnel, only 9 % in rural areas are.⁵² This highlights that women in rural areas do not have access to any form of reproductive health care, as well as the urgent need to continue to expand and improve the provision of health care services for women in remote rural areas.

Women in Afghanistan face many barriers to accessing health care. Not only does their restricted mobility inhibit their



Afghanistan immunization-related facts

- 1 year-olds immunized against measles: 64%
- 1 year-olds immunized against TB: 73%
- 1 year-olds immunized against polio: 76 %



BOX 1.4

Fast facts on child and maternal health in Afghanistan:

- Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births: 135
- Under-5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births: 257
- Probability at birth of not surviving to age 40: 0.431
- Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births: 1,600

Source: NRVA 2005; JHU 2007; UNICEF 2007

Many factors increase the likelihood of an epidemic breaking out in Afghanistan, including the prevalence of intravenous drug use and paid sex

visiting health facilities; the treatment of women by male doctors is largely considered unacceptable. As indicated above, the BPHS is improving health services throughout the country, but a more concerted effort is needed to meet the needs of Afghan women, particularly in rural areas. Significant progress has already been forthcoming. Not only has the number of health care workers increased to 15,001 in 2007; 49.3 % of these are women.⁵³ Nonetheless, many challenges remain. Many of the deaths of women and children are largely preventable. Such deaths are a direct result of the young age of marriage, overall poor health, frequency of child birth as well as virtually no access to gynecological and obstetrical surveys.⁵⁴ As mentioned above, the majority of marriages in Afghanistan are

forced, and many of these involve girls below the age of fifteen. Child marriages constitute about 40 % of all marriages.⁵⁵ The gender gap in education also has severe health consequences.

COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA, TUBERCULOSIS, AND OTHER DISEASES (GOAL 6)

Although little hard evidence is available on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan, UNAIDS and WHO have estimated that the number carrying HIV in Afghanistan could range from 1,000 to 2,000. Many factors increase the likelihood of an epidemic breaking out in Afghanistan, including the prevalence of intravenous drug use and paid sex. The large number of refugees and

Afghanistan faces a serious challenge posed by HIV/AIDS

Afghanistan has low HIV/AIDS prevalence. The first full-blown case was detected in 1998. Since then, given a lack of surveillance and reporting, little is known about how far the virus has spread. The blood banks and the Voluntary Confidential Counseling and Testing Centers (VCCT) are the only sources of information on HIV/AIDS prevalence in the country. So far, they have detected a total of only 61 actual AIDS cases. Though the available information is not representative of all of Afghanistan, it does provide sufficient evidence of an emerging HIV/AIDS epidemic.

For many reasons, Afghanistan is at high risk. Widespread poverty, high unemployment, low literacy, a large number of vulnerable groups, the low social status of women, sex slavery and prostitution, drug production and trafficking, a large number of drug abusers and Injecting Drug Users (IDUs), the poor social and public health infrastructure, lack of blood safety and injection practices, and, perhaps more than anything, a limited knowledge of HIV/AIDS among Afghans - all these factors contribute to making conditions for an HIV/AIDS

epidemic highly favorable. Afghan women are particularly vulnerable to the potential epidemic because of their social status as well as their biological vulnerabilities.

Aside from the poor state of blood transfusion facilities, a lack of comprehensive information on the HIV/AIDS prevalence among those at "high risk" -- in particular, the estimated 14,000 injecting drug users (IDUs) -- throughout the country is a matter of great concern. A study by the Government and UNODC (2005) revealed approximately one million drug users in the country, 14% of them IDUs. Neighboring Iran, Tajikistan, and Pakistan have each reported outbreaks of HIV/AIDS among IDUs. International experience shows that the spread of this infection within the IDU community is rapid.

Because the National Health Policy Document makes no reference to HIV/AIDS, the existing National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (2006-2010) is not yet underpinned by a National HIV/AIDS Policy and the political support associated with such a policy. There is only limited understanding of HIV/AIDS as a com-

bined health and development issue at both the senior and technical levels of the Government. At the societal level, little is known about HIV/AIDS. Because the disease is perceived largely as a taboo, signs of infection are denied.

Confronting this threat demands a coordinated policy, followed by decisive action without delay. Targeted resource allocation within comprehensive preventive programs and services must be provided by the Government. Capacity development in the health care system must also be accelerated and the affected communities assisted. The country should move towards a cultural environment in which the HIV/AIDS threat is acknowledged, and strong support is provided to fight it. Social discrimination and the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS should be addressed head-on with realistic and culturally sensitive public awareness campaigns. Policy-makers must project a proactive vision from which specialists can design a multi-pronged HIV/AIDS prevention response that reflects sensitivity to Afghanistan's national capacity.

Source: Mirwais Sarah, UNDP

displaced peoples, high levels of illiteracy, and lack of access to information on the virus and how people can be protected all contribute to Afghanistan's vulnerability to such an epidemic (box 1.5)

Malaria is widespread in approximately 60 % of the country and is extending to higher altitudes as the climate warms. An estimated 8 % of the population is afflicted with malaria each year.⁵⁶ Although the annual incidence of malaria is estimated to be 1,500,000 cases per year,⁵⁷ the number of cases detected and reported is significantly lower. Malaria incidence has dropped by almost half from 2002 to 2006. In 2002, the number of reported cases was 626,839,⁵⁸ yet the officially reported malaria incidence for 2006 is 329,754.⁵⁹ The expansion of the BPHS has facilitated the detection and treatment of malaria cases in vast areas of the country.⁶⁰

But Afghanistan has one of the highest incidences of tuberculosis in the world. Among the 22 high-TB burden countries, Afghanistan ranks 17th.⁶¹ The current prevalence of tuberculosis is estimated at 228 cases per 100,000 of the population.⁶² The death rate from tuberculosis in Afghanistan is still approximately 12,000 deaths per year.⁶³ Tremendous progress has been made in detecting and treating cases of tuberculosis over the past six years, resulting in a significant decrease in the prevalence of the disease. There were approximately 50,249 cases of tuberculosis in 2005,⁶⁴ though this dropped to 41,000 new tuberculosis cases in Afghanistan in 2006. Women of reproductive age continue to be the majority of the population suffering from this disease. The increase in access to the BPHS has contributed to the detection and treatment of tuberculosis. Over 25,000 individuals were treated for tuberculosis in 2006, approximately 16,000 of whom were women.⁶⁵

ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY (GOAL 7)

The population of Afghanistan is highly dependent on environmental resources,

particularly natural resources, for their livelihoods. Environmental degradation directly threatens the livelihoods of Afghans.⁶⁶ Forest cover has been reduced by almost half since 1978, and the loss of environmental resources in Afghanistan does not appear to be reversing.⁶⁷ From 2000-2005 alone forest cover has dropped from 10,150 to 8,670 square kilometers.⁶⁸ Lack of access to alternatives for energy is only one of the reasons for the reduction of forest cover.⁶⁹ The extent to which environmental resources are being depleted is further reflected by the extremely high percentage of the population that uses solid fuels (98 % rural and 75 % urban).⁷⁰

Access to safe drinking water varies considerably throughout the country (map 1.2). Only 31% of households nationwide have access to safe drinking water, with

The increase in access to the BPHS has contributed to the detection and treatment of tuberculosis



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Access to safe drinking water and sanitation in Afghanistan

Categories	% households with access to safe drinking water	% households with sanitation facilities within their compounds
Kuchi	16	29
Rural	26	72
Urban	64	85
National	31	73

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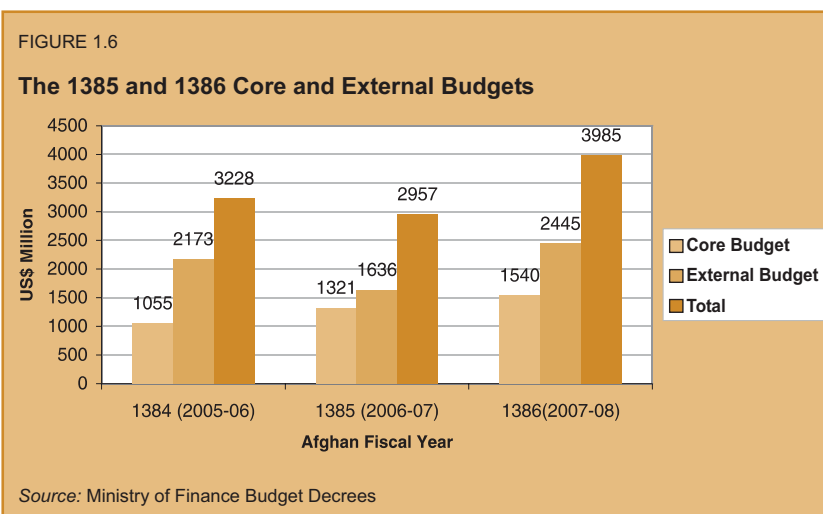
are estimated at about \$83 per capita per year—reflecting initial difficulties mobilizing donor pledges and constrained absorption capacity on the part of the Government.⁷⁶ From 2002 until the end of fiscal year 2004/5, only \$3.3 billion of the \$13.4 billion pledged was spent on projects.⁷⁷ Approximately \$1.5 billion in official development assistance was disbursed in Afghanistan during Afghan fiscal year 2005/06.⁷⁸ However, there are good signs that disbursements are improving, both in terms of Government and donor performance which indicates that aid is likely being used more effectively. Government expenditures as a percent of amount budgeted rose from 65 % in 2005/06 to 71 % in 2006/07.⁷⁹

The Government has put forward an action plan to enhance aid effectiveness, much of which is based in part on the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. It includes actions to increase Government ownership and to further enable it to exercise effective leadership over development policies and strategies. To accomplish this, the Government emphasizes the primacy of the ANDS as the guiding document for international partnership in combination with the Afghanistan Compact. To align aid flows with national priorities, the Government has requested that donors align their aid flows with national policies. The ANDS enables the Government's international partners to align their aid flows with Government policies while building its capacity.⁸⁰ Although as yet most aid monies have been outside the control of the Afghan Government, at least on paper the donors are increasing their commitments to the Core Budget, which is under the Government's control and thus funds its own nationally determined priorities. The Ministry of Finance Budget Decrees reveal that for fiscal years 2006/07 and 2007/08 commitments to the Core Budget have increased to approximately \$ 1.3 billion and \$ 1.5 billion respectively. On the other hand the External Budget, which the Government has limited or no direct control over, has

dropped from \$2.1 billion in 2005/06 to \$1.6 billion in 2006/7 (figure 1.6). According to the Principles of the Paris Declaration, the increase in funding to the Core Budget should increase the effectiveness of aid. Although the proportion of total assistance channeled to the Treasury appears to be increasing, these figures can be misleading. Not only are there problems with spending from the Core Budget; many donors make "off-budget" plans, leading to significant under-reporting of the External Budget.⁸¹

At present, nearly three quarters of donor assistance is still disbursed and delivered outside the Government budget.⁸² Initial findings from a recent study indicate that assistance channeled through the Government can also yield greater local economic impact than funds provided to "international companies or NGOs." According to this recent study, of the \$1.36 billion spent in 1384 by major donors from whom information could be gathered, the local impact was around 31.2 % or \$424 million.⁸³ Yet this is only one measure of aid effectiveness. To bring changes to the lives of the Afghan people, aid must be used effectively, but also targeted to those areas that will bring about and encourage sustainable development. The benefits of communications and information technology are beginning to reach Afghans throughout the country. Approximately 150 people out of every 10,000 have access to a

At present, nearly three quarters of donor assistance is still disbursed and delivered outside the Government budget



The estimated area upon which opium poppy cultivation is taking place in Afghanistan increased by 59 % in 2006

telephone or mobile phone. Those with access to telephones varies significantly between urban and rural areas. 830 out of every 10,000 have access to telephones in urban areas versus 30 out of every 10,000 in rural areas.⁸⁴ New initiatives are introducing telephone services available to the public in district centres.

ENHANCING SECURITY (GOAL 9)

Afghans continue to perceive security as the most striking challenge for the nation.⁸⁵ Because security throughout Afghanistan deteriorated significantly in the past year, such opinions continue to be fuelled. The number of fatalities of Afghan civilians, security forces, as well as international civilian and military personnel, was the highest of any year since the establishment of the Interim Authority in 2001. The number of suicide attacks increased five-fold,⁸⁶ and anti-government elements continue to demonstrate their strength amidst the ongoing insurgency.

Continuingly high rates of opium production place significant amounts of money in the hands of warlords and organized crime, which in close cooperation with the insurgency, have great potential to continue to destabilize the country, or undermine nascent institutions through corruption.⁸⁷ The estimated area upon which opium poppy cultivation is taking place in Afghanistan increased by 59 % in 2006. The extremely high levels of income earned by such actors from the opium crop gives them little incentive to support the state or the licit economy. Licit GDP in Afghanistan was \$US 6.7 billion in 2005/6. The overall potential value of the opium sector of Afghanistan in 2006 is estimated to be the equivalent to 46 % of licit GDP or 32 % of the overall economy, if the opium sector is included in the economy. Because of the strong growth of the licit economy, the overall size of the illicit opium industry declined from 61 % of licit GDP in 2004 to 52 % in 2005 and 46 % in 2006.⁸⁸ Initial projections indicate that poppy cultivation is

likely to increase in 2007.⁸⁹

Although the number of Afghan National Police (ANP) has increased in the past year, the force's ability to maintain law and order throughout the country remains weak,⁹⁰ and the people's faith in the police remains tenuous.⁹¹ Currently standing at 62,000 the ANP is allowed to take its personnel total to a temporary ceiling of 82,000.⁹² Reforming and strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Interior (MoI), which holds the responsibility for law enforcement, is essential to improving the performance and efficacy of the ANP.

In 2007, the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) reached a strength of 37,000 troops, with an additional 12,000 in training, transit, hospital, and studies. Increased levels of insecurity also inhibited the Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups (DIAG), but in order to accelerate progress on this front, a DIAG Action Plan has been drafted and approved by the President. A weapons registration program has also been initiated.⁹³ Furthermore, 132,000 square kilometers of land was cleared of landmines.⁹⁴

Security is a pre-requisite to state-building. The ANP cannot properly function if the ANA cannot secure Afghanistan's borders. DIAG cannot successfully move forward if a legitimate security force is not in place to maintain people's personal security or if disarmed groups do not have other jobs to turn to. Until the Government holds a monopoly of force, its ability to uphold the rule of law, strengthen good governance, tackle the opium trade, or simply control Afghanistan's harsh terrain will remain limited.

AFGHAN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CHAMPIONED THROUGH AN MDG-BASED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Bonn Agreement, signed in December 2001, laid the path for Afghanistan's political transition, including the establishment of an Interim Authority; the convening of an Emergency Loya Jirga to elect a

Transitional Administration; the drafting and approval of a Constitution; and national elections for a President and the National Assembly. The first gathering of the National Assembly in December 2005 marked the official completion of the transition laid out in the Bonn Agreement. Despite the progress made in establishing democratic institutions in Afghanistan, the Government of Afghanistan and its people still face formidable challenges to develop and consolidate the nascent state.

The Afghanistan Compact signed in January 2006 serves as the framework for further strengthening the Afghan state and society. The Afghanistan Compact articulates the Government's priorities in the areas of security; governance, rule of law, and human rights; and economic and social development. The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDES) will provide the strategy and the mechanisms to achieve the five-year benchmarks agreed upon with the international community in the Afghanistan Compact. The ANDES is also being formulated to move Afghanistan toward the achievement of the MDGs. More than any other instrument, the ANDES is the fundamental vehicle for guiding and monitoring efforts to achieve, by 2020, the country's Millennium Development Goals.

The Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDES) was presented alongside the Afghanistan Compact in January 2006 at the London Conference. The I-ANDES represents a national consensus of Afghanistan's development priorities and is the interim strategy for meeting the Afghanistan Compact benchmarks. The I-ANDES attempted to accommodate the country's main human development challenges in pursuit of a pro-poor development agenda, and it met the requirements of an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP). The I-ANDES is currently being implemented.

The full ANDES will be finalized by mid-2008. A number of activities contributing to

the development of the ANDES are ongoing. For the ANDES to be translated into meaningful change for ordinary Afghans, the strategy must be fully integrated into the national budget. In order to do so, all programs that will make up part of the ANDES will be prioritized and costed. The consultation process is central to the development of the ANDES. Two rounds of consultations on the ANDES will be conducted at the national and the sub-national level. The emphasis is on building national ownership to ensure that Afghans are not only in the "front seat" of the process, but are also securely behind the steering wheel. The process for formulating the ANDES is based, at its core, on consultations with and direct contributions from Afghans, as well as representatives of the international community.

While the MDGs are important, the priority placed on each Goal must be determined through the process of developing the ANDES, and the MDGs should be linked directly to the political agenda of the country.⁹⁵ The manner in which MDGs are prioritized will be determined in part by the extensive ANDES consultation process. Through this process communities across the country will contribute to prioritizing the MDGs against other national development priorities. The full ANDES is expected to reflect an overwhelming national consensus on the country's core development priorities for the next five years, as well as to promote all dimensions of human development and progress toward the MDGs.

The ANDES will also meet the requirements of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) needed to secure future concessional loans as well as increased debt relief from the international community. One of the challenges faced by the Government of Afghanistan is to develop policies that foster pro-poor growth. This entails targeted interventions to improve the living conditions of poverty stricken households by raising their level of real income along-

For the ANDES to be translated into meaningful change for ordinary Afghans, the strategy must be fully integrated into the national budget

Trust in the Government and the reconstruction process is central to achieving peace and security

side non-poor households, thus reducing the country's high levels of inequality.

Although Afghanistan has made significant progress towards achieving the MDGs, the Government and its people still face enormous obstacles to meeting these targets and to furthering human development in Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan, its citizens, and the international community have a unique opportunity to move forward towards these objectives.

Afghanistan serves as one of the most prominent examples of the intersection of international peace, security, and development. The country is still at great risk of falling back into conflict. Approximately 50% of countries that have entered a peace agreement after conflict have descended into violent conflict again within ten years.⁹⁶ Afghanistan has been working to consolidate peace and security throughout the country since 2001. Trust in the Government and the reconstruction process is central to achieving peace and security. Such trust can only be earned by the Government of

Afghanistan and the international community through a combination of addressing basic needs and by developing a strategy to make reconstruction work over the long-term.⁹⁷ Providing resources to this end is insufficient. A national development strategy must be developed that adequately meets the needs of the Afghan people, furthers human development, and addresses the causes of conflict.

In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders declared that:

"We will spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war, whether between or within States, which has claimed more than 5 million lives in the past decade..."

They thus resolved to *"strengthen the rule of law in international as in national affairs..."*

For international peace and security to prevail the Government and the nations of the world must develop and implement a strategy sufficient to ensure that the missing links to human development in Afghanistan—the rule of law and access to justice—are tended to.