

"PROGRESS FOR WOMEN IS PROGRESS FOR ALL"

UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programs and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality.

Through collaborative efforts with government, other United Nations agencies, and nongovernmental partners **UNIFEM Afghanistan's** goal is to increase opportunities for women in order to transform development into a more equitable and sustainable process.

UNIFEM Afghanistan Mission

Situation of Women in Afghanistan

POPULATION

- ◆ **48.9%** of Afghanistan's population is female

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- ◆ Women represent **27%** of the National Assembly (**68** out of 249 seats in Wolesi Jirga, **23** out of 102 in the Mesherano Jirga)
- ◆ Women hold **121** out of 420 Provincial Councils' seats
- ◆ Women account for **26%** of all civil servants
- ◆ The number of women who registered for the elections increased from **41.5%** in 2004 to **44%** in 2005

However

- Only **one** cabinet member is female (Minister of Women Affairs)
- There were not enough women to meet the 124 seat quota at Provincial Council elections, and **3 seats** had to be given to men
- In 17 of the 36 Ministries there are less than **10%** female employees

In 2004

- ◆ **87%** of Afghans believed that women need a male relative's authorization to vote
- ◆ **35%** of women believed they would not have permission to vote
- ◆ **18%** of men admitted they would not allow their wives to vote

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

- ◆ **30%** of agricultural workers are women
- ◆ Women receive between **50 to 60%** of the male wage
- ◆ There are some **50,000** war widows in Kabul, supporting an average of 6 dependents

PARTICIPATION IN THE JUSTICE SECTOR

- ◆ An Afghan Women Judges Association was created in 2003, and there is also an Afghan Women Lawyers and Professionals Association
- ◆ Of the 1547 sitting judges in Afghanistan only **62** are female
- ◆ Of the 546 prosecutors, 35 or **6.4%** are female
- ◆ Of the 1241 attorneys 76 or **6.1%** are female
- ◆ There are **no women** members in the Supreme Court Council
- ◆ The Family and Juvenile Courts are headed by women

PARTICIPATION IN SECURITY SERVICES

- ◆ Women represent less than **1%** of employees in Police or Military services
- ◆ There are only **233** police women in Afghanistan
- ◆ There are **259** women in the Afghan National Army, which is **0.6%** of approximately 43,000 military personnel

PARTICIPATION IN PEACE BUILDING

- ◆ **1121** women's councils have been established throughout Afghanistan by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, with a total of **56,535** women participating in the women's councils

HEALTH

- ◆ A new **Department of Women and Reproductive Health** was established within the Ministry of Health in 2003
- ◆ A **Basic Package of Health Services** has been developed which includes emergency obstetric care

However

- ◆ One woman dies every **29 minutes** in child birth (**1600 to 1900 deaths per 100,000 live births**, the second highest maternal mortality rate in the world)
- ◆ Only **14.3%** of births have skilled attendants present, and only **12%** of women receive professional ante-natal care
- ◆ Depending on location, between **30% and 90%** of women in rural areas cannot access health care
- ◆ The average woman has **6.6 children**
- ◆ The average life expectancy for women in Afghanistan is **44 years**
- ◆ **83%** of the 50,000 Afghans who die from tuberculosis each year are women
- ◆ **48%** of women are iron-deficient

EDUCATION

- ◆ Estimated literacy rate for women stands at **15.8%** (for men 31%)
- ◆ Boys are twice as likely to complete primary school than girls
- ◆ Only **19%** of schools are designated as girls schools
- ◆ In **29%** of educational districts there are no designated girls schools at all
- ◆ Only about **one quarter** of the teachers in Afghanistan are women
- ◆ At primary level there is **one girl student for every two boys**
- ◆ At secondary level there is **one girl for every five to six boys**
- ◆ The number of girls in secondary school decreased by 4.7% per annum during 2004-5

MARRIAGE

- ◆ Women head **2.2%** of Afghan households
- ◆ **70 to 80%** of women face forced marriages in Afghanistan
- ◆ **57%** of girls are married before the legal marriage age of 16
- ◆ The number of reported divorces increased from 14 in 2005 to **158** in 2006

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- ◆ Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission registered **1651** cases of SGBV in 2006:
 - 558** cases of severe beatings
 - 213** cases of forced marriage
 - 106** cases of self-burning
 - 50** cases of murder
 - 41** cases of girls exchange
 - 34** cases of rape
- ◆ The Ministry of Women's Affairs registered **1953** cases of SGBV in 2006:
 - 612** cases of forced marriage
 - 250** cases of beatings
 - 60** cases of murder
 - 44** cases of self-burning
 - 31** cases of rape

Afghan Government Commitments to Women

- ❑ **BONN AGREEMENT – Signed on December 5, 2001**
Committed to "broad-based, gender sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government."
- ❑ **AFGHANISTAN CONSTITUTION – Approved on January 4, 2004**
Articles 22, 44 and 54
"The citizens of Afghanistan – whether woman or man – have equal rights and duties before the law"
- ❑ **AFGHANISTAN COMPACT – Signed on January 31-February 1, 2006**
Benchmarks: Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights
"By end-2010: the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan will be fully implemented; and, in line with Afghanistan's MDGs, female participation in all Afghan governance institutions, including elected and appointed bodies and the civil service, will be strengthened."
"Build lasting Afghan capacity and effective state and civil society institutions, with particular emphasis on building up human capacities of men and women alike."
"Recognize in all policies and programs that men and women have equal rights and responsibilities."
- ❑ **AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (Interim)**
Launched on January 31-February 1, 2006
Cross-cutting Issue no. 1: Gender Equity
"The Government's goal is to eliminate discrimination against women, develop their human capital and promote their leadership in order to guarantee their full and equal participation in all aspects of life in Afghanistan"
 I-ANDS contains a total of 18 statements of commitment addressing gender equity

❑ **MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Afghanistan became the 191st signatory to the Millennium Declaration in 2004

Goals 2, 3, 4 and 5

"To achieve universal primary education; To promote gender equality and to empower women; To reduce child mortality; To improve maternal health."

❑ **PROTOCOL ON THE ELIMINATION OF FORCED AND CHILD MARRIAGE – Signed November 24, 2005**

"Aiming at the elimination of child and forced marriage by 2008"

❑ **ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN COMMISSION (INTER-MINISTERIAL)**

Created July 9, 2003

Mandated to supervise and coordinate action and policy on violence against women at the national level

❑ **CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW) – Ratified on 5th of March 2003**

"...the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields"

❖ **GENDER AND JUSTICE**

- ◆ Engendering **governance & peace building**
- ◆ Increasing women's **access to justice**, especially in rural areas:
 - Supporting a pilot project providing legal counseling and legal aid in **6 provinces**
 - Supporting legal reform through technical assistance to the **Parliamentarians' Law Reform Working Group**
 - **Mapping of Afghanistan's laws** from a gender perspective
 - Facilitating the development of a **Protocol on Forced and Child Marriage**
- ◆ Promoting women's rights, equity and protection against violence through: **advocacy, research, policy recommendations, development of a Primary VAW database, law reform**, etc.
- ◆ Supporting protection mechanisms such as **safe houses** and **referral centers** for women victims of violence or at risk
- ◆ Lobbying for **reform of discriminatory laws and policies**
- ◆ Lobbying for **the inclusion of women in the Supreme Court**
- ◆ Building capacity for **women parliamentarians, provincial council members and civil society representatives**

❖ COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CEED)

The CEED Unit supports women's economic security in **six provinces** of Afghanistan. A total of **12,660** women and girls have benefited from the projects since 2003.

- ◆ **600** women have been attending courses in psycho-social focusing that help women who face trauma as a result of war
- ◆ **1388** women and girls have participated in integrated computer and English programs
- ◆ **1100** women trained in adult literacy and health & hygiene
- ◆ **1060** women are trained in health education and legal advisory issues
- ◆ **4796** women trained in literacy, health education and rights awareness
- ◆ **895** women have received loans through micro-finance institutions
- ◆ **550** women received training in poultry and health hygiene
- ◆ **1381** women have received training in vocational and income generating activities
- ◆ **800** women received training in capacity building
- ◆ **90** women trained in civil rights education

Most of these trainings have been conducted in UNIFEM-supported Women's Development Centers (WDCs) and internally displaced people centers (IDPs). These centers provide women a secure space to come together, share knowledge and develop various skills for their improved well-being and livelihoods.

❖ INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

- ◆ **Institutional capacity building of the Ministry Of Women's Affairs (MOWA)** as lead ministry for gender mainstreaming across government. Technical support is provided to MoWA planning department staff and policy advice provided to Minister and Deputy Minister.
- ◆ **Advocacy work** on key issues of nation building, reconstruction and reform such as the Constitutional Loya Jirga process, elimination of violence against women, or CEDAW through establishment of the Gender and Law Working Group or the task force on CEDAW implementation.
- ◆ **Technical Assistance** in the development, implementation and monitoring of a National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan and in mainstreaming gender in the ANDS and implementation of benchmarks of the Afghanistan Compact.