

The National Development Framework

A summary

Kabul, April 2002

This document is a highly abbreviated summary of the draft National Development Framework. The NDF was developed by the Afghan Authority for the Coordination of Assistance after extensive consultations with ministers and others. It was presented to the international community at the first Implementation Group meeting in Kabul on 10-11th April. The full document is available from the AACA in Kabul, aca@tempoffice.fsworld.co.uk. A Dari version will be available in mid-May.

There is a consensus in Afghan society: violence as a means of compelling the majority to submit to the will of a minority must end. The people's aspirations must be represented and reflected in an accountable government that delivers value on a daily basis. This consensus forms the foundation for a vision of a prosperous and secure Afghanistan. This vision can mobilize the energies of an enterprising and independent people. It will guide them in their collective and individual pursuits, and reinforce the sense of national unity, mutual dependence and participation in the common enterprise of rebuilding the country.

But to capitalize on this consensus we must deliver, and deliver soon. As words become deeds, as plans become reality, belief in the possibility of a safe and prosperous future will grow. Delivering rapidly does not mean delivering unwisely. We must internalize the lessons of 50 years of experience of international assistance. Perhaps most important is that the vision for development and reform must be owned by government and people, rather than be imposed from outside.

The National Development Framework sets out our vision for the future of Afghanistan. It lays out our priorities through a series of 12 programs, and lays down broad strategies in each program area. We intend the program to be the primary form of action, and the national budget to be the central instrument of policy. The NDF forms the basis for the development budget, where the programs will be costed, hard choices made, and specific projects presented. The government will not insist that all monies spent on reconstruction in Afghanistan go through our channels, but we expect donors to fund and implement only those projects consistent with the goals and strategies outlined in the NDF.

We are ready to adapt the NDF in the light of new learning. We will encourage constructive engagement with the NDF from all sections of Afghan society as well as from our national and international partners. However, perhaps the central goal of reconstruction is to ensure that the government of Afghanistan is accountable to the Afghan people. Thus it is the government that will take the final decisions, and the government that will be held accountable for those decisions by the people of Afghanistan.

Our development and reform strategy has three pillars:

The first is to use humanitarian assistance and social policy both to create the conditions for people to live secure lives and to lay the foundations for the formation of sustainable human capital. There are five programs in the pillar. **Refugees and returnees**; millions of refugees and displaced will be returning to their homes. An integrated approach will be required to help them re-integrate safely and develop secure livelihoods rather than end up in shanty towns. After years of neglect, **education** for our children will be the

foundation of economic growth and poverty reduction. Vocational training is a priority to help women into employment and to assist the mujahadeen, many of whom have sacrificed so much.

Health and nutrition will require massive and long-term investment if we are to lift Afghanistan from 169 in the human development index, in particular in better obstetric care that will bring down the unacceptably high levels of maternal and infant mortality rates. Afghans have shown a remarkable ability to survive in the face of disaster, but there is a need to invest in **livelihoods** to facilitate our enterprise in the search for a good living. And finally, after the ravages of the Taliban, we must act fast to preserve our national heritage, we must remember the vital role of **culture** in the process of national reconstruction.

It is vital that we take an integrated and programmatic approach to all work in this pillar, sectoral and localized projects will lead to disconnects and failure. So we are initiating two, large-scale, integrated interventions as the foundation of much work in this pillar. Firstly, a national community development program, known as **National Solidarity**, will deliver block grants to communities across the country. And secondly, we have designated **10 key areas** for special attention because they have been worst affected by human rights abuses and will be centers of refugee and IDP return.

The second pillar is the use of external assistance to build the physical infrastructure of the country and to develop its natural resources in a way that lays the basis for a private sector-led strategy of sustainable growth. There are four programs in this pillar. In the **transport program** we are committed to reuniting the country through making transport easier and cheaper. This will require a major roads program, both on the highway network and for rural access to provide access to markets both domestic and international. Kabul and other airports will also need rehabilitation. In the **urban management program** our aim is to invest in a balanced urban development program across the country to create cities that are hubs of economic activity and organically linked to rural areas. We need to focus on some immediate and pressing needs such as roads, transport, sewerage, waste management, drinking water and sanitation.

In the **energy, mining and telecommunications program**, we intend to establish an enabling environment, including appropriate regulation, to facilitate local and foreign investors to develop services. This will include privatizing some existing state enterprises. In terms of **natural resources**, we will aim to assist farmers to respond to the domestic and international market through better knowledge, tools and linkages with the market while at the same time developing their capacity to protect themselves from drought. Affordable credit is a priority. We will also invest in the forestry and livestock

sectors and, crucially, develop a comprehensive inter-ministerial policy for the management of perhaps our most precious resource, water.

For all the activities of this pillar, the state will define the areas of priorities, but will not be the implementing agency. Instead, we will turn to the national and international private sector, including NGOs, to help us design and implement our projects. Communities will be asked to participate in project identification, monitoring and evaluation.

The third pillar is the creation of sustainable growth through a competitive **private sector**, which becomes both the engine of growth and the instrument of social inclusion through the creation of opportunity. We are in the fortunate position that the European and American markets are open to our exports and the development of the export market for our agricultural and horticultural products is critical to our strategy of eliminating poppy cultivation. We must also use internal trade as a way of binding the country together, economically as well as politically. We are also working on the relevant policy and legal frameworks that would attract investment.

The issue of gender is critical for all our activities. We must engage in a societal dialogue to enhance the opportunities of women and improve cooperation between men and women on the basis of our culture, the experience of other Islamic countries, and the global norms of human rights.

The foundations for our success in all these activities will be security and administrative reform.

Rebuilding a shattered public administration will be one of our biggest and most important challenges. Not only will have to rebuild, but to re-orientate the state machinery so it becomes light, accountable and concentrates on policy and regulation, but leaves implementation and growth to the private sector. This will require a number of reforms, not least the pay-scale of our civil servants will need to be raised, and a merit based recruitment system established. Ministries will be rejuvenated through the creation of implementation cells of between 10 and 40 people, recruited on the basis of merit, who will translate programs into specific projects, implemented by the private sector. Many of our central institutions such as the central bank will need to be rebuilt, and we will need to put in place financial, audit and procurement procedures that meet international standards. We aim to have a budget process and procedures in place so that donors have sufficient confidence to provide direct budget support and government can assume the leading role in project identification and management.

We must also ensure we get the balance right between Kabul and the provinces, between the urban centers and the rural areas. Our investments will be based on an even-handed approach across the country. We will be initiating a project to rebuild the infrastructure of government at the province level and the communications infrastructure to ensure the speedy flow of information between Kabul and the provinces.

But we must also have a vibrant civil society as one way of ensuring the government is held to account. We will be revising the NGO laws to ensure they receive adequate protection under the law and also the laws on freedom of speech and association.

The rule of law and good governance will depend on security. We have prepared a program for the creation, training and deployment of a national police force and a national army and the first battalion of the new army has been trained and deployed as the National Guard. We will also need to provide for absorption back into society of the mujahadeen through employment creation and vocational training. Demining is also an urgent priority and a precondition for agricultural recovery and freedom of movement. The judicial system will be revived through a program that provides training, makes laws and precedents available to all parts of the system, and rehabilitates the physical infrastructure and equipment of the judicial sector.

Finally, our strategy of development provides a clear role for the state. The state must provide security, invest in human capital, and articulate and implement a social policy focused on assistance to the vulnerable and excluded and the elimination of poverty. It must create an enabling environment for the activities of the private sector, make effective use of aid to attract trade and investment, and put the economy on a sustainable path to growth.

We thus need an effective central government that re-establishes the national unity of the country on the basis of strong institutions and the rule of law. Simultaneously, we are committed to building on community level participation and effective management at the local level. We do not see government as the producer and manager of the economy, but as regulator and promoter of the entrepreneurial energies of our people. The state will enter into a direct managerial role only when social justice demands its presence. The government will act in partnership with communities, NGOs, donors, UN organizations and the national and international private sector to implement its programs, and realize its vision. As the legitimate representative of the people, it is the key task and challenge of the government to create the institutions and organizations that embody the principles and practices of good governance.