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# Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for March 24 – March 31, 2004

Issue 52

United States Agency for International Development

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## STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT

### Program Goals

- Support the Bonn process: the Constitutional, Human Rights, and Judicial Commissions; the 2004 elections; and a free and independent media.
- Strengthen government budgeting, revenue generation (e.g., customs), monetary management, private-sector related legal and regulatory frameworks, and promote private enterprises.
- Build capacity to carry out other legitimate government functions and support reconstruction of health, judicial, education, economic, agricultural and transportation infrastructure.

### Recent Progress:

- **Voter Registration:** USAID is working with the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, the United Nations and other donor organizations to register 6.5 to 7 million voters for the upcoming 2004 elections. USAID's elections-related activities include conducting a public education campaign geared toward women, deploying registration teams throughout the country, and providing advisors to help plan for the elections. Currently, there are 93 registration sites and over 400 registration teams in place, and as of March 18 over 1.5 million Afghans had registered to vote—28% of them women.
- **Voter Registration Education Campaign:** During the next two months, USAID will fund a public education campaign using various communication tools, with the goal to educate Afghans on basic democratic values of the electoral process, ensuring higher voter turnout, an informed electorate, and greater women's participation. USAID will produce 200,000 audio cassettes with elections-focused poetry, dramas and stories; conduct face-to-face sessions focused on voter registration and election procedures; and use mobile cinemas to show elections-related video programs.
- **Customs Revenue Collection:** Customs revenues account for nearly \$120 million of the estimated \$193 million of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan's domestically generated revenue. USAID is working with the Ministry of Finance to enact customs reform to increase revenue beyond current levels. USAID-supported customs houses are operating in Kabul, Herat (western), Jalalabad (eastern), Mazar-e-Sharif (northern) and Kandahar (southern) provinces. On March 21, a new customs schedule of importable goods and their corresponding customs duties was enacted, and better customs revenue tracking mechanisms will be implemented by central government advisors and Ministry of Finance representatives (Mustofiats) who are located at each of the respective customs houses. The Mustofiats will ensure that the central government collects all assessed duties by tracking and comparing regional customs house declarations with actual receipts of duties paid.

*An Afghan-Pakistani border crossing site at Turkham city near Jalalabad, eastern Afghanistan.*

*Customs declaration room in Turkham border city.*

*Customs weighing scale in Turkham border city.*

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## INCREASING ACCESS TO BASIC HEALTH CARE

### Program Goals

- 400 health centers renovated or constructed in rural areas, providing services to an estimated 12 million people.
- 11 million beneficiaries assured improved access to basic services in 13 provinces; 4.4 million women and children given access to services through USAID's health care initiative grants.
- 3,400 new community health workers, 990 midwives, 6,000 clinic staff trained.
- Make safe water systems, contraceptives, mosquito nets and other health products available at reasonable prices using existing trading and marketing systems.
- Strengthen MOH capacity at the national and provincial levels for guiding effective health care policy; develop a public health education program; determine a sustainable health finance policy; strengthen human resource development; improve hospital management; and expand and improve the HMIS.

### Recent Progress:

The USAID-funded REACH (Rural Expansion of Afghanistan's Community-Based Healthcare) program aims to improve the health of women of reproductive age and children under 5 years of age.

- **Community Mapping Programs:** USAID has implemented community mapping programs in eight districts in Herat and Faryab provinces. These programs expand the reach of healthcare services beyond the walking distance of clinics, and develop healthcare information that is used to determine where services are needed. Community mapping also takes into account Afghanistan's high illiteracy rates by training community health workers to use color-coded and pictorial guides to identify community members' needs and track the health services that are being accessed.

### Recent Progress (continued):

- **Community Mapping Success in Herat:** USAID's community mapping program in Herat province was recently visited by a senior Ministry of Health team. The Deputy Minister of Health, Dr. Ferozuddin Feroz, led the team and noted that the community health workers in Herat were well organized, well trained, and most importantly, well acquainted with the health needs of the families within their respective communities. In a letter to USAID program implementers, Dr. Feroz stated, "this achievement [community mapping programs] is the fulfillment of a dream we [Afghans] have had for a long time, giving us a feeling of tremendous satisfaction. Please accept my heartfelt congratulations."



*Completed clinic in Kabul province.*

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## EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

### Program Goals

- 1,000 schools and 17 provincial women's centers rehabilitated or constructed.
- 16 million textbooks printed & distributed for 2004 school year
- 30,000 classroom teachers trained.
- 80,000 students enrolled in accelerated learning programs to reach their appropriate grade level.

### Recent Progress

Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) is a three-year USAID program designed to provide educational opportunities for communities that demonstrate a commitment to education. The program trains teachers, provides textbooks, implements accelerated learning programs, and provides advisers to the Ministry of Education. Primary education programs are underway in Nangarhar, Faryab, Baghlan and Kunduz provinces.

- **School Construction Announcement:** On March 21, Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad announced—during a ceremony opening the new school year—that USAID will build 152 and refurbish 255 schools by September 2004. The Ambassador remarked, "I have heard of many young Afghans who aspire to be engineers and doctors solely because they wish to rebuild their country and provide better quality of life for their families. We must give them these opportunities. We must empower the next generation with the tools and the confidence to create a new, democratic and free Afghanistan." Since 2002, USAID has constructed or rehabilitated over 200 schools, reached 16,000 students through accelerated learning programs, trained 2,100 teachers and distributed 25 million textbooks.



*Kabul school girl who sang at the school reconstruction announcement.*



*Installation of exterior windows at Kabul school site.*

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