



Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for May 12 – May 25
Issue 58

United States Agency for International Development

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

As both presidential and parliamentary elections draw near, the Government of Afghanistan and USAID are helping to educate the Afghan public about the electoral process.

- **Grassroots Civic Education:** USAID and Swisspeace are training trainers for "Face to Face", a program that will target rural populations on the elections process through grassroots efforts. So far, of 43,299 people trained, 27,786 are men and 15,513 women. The program kicked off activities in Paktika province with surprising success, despite initial concerns on how local populations would receive civic education programs.
- **Theatre Promotes Participation in Election:** Groups of actors participated in a theatrical competition with the theme *Entekhab-e Khub* (which means "good choice") highlighting the importance of participation in the elections. The theatrical productions focused on the provincial elections for the *Wolesi Jirga* or lower house of the Afghan Parliament. Three teams were selected in this competition and are among many that will be selected at competitions throughout the country. The material centers on common concerns of Afghans, such as the need for good governance, infrastructure rehabilitation, access to quality health, and general socio-economic development. The selected groups will now present their production to Afghan audiences to promote public participation in the upcoming elections.

Groundbreaking of Jalalabad-to-Asmar Secondary Road:

Construction began May 16 on the 122 km long Jalalabad-to-Asmar Road. Turning over the first shovels of dirt were Ambassador Khalilzad, Minister of Public Works Engineer Abdullah Ali, Minister of Transportation Ali Jawad, Minister of Rural Development Haneef Atmar and the Governor of Nangarhar, Haji Din Mohammad.

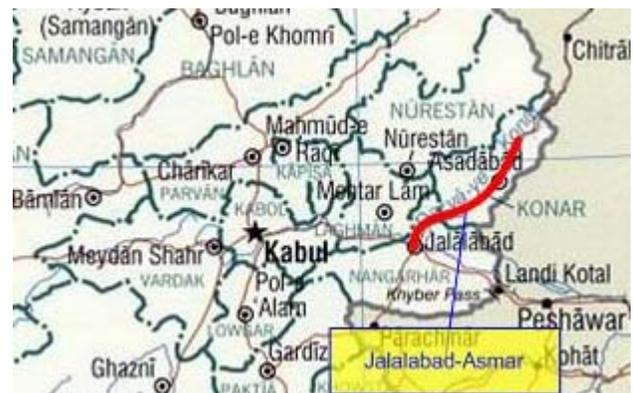
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Recent Progress (continued)

The road will better connect Nangarhar, Kunar and Nuristan Provinces. "It will improve the economic possibilities involving trade of all three provinces, perhaps most dramatically in Nuristan, which has been isolated for centuries," said Ambassador Khalilzad. The Jalalabad-to-Asmar Road is one of three provincial road projects beginning this month.



Officials breaking ground on the Jalalabad-to-Asmar Road in a ceremony held in Jalalabad, Nangarhar. From left: Minister of Rural Development, Mohammad Haneef Atmar; Minister of Transportation, Ali Jawad; U.S. Special Presidential Envoy and Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad; Minister of Public Works, Abdullah Ali; and Governor of Nangarhar, Haji Din Mohammad.



Map of secondary road (indicated in red) to be rehabilitated.

REVITALIZING AGRICULTURE/CREATING JOBS

Program Goals

- Increased marketable output of \$250 million in agriculture.
- More than 500,000 farm family beneficiaries.
- A reliable source of water provided to more than 500,000 hectares of land through irrigation rehabilitation.
- 1,000 km of improved village feeder roads rehabilitated.
- Construction of over 100 agricultural market centers.

Recent Progress

USAID's Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP) is a three-year program aimed at enhancing the food security and incomes of Afghanistan's rural population. It has two principal objectives, to increase agricultural productivity and output, and to facilitate effective linkages between producers, processors and markets.

- **Increasing Women's Income through Horticulture:** Horticultural products (almonds, raisins, apricots, etc.) have traditionally accounted for a large share of Afghanistan's export markets. The involvement of women in the industry ranges from ownership of horticultural farms to the sorting of products in market centers, a labor-intensive activity most often performed by women. RAMP is supporting the revitalization of Afghan horticulture by reestablishing orchards and vineyards; developing greenhouses for fruit processing; providing solar dryers and storage facilities; and, improving productivity of field crops and vegetables.

INCREASING ACCESS TO BASIC HEALTH CARE

Program Goals

- Over 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, and 6,000 clinic staff trained.
- Make safe water systems, contraceptives, mosquito nets and other health products available at reasonable prices using existing trading systems.
- Strengthen MOH capacity at the national and provincial levels for making 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 through increased use of basic health services in rural areas.

- **Making a Difference:** In six districts of Herat, USAID-funded clinics provide a basic package of maternal and newborn health services to 300,000 Afghans. Since the opening of the clinic in Zandajan district, tuberculosis and whooping cough rates have declined, and the number of vaccinated children increases every week. Abdullah Hadi, a member of his village council, and his wife were very grateful for the midwives and the vaccination program provided by the clinic. *Continued>*



Woman sorts almonds for Kabul trader.

Benefits of Improving Horticulture:

- ◇ According to FAO, women headed 11% of horticultural farms in 1999.
- ◇ Fruit and nuts provide essential nutrients for women and children.
- ◇ Intercropping vegetables with fruit trees provides optimal use of scarce water.
- ◇ High-value yields make best use of small landholdings.
- ◇ Added-value products like dried fruits reach additional markets.
- ◇ Dried fruit and nuts are easier to transport than other products.



"We were pleased to help the clinic," said Abdullah Hadi, "because the clinic is helping us."

The couple was so concerned about malnutrition in their village, they volunteered to conduct a survey. While learning about the health and nutrition practices of their community, the family also encouraged their neighbors to visit the clinic and have their children vaccinated.