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AFGHANISTAN

Date: December 2012
DOC Office: +93 (0)700 11 4015
E-mail: kabulAIDdoc@usaid.gov
<http://afghanistan.usaid.gov>

FACT SHEET

Rule of Law Stabilization Program – Informal Justice Sector Component

OVERVIEW

The Rule of Law Stabilization Program – Informal Justice Sector Component (RLS-I) supports the traditional justice sector and works directly with traditional dispute resolution (TDR) elders and local government and religious stakeholders to foster linkages between the formal and traditional justice systems, increase access to justice, and increase stability through conflict resolution. The overall objective of the RLS-I Program is to strengthen Afghanistan's traditional justice sector and align it with the Afghan Constitution in order to safeguard the rights of individuals, particularly women. Many TDR mechanisms use traditional beliefs and customary practices as the foundation to resolve disputes; these beliefs, however, are against traditional (*Sharia*) law and violate the rights of individuals. RLS-I directly addresses this issue and, through a series of trainings and outreach tools, introduces principles of *Sharia* law to TDR stakeholders to reduce the likelihood of TDR decisions violating the rights of Afghans.

ACTIVITIES

- Familiarize Afghans TDR mechanisms (community councils known as *shuras* and *jirgas*) with Afghan and *Sharia* law with an emphasis on women's rights.
- Link traditional dispute-resolution mechanisms to formal justice sector institutions, such as the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) offices and district courts.
- Promote the resolution of long-standing disputes by creating regional councils (*shuras*).
- Further the role of women in traditional dispute-resolution mechanisms by supporting *spinsary* (wise woman) groups made up of respected female elders involved in dispute resolution.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Improved dispute resolution in 41 districts, with an emphasis on the resolution of land disputes, which are particularly destabilizing.
- Established networks of village elders to improve community dispute-resolution capabilities.
- Established six Community Cultural Centers (CCCs) to increase citizens' understanding of rights.
- Trained over 20,000 individuals (40 percent women) in key principles of Afghan Law.
- Facilitated the registration of close to 700 TDR decisions with district officials and local district courts.
- Settled 39 long-standing disputes.
- From September 2011 to July 2012, women's dispute resolution groups resolved or diffused 486 disputes.