

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan 2002-2012

Information Mapping



When I asked permission to take her photos, she said, "I allow you because other women should see me in the picture and gain the courage to open some shop for themselves in public and local markets."



JULY 2013

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan, 2002 - 2012

Information Mapping

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with

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July 2013



This research was
funded by the UN
Women Afghanistan
Country Office

Editing: Brandy Bauer
Design and layout: Michael Monts
Cover Photograph: Photo taken by Massouda Kohistani, Shahr-i-Naw, Kabul
AREU Publication Code: 1311

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.... with the hope of a peaceful Afghanistan amid the problems that we have,
may there come a day in our life
that there should be an Afghanistan without violence,
without weapons, without cultivating poppy,
without crime and kidnappings, ...
we are in this hope so that merciful Allah do mercy on our people
so that the people themselves bring some changes
because I don't think that an angel is coming to help us
or others will bring change to us and
it has been proved that no one can bring changes but we ourselves,
as there is a holy Ayah
which says that Allah will never bring changes to a nation until they don't bring it themselves,
till we don't try and start working
but unless we take courage in our hands and build this country
then no foreigner can ever bring changes.
And there is nothing else to say.

Representative, Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs,
Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, AREU interview, 31 December 2012

About the Author

Dr Lena Ganesh is an anthropologist researching and working on gender, including gender in areas of armed conflict. An architect with professional experience in the media, her other areas of research experience and interest are violence against women, gendered exclusion within traditional hierarchical social structures and the historical and extant gendered uses of space.

About the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) is an independent research institute based in Kabul. AREU's mission is to inform and influence policy and practice through conducting high-quality, policy-relevant research and actively disseminating the results, and to promote a culture of research and learning. To achieve its mission AREU engages with policymakers, civil society, researchers and students to promote their use of AREU's research and its library, to strengthen their research capacity, and to create opportunities for analysis, reflection and debate.

AREU was established in 2002 by the assistance community working in Afghanistan and has a board of directors with representation from donors, the United Nations and other multilateral agencies, and non-governmental organisations. AREU currently receives core funds from the Embassy of Finland, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Specific projects in 2013 are currently being funded by the European Commission (EC), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Women, as well as the Embassy of Finland.

AREU would like to extend special thanks to UN Women for making this publication possible. In particular considerable gratitude is due to Dr Mamadou Bobo Diallo, Economic Specialist, UN Women HQ New York and Mr. Asela Kalugampitiya, along with Rim Aljabi and Hassan Fahimi of UN Women Afghanistan, for their inputs in reviewing the paper. Finally, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to Anil Chandrika, WESR Specialist at UN Women for his tireless efforts and dedication to this project.

Preface

In the recent socio-economic culture of Afghanistan, as in most countries since the Industrial Revolution's introduction of the artificial division between production and reproduction, women's participation in the labour economy—whether reproductive or productive—has been invisible and unaccounted for in much policy-making, planning and budgeting. In parallel, socio-cultural practices specific to Afghanistan that have often been an uncertain mix between the Shari'at code and those customary laws followed by different ethnicities and tribes have adversely affected the living conditions of women and girls. As a consequence too, women's practical and strategic needs have not been addressed by consecutive regimes, nor has the discourse of women's human rights percolated through much of the more recent rhetoric around "gender empowerment" to materially and politically improve the lives of women and girls in Afghanistan.

This report looks at the current economic status of women in Afghanistan. It introduces and contextualises the ways in which women's economic activities have been addressed and provides an assessment of the policies, laws and strategies drafted by the Government of Afghanistan for enhancing women's economic empowerment. It does this through a listing and analysis of surveys, reports, projects and research undertaken and implemented by the government, multilateral international agencies, national non-governmental organisations and individual researchers on women's economic activities. This is juxtaposed with an assessment of the status of women's human rights and the ways in which women's access to education, health, safety and public participation have been enhanced in the past decade. As a parallel tool in understanding the whole, it points to some strategies and methods that have been successful provincially, nationally and internationally in mitigating some of the disempowerment that traditionally placed power structures continue to effect.

The report concludes with recommendations evolving from the analysis and offers an understanding of the ways in which policies and processes can often work in limited and limiting ways in programming and implementation. While streamlining can offer greater efficiency, there is a need for greater emphasis on effective and accountable programming for longer-term strategies that could offer a more sustainable environment for the economic empowerment of women in Afghanistan. This is all the more urgent given the impending transition of security responsibilities and its associated legitimate concerns on the bartering away of women's recently (re)gained rights to placate conservative factions in peace negotiations. The programming and utilisation of resources could be better sensitised towards a cogent gender-oriented strategy that contributes concretely to women's equal participation in the development of Afghanistan, and equally importantly, as equal citizens of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Acknowledgements

This research is indebted to Massouda Kohistani, Rahim Azami and Roya Mahtabi, without whose dedication and research skills, much orientation would have been lost. Their tenacity in identifying appropriate individuals and representatives in organisations and the government and their persistence in the often burdensome task of following up with them contributed immensely to this report, as have their field notes, observation and many other aspects of research. Thanks are also due to Mahdi Mosawi for his contributions to the first phase of this project. The hard work put in by Ehsan Khamosh, Abdullah Azizi, Hoshem Sidiqi, Hodayun Rahimi and Ibrahim Amiri, in translating and transcribing the interviews, remains invaluable.

Particular gratitude is owed to Dr Rebecca L. Miller for her patience in gathering information and for her skills in data collation.

I would like to express my deep appreciation of my other colleagues in AREU, in particular Nasrullah Baqaie, Ghulam Rasool, Ghulam Ali, Saidajan Sarwari, Parvez Azizi and Atiqullah Shahnai for accommodating the team's logistical needs and to Raqimajan and Simagulljan for their many kindnesses. Dr Chona Echavez's cheer and guidance through this project has been invaluable.

Thanks are due to the many respondents who gave their time and proffered information. Their opinions and views on women's empowerment in Afghanistan form the bedrock of this research. In particular, the female participants of the projects under study and the men and women of their families and communities provided invaluable information on the ways in which women and women's economic empowerment are seen in society. In tandem, I thank the representatives of those organisations which implemented these projects and those in various departments of the government who made available data and shared their opinions on the ways in which structural processes direct women's empowerment.

Finally, I express my gratitude to the reviewers of this report who so kindly took the time and trouble to offer comments and suggestions in order to improve its quality and clarity.

Any mistakes and misinterpretations remain my responsibility.

Lena Ganesh
July 2013

Kabul, Afghanistan

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Glossary

Baad: A practice where the female members of a family (female children, young girls, women) are given as compensation for blood feuds. Such brides are generally seen as low status and more susceptible to domestic violence, and as reminders of the harm done by her natal family to the marital family. Also practiced and seen as legitimate when an engaged woman or girl runs away (or elopes) and her family cannot pay back the expenses of the engagement borne by the groom; another unmarried female relative of the family is given or taken away as restitution. Women and girls could also be given in *baad* in lieu of non-repayable loans. All *baad* is usually either decided by the *Jirga* or condoned by the community and seen as restitution or as restorative justice to prevent conflict or the escalation of a feud. *Baad* is a criminal offence in Afghanistan.

Badal: Lit. “exchange,” a practice when a female (sister, daughter, niece) and male of one family are married to a male and female from another. Seen as involving unwilling parties and/or inappropriate matches, for example, a father marrying his daughter to a man and marrying the other man’s daughter in exchange.

Chaddori: The Afghan traditional, all-encompassing, loose and stitched outer garment worn by women, ideologically associated with Islam and with the honour implicit in “keeping purdah,” i.e. maintaining gender boundaries. It covers the body from head to toe, with a latticed opening over the eyes. It has generally been de rigeur among the settled population during the past century and blue in colour since about the 1990s in Afghanistan.

Jirga: Gathering/council of elders—traditionally elite males, with some seniority, wealth, learning and/or other markers of social capital—within a community or tribe to discuss and decide upon economic, legal and social issues pertaining to the community’s well-being and actions. The issues could be intra-community, inter-tribe/community or between the community/tribe and the state. Decisions taken by the *Jirga* members can be authoritative and not generally open to dissent or non-compliance.

Mahram: Husband or another close male relative with whom marriage is prohibited and who is responsible for the well-being and actions of a woman.

Mahr: The amount given by the groom to the bride. While *mahr-e-moajal* is given at the time of marriage, *mehr-e-ma’ajal*, the amount set upon the finalisation of marriage is, under Islamic jurisprudence, a contractual obligation to be paid by the husband to the wife in the eventuality of the dissolution of the marriage. Both types are observed more in their breach than by observance.

Meshrano Jirga: “House/Council of Elders,” Afghanistan’s Upper House of Parliament

Wolesi Jirga: “House/Council of People,” Afghanistan’s Lower House of Parliament

Ulema: Religious scholars

Shura: Local council

Qur’an, Qur’an-e-Sharief: Lit. “reading,” Holy Qur’an; teachings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during his lifetime.

Shari’ah: Lit. “path,” the legal process within Islam that governs the believer’s relationship to the state, to community and to the divine, in adherence with the principles of the Qur’an-e-Sharief and the Sunnah, given extant socio-political circumstances. Of its major schools of *madhaahib* (jurisprudence), Hannafi and Ja’fariare followed in Afghanistan. The former, seen as the most liberal and followed by Afghanistan’s majority Sunni population, emphasises the application of logical reasoning by scholars in applying Islamic rules to new situations.

Sunnah: The teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It reflects the “normative practices” to which the believer must adhere. The Sunnah supplements the Qur’an, offering insight on some of its meanings.

Acronyms

ACCI	Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries
ADF	Agricultural Development Fund
AGRED	Afghan Agricultural Research Extension Development
AIA	Afghanistan Interim Authority
AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
AISA	Afghan Investment Support Agency
AMDGs	Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals
AMICS	Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ANP	Afghan National Police
APA	Afghan Pride Association
APTTA	Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement
ARD	Association for Rural Development
AREDP	Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
ASM	Artisans and Small Mining
AWBC	Afghan Women Business Council
AWBF	Afghan Women's Business Federation
AWC	Afghan Women's Council
BPHS	Basic Package of Health Services
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
CDCs	Community Development Councils
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Central Statistics Organisation
DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
EVAW	Elimination of Violence Against Women
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HFL	Hope for Life
HLP	Horticulture and Livestock Project
IALP	Integrated Alternative Livelihood Program

I-ANDS	Interim-Afghanistan National Development Strategy
IGAs	Income Generating Activities
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMCs	Inter-Ministerial Committees
LEVAW	Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women
LOTFA	Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MCIT	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEDA	Mennonite Economic Development Associates
MoEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
MFIs	Microfinance Institutions
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MISFA	Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industries
MoEc	Ministry of Economy
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHRA	Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs
MoIC	Ministry of Information and Culture
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoTCA	Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NABDP	National Area Based Development Program
NADF	National Agricultural Development Framework
NAPWA	National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NECDO	Noor Educational and Capacity Development Organisation
NOREF	NorskRessurssenter for Fredsbygging/Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre
NPPs	National Priority Programs
NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
OHCHR	Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights
PC	Provincial Council
RAMP	Rebuilding Agricultural Markets in Afghanistan Program

RECCA V	Fifth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan
RMLSP	Rural Microfinance and Livestock Support Program
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TAFA	Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan
TALP	Targeted Alternative Livelihood Program
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence Against Women
WTO	World Trade Organisation



Photo taken by Roya Mahtabi, Ball Making, Guzargah, Kabul

Executive Summary

The unequal position of women in Afghanistan has been particularly noted in recent decades as well as researched in many contexts. While attention has been paid to women's human, social and political rights, women's economic rights, a key human right, has received much less attention. Yet there have been efforts, both scattered and concerted, in many development strategies in the past decade to address this deficit. Women's economic participation is, in many aligned narratives, increasingly seen as an integral part of both women's rights and as a key factor contributing to inclusive growth and development. Funded by UN Women as part of its broader strategy focused on Women, Economic Security and Rights, this research aims to map efforts that have been undertaken in Afghanistan for improving women's economic status and rights since 2002 in order to inform policy for further development.

While the broader research is divided into two linked reports, this first report, "Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan: Information Mapping, 2002-2012," chiefly presents information on developments and interventions around women's economic status in Afghanistan post-2001, including on international resolutions and governmental strategies, legal amendments, procedures and mechanisms. Reviewing gendered developmental and economic indicators, it maps the information of various resources within the government and in multilateral and institutional agencies working in Afghanistan around issues of women's economic empowerment. It offers an assessment of the ways in which women's empowerment and economic engagement have been addressed, or not, in this past decade. This report concludes by offering recommendations in the arena of policy review which the state, as a key formulator of policies and strategies for effective implementation, can consider.

The second report, "Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan, 2002-2012: Situational Analysis," contextualises the earlier report by focusing on the views of women beneficiaries, and their communities, of the selected projects. An overview, "Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan, 2002-2012: Information Mapping and Situational Analysis," consolidates the two reports and offers a summary of their findings and recommendations. While each report can be read individually, a sequential reading offers a clearer, contextualised understanding of women's practical and strategic needs.

Three methods were used in obtaining information for the research presented in this report: (i) a review of national and international perspectives and strategies since 2001, (ii) analyses of existing programme and project analyses and evaluations and other documents from governmental, programming/donor agencies and implementing organisations working directly on projects designed to enhance women's participation in economic activities, and (iii) semi-structured in-depth interviews with 25 representatives of 12 ministries and government programmes, nine representatives of seven donor agencies and embassies, and 25 representatives of 23 agencies and networks that implement projects for women's economic participation. Although there is a paucity of gender disaggregated data in many sectors—especially on labour, employment sectors, time-use, and similar—this research synthesises available information relevant to women's income-generating activities and identifies those aspects that need to be considered for strengthening this much neglected but crucial area.

In addition to mapping women's economic opportunities, the report offers information on the ways in which gender and human rights have been addressed in the past decade. This is primarily because of the tremendous gender-based violations and restrictions that

have been visited upon the general polity of Afghanistan in the extended period of conflict. The contractions of space for Afghan women, especially in the field of education, health and political participation, have had a direct result on the capacities of women to be economically active. In providing information on gendered human rights, the report assesses the improvements in women's access to rights, which, within the context of the social and cultural structures of Afghanistan, can direct their access to economic opportunities.

The analysis and recommendations are based upon the above in conjunction with relevant data on strategy, policy programming and implementation. These measures are short-term interventions and longer-term investments that require:

- Specific strategies and action plans that have context-based gendered programming with concrete output, outcome and impact indicators, gender-responsive budgeting, and gender-sensitive and robust monitoring to bring them to fruition; and
- Coordination between, especially, the sectors of education, health, justice, religious affairs, labour and, of course, economy, agriculture, trade, industry and finance.

Research findings indicate that, although the achievements of the past decade are many, they are relative to the cumulative deprivations faced during the preceding three decades and are heavily constrained by extant severe poverty. Gender gaps are wide across sectors and strategies in Afghanistan. At the governmental level, they are most keenly seen in legal instruments and in the implementation and lack of extensive outreach depth of ministerial policies and national strategies for gendered development. At the level of policy, though, while many are well-positioned and cover much ground, some lack context and gender sensitivity or focus on broad-based vision statements that offer little material direction. On the ground, the effects of the gender gaps are sharpest in: access to basic health services, particularly in reproductive health, mental health, and in addressing gender-based violence; female absolute enrolment at primary school levels and in retention at secondary and tertiary levels; women's economic participation in the public and private sectors and in the urban and non-urban economy; and women's political participation, especially at district and provincial levels and their absence in most decision-making bodies. All of these have a cascading effect on women's economic well-being, particularly within the contexts of high levels of gender-based violence and increasing insecurity.

Economically, the picture that emerges is that much of women's work is being unaccounted for, as women are mostly engaged in unpaid or low-paying labour in insecure and vulnerable jobs in an informal, unregulated economy. Currently the micro-finance investment sector is a significant, but quite restricted, channel of opportunity. However, there is immense potential for new opportunities for women in the small and medium enterprise industry, particularly in horticulture, aviculture and in agri-business. In all these sectors, protection measures are required to nurture and sustain these sectors' initial gestation and growth vis-à-vis their potential in engaging the maximum number of women.

The Government of Afghanistan is bound by economic imperatives, its legal instruments and agreements made with the international community to a) progressively realise its citizens' right to access to work, and b) create an enabling environment such that each citizen—without discrimination by age, sex, disability, class, ethnicity, religion—has equal opportunity to this human right. It has made it obligatory upon itself to remove all impediments to women's equal access to this right and to therefore not only provide, monitor and direct laws and strategies that specifically address women's socio-culturally derived

unequal access to developmental priorities, but to review the implementation of extant laws and strategies that provide for women's economic participation and empowerment.

Key challenges faced in implementing the economic rights of women provided in resolutions, agreements, strategies and policies are inadequacies in: understanding the rights of women, both Islamic and secular, and the concept of gender in policy-making and implementation; technical expertise in programming, implementation, and monitoring; and knowledge and/or understanding of national level policies among policy implementers.

Bringing changes in women's access to economic opportunities will require strengthening existing actions in many different activities in the coming decades. Under the prevailing socio-cultural, legal and economic conditions in Afghanistan, but also keeping in mind the planned and potential changes around 2014 as well as Afghanistan's commitment to its Millennium Development Goals, the research results show four chief areas of action and intervention that could address women's ongoing unequal access to economic opportunities. These are, especially, in education, health, economic empowerment and religious affairs. All four converge in the field of what could be termed "creating spaces for women" by:

1. **Strengthening the policy environment:** At the central level of the government, and for the Central Statistics Organisation (CSO), there has to be a revised understanding of women's contribution to the economy and the economic development of Afghanistan. The specific implementation of the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (NAPWA) and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) alone, in collaboration with line ministries, would address many of the gaps that the country is facing today in human development, poverty reduction and the greater involvement of women in economic activities.
2. **Addressing human development gaps:** It is crucial to address the gaps that girls and women face in education and educational facilities, health care and provision, and in access to safety, physical mobility and political participation. One route to take is to provide facilities that are women oriented and gender segregated, particularly since there is a significant gap in the retention of girls in secondary level education. In the meantime, there is already enough encouragement for women's access to education—the quest for knowledge being a central pillar of Islam—and to health services. The bottlenecks here are access to separate but equal resources for women, particularly for girls and young women.
3. **Focusing on deliverables:** It is necessary to create a strong and active network of and for women, across sectors, that operates at a pan-Afghanistan level in cities and provincial headquarters to build a women-to-women service delivery model (from producer to wholesalers, processors, exporters) and entrepreneurship among women with a focus on the domestic market and export potential.
4. **Engendering financial services:** Access to credit and capital is essential to widen and enhance women's economic engagement, but women have extremely limited access to substantial credit or capital; access to collateral remains a bottleneck. They lack insurance and risk guarantee. In the current microfinance climate, they also face high interest rates and small credits coupled with tight repayment schedules. Simultaneously, the reach of the microfinance sector is limited when compared to demand and is of a fairly standard nature which does not always cater to the needs of women in the rural informal sector and in small-scale trade.

Given the socio-cultural background of the region, as well as the gender dynamics prevalent prior to 1973 and between 1973 and 2001, the situation at present has relatively improved. However, there has to be both a better perception of how various dimensions of exclusion interact with gender as well as the ability to address existing socio-religious power structures that limit women's participation in economic activities. Equally, in order to create free, fair and favourable opportunities for women's equitable access to the monetised market, a "level playing field" in the world economy is necessary. Much depends upon the nature of the transition and the terms of agreement negotiated as well as the turn the economy may take. Equally, the continued inflow of aid in the current quantum from the international community is crucial in the coming years if women are to have any leverage in building upon the initiatives of this past decade. Embedded socio-cultural traditions cannot be countered in a decade and the economic empowerment of women in terms of policy in Afghanistan is greatly complicated by the interlinked absence or limited presence of human rights. While short-term initiatives and medium-term investments by politicians, academics, civil society activists, political parties, religious scholars, tribal elders, provincial councils, members of commerce and trade, and other groups are critical to keep the momentum going, longer term human and resource investment is vital for the rejuvenation of society in a comprehensive manner.

1. Introduction

A key development in Afghanistan's recent history has been its legal, political and humanitarian engagement with the international community in the wake of the events since 2001. In much of these publicised interactions on this topic, human rights compliance and gender equality have played important roles both in national and international fora and have been subjected to intense scrutiny. In most of these discourses in Afghanistan, the language of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), among others, has shaped the ways in which socio-political change has been directed. Gendered economic engagement and empowerment, though, interfaced as it is with poor infrastructural and developmental indices and predicated on the pre-condition of security in Afghanistan, has perhaps received less attention.

While the value and nature of women's work has changed in recent centuries, the work itself has remained substantial. However, the advent of industrialisation and the monetisation of work generally translated to a division between productive and reproductive labour, in which the invisibility of women's work has progressively meant a great feminisation of poverty.¹ In countries and regions subscribing to particularly strong patriarchal structures, women's labour remains unrecognised, unpaid and undervalued; the ideal division of labour is still very much the man as breadwinner and the woman as homemaker. The increasing interweaving and dependence of these societies' economies with the globalised economy has further meant that women's entry into the labour market ensures they do a triple shift.² The division is particularly sharp in Afghanistan, despite or due to the centrality of Islam, and has severe implications for women's ability to access a monetised labour market positioned in the public sphere.

Afghanistan, since 2004, formally subscribes to the free-market economy.³ Markets are, however, dominated by those higher up in the national and global value chains with access to capital and credit and who are able to effectively harness technology. Afghanistan, with its largely informal and importing economy, liberal trade regime and low tariffs, is not a key player and cannot compete in many sectors with neighbouring countries whose raw materials and finished goods both dominate Afghan markets. Meanwhile, the country's many smaller players, chiefly in agriculture and handicrafts, remain trapped in the subsistence-level informal economy. Women, typically, remain in labour-intensive micro-level activities, at best supported by micro-level credit and

1 Poverty in Afghanistan is defined as the ability to access 2,100 calories and some basic non-food needs, the monetary equivalent of which works out to about 47 Afghanis per person per day or 708 Afs/US\$14 per person per month, which 36 percent of the population is unable to access, while 53 percent can just about access. "[O]ne small, negative shock has the potential to move many individuals into poverty." Central Statistics Organisation and World Bank, "Setting the Official Poverty Line for Afghanistan," 24, undated, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/AFGHANISTANEXTN/Resources/305984-1326909014678/8376871-1334700522455/PovertyStatusMethodologyReport.pdf> (accessed 5 June 2013). See also Amelie Banzet, Marjan Kamal, Peggy Pascal, Johan Pasquet and François Grunewald, "Research on Chronically Poor Women in Afghanistan: Final Report," 18 (Japan International Cooperation Agency and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, March 2008), http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/CPW_report_hand-ove-_march2008.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013). A more recent multi dimensional analysis of poverty in Afghanistan indicates a Multi dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of 0.51 by which estimate almost 84% of Afghan household are multi-dimensionally poor, Centre for Policy and Human Development, "Afghanistan Human Development Report 2011 The Forgotten Front: Water Security and the Crisis in Sanitation", (Kabul: Kabul University, Centre for Policy and Human Development, 2011):36-38

2 Caring labour for the family, household work and income-generating work. See, for example, S. Himmelweit, "Making Visible the Hidden Economy: The Case for Gender-Impact Analysis of Economic Policy," in *Feminist Economists* 8, no. 1 (2002): 49-70.

3 Article 10, Constitution of Afghanistan, 2004.

other forms of restricted access to productive resources, without access to savings and remaining highly susceptible to risk. Further, the economic policies of the government have not emphasised the sectors which are currently catered to by the majority of the population⁴ and in which women play significant, albeit “invisible” roles.

Sources of economic growth in Afghanistan in the past decade have been services (communication, transport, government services) and industry (dominated by construction). From 2006 to 2011, revenue grew by 20 percent a year; in 2011 revenue was 11 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), from 3 percent in 2002-03.⁵ The per capita GDP has grown from US\$426 in 2009 to \$505 in 2010 to \$629 in 2011;⁶ in 2012 the per capita GDP was \$725.⁷ Afghanistan’s growth is, in a best-case scenario, predicted at 7 percent for 2011-18; agriculture and resources are seen as the key drivers of growth, with mining showing potential. Its governance and institutional structures are weak and health, education and gender indicators are alarming. Security, in particular, is of significant concern. Aid inflows in 2010-11 have equalled Afghanistan’s national GDP but, with the bulk (88 percent) of this external aid having a local impact worth only around 10-25 percent, its effect on the local economy is highly limited; the impact of the foreseen decline in aid is expected to affect the development sector.⁸

Afghanistan’s population for 2012-13 has been estimated at 25.5 million, with nearly 12.5 million females and 13 million males.⁹ Within this, its non-working age population was nearly 50 percent, with 11.5 million under the age of 15—the highest in the world—and 0.75 million over 65 years;¹⁰ and making for an estimated dependency ratio of 96.

4 59.1 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture, 24.6 percent in services and 12.5 percent in industry services. Ministry of Economy, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, “Afghanistan Provincial Briefs 2011” (Kabul: 2011), <http://moec.gov.af/Content/files/Last20updated%20english.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013). However, agriculture contributed to 26.74 percent of the GDP in 2012 while services and industry contributed 48.27 percent and 21.39 percent respectively, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Central Statistics Organisation (CSO), “Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12” (Kabul: 2012).

5 The World Bank, “Afghanistan in Transition: Looking Beyond 2014, Vol. 1: Overview” (Washington, DC: The World Bank, May 2012).

6 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Central Statistics Organisation, “Statistical Indicators in the Country,” <http://cso.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/StatisticalIndicatorsinthecountry3920128598270553325325.pdf> (accessed 5 June 2013).

7 CSO, “Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12.”

8 A mainstay of women’s rights, international aid programming in Afghanistan has supported the development of policy instruments, pilot projects and programmes, technical assistance, and the generation of greater awareness of the issue of women’s rights and gender. However, it has been bogged down in many ways: lack of knowledge about, and resistance to, Afghan socio-cultural gender norms; coordination with donor country objectives rather than with Afghan national priorities; value alignment with women’s rights as seen in the Global North; ad hoc and short-term programming; lack of gender analysis in programming and implementation; inadequate monitoring and evaluation; inability to reach the non-urban areas and the consequent general restriction to urban elite women; limited overall outreach; focus on disbursements and numbers rather than on impact and capacity. For example, of the US\$10.4 billion pledged at the 2006 London Conference for Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) implementation, US\$4.8 billion has been spent directly by donors and not aligned with ANDS sector priorities; Human Dimensions of Poverty in Afghanistan (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010), 12, citing *Donors Financial Review* (Ministry of Finance of Afghanistan, January 2009), 9. See also Matt Waldman, “Falling Short: Aid effectiveness in Afghanistan” (Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief, March 2008), 7; Naila Kabeer, Ayesha Khan and Naysan Adlparvar, “Afghan Values or Women’s Rights? Gendered Narratives about Continuity and Change in Urban Afghanistan” (Institute of Development Studies working paper 387, December 2011), 23.

9 Not including the 1.5 million nomad population, CSO, “Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12,” Settled Population by Civil Division, <http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/Settled%20Population%20by%20Civil%20Division.pdf> (accessed 7 June 2013).

10 The World Bank, “Labor participation rate, female (percent of female population ages, 15+),” <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS> (accessed 5 June 2013).

2007/2008 figures show women's labour participation at 47 percent, with nearly 95 percent of women in vulnerable employment and 78 percent in unpaid family work¹¹. With a 2.8 percent annual population growth, poverty levels are also expected to rise and inclusive economic growth would accommodate all women into the active employment category.

As seen in this research, women are consistently contributing to Afghanistan's productive economy in what can be euphemistically called "back-end" labour but without which labour the sectors would cease to function. The socio-cultural codes in Afghanistan around honour and gender roles ensure that the end product of the joint labour of women and men is converted by men in the monetised market in the public sphere in which women have no direct access. Simultaneously, traditional codes often prevent the social acknowledgement of women's equal ability to earn an income, reiterate the concept of man as breadwinner and woman as homemaker, and prevent the access of women to both economic acknowledgement of their labour and to greater, formal participation in economic activities. Some of the major constraints that women face are lack of job opportunities and experience, lack of technical knowledge, low pay, low educational attainment, and an unsupportive family environment.¹²

Even as women's economic empowerment can be defined as "the ability of women to bring about positive changes in their lives and societies as a result of their participation in economic activities"¹³, in the Afghan context, women's economic empowerment can best be additionally contextualised as i) the availability of economic opportunity that monetises and/or makes visible their labour and ii) the allowance given by socio-cultural norms and economic contexts to access the opportunities. Ideally, proposed introductions in the former should address the latter as a result of more embedded norms and values influencing the latter.

As examples from similarly placed countries like Indonesia show, even if formal legal rights have little effect *de facto*—as in access to inheritance and land—female empowerment can be enhanced disproportionately in households and communities where women are seen to contribute economically. Globally, the high correlation between practiced women's rights and development points to a movement toward increased formal property rights, decrease in fertility, increased focus on developmental agendas, enhanced capacities of women within and over themselves, their families and their communities and a reduction in the political gender gap.¹⁴ However, as seen from

11 Ministry of Economy and the World Bank "Poverty Status in Afghanistan: A Profile Based on the National Risk Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 2007/8" (Ministry of Economy, 2010). However, as Gaye et al. (2010) note: "Labor force participation, as traditionally measured, ignores the important contributions of women in unpaid work and may perpetuate the undervaluing of these critical activities." Amie Gaye, Jeni Klugman, Milorad Kovacevic, Sarah Twigg and Eduardo Zambrano, "Measuring key disparities in human development: the Gender Inequality Index" (Human Development Research Paper, UNDP 2010/46): 14, <http://paa2013.princeton.edu/papers/130872> (accessed 5 June 2013). Further, the numbers of underemployed women are not clear. However, an overall underemployment of 48.2 percent is indicated by NRVA 2007/8. Female employment-to-population ratio in South Asia is highest in Afghanistan (NRVA 2007/8), pointing to the exacerbated effects of extended conflict and its consequential destitution that act as a push factor in women's income generation.

12 Samuel Hall, "Economic Assessment and Labour Market Survey of Mazar-i Sharif, Pul-i Khumri, Kandahar City and Kunduz City" (Kabul: Mercy Corps, 2011). These constraints are further examined in the forthcoming "Economic Empowerment of Women in Afghanistan, 2002-2012: Situational Analysis," as part of the wider research for this project, accessible through the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit website.

13 UN Women, "Guidance Note Women's Economic Empowerment", (New York, 2012), 1.

14 For example, Nistha Sinha, Dhushyanth Raju, and Andrew Robert Morrison, "Gender Equality, Poverty

the sections below, women's economic empowerment has received varied attention in the policy environment in Afghanistan and scattered emphasis in their translation into practical measures.

Before looking at, and mapping, the access opportunities provided for women's economic participation in Afghanistan, it will be useful to look at the entry point of concerted interventions which have set the tone and tenor of many of the developments that address gender concerns in the country today.

The following sub-sections look at i) the objective of this study, ii) the methodology used to chart the information-gathering process, iii) international conventions, treaties and resolutions relevant to women's economic participation, iv) national development strategies that have been influential for women's participation in the economy, and v) the socio-economic and developmental status of women today. Section 2 is an assessment and analysis of the steps taken in this past decade toward enhancing women's human rights and economic empowerment. Section 3, while looking at key components of the country's extant economic environment and the newer ways that women can be positioned within this, concludes by offering policy and strategic approaches to address the challenges that women face in accessing economic opportunities.

1.1 Objective

The primary objective of this research report is to identify, collate and assess information on women's economic empowerment in Afghanistan in the decade spanning 2002-2012. As such it identifies the following and marks the provisions for women's economic empowerment:

- Agreements and resolutions that were jointly drafted between the Afghanistan authorities and representatives of the international community who were engaged in the process of rehabilitation and rebuilding in Afghanistan;
- International conventions to which Afghanistan is a state party;
- Chief strategies and laws conceptualised by the Government of Afghanistan for the socio-economic development of Afghanistan;
- Key ministries and their strategies, programming policies and action plans; and
- International and national agencies and institutions that work within the field of women's empowerment and women's economic participation through project planning, sponsorship or implementation.

and Economic Growth" (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 4349, 1 September 2007), in analysing the relationship between gender inequality and development. See also "World Development Report 2012 Gender Equality and Development" (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2011); Keera Allendorf, "Do Women's Land Rights Promote Empowerment and Child Health in Nepal?" *World Development*, 35, no.11 (November 2007) 1975-1988, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X07001416> (accessed 7 June 2013); Rose Kalima, "Where Women are Leaders" (London: Zed, 1992); Mukesh Eswaran, "The Empowerment of Women, Fertility, and Child Mortality: Towards a Theoretical Analysis," *Journal of Population Economics*, 15, no. 3 (2002): 433-454; Ester Boserup, *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (London: Earthscan, 1970, Reprinted 1997); Eastern Africa Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women, "Women's Political Participation and Economic Empowerment in Post-Conflict Countries: Lessons from the Great Lakes Region in Africa" (International Alert 2012), http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/publications/201209WomenEmpowermentEN_0.pdf (accessed 7 June 2013).

It then assesses:

- Human rights for women and the status and improvements in education, health, political participation, and safety;
- Economic rights for women, women's labour participation and the key routes taken in this past decade; and
- The impact that improvements in women's human rights have had on women's economic rights and vice-versa.

The recommendations for improving women's access to human rights and economic opportunities are based upon a consolidated analysis of all the above.

This document is not an in-depth or critical review of policy, policy-making and the result of the distance between policy and practice on women's economic empowerment in Afghanistan. It offers a broad sweep of the status of women's human rights and economic engagement and summarises recommendations based upon literature review and primary research. It can function as a resource for extensive and in-depth research on the involvement of women in the unfolding economy of Afghanistan.

1.2 Methodology

Three methods were used in obtaining information for the research presented in this report: i) reviews of existing programme and projects, including those of the government, donor agencies and implementing organisations working directly on projects designed to enhance women's participation in economic activities, ii) primary research from semi-structured in-depth interviews with 59 respondents (25 representatives of key ministries and institutions, nine representatives of seven donor agencies and embassies, and 25 representatives of 23 agencies and networks that implement projects for women's economic participation), and iii) secondary evidence from documents, material and information obtained from 11 ministries and donor agencies.

On the ground

The project began with a desk-based information mapping process involving the collection, description and cataloguing of all policies, mechanisms, programmes and other frameworks aimed at improving women's economic life since 2002. This involved the creation of an inventory of much qualitative and quantitative data and studies currently available on: international treaties and agreements ratified by the Government of Afghanistan that are pertinent to the status of women, laws, policies and strategies (Government of Afghanistan, para-government and the private sector), surveys and reports (Government of Afghanistan, ministries, departments, international agencies, international non-governmental organisations, Afghanistan-based non-governmental organisations). In parallel, extensive reading of the gendered context of Afghanistan as well as of the socio-political unravelling that took place in the last 30 years helped to better understand the situation of women as it unfolded in the last decade.

The team was introduced to feminist qualitative research approaches and methodologies and some capacity building—including on sensitive interviewing, informed consent and social-sensitive indicators—to identify the challenges, opportunities and best practices. Research respondents came from three categories: representatives of key ministries and government programmes, representatives of donor agencies, and representatives of agencies and networks that implement projects for women's economic participation.

Appendix 1 provides the tabular information on the interviews conducted; topic guides for semi-structured interviews were made specific to the three categories. The main themes addressed across the topic guides were: i) approaches used by donors, government programmers and implementing organisations to improve women's economic situation during the last decade, and ii) women's ability to access the economic empowerment initiatives and the sustainability of the initiatives. The variations in the topic guides addressed: government policy planning, outreach and implementation; and the perceived results of a woman's access to economic power. A pilot was conducted in October 2012 and main fieldwork took place between November 2012 and March 2013.

The fieldwork was conducted by two Afghans, one female and one male. All interviews except two were in Dari; one with a Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) representative was conducted in English by the non-Afghan member of the team. All interviews were held in person except for two Skype interviews and two telephonic interviews. Most interviews were conducted according to the gender of the respondent/s and the interviewer. Most interviews were recorded (if the respondent permitted) and translated by bilingual, non-professional Afghans. Team members reviewed and revised the transcripts to ensure construct validity and better data capture. Security considerations often overtook appointments and other forms of data-gathering, requiring re-investments of time. Data analysis was done manually though extensive coding and analysis.

The limitations of the report include:

- the exclusion of development debates that could contribute to a better understanding of women's equitable access to and benefit from economic activities. This is particularly important in view of the emphasis placed on private sector development and the free-market economy in many governmental policies as well as in donor-aid programming.
- a focus on women's human rights is necessary given that they are inextricably intertwined with women's access to economic opportunities. However, this limits the space in this report for discussing more than a few key areas such as agriculture, horticulture, livestock and small-scale trade. Women's involvement in important areas like opium-growing and rural handicraft and enterprise, or as informal vendors or domestic workers, will need to be looked into in another, future study.
- a lack of availability and poor quality of available data, particularly detailed micro-level studies. Policy documents and programme reports are unclear on the causality between inputs, outputs and outcomes.
- some key ministry personnel were unavailable or busy. There has been confusion about project monitoring and lack of knowledge of policy or strategy among certain personnel within ministries. Information on the structure and functioning of government ministries and departments are generally not available in the public domain; official requests have not been met.
- lack of focus on class and regional variations.

The following two sub-sections offer a look at international agreements and resolutions that Afghanistan has entered into and the national policy environment of strategies and laws.

1.3 International agreements and resolutions

With the UN-convened Bonn Agreement of 2001¹⁵ signalling a different phase in Afghan history, Afghanistan has seen significant achievements for women's rights in this past decade. Nationally, the processes for these include:

- The 2001 Brussels Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy;
- The 2001 creation of the first Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA);
- The 2002 Declaration of the Essential Rights of Afghan Women;
- The 2002 National Area Based Development Program (NABDP);
- Establishment of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) in 2002;
- The 2003 National Solidarity Programme (NSP);
- Twenty percent female representation in the Constitutional Loya Jirga;
- Establishment of the 27 percent baseline quota for women's political representation in the Wolesi Jirga (House of People);
- A baseline 17 percent quota in the Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders);
- A statutory requirement of female representation in 25 percent of Provincial Council seats;
- Successful passage of the 2004 Afghan Constitution;
- The 2005 Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS);
- The 2005 Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- The 2006 Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation, and Justice in Afghanistan;
- The 2007 National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA, 2007-17);¹⁶
- The 2008 Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS, 2008-13);
- The 2008 Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals (AMDGs, 2008-13);
- The 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (LEVAW);¹⁷ and
- The 2010 National Priority Programs (NPPs).

Each of these has significant bearing on the different sectors and their mandates, and activities have had varying levels of impact.¹⁸

15 Through which Afghanistan and the international community agreed to establish the Afghanistan Interim Authority (AIA). Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions ("Bonn Agreement") (Afghanistan), S/2001/1154, 5 December 2001, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3f48f4754.html> (accessed 7 June 2013).

16 Which took effect in 2008.

17 Yet to be passed by Parliament, but enacted in August 2009 by a Presidential Decree. Under Article 79 of the Constitution (2004), a Presidential Decree is legal unless rejected by the Parliament.

18 With the exception of the first three, women have generally not had equal representation in these processes.

Afghanistan has signed, ratified, endorsed or acceded to many international resolutions and treaties in many sectors, whose principles and guidelines serve as a framework for some of the current laws and strategies that empower women. The international conferences, which brought some members of the international community together since 2001 in support of Afghanistan, helped set the direction for constitutional and policy reforms toward gender-just practices; these conferences (see List A in Appendix 2) have charted legal, social, economic, ideological and other efforts toward a more gender-just society in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is also State Party to many international human rights treaties, enumerated in List B in Appendix 2. In treaties on fairness, protection and non-exploitation of employees in the labour market, Afghanistan has ratified 19 International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions,¹⁹ including on equal remuneration for work of equal value and non-discrimination in employment and occupation. Afghanistan's ratification of these treaties serves as additional protection for women's rights; Afghanistan is legally bound to these resolutions and treaties through its Constitution and through the Bonn Agreement.²⁰ Further, Afghanistan is a signatory to the 1981 Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, the 1990 Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam and the 1994 Arab Charter on Human Rights.

Afghanistan is also Party by consensus to certain other women-relevant General Assembly Resolutions like the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme for Action²¹ and the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration and Programme for Action.²² A member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), it has still not signed its 1997 Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution nor has it ratified the United Nations 1964 Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages. It has also not ratified 63 ILO Conventions, including on forced labour, the right to unionise, social security, medical care, old age, home-work, part-time work, domestic work and maternity protection.²³

However, in most of the international conferences and their resolutions and declarations mentioned above, the "woman question," when included in discussion and agreement, has remained focused on legal, social and political rights.²⁴ Women's economic right, a key human right, has generally remained in the margins rather than as a fulcrum that could support other rights in the power dynamics of gender, both local and global. In poverty reduction strategies it is universally accepted that gender inequality translates to a higher representation of women among the poorest of the poor and that achieving the MDGs would need a strong focus, and an affirmative emphasis, on women's equal economic engagement to address the growing feminisation of poverty. Equality of opportunity is therefore a crucial part of any commitment to women's human rights and to gender justice.

19 International Labour Organisation, Normlex, Information Systems in International Labour Standards, "Ratifications for Afghanistan," ILO, http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:0::NO::P11200_COUNTRY_ID:102945 (accessed 9 June 2013).

20 Under the Bonn Agreement, in particular, Afghanistan's treaty obligations are crucial. In line with this, only those pre-existing laws that do not conflict with its ratified international treaties can be retained.

21 Also known as the World Conference on Human Rights.

22 Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.

23 Normlex, Information Systems in International Labour Standards, "Up-to-date Conventions Not Ratified by Afghanistan," ILO, http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11210:0::NO:11210:P11210_COUNTRY_ID:102945 (accessed 9 June 2013).

24 The prominence given to civil and political rights over economic, social, and cultural rights has been questioned, for example, in the 1993 "Bangkok Declaration."

The three World Conferences on Women (Mexico City, 1975; Copenhagen, 1980; Nairobi, 1985) leading up to the 1995 Beijing Conference and followed by the three Beijing Review Conferences (+5, +10, +15) have been increasingly concerned with economic progress.²⁵ In fact, they make for an interesting insight into the movement from integrating women into development and peace to seeing women as independent citizens with full rights. Among the international treaties and agreements which incorporate an economic focus are the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,²⁶ the 1964 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,²⁷ the 1980 Copenhagen World Women's Conference, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration and Programme for Action, the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the 2009 Hague Conference Declaration; the 2010 Kabul Communiqué and the 2011 Bonn Communiqué. Those at Copenhagen and Beijing and The Hague, moreover, specifically recognise the necessity of integrating women into the global focus on sustainable, equitable economic growth.

Afghanistan has entered into many bilateral and multilateral trade agreements in the past decade, including the recent Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA, 2010) and the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA, 2011). Other recent conferences with declarations on trade and export oriented issues include: the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA), Islamabad; the Istanbul Statement on Friendship and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia, Istanbul; the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Istanbul; the 5th RECCA Conference Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 2012; and the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan: Security and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia, Kabul. These and others have propelled improvements and reform in customs facilities and systems, transportation infrastructure, property records, procedural streamlining and reforms company law, collateral law and taxation, and similar.²⁸

Trade bodies that Afghanistan is a part of include SAARC, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), UN Economic and Social Commission Asia Pacific (UNESCAP), and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

25 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China), September 1995. Its "International Bill of Women's Rights" concerning their health, education, role in security and economy has the following points: Item 16: Women's involvement required for eradication of poverty based on sustained economic growth, social development, environmental protection and social justice; Item 26: Promote women's economic independence, including employment, and eradicate the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women by addressing the structural causes of poverty through changes in economic structures, ensuring equal access for all women; Item 35: Ensure women's equal access to economic resources, including land, credit, science and technology, vocational training, information, communication and markets, as a means to further the advancement and empowerment of women and girls.

26 Afghanistan is not party to its 2008 Optional Protocol, which would allow monitoring of the rights granted by the treaty.

27 Afghanistan is a member state and also a member of the Trade and Development Board.

28 The Law on Central Bank and the Law on Banking (2003), Income Tax Law (2005), Company Law (2007) and the Mortgage Law and Movable Property Law (2009) have been legislated. A credit information bureau, a collateral registry, Shari'ah-compliant finance and leasing legislation are being developed by Da Afghanistan Bank.

Table 1: Afghanistan's participation in multilateral trade and trade-related organisations²⁹

Organisation	Region	Number of member countries	Participating countries
SAARC	South Asia	8	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
ECO	Central Asia	10	Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
UNESCAP	Asia and Pacific	52	Among commission members, Afghanistan's key export partners are Iran, India, Pakistan, Russia and Uzbekistan
World Customs Organization	Worldwide	174	Among organisation members, Afghanistan's key export partners are Belgium, Finland, Germany, Iran, India, Pakistan, Russia, UAE, UK, USA, Uzbekistan
World Trade Organization (WTO)	Worldwide	153	Afghanistan is an observer, as are Iran, Russia and Uzbekistan. The following key export partners are WTO members: Belgium, Finland, Germany, India, Pakistan, UAE, UK, USA

Appendix 2 provides a full list of key conferences on Afghanistan and identifies points that specifically relate to women.

1.4 National policy environment: strategies and laws

Some of the chief concerns identified by the Afghanistan Interim Administration³⁰ in the rehabilitation and restructuring of the country's human resources, institutions and infrastructure were:

- Enhancement of administrative capacity, with emphasis on the payment of salaries and the establishment of the government administration;
- Education, especially for girls;
- Health and sanitation;
- Infrastructure, in particular, roads, electricity and telecommunications;
- Reconstruction of the economic system, in particular, the currency system; and
- Agriculture and rural development, including food security, water management and revitalising the irrigation system.

The inter-weaving of consequent Afghan national strategies reflect these concerns as well as Afghanistan's obligations to the United Nations MDGs (2000), CEDAW (1979) and other treaties.

Appendix 3 offers a chronological gendered summary of some key national developmental and politico-legal initiatives taken from 2002 to 2012 in Afghanistan, including on Afghanistan's compliance with CEDAW and the MDGs.

29 The World Bank, "Understanding gender in agricultural value chains: the cases of grapes/raisins, almonds and saffron in Afghanistan" (Agriculture and Rural Development Unit, Sustainable Development Department, South Asia Region: The World Bank, May 2011), 11.

30 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, 21-22 January 2002: Co-Chairs' Summary of Conclusions," http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/afghanistan/min0201/summary.html (accessed 7 June 2013).

1.5 Socio-economic development indicators, 2012

Unless otherwise indicated the following socio-economic development indicators are from the Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12:

- Population (2012): 26.5 million
 - Female: 49 percent
 - Population under 15: 46.1 percent
 - Population over 65: 3.7 percent
- Poverty level: 36 percent
- Number of schools: 14,394
 - Female students in schools: 3,013,009 of a total of 7,861,988
 - Female teachers in schools: 54,069 of a total of 180,489
 - Number of universities: 60
 - Female students in universities: 19,934 of a total of 112,367
- Women teachers in universities: 603 of a total of 4,873
- Infant mortality rate³¹: 74/1000
- Under-5 mortality rate³²: 102/1000
- Mortality and morbidity rate³³: 327/100,000
- Number of hospitals (government and private): 422
- Number of doctors: 15,168
- Doctors per 10,000 population: Two
- Health associate professionals: 24,464
- Comprehensive health centres: 766
- Basic health centres: 1,860
- Sub-health centres: 1,358
- Number of beds: 22,923
- Number of midwives: 2,863
- GDP: 903,990 million Afs
- Expenditure: 958,865 million Afs
- Per capita GDP: US\$715
- Agriculture's contribution to GDP: 26.74 percent
- Industry's contribution to GDP: 21.39 percent
- Services' contribution to GDP: 48.27 percent

31 Central Statistics Organisation, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2010-11," <http://cso.gov.af/en/page/6807> (accessed 9 June 2013).

32 CSO, "Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2010-11."

33 CSO, "Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2010-11."

2. Assessment and Analysis

Although the gender-just acts in many of the legal instruments and policies of the Government of Afghanistan were drafted from resolutions of the international agreements listed in Appendix 2, the tone and tenor of many laws listed is of woman as carer of the nation and of the “culture” and “tradition” of “Afghaniyat”³⁴ and of woman as an asset to the nation, community and family.³⁵ They tend to reify the “Women in Development” approach of the 1980s. And their implementation through various ministries continues to, in a sense, reproduce the frictions between traditionally valued and newer approaches to gender roles. Further, in the absence of full *de facto* legitimacy that can ensure security and with a fledgling institutional capacity and high donor dependence, the Government of Afghanistan has been unable to fulfil its obligations to many international agreements.³⁶

34 It is worth reiterating that these terms in a land so diverse cannot have singular meanings. Identities vary with community, individual practices (both inherited and altered), ethnicities, geographical position, access to education, class and a myriad other factors. Centlivres (1976) has made the point that groups commonly called “ethnic” and depicted in “ethnographic maps” are not comparable, since they share no common defining criterion—in one case it may be language, in another religion, or political or historical identity. Maps simplify reality; the use of ethnonyms and ethnic identities is situational and strategic; essentially, ethnicity must be viewed as an idiom, a discourse of “popular anthropology,” whether “theirs” or “ours,” Micheline Centlivres-Demont, “Types D’occupation et Relations Inter-Ethniques Dans le Nord-Est de l’Afghanistan,” *Studia Iranica*, 5, no.2, (1976): 269-277, cited in Richard L. Tapper, “Ethnicity, Order and Meaning in the Anthropology of Iran and Afghanistan,” *Colloques internationaux* (1988): 23. The Taliban’s contention of there being a single vision of “Afghaniyat” is a case in point that still reverberates among Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, Turkmen, Baluchs, Ismailis and Aymaqs today. “Afghanistan has near to fifty-five diverse ethnic groups, all of them practicing family customary legal systems,” Xaviera Medina de Albrand, “Customary and Family Law: A Gender Approach in Afghanistan,” *Effectius Newsletter*, no. 8 (2010), http://effectius.com/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/Customary_and_Family_Law_a_Gender_approach_in_Afghanistan_Xaviera_Newsletter8.27185709.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013). The Initial and Second Periodic Report to CEDAW (2011: 59) notes that textbooks are provided and distributed in, besides Dari and Pashto, Uzbeki, Turkmeni, Nooristani, Pashaye, Baloochi and Sheghnani; Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, “Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Combined Initial and Second Periodic Reports of States Parties, Afghanistan” (New York: Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW/C/AFG/1-2, 21 December 2011), 59, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/CEDAW.C.AFG.1-2.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

35 The Central Statistics Organisation, for example, finds it necessary to use its findings on the educational level of women as “compelling evidence that investments in the status and wellbeing of women are investments in children, and in communities at large.” Central Statistics Organisation, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, “Afghanistan: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010-2011” (United Nations International Children’s Educational Fund, June 2012), xviii, <http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/AMICS-Jun24-2012-FINAL.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

36 The point has been made by many that the ratification of treaties and resolutions do not necessarily translate to compliance or implementation in the framing of national laws and strategies. See Oona Hathaway, “Do Human Rights Treaties Make a Difference?” (Yale Law School, Faculty Scholarship Series, Paper 839, 2002), http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1852&context=fss_papers (accessed 1 April 2013). See also a critique of the refusal of the USA to ratify the CEDAW on the basis of cultural and structural misalignment between the Constitution of the USA and the Convention, Catherine Powell, “Lifting Our Veil of Ignorance: Culture, Constitutionalism, and Women’s Human Rights in Post-September 11 America,” *Hastings Law Journal*, no. 57 (2005): 331-383, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=910250> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.667463> (accessed 1 April 2013). Such arguments have been used by many other states, including Muslim ones. Moreover, treaties like the 1990 Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (authored by the Organization of the Islamic Conference) declare that all human rights are subsumed under the Islamic law of *Shari’ah*. See Organization of the Islamic Conference, “Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam,” 5 August 1990 (United Nations General Assembly Official Records, World Conference on Human Rights, 4th Session, Agenda Item 5, United Nations Document A/ CONF.157/PC/62/Add.18, 1993), <http://www.arabhumanrights.org/publications/regional/islamic/cairo-declaration-islam-93e.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013). It is also questionable whether, despite being Party to Treaties and Resolutions, the principle of progressive realisation has been adequately addressed in Afghanistan.

The information gained from Sections 1 and 2 points us toward two major arenas³⁷ that have effected and affected women's economic engagement in this past decade and which can be taken up for assessment and analysis: the status of women's human rights situation and their economic participation. This section accordingly looks at these two fields and the impact that each has had on the other.

2.1 The status of women's human rights

In 2004, with an estimated Gender Inequality Index³⁸ of 0.3, Afghanistan was among the bottom-tier of countries with the least parity between men and women. If we trace the graph of women's education, health, safety and political participation in this past decade, a certain stacticity of status is revealed, along with some improvements.

2.1.1 Education

The education sector has seen very modest gains in absolute terms. In 2003, the literacy rate for 15- to 24-year-old females was 18 percent.³⁹ For 2003 the net attendance was 54 percent, or 2.3 million students.⁴⁰ The ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary school between 2003 and 2004 was between 0.46 to 0.60, in secondary school between 0.29 and 0.33, and in tertiary education between 0.12 and 0.21.⁴¹ Afghanistan in 2003 had the largest school age population proportion in the world, with the 7- to 12-year-olds making up 19.6 percent of the population.⁴² Only 24 percent of the population 15 years and older could read and write, with an estimated 12.6 percent of women being literate. In rural areas the literacy rate was 20 percent, which dropped to 6 percent among nomadic people. The MICS survey found that Afghan parents' major reasons for not enrolling their children in school included the distance of the school (37.2 percent); inadequate facilities (25.8 percent); lack of gender-segregated schools (22 percent); child-labour in domestic chores (17.2 percent); a belief that schooling is not necessary (15 percent); child-labour in paid work (7.1 percent)⁴³ and the teachers' gender (6.4 percent).⁴⁴

By 2008, even with 42 percent of girls of primary school-going age (6 to 9 years) attending school, the gender gap had widened. Even as school enrolment rates went up, the gap had increased from 21 percent female/28 percent male in 2005 to 29 percent female/41 percent male in 2007-08 in primary schools, and in tertiary education (15 to 25 years) from 19 percent female/40 percent male in 2005 to 22 percent female/51

37 The third factor, perhaps the strongest and which is explored in the second part of the wider research report "Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan, 2002-2012, Situational Analysis," is the location of the female self in the family and the community.

38 An index that captures women's disadvantage in empowerment, economic activity and reproductive health.

39 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Millennium Development Goals Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Country Report 2005: Vision 2020" (Kabul: United Nations Development Programme, 2005), 34, <http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Afghanistan/Afghanistan%20MDG%202005.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

40 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "MDGs Country Report 2005," 33.

41 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "MDGs Country Report 2005," 42.

42 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "MDGs Country Report 2005," 33, citing United Nations Children's Fund, "Best Estimates of Social Indicators for Children in Afghanistan 1990-2005" (New York: United Nations Children's Fund, 2005).

43 It is estimated that up to 30 percent of primary school children are working and are often the sole source of income for their families. Farida Ayari, "Children Carrying the Burden of Work in Afghanistan," http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/afghanistan_50072.html, 23 June 2009 (accessed 1 April 2013).

44 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "MDGs Country Report 2005," 34.

percent male in 2007-08.⁴⁵ While access varied provincially,⁴⁶ 6 percent of women over 25 years had had access to some type of formal education but 88 percent women over 15 years remained illiterate. Primary school enrolment for girls seems to have received more attention, with 39.1 percent of primary schools, 33.2 percent of secondary schools and 28.1 percent of higher secondary schools having been designated female only. Eighty percent of districts lacked girls' high schools.⁴⁷ As of 2008 there were 511 Islamic education institutions throughout the country and the number of Islamic students increased from 58,000 in 1385 (2006) to 106,000 in 1387 (2008). Only 5 percent of Islamic education students were females, but the ministry planned to increase the number of female students to 40 percent of the total by 2014; it was to establish 32 *Dar-ul-Ulums* for girls in the provinces.⁴⁸

Of the total 11,123 schools in 2009, 2,166 or 19 percent were girls-only, 3,434 or 31 percent were mixed and 5,523 or 50 percent were for boys.⁴⁹ There are provinces with a very low percentage of overall enrolment: Uruzgan (2 percent), Helmand (4 percent), Zabol (5.2 percent) and Kandahar (11 percent).

Figure 1: Female literacy rates by province, 2008⁵⁰



45 Ministry of Economy, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and World Bank Economic Policy and Poverty Sector, "Poverty Status in Afghanistan: Based on the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 2007-2008" (presentation, July 2010).

46 For example, Uruzgan has one of the lowest enrolment rates with an estimated 2 percent of its children enrolled in schools. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Economy, "Afghanistan Provincial Briefs 2011."

47 Musa Sultani, Hussain Ali Moin, Muhammad Hussain Nusrat, Abdulqayum Zahidi, Safiyullah Elham and Muhammad Hussain Hasrat, "Report on the Situation of Economic and Social Rights in Afghanistan - IV" (Kabul: Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, December 2009): 27, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4b3b2df72.html> (accessed 1 April 2013).

48 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Education, "Strategic Plan - Program Five: Education Management," <http://moe.gov.af/en/page/2016> (accessed 10 June 2013).

49 Marit Glad, "Knowledge under Fire: Attacks on Education in Afghanistan Risks and Measures for Successful Mitigation," (Kabul: Care International and Ministry of Education, August 2009), <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/EdStats/AFGpub09a.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

50 Peter Pauli, "National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2007/8: A Profile of Afghanistan," (Kabul: Delegation of the European Commission to Afghanistan, 2009), 67, <http://cso.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/NRVA2007-08Report38201112528554553325325.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

The AMICS (2010-11), with 81 percent of its respondent women aged between 18-49 and living in rural Afghanistan, shows 82 percent had no formal education, while 8 percent had primary level education only, and 11 percent had attained secondary level education or higher. Chief constraints to female education remain financial inadequacy,⁵¹ remoteness of schools, lack of separate facilities, and denial of consent by the family. However, insecurity for girls' education has become significant. The years 2007-08 saw 311 attacks on schools with 84 deaths and 115 injuries to children, teachers and employees.⁵² As of June 2009, 695 schools across the country were closed, affecting over 340,000 students.⁵³ An ongoing feature has been warning letters sent to teachers and students to stay away from schools, and improvised explosive devices and physical attacks on students and teachers.

2010 data reveals that women formed 30 percent of the 170,000 teachers, 38 percent of students enrolled in Teacher Training Colleges, and 26 percent of graduates from Grade 12⁵⁴ and 12,421 schools. Only 22.2 percent of women between the ages of 15-24 were literate⁵⁵ and women's literacy rate in rural areas was more than three times lower than urban areas.⁵⁶

As of 2012, the percentage of female students enrolled in formal education—General Education (Grades 1 to 12), Islamic Education (Grades 1 to 14), Teacher Training College (Grades 10 to 14), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (Grades 10 to 14), Community Based Education (CBE) (Grades 1 to 6) and Cross Border Education was 38.04. The percentage of male students is 61.96 and the total number of students was 8,328,350. Zabul had the least number of students enrolled with a total of 21,114. Overall, 38.58 percent of teachers were female and 5 percent were female in Islamic Education.⁵⁷

The total number of schools (primary, middle, professional, night-time schools, teacher training and religious) was 14,394, with a total 7,861,988 students, of which 3,013,009 were female. The total number of teachers was 180,489 of which 54,069 were women. In higher education there were 60 government and private universities with 112,367 students, of which 19,934 were women. In these universities, the total number of

51 "...damaged schools are not rebuilt and are not safe. There are shortages of teachers, books, tables, chairs, papers and pencils, let alone other equipments. The university courses close down because of lack of teachers and equipments." Mansoor, a teacher in Mazhar-e Sharif, said: "Universities do not have the capacity to absorb the number of candidates and there are no teachers. The salaries of the existing teachers are not paid for months." Elaheh Rostami Povey, *Afghan Women: Identity and Invasion* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 307.

52 United Nations International Children's Educational Fund, "Annual Report 2008" (New York: United Nations Children's Fund, June 2009), http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_Annual_Report_2008_EN_072709.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

53 According to the Ministry of Economy security database, cited in Marit Glad, "Knowledge on Fire," 38.

54 Ministry of Education Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Summary Report of Education Situation: Year 1388 (2009-2010)" (Kabul: Directorate of Educational Management Information System and Directorate General of Planning and Evaluation, undated), http://moe.gov.af/Content/files/079_1388%20English%20Report.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

55 Anuradha Rajivan, "Power, Voice and Rights: A Turning Point for Gender Equality in Asia and the Pacific" (Colombo: United Nations Development Programme Regional Centre for Asia Pacific and Human Development Report Unit, Asia-Pacific Human Development Report, February 2010), <http://web.undp.org/asia/pdf/APHumanDevelopmentReport2010.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

56 Central Statistics Organisation, "AMICS 2010-2011."

57 Ministry of Education Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "1390 (2011/2012) EMIS Statistical Analytical Report" (Kabul: Directorate of Educational Management Information System and Directorate General of Planning and Evaluation, 2012), http://moe.gov.af/Content/files/MoE_1390_Stat_Analysis_Final.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

teachers was 4,873, of which 603 were women.⁵⁸ In vocational training however, there were very few women—3,245 out of 27,019 students. The highest enrolment in vocational training for women was in management and accounting (around half), followed by food and light industries, which includes computer literacy. However, there was some limited enrolment of women in non-traditional occupations like auto mechanics (13), but very few women were listed for training in agriculture and veterinary training (32).⁵⁹ The figure for women teachers at government teacher training institutes was low—just 282 out of 1,577; in many provinces their representation was nil. The number of female students was 19,233 out of a total of 52,617.

Table 2: National Education Strategic Plan target and program annual targets⁶⁰

Main indicators	2010 Achievements	2011 Achievements	2014 Targets
Number of students	7,101,461	8,008,676	9,938,727
Number of schools	12,421	13,562	16,150
Number of teachers	166,262	172,291	200,014
Number of school councils/ <i>shuras</i>	10,876	1,333	16,150

Overall, while enrolment in education for girls at the primary level has increased considerably in this decade, it remains very low in absolute numbers as well as in the female-to-male ratio. The Afghanistan Compact (2006) says, “By end-2010: in line with Afghanistan’s MDGs, net enrolment in primary school for girls and boys will be at least 60 percent and 75 percent respectively; a new curriculum will be operational in all secondary schools; female teachers will be increased by 50 percent.” The non-provision of girls-only schools and early marriage has contributed to a high drop-out rate when girls reach puberty and when purdah restrictions begin to be activated. If Afghanistan is to meet the AMDGs’ aim for 100 percent literacy by 2020, there has to be a huge amount of resources channelled into girls-only schools with all-female teachers and a greater monitoring of child-marriage; community-based schools for girls and young women also need to be expanded. Further, the significant disparities at the provincial level need to be addressed. Much depends on the security situation and the abilities of the government and the communities to counter reactionary forces. Equally importantly, the curriculum has to address girls’ professional and economic capacities rather than, for example, agriculture being taught to boys and home management to girls.⁶¹ In keeping with women’s current and contributory roles in agriculture, for example, it is important to provide knowledge and training within the gendered division of roles in rural work or in trade, enterprise and other aspects of non-rural occupations.

2.1.2 Health

The graph of the health sector shows some relative improvement in certain areas for this decade. In 2002, Afghanistan had an under-five mortality rate of 257 per 1,000 (varyingly, the second or the third highest in the world) and infant mortality rate of 165 per 1,000.⁶² The fertility rate was 6.9 and the estimated maternal mortality rate was

58 CSO, “Statistical Yearbook 2011-12,” Education, 54, <http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/Education%20syb.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

59 CSO, “Statistical Yearbook 2011-12,” 66.

60 Adapted from Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Education, “1390/2011 Annual Progress Report” (General Planning and Evaluation Department EMIS Directorate, undated), 1.

61 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, “Combined periodic reports to CEDAW,” 46.

62 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Public Health, “Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry

1,600 per 100,000⁶³ live births (the single highest cause of death).⁶⁴ Nearly 17 percent of the basic primary health facilities provided the basic reproductive health package related to safe motherhood and family planning services; nearly 40 percent of the basic facilities had no female health care provider.⁶⁵ The distribution of medical staff was highly uneven and favoured Kabul and other cities at the cost of the rural areas; for example, there was one doctor per 1,000 people in Kabul, whereas there is only one per 100,000 in Bamiyan.⁶⁶ A large percentage of women suffered from depression, trauma and other repercussions of the violence and conflict. One of the goals set by the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH)⁶⁷ was the reduction by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015 in the ratio of maternal mortality.⁶⁸ In 2002, the MoPH established the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS), which provided for the Primary Health Care (PHC) system in Afghanistan.⁶⁹ Drinking water supplies reached 23 percent of Afghans.⁷⁰

In 2003, the extreme prevalence of chronic malnutrition was seen in the 45-52 percent of stunting and the high incidence micronutrient deficiency diseases among children less than five years of age; 41 percent children under five were underweight.⁷¹ From the lack of inadequacy in the allocation of critical survival resources, the extremely high rates of women's mortality meant that the equivalent of one million women or 3.7 percent of the female population was missing from the demographic count.⁷² One-fifth (20.4 percent) of rural households were below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption and six million rural Afghans or 38 percent of the rural population faced chronic or transient food shortages.⁷³ Many of the chronically food insecure households "were female-headed, had disabled household members and large numbers of children, and lived in remote rural areas with little or no access to irrigation, markets or other services."⁷⁴ Nineteen districts had no health facilities at all; the basic health centres

of Public Health Annual Report 1387," <http://moph.gov.af/content/media/Documents/HNSS-Report-ENG-v4-1281220101156987.pdf> (accessed 4 June 2013).

63 There were significant provincial variations. Kabul for example, had an estimated MMR of 400 per 100,000 while Badakhshan had an MMR of 6,500 per 100,000. Linda A. Bartlett, Shairose Mawji, Sara Whitehead, Chad Crouse, Denisa Ionete, Peter Salama and Afghan Maternal Mortality Study Group, "Maternal Mortality in Afghanistan: Magnitude, Causes, Risk Factors and Preventability" (Ministry of Public Health Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United Nations Children's Fund Afghanistan, 2003).

64 Five times that of Pakistan and 50 times that of Uzbekistan.

65 Ministry of Health, Transitional Islamic Government of Afghanistan, "National Reproductive Health Strategy for Afghanistan 2003-2005" (Kabul: General Directorate of Health Care and Promotion, Women's and Reproductive Health Directorate, Reproductive Health Taskforce, Final document, July 2003), <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan018855.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

66 Asta Olesen, et al., "National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction," 24, citing Ministry of Public Health World Health Organisation, 2001, unreferenced.

67 Ministry of Health, Transitional Islamic Government of Afghanistan, "Interim Health Strategy 2002-2003: A Strategy to Lay Foundations" (Kabul: Ministry of Public Health, February 2003).

68 Ministry of Health, "Health Strategy 2002-03," 10, Box 2.

69 Ministry of Public Health Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "A Basic Package of Health Services for Afghanistan, 2005/ 1384" (Kabul: Ministry of Public Health, 2005), <http://moph.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/BPHS-2005-FINAL29122010162945969.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

70 Peter Pauli, "National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2007/8."

71 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "MDGs Country report 2005," 23-25, citing United Nations International Children's Educational Fund and Ministry of Public Health Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Caring practices Formative Research Panjshir Valley Community" (2003).

72 Stephan Klasen and Claudia Wink, "'Missing Women': Revisiting the Debate," *Feminist Economics*, 9, no. 2-3 (2003), 263-299, <http://csde.washington.edu/~scurran/files/readings/April28/recommended/MissingWomen.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

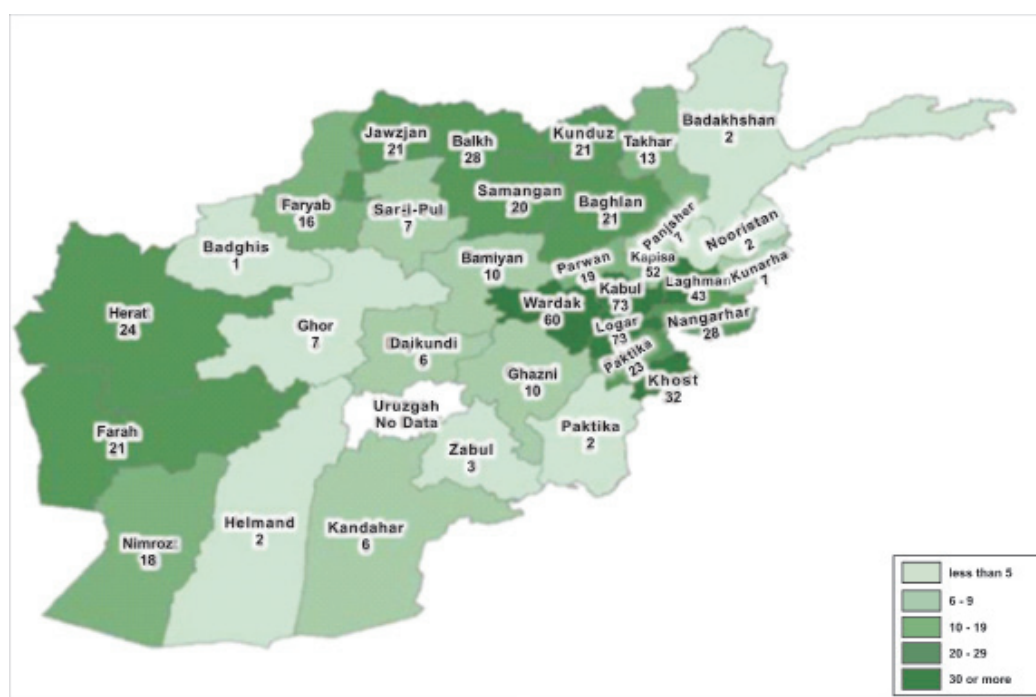
73 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "MDGs Country Report 2005."

74 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "MDGs Country Report 2005," 28, citing Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation

to population ratio was from approximately one per 40,000 people in the central and eastern regions to approximately one per 200,000 in the south.⁷⁵

By 2007, the situation seems to have worsened as well as improved; 7 percent of under-fives were dying of hunger while as much as 57 percent experienced stunted growth. More than six million Afghans did not meet minimum food requirements, with an estimated average 30 percent of the population eating below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption. Yet child mortality had dropped from 165 to 129 per 1,000 live births by 2007 and under-five mortality to 191 per 1000.⁷⁶ The maternal mortality rate by 2007 was 327 deaths per 100,000 live births, which was also significantly lower than initial estimates.

Figure 2: Percentage of women using skilled birth attendants, by province⁷⁷



However, “the percentage of BHCs nationwide with at least one female health worker more than doubled from 31 percent in 2004 to 79 percent in 2009.”⁷⁸ Further, by 2010, as the Afghanistan Mortality Survey shows, the maternal mortality rate remained at 327 per 100,000 births, the infant mortality rate was at 74 per 1,000 live births, while the under-five mortality rate was around 102 per 1000 live births.⁷⁹ Education for mothers has had

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Development and World Food Programme, “Report on Findings from the 2003 National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) in Rural Afghanistan” (Kabul: Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation, 2004), <http://surveynetwork.org/surveys/index.php/catalog/933/download/40422> (accessed 1 April 2013).

75 Asta Olesen et al., “National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction,” 23.

76 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Public Health, “Public Health Annual Report 1387.”

77 Peter Pauli, “National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2007/8,” 85.

78 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Public Health, “National Gender Strategy, 2012-2016” (Kabul: Ministry of Public Health, February 2012), http://moph.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/MoPH_National_Gender_Strategy_Final_English_2012164201212934246553325325.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

79 Central Statistics Organisation, “AMICS 2010-2011.” This and similar data is not sex-disaggregated and there is no research to show discrimination in feeding and nutrition patterns between female and male newborns and infants. For example, it was found that breastfeeding was discontinued by age 12-15 months for 6.7 percent of boys, but for 11 percent of girls. Linda A. Bartlett, et al., “Maternal Mortality in Afghanistan.”

a significant link for both maternal and infant mortality; for mothers with no education the infant mortality rate was 74 but for those with secondary education or higher it drops to 55; mothers' education also significantly influences children's immunization rates. However, inadequate access to nutrition due to high poverty translated to 31 percent of children under five being moderately to severely underweight, 55 percent being moderately stunted and 18 percent being moderately or severely wasted.

In 2010, the fertility rate was 5.1. Fertility was seen to drop rapidly, from 5.3 children among women with no education to 2.8 children among women with higher education.⁸⁰ It was found that 14 percent of women aged 15-19 have begun childbearing with 2 percent having had a live birth before the age of 15. Nearly 25 percent of women aged 20-24 years had already had a live birth before reaching age 18. Importantly, 20 percent among those with no education, 27 percent among women with primary education, and 38 percent among women with secondary education or higher, used contraception. Nearly 20 percent of women aged 15-19 years are currently married—15 percent of women aged 15-49 years were married before the age of 15, while 46 percent were married before the age of 18. About 7 percent of women aged 15-49 years were in a polygamous marriage, with the incidence of polygamous marriage being almost twice as high among women with no education (8 percent) than among the 4 percent of women who have secondary education or higher. About 2 percent of women aged 15-19 years are in a polygamous marriage, while it is 11 percent for women aged 40-49 years.⁸¹ Fifty-seven percent of all marriages involve female children under the age of 16.⁸²

Nearly 87 percent of the population is currently under the coverage of the BPHS, of which 66 percent have access to health facilities within two hours' walking distance and 57 percent within one hour walking distance.⁸³ There are 280 public hospitals and 142 private hospitals in total for a population of 26.5 million.⁸⁴ Health services in Afghanistan are still highly limited and the medical profession has a specific shortage of female doctors and nurses; supplies as well as obstetric care are inadequate and the health centres are not easily accessible for women without transportation or without a *mahram*. The Asia Foundation Survey (2012) says "only 38 percent of the people agree that their health conditions and access to medicine have improved. Forty-seven percent of the people are still waiting for their health conditions and access to medicine to improve. The change still has to come. Fourteen percent of the people are worried because their health conditions have deteriorated as compared to the Taliban regime."

Overall, the health sector has shown optimistic trends in the reduction of infant, child and maternal mortality, and in increasing the range of basic health care facilities. In child nutrition and stunting much more needs to be achieved; the AMDG target for the

80 Ministry of Public Health, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Central Statistics Organisation, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010: Key Findings" (2010), 6-7, <http://www.measuredhs.com/pubs/pdf/SR186/SR186.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

81 Central Statistics Organisation, "AMICS 2010-2011."

82 Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, "Fifth Report Situation of Economic and Social Rights in Afghanistan" (Kabul: Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, December 2011), http://www.aihrc.org.af/media/files/Reports/SECR/Report%20on%20ESCR_Final_English_12_2011.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

83 Ministry of Economy, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "ANDS Annual Progressive Report: 1389" (Kabul: Ministry of Economy, 2011), 4, http://moec.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/ANDSAnnualProgressiveReport1389_English1102011142610417553325325.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

84 Central Statistics Organisation, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2011-12," (Kabul: Central Statistics Organisation, Chapter 4: Health Development, 2012), 110, [http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/Health%20Development\(1\).pdf](http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/Health%20Development(1).pdf) (accessed 1 April 2013).

prevalence of underweight children under five years of age by 2015 is 15 percent; the MDG is 109 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. The outreach depth of health care and reproductive health services needs to be strengthened further and the fertility rate, evolving from early marriage and child-bearing, needs to be lowered far more. The disparities between urban and rural health care access are significant. Again, unless women are catered to by women professionals, the provision of health care and the corresponding health-seeking behaviour will remain highly unsatisfactory.

2.1.3 Political and public participation

Access to the public sphere and equal participation in a nation's political landscape could be a litmus test for women's empowerment. With the public-private divide in Afghanistan being especially rigid and with a man and his family's honour being associated with women's circumscription within the boundaries of the home/family/community, women's crossing the boundary and entering into the male territory of the public sphere has strong implications for gender roles and gender dynamics.

As noted in Section 1.3, Afghan women have participated in a highly limited way in the various international discussions that charted the route to the reconstruction of their country. Apart from the Declaration of the Essential Rights of Women at Dushanbe, 2001,⁸⁵ the Brussels Conference in 2001, and the Constitutional Loya Jirga 2003 (which had 114 women out of 504 delegates), the participation of women in bodies deliberating political change has been negligible or nil.⁸⁶ At the 2010 London Conference⁸⁷ and the 2011 Bonn Conference, in particular, the sidelining of women has been much remarked upon; eventually the latter included only 11 women (22 percent) of 69 in the delegation (but formed 50 percent of civil society delegation).⁸⁸ At the crucial pre-conference talks of all the international conferences, when agendas are decided and decisions taken, there have been no women reported. The Chicago Conference 2012 was the first to include women's right to participate in conflict and post-conflict decision-making.

In the elections in 2004 and 2009 (Presidential), 2005 (Provincial Council and Parliamentary) and 2010 (Parliamentary), there was a substantial turnout of women voters, with about 10-20 percent of candidates being women.

85 That many of its demands, including the right to physical mobility for women, were ignored in subsequent instruments like the Constitution 2004, is indicative of political processes endemic to Afghan and other societies that tend to not give credence to women's right to voice and visibility.

86 The gloss given in the report of the Government of Afghanistan to CEDAW (2011:32) says "[a]mong the 60 participants in Bonn Conference [2001], where a national government for Afghanistan was profound [sic], 6 were women. After the Bonn Conference, Afghan women have attended other conferences on Afghanistan around the world, although the number of women has been lower than the number of men. This can be mainly due to the fact that there are few women in the leadership level in the country." Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Combined Periodic Reports to CEDAW," 32.

87 "[A]t the London Conference in early 2010, it was on no one's agenda to speak about Afghan women, and the Conference seemed scripted to gain the assent of the international community for allowing the return of Taliban. Nonetheless, Afghan women activists succeeded in a strong media campaign that at least resulted in the acknowledgement of women's rights and respect for the Constitution of Afghanistan. Also, it was the Afghan women who strongly raised their voices to affirm the importance of justice as well as the strengthening of the formal justice systems in the country." Orzala Ashraf Nemat, "Afghan Women at the Crossroads: Agents of Peace – or Its Victims?" (Century Foundation Report, 2011), http://old.tcf.org/publications/2011/3/afghan-women-at-the-crossroads-agents-of-peace2014or-its-victims/get_public (accessed 1 April 2013).

88 Mayfair and Soho Group, "Afghanistan and Women's Rights," 28 November 2012, <http://www2.amnesty.org.uk/groups/mayfair-and-soho/afghanistan-women%E2%80%99s-rights> (accessed 1 April 2013).

Table 3: National-level female turnout and candidate numbers for Presidential and Provincial Council (PC) and Parliamentary elections⁸⁹

Election	Total votes in million	Percentage women voters	Total candidates	Female candidates	Ex-quota female candidates
2004 Presidential	7.3	37	18	1	—
2005 PC	6.4	41	3,025	247	24
2005 Parliamentary	6.4	41	2,775	335	19
2009 Presidential	5.9	39	39	2	—
2009 PC	5.9	39	3,196	328	20
2010 Parliamentary	4.2	39	2,577	406	18

Generally, these elections saw a lack of female civic outreach workers and polling booth officers. Women voters lacked information about the processes and the candidates as community level discussions were generally out of bounds and very few public outreach services could reach them. Most were unaware of the reservation of seats for women candidates. With women not having to show their photos on their voter registration cards, the recorded number of women voters is not considered accurate, with proxy voting by men taking place. Polling booths were difficult to access for women and some also had common entrances for women and men, increasing the discomfort that women voters experienced. For women voters, voting was a powerful expression of rights and of their involvement in the public sphere. They were also more inclined to vote for women candidates in the hope of achieving gendered solidarity; problems they would not be able to relate to a male candidate, they felt, would be understood by a woman. This was despite the fact that women candidates did not campaign on a gendered platform.⁹⁰

Female candidates were generally constrained by relatively less access to resources, restricted mobility and inadequate number of safe spaces as campaign venues. Interestingly, while female candidates tended to try and target male voters in the belief that they would be more capable of mobilising communities, male voters' perception of them was as less efficient and with lesser ability to deliver on campaign promises than male candidates. Most successful women candidates had sufficient access to resources and connections to a powerful family or political party. Security related concerns for women candidates and voters have risen in all elections, with the number of polling booths as well as the number of voters dipping and women candidates being provided with bodyguards.

Women in Parliament, currently 69 in the Wolesi Jirga (out of 249) and 28 in the Meshrano Jirga (out of 102), have generally been perceived as playing a highly political balancing act. On the one hand, the general expectation of women's issues being taken up more effectively is belied with both numbers and real political power that is out of their reach. On the other hand, since their political careers have been linked strongly to their political mentors or parties, rather than to their constituencies, it precludes

89 Oliver Lough, Farokhloqa Amini, Farid Ahmad Bayat, Zia Hussain, Reyhaneh Gulsum Hussaini, Massouda Kohistani and Chona R. Echavez, "Equal Rights, Unequal Opportunities Women's Participation in Afghanistan's Parliamentary and Provincial Council Elections" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2010).

90 Oliver Lough, "Equal Rights, Unequal Opportunities."

wielding power outside of party or mentor interest.⁹¹ However, the more outspoken female members of Parliament face particular intimidation and verbal attacks from the religious majority or conservative colleagues and indifference from other male colleagues; they are also more susceptible to militant threats. Within the ministries, female members of Parliament are seen as operating on a far from equal position vis-à-vis male members and are often perceived as having little or no authority. There are currently 12 women in the executive (three ministers: Women's Affairs, Public Health and Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled), one general director, one director of independent commissions (the AIHRC), five deputy ministers, one governor (Bamiyan) and one mayor (Nili, Daikundi); the Deputy Speaker is a woman. The AMDGs' target is 30 percent representation of women in Parliament by 2020.

Two out of nine secretaries of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) are women and two women are members of IEC's leadership committee. Seven percent of all staff in the IEC are women but, of these 255 total, only 15 are permanent.⁹² However, half of its regional and district staff are women and there are equal numbers of female and male public awareness campaigners in all districts of Afghanistan. Direct representation of women has been nationally established in 20 percent of the communities through shuras and in 36 percent through Community Development Councils (CDCs), compared to 56 and 60 percent for male representation. Only 4 percent of CDC officials are female.⁹³ Although when compared to 2001 there is a higher presence of women in many government ministries as well as in the civil service, the numbers of female civil servants dropped from 31 percent in 2006 to 18.5 percent in 2010⁹⁴. Notwithstanding the government's commitment to 25 percent representation of women in the civil service, 20 percent of all government employees are women⁹⁵.

As of 2010, women made up 0.5 percent of the police⁹⁶. There is a strong need for women to be represented in the police force, especially at officer and lower levels, to address violence against women, particularly domestic violence. Sixty-five percent of those surveyed for a 2009 Police Perception Survey⁹⁷ endorsed this view. Like in many other countries, access to justice for women in Afghanistan is an uncertain mix between social prejudice and institutional lack:

- Women's expectations of the police in terms of helping protect against gender-based violence is low.

91 See also Anna Wordsworth, "A Matter of Interests: Gender and the Politics of Presence in Afghanistan's Wolesi Jirga" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Issues Paper Series, June 2007), <http://www.areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/711E-A%20Matter%20of%20Interests%20IP.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

92 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Combined Periodic Reports to CEDAW," 47.

93 Arne Disch, Vegard Bye, Torun Reite, Elina Dale and Stephanie Crasto, "ARTF at a Cross-Roads: History and the Future," 13 (Oslo: Scanteam, September 2012), <http://ausaid.gov.au/countries/southasia/afghanistan/Documents/artf-cross-roads.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

94 United Nations Development Fund for Women Afghanistan, "Factsheet 2010" (February 2010), <http://www.unifem.org/afghanistan/media/pubs/factsheet/10/index.html> (accessed 3 February 2013).

95 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Central Statistics Organisation, "Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2009-10" (Kabul: Central Statistics Organisation, 2010), <http://cso.gov.af/en/page/4723> (accessed 1 April 2013).

96 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Combined Periodic Reports to CEDAW," 30-33, citing United Nations Development Programme-Afghanistan, "Police Perception Survey, 2009: The Afghan Perspective" (2009), <http://www.undp.org.af/publications/KeyDocuments/PolicePerceptionSurvey09.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

97 Samuel Hall Consulting, "Women's Perceptions of the Afghan National Police" (Kabul: Heinrich Böll Stiftung Afghanistan, 2011), http://www.af.boell.org/downloads/PPS_new.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

- There is tremendous social prejudice against women who seek outside help rather than keep domestic violence private.
- The Family Response Units set up by the Ministry of Interior is not perceived as legitimate or professional within the Police department.
- Extreme corruption exists within the force.
- There is a lack of training and resources, commitment to crime prevention, community confidence and support, and vulnerability to interference by politicians or local elites.⁹⁸

“Women police receive little respect both from civilians and within the force. Policewomen in Kabul inform a limited number of family members of their profession and never wear their uniforms to work out of fear for their own safety. In fact, many women rarely wear their uniforms at all. Some women are instructed not to wear uniforms by their commanders, perpetuating the perception that women are not ‘real’ police. Others do not have uniforms, feel uncomfortable in uniforms tailored for men that are ill suited for a female form, or just prefer not to wear them...”

Samuel Hall Consulting,
“Women’s Perceptions of ANP.”

For a highly sex-segregated environment, the number of policewomen is very low—in 2010, there were 584 women at officer and lower levels across the police force.⁹⁹ The Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), begun in 2002 as a mechanism to help build the Afghan police force, began trainings for women officers in 2010. In 2011 the LOTFA claims to have 1,200 women in the ANP.¹⁰⁰ There is resistance to progressive policies within the ANP and Afghan Ministry of Interior.¹⁰¹ “Policewomen are often relegated to ‘women’s work’ such as fetching tea, working in the kitchen and cleaning. While some women actually volunteer for such tasks, being forced to do menial tasks is incredibly frustrating for those women with a genuine interest in police work.”¹⁰² Women police officers also report experiencing harassment and sexual abuse.¹⁰³ Having 5,000 women in the Afghan Police Force by 2014 is a target for the LOTFA. Of great concern is the arming and funding of ex-militia to establish the village-based defence forces, the Afghan Local Police;¹⁰⁴ such methods have been tried in many post-conflict areas and are associated with great human rights violations, whether as militia or as part of the legitimate government.

While great effort is required in the enforcement arm of the justice sector, its other arm, the judiciary, is malnourished in its inclusion of women in both religious and secular systems. An Afghan Women Judges’ Association (AWJA) was created in 2003. Yet in 2010, of the 2,203 judges there were 48 female judges in penal courts and 60 female judges

98 Samuel Hall Consulting, “Perceptions of ANP.”

99 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, “Combined Periodic Reports to CEDAW,” 32.

100 United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan, “Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA): 2002-2013” (UNDP Project Factsheet, 2011), <http://www.undp.org.af/Projects/Report2011/lotfa/Project-LOTFA-Apr2011.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

101 Samuel Hall Consulting, “Perceptions of ANP,” 1.

102 Samuel Hall Consulting, “Perceptions of ANP,” 21, citing Ray Nash and Robert Ward, “Afghan National Police Family Response Units and Women’s Police Corps” (Kabul: US Embassy, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, 2011).

103 Quil Lawrence, “For Afghan Policewomen, Sex Abuse is a Job Hazard” (NPR, 8 March 2012), <http://www.npr.org/2012/03/08/148041305/for-afghan-policewomen-sex-abuse-is-a-job-hazard> (accessed 9 June 2013).

104 International Development Committee, “Afghanistan: Development Progress and Prospects after 2014: Sixth Report of Session 2012-13” (London: House of Commons, Vol. 1, 2012), 21, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmintdev/403/403.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

in the civil courts, totalling 118,¹⁰⁵ i.e. about 5 percent; unsurprisingly, the Family and Juvenile Courts are generally headed by women. Affirmative action to encourage the appointment of women to the courts has not been taken.¹⁰⁶ Only 6.4 percent (35) of the 546 prosecutors and 6.1 percent (75) of the 1,241 lawyers are female. There are no women in the nine-member Supreme Court Council. In 2012, the AWJA was re-launched with 150 women judges.

The lack of representation of women in the executive, the judiciary and law enforcement is a serious negative indicator of women's political participation in Afghanistan. In March 2012, the all-male Ulema Council, composed of 150 leading clerics, issued a statement justifying certain types of domestic violence, calling for legal amendments for sex-segregated occupational and health facilities, mandatory *hijab* and a *mahram* to accompany women in public spaces. This was endorsed by the President at a press conference.¹⁰⁷ If these calls to a return to pre-2001 years are not challenged and contained or are allowed to be taken forward even regionally,¹⁰⁸ the repercussions will have obvious impacts on all constitutional gains and on the painfully slow and marginal attitudinal changes toward women's equal rights.

Women's public visibility has increased to a relatively far greater level in this past decade and this has been much remarked upon in this research, with approval, apprehension and hostility. While this is true for mostly urban areas, it is a cautious and tentative move for women that has called for much alertness, will and extracted legitimacy. In this past decade, women in some circumstances have utilised collective strength and gendered solidarity to break this divide. For example, in 2005, Kabul saw hundreds of widows protesting against the kidnapping of a female aid worker. In 2007 in Kandahar, in a bid to stop warring parties, women came together at the Kherqa Sharif mosque (mosques are normally barred to women), and offered peace prayers.¹⁰⁹ That same year, women in Kabul visited mosques to advocate against the use of religion as a justification for suicide attacks. In 2008, women in Kandahar protested the kidnapping of a woman aid worker. In 2008, blue scarves were worn by women across many provinces to signify opposition to violence and war. In 2012, there were protests by women and men in Kabul against the execution of a woman on charges of adultery by the Taliban in Qimchok, Parwan Province.

Overall, however, boundaries remain for women's entry to the public sphere. A 2012 survey found that "(80 percent) of women say women should be allowed to work outside the home compared to just over half (55 percent) of men. Likewise, significantly more urban respondents agree with the statement (81 percent) than do their rural counterparts (61 percent); strongest among Hazaras (77 percent), followed by Uzbeks (73 percent) and Tajiks (72 percent). The highest levels of support for women working outside the home are reported in the northwest (80 percent), central/Kabul (75 percent), central/Hazarajat (71 percent), northeast (65 percent), east (59 percent) and west (58 percent)

105 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Combined Periodic Reports to CEDAW," 38.

106 Hangama Anwari, Cheshmak Farhoumand-Sims and Krista Nerland, "Assessing Gendered Access to Justice in Afghanistan," 15 (The North South Institute, Environmental Scan, Access and Action Series, December 2009), <http://www.nsi-ins.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/2009-Assessing-Gendered-Access-to-Justice-in-Afghanistan.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

107 See, for example, Sari Kuovo, "A Slippery Slope."

108 For example, Al Arabiya, "Raping women in Tahrir NOT 'red line': Egyptian preacher Abu Islam," 7 February 2013, http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2013/02/07/264982.html?utm_medium=referral&utm_source=pulseneews

109 Julie Billaud, "Visible Under the Veil: Dissimulation, Performance and Agency in an Islamic Public Space," *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 11, no. 1 (2009): 120-135.

regions. Opposition is highest in the southwest (55 percent) but also significant in the east (40 percent) and west (38 percent).”¹¹⁰ Overall, support for women being allowed to work outside the home fell from 71 percent in 2006 to 62 percent in 2011. The streets remain highly territorialised as male and women’s use of them, without a *mahram*, subjects women to different forms of intimidation as well as verbal and physical sexual harassment.¹¹¹

The political and social participation of women remains a highly contested area, and interviews with women’s groups in this research have brought about strong calls for the use of the clergy in redressing this inadequacy. One respondent expressed it as “... I have a request from the Hajj and Islamic Affairs Ministry that in the Friday’s prayers they take at least four minutes of their time and talk about women rights in mosques, *takya khana ha...*”¹¹² As has been often expressed, there has to be a far stronger thrust by the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA) in rectifying the wrongs done to women in Afghanistan both under customary law and due to socio-cultural traditions which are mistakenly thought to have sanction under Islam. While the respondent from MoHRA¹¹³ has reiterated many of the traditional sentiments and ideals of the private sphere being a woman’s primary locus, he has also expressed a need to rectify many practices, especially those on widows’ rights, *mahr* and inheritance. He is of the opinion that the ministry can encourage the spread of “correct interpretation” through the different *jameh* mosques and *unjameh* mosques, *takaya*, *husainia* and *khanaqahs*¹¹⁴ through the country. The influence of imams in Afghanistan cannot be overstated and it is incumbent on the government to be far more pro-active in using Islam positively to bring about changes in women’s lives.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), since 2007, has trained about 5,000 mullahs in collaboration with MoHRA on how to bring improvements in women’s lives, related to education, marriages, rights, and inheritance. The mullahs are responsible for disseminating this information on women’s rights from an Islamic perspective in different districts in four provinces; the MoHRA has compiled a book for *jumma khutbas* (Friday sermons) on how to incorporate gender rights in a more Islamic way.¹¹⁵

110 Nancy Hopkins, Mohammad Osman Tariq, Fazel Rabi Haqbeen, Palwasha Lena Kakar, Abdul Ghafor Asheq, Fazel Rabi Wardak and Habibullah Haidar, “Afghanistan in 2012: A Survey of the Afghan People” (Kabul: The Asia Foundation, 2012), <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/Surveybook2012web1.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

111 For example, Samuel Hall, “The Challenge of Becoming Invisible Understanding Women’s Security in Kabul” (Kabul and Berlin: Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 2012).

112 Khadija Sherbaz, All Afghan Women Union, AREU interview, 29 December 2012.

113 Gul Aqa Habib, Director of Planning and Policy, MoHRA, AREU interview, 31 December 2012.

114 Jama mosques are used for daily congregation, *unjamaeh* are used for special occasions like Eid, *takaya* and *husainia* are shi’te mosques, and *khanaqah* are congregations in the presence of a living *pir* or holy man.

115 Gulistan Ibadat, Gender Specialist - UNDP, AREU interview, 6 January 2013.

Box 1: NECDO: The Imam Initiative

The Noor Education and Capacity Development Organization (NECDO) is one of the private efforts in the re-orientation of the clergy¹¹⁶. Begun in 2002, NECDO has trained 900 mullahs in four years. With the help of the American Society for Muslim Advancement¹¹⁷ and women scholars from Canada, Libya and Egypt, NECDO researched and prepared material on marriage, child marriage, right of social participation (including job opportunities and political participation), right to education and rights to inheritance. They invited 20 imams identified by MoHRA and shared this material for review and comment. The imams' main reservations hinged around honour and women's social and political participation; debates and discussions were particularly around the necessity of a *mahram*. In the six review meetings that followed, a common understanding evolved, and "the ideas of those imams were eventually changed and then they were mentally ready, then we asked them to conduct the study material to the people in the mosques, they accepted." In order to check that the imams were indeed including women's rights in the *Khutba* (discourse) before the Friday prayers, NECDO engaged 25 youth from 16 provinces from the Kabul University Hostel, trained them in monitoring and report writing, and had them attend the various prayers incognito. The imams who didn't follow the agreement were then informed and they too began including women's rights in the *Jumma Khutba*. NECDO was able to collect and review reports from 20 mosques every week; they eventually designed a one-year programme.

NECDO implemented the same programme in Nangarhar, with a similar set of actors—the imams identified by the Nangarhar Department of Hajj and Religious Affairs and students from Nangarhar University—where they faced even more resistance and which involved far more discussion and reasoned arguments. Eventually the Nangarhar imams were convinced, so much so that their sons were also involved in the monitoring.

"Then we extended the programme for another year so we targeted ten mosques for girls and those imams who helped us previously now were ready to help us with the female part; they activated the women's sections in the mosques and they talked to the people of their areas and convinced them, and the daughter of the imam became the female in charge of that section; gradually they created two partitions for [usually older] women to attend mosques in Nangarhar."

The youth too carried the messages to 16 provinces. NECDO has since held successful workshops on child marriage (incorporated into the *nikah*[marriage] ceremonies that the imams conducted), on the selling of wives along border regions, *baad*,¹¹⁸ *badal*, human rights according to Islam, and similar. NECDO has an active network with 25 committees of imams in 16 provinces called *Karama*, with 20 imams, about 150 young women and four legal aid offices.

NECDO's goal is the "implementation of the women's rights according to Islam and the laws of the Afghan Government and to the [international] conventions that the government has agreed to." Since women are unable to cross the threshold (*chaukhat*) of their homes, whose watchmen (*chaukidars*) are men, NECDO teaches men about women's rights in order to open the doors for women.

116 Jamila Afghani Kakar, Director, Noor Education and Capacity Development Organization, AREU interview, 23 January 2013. It has helped NECDO's success with the Imam Initiative that Jamila has a Master's in Shari'ah Law, a Master's in International Relations, advanced training in gender (including on gender-responsive budgeting), and belongs to a family regarded highly among the religious community in Kabul.

117 American Society for Muslim Advancement, "Mission," <http://www.asmasociety.org/about/index.html> (accessed 1 April 2013).

118 A practice where the female members of a family are given in marriage as compensation for crimes committed by their male relatives against the men of another family, through decisions taken by the Jirga. A criminal offence under Article 517 of the 1976 Afghan Penal Code (only applicable when a woman above 18 years or a widow is traded, punishable with up to two years in prison) and under the 2009 LEVAW (with up to ten years imprisonment including for trading girls under 18 years of age). See also "Harmful Traditional Practices and Implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women in Afghanistan" (Kabul: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and Office of the High Commission for Human Rights, 2010).

2.1.4 Safety

The poverty trap that women in Afghanistan are enmeshed within has been exacerbated by what has been generally called a “post-conflict” situation but where the state’s authority has been termed as “a useful fiction.”¹¹⁹ The situation in 2012-2013 in Afghanistan cannot be termed post-conflict. Armed military offensives continue in various parts of the country and there is a rise in the intensity of armed conflict between the Afghan government/NATO-led troops and the different militia groups. In parallel, armed violence is used by non-state actors (including insurgent groups, criminal cartels, drug rings, warlords and local militias). Apart from many districts in Kabul Province, conflict is not seen to have ceased nor the rule of the law to be effective in many of the other 33 provinces of the country.¹²⁰ As of December 2012 there were about 102,000 foreign troops stationed in Afghanistan and the size of Afghan Security Forces in October 2012 was around 337,000; the number of insurgent attacks in October 2012 alone was around 2,250.¹²¹ Seventy-four individual NGOs were victimised in 164 incidents, including 25 abductions and 45 violent (IED, SAF) cases. A total of 2038 people died in 2012 in conflict-related incidents.¹²² Armed opposition groups have been becoming nationalised with operations now converging to counter the efforts of the government/NATO forces.¹²³ Figures compiled by the rights group Afghanistan Rights Monitor indicate that over 10,000 Afghan civilians have lost their lives in armed hostilities since 2008. The number of those maimed and wounded is unknown but estimated at over 20,000.¹²⁴ The situation continues through internal displacement, poor access to civic and human rights and by the lack of employment, health, food and nutrition, justice and security, education and public participation.

Subsequent to the state’s decreasing control over the armed militia since 2005-06, gender-based violence and intimidation is seen to have increased in all provinces since 2007. The killings of women in public life—in particular, the shootings of female politicians, media-persons and other high profile women with impunity—has reiterated the extreme risks that women face when they step out of the traditional gender roles.¹²⁵

119 Noah Coburn, “Bazaar Politics: Power & Pottery in an Afghan Market Town” (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

120 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, “Afghanistan Opium Survey 2010” (December 2010), http://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_Opium_Survey_2010_web.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

121 Ian S. Livingston and Michael O’Hanlon, “Afghanistan Index: Also Including Selected Data on Pakistan” (Washington, DC: Brookings, 31 January 2013), <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Programs/foreign%20policy/afghanistan%20index/index20130131.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013). See also Andrew Beath, Fotini Christia and Ruben Enikolopov, “Direct Democracy and Resource Allocation: Experimental Evidence from Afghanistan” (Washington, DC: The World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper Series 6133, 2012), http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/07/16/000158349_20120716094426/Rendered/PDF/WPS6133.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013); Simon Chesterman, “An International Rule of Law?” *American Journal of Comparative Law* 56, no. 2 (2008): 331-61, http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/NYU_aninternationalruleoflaw.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013); Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

122 Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, “Quarterly Data Report: Q. 4 2012” (2013), <http://www.ngosafety.org/store/files/ANSO%20Q4%202012.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

123 Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, “Quarterly Data Report,” 14.

124 Orzala Ashraf Nemat and Ajmal Samadi, “Forgotten Heroes: Afghan Women Leaders Killed in Impunity Ignored in Justice,” 1 (Afghan Rights Monitor, 2012), <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Forgotten%20Heroes%20Afghan%20Women%20Leaders%20Killed%20in%20Impunity%20Ignored%20in%20Justice.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

125 Nadia Sediqqi, Acting Head, DoWA, Laghman Province, was shot dead on her way to work in December 2012. Her predecessor, Hanifa Safi, was killed in July 2012 by a car bomb that her family blamed on the Taliban. A schoolgirl, Anisa, was shot dead in Kapisa Province in December 2012, allegedly for her volunteer

This increasing insecurity has also created greater difficulties for women-led businesses, women entrepreneurs and income-generating or employed women; they face fear, extortion, intimidation and gender-based violence and sexual harassment.¹²⁶ The thin legitimacy of the present government and the limited reach of the rule of law have meant that the climate of violence and fear for women has not changed in the past decade.

Women and girls face severe and multiple forms of domestic violence on a regular basis¹²⁷ which not only prevents their access to basic human rights but institutionalises and perpetuates the cycle of violence in a conflict-ridden society. The AIHRC alone recorded 18,580 cases of violence against women from 2002-2012, which makes for about six reported cases per day recorded by one institution;¹²⁸ the AIHRC records about 25 percent of the total recorded cases of violence against women (see Figure 3 below). The increasing incidence of self-immolation by young women as an extreme form of protest¹²⁹ to violence against them is matched only by the pitifully low number of shelters. There are 17 shelters across Afghanistan, which have housed a total annual average of 60 women from 2005-09; in 2010, the total number of women housed in shelters was 186.¹³⁰

Equally significant is the high incidence of ongoing violations against women¹³¹ through child labour, child prostitution, prostitution, harmful traditional practices such as *baad*, *badal*, sexual violence, trafficking and human smuggling.¹³² In addition, with the government's efforts to eradicate poppy crops—opium production generates about

work on polio vaccinations, which the Taliban opposed. These are just three examples of publicly visible killings that reached the wider public domain. Such killings have included women development activists, doctors, journalists, provincial lawmakers, teachers and others. See for example, Orzala Ashraf Nemat et al., "Forgotten Heroes."

126 See also Saeed Parto, Anna Paterson and Asif Karimi, "Enabling or Disabling: The Operating Environment for Small and Medium Enterprises in Rural Afghanistan" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Working Paper Series, September 2007), <http://www.areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/720E-Enabling%20or%20Disabling-WP-web.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

127 Diya Nijhowne and Lauryn Oates, "Living with Violence: A National Report on Domestic Abuse in Afghanistan" (Washington, DC: Global Rights, 2008), http://www.globalrights.org/site/DocServer/final_DVR_JUNE_16.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013). United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Silence is Violence: End the Abuse of Women in Afghanistan" (8 July 2009), http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Press/VAW_Report_7July09.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013). See, for example, Elaheh Rostami Povey, "Afghan Women: Identity and Invasion."

128 Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, "Fifth Report Situation of Economic and Social Rights in Afghanistan" (Kabul: AIHRC, Qaus 1390/November/December 2011), http://www.aihrc.org.af/media/files/Reports/SECR/Report%20on%20ESCR_Final_English_12_2011.pdf (accessed 17 June 2013).

129 Anita Raj, Charlemagne Gomez, and Jay G. Silverman, "Driven to a Fiery Death - The Tragedy of Self-Immolation in Afghanistan," *New England Journal of Medicine* 358, no. 21 (22 May 2008): 2201-03, <http://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMp0801340> (accessed 1 April 2013).

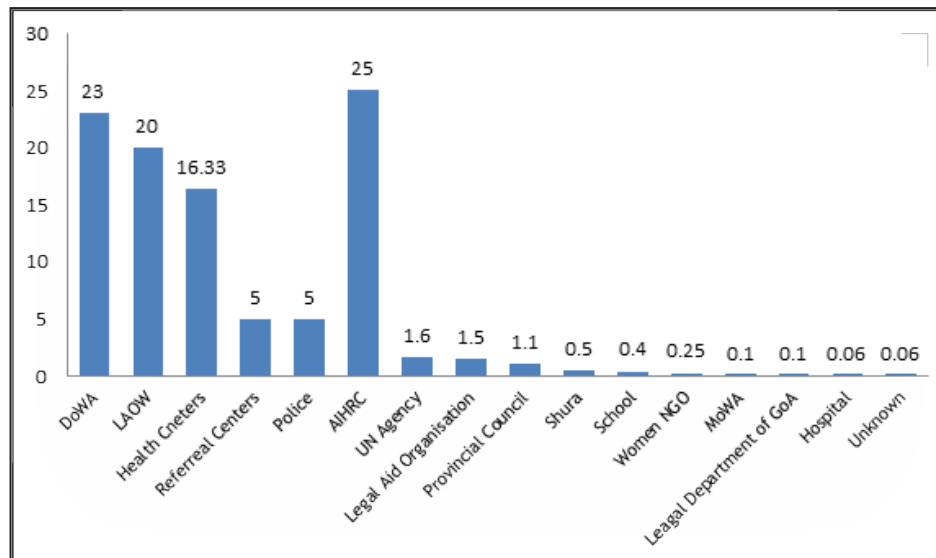
130 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Combined Periodic Reports to CEDAW," 50-51.

131 United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, "Still a Long Way to Go: Implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women in Afghanistan" (Kabul: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, 2012), <http://unama.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Qy9mDiEa5Rw%3d&tabid=12254&language=en-US> (accessed 1 April 2013).

132 Rachel Reid, "The 'Ten-Dollar Talib' and Women's Rights: Afghan Women and the Risks of Reintegration and Reconciliation" (New York: Human Rights Watch, July 2010), www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/afghanistan0710webwcover.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013); Ashley Jackson, "High Stakes: Girls' Education in Afghanistan" (Oxford: Oxfam GB, Joint NGO Briefing Paper, 24 February 2011), <http://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/oxfam/bitstream/10546/125287/1/bp-high-stakes-girls-education-afghanistan-240211-en.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013); Diya Nijhowne et al. "Living with Violence"; Julie Lafreniere, "Unaccounted and Discounted: A Secondary Data Research Project on Violence Against Women in Afghanistan" (Kabul: United Nations Development Fund for Women Afghanistan, May 2006); United Nations Development Fund for Women Afghanistan, "Child and Forced Marriage: Conference Proceedings" (Kabul: United Nations Development Fund for Women Afghanistan, March 2007).

9 percent of the GDP (US\$1.4 billion) and the opiate economy has an export potential amounting to about 15 percent (\$2.4 billion)¹³³—young daughters or sisters are kidnapped or traded to smugglers and others to meet the debts of impoverished opium farmers. The transformation of the female self through acts of violence, especially rape, can be described through the notion of “poisonous knowledge”¹³⁴ which creates spaces of devastation in the community.¹³⁵

Figure 3: Recorded violence against women¹³⁶



AIHRC initiated the establishment of Human Rights Councils in 2012, covering at least 22 provinces and led by civil society organisations, to advocate for and address human rights and women’s rights violations. Social attitudes do not seem to have altered society’s perceptions about domestic violence and there has been a lack of engagement with socio-cultural and customary law practices that often invalidate the mandated provisions of the women’s constitutional rights. As the representative from Women for Afghan Women (WAW), an organisation which works to give aid, advice and shelter to survivors of domestic violence, suggests, clerics should give far greater emphasis in their sermons.¹³⁷ The view that “family problems should be handled at home or with elders” continues, and “women who do seek outside aid are often shunned by their own families.”¹³⁸ Also, according to AMICS, 2010-11, 92 percent of women accept domestic violence such as hitting or beating. The main reasons cited for acceptance are: neglect

133 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, “Opium Survey 2010.” See also The World Bank, “Afghanistan Economic Update, 2012, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management, South Asia Region” (World Bank: 2012), <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/734470WP0Afgha0C0disclosed011010120.pdf> (accessed 10 June 2013).

134 Veena Das, “Violence, Gender and Subjectivity,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 37 (2008): 283-299.

135 Parin Dossa, “Structural Violence in Afghanistan: Gendered Memory, Narratives, and Food,” *Medical Anthropology: Cross-Cultural Studies in Health and Illness* (2012): hard copy in press. See also Catherine Panter-Brick, Mark Eggerman, Viani Gonzales and Sarah Safdar, “Violence, Suffering, and Mental Health in Afghanistan: A School-based Survey,” *The Lancet* 374, no. 9692 (5 September 2009): 807-16.

136 United Nations, CEDAW, “Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women Afghanistan Combined Initial And Second Periodic Report” (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 2011): 18, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/CEDAW.C.AFG.1-2.pdf> (accessed 10 June 2013).

137 Shukria Khaliqi, Regional Office Manager - Women for Afghan Women, AREU interview, 26 November 2012.

138 Samuel Hall Consulting, “Perceptions of ANP.”

of children (61 percent), not taking the husband's permission to leave the house (78 percent), arguing with their husbands (76 percent), wearing inappropriate clothing (63 percent), refusal to have sexual intercourse (46 percent) or burning the food (31 percent).¹³⁹

Family courts have not been instituted in most provinces; where instituted, not all function. The informal justice mechanisms, which many women approach by both default and tradition,¹⁴⁰ do not have women represented in the *jirgas* and *shuras*. The informal courts, based on subjective patriarchal tribal and customary laws and practices with deep-rooted gender inequalities,¹⁴¹ continue to hold sway in much of the country where the writ of formal law is notable only in its absence.¹⁴² Women take their issues to such courts in the absence of a functioning judicial system, ignorance about alien legal processes, financial and mobility constraints, and the social pressures that stigmatise a public approach to private matters.¹⁴³ Yet more women (42 percent) than men (38 percent) are likely to approach formal than informal courts.¹⁴⁴ In 2007, the informal justice system still handled an estimated 80 percent of the cases¹⁴⁵ and attempts were made, in 2010, by the government to give legitimacy to informal courts and justice processes.¹⁴⁶

139 Central Statistics Organisation, "AMICS 2010-2011." See also Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, "Annual Report 1389" (Kabul: AIHRC, 2010/11), <http://www.aihrc.org.af/media/files/Reports/Annual%20Reports/inside.pdf> (accessed 8 June 2013).

140 Rebecca Gang, "Community-Based Dispute Resolution Processes in Kabul City" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, March 2011), <http://www.areas.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/1107E-CBDR%20Processes%20in%20Kabul%20City%20CS%202011%20web.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

141 The rights granted to women under the Civil Code as well as Hanafi jurisprudence are ineffective. Local decision-making bodies like *shuras* favour traditional norms, like Pashtunwali, which permits *baad* in conflict resolution, denies women land ownership and restricts marriage and inheritance rights.

142 After the Taliban's departure, "the enthusiasm for restoring a highly centralized government was confined to the international community and the Kabul elite that ran it." Thomas Barfield, *Cultural and Political History*. However, "even in the urban and relatively well-developed boundaries of Kabul, formal institutions often rely on informal traditional conciliators, known as *mosliheen* or *hakamain*, to adjudicate civil, commercial and some aspects of criminal cases. Over the course of one four-month period, 11 of 27 civil and seven of 23 criminal cases were resolved through conciliator mediation." Zuhail Nesari and Karima Tawfik, "The Kabul Courts and Conciliators: Mediating Cases in Urban Afghanistan" (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, Peacebrief 101, 29 July 2011), <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/PB101.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

143 Christine Noelle-Karimi, "Village Institutions in the Perception of National and International Actors in Afghanistan" (Bonn, Germany: Center for Development Research, University of Bonn, Working Paper Series 65, April 2006), http://www.zef.de/fileadmin/webfiles/downloads/zef_wp/wp65.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013);

The Asia Foundation, "Afghanistan in 2007: A Survey of the Afghan People" (Kabul: The Asia Foundation, 2007), <http://www.asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/AGsurvey07.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013); Hangama Anwari et al., "Gendered Access to Justice"; Jennifer Brick, "The Political Economy of Customary Village Organizations in Rural Afghanistan" (Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Central Eurasian Studies Society, Washington, DC, September 2008), <http://www.bu.edu/aia/brick.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

144 Ruth Rennie, "State Building, Security and Social Change in Afghanistan: Reflection on a Survey on Afghan People" (Kabul: The Asia Foundation, 2008), <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/2008surveycompanionvolumefinal.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

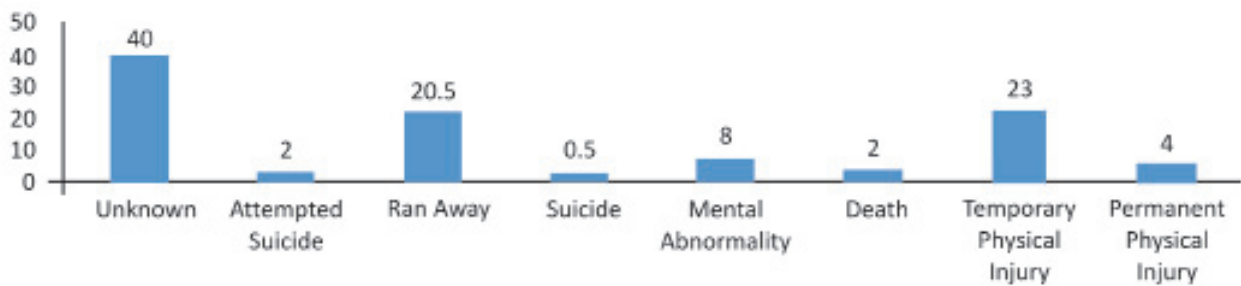
145 Center for Policy and Human Development, "Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007: Bridging Modernity and Tradition: Rule of Law and the Search for Justice" (Islamabad: Army Press, 2007), http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/asiathepacific/afghanistan/afghanistan_2007_en.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

146 Many NATO governments, notably the U.S. and Britain, have promoted the strengthening and official recognition of this attempt, "despite the explicit protestations of most Kabul-based human rights activists." Torunn Wimpelmann, "Promoting Women's Rights in Afghanistan: A Call for Less Aid and More Politics" (Oslo: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center, NOREF Policy Brief, October 2012): 5, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/7b618f95386a5a70f36422867871046c.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013). "Many

Box 2: Women’s Jamaats

In Southern India, family disputes are settled by *Jamaats*—all male bodies which apply the Shari’ah law to cases without allowing women to be present, even to defend themselves. Recognising this fundamental inequity, a group of women in 2004 established a women’s *Jamaat*, which soon became a network of 12,000 members spread over 12 districts. Despite enormous resistance, they have been able to settle more than 8,000 cases to date, ranging from divorce to wife beating to brutal murders and more. The women’s *Jamaat* has acquired power through both communal education and the leaders’ persistent, tenacious and compassionate investigation of the crimes. Above all, the women’s *Jamaat* exists to hold their male counterparts and local police to account, and to reform a profoundly corrupt system which allows men to take refuge in the most extreme interpretation of the *Qur’an* to justify violence toward women.¹⁴⁷

Figure 4: Violence against women and its effects¹⁴⁸



Lastly, the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) is severely lacking¹⁴⁹. There are nine female members of the 70-member High Peace Council¹⁵⁰ and 2 women in the Council’s 15-member governing body assigned with carrying out peace negotiations with the Taliban and other militia groups. There is no reliable information on the number of women in the provincial peace councils; according to a member of a provincial council, there

criminal and civil cases are currently being settled through traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. Such mechanisms are suffused with practices that severely violate Afghan law, women’s human rights, as well as women’s rights under Sharia law. Thus, they cause serious setbacks for women’s rights in Afghanistan. Further, traditional mechanisms often cross the line from mediation over to judgment and punishment, which is illegal. Only the formal justice system of the government has the legal right to determine whether a crime has been committed and to convict and mete out appropriate punishment in a proper court of law.” Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, “National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan” (Kabul, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2008): 41.

147 Deepa Dhanraj, “Invoking Justice,” Film Segment: <http://www.wmm.com/advscripts/wmmvideo.aspx?pid=192> (Women Make Movies, 2012).

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/09_12/09_17/091712_india.htm (accessed 8 June 2013).

148 United Nations, CEDAW, “Consideration of Reports Submitted under CEDAW,” 18.

149 For example, Zarin Hamid, “UN SCR 1325: Implementation in Afghanistan” (Kabul: Afghan Women’s Network, 2011), http://www.gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/Afghanistan_Report.pdf (accessed 14 June 2013).

150 Created as part of a Joint Secretariat to oversee the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) after the Peace Jirga of 2010. In 2011, the APRP issued a Gender Policy, including the creation of a Gender Oversight Committee, a Gender Unit in the Joint Secretariat and Provincial and District Level Gender Steering Committees, Stefanie Nijssen, “The Peace Process & Afghanistan’s Women Part 2 of a 4 Part-Series on Peace and Reintegration in Afghanistan”, (Kabul: Civil-Military Fusion Centre, 2012). https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/afg/Documents/Governance/Afghanistan_Women_Reconciliation.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

are about two-three female members out of approximately 25-30 members in each council¹⁵¹. Moreover, regarding the different regional talks held with neighbouring countries negotiating with militia groups over the coming transition and deciding the conditions for it¹⁵², women members say they are either not invited or told about the meetings; sometimes the meetings are held at night when women find it difficult to attend¹⁵³. A National Action Plan on Afghanistan's implementation of the UNSCR1325 is yet to be formulated.

Of equally grave concern is the arming and funding of ex-militia to establish village-based defence forces, the Afghan Local Police¹⁵⁴; such methods have been tried in many post-conflict areas and are associated with ongoing human rights violations, whether as militia or as part of the legitimate government¹⁵⁵. The National Reconciliation, General Amnesty and Stability Law (2009) gives amnesty to all those currently in government for conflict crimes, including for crimes against women and for sexual crimes¹⁵⁶. A national strategy on justice and reconciliation, with a timeline on reconciliation points, their ideation and internalisation, needs to be pursued. This is necessary for, on the one hand, restitution and the healing of a society left exhausted from three decades of brutal violence as well as, on the other hand, to sustain *islah* (peace efforts through community-based reconciliation, arbitration) in the coming years¹⁵⁷.

In tandem, though, the passage of such laws as the Shi'a Personal Law (2009)¹⁵⁸ and the National Reconciliation, General Amnesty and National Stability Law (2009)¹⁵⁹ are

151 Anonymity requested, Personal communication, at the Women, Peace and Security Forum, Kabul, 4-6 December, 2012.

152 The Afghan People's Dialogue on Peace, a process that included 78 discussion groups across Afghanistan in October 2011, recorded many Afghan men and women saying they were worried that women's rights would become a casualty of peace. The Dialogue report noted that many of the 1,500 participants interviewed said that women's rights to education, work and freedom of movement in public spaces should not be compromised and that Taliban-era abuses against women should not be permitted to return; Stefanie Nijssen, "The Peace Process and Afghanistan's Women", 5.

153 . Anonymity requested, Personal communication, at the Women, Peace and Security Forum, Kabul, 4-6 December, 2012.

154 International Development Committee, "Afghanistan: Development Progress and Prospects after 2014: Sixth Report of Session 2012-13" (London: House of Commons, Vol 1, 2012), 21, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmintdev/403/403.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2013).

155 "[I]n May 2012, in the NATO Summit, Afghan Women's Network called for: "a more transparent vetting process for the recruitment of Afghan Local Police and other security forces so that those guilty of previous human rights violations do not automatically become part of the security forces, including a community-based vetting process that allows women to report on the background of those being recruited", Pirjo Jukarainen "Implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan- Analysis of Finland's Activities during the Period of the National 1325 Action Plan 2008-2011", (www.1325.fi : 1325 Network Finland, 2012):8. http://www.1325.fi/tiedostot/Jukarainen_Afghanistan_report_final_2012.pdf (accessed 10 June 2013).

156 The Law, granting amnesty to perpetrators of gross gender base violence, threatens constitutional rights, besides contravening the provisions of the Convention on Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity 1968, which Afghanistan ratified in 1983.

157 See, for example, "Position Paper, Demands of Afghanistan Civil Society on the occasion of Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan - 08 July 2012," http://www.af.boell.org/web/Democratization-Demands_of_Afghanistan_Civil_Society_on_the_occasion_of_Tokyo_Conference_374.html (accessed 10 June 2013), Emily Winterbotham, "Healing the Legacies of Conflict in Afghanistan Community Voices on Justice, Peace and Reconciliation," (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2012).

158 See also Lauryn Oates, "A Closer Look: The Policy and Lawmaking Process Behind the Shiite Personal Status Law," (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit Issues Paper Series, September 2009): 28, <http://www.areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/935E-%20A%20Closer%20Look%20-%20The%20Policy%20and%20Law-making%20Process%20Behind%20the%20Shiite%20Personal%20Stauts%20Law.pdf>(accessed 1 April 2013).

159 The law, granting amnesty to perpetrators of gross gender-based violence, threatens constitutional rights, besides contravening the provisions of the Convention on Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations

detrimental to women's limited gains. And, in 2012, the President's office endorsed a National Ulema Council statement which declared that women are secondary to men, that certain types of violence against women are allowed by Shari'ah,¹⁶⁰ contrary to the provisions and penalties for domestic violence offered in the EVAW.¹⁶¹ It also suggested legal measures for sex-segregated occupational and health facilities and the need for a woman to be accompanied by a *mahram*.

There are five issues of alarming concern for gendered rights: trafficking, the rights of disabled women, the situation of women-headed households and chronically poor women, the situation for displaced women returnees and child marriage. These cannot be elaborated here due to lack of space.

2.2 Women's economic rights and empowerment

The areas in which gender mainstreaming has received substantive focus in, for example, education and health, have shown some progress, which, considering the nature of the deprivations faced by women, is appropriate and urgently needed. However, the focus also seems to have fit well with the traditional power structures in Afghanistan that construct women as dependent.

The employment sector during this past decade has not received attention.¹⁶² There is a lack of data on employment by age, sex, education level, labour force participation and its sector-wise data, unemployment and underemployment rates by provinces and sectors, wage levels, as well as neglect of much collaborative or centralised, sector-based programming. The generation of jobs; the review of the labour, trade and investment policies; investment in agriculture or small scale industry; or reviews of the financial markets' domestic and international linkages all have been highly inadequate. Forty-eight percent of the people surveyed in the Asia Foundation (2012) report on economic development in Afghanistan¹⁶³ responded that their living standards have remained the same, and 9 percent stated that they are worse off than they were under the Taliban regime.

In particular, it must be noted that the economic empowerment of women has not been reviewed as much¹⁶⁴ in this past decade, as compared to the number of projects undertaken and resources invested. Afghan women's economic engagement has generally been overlooked in favour of vocational training and micro-jobs like sewing or learning to operate a computer, which have had no specific market outlets¹⁶⁵ and which,

to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity 1968 which Afghanistan ratified in 1983.

160 Official declaration by the National Ulema Council of Afghanistan on 2 March 2012, and endorsed by the President on 6 March. See Sari Kuovo, "A Slippery Slope: What Happened to Women's Rights in March 2012?" (Kabul: Afghanistan Analysts Network, 2012).

161 In May, 2013, the EVAW law was debated without endorsement by the Parliament.

162 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Economy, "ANDS Annual Progressive Report 1389" (General Director of Policy, ANDS Monitoring and Evaluation, 2011): 3. "The labor market has not yet been developed; statistics or labor market analyses are not available. This is due to accurate statistics not being collated and observed by relevant ministries." And, page 44: "The government has not yet developed its own set of economic objectives based on our guiding principles, neither for the economy as a whole nor for individual sectors."

163 Abdul Qayum Mohmand, "The Prospects for Economic Development in Afghanistan, Reflections on a Survey of the Afghan People, Part 2 of 4, Occasional Paper, No. 14" (Asia Foundation, June 2012).

164 For example, of a total of US\$5.4 billion expended on projects by the World Bank from 2002-12, US\$597.4 million were for projects related to women. See Appendix 4.

165 For example, Ministry of Economy, "ANDS Annual Progressive Report, 1389," page 44 says: "In total

moreover, have provided extremely limited access to economic opportunities. Some programmes have focused on urban economic renewal but have allowed a non-gender specific programme focus. Further, in a country where 77 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture-related activities and 55 percent solely in agriculture, neglecting its economic potential is detrimental to the majority of Afghanistan's population. A USAID study¹⁶⁶ states that "the greatest hope for bringing this underutilised part of the economy [women] into the workforce may lie in the reinvigoration of the carpet industry and agricultural processing."

The government's current emphasis on private-sector led growth is detrimental to women. The Afghan Constitution advocates the free market with little or no state intervention; economic development is within the remit of the private sector. The free-market approach is neither pro-poor nor equitable especially when social protection measures are not in place and poverty and near-poverty levels are so high. Vulnerable groups like women who have the least access to education, training, work experience or marketable skills and to mobility, capital, credit or business acumen will face an uphill struggle in capturing and retaining footholds in the unfolding economy. Women are further ring-fenced by their reproductive and caring roles in terms of time availability, especially given the high reproductive rates and limited access to health and care facilities. Other socio-cultural norms ensure that access to the public sphere of markets is necessarily mediated by males.

Access, especially direct access, to economic betterment is thus blocked in many ways for women in a cash economy whose locus is the market/public sphere; their entry into it is all but "forbidden." This is also to be seen in light of the constrained status of Afghanistan's middle-class. Women are not to be seen much, except to some minimal extent in government institutions, or as managers, producers, regulators, traders, teachers, voters, and similar occupations which make a market economy function. The market economy also depends on a functioning system of laws, courts, schools, credit, electricity, information, security, transportation, and similar sectors, all of which are currently either absent or woefully inadequate in Afghanistan. In the current climate, micro-enterprises, which are mostly male-dominated, and subsistence farming, in which women participate but within adequate recognition and remuneration, thrive better.

Yet Afghanistan's need to generate employment is crucial, particularly given its estimated 2.8 percent annual population growth. This section will first look at the available data on women's labour force participation and the nature of women's participation, and then at the efforts taken in this decade to enhance women's engagement in agriculture, horticulture and livestock and trade.¹⁶⁷ It will conclude by offering some suggestions on women's inclusion in sectors perceived to have economic potential in Afghanistan in the future. In doing so, it is conscious of privileging a market-driven position over other approaches, particularly those oriented toward more developmental or social protection strategies. This is partially due to limitations of space and scope and partially in response to the free-trade approach that pre-dominates Afghanistan's existing economic strategies. Yet a particular tilt in this section toward the small-farm gendered economy may provide a counter-force that propels and develops a rights-based solidarity among small-scale and individual women producers.

186,409 women have received literacy training, attended workshops, campaigns, technical and vocational trainings in the capital and provinces." There is no mention of the types of training or of their impact on women's income generation.

166 BoozAllen Hamilton, "Afghanistan's Agenda for Action: Developing the Trade and Business Environment" (USAID, Business Climate Legal and Institutional Reform (BizCLIR) Project, August, 2007): 8.

167 Lack of space prevents this report from looking into, for example, gender and opium economy, women's roles in food security and access to credit, nor does it look at gendered rural enterprise and handicraft.

The informal sector in Afghanistan and women's empowerment

At the outset, it is useful to classify the informal sector in Afghanistan into two segments, based on the type of activity, number of people involved in the activity and the complexity of transactions. As such, each segment requires a different strategy for harnessing the underlying potential into income-generating growth and economic empowerment of women.

1. The smaller segment can be classified as Income-Generating Activities (IGAs). In most developing countries, this is the predominant type of informal activity. Examples of IGAs in Afghanistan would include seasonal trading of agricultural produce, keeping domestic animals, and many traditional craft activities like embroidery and carpet-weaving, especially in rural areas. Such activities are pre-entrepreneurial, and of a subsistence nature, supplementing farming incomes. They usually concern part-time, seasonal activities, based on traditional technologies, local materials and local markets. This segment usually employs a few family members, apprentices and a few permanent workers. The technology is usually purely traditional. These activities are not usually scalable.
2. The second segment—small and medium enterprises (SMEs)—comprises businesses that are bigger than IGAs. They could employ about 10 to 20 (sometimes 50) people. They use non-traditional or “modern” technologies in at least some of the productive aspects of the transformation process. Their products and services range from simple to complex and similarly span a wide range of consumers. The marketing pattern may be somewhat complex, reflecting innovation in raw material procurement and in sale of products. SMEs are (on the margin of) formal: they are usually registered with the local government and tend to pay some taxes. Examples of small enterprises are: garment assembly, motorised transport, building and construction and medium-scale industrial agro-processing. Many of these businesses have strong potential for growth, and for the development of organisational and managerial skills.

2.2.1 Women's labour participation

In 2002, female employment was 17 percent of the total employment in the non-agricultural sector.¹⁶⁸ In the agricultural sector, a report on the NRVA 2003¹⁶⁹ survey on employment and rural wages by gender indicated a very low participation of women in income-earning activities and reported that their income was about 40-50 percent of that paid to men. While very few were engaged in planting, harvesting, and a marginal number in irrigation or shepherding,¹⁷⁰ more women were employed as domestics or in self-employment through home-based handicraft-making, weaving, tailoring and embroidery; wood-gathering and other natural resources were also used for income generation. Fewer numbers of women were participating in the waged economy in the southern (13.7 percent), central (33.8 percent) and eastern (39 percent) parts of Afghanistan and more in the west-central (45 percent), southwestern (52.7 percent),

168 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, “Afghanistan's Millennium Development Goals, Report 2005 Vision 2020”, Kabul: United Nations Development Programme,”39, Table 6.2, <http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/MDG-2005-vision2020.pdf> (accessed 9 June 2013), citing United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2002).

169 Carried out in July-September 2003 by MRRD.

170 Hector Maletta, “Gender and Employment in Rural Afghanistan, 2003-5,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* (2003): 173-196.

western (79.9 percent), northeastern (80.9), and northern (90.25) parts¹⁷¹. Those working in embroidery and handicrafts were predominantly in the northeast and north and belonged to the medium and better-off category of the sample population, while the maximum number of women engaged in weaving was in the north, northeast and west as also for domestic service and in gathering wood. About 44 percent) of women had some control over the income they generated.

By 2007, Afghan women living in certain urban areas were able to set up their own businesses or go back into teaching, health care jobs, etc. However, huge inequalities in employment remained in rural areas, with women being restricted, to low-paid employment. In the case of urban sector employments such as education, health care and service industries, women continued to be in the minority. About three 8 percent of women worked in the formal economy¹⁷², 44 percent were in the informal sector, 32 percent worked unpaid in income generation within the family and around 7 percent of women were unemployed; around 48 percent were underemployed.¹⁷³ On average, the number of female full-time employees ranged from 3 percent in small firms (1-19 employees) to 4.2 percent in medium-sized enterprises (20-99 employees) and 1.6 percent in firms with 100+ employees.¹⁷⁴ Only 0.7 percent of firms surveyed had women at manager level while 2.8 percent of firms had female partnership in ownership.

In 2008, women's share in employment in the non-agricultural sector was 18.4 percent.¹⁷⁵ In 2009, according to a survey of non-agricultural economic activity in Afghanistan,¹⁷⁶ 57 percent of workers engaged in the manufacturing sector were women as were 56 percent in the education and 18 percent in the health and social work sectors. Women were barely represented in trade and repair, construction (1 percent), accommodation and food services (1 percent), electricity, gas and water (2 percent), mining and quarrying (3 percent), information and communication (3 percent), real estate (3 percent), and transport and storage (5 percent). Of these, the sectors which provide maximum employment for workers (female or male) were education (average of 20.6 workers per establishment), mining and quarrying, and construction (10.6 workers each, average). Manufacturing accounted for an average of only 3.6 workers per establishment while health and social work provided for an average of three workers per establishment; however, manufacturing had only 1.3 paid employees, health and social work 1.7 and education 18.2 average paid employees per establishment.¹⁷⁷ Education and the health

171 Hector Maletta, "Women at Work: Gender, Wealth, Wages and Employment in Rural Afghanistan, 2002-2003" (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigación en Ciencias Sociales, Universidad del Salvador, April 2004), http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=575026, (accessed 9 June 2013).

172 A figure far lower than the eight percent shown in 1989 statistics as women engaged in the formal sector; see Valentine Moghadam, "Patriarchy and the Politics of Gender in Modernising Societies: Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan", *International Sociology*, 7, no. 1 (1992): 35-53. It is also lower than the 1981 statistics of eight percent; see Hanne Christensen, "The Reconstruction of Afghanistan: A Chance for Rural Afghan Women" (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2000), 8.

173 Peter Pauli, "NRVA 2007/8."

174 The World Bank and International Finance Corporation, "Enterprise Surveys - Afghanistan" (Washington, DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2008): 14.

175 The World Bank, "Share of women employed in the non-agricultural sector (% of total non-agricultural employment)," http://search.worldbank.org/quickview?name=Share+of+%3Cem%3Ewomen%3C%2Fem%3E+employed+in+the+nonagricultural+sector+%28%25+of+total+nonagricultural+employment%29&id=SL.EMP.INSV.FE.ZS&type=Indicators&cube_no=2&qterm=afghanistan+women+agriculture (accessed 10 June 2013).

176 Asian Development Bank and Central Statistics Organisation, "Afghanistan Integrated Business Enterprise Survey Report 2009" (Kabul: Central Statistics Organisation, 2009), <http://cso.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/AFG2009EnterpriseSurvey8Sept2010382011123844606553325325.pdf> (accessed 10 June 2013).

177 Asian Development Bank and Central Statistics Organisation, "Afghanistan Integrated Business Enterprise Survey Report 2009."

and services sectors appear to have the greatest potential in terms of their capacity to employ women since jobs in these sectors are usually aligned with traditional gender roles although manufacturing too offered a high potential.

In 2011, the female labour force participation rate (15+) was 15.8 percent¹⁷⁸ and the female-to-male labour participation ratio was 0.196, similar to 1990 figures of 0.190 but higher than 2000 figures of 0.166.¹⁷⁹

2.2.2 Sectors of women's key labour participation in IGAs

Agriculture

Agriculture, including crops, livestock, forestry and fishery, has traditionally been the mainstay of the Afghan economy. In recent decades income through opium generation and export has increased dramatically. And 59.1 percent¹⁸⁰ of the population is engaged in agriculture, mostly working in low-productivity and subsistence-type production.¹⁸¹ Only 12 percent of land in Afghanistan is arable and only half of this currently under cultivation; 46 percent is under permanent pasture¹⁸² and 37 percent of rural households have less than 3 percent of the irrigated land.¹⁸³ Since landholdings are small—less than 0.5 ha of irrigated land¹⁸⁴—households and families that own land can rarely depend on it for their entire source of food or household income. Instead, they supplement their income through handicrafts, trade, livestock, farm labour, services and employment, both seasonal and part-time.¹⁸⁵ The contribution of agriculture to the GDP has come down from 31.11 percent in 2009-10 to an estimated 26.74 percent in 2011-12.¹⁸⁶

Of the economically active female population of Afghanistan in 2010, 32.1 percent were involved in agriculture.¹⁸⁷ Typically, female farmers and small farmers are the major contributors to Afghanistan's agricultural economy, even with small landholdings.

178 The World Bank, "Labour Force, female (% of total labour force)," http://search.worldbank.org/quickview?name=Labor+%3Cem%3Eforce%3C%2Fem%3E%2C+female+%28%25+of+total+labor+%3Cem%3Eforce%3C%2Fem%3E%29&id=SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS&type=Indicators&cube_no=2&qterm=afghanistan+women+labor+force+participation (accessed 10 June 2013).

179 United Nations Development Programme, "International Human Development Indicators," <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/48906.html> (accessed 11 June 2013).

180 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Economy, "Afghanistan Provincial Brief, 2011."

181 International Labour Organisation, "Afghanistan: Time to Move to Sustainable Jobs Study on the State of Employment in Afghanistan" (Kabul: International Labour Organisation, May, 2012): 27. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_4066.pdf (accessed on 9 June 2013).

182 CSO, "Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12," Agriculture and Development, 138, <http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/Agriculture%20Development.pdf> (accessed 9 June 2013)

183 Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food, Master Plan (Kabul: 2005), cited in Adam Pain and Sayed Mohammad Shah, "Policy Making in Agriculture and Rural Development in Afghanistan" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2009): 44.

184 Adam Pain and Sayed Mohammad Shah, "Policymaking in Agriculture and Rural Development," 14, citing Asian Development Bank, "Rebuilding Afghanistan's Agriculture Sector" (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2003): 23.

185 International Labour Organisation, "The state of employment in Afghanistan," 17.

186 CSO, "Statistical Yearbook 2011-12," National Accounts Table 7.4, 133, [http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/National%20Accounts\(3\).pdf](http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/National%20Accounts(3).pdf), (accessed on 10 June 2013).

187 Food and Agriculture Organisation, "The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11, Women in Agriculture Closing the gender gap for development" (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2011): Table A4, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf> (accessed 10 June 2013).

Equally, this sector has been a chief vehicle for women's income generation activities and for their contribution to the economy. Women form an integral part of the informal economy and of the agricultural value chains; their involvement is equal to that of men in all agricultural produce. The specific division of labour within this sector, however, depends upon the region, communities and ethnicities of the women as well as their age, class, the number and age of the other women in their household, and other related factors. Women from the better-off farming families tend to do farm-related work that is more within the household while women from sharecropping families tend to work with men on the land, seasonally, and in certain activities. Unmarried and married women rarely own land. Daughters, married or unmarried, may sometimes have access to land use and to the produce of their labour but even if inherited they do not have the selling or mortgaging rights. Widowed women may inherit land sometimes and lend it out for sharecropping or work on it themselves.

Women's involvement in agricultural activities as compared to men could be affected by various factors: whether a woman belongs to a landed or landless household, village-specific resource sharing arrangements, household composition, knowledge of agricultural activities, marital status, wealth, tradition, location and size of villages, and the nature of NGO projects working in a given village.¹⁸⁸ Women's farm-based activities include pre- and post-harvest activities: removing stones from the soil, seed-bed preparation, weeding, cleaning and preparing the seed, moving the wheat for storage and separating the wheat from the husk in preparation for making flour, preparing the meals for male household members, and in certain areas, working on the land. Men's agricultural activities such as land preparation, planting/sowing, and fertiliser application are usually completed within a specific time frame, while women's agricultural activities such as weeding are recurrent, daily activities that last from the time the seed is planted to harvest time.¹⁸⁹ Although in many regions of Afghanistan women's work in farming activities is mentioned as some pre-harvesting and mostly post-harvesting work, interviews with representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)¹⁹⁰ show that women in Nuristan and Kunar provinces undertake the ploughing of fields and a host of other activities normally associated exclusively with men. Regional variations mean that women may not be allowed to plough or harvest the fields in the south.

Women farmers, however, face both invisibility and poor access to agricultural resources; poor recognition in formal methods of accounting and programming; lack of land ownership; insecure tenure; insecure control over land and its produce; fewer working animals needed in farming; lack of control over the livestock and over the income from livestock (whether owned or managed); socio-cultural constraints for having direct market access; lesser or no access to newer varieties of seeds, fertilisers, pest control measures and mechanical tools; unequal access to year-round or full-time jobs; lack of credit and collateral; acute disparity in daily wages; less education and less access to aid and extension services. In sum, there is lack of gendered equity in availability and accessibility to opportunities and women in agriculture and related activities generally remain at the micro-scale of production.

188 Jo Grace, "Who Owns the Farm? Rural Women's Access to Land and Livestock" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2005): 16.

189 Thomas Fattori, "Organizing Afghan Women to Generate Income from Poultry," Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP) in Afghanistan (Washington, DC: Food and Agriculture Organisation and Chemonics International, 2005), <http://globalfoodchainpartnerships.org/cairo/papers/TomFattoriAfghanistan.pdf>; see also World Bank, "National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction."

190 Nasrullah Bakhtiani, Director, Monitoring and Evaluation Department - Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, AREU interview, 18 December 2012; Anonymity required, MAIL representative, AREU interview, 1 January 2013.

Box 3: Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), India

SEWA sources ways of circumventing traditional gendered barriers. For example, prohibition of women's ownership of land has long been one of the ideologies sustained by a patriarchal system. "In the arid areas of Banaskantha [district], attempting direct ownership of land would have led to a long struggle lasting at least a decade. By organising themselves into Pani Panchayats (Water Councils) of SEWA, now they own water, its source or its supply, which has in effect, in an arid land, made the women joint owners of the land."¹⁹¹ SEWA aims its organising capacities at areas where it can make a difference, "recognising that since economic and social structures are so inter-related, the solutions too have to be integrated... where various inputs are needed not one after the other but simultaneously."¹⁹²

Only women can be full members of SEWA. For several reasons it was thought necessary to have a separate organisation for women. Social customs and impediments imposed by the family and the community have restricted women's development. Experience has shown that when men attended meetings, women either became silent observers or left altogether. Such situations, though they may not be created or desired by the male participants, were nonetheless common. It is felt that unless women acquire the ability and confidence to participate equally with men, the situation will not change. At an initial stage women should be provided with the necessary assistance to learn new attributes and skills, and to develop their self-confidence. When women are able and willing to face men on an equal footing in all spheres of activity, female and male workers must come together in the common struggle for social change.¹⁹³

Box 4: Women-only spaces, Herat and Samangan

*"Past practices in Afghanistan have demonstrated that, even in more conservative areas – such as Helmand – where women's mobility is highly restricted, landowners and fellow villagers are receptive to creating walled-off areas in which women can work. As a part of the perennial horticulture component of MAIL's Horticulture and Livestock Project, farmers are encouraged to forgo some production of staple crops and instead create an orchard on part of their land, on which women can work exclusively. In Herat and Samangan, women were trained to weave gabions, an activity they undertook from within a compound. This was an initiative of women's CDCs, but was warmly received and accepted by male members of the villages. The women chosen to work on the program were identified through a transparent process of wealth ranking undertaken at the village level and overseen by the women's CDCs."*¹⁹⁴

191 Ela Bhatt, "Late Early Years - SEWA's Perspectives on Early Year after Indian Independence," Inaugural Address, The Early Years after Indian Independence: Women's Perspectives, August 9-11, 1997, Baroda, Indian Association of Women's Studies, Centre for Women's Development Studies and Women's Studies Research Centre of M.S. University (Ahmedabad: SEWA Academy, 1994): 4.

192 Reema Nanavaty, "Making The Poor Women Reach Markets: 'SEWA's Journey,'" Annual Meetings in Prague, International Monetary Fund, The World Bank Group (Ahmedabad: SEWA, 2000): 10.

193 S. Selliah, *The Self-Employed Women's Association, Ahmedabad, India* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1989), 14.

194 Asta Olesen, et al., "National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction."

Horticulture

Women's major contributions in horticulture are in dried fruits (grapes, raisins, almonds, saffron), medicinal plants, and spices and seeds. In 2011-12, dried fruits contributed 32 percent of Afghanistan's exports, while medicinal plants contributed 18 percent.¹⁹⁵ Of the dried fruits, grapes and raisins form 48 percent of exports and almonds form 18 percent. Women are also involved in fruit and vegetable cultivation through post-harvest crop processing activities such as cleaning and drying vegetables.¹⁹⁶ Grapes are grown in Nangarhar, Nimruz, Kandahar, Kabul, Parwan, Jawzjan and Herat provinces, saffron (a recent crop in Afghanistan) in Herat, and almonds in Samangan, Balkh, Parwan, Kunduz and Daikundi provinces.

Studies on women's presence in the raisin, almond and saffron sub-sectors show that women are heavily involved in the irrigation, weeding and harvesting of these three crops.¹⁹⁷ Women farmers with small land holdings are less able to access innovative technology (dryers for saffron, shelling for almonds, trellising for grapes, etc.). Moreover, extension training service beneficiaries are often identified on the basis of land ownership which means women are excluded. Women's socio-cultural access to local produce markets is not addressed by transportation mechanism patterns.¹⁹⁸ The male networks of middlemen, village-level traders and input suppliers are generally out of bounds for women.

However, there has been an increase in the grouping of horticulturalists into cooperatives and producer groups and women producer groups are emerging. Among the saffron growers, for example, Herat has two women producer associations who cultivate saffron. In Pashtoon Zarghoon District the producer association (of 275 women) owns the land while in Ghoryan District the association (480 women, including many widows), lease the land.¹⁹⁹ Since they have cooperative strength, they are better able to reach markets in which there are also some women domestic retailers. These women domestic retailers are in direct contact with both the domestic consumer and the international informal exporter. However, women are not part of the input supplier side of saffron growing.

In the grapes/raisin and almond sectors, while women are mostly involved in the drying, cleaning, sorting, grading/sorting, with some level of contribution in packaging, they are not involved at all in the post-harvest processing, including in dealing with middlemen, traders, wholesalers, retailers and exporters. Further, "[r]ural women perform harvesting and post-harvest processing of raisins, almonds, and saffron as a part of household chores; thus, their work goes unpaid. Women in urban or peri-urban areas are paid 100-200 Afghani per day, or 100 Af per 50-kilogram processed, and are hired

195 CSO, "Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12," External Trade, 224.

196 For example, Alice Kerr-Wilson and Adam Pain, "Three Villages in Alingar, Laghman: A Case Study of Rural Livelihoods" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2003).

197 The World Bank, "Understanding Gender in Agricultural Value Chains"; Saeed Parto, Anastasiya Hozyainova, Rozbih Mihran, Jos Winters, Nafasgul Karimi, Zarghona Saify and Joost Gorter, "Gender and the Agricultural Innovation System in Rural Afghanistan: Barriers and Bridges" (Kabul: Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organisation, 2011).

198 J. Howe, "Rural Access and Mobility in Afghanistan - A Gender-sensitive Analysis" (Washington, DC: World Bank, March 2010); Ruxandra Boros, "Afghan Women Entrepreneurs: At the Crossroads Between Globalization and Local Traditions," *International Journal of Business and Globalization*, 2, no. 4 (2008): 373-402; Julie Babinard, "World Bank Gender Transport Surveys An Overview" (Washington, DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2011), <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTTRANSPORT/Resources/336291-1227561426235/5611053-1231943010251/TRN-43-GenderSurveys.pdf> (accessed 10 June 2013).

199 The World Bank, "Understanding Gender in Agricultural Value Chains," 21.

by processors or wholesalers to clean, sort, grade and package raisins or almonds for national, regional and international markets.”²⁰⁰ Moreover, there are few or no women service providers in extension, credit, input supply, or marketing. Despite the key roles women play in harvesting and post-harvest processing, there is little or no training on quality control, including hygiene, sanitation, and higher-value varieties.

Unlike in agriculture, the key blockades to women small horticulturists or to women producer associations moving up in the value chain seem to be on the input side, in the spheres of post-harvest processing and marketing. The latter two are the key areas where greater income can accrue and where the conversion of women’s labour to the monetised market is effected, currently by male village level traders, sales agents, retailers and wholesalers. This not only prevents the woman worker from realising the full benefit of her labour but also prevents the direct interaction with key actors of the value chain.

The main constraints of women in the horticulture sub-sector are: socio-cultural barriers, access to land, capital and start-up funds, ineffective regulations, insufficient government programmes to encourage women to engage in entrepreneurial activity, lack of information on start-up funds, lack of product-specific financial services, segregation in the lower ends of the value-chains, inadequate reach of financial services, inadequate number of qualified women extension workers who are educated as well as mobile, inadequate, economical transportation, lack of access to time and labour-saving equipment and innovative technology.²⁰¹

Livestock

An integral part of most farming systems in Afghanistan is the livestock sector. It functions as a source of sustainable livelihoods, assets that can be accumulated, protection in times of seasonal changes, insurance in times of disasters, social currency used in marriage transactions (*pie-wasi*), and also for consumption.²⁰² Women have traditionally been given *pie-wasi* in Afghanistan and livestock animals and their produce are considered women’s domain, especially those animals that they bring in *pie-wasi* from their natal homes.

An activity that is within the household compounds, except for nomadic communities, women are responsible for all livestock-related activities from breeding, caring for newborn and sick animals, collecting fodder and feeding, to milking and making dairy produce such as *krut* (dried yoghurt balls), milk and butter. Many women also engage in spinning wool and some women use sheep’s wool for filling cushions and pillows and making *namads* (felted woollen rugs).²⁰³

Women’s greater responsibility for livestock does, to some extent, appear to translate into more decision-making power, as women appear to be able to sell the animals’ produce and sometimes make decisions over how to use the income generated. In parts of the northeast, women even interact with veterinarians; yet veterinary training is generally given to men in villages. However, in the move away from work responsibility to decision-making about the livestock, as Table 4 shows, men are more likely to be responsible.

200 The World Bank, “Understanding Gender in Agricultural Value Chains,” viii.

201 The World Bank, “Understanding Gender in Agricultural Value Chains”; Parto, et al, “Gender and the Agricultural Innovation System in Rural Afghanistan: Barriers and Bridges.”

202 Food and Agriculture Organisation, “Invisible Guardians, Women Manage Livestock Diversity” (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2012), <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i3018e/i3018e00.pdf> (accessed 11 June 2013).

203 Jo Grace, “Who Owns the Farm?”; Thomas Fattori, “Organizing Afghan Women to Generate Income from Poultry.”

Table 4: Women and men's responsibilities and control over livestock²⁰⁴

	CATTLE		SHEEP		GOATS	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Work Responsibility						
Feeding	69.14	19.46	59.70	26.60	63.86	23.37
Grazing	11.14	21.89	07.67	32.17	10.74	27.72
Watering	63.32	17.20	51.22	26.36	51.81	23.80
Tending young	81.86	04.86	58.54	16.49	70.68	13.50
Milking	84.13	01.87	57.49	04.88	77.94	04.93
Treating	22.73	74.44	38.21	56.91	33.82	59.22
Decision Making						
Purchasing animals	33.65	65.63	28.69	68.76	33.96	60.23
Purchasing feed	28.95	70.37	24.39	73.05	27.29	66.91
Selling animals	37.60	61.64	35.31	61.56	42.96	51.09
Selling milk	52.31	19.06	35.89	17.65	47.96	18.58
Selling wool			34.03	25.90		
Selling fiber					40.35	21.92
Treating	34.09	64.63	46.23	50.41	38.61	54.57

Poultry tends to be the traditional backyard system with feed being scavenged; meat and eggs are generally sufficient for household consumption. Nearly 93 percent of backyard chicken owners are women. However, there is evidence of poultry farming moving from the extensive and scavenger system to the more intensive semi-scavenger or semi-commercial systems. Through a Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program/Food and Agriculture Organisation (RAMP/FAO) project, for example, 850 village women producer groups have been formed that received training through female extension workers and a supply of vaccines and mixed feed; poultry advisors assisted and guided the producer groups to establish contacts with shop owners in the provincial centres for the marketing of eggs.²⁰⁵

Examples of women-owned or women-managed ventures, albeit funded and project-framed, in agriculture/horticulture/livestock are:²⁰⁶

- The Kabul Women's Farm Store: a women-only store for inputs such as seed, fertiliser, trellises, pruning tools, agricultural machinery (for sale or rent) and extension services (provided through training and demonstration plots and greenhouses).

204 Jennifer Solotaroff, Nadia Hashimi, Asta Olesen, "Main Report. Vol. 1 of Gender in Developing the Agriculture and Livestock Sectors: Increasing Women's Opportunities along Value Chains of Farm Products. Afghanistan gender mainstreaming implementation note series; no. 2" (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2012), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2012/07/16541786/gender-developing-agriculture-livestock-sectors-increasing-womens-opportunities-along-value-chains-farm-products-vol-1-2-main-report> (accessed 11 June 2013).

205 Thomas Fattori, "Organizing Afghan Women to Generate Income from Poultry."

206 The World Bank, "Understanding Gender in Agricultural Value Chains," 18-23.

- Roots of Peace: facilitates horticultural extension services from 18 women extension workers for women's producer groups; they receive training and information on improving post-harvest processing
- In Kabul City, the Afghan Pride Association (APA) is a processing centre owned and operated by women, with 200 members who work at the centre as processors or supervisors. The APA cooperates with women's associations such as the Afghanistan Women Business Council (AWBC).

Some strategies and programmes that have incorporated female groups or women's cooperatives include:

- Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP).
- The Facilitation of Sustainable Decent Work through Skills Development and Market-Friendly Labor Regulations Program.
- The National Rural Access Program (Agriculture and Rural Development [ARD] Cluster) that links farmers and communities to the growing national road network while providing nationwide labour-intensive road construction and maintenance. The ARD Cluster Programs generate jobs by increasing productivity in rural areas, helping the farm sector link agricultural and rural products to markets, and creating opportunities in rural enterprise in both agricultural and non-agricultural value-added activities.
- Agriculture Research and Extension Development Program (AGRED).
- Integrated Alternative Livelihood Program (IALP).
- Horticulture and Livestock Programme (HLP).
- Sustainable Agricultural Livelihoods (SAL).
- Agriculture Market Infrastructure Project (AMIP), including the Livestock Support Project and Horticulture Support Project.

Some of these projects also provide training through female extension workers, access to innovative technologies and improved market support. The extent of focus on women's groups is unclear in many but some like the AMIP and HLP are more clear. Moreover, in the overall principles driving these projects too, as Pain and Sayed (2009) note, of policy-making in MAIL, "[t]here are critical conditions or assumptions that have to be met if linkages between changes in agricultural productivity and effects on poverty can be created. Many of the positive effects of agricultural growth depend on small farms playing the major role in agricultural growth, and this cannot be guaranteed."²⁰⁷

A more in-depth look at some of these projects is provided in Appendix 5.

Many of these initiatives depend upon projects initiated by donor/aid agencies and the programming life of the aid itself. In such short-term projects, the tenuous links between the donor/programmer and the implementing agency break almost as soon as they are established.²⁰⁸ With no follow-up activities charted—which are essential when gendered socio-economic development is aspired for in traditional contexts—the energies generated by short-term projects generally evaporate all too soon. One- or two-year projects do not encourage sustainable change in the power relationships that sustain gender imbalances; such measures, as the Office of the High Commissioner for

207 Adam Pain and Sayed Mohammad Shah, "Policymaking in Agriculture and Rural Development," 25.

208 As we also note in the second report of this research: "Economic Empowerment of Women in Afghanistan, 2002-2012: Situational Analysis."

Human Rights (2010) report based upon a 14-province survey²⁰⁹ points out, serve to exacerbate a situation of dire poverty, especially when they do not take into account localised contexts.²¹⁰ In this and all efforts, it is incumbent upon the government to develop long-term programmes that can build upon each short-term project in ways that can have effect at pan-Afghanistan levels.

In this, government-owned and operated programmes are more sustainable and likely to win people's long-term involvement. For example, the government, through MAIL, has created the Agricultural Development Fund (ADF), which provides agribusinesses in key value chains with credit and loans for a range of agricultural activities. It operates through farmers' cooperatives and associations at farm, retail, and regional levels, away from the formal banking system, by offering Shari'ah-compliant (*Murabaha*) finance products. It also has a Shari'ah Advisory Board, which includes a representative of MoHRA.

Since the ADF is designed to lend to small commercial farmers with farm holdings between one and 30 hectares it has faced the problems with women around lack of land and collateral. Its pilot, Zahra, is underway for 135 female agribusiness entrepreneurs already operating medium-scale enterprises, individually or in groups in annual and perennial horticulture, livestock husbandry and agro-processing.²¹¹ It is unclear how ADF/Zahra is circumventing the lack of land / collateral or whether women's cooperatives and farmers are participatory. If successful, ADF/Zahra could be a good replicable model for women to profit from a structured, government-owned and operated, financial lending and services institution. Similarly, MAIL has recently completed a Women's Cooperative Necessity Measurement with UNDP, which assesses the needs of women in the management of cooperatives.²¹² Another example is the Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program's (AREDP) gabion-box making by women's cooperatives in Balkh. Earlier imported from Pakistan, the cooperatives' product feeds directly into the infrastructure construction initiated by other local government activities.²¹³

Currently, the critical mass required for women in all sections of the value chains has not been reached. As Parto et al (2011) say, the creation of women's associations alone cannot eliminate gender inequities. What is needed is a "[s]ystemic change in chain governance [providing] continued support, nurturing and even protection of these associations, regulatory reform, and (dis)incentives aimed at creating an enabling environment conducive to the emergence of a level playing field for all actors in the value chains, regardless of gender."²¹⁴

209 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Human Rights Dimension of Poverty in Afghanistan" (Kabul: UNOHCHR, 2010). In making a similar point while advocating for transformative social protection to tackle social and economic sources of risk, Kantor and Pain also say that this approach "clashes with the current political reality in Afghanistan, where pressure to show quick results trumps interest in dealing with the structural causes of poverty," Paula Kantor and Adam Pain, "Running Out of Options, Tracing Rural Afghan Livelihoods" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2011): 7.

210 An example of participatory implementation could be DACAAR's Women Resource Centres, which included extensive consultations with village leaders, elders, religious leaders, district governors, provincial leaders, district officers, and other NGOs in order to create acceptance for women's participation in and making use of the centres, Norwegian Agency for Development Corporation, "Gender Review Report Royal Norwegian Embassy" (Oslo: Norad, 2011): 29.

211 USAID, "Agricultural Credit Enhancement (ACE) Program 2012 Annual Report" (Kabul: USAID, 2012), [http://www.acdivoca.org/site/Lookup/ACE-ANNUAL-REPORT-FY2012_web/\\$file/ACE-ANNUAL-REPORT-FY2012_web.pdf](http://www.acdivoca.org/site/Lookup/ACE-ANNUAL-REPORT-FY2012_web/$file/ACE-ANNUAL-REPORT-FY2012_web.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

212 Qais Faqeer, Administration and Finance Officer - Rabiha-e-Balkhee Skill Support Administration (RASA), AREU interview, 27 November 2012.

213 Roger Karlsson, Development Advisor - Swedish Embassy, AREU interview, 29 November 2012.

214 Parto, et al, "Gender and the Agricultural Innovation System in Rural Afghanistan," 25.

Some countries and communities facing constraints similar to those of Afghanistan have found innovative ways to create the organisational infrastructure to capitalise on microcredit, and to successfully integrate with the mainstream economy. The “Puthu Vaazhvu” (New Life) project in southern India is a World Bank-assisted programme to empower women and provide sustainable livelihoods for poor and marginalised individuals and households; it is generally seen as successful.²¹⁵

Box 5: A model for scaling up IGAs in Afghanistan

The “Puthu Vaazhvu” project being implemented by the government in the southern state of Tamil Nadu in India, with World Bank assistance, is a relevant model for Afghanistan, for harnessing the IGAs of numerous small entrepreneurs (mainly women).²¹⁶ Under this project, which began in 2006, a group of about 10 village members doing similar livelihood activities form a Common Livelihood Group (CLG). The CLGs are formed for the purpose of getting common support services like procurement of raw materials and marketing, to improve business activity, eliminate middlemen and increase profits. The project extends financial assistance to the CLG, based on their business plan, for the purchase of common assets and meeting other support requirements like technical training, marketing and procurement expenses. By February 2013, 3,853 CLGs have been created in the state, with a cumulative membership of 73,031 persons.

Most of the work is managed by the women themselves, women who, by their own admission, had never stepped out of their homes on their own prior to the project.

Another interesting aspect of the project is the Community Professional Learning Training Centres (CPLTCs) that are meant to facilitate community-to-community learning. These centres provide a platform for community members to share their learning and experience. The project provides initial seed money to set up CPLTCs.

For example, under the “Puthu Vaazhvu” project, the federation of Agarbathi (incense sticks) producers of Edayansathu village (Vellore district) was created by bringing together 18 existing women’s self-help groups (SHGs), all engaged in the manufacture of incense sticks. The purpose of the federation is to facilitate information-sharing among its members, to eliminate middlemen in marketing, and to increase profits for the SHGs to make them financially self-sufficient. The SHGs are now running the business of manufacturing the incense sticks through the federation, which was registered under the Societies Registration Act in October 2007. While the project provides initial funding for setting up the institutional support for the federations, the federations are expected to rapidly become financially independent.

2.2.3 SMEs and women’s participation

According to the Vision 2020, Afghanistan in 2005 was “putting in place the most liberal trade and tariff regime in the region.”²¹⁷ One of I-ANDS’ five-year strategic benchmarks is gaining accession to the WTO by 2010; and Article 10 of the Constitution,²¹⁸ the third pillar of ANDS,²¹⁹ and Goal 8 of the AMDGs²²⁰ all emphasise private-sector led development.

215 Charukesi Ramadurai, “Stitching Lingerie Improves Women’s Lives in South India,” *New York Times*, 21 May 2012, http://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/21/stitching-lingerie-improves-womens-lives-in-south-india/?_r=0, (accessed on 11 June 2013).

216 See Government of Tamil Nadu, “Pudhu Vazuthu Project,” <http://www.pudhuvaazhvu.org> (accessed on 9 June 2013).

217 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, “Afghanistan’s Millennium Development Goals, Report 2005 Vision 2020” (Kabul: United Nations Development Programme, 2008): 10.

218 The State “...encourages and protects private capital investments and enterprises based on the market economy and guarantees their protection...”

219 “...reduce poverty, ensure sustainable development through a private-sector-led market...”

220 “...develop an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system...”

Afghanistan's WTO membership is probably due in 2013-14, and the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) argues that accession will grant the country: more credibility, lowering of barriers to cheaper imports and commodities, wider regional and global export markets, preferential status among WTO members, and greater foreign direct investment.²²¹ Besides wider benefits due to its land-locked and Least Developed Country status (additional technical assistance, support for economic diversification, developing skills and infrastructure through Aid for Trade²²²), membership to the WTO can potentially offer Afghanistan greater negotiation for cooperation with neighbouring member countries for access to ports and the transport of exports overland. However, WTO membership would also mean opening up Afghanistan's fledgling industry and business to international competition with economies far more structured and technologically informed.²²³ With little by way of social protection, there is a greater feminisation of poverty, with many small industries in agri-business, livestock, horticulture, and the rugs and carpet industry becoming more susceptible to more exploitative terms in the face of far greater competition than already exists.²²⁴

There are also the negative realities of the private sector within Afghanistan, informed by oligarchic power structures, insufficient regulatory systems, poor infrastructure and security that are unlikely to attract foreign direct investment, the potential pressure to privatise essential services, and the inability of the government to maintain the policy space it needs to achieve development priorities.²²⁵ This is to be seen with "the reality of economic operations within Afghanistan, such as corruption, government policy positions, and in some cases, smuggling."²²⁶ Afghanistan should be able to include the vision and needs of women in the sectors it chooses to emphasise, in the tariff rates negotiated in import and export and in the expansion of export markets on sustainable and equitable terms.

221 Afghanistan Investment Support Agency, "Afghanistan's Accession to the WTO," <http://www.aisa.org.af/newsarchive/AfghanistanAccessionWTO.pdf> (undated).

222 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/World Trade Organisation, "Aid for Trade at a Glance 2013 Connecting to Value Chains," (OECD/WTO, 2013), http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/aid4trade13_intro_e.pdf; http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/aid_glance-2013-en (accessed 9 June 2013).

223 Exports in Afghanistan had declined from US\$1.2 billion in 2003 and further to US\$545 million in 2009 to US\$403 million in 2010; Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan (TAF), "Afghan Women Go to (the global) Market: An Analysis of Women's Participation in Trade and Business" (Kabul: USAID & Chemonics, 2011): 7. Afghanistan is ranked 183rd out of 183 economies in a 2011 survey on the national environment for conducting and doing business.

224 The Skills Training and Rehabilitation Society (STARS), for example, trains and provides a market for women in bag-making and carpentry. As its representatives pointed out, "[o]ne of the main problems in Afghanistan is the open market system that we have currently. The open market system harms all the businesses that we have. For example, the women that we have trained in bag-making, these bags each cost 150 Afghani, [but] the bags that come from China each cost only 50 Afghani, with very good design. In carpentry, a very nice table costs 5,000 Afghani but the ones that come from China cost only 3,000 or 1,500 Afghani so people prefer those, even if they fall apart after a few months... We want to make a better market system, and the government should collaborate with us on this..." Zuhra Aman, General Manager - STARS, AREU interview, 13 December 2012.

225 See, for example TAF, "Afghan Women Go to (The Global) Market"; Sarah Lister and Adam Pain, "Trading in Power: The Politics of Free Markets in Afghanistan" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2004); Oxfam International, "Getting the Fundamentals Right: The Early Stages of Afghanistan's WTO Accession Process" (Oxfam, 2007), <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/Getting%20the%20fundamentals.pdf> (accessed 11 June 2013).

226 TAF, "Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Survey of Afghanistan toward Trade" (Kabul: USAID/Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan, 2010), <http://www.theairconsulting.com/uploads/1/1/3/4/11343833/afghantrade.pdf>. The World Bank closed the Private Sector Development Support Project in 2011 and suggested a public-private partnership instead; see World Bank, "Afghanistan - Private Sector Development Support Project" (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2012), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2012/03/16254564/afghanistan-private-sector-development-support-project> (accessed 11 June 2013).

Afghan women in business and entrepreneurship are generally in the small or micro level and need a lot of support, both nationally and internationally. The chief problem for women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan are conservative attitudes which make it difficult for a woman to function and take decisions independent of the husband or father; these can have particular relevance for establishing and running a business or enterprise, if the woman is consequently socially constructed as autonomous. Secondly, interaction with men in bureaucracy and other fields that is necessary at all levels—essentially participating in what is a male preserve—is not considered *wajib* in Afghan society.

However, economic necessity (also frequently seen as losing face, *abaru*, for the husband) can also be re-positioned as part of the woman's role in taking care of her family, along with achievement and economic autonomy.²²⁷ Thirdly, an aligned problem is the female mobility that women's participation in trade and commerce entails. This not only makes the woman a transgressor of severe spatial barriers but can also subject her to attacks and physical insecurity that defies the rule of law. While men can hire bodyguards against criminal acts, women's bodyguards can rarely be from the non-*mahram* circle, i.e. professional bodyguards are not generally an option for the woman trader or entrepreneur.

From a subjective and practical perspective, and as research respondents in this study also indicate, there are—besides the reasons indicated above—high levels of insecurity, corruption, an inability to capitalise upon successes, and fault lines between women's productive and reproductive labour.²²⁸ According to TAFE, ²²⁹ women “who want to enter trade or maintain or expand their business are faced with a broad range of issues in every aspect of their lives, in every institution they deal with, and at practically every step of the way.” Other constraints for women in trade range from: lack of literacy and numeracy, business and organisational management skills, capital and credit, market and trade competitive knowledge, access to quality raw materials and technology, lack of or inadequate production space, equipment/facilities, quality control and packaging, market information, transportation, and inadequate reach within domestic and international markets. Further, women “are not consulted nor represented in dialogues on national trade policies and international trade consultations, therefore, their particular needs and concerns are not surfaced, recognised and addressed.”²³⁰ The Afghan Women's Business Federation (AWBF) puts it as “they need someone to take their hands and help them and raise them and strengthen them so that they can continue their businesses in a better and more advanced way.”²³¹

The change in women's participation in trading and economic activities, according to the AWBF, is that women who formerly traded individually have gradually started forming groups. A woman has now “directly entered the society, and can ascertain her presence in the family and in the society, and says that she herself is involved in the economic activity, and this is my daily or monthly or annual income that [it] comes to the house [household income] from her.” To help women develop their income generation into a business, the AWBF helps in the step-by-step process of building this business.

227 Also seen in countries such as Turkey, Robert Hisrich and Sevgi Ozturk, “Women entrepreneurs in a developing country,” *The Journal of Management Development*, 18, no. 2 (1999): 114-125, and Morocco, Kenneth Gray and Jocelyn Finely-Hervey, “Women and Entrepreneurship in Morocco: Debunking Stereotypes and Discerning Strategies,” *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 1 (2005): 203-217.

228 Malalai Jawad, Membership Manager - Afghan Women's Business Federation (AWBF), AREU interview, 30 December 2012; Sahiba Nooristani, Investment Promotion Officer - AISA, AREU interview, 1 January 2013.

229 TAFE, “Afghan Women Go to (the Global) Market,” 3.

230 TAFE, “Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Survey,” 19.

231 Malalai Jawad, Membership Manager - A WBF, AREU interview, 30 December 2012.

Helping the woman develop her aims and objectives, systematise her activities, develop a business plan with financial and management planning, register the business, cultivate leadership and negotiation skills, and navigate business expansion and access to capital are all within the remit of the AWBF.

However, it is not only individual women in trade and business who face the lack of access to capital but also women's associations. Created in 2005 as a canopy for organisations like the Afghan Women Business Council, Afghan Businesswomen Union, and other small and big unions that had been established since 2001, the AWBF was formed to consolidate activities and streamline processes. A private effort with funding sourced from aid agencies, it offers members training and services, and a design department which is particularly useful for those in the carpets, clothing and jewellery business. It provides start-up training as well as advanced business activities, management, financial and skills training. Despite being a federation of businesswomen, it has recently faced a crunch and has had to shut its offices in Mazar-e-Sharif, Bamiyan and Jalalabad provinces that are its northern, eastern and central regions, respectively. AWBF now has 177 active societies under its umbrella, each with about 10-12 unions.²³²

Box 6: The move from income generation to a registered business

"We had a training session in the federation in 2010 where a German woman came and worked a design session for the women with the help of GIZ. Among the women that we had invited to this programme, there was a woman embroiderer who was working with one of the member women, meaning she'd produce for her; she'd stitch the works and would hand it over to her and she would then use the works in designing clothes. We invited this woman to the training. After the end of the training, what she started her business with was two pairs of socks and two pairs of gloves that she had knitted. Presently she has a license from AISA while she herself is illiterate. Today she herself is at the lead of her business; her name is Hawa Gul Rezaie and if you ever wanted to meet her, we can introduce her directly to you."²³³

Much like participation in microfinance, women entrepreneurs experience a range of empowerment indicators: greater confidence, mobility and ability, widening networks of contacts and knowledge and improved household and community status, responsibility, decision-making and economic status, say many research participants.²³⁴

However, women in the small-scale enterprises have their own problems around capital, illiteracy, lack of production space and lack of knowledge about the many legal requirements necessary to set up and convert an income-generating activity into a formal business. The first bottleneck a woman entrepreneur encounters is when she needs capital. Accessing formal, non-family capital calls for significant negotiating skills on her part in convincing her family, normally a first and natural ally for a son, that they can trust her to not fail and not squander away their hard-earned savings and that the land, house or other immovable property is to stand as collateral for her venture.

The would-be entrepreneur also needs three more people who can vouch for her: one government staffer and two established store-owning business people. The chances

232 Malalai Jawad (AWBF), interview, 30 December 2012.

233 Malalai Jawad (AWBF), interview, 30 December 2012.

234 For example, Wasima Amiri, SABAH, AREU interview, 13 January 2013.

being that most store-owning businesspersons are men, it means that the woman is going through yet another round of battling against deeply held patriarchal beliefs, which distrust a woman's ability to do business, besides the store-owner's reluctance to stand guarantee for a third party. Later, despite becoming skilled, established and successful businesswomen, many women continue to run their business on a municipal license, do not approach the AISA for registration, and find the taxation forms of the Ministry of Finance convoluted and cumbersome. Hiring a tax expert is an ill-affordable option. The AWBF suggests tax-exemption or tax-break for three to five years for women entrepreneurs in order to help them stabilise their income and their businesses, and thereby stimulate a sustainable, successful business environment for women.

Production space for an enterprise is another problem. The Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI) has built industrial parks in Kabul (Bagrami), Balkh (Gorimar), Kandahar (Shorandam), Nangarhar (Hisar-e-Shahi, incomplete²³⁵), and Helmand (Bost, an agri-business park), which are being transferred to AISA. There are far larger parks in the pipeline around Kabul at Kamari, Sinjet Dara and Deh Sabz.²³⁶ MoCI is leading a National Priority Program on Integrated Trade and SME Facility under the Private Sector Development Cluster, which includes US\$200 million for industrial parks development across the country. These parks are to not only provide high-quality infrastructure and reliable power supply, but provide loan facilities to own the ground and construct upon it. Unless women are given at least 30 percent access to the space and facilities being developed in these parks, and other trade-development projects, targets like those in the ANDS for women's economic empowerment are not likely to be met. That SMEs are responsible for the creation of 70 percent of new jobs worldwide cannot be overlooked.²³⁷

The many limited time-frame ventures financed by international agencies and implemented by local NGOs target start-up entrepreneurs or offer technical skills such as tailoring, embroidery or jewellery making. Representatives from organisations/networks working on women's rights and economic empowerment point out that the donor-led projects, besides using de-contextualised, non-participatory and opaque programming, tended to focus on occupational training and neglect to provide support on the input side or in marketing and sales of the finished product. As with IGAs in agriculture, agencies working with women in SMEs and which fund short-term projects for women in small-scale ventures tend to wind up a project after some training and capacity building. As one research participant put it, "in which community can such initiatives empower women economically? Once such a project is over the centre vanishes," she said and "the women don't know where to go and what to do." She suggested hybrid, public-private partnerships which can offer women long-term occupational stability and income generation. Further, all projects should build in equipment costs into each cycle which can become the property of the project participants so that the skills acquired during project participation can be continued.²³⁸ Those organisations and their donors that have had their marketing plans in place have stronger capacity to continue their activities imparting income-generating skills to women. For example, SABAH, which trains women in jam and sauce making and in tailoring, is able to market the products through a tie-up with SAARC, through both its donor (SEWA) and MoWA.

235 World Bank, "Afghanistan - Private Sector Development Support Project." It also says: "An independent authority for the development of industrial parks has not been created," and "there is an overlap of responsibilities between AISA-IPD and Ministry of Commerce and Industry," v.

236 Government of the United States of America, Department of Commerce, "Invest in Afghanistan: Opportunities in Logistics and Transportation," http://www.trade.gov/static/afghanistan_logistics.pdf (accessed 11 June 2013).

237 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Economy, "Toward Self Reliance, Strategic Vision for the Transformation Decade" (Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan, 8 July 2012): 13, citing ILO.

238 Dr Alema, Civil Peace Service Coordinator - GIZ/DED, AREU interview, 12 December 2012.

Overall, it is evident that without institutional and organisational capacity, projects in small-scale enterprise for women, women's associations or microcredit institutions have limited potential to transform into actual capital/asset creation channels for women. There is a dearth of business support organisations for women. In the absence of basic numeracy, book-keeping and accounting skills, the ability to make a profit, understand a business plan, comply with government rules, or obtain larger loans become pitfalls for sustained income expansion. Women's consequent dependence on men could translate to losing control over their own finances. Thus, although the outlook for Afghanistan's SMEs appears bright,²³⁹ there is no particular substantive evidence of women specifically benefiting from these initiatives. Further, for the SME segment to become a dynamic source of employment creation, access to international markets through trade is imperative; the low-income domestic market is not capable of absorbing the production of SMEs on a scale that would be able to provide substantial employment generation. A survey of international private sector companies working with women-owned businesses would be useful.

Laws that need review or introduction are: Company Law and Corporate Governance, Contract Law and Enforcement, Real Property Law, Secured Transactions Law, Bankruptcy, Competition Law and Policy, International Trade Law²⁴⁰; the incorporation of provisions that enhance women's participation in trade and entrepreneurship is necessary, especially around fiscal and logistical measures. For example, earning women with husbands face obstacles in registering movable and immovable assets in their names and are coerced by social pressure and government procedure into registering sole or jointly acquired assets in their husband's name.²⁴¹ Legal steps need to be taken to facilitate and improve women's access to and control over assets and investments, their ability to utilise their income and credit, and provide safety nets against potential risks. Particular attention needs to be paid to the needs of widows and female-headed households.

Information and communication technology

Information-sharing among individuals engaged in these IGAs becomes a challenge when women are not allowed to travel to nearby households and villages. If Afghanistan's informal IGA and SME segments are to coordinate their activities and integrate with domestic and international markets, access to easy communication is a key prerequisite. Given Afghanistan's difficult physical terrain, poor transport networks and cultural factors that restrict women's mobility, the ability to communicate is one of the strategic options for overcoming geographical and time barriers. Many developing countries in Asia, Africa and South America have taken advantage of mobile communications technology to overcome physical, infrastructural and organisational hurdles to economic and social progress. Afghanistan is also well-placed to employ this technology to achieve its development needs.

According to Afghanistan's Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), mobile telephone coverage reaches over 60 percent of the population; over 19.5 million are GSM subscribers while about 164,000 are CDMA subscribers in a country of

239 See, for instance, Jake Cusack and Eric Malmstorm, "Afghanistan's Willing Entrepreneurs Supporting Private-Sector Growth in the Afghan Economy" (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 2010), http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_Kauffman_Entrepreneurs_CusackMalmstrom.pdf, (accessed on 11 June, 2013); Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA), "MISFA Annual Report for the Year ended 2012," http://www.misfa.org.af/site_files/13613501921.pdf (accessed 12 June 2013).

240 Booz Allen Hamilton, "Afghanistan's Agenda for Action: Developing the Trade & Business Environment."

241 Anonymity requested, National Solidarity Programme staff, AREU interview, 23 December 2012.

31.4 million. There are 4,760 active towers throughout the country spanning 85 percent of the population. The ministry plans to expand its services in remote parts of the country where the remaining 15 percent of the population will be covered with the installation of 700 new towers.

Table 5: Telecom statistics, end of December 2012²⁴²

GSM subscribers	19,520,813
CDMA subscribers	164,443
Landlines	90,017
Penetration	72 percent
Investments in US\$	1,922.00
Telecom base stations	5,005
Population coverage	>88 percent

The government is already using mobile technology for delivering a literacy programme to its citizens. As noted in Section 2.1.1, Afghanistan's literacy rate among women remains at just 12.5 percent, compared to 39.3 percent for Afghan men. The mobile literacy programme enables Afghan men and women deprived of a basic education to learn to read and write by using a mobile phone. The programme is intended as a major step toward the government's target of achieving 48 percent literacy among those over 15 by 2015.²⁴³

Afghanistan's communications infrastructure is good, and government plans for continued investment in this sector are expected to improve it considerably. Roshan offers M-paisa²⁴⁴, and Etisalat has also launched an application for women users.²⁴⁵ Further, according to the Declaration of RECCA V, 2012, Afghanistan's fibre optic system is to be connected with regional fibre optic systems. However, the potential for harnessing this technology for increasing productive capacity still remains untapped.

Clearly, mobile phones along with access to the internet can be an important conduit for coordinating business activities within and across women's SMEs and groups involved in IGAs. According to ANDS (2005), under Enabling Environment, MCIT is to have piloted home-based ICT related work for women by the end of 2008; this falls under the categories of Development/Gender Cross-Cutting Issues. Although the pilot's implementation and subsequent policy development is unclear, in May 2013, MoWA and MCIT have launched mobile technology programmes "specifically designed for women, such as a distance-learning literacy program, a family hotline facility, an SMS service for teachers and students to fast-track their progress in education, and mobile health applications during pregnancy."²⁴⁶

242 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, "Telecom Statistics, End of December, 2012," <http://atra.gov.af/en/page/telecom-statistics-end-of-december-2012> (accessed 14 June 2013).

243 The phone is called Ustad Mobile (Mobile Teacher) and provides national curriculum courses in both national languages, Dari and Pashto, as well as mathematics. All the lessons are audio-video, with writing, pronunciation and phrases installed in Ustad Mobile phones and they are distributed free to students.

244 Offering, among other services, person-to-person money transfer, disbursement and repayment of microfinance loans, bill payments, disbursement and receipt of salaries; Roshan Telecom, <http://www.roshan.af/Roshan/M-Paisa.aspx> (accessed 11 June 2013)

245 Etisalat's intended programme will "provide a number of services for female users, enabling them to capitalize on business and training opportunities. Additionally, the program includes special services such as day care centers, pre-natal care centers, health services, vaccination and immunization programs, as well as a hotline for women to address emergency situations." USAID, "Mobile money services customised for women" (Kabul: USAID, March 2012).

246 USAID, "Connecting to Opportunity: A Survey of Afghan Women's Access to Mobile Technology" (Kabul: USAID, 2013).

Box 7: The e-choupal initiative and its benefits to farmers

In India, *e-choupal* is an “internet kiosk, village gathering place and e-commerce hub all rolled into one”²⁴⁷ and addresses the agricultural challenges of small land-holdings, the hold of middlemen, and the weak infrastructure that rural India faces. Under *e-choupal*, internet centres provides farmers with real-time information on weather, produce and input prices, and on management and risk. It is a digital revolution that allows farmers a range of available alternative output marketing routes and transaction costs at the *e-choupal* centre and enhances the value chain of the farm to factory process to the advantage of the farmer. Launched in June 2000, *e-choupal* reaches out to “over 4 million farmers growing a range of crops—soybean, coffee, wheat, rice, pulses, shrimp—in over 40,000 villages through 6,500 kiosks across 10 states.”²⁴⁸

2.2.4 Networking across IGAs and SMEs

If women are not to remain relegated to subsistence-level or the lowest paying jobs, strategically targeted, public-private community partnerships that address women’s social exclusion and build their socio-economic capital should form a part of future efforts to look at women’s economic engagement.

If we are to promote and integrate women’s livelihood groups, for example, one chain model could be to have:

1. **At the village level:** Expansion of livelihood-based, village-level women’s producer groups (that are being addressed to some extent by some aid projects). These producer groups can be linked to the CDC women’s *shuras*, to the MRRD women’s councils, to the MISFA micro-credit and savings groups and perhaps to the women producers in NABDP’s DDAs and the women’s groups in the Targeted Alternative Livelihood Programme (TALP) of the AREDP. As an entry point these programmes provide a governance mechanism by ensuring transparency and accountability in the selection and management of producer groups. Such women producer groups can be represented at the district level in a cooperative form for each livelihood: fruit growers, carpet makers, dairy producers, poultry workers, farm workers, saffron producers, weavers, raisin producers, almond producers, embroiderers, tailors, patch-workers, vegetable growers, cotton gin-workers, silk producers, honey-bee farmers, mud-brick producers, and similar.
2. **At the district level** could be the Women’s Community Centre, a women’s-only cooperative one-stop centre for all issues connected with livelihood groups specific to that district, and owned and run by the livelihood/cooperative groups of that district. The centre can combine:
 - A cooperative store that houses input supplies, procurement and storage of raw material, seeds, vaccines, veterinary medicines, fertilisers, etc. Credit/smart cards could be offered by the store.

247 Mohanbir Sawhney, “Fields of Online Dreams” (ITC, The CIO Magazine, 2002), <http://www.itcportal.com/media-centre/press-reports-content.aspx?id=655&type=C&news=Fields-Online-Dream> (accessed 11 June 2013).

248 Nelson Vinod Moses, “Why Does the World Need More Social Entrepreneurs?” Ashoka India, <http://india.ashoka.org/why-does-world-needs-more-social-intrapreneurs> (accessed 11 June 2013).

- A centre for training and extension services, with facilities for networking with mobile services such as Roshan's M-Paisa and with linkage to e-choupal services.
- An e-choupal kiosk centre.
- Microfinance institution (MFI) points: loan, credit, savings and insurance facilities.
- SME points: training and access to capital and a link to a private sector database, with tax training and help with tax forms; legal aid could also be introduced.
- A production area catering exclusively to women's local livelihood sectors.
- Equipment leasing facility.
- Child-care.
- Women-only transportation to and from villages.
- Marketing services for the local produce to be linked to domestic markets and to public-private partnerships for trade to international markets through Regional Centres.
- Collection of products from the village and transportation of goods to Regional Centres.
- Coordination between government agencies and women producer groups on problems related to irrigation, disease, electricity, water, and similar.

Importantly, the Community Centres can help eliminate the middleman and enable a putting-out system, as explained in Box 8.

Box 8: The domestic/putting-out system and trade

Ashraf Ghani, former Finance Minister of Afghanistan, has suggested that the textile industry might benefit from a domestic system (also known as a putting-out system)²⁴⁹, an arrangement that was successfully used by the English and American textile industry during the Industrial Revolution, and continues to exist in many industries across the world even now. Under the domestic system, work is contracted by a central agent to subcontractors who complete the work in off-site facilities, either in their own homes or in workshops with apprentices and craftsmen. This system was a successful model in western countries in pre-urban times, when farming and household duties tied people to their homes, and poor infrastructure made travelling to work very difficult. These conditions prevail in current-day Afghanistan due to cultural norms that constrain mobility for women, as well as poor infrastructure largely destroyed by years of conflict. Through this system of subcontracting, the domestic manufacturing sector can be linked to international markets, thus allowing economies of scale to be realised and enabling a large proportion of the workforce to be absorbed, without disturbing the cultural norms that govern Afghan society. The textile industry is not the only industry that can benefit from this system. This type of system currently exists in China, India and South America, and is not limited to the textile industry; it is ideally suited for any cottage industry. In India, much of rural non-traditional activity such as lace-making and *beedi* making works under the put-out system even now, and predominantly employs women.²⁵⁰ Other products in Afghanistan that are suited for this sub-contracting model are products like carpets, dried fruits, saffron, etc.

249 Ashraf Ghani, "Rebuilding Broken States" (TED, Oct 2012), http://blog.ted.com/2009/08/20/rebuilding_brok/ (accessed 12 June 2013). Afghanistan manufactured and exported good quality raw material and textiles in the 1960s and 1970s, including cotton and falalein.

250 Koteeswara Rao, *Empowerment of Women in India* (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2005).

3. **Regional Centres:** These will need to be based upon the types of produce specific to a geographical region, since the administrative boundaries of the current 34 provinces do not necessarily run parallel to the soil and economic conditions connected to differing ecosystems. The Regional Centres could be based upon, for example, Dupree's 11 divisions of Afghanistan²⁵¹ as an alternative to current administrative divisions of 34 provinces. These Regional Centres can link women's village and district-level produce and the national women's organisations dealing with international markets. Its services will cater to local production as well as export of produce with:

- AISA regional offices for women.
- Offices of the livelihood-based regional groupings of women in SME and business support.
- Training and extension centres, including for women's participation in renewable energy sources.
- Input Procurement Centres that offer and supply quality input at cost rates to the District Women's Community Centres.
- Free trade zones for women in agriculture, livestock, handicrafts and other products and businesses specific to the region.
- MFI centres for women, with access to sector-specific and women-friendly credit, training, research and survey centres that can monitor women's MFI access and use in the districts in its ambit.
- SME centres for women, with access to sector-specific and women-friendly loans and capital and credit with training, research and survey centres that can monitor the women's SME access and use in the districts in its ambit.
- A public-private partnered industrial park for women-owned and operated SMEs, with low tax rate for microenterprises, small business, and small local agricultural producers.
- Coordination of public-private partnerships for trade to international markets.

MAIL, MRRD and MoCI should develop and embed an all-female Gender Technical Team (GTT) to coordinate with each Regional Centre to include specialists in finance, gender, technical services, renewable energy, value-chain, customer service, female *ulema*, marketing, procurement and IT.

4. **At the national level,** an umbrella Afghan women's organisation is needed that:

- Coordinates all issues concerning women's livelihood options, income and equal wages;
- Coordinates women's access to credit, capital and training needs;
- Coordinates women's access to power, especially through renewable energy sources;
- Surveys and monitors women's access to the above across the Regional Centres;
- Offers policy advice to the government and reviews all existing laws in tax and labour practices from a gender perspective;
- Reviews international agreements in tariff and trade negotiations to ensure women's benefits and interests are protected; and
- As a representative organisation, has members from the Regional Centres, with sector-wise cross-linkages. These members will have presence in

251 The Wakhan Corridor-Pamir Knot, Badakhshan, Central Mountains, Eastern Mountains, Northern Mountains and Foothills, Southern Mountains and Foothills, Turkistan Plains, Herat-Farah Lowlands, Sistan Basin-Hilmand Valley, Western Stony Desert, and Southwestern Sandy Desert.

national-level institutions like AISA and the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI), contribute to ministerial briefings, participate in all international regional trade bodies and in all international multi-regional conferences on trade and export.

AISA, ACCI, MoCI should organise regular training sessions across the Regional Centres to raise awareness among the private sector, to encourage the incorporation, and equitable incorporation, of women workers into business and industry and to increase business dealings between the private-sector and women's cooperatives and producer groups.

Thus far we have looked at the national and international legal instruments, strategies and programmes that have evolved in the last decade around some issues of women's human rights and labour participation. Entrenched traditions (especially given Afghanistan's history of decentralised legal systems) and a localised understanding of the Shari'ah continue to make precarious women's rights to life, property, justice, human rights and economic participation that are otherwise theoretically better guaranteed by Islam and protected by the "theocratic constitutionalism"²⁵² that frames the laws of Afghanistan. Further, there has been a significant lack of support, and resistance to, gender-responsive laws in the Parliament and in administrative circles. In effect then, the relative egalitarian spirit of the Constitution and that of the Shari'ah is substantially undermined.

Overall in the past decade, although there have been some changes, much more remains to be done to create an environment where women can participate better in the economy of Afghanistan. The chief casualties continue to be education, health, women's presence in the public sphere and women's safety, four important indicators of women's well-being in any society that connect directly to the economic empowerment of women. Although women have been granted some rights through laws, mechanisms that enforce and implement their realisation is seen to be lacking. The informal participation of women in Afghanistan's economy needs to now be streamlined and coordinated to utilise women's full economic potential.

2.3 Impacts of greater rights on economic opportunity and vice versa

There are no effective assessments of the performance and effect of strategies and laws, and in their absence it is difficult to estimate the impacts of the improvements of women's human rights upon their economic advantages. There have been some qualitative and quantitative studies based upon limited samples, which point to various results. These also point to the possibility that, even with the sometimes dismal situation, there have been positive changes toward women's human rights as well as toward women's economic empowerment in this past decade. The efforts of some of the strategies, programmes and projects are beginning to bear fruit, with urban Afghanistan and select pockets of rural Afghanistan being the drivers of change. Spaces and cracks are opening up that encourage women's participation and economic engagement. The following pages analyse the effectiveness of some of the strategies and initiatives of the past decade.

252 Larry Backer, "Theocratic Constitutionalism: An Introduction to a New Global Legal Ordering," *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 16, no. 1 (2009): 85-172. See also Faiz Ahmed, "Afghanistan's Reconstruction, Five Years Later: Narratives of Progress, Marginalized Realities, and the Politics of Law in a Transitional Islamic Republic," *Gonzaga Journal of International Law*, 10, no. 3 (2006-2007).

A look at some key instruments

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), 2002

The AIHRC has:

- Conducted workshops for training and awareness-raising on human rights;
- Used radio and print media to communicate information on human rights instruments;
- Identified, recorded and addressed human rights violations across the country;
- Recorded cases of violence against women and offered outreach, advocacy, legal aid and other services to victim-survivors;
- Conducted monitoring missions at prisons, detention centres, custody centres, and juvenile rehabilitation centres, hospitals, orphanages, and shelters;
- Monitored, documented and reported on six election processes;
- Conducted a nation-wide consultation on war crimes, crimes against humanity, and gross infringements on human rights during the three decades of war in Afghanistan and, with these documentations, helped draft an Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation, and Justice in Afghanistan;
- Created a Special Investigation Team to monitor the observance of international humanitarian law during the ongoing armed conflict, document violations, and publish reports on conflict-caused civilian casualties and violations of international humanitarian law;
- Conducted research and published human rights challenges and opportunities; and
- Organised several international conferences on family law, child custody, women's self-immolation, preventive mechanisms of violence against women, protection of victims of war crimes and protection of child rights.

The AIHRC's reach and range are powerful, as are the effects of its activities. However, as an independent commission, it lacks teeth in enforcing punitive action and its effectiveness is limited to documentation, building awareness and lobbying. The AIHRC has initiated the establishment of Human Rights Councils in 2012, covering at least 22 provinces and led by civil society organisations to advocate for and address human rights and women's rights violations. Although created through the Constitution, it needs far more support from the Ministries of Justice, Women's Affairs, Counter Narcotics and other ministries and agencies. The need for women's shelters and far better access to justice is urgent. As an MRRD official put it, "[O]n the one hand we want women to know their 'rights,' on the other any attempt to exercise those rights are met with more resistance from the men...if a woman is in an already tight situation...a husband who hits her sometimes may start assaulting her every other day..."²⁵³

Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs)

MFI programmes, in general, have had limited effect in impacting gendered social change. Some of the results from women's participation in the MFI in Balkh show varying results in: access and forms of utilisation, enhanced mobility, household social status, decision-making power, economic status, independence and self-confidence, a sense of ownership

253 Ghizal Haress, Executive Director - AREDP, MRRD, AREU interview, 2 January 2013 and 5 January 2013.

over monies gained and an extended radius of interaction²⁵⁴. However, a case study in Parwan²⁵⁵ shows that the success of an MFI also depends upon women's access to other forms of income, whether land and access to water or the income of other members of the household that contributes to the repayment of loans. A study in Kabul shows that most loans to women had been used as capital for male members of the household, to pay off earlier informal loans or for use in household and ceremonial expenses. Overall though, community contexts and self-perceptions have a big role to play in women's use of micro-credit, as in other issues. However, individual family dynamics also direct the participation and ways in which the loans are used. Greater observable social change is brought about through MFI participation in households and communities where women's roles are already less circumscribed. Objections to *sudh* (illicit interest) also vary; in some communities it is not seen as much of an issue. If the community and the family values the woman's contribution to its income-generating activities, an avenue opening up to enhance it is looked at positively, including MFIs.

The belief around women's very limited mobility and lesser participation in household decision-making is also seen to be non-universal and subject to traditional community norms. However, where the MFIs have specifically contributed is in creating a relatively greater opportunity for gendered solidarity in the sense of facilitating a common cause for progress. Women who are part of the MFI are seen to come together more in meetings and gatherings, learn from each other and participate more in each other's problems. The move from on-account, piece-work to gaining wider marketing skills to widen product reach had not been made. The overall monitoring from the MFI staff is lacking, in terms of i) utilisation of the loan by the woman client, ii) women's economic independence, and iii) a structured programming that sees the potential link between access to loans and gendered social impact. Despite newer regulations around the Identity Card and required proof of women's business activities, the MFI programmes are chiefly instrumental in channelling money through the woman to improve household economic status. Lastly, access to credit is significantly interwoven with local power and social structures and also interacts with the informal credit system that has presence in Afghanistan.²⁵⁶

In agricultural areas, where MFIs have less reach, more clientele are men due to issues over land and inheritance as collateral. However, in most processes of the sub-sectors, women and men work at complementary activities, and sometimes side-by-side. There are many sections in agri-business, for example, where negotiations could be considered to offer attractive returns for the partial transfer of the land/equipment to a wife, in lieu of, for example, zero tariff on export. Such, or other measures that can look into alternative methods of securing security for women, will require discussions across line ministries including the MoHRA.

Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA)

MISFA was established in 2003, funded via the World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund and overseen by MRRD. Funding micro-credit investment and activities and promoting an inclusive finance development sector, it was positioned with a time frame

254 Chona Echavez and Sogol Zand, "The Impact of Microfinance Programmes on Women's Lives: A Case Study in Balkh Province" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2012).

255 Sogol Zand, "The Impact of Microfinance Programmes on Women's Lives: A Case Study in Parwan" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2010).

256 For example, Erna Andersen, Paula Kantor and Amanda Sim, "Microcredit, Informal Credit and Rural Livelihoods: A Village Case Study in Bamyan Province" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2008).

of five years within which a sustainable commercial market was to have been established. In 2006, the Ministry of Finance became its sole shareholder and by 2008, it had 428,929 clients and 373,080 active borrowers.

The strategic plan for MISFA “developed in early 2008, envisioned a potential market of 3.5 million borrowers, actual clients of 750,000 and a portfolio outstanding of US\$220 million by December of 2010.”²⁵⁷ MISFA went through a difficult period from 2003 to about 2009. Its problems included: fewer resources, multiple borrowing by clients, lax credit discipline, and short-cuts at all levels from staff training to client training and due diligence, which led to the exit of many MFIs since 2009-10. Apart from lack of national capacity and a weak impact monitoring system, the chief problem seems to be that micro-credit programmes, mainly as part of broader humanitarian and developmental programs, have been bogged down by lack of proper credit and risk management policies as well as by non-repayment of loans and inadequate organisational governance. Additionally, not all MFI funds were being sourced or routed through MISFA.

In 2009, MISFA had a portfolio US\$127 million held with 16 partner institutions (limited liability companies) supporting the programme. By 2011, the sector had nine institutions and \$110 million, with 88 percent held by three institutions. As of January 2012, MISFA is active in 95 districts, and 54.6 percent of its borrowers are women. It has outstanding loans of \$108 million and six partners. Of these, ASA (95.8 percent), Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC, 83 percent) and Hope For Life (HFL, 53 percent) cater to the maximum number of women. Totally, MISFA has 168,818 female clients and 115,182 female borrowers. Those working exclusively with women are: the Afghanistan Rural Microcredit Programme (ARMP), BRAC, Micro Finance Agency for Development (MoFAD), Parwaz and Women for Women (WFW).

The activities of MISFA and the micro-finance sector in general are still heavily skewed toward the urban base, with 244,882 urban and 84,183 rural active clients and 146,051 urban and 49,315 rural active borrowers. Consequently, the amount of loans disbursed is seven times greater in urban areas than in rural ones.²⁵⁸ There is also a huge gap between demand and supply with an estimated 1.8 million needing credit services to the tune of about \$1.3 billion.²⁵⁹ Micro-credit is not tailored according to sub-sector; the need for loans in the wheat crop may differ from those for livestock, while handicraft and other small-scale businesses like retail may have different repayment schedules. There is a lack of savings services and no insurance products.²⁶⁰ Further, the repayment of loans starts almost immediately, making it a doubtful venture for poor women. A copy of the National Identification Card is required. Since 2011, savings have been made voluntary rather than compulsory.

Group lending with women’s self-help groups seems to have had the best results, with the collective ensuring peer pressure in both repayment and in countering any religious opposition. However, this model has not been taken to scale. Solidarity loans offer loans with the group as collateral but the amounts loaned are low. Loans offering a higher amount (agricultural, livestock, business) require borrowers to have assets. Seed Banks

257 Dale Lampe, “One Step Back from the Brink: Donors, Disbursement and Default” (Microbanking Bulletin: 2011), http://www.themix.org/sites/default/files/MBB%20-%20one%20step%20back%20from%20the%20brink_1.pdf (accessed 11 June 2013). According to Lampe, a more realistic estimate for borrowers would have been US\$1.5 million.

258 MISFA, www.misfa.org.af.

259 Maliha Hamid Hussein, “State of Microfinance in Afghanistan” (Kabul: Institute of Microfinance, 2009): 36, http://www.inm.org.bd/publication/state_of_micro/Afghanistan.pdf (accessed 11 June 2013).

260 Maliha Hamid Hussein, “State of Microfinance in Afghanistan,” 37.

have also been a successful route as they are Shari'ah-compliant but not enough Seed Banks have been targeted. Parwaz, a micro-credit agency operating under MISFA, "uses a cost-effective strategy to reach female clients by hiring part-time community agents, known as promoters, who live in the community and have strong client relations. They host weekly group meetings and ensure high repayment and social networking. Each loan officer works with two community promoters and is able to reach as many as 600 clients.²⁶¹"

Loans taken by women could actually be used by their husbands. If the purpose for which the loan is used succeeds, women's status may go up within the household, but if they don't then domestic violence could increase with alterations in household dynamics. There is a far greater need for Shari'ah-compliant micro-credit. A MISFA gender impact assessment study²⁶² identifies the following as constraints to women accessing micro-credit services: traditional and religious norms, increasing insecurity, low literacy, lack of identity cards (*tazkira*); utilisation of loans by the male head of household; lack of business development services; lack of female staff; high costs of hiring female staff.

MISFA has, between 2010 and 2012, opened regional offices in Mazhar, Nangarhar and Herat in collaboration with MRRD and evolved strategic partnerships with the Afghanistan Microfinance Association and the Afghanistan Institute of Banking and Finance. In partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), MISFA is implementing a component of the Rural Microfinance and Livestock Support Program (RMLSP) called the Ultra-poor Programme being piloted in Bamiyan and targeting 400 families over 33 months. Importantly, it is introducing new Shari'ah-compliant services (*Murabaha*) with a *fatwa*²⁶³ obtained from Afghanistan's Supreme Council of Islamic Scholars, and, facilitating e-payment for one of its partners, Mutahid, through a tie-up with Roshan telecommunication. It is also focusing on understanding context-specific products and services, including the time taken to repay loans, while working on strengthening its institutional capacity-building.²⁶⁴ *Murabaha* has higher administrative costs, and FINCA, one of MISFA's partners, had introduced and experimented with *Murabaha* in 2009.

The Constitution of Afghanistan, 2004

If the Constitution is seen in conjunction with the Civil Law and the Labour Law, secular subjects such as banking, administration, revenues, commerce, the political structure and similar are more or less discrete from the Shari'ah, while personal and family matters are regulated by it. Key contradictions are seen between Article 22 and Article 3, under which "[n]o law shall contravene the tenets and provisions of the holy religion of Islam in Afghanistan." However, there are two points to be made in this context. Firstly, Article 130 says on "[...] If there is no provision in the Constitution or other laws about a case, the courts shall, in pursuance of Hanafi jurisprudence, and, within the limits set by this Constitution, rule in a way that attains justice in the best manner." Article 130 thus seems to suggest either that statutory law is placed above Islamic law or that Islamic law when applicable in the absence of a suitable state law is to operate within the parameters the latter has set.²⁶⁵ However, it is fairly clear that although

261 Maliha Hamid Hussein, "State of Microfinance in Afghanistan," 15.

262 Afghan Management and Marketing Consultants, "Gender Mainstreaming in Afghanistan's Microfinance Sector: An Impact Assessment" (Kabul: MISFA, undated), www.ammc.com.af (accessed on 11 June 2013).

263 A legal pronouncement made by an Islamic scholar on matters involving the Shari'ah.

264 MISFA, "MISFA Annual Report, 2012."

265 Nadjma Yassari, ed. "The Shari'a in the Constitutions of Afghanistan, Iran and Egypt: Implications for Private Law" (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

Shari'ah is operable on the subsidiary principle by Article 130, it supersedes statutory law by the repugnancy principle in Article 3. Secondly, the Constitution is clearer on the scope of the Shari'ah for Shi'a Muslim women. By Article 131,²⁶⁶ for Shi'a Afghans all personal matters are to be dealt with in the first instance under the Jafari Law within the parameters of statutory law, and, also in non-personal matters, if there is no provision in state law; Article 3 applies here too.

Further, Yassari and Mohammad²⁶⁷ point out that the stand of Article 22 on equality is contrary to the existence of the Civil Code of 1977 as well as the weight given to customary law (*urf*), especially quasi-legal codes like the Pashtunwali²⁶⁸ that are steeped in practices like *poar*,²⁶⁹ *baad* and *badal*. Penalties like those of the *hadd* (*hudood*) law remain incorporated into the Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure Code. The CEDAW Report²⁷⁰ says “[if] a Hudood crime²⁷¹ is proved, the judge shall punish the offender based upon the Shari'ah law.” There is thus uncertainty in both writ and interpretation, which is left to the courts to decide upon, as legal tradition in Afghanistan continues to be characterised by diversity in custom, ethnicity and region, Shari'ah and non-religious or secular law²⁷². However, this also means that the authority for the final interpretation of the law pertaining to any particular case rests with the extant Supreme Court. The Supreme Court (Stera Mahkama/Tamyeez) should be “composed of judges of top legal, scholarly, and personal credentials, trained in Islamic, civil, and constitutional law, including Shi'a and women”²⁷³; it is not. The oligarchic nature of the judicial elite is cause for alertness in a situation when only 5 percent of judges are women.

In particular, the rights of women have been left unresolved between the Shari'ah, customary law and statutory law, between constitutional “equality” and legal inequality.

266 Afghan Official Gazette No. 988/2009, dated 27 July 2009. This legal allowance for Shi'a personal matters was a first in Afghan Constitutional history.

267 Nadjma Yassari and Mohammad Hamid Saboory, “Sharia and National Law in Afghanistan,” Jura Gentium (undated), <http://www.juragentium.org/topics/islam/en/yassari.htm> (accessed on 12 February 2013).

268 Pashtunwali, through the legal process of jirga and community elites (*marakchi*), is a form of common law governing codes of behaviour and personal law, including for inheritance, transactions, obligations and property ownership, among the Sunni Pashtun quams/communities (see, for example, Thomas J. Barfield, “On Local Justice and Culture in Post Taliban Afghanistan,” *Connecticut Journal of International Law*, 17 (2002): 437-439; International Legal Foundation, “The Customary Laws of Afghanistan A Report by the International Legal Foundation” (Kabul: International Legal Foundation, 2003); Palwasha Kakar, “Tribal Law of Pashtunwali and Women’s Legislative Authority” (Harvard Law School Islamic Legal Studies Program, unpublished research paper, 2003), <http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/ilsp/research/alhp.php> (accessed 11 June 2013). Generally oriented toward restorative justice and non-static, it has been and remains highly influential in law and practices through Afghanistan through a variety of cultural, national and institutional filters despite some contestation from other ethnicities and sects. Carter and Connor call it “an inclusive code of conduct guiding all aspects of Pashtun behavior and often superceding [sic] the dictates of both Islam and the central government.” Lynn Carter and Kerry Connor, “A Preliminary Investigation of Contemporary Afghan Councils” (Peshawar, Pakistan: Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), 1989): 7, <http://repository.forcedmigration.org/?search=A+PRELIMINARY+INVESTIGATION+OF+CONTEMPORARY+AFGHAN+COUNCILS&start=0&rows=10> (accessed 11 June 2013).

269 Haq-ul-abd, recognised in Article 1310 of the Civil Code, 1977.

270 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, “Combined Periodic Reports to CEDAW,” 32.

271 Hudood crimes include: adultery, drinking alcohol, brigandage, theft and *qazf* (to wrongfully accuse a chaste Muslim man or chaste Muslim woman of adultery or homosexuality).

272 Almost all Constitutions since 1923 have balanced between the Shari'ah and secular western codes; influences have been from Egypt, Turkey and France.

273 Referring to Fazel Hadi Shinwari’s term as Chief Justice from 2001-06 and his conservative rulings on, for example, female singers on television, or against a feminist in the Cabinet, which according to Barnett Rubin, reflected his exclusive training in Islamic Law, Barnett R. Rubin, “Afghanistan’s Uncertain Transition From Turmoil to Normalcy,” *CSR NO. 12*, (Council of Foreign Relations, 2006):25.

This is reflected on a routine basis in the nature and control of the primary courts and the provincial courts in cases of, for example, runaway women and girls who are charged with and convicted of adultery and imprisoned in prisons and juvenile homes. The cleavage shows in inheritance, as another example, where the Shari'ah recognises women's rights to inheritance but customary law and culture do not.²⁷⁴ Further, financial independence and inheritance for women are guaranteed in the Constitution, but not women's participation in the judicial system or their right to free movement, all key elements of women's rights. The former two have been debated within concepts of Islam and gender in many discussions²⁷⁵ while the last is pertinent because of the specific socio-cultural context of Afghanistan that is rigid in its treatment of public and private spheres.²⁷⁶ While it could be argued that financial independence for women is already granted in the Shari'ah as is inheritance²⁷⁷, albeit unequally, the lack of mobility for women significantly impedes access to education, health care, economic participation, political participation and many other basic as well as secondary rights.

Articles 83 and 84, through affirmative action, provide for the realisation of the rights of women mandated by Article 33, whereby all citizens have the right to suffrage as well as the opportunity to serve as elected officials. Article 53 though, requires the state to care for those without other recourse, such as the term "[adult] women without a caretaker." Even if it is interpreted as a specific provision "for the many women who have lost breadwinning husbands, fathers, or brothers in the decades of conflict that have consumed the country and who lack access to viable economic opportunities due to discrimination or to Afghanistan's dismal economic situation,²⁷⁸" the use of the word "caretaker" is analogous with, and reinforces, the infantilisation of women and promotes the stereotypical images of men as guardians. The centrality provided to the *mahram* needs to be reviewed in terms of civil and citizenship debates.

Considering the above, and since customary barriers restrict the economic activities of women and prevent their legitimate access to inheritance, *mehr*, maintenance, work, financial independence and ownership of property and assets, there is a need to review family law in the Shari'ah and address and reconstruct customary law accordingly, including on consent. This is also in line with Article 54 of the Constitution that says "[...]The state shall adopt necessary measures to attain[...]the elimination of related traditions contrary to the principles of the sacred religion of Islam."

274 See Jo Grace, "Who Owns the Farm?" 19-23.

275 Miriam A. Nawabi, "Women's Rights in the New Constitution of Afghanistan" (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2003): 9-11; Christie S. Warren, "Lifting the Veil: Women and Islamic Law," (William and Mary Law School Scholarship Repository, Faculty Publications, Paper 99, 2008), <http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/facpubs/99>; Faiz Ahmed, "Shari'a, Custom, and Statutory Law: Comparing State Approaches to Islamic Jurisprudence, Tribal Autonomy, and Legal Development in Afghanistan and Pakistan," *Global Jurist Advances*, Article 5, 7, no. 1 (2007): 1-54; Laura Belkner, "The Secular and Religious Legal Framework of Afghanistan as Compared to Western Notions of Equal Protection and Human Rights Treaties: Is Afghanistan's Legal Code Facially Consistent with Sex Equality?" *Cardozo Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 20 (2012): 501-36.

276 The 2001 Essential Declaration of the Rights of Afghan Women makes specific mention of this: "The right to move about freely and independently."

277 Afghan Civil Code sections 289-342 and 1993-2267; Rural Development Institute, "Women's Inheritance Rights to Land and Property in South Asia: A Study of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka" (World Justice Project, December 2009), http://www.landesia.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/RDI_Report_WJF_Womens_Inheritance_Six_South_Asian_Countries_December_2009.pdf (accessed 12 June 2013). All previous Constitutions, except one, had retained both secular and Islamic-Hanafi laws which later applied to all Muslim Afghans in personal matters.

278 Nusrat Choudhury, "Constrained Spaces for Islamic Feminism: Women's Rights and the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan," *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism*, 19 (2007):155-74.

The Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals, 2005

The 2008 Progress Report for the AMDGs shows that the first three targets set for Goal 3²⁷⁹ were estimated as difficult to meet by 2020. Data varied on all indicators for the first three targets (education, economic participation and political participation) between no change and a marginal improvement, while one target (ratio of girls to boys in primary education) showed a drop of 0.01. The fourth target, i.e. women's access to justice, was in 2008 still seen as achievable since legislation to deal with women's rights in employment, family rights, property and inheritance and to a violence-free life was being reviewed. The 2010 AMDGs Progress Report shows an improvement in three indicators: ratio of girls to boys in primary education (up by 7 percent from 59 percent in 2008), that in secondary education (up by 3 percent from 42 percent in 2008) and ratio of literate females to males, aged 15 to 24 years (up by 8 percent from 37 percent). Other indicators including for employment and political participation show a decline in the 2010 AMDGs Progress Report. It mentions that legislation for women's access to justice is still being reviewed;²⁸⁰ family rights, property and inheritance are specified in the Shari'ah and fall under Personal Law. As of 2013, no specific legislation to protect the rights of women in employment has been adopted, reviewed or amended.

On the whole, the progress is lagging far behind the project's 2020 Goals. To reach parity in education by 2020, for example, will require five girls to be enrolled at the primary stage for every three boys, and three girls for every boy at the secondary stage.²⁸¹ In female work participation in government institutions, the figures show a dip from 30 percent in 2005 to less than 20 percent in 2010.²⁸² Further, there seem to have been certain gaps in data collection and availability, especially in those provinces which continue to be conflict affected. Most importantly, to adequately enhance female labour participation in Afghanistan, the crucial sectors to be monitored, analysed and strategized for are in the two sectors of agricultural and non-agricultural informal economy. Although we get a measure of the challenges faced in increasing the gender balance, strong programming in these two sectors will require urgent implementation.

National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA), 2008

Adopted by the Cabinet in May 2008 as a national-level coordination mechanism, NAPWA in early 2011 showed a slow pace of progress, reflecting a wide gap between policy and implementation. NAPWA was identified for support under a National Priority Program (2011) named Capacity Development for Implementation of the NAPWA. As the implementing agency for NAPWA, MoWA's performance has been questioned by many in the government as well as in civil society and the international aid community; some within the ministries do not see it as a credible or effective advocate for enhancing women's status in Afghanistan. The points made in various documents for the lack of NAPWA implementation are related to the role and position of MoWA, the lack of implementation and accountability mechanisms that provide for benchmarks, timeframes and enforceability within all ministries responsible for gender mainstreaming and, to some extent, a lack of ownership of NAPWA within MoWA and within the government as a whole.²⁸³

279 The third Goal of the AMDGs, "Promote gender equality and empower of women" is looked at (as within the MDGs) through the targets of female enrolment in education, work participation and political participation.

280 The enactment of the EVAW Bill in 2009 is not mentioned in the report.

281 UNDP Afghanistan, "Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women," http://www.undp.org.af/undp/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=87&Itemid=68 (accessed 12 June 2013).

282 Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, "Fifth Report Situation of Social and Economic Rights in Afghanistan" (Kabul: AIHRC, 2011): 73; UNIFEM Factsheet 2010, <http://www.unifem.org/afghanistan/media/pubs/factsheet/10/index.html>, 12.

283 Norad, "Gender Review Report," 27; Anna Wordsworth, "A Matter of Interests."

All ministerial representatives, bar two, spoke of MoWA as the ministry to deal with NAPWA as “women’s issues,” thus sidelining the concept and meaning of gender mainstreaming entirely as well as shrugging off their own responsibility. Ministries and their representatives need training on the concepts of gender, equity and gender-responsive budgeting; there are some disturbing perspectives like “women are not clever because they have gynaecological problems, they give birth to children and other female problems that they have, their minds are not in place.”²⁸⁴ There is also not enough understanding across sectors of how gender is localised in Afghan contexts. Further, in the absence of specific requirements on benchmarks and indicators as well as low capacity on gender within ministries, substantial guidance and capacity is required to fulfil NAPWA directions.

For example, there is evidence that gender mainstreaming has not been translated to policy and/or action within many sectors. If gender is to be truly cross-cutting, it should, logically, be addressed in every sector from infrastructure to health to agriculture to education to economy to security, even if over time. The programmes in the sectors like energy, water, mining, communications technology, and urban development do not have strategies for women’s participation or inclusion nor do line ministries mainstream gender across strategies. The benefits to women are assumed as indirect as part of the benefits to the population at large. For example, under ANDS, the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum is to provide gender mainstreaming in the policies of the mining sector. The Mining Policy does not mention women except that it has consulted both men and women in its displacement and resettlement meetings and that its Artisans and Small Mining (ASM) sub-sector has conducted a “scoping analysis regarding empowerment of women in the gemstone / jewellery trade,” and under the World Bank’s Sustainable Development of Natural Resources Project (SDNRP II, 2011) project, it lists training for women in gemstone-based entrepreneurial activities²⁸⁵ as one of its expected outcomes. However, the ministry’s ASM Policy²⁸⁶ makes no mention of women. Moreover, and especially, the ministry does not seem to have addressed the gendered implications of the various sub-sectors under mining—there is no information of baseline assessments, social mapping, and gender-sensitive indicators or of employment for women.

Similarly, the Civilian Technical Assistance Programme (CTAP) of the Ministry of Finance makes no mention of women or of gendered indicators. As another example, under ANDS, the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation (MoTCA) is to implement the policy on promoting equitable access to transportation by 2010 under the category of both Development and Gender as a Cross-Cutting Issue. Its implementation has not been effected. The MoPH has included Gender-Based Violence (GBV) into its Health Management Information System (HMIS) but neither its Health and Nutrition Sector Strategy (2007-2008) nor the National Rural Health Strategy (2006-2009) mention GBV. There will need to be a systematic review of all policies and strategies of ministries to see if NAPWA and ANDS are being implemented in letter and spirit.

Gender balance within ministries also has not been achieved. For example, MAIL has about 350 women among a total of 9,000 staff.²⁸⁷ Many ministries have a gender unit but

284 Anonymity requested, representative - Ministry of Finance, AREU interview, 29 December 2012.

285 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, “FAQs and Briefing Notes on Mining and Hydrocarbon Sector” (2011), <http://mom.gov.af/en/page/6393> (accessed 11 June 2013).

286 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Mines, “Artisanal and Small Scale Mining Policy” (Directorate of Policy, Hoot 1390 [2010/11]), http://mom.gov.af/Content/files/Policies/English/English_ASM_Policy.pdf (accessed 11 June 2013).

287 Anonymity requested, representative- MAIL, AREU interview, 1 January 2013.

some have a gender officer; MoHRA only has a gender representative. Gender units in all respondent ministries are discrete from the planning and policy-making units of the ministries. Most gender unit staff are lower-ranking and do not contribute to the policies, implementation and impact assessment of the ministerial projects and programmes; the lead person is sometimes senior and therefore can participate. The practical job remit of gender units seems to chiefly focus on the recruitment of women into the ministries. Some gender units have conducted a few intra-ministry trainings. In some ministries their job is seen as restricted to celebrating Mother's Day and International Women's Day, when banners and posters are made and small ceremonies are held within the Ministry for those staff who care to attend. Among those ministries that have a gender policy, MRRD's policy is relatively substantive. MRRD has a Gender Directorate since 2011, and one of its more successful programmes, the AREDP, also has a Gender Equality Strategy tailored to meet its programmatic needs within the Gender Policy of MRRD. MRRD also has a women's shura for its internal gender policy and for the coordination of five Directorates, the Deputy Ministry of Finance and Administration and the sub-Directorate of Gender.

MoWA, as in many other countries where women's status is very low, ranks low in the hierarchy of ministries. Yet, as the policy-maker for women's issues and as the implementing and monitoring agency of the NAPWA, it is the apex body in Afghanistan to "do gender" for all its population. The lack of accountability within Ministries to gender mainstreaming is related to the low position given to MoWA as an implementer. MoWA is seen as unable to "advocate counterparts in other ministries more forcefully or successfully."²⁸⁸ It requires capacity, qualified staff as well as a proportionate budget if it is to function as a ministry that is to implement gender mainstreaming as well as guide policy on women for Afghanistan. Most importantly, though, it is seen to lack authority.²⁸⁹ MoWA in Afghanistan is in a double bind: gender is to be mainstreamed by all but the mainstreaming is to be implemented by a ministry that has inadequate capacity, minimal budget²⁹⁰ and almost no socio-executive capital.

In the past ten years MoWA has had four ministers, all women. The first three, also independent activists, were seen as outspoken by the conservative factions within the male-majority Parliament. The current minister has been in her position for about four years now and is seen to keep a lower profile. Some of the ministry's recent achievements include: the current review of the Family Law, a greater emphasis on project cycle management, including budget and monitoring, establishing gender units in ministries and significant dissemination of information on women's rights. The MoWA representative hopes for greater cooperation from all ministries in MoWA's monitoring of the NAPWA and for gender responsive budgeting to be undertaken by all ministries.²⁹¹

288 Wikileaks, Reference ID 08KABUL3342, "Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs: Not Speaking Up for Afghan Women," <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/12/08KABUL3342.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

289 For example, a representative of the Nangarhar DoWA says, "I have witnessed...men who are directors in high government and other posts come to my office and say: 'Find me a good, beautiful, fashionable girl because I want to marry for the second time.' I am forced to be tough with them and say I am here to work for women's rights not to pimp out women for lustful men. Then they say that a woman without help cannot get anywhere and that if I want men to give me importance then I should do what they tell me." Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, "A Study of Gender Equity through National Solidarity Programme's Community Development Councils 'If Anyone Listens I Have a Lot of Plans'" (Kabul: DACAAR, 2010): 50.

290 MoWA's actual budget expenditure was just 0.14 percent of the national budget expenditures in 2010-11, CSO, "Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2010-11."

291 Mizhgan Mustafawi, Deputy Minister of Policy and Plan- MoWA, AREU interview, 8 January 2013.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs Initiative to Support Policy and Advocacy (MISPA) was launched in 2006 to strengthen capacity for MoWA and the 33 DoWAs.²⁹² Following Presidential Decree No. 45 (October 2012) a Sub-Directorate of Monitoring was established in the Directorate of Planning and Policy of MoWA to assess and monitor the implementation of NAPWA in each ministry. Commissions across provinces to address violence against women have been established. A Women's Policy Development Centre (WPDC) and Provincial Women's Development Council (PWDC) in the provinces has been lately developed within MoWA which is also to look into, monitor and assess the implementation of NAPWA across the ministries.

Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA)

The AISA, established in 2003 as a "one-stop shop for investors," is an Investment Promotion Agency. It is responsible for the registration, licensing, advocacy and promotion of investments in Afghanistan and has regional offices in Herat, Kandahar, Mazar, Jalalabad, Khost, Kunduz and Helmand. Of its 14 senior management personnel, one (Human Resources) is a woman; of a total 130 staff, 20 are women.²⁹³ AISA's investment promotion officer is a woman, as are its license manager and service sector specialist in the research department. AISA also scouts for suitable partnerships and alliances with businesses in other countries and matches them with appropriate firms in Afghanistan dealing with similar raw or finished products that can be imported or exported to mutual advantage. Conferences and exhibitions are arranged between buyers and sellers; AISA also makes sure that all products exhibited as Afghan produce meet quality standards and are genuinely and fully made in Afghanistan.

AISA's female members are mostly in handicrafts, furniture, excavation, marble and jewellery; their business investments are far less than those made by the male members. Women invited to participate in AISA exhibitions are at first uncertain and apprehensive about their presence in this trade sphere, primarily, according to an ASIA representative,²⁹⁴ due to a nervousness in dealing with men and selling their products to them. But, she says, AISA finds women eager to participate in their future exhibitions and that second-time participants are able to improve on the quality and range of their products. They also seem to offer a certain amount of discreet encouragement to women members inasmuch as not insisting on certain formalities to be fulfilled immediately. AISA does not have a policy of gender nor any projects for specifically encouraging women entrepreneurs, although it has arranged for a few women to visit other countries for training and has also organised some trainings for women in Afghanistan. Corruption among government agencies and high insecurity for women was noted as a chief impediment for entrepreneurship, particularly for women. Although they are in close coordination with the MoCI, the Chamber of Commerce (CoC), MoF, and MoFA, AISA does not actively coordinate with MoWA and finds them rather unresponsive. AISA needs a focus on women's economic activities and the development of specific initiatives in order to enhance women's economic potential. AISA also lacks women's presence at its senior management level.

The Afghan Investment Support Agency (AISA):
"It's great, it's Afghan made"

292 The Asia Foundation, "Ministry of Women's Affairs Initiative to Support Policy and Advocacy," <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/MISPA1AfghanistanFINAL.pdf> (accessed 12 June 2013).

293 www.aisa.org.af (accessed 11 June 2013).

294 Sahiba Nooristani, Investment Promotion Officer- AISA, AREU interview, 1 January 2013.

The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI)

The ACCI (“the voice of Afghanistan’s private sector”) was established in 2004. It is an independent organisation that is serving the advocacy and business facilitation needs of the private sector economy and represents its interests to the government. All 21 board members are male; of its team of 12, one is a woman (human resources). More credits and loans are available to men than women.²⁹⁵ It offers various services in industry and export promotions, international affairs, legal services and arbitration, and business development services.

The Afghan Women Business Federation is a permanent member of ACCI; the Afghan Women Development Foundation and the Kabul Women Union are also members. ACCI offers a 50 percent discount to women entrepreneurs or their associations for membership. With 22 representatives in the provinces, ACCI is also partner with international agencies such as the International Chamber of Commerce, SAARC, Innovative Research Universities, ECO and ILO and has contributed to ANDS (2005). There are a few ad hoc programmes such as arranging for a few businesswomen to obtain capacity building in other countries or arranging their participation in exhibitions in other countries. It does not have a policy or strategy to address businesswomen’s inclusion in the commerce and industry sector. It is in the process of drafting some women-specific proposals in business training and skills development in the Business Development Services Plan it is developing, and which it hopes to implement in all provinces. The ACCI representative²⁹⁶ suggested that women need strengthening in their approach to business and in their business management and financial skills. As a means to enable better participation of women in commerce and industry, he felt that a lower tariff for women-owned and operated businesses, especially in export, would help immensely.

Trade and Accession Facilities for Afghanistan (TAF)

TAF was started in December 2010 to implement reforms in five key sectors to improve the regulatory climate for SMEs. The project aims “to generate economic growth, trade and investment by improving conditions for international trade and transit, help the Afghan Government and the private sector capitalise on regional and global trade linkages and boost trade through assistance in trade policy liberalization, customs reform and trade facilitation.

TAF needs to focus on the establishment of government-certified quality control measures in various sectors across the country. It has not mentioned any gender-sensitive measures like women’s inclusion in the business communities being represented in development of trade policies nor in its collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data, nor in women-specific knowledge dissemination around policies and opportunities.

Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), 2008

The NAPWA is the designated principal policy tool for gender mainstreaming in the ANDS. In the section introducing gender as a cross-cutting theme, the ANDS repeats the three objectives stated in the NAPWA. It does not offer specific guidance or further details on women’s empowerment. Gender is a cross-cutting issue in ANDS, and three immediate goals have been prioritised, namely: i) to attain the 13 gender-specific benchmarks of the Afghanistan Compact/I-ANDS, including the five-year priorities of NAPWA; ii) to

295 Qurban Haqjo, Head, Afghanistan’s Chamber of Commerce; TAF, “Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Survey,” unnumbered.

296 Ali Zaki, Director, Business Development Services- ACCI, AREU interview, 1 January 2013.

realise the gender commitments that are mainstreamed in each of the ANDS sectors; and iii) to develop basic institutional capacities of ministries and government agencies on gender mainstreaming.

Under ANDS²⁹⁷ “performance of sectors on gender are to be monitored by the Oversight Committee and the JCMB. The gender indicators and statistical framework of MoWA will be expanded to include indicators on the performance of government on the promotion of women’s status. To facilitate coordination, 17 Inter-Ministerial Committees (IMCs) will be established, each responsible for overseeing the implementation of an ANDS sector strategy. The monitoring and evaluation system of every ministry will:

- Include gender in the terms of reference of the monitoring and evaluation unit and job description of its chiefs.
- Provide training on gender sensitive monitoring and reporting.
- Adopt gender sensitive indicators.
- Collect and process sex disaggregated data.
- Highlight gender achievements in ministry and sector reports.
- Surveys that will set the baseline data for monitoring will be conducted. The baseline statistics on women and men in Afghanistan will be updated annually and disseminated to strategic users
- A mid-term evaluation will be conducted in 1387 (2008) and another in 1390 (2011). Insights from the evaluation will be used to inform future planning, including the updating of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan.”

However, under ANDS Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators for Gender, only three items are mentioned: ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education, to be collected annually by the Ministries of Education and Higher Education; ratio of literate women to men aged 15-24 years to be collected every three years by the NRVA and CSO; and share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector to be collected every three years by the NRVA and CSO.

Action points made for women’s empowerment articulated in the ANDS Appendix 1²⁹⁸ are provided in summary table form in Appendix 7 of this report. As seen in Appendix 7, in the ANDS (2008-13) Appendix 2, the Monitoring Matrix, there are very few indicators, baselines and targets that refer to the implementation and thence monitoring of the points of the Action Plan. Many issues apparently addressed in ANDS have become marginalised or have disappeared entirely in the Monitoring Matrix. As can be seen, specific targets are provided for only in Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights, Education and Social Protection. Moreover, some of the baselines and targets are unclear. Likewise, the quantity and quality of “doing gender” dips drastically from the broad flourishes of the main document itself. Importantly, ANDS also does not include efforts to expand or improve upon subsistence-level farming.

If gender is to be truly “cross-cutting,” it should, logically, be addressed in every sector—from infrastructure to health to agriculture to education to economy to security, even if over time. While the path of least resistance has been used in many countries with embedded patriarchal norms, one can debate the limited allocation of resources to “women’s” sectors/activities in Afghanistan, and question the lack of widening the scope of activities and sectors targeting women’s participation to include economic empowerment.

297 Afghanistan National Development Strategy, 151-2.

298 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, “Afghanistan National Development Strategy, (2008-13),” Appendix 1, National Action Plan (2009-13): 192-245.

Box 9: The Road Sector Support Programme (RSPS), Uganda

RSPS is supported by DANIDA. The RSPS’s “principle of equality of opportunity to both women and men resulted in the most visible and direct gender outcomes. There was improvement of women’s access to employment in the roads sub-sector, both as workers and contractors and in training opportunities in labour-based methods of road works. By actively promoting labour-based methods, the program enhanced women’s opportunities to benefit directly from road improvements through earning cash income for payment of school fees for their children, accessing health facilities and consumer goods, as well as investment in productive assets such as land.”²⁹⁹

The National Priority Programs (NPPs)

The 22 NPPs were presented at the Kabul Conference in 2010 to “bring order, effectiveness, and assessment to Afghan strategies, aid management, and action to improve utilization of resources and achieve medium to long-term sustainability.”³⁰⁰ They are grouped into six clusters³⁰¹:

- Security: Peace and Reintegration;
- Human Resource Development: Skills Development and Labor, Education for All, Higher Education, Women Affairs, Capacity Building for Health;
- Infrastructure Development: National Regional Resource Corridor, Extractive Industries, National Energy Program, Urban Development;
- Private Sector Development: Trade Facilitation and SME, E-Afghanistan;
- Agriculture and Rural Development: Water and Natural Resource Management, Comprehensive Agriculture, Rural Access, Strengthening Local Institutions; and
- Governance: Economic and Financial Reform, Transparency and Accountability, Efficient and Effective Government, Local Governance, Justice for ALL, Human Rights.

National Solidarity Programme (NSP), 2003

The NSP results for women’s participation have been mixed. According to the government’s report to CEDAW in 2011, about 30,000 rural women are members of CDCs through the women’s *shuras*; the MRRD lists “more than 30,000 CDCs” as of August 2012. The women’s *shuras* have provided women with a certain space and voice through which to partially participate in the development of their communities. This is a marked step forward for women’s access to the public and political spheres within their communities since the isolation that many Afghan women face due to socio-cultural norms inhibits or prohibits their meeting with non-family, sometimes even with those women who are not immediate (matrimonial) kin, without the permission of the male head of their households. Like the MFIs, the women’s *shuras* mandated by the NSP provide some

299 Nite Tanzarn, “Integrating Gender Into World Bank Financed Transport Programs Case Study Uganda” (Washington, DC: The World Bank, Road Sector Programme Support (RSPS), 2003): 5, <http://www4.worldbank.org/afr/ssatp/Resources/HTML/Gender-RG/Source%20documents%5Ccase%20studies%5CICNET%20Case%20Studies%20for%20WB/CSICN12%20Uganda%20Road%20Program.pdf> (accessed 12 June 2013).

300 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Finance, “The Kabul Process,” <http://www.thekabulprocess.gov.af/> (accessed 12 June 2013).

301 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Finance, “National Priority Programs,” <http://mof.gov.af/en/page/3976> (accessed 12 June 2013).

legitimate community-acknowledged spaces for gendered solidarity.³⁰² Women in the CDCs have obtained some literacy and vocational skills as well as leadership training, and some ability to engage in the wider public sphere.

However, even as women's and men's *shuras* meet jointly only occasionally, even among their limited community radius, there has been limited enhanced visibility for women since men's *shuras* either do not listen to women's voices or tend to speak for them. "[T]he women's *shuras* have to communicate their needs to the World Bank, UNDP project staff and MRRD through the men's *shura*, which no doubt provides the men with considerable control over the priorities funded...None of the national or international advisers working directly with the *shuras* and local authorities are women."³⁰³ Facilitating Partners too fail to give adequate importance to women's roles and women's projects are often decided in male-dominated selection procedures.

The quality of participation in the NSP process has been "impacted by men in CDCs blocking information, lack of structured, two-way communication between men and women's groups, men controlling project funds and largely ignoring any input which women may want to make." There is inadequacy of female staff among the NSP and the Facilitating Partner staff³⁰⁴ and "resultant inattention to or neglect of women's concerns and inputs."³⁰⁵ There is possibly significant variation evolving from different socio-cultural traditions that may enable more effective participation by some women in CDCs; in Daikundi, i.e., "men are more willing to accept women's leadership because there has been a longstanding tradition of it as a result of which a number of women feel confident about the quality of their leadership."³⁰⁶

Yet, as Azarbaijani-Moghaddam (2010) points out, "[d]iscussions with staff of NSP and FPs [Facilitating Partners] often demonstrated a sense that rural communities had somehow stopped in a time warp and that rural people remained conservative and unwilling to change, especially when it comes to gender relations. Interview transcripts are peppered with phrases such as 'our culture does not allow this,' 'we cannot change our culture,' 'uneducated people are backward,' 'our women are uneducated,' 'our people are not ready,' and so on. This may be true to a certain extent, but as an underlying assumption, it affects the way staff approach programming with women in these areas and how they evaluate their work. It also raises questions about staff perceptions of the nature of development and whether they realise that it involves inevitable social change."³⁰⁷

According to interviews in this research, the CDCs have not been effective in enhancing women's public participation. The MRRD lists 388 CDCs with only male *shuras*, none with

302 Chona Echavez, "Gender and Economic Choice: What's Old and What's New for Women in Afghanistan Results from a Rapid Qualitative Assessment in Kabul and Parwan Provinces" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2012); Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, "A Study of Gender Equity through National Solidarity Programme's Community Development Councils."

303 Carrol Faubert, Mary Kaldor, Saeed Niazi and Rajeev Pillay, "Case Study Afghanistan Evaluation of UNDP Assistance to Conflict affected countries" (New York: UNDP Evaluation Office, 2006): 27, <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/thematic/conflict/Afghanistan.pdf> (accessed 12 June 2013).

304 Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, "A Study of Gender Equity through National Solidarity Programme's Community Development Councils," vii-ix.

305 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, "Villages Speak and the Nation Listens, The Third National Consultation Conference of Afghanistan's Community Development Councils" (2011): 15, <http://www.nspafghanistan.org/files/2010%20CDC%20-%20NCC%20III%20Report.pdf> (accessed 12 June 2013)

306 Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, "A Study of Gender Equity through National Solidarity Programme's Community Development Councils," 33.

307 Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, "A Study of Gender Equity through National Solidarity Programme's Community Development Councils," 47.

women's *shuras* and 377 CDCs with mixed *shuras*³⁰⁸; some of the CDCs with only male *shuras* have women's groups and some have advisory groups which also include women. The number of women in the mixed *shuras* is on average eight, with an average *shura* of 30 persons. Mid-level officials at the NSP, who interact with the councils and have charge of project implementation, say that "the real picture is that women do not have the authority to make decisions through the NSP and CDC." They candidly but anonymously say that "all the projects that women have through NSP and CDC they were already decided by men in their community...then women get that project and work with it... If men do not agree with women regarding their decision in the community, women can never take on a project."³⁰⁹ Yet, the NSP's mobilisation of the CDCs has had a positive impact on women's groups, in for example, Balkh, and their participation in an AREDP programme of the MRRD.³¹⁰

It also has been argued that the CDCs are not accountable to the communities themselves but are "rentier" community organisations dependent on the NGO that funds the project. Further, large cash infusions along with inadequate self-enforcing accountability mechanisms within a CDC "may be sources of contention that generate, rather than prevent, conflict."³¹¹ Even if funding is sourced through NGOs as implementing agencies, there has to be a system where the CDC's and/or the responsible NGO is accountable to the communities and to the district government officials.

Further, the NSP is seen to lack monitoring and assessment mechanisms for gender-related targets. However, its reach has helped develop the banking system and generated more demand for banking services³¹² and it is also generally seen as one of the successful participatory projects of Afghanistan that has contributed much to local governance and decision-making. Overall, the NSP has not conducted an impact assessment on the nature of women's involvement and the effects it may have had upon them. The NSP has about 1,000 staff, of which 10-15 percent are women.³¹³

Although the CDC by-law (2006)³¹⁴ offers a legitimate operational framework, a CDC remains a service provision limited to the MRRD and funded by its donor. As a constitutionally based, democratically elected development body at the community level, there should be a policy in the CDC funding mechanism in order to absorb it within the government strategies beyond the current donor-dependent one funded by multilateral and bilateral donors, with core support from the World Bank. The NSP can also consider affirmative action of at least 30 percent projects to be decided and executed by women's *shuras*, helped initially in accounting and management by trained female staff among facilitating partners.

308 Unpublished, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, National Area Based Development Programme.

309 Anonymity requested, NSP monitoring officers- NSP, AREU interview, 23 December 2012.

310 Roger Karlsson, Development Advisor - Swedish Embassy, AREU interview, 29 November 2012.

311 Joanna Brick, "The Political Economy of Customary Village Organizations in Rural Afghanistan."

312 Yama Torabi, "Assessing the NSP: The Role of Accountability in Reconstruction" (Afghanistan: Integrity Watch, 2007): 13, <http://www.iwaweb.org/reports/PDF/AfghanNSP.pdf> (accessed 5 June 2013).

313 Abdul Rahman Ayubi, Executive Director, Operations - NSP, AREU interview, 18 December 2012.

314 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development, National Solidarity Programme, "NSP Definitions," <http://www.nspafghanistan.org/default.aspx?sel=15#CDCByLaws> (accessed 16 June 2013).

Table 6: NSP policies and practices for promoting gender equity³¹⁵

Principle	NSP Policies and Practices
Gender equity in NSP participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain early agreement with community leaders about the ways in which women can participate in CDCs in a culturally acceptable manner. • Organized parallel meetings for men and women so that women do not need to mix publicly with men. Even if mixed meetings are acceptable, it may be better for women to hold separate meetings so they can feel free to participate and speak openly • Maintain records of participants in events and meetings, disaggregated by gender (particularly those related to community development planning)
Gender equity in CDC representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize separate voting venues for men and women to encourage more women to vote • If there are culture constraints to holding mixed-gender meetings, have the communities elect a male and female representative from each cluster and organize male and female sub-committees. Explain that male and female sub-committees have equal standing under the CDC • Help communities identify methods for sharing information and coordinating joint decision-making between sub-committees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Officers of each sub-committee should serve on the CDC Executive Coordinating Committee, which finalizes and approves (signs) all NSP forms; and - Minutes of all meetings should be shared between groups.
Gender equity in access to NSP information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that programme information such as the “public notice board” is posted in a public place that is easily accessible to men and women. If a mosque is chosen for posting information, another posting place accessible to women must also be chosen
Gender equity in access to NSP training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure equitable delivery of training to male and female CDC members. At a minimum, all key officers of both sub-committees should be trained (Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary)
Gender equity in decision making and control of project assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform community leaders that at least one NSP-funded subproject should be prioritized by women and managed by the women’s CDC sub-committee or by a project committee nominated/approved by the women’s CDC sub-committee. • Ensure that at least 2 male and 2 female officers sign all NSP forms

315 Jason Calder and Aziz Hakimi, “Statebuilding and Community Engagement without Reconciliation: A Case Study of Afghanistan’s National Solidarity Program” (Afghanistan: Future Generations Graduate School, Occasional Paper, Peace Building Series No. 2, March 2009).

2.4 Summary

While there has been a limited impact of opportunities in education, health and political participation for women it has been greatly tempered by lessening access to safety. Compared to 2001, women's access to education and health care has improved in absolute numbers, but it is not proportionate to the population. In political participation the numbers are there but the efficacy is highly limited. In safety, the situation for women is deplorable. Access to economic opportunity is mediated by perceptions of safety as well as by socio-developmental indicators and community contexts. As long as women are offered enhanced economic engagement within the community context of accepted gender roles, it may be accepted and used to greater effect. However, the government has just begun to focus on women's economic potential, and programmes and strategies are underway to realise this potential. For these to be realised in full, all ministries and their strategies, as well as international aid, have to be fully oriented toward, especially, ANDS and to all principles of the NAPWA.

How "gender mainstreaming" is understood and if and whether it is put into action varies within programmes and strategies and the mechanisms for this need strengthening. Further, there is also a large gap between broadly stated principles in some policies and the specifics that are then provided within the policies themselves. Coordination and monitoring mechanisms need buttressing as do accountability mechanisms. MoWA has recently formed a unit for monitoring and evaluation as an oversight body to ensure the integration of gender-sensitive components in the design and implementation of NAPWA and the indicators that have been developed jointly with the concerned women's networks and line ministries.

Women's representation in labour is disorganised and piece-meal. There is very little data or sector-wise analysis on women's labour participation. Available data indicates that there has been no surge in their economic participation yet. Their participation remains at the lower end of value chains and lack of access to many resources prevents an upgrade of their skills and income. Organised, informal income generation requires processes and national-level strategies that can structure, streamline and harness women's potential, even if in a rather instrumentalist approach. This includes financial, credit and trade related services for an extensive and deeper outreach tailored to suit gender and sector needs so that women are incorporated into the promotion of value chains in all products.

Collective processes at the local levels need to be linked with collective women-oriented initiatives at the national and international levels; this link can be facilitated by a far greater focus on women's equitable access to resources. Women's self-help groups and women's cooperatives can offer spaces to channel resources that individual women are unable to access; localised groups help incorporate women's familial and social roles and help shape the contours of each woman's economic mobility. Gendered collective approaches, while raising income levels and reducing deprivation, address inadequacies in capabilities and the paucity of opportunities that restricts individual ability. Human capital (skills) and participatory community capital (community, kinship and social networks) can be used to maximise women's opportunities to exercise power and to make choices, while lobbying collectively to implement changes in legislation and policy. Such agency can help in the creation of subaltern counter-publics that target economic self-sufficiency, integrated development and consciousness-raising.

3. Arenas for Policy Review

Afghanistan is facing the formidable task of rebuilding the country after the U.S. and NATO forces leave in 2014. While an interim elected government has been in office since 2001, peace and stability elude this war-ravaged country. The continuing battles between insurgents and international forces have meant that the government is extremely limited in its capacity to create jobs or offer public services. However, with no formal safety nets, employment opportunities must increase rapidly, both to engage greater numbers of the current working-age population, as well as to absorb the rapidly growing population. The risks and consequences of a large number of unemployed youth in fragile environments can be severe, as the experiences of the Middle East, Uganda and Rwanda bear testimony to.

Restoring the physical, institutional, organisational and human infrastructure destroyed during decades of conflict will require prudent yet assiduous employment of all domestic resources available to the country, as well as access to foreign capital and markets. Women have to participate equally in this nation-building effort; no country can achieve decent living standards or economy when its female population lacks productive employment. Women's economic empowerment is therefore a prerequisite for Afghanistan's growth and prosperity. Yet, efforts to empower women cannot succeed unless men are equal participants and beneficiaries in these efforts. Culturally, Afghanistan shares many values with countries in South Asia, especially as they pertain to gender relations, the family and the community. A focus on women's income-generation activities in isolation, without due consideration to the complex web of social and familial dynamics that are deeply important for all involved, is likely to fail, and possibly worsen the outcomes for women.³¹⁶ Equally, economic empowerment often precedes social empowerment.

As noted earlier, the Government of Afghanistan is bound by economical imperatives, legal instruments and agreements with the international community to:

- Progressively realise its citizens' right to access work, and
- Create an enabling environment such that each citizen—without discrimination by age, sex, disability, class, ethnicity or religion—has equal opportunity to this human right.

It has made it obligatory upon itself to remove all impediments to women's equal access to this right and to therefore not only provide, monitor and direct laws and strategies that specifically address women's socio-culturally derived unequal access, but also to review the implementation of extant laws and strategies that provide for women's economic participation and empowerment. The route chosen by the government and by international agencies is "gender mainstreaming."³¹⁷

316 See also Melissa Kerr Chioyenda, "Afghan Women, Culture and Development" (American Anthropological Association, 2012), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/american-anthropological-association/afghan-women_b_1409068.html (accessed 17 June 2013).

317 "...gender mainstreaming is a pox for women. The worst thing you can do for women is fold them into the mandates of...[broader development programmes]. Once you've mainstreamed gender it's everybody's business and nobody's business. Everyone's accountable and no one's accountable. I don't know who thought up this gender mainstreaming guff, but I often wonder what their motives were...Gender mainstreaming might work if we had what sports and financial enthusiasts call 'a level playing field,' that is to say, if there were real equity and equality between women and men. Then gender mainstreaming becomes a way of maintaining that equality. But when you start from such gross inequality, mainstreaming simply entrenches the disparities." S. Lewis, *Race against Time: Searching for Hope in AIDS-Ravaged Africa* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2005), 125-6, cited in Martha Macintyre, "Modernity, Gender and Mining: Experiences from Papua

Given the socio-cultural background of the region, as well as the gender dynamics as they played out politically prior to 1973 and between 1973 and 2001, there has to be both a better perception of how various dimensions of exclusion interact with gender, as well as the ability to address existing socio-religious power structures that limit women's participation in economic activities. Equally, in order to create free, fair and favourable opportunities for women's equitable access to the monetised market, a "level playing field" in the world economy is necessary. Much depends upon the nature of the transition and the terms of agreement negotiated as well as the turn the economy may take. Equally, the continued inflow of international aid—in the current quantum—is crucial in the coming decades, if women are to have any leverage in building upon the initiatives of this past decade. Embedded socio-cultural traditions cannot be addressed in a single decade; it takes decades to redress gross gendered imbalances.

The economic empowerment of women in terms of policy in Afghanistan is greatly complicated by the interlinked absence or limited presence of human rights. While short-term initiatives and medium-term investments by politicians, academics, civil society activists, political parties, religious scholars, tribal elders, provincial councils, members of commerce and trade and other groups are critical to keep the momentum going, longer term human and resource investment is vital for the rejuvenation of society.

That said, and based on the insights gained from this mapping effort, the following points, arranged in four broad categories, could be beneficial to enhance women's economic engagement. Gender is "mainstreamed" through all four categories through the motif of "creating women-only spaces" as a crisp reminder of realities that have been acknowledged all through the decade but not sufficiently acted upon.

The four categories are:

1. Strengthening the policy environment
2. Addressing human development gaps
3. Focusing on deliverables
4. Gendering the financial services

While many of these points have been made in other studies and reports, many are drawn from the analysis in this study. However, recommendations have not been effectively acted upon or acted upon at all.

1. Strengthening the policy environment

At the central level:

- Legislative and administrative measures do not give legal backing to the Constitution nor to Afghanistan's ratification of international conventions. There is a need to review all domestic and statutory laws as well as penal and civil codes based upon international agreements, particularly CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, to ensure that they reflect gender concerns and equity and human rights in all their provisions. Afghanistan should ratify CEDAW's Optional Protocol.

New Guinea," in *Gendering the Field Towards Sustainable Livelihoods for Mining Communities*, ed. Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, (ed.), 21-32 (Melbourne: ANU EPress, 2011), <http://epress.anu.edu.au/apps/bookworm/view/Gendering+the+Field%3A+Towards+Sustainable+Livelihoods+for+Mining+Communities/5521/ch02.xhtml> (accessed 9 June 2013).

- The review of the legislative framework and the judicial system will gain legitimacy and efficacy only if it engages with the foundation of justice in Afghanistan, i.e. Islamic law. A judicial debate, one that draws upon Islamic notions of equity and social justice, is necessary to bring about changes which represent women's interests for a maximum impact on women. Tapping into compatibilities between the Shari'ah and a legal code that recognises international human rights is not an exercise unique to Afghanistan. It has gained acceptance, partly or in substantive measure, in countries like Morocco, Malaysia and Egypt. However, the relevance of the process to Afghanistan and Afghaniyat needs to be validated.
- Along these lines too, the Family Law should be reviewed to ensure its compliance with the Shari'ah, especially on issues of *meras* (inheritance) and *mahr*. Until such time as women's access to land and capital is not addressed, the government should provide leased land to women's producer groups and form women's cooperatives. The potential of such measures for women's livelihood options as well as for the rural economy has been addressed in Section 2.2. The Waqf Boards can also collaborate in the leasing. In the longer run legislative measures need to be in place to enable women to own, buy, sell and inherit land. Rather than *zameen* (land), *zar* (gold, similar) and *zan* (woman, wife) belonging to a man, land being a woman's heritage should also be considered; *zameen zar-e-zan ast*.
- Women's representation in all consultative and decision-making fora regarding peace and development in Afghanistan should be ensured at the minimum mandated level. If the minimum mandated number of women is not present, the decisions of the forum cannot be held legitimate for further discussion or progress.
- Affirmative action for women's employment of at least 30 percent in all government institutions, at each grade, including in the judiciary and the executive, should be ensured.
- Labour laws, trade policies and private sector legislation (contracts, standards, tariff and other similar instruments) should be in line with international standards on labour rights, including Article 11 of CEDAW, should contribute to and be in line with the Millennium Development Goals and the ANDS, and should ensure the social protection of vulnerable livelihoods. In particular, government programmes and donor agencies need to include the monitoring of minimum wages.
- The intense vulnerabilities faced by chronically poor women, female-headed households and disabled women need to be recognised.
- A provision and a mechanism should be created within the Ministry of Justice that ensures the implementation of all recommendations made by the AIHRC and by the High Commission on Ending Violence Against Women. A national audit on the implementation of the EAW should be conducted annually and its results placed in the public domain.

In the line ministries, a revised understanding of women's contribution to the economy and the economic development of Afghanistan is required. Although modifications are needed, the specific implementation of NAPWA and ANDS alone would address many of the gaps that the country is facing today in human development, poverty reduction and the greater involvement of women in economic activities. This includes:

- Ensuring gender justification of every project undertaken by any agency and by any arm of the government, including in sectors considered non-traditional for women. Although the Ministry of Finance is currently implementing this while reviewing and before passing annual financial requests, the implementation of budgets for activities targeting women is not currently ensured.

- Mandate gender-responsive budgeting in every ministry and in all projects, gender analyses and gender filters of proposed projects, embedded project mechanisms like gender-disaggregated data and targets, gender impact analysis in every annual report, and gender-auditing of each ministry's activities. Achievements stated at ministerial levels and in annual progress reports cannot be descriptive, but need to reflect broader progress than the number of women given vocational training, for example; reports need to provide credible, reliable information of impact, and present a comparative analysis of monies spent.
- Ensure a Gender Officer in the provincial departments of every ministry to help monitor the implementation of all activities of the ministry.
- Strengthen MoWA and DoWAs through increased budget, extensive capacity building and executive powers to ensure accountability across all ministries.
- Assess security policies and programmes, including the National Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) programme and the National Afghan Security Policy (NASP), to ensure non-discrimination policies as well as to prevent attacks, harassment and aggression toward women in the public sphere.
- Afghan men working in projects for women could have a tendency to downplay both their work and their role since such work can have low status for the men. This puts at risk their commitment to empowering women. Orientation and training will help.
- Establish a Labour Inspectorate; ensure minimum wage and equal wage for women.
- Ensure that certification laboratories are set up and function for all sectors with budgets, facilities, equipment and other infrastructure.
- Give women-owned or managed cooperatives, businesses and companies a tax break for the (graded) gestation period of the enterprise.
- The MoCI, in coordination with line ministries, should look at participation in the Enhanced Integration Framework of Least Developed Countries, and consider a gendered Trade Integration Study.
- The Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW), in coordination with line ministries, should focus far more on harnessing sources of renewable energy (wind, solar, biogas) and induct women in the use and maintenance of energy equipment.
- Women's transportation needs should be specifically considered by the MoTCA in coordination with line ministries that programme projects for women's socio-economic needs. While rural investments need a strong focus on connecting women to health and education facilities, gender-sensitive policies and investments in transport are necessary, including for women-only group travel; in parallel, intermediary means of transport need be explored seriously.

Central Statistical Organisation (CSO)

- Conduct a mixed-method, national, gender core-development indicators survey for 34 provinces with a sample size of at least 100,000 households. Comprehensively analyse the gender dimension of, and compile data for women on: value chains in all sectors, labour market participation and unemployment, industrial and occupational distribution of workers, patterns of involvement in subsistence production, unconventional definitions of work, women's work in "non-traditional" sectors, unpaid labour and its nature and extent, land ownership, water management, domestic production and related tasks, time-use surveys, income-earning opportunities, physical mobility, accessibility of services, the market viability of goods made by women, women-managed and women-led patronage and support

networks, disability, and similar in order to assess women's productive work and non-monetised contributions to the economy.

- Also gather and analyse data on child marriage and child labour.

2. Addressing human development gaps

It is crucial to address the gaps that girls and women face in education and educational facilities and in health care and provision, and in access to safety, physical mobility and political participation. One of the routes to take is to align with customary and traditional norms and values.

- Identify and create a network of respected female authority figures, preferably with religious knowledge. Training senior women, especially wives of male religious leaders, and younger women as female religious teachers (*bibis*) or as *ulemas* will help to re-examine the ways in which Islamic rights for women within the framework of Afghanityat can be disseminated and how the "Canon" can be re-visited. Home-based Qur'an schools will help establish such a network.
- MoHRA should spear-head the development of initiatives to raise public awareness on Islamic values and women's rights.

In the meantime, there is already enough encouragement for women's access to education—the quest for knowledge being a central pillar of Islam—and health services. The bottlenecks here are access to separate but equal resources for women, particularly girls and young women. The possible ways out of the log-jam could be:

- Providing equitable access to education for girls and women, including funding and building more girls-only schools, especially at secondary and higher secondary levels. Financial education in schools and other educational institutes is necessary to develop financial acumen for both girls and boys, including on saving and investment. The curriculum needs to be reviewed: for example, offering boys training in agriculture-related programmes and home-management skills to girls is detrimental to women's economic knowledge and participation. Women's rights under the civil code and CEDAW as well as under Islamic jurisprudence should also be incorporated in the curriculum.
- Providing alternate formal education in Islamic jurisprudence to women at village and district levels and incorporate Shari'ah-informed, women's rights' relevant information in colleges and universities.
- Training and recruiting women as sole teachers in numbers and with technical expertise sufficient to meet the needs of girls-only schools.
- Increasing health-seeking behaviour and equitable access to care by offering women-only services within comprehensive health-care centres at the district level, by providing women health workers at each community and basic health centre, and mobile household health clinics at the village level in more remote areas.
- Training and recruiting female doctors, nurses, midwives, surgeons, obstetricians and paediatricians, and other technical staff in numbers and expertise sufficient to meet the needs of women at district and provincial levels; all staff should also be trained to look for signs of gender-based violence.
- Providing a minimum of one shelter home and one legal aid centre for women in each district.

- Researching and addressing the key empowerment issue of women's ability to access physical public space, in terms of transportation, socio-cultural barriers, time and sexual harassment.
- Involving women from regional and other Muslim countries in all of the above activities.

3. Focusing on deliverables

- Create a strong and active network of and for women, across sectors, that operates at a pan-Afghanistan level in cities and provincial headquarters to build women-to-women service delivery models (from producer to wholesalers/processors/ exporters) and entrepreneurship with a focus on the domestic market and export potential.
- Identify and group women into producer groups and associations based upon livelihood and occupational categories. Clusters of women producers could be formed so that women can work and learn in groups. Women's CDCs, the women's savings groups of MRRD and other women's *shuras* could be transformed into more enterprise-focused entities.
- Mobilising women based on their needs and opportunities through self-help groups, associations, cooperatives and unions. The tendency among many families and communities is to restrict women's movement, not just outside their immediate community groups but sometimes even with other women within their immediate ethnic community or extended families. Women's groups have a huge potential to promote unity and solidarity to women.
- Training and recruiting women field workers in sufficient numbers to provide a comprehensive range of technical services and information from input to markets for female farmers, producers, craftspeople and other sectors specific to a district or region. The training of female extension workers (currently implemented in a highly limited way) needs to be expanded to all districts and beyond horticulture to include poultry, agriculture and animal husbandry.
- Extension workers are needed in quality control, credit and trade/market linkages to connect with women producer groups. Developing mobile agri-service centres at district headquarters level could be highly beneficial.
- The identified moderate barrier to women producers/association groups remains at the level of contact and interaction with the next step of the market, i.e. village traders/agents/farmers' groups/associations. Identify and train women to fill these gaps, especially at the community level.
- Women input suppliers are needed for farm products in various sectors: women-only stores should be developed at the district level, perhaps even mobile stores. They should be identified, trained and incorporated into MAIL projects, such as HLP, the Perennial Horticulture Development Project, the ASAP Ag-Depots, the Afghanistan Farm Service Alliance, etc.
- More women as basic veterinary workers are needed.
- Access to markets: There is some acceptance of the strength-in-numbers approach, and women travelling in groups may be an effective means of circumventing mobility problems. Transportation has to be made accessible to women-only groups.
- Develop women-owned and women-only processing centres.
- MAIL and other ministries should develop a marketing strategy for each product to access key regional and international markets. This could be developed in

consultation with export support agencies, such as the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan (EPAA), ACCI, and the private sector. A national consortium should be developed, supported by a consortium of international investors.

- MoCI should tie up with AISA, ACCI and TAFE to target women's access to trade far beyond the current limited number of women participating in trade exhibitions. A "hub-regional" network of women's organisations across Central Asia, the Middle East and South Asia should be actively nurtured. This should also include direct contact with women producer associations in the rural networks. Academia could be consulted.

4. Gendering financial services

Access to credit is essential to enhance women's economic engagement, as women have highly limited access to any kind of substantial credit or capital. They lack insurance and risk guarantees. In the current microfinance climate, they also face high interest rates and small amounts of credits coupled with tight repayment schedules. Simultaneously, the reach of the MFI is limited when compared to demand, is of a fairly standard nature and does always not take into account the contexts of women in the rural informal sector and those engaged in small-scale trading.

MFIs and SME financing should:

- Develop a diversified range of gender-sensitive financial products that can meet rural-sector needs as well as trade and enterprise needs, in line with Islamic modes of finance, and which will help the expansion of financial services to rural communities through linkages with the commercial sector.
- Promote micro-insurance and community rural insurance groups.
- Be able to include credit to buy fodder, seeds, equipment (sale or lease) and all input material.
- Develop a flexible package for building women's small and medium enterprises, with longer grace and repayment periods.
- Disseminate widely the Secured Transactions Law that allows a broad range of movable assets to be used as security for availing business loans.
- Reach those below the poverty line through appropriate incentives, a wider and modified service portfolio, partnership support and risk mitigation measures.
- Widen the reach of MISFA's Murabaha-based microfinancing.
- Make available loans and grants as start-up capital and/or seed money at the scale that SMEs require. Social investment funds and joint equity funds could be facilitated through international agencies. Loans should be gender, sector and context specific and designed to allow for lower interest rates and longer repayment periods.
- Assess approaches that use the individual, solidarity group and village-level banking models to develop a better understanding of loan/credit use, and its impact on women's empowerment, social status, productivity and income.

Due to their relative wider outreach depth and their established principles of targeting women, MFIs, with expanded training to staff and implementing agencies, have far greater potential to create women's spaces that encourage access to technical and marketing networks and skills. This could be especially fruitful when combined with the women's CDCs of the NSP as well as the women's councils and producer groups

identified by the MRRD. This could be further enhanced if the knowledge generated in such combined knowledge hubs could be transferred periodically to the secondary level girls'-only schools.

Also, at the international level:

- Far greater emphasis has to be placed on women's economic empowerment in international conferences and resolutions. These should be accompanied by country analysis, targets and indicators for increasing women's livelihood opportunities.
- Focus is necessary on the detrimental nature of the free-trade economy and its contribution to the feminisation of poverty, especially in countries like Afghanistan.

In the light of the impending transition in 2014,³¹⁸ expected lower aid and public spending is anticipated to affect gendered aid programming. Tighter budgets could translate to the greater expectation of value for money:

- Every calf has four legs: There has been a significant lack of coordination among multi-lateral and bilateral donors in Afghanistan, with agencies seeking to push individual country agendas and ideologies onto policy-making within different ministries. The *buzkashi* over the Afghan development calf has not given any focused, coordinated or coherent output on gender and development and the ways in which it needs to be systematically and holistically addressed in Afghanistan. Nor have potential complementarities of agencies around gendered economic empowerment been successfully addressed. In order to ensure information sharing on gender equality and best practices in programming, a multi-donor analysis of "lessons learned," including an internal gender audit, will be timely before 2014 and before more monies are channelled.
- It is necessary to i) synergise all initiatives with Afghan-led initiatives and influence policy in a unified manner, ii) increase the domestic economic impact of aid by channelling all aid through the Afghan government budget, iii) increase domestic contracting, and iv) continue to fund and support the formulation and, more importantly, the effective implementation of policies that promote gendered equality in Afghanistan.
- Projects for women should be served by women facilitators on the ground and by including women at senior and decision-making levels. If implementing agencies do not yet have an adequate balance of women in staff and seniority, donors should ask for it.
- Ensure gender balance within donor and implementing organisations, especially at the senior management level, including at embassies.
- Ensure long-term consultants with an understanding of Afghanistan and accountability to programmes are developed, activated or executed. There needs to be a focus on female economic development experts as lead agents.
- The allocation of monies to women-specific projects should be at least 50 percent of overall country strategy and contribution. They should have concrete outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation should not only be conducted and placed in the public domain for all monies allocated and disbursed and all projects contracted and completed, but community monitoring through community representatives, with 50 percent women's representation, should be taken on board before and during the implementation of projects.

318 As of December, 2012, 11 of the 34 provinces are "fully transitioned," i.e. have already undergone the transition of security responsibility from the International Military Forces to the Afghanistan National Security Forces.

- International agencies must take cognisance of dissent and dissenters within Islam. Cultural relativism and cultural sensitivity must be tempered by taking into account Muslim women's organisations' views on Islam and on Afghan women's rights to participate in the shaping of their culture and religion.
- Networks of women's human rights organisations across Central Asia and South Asia as well as the Middle East should be actively considered. Active funding and technical support for women activists in Afghanistan to link more regionally should be looked at urgently.

Appendix 1: Research Participants

No	Organisation	Name	Position	Date
1	Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Ali Zaki	Director, Business Development Services	01.01.13
2	Afghanistan Investment Support Agency	Sahiba Nooristani	Investment Promotion Officer	01.01.13
3	Afghan Women's Business Federation	Malali Jawad	Membership Manager	30.12.12
4	Afghan Women's Centre	Rasool Habibi	Program Coordinator	19.11.12
5	Afghanistan Women Education Center	Jamila Zafar	Project Representative	31.10.12
6	Afghan Women's Network	Leeda Azizi	Program Officer	22.10..12
7	All Afghan Women's Union	Khadija Shahbaz	Master Trainer	29.12.12
8	Canadian Embassy	Claude Désilets	Deputy Head of Aid	16.12.12
9	Canadian International Development Agency	Anonymity Required	-	04.11.12
10	Community Centre for the Disabled	Ahmad Shah	Senior Trainer	5.12.12
11	CARE	Frozan Yosufzai	Gender Project Officer	27.11.12
12	Educational and Training Center for Poor Women and Girls of Afghanistan	Aliya Yousufzai	Program Officer	29.11.12
13		Parwin Zamani	Head, Educational Development	18.12.12
14	Female Rehabilitation and Development Organisation	Anonymity Required	Project Representative	20.11.12
15	Finnish Embassy	Matti Vaananen, Musliuddin Aabidi	First Secretary National Programme Coordinator	06.01.13
16	GIZ	Dr Alema	Civil Peace Service Coordinator	12.12.12
17	Humanitarian Assistance Muska	Aziza Momand	Director	20.10.12
18	Humanity International	Samiulhaq Sami	Advocacy and Awareness Technical Advisor	17.12.12
		Qasim Khan	Project Representative	
19	International Rescue Committee	Abdul Shakoor	Former Programme Coordinator	21.10.12
20	Institute for the Economic Empowerment of Women	Manizah Wafeq	Director	27.11.12

No	Organisation	Name	Position	Date
21	Japan International Cooperation Agency	Ikumi Ogiwari	Gender and Development Advisor	08.12.12
22	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock	Nasrullah Bakhtani	Acting Director, Policy & Planning	18.12.12
23		Adela Yousufzai	Gender Director	9.1.13
24		Anonymity Required	-	1.11.12
25	Ministry of Commerce and Industry	Anonymity Required	-	23.12.12
26		Anonymity Required	-	25.12.12
27	Ministry of Economy	Arif Sahar	Afghanistan National Development Strategy	17.12.12
28		Anonymity Required	-	17.12.12
29		Anonymity Required	-	30.12.12
30	Ministry of Finance	Anonymity Required	-	26.12.12
31		Anonymity Required	-	29.12.12
32	Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs	Gul Agha Habib	Director, Policy and Planning	31.12.12
33	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Development	Anonymity Required	-	3.2.13
34		Imranullah Kamran	Former Gender Director	25.12.12
35	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development	Abdulrahman Ayoubi	Executive Director, National Solidarity Programme	18.12.12
36		Anonymity Required	-	23.12.12
37		Ghizal Haress	Executive Director, Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program	2.1.13 & 05.01.13
38	Ministry of Women's Affairs	Anjuma Nahimi	Head, Economic Development	22.12.12
39		Mizhgan Mustafawi	Deputy Minister	29.12.12
40		Samia Sadad	Head, Gender Capacity Building Department	9.1.13
41		Hussain Ali Moieen	Economic Specialist, Department of Economic Development	09.01.13

No	Organisation	Name	Position	Date
42	National Area Based Development Programme	Sami Jalalzai	Head, Local Institutional Development Department	02.12.12
43		Ziyadah Karim	Head of Gender Department	
44	National Solidarity Programme	Abdurahman Ayubi	Executive Director	18.12.12
45	National Solidarity Programme	Anonymity Required	-	23.12.12
46	National Solidarity Programme	Anonymity Required	-	23.12.12
47	National Solidarity Programme	Anonymity Required	-	23.12.12
48	Noor Education and Capacity Development Organization	Jamila Afghani Kakar	Director	23.01.13
49	Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Support for Afghanistan	Mahbouba Saraj	Gender and Program Advisor for Women	26.11.12
50	Rabiha-e-Balkhee Skill Support Administration	Abdullah Hamidi	Programme Manager	27.11.12
51		Qais Faqeer	Administration and Finance Officer	27.11.12
52	Sanayee Development Organisation	Samiullah Naseri	Director	25.11.12
53	Skills Training And Rehabilitation Society	Zuhra Aman	Program Coordinator	12.12.12
54	Sabah	Wasima Amiri	Director	1.12.12
55	Shohada	Jawad Wafa	Executive Director	18.11.12
56	Swedish Embassy	Roger Karrlson	Project Advisor	29.11.12
57	United Nations Development Programme	Gulistan Ibadat	Gender Specialist	06.01.13
58	Women for Afghan Women	Shukria Khaliqi	Director	26.11.12
59		Friba Ahmadi	Head	31.12.12

Appendix 2: List of key conferences, resolutions and treaties to which Afghanistan is party

List A: Declarations of International Conferences on Afghanistan, 2001-12³¹⁹

Place	Date	Declaration	Source	Description
Dushanbe	2000	Declaration of the Essential Rights of Afghan Women	<i>Declaration of the Essential Rights of Afghan Women.</i> June 28, 2000. Accessed March 12, 2013. http://www.bdr.freesevers.com/custom.html	This Declaration is an informal intervention drafted by Afghan women leaders, validated at the international conference organised by NEGAR at Dushanbe, Tajikistan, and presented to the President of the Interim Government of Afghanistan. It is seen as a document that aimed, through its provisions, to legitimise the writ of the State within its borders while simultaneously declaring its right to self-determination as a sovereign nation within the family of other sovereign nations. It describes the rights of women in Afghanistan to equal treatment and opportunities for social, political and economic empowerment. In particular, Section III, item 6, calls for the right to just and favourable conditions of work. Personal law is not within its scope.
Brussels	2001	Brussels' Proclamation - Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy	Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy. <i>The Brussels Proclamation.</i> December 4-5, 2001. Accessed March 12, 2013.	This document is a statement from a conference of 50 female Afghan leaders, organised to provide input on the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Its four main areas of recommendations are: Education, Media and Culture; Health; Human Rights; Refugees and Internally Displaced Women. It calls for the inclusion of principles of non-discrimination as central to new legal system, and equal rights for women, including equal pay. N.B: Source in the following, unless otherwise noted: Civil-Military Fusion Centre. <i>Afghanistan Agreements: A Collection of Official Texts from 2001 to 2011.</i> Accessed March 12, 2013. https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/afg/Documents/Governance/CFC_Afghanistan_Agreements_June2012.pdf .

319 In these conferences (with the exception of the first two) women's equal participation has been absent.

Place	Date	Declaration	Source	Description
Bonn	2001	The International Conference on Afghanistan: <i>Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions</i> (“The Bonn Agreement”)		Sections III, IV, and V include statements concerning the importance of the participation of women representatives in the Interim Administration (III) and the Emergency Loya Jirga (IV); Section V states the Interim Authority and Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga will ensure women’s participation.
Tokyo	2002	International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan: <i>Co-Chairs’ Summary of Conclusions</i>		Sections 8 and 13 emphasise the importance of training and education for women as the country rebuilds. Section 12 emphasises the “centrality of restoring the rights and addressing the needs of women,” and that “women’s rights and gender issues should be fully reflected in the reconstruction process.”
Berlin	2004	International Afghanistan Conference: <i>The Berlin Declaration</i>		Section 10 under “Agree” affirms that all efforts at reconstruction should “promote the participation of women according to their rights under the Constitution.” No other mention of women.
London	2006	The London Conference on Afghanistan: <i>The Afghanistan Compact</i>		Principles of Cooperation affirm that all policies and programs should recognise that “men and women have equal rights and responsibilities.” Certain benchmarks and timelines from Annex I directly address the empowerment of women: Under Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights: Gender: By end-2010, the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan will be fully implemented; female participation in all Afghan governance institutions, including elected and appointed bodies and the civil service, will be strengthened.

Place	Date	Declaration	Source	Description
				<p>Under Economic and Social Development:</p> <p>Education: Primary and Secondary Education: By end-2010, net enrolment in primary school for girls will be at least 60 percent; female teachers will be increased by 50 percent; enrolment of students to universities will be 100,000 with at least 35 percent female students; and 150,000 men and women will be trained in marketable skills. (p. 9)</p> <p>Social Protection: Vulnerable Women: By end-2010, the number of female-headed households that are chronically poor will be reduced by 20 percent, and their employment rates will be increased by 20 percent.</p>
Rome	2007	The Rome Conference on the Rule of Law in Afghanistan: <i>Joint Recommendations</i>	<i>Rome Conference on the Rule of Law in Afghanistan (July 2-3, 2007): Joint Recommendations.</i> Accessed March 12, 2013 http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/Romejoint_recommandations.pdf	Women's access to justice and alternatives to detention for women in conflict with justice are mentioned as key issues. Gender mainstreaming is identified as a cross-cutting issue in rule of law.
Paris	2008	Paris International Conference on Afghanistan: <i>Declaration of the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan</i>		The only mention of women is the donors' commitment to support the implementation of the National Action Plan for Women. No specific recommendations.
Moscow	2009	Shanghai Cooperation Organization: <i>Declaration of the Special Conference on Afghanistan</i>	<i>Declaration of the Special Conference on Afghanistan Convened under the Auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.</i> (Moscow, March 27, 2009.) Accessed March 12, 2013. http://www.un.int/russia/new/MainRoot/docs/off_news/270309/newen2.htm	Although this conference addressed the economic progress of Afghanistan and the help by the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, there was no mention of women.

Place	Date	Declaration	Source	Description
Hague	2009	International Conference on Afghanistan: Hague Conference Declaration	<i>Afghanistan Conference: Final Declaration</i> . March 31, 2009. Accessed March 12, 2013. http://www.iwaweb.org/Docs/resource_centre/CBM/2009%20The%20Hague%20Conference%20Declaration.pdf	Calls on Afghanistan to expand efforts to ensure that women are more fully integrated into assistance programmes in recognition of the need to mobilise its entire population in the development of the country.
London	2010	The London Conference: London Conference Communiqué		Section 26 records the approval by the international community of the government's commitment to implement the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan and the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law, as well as the overall commitment to strengthen the participation of women in all Afghan governance institutions, including elected and appointed bodies and the civil service.
Kabul	2010	The Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan: Kabul Conference Communiqué		Section 10 under Gender and Children's Rights reiterated the centrality of women's rights, including political, economic and social equality, to the future of Afghanistan; commended the mainstreaming of gender into all priority programmes; and reiterated donors' commitment to assist all ministries and government bodies (national and sub-national) in implementing the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan. Called on the Government of Afghanistan to identify and prioritise NAPWA benchmarks for implementation within each cluster; and develop a strategy to implement the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law in the following six months. Sections 13 and 14 under Peace, Reconciliation and Reintegration called for the inclusion of women's rights in negotiations for peace and for local Peace Jirga meetings that include women.

Place	Date	Declaration	Source	Description
Bonn	2011	The International Afghanistan Conference: Bonn Conference Communiqué		<p>Sections 6 and 7 note the guarantee of equality of men and women under the Constitution, and reaffirms the rights of women as key for Afghanistan's future.</p> <p>Section 18, addressing the peace process, calls for reconciliation to "respect the Afghan Constitution, including its human rights provisions and the rights of women" (p.4).</p>
Tokyo	2012	International Conference on Afghanistan: The Tokyo Declaration	The Tokyo Declaration: Partnership for Self-Reliance in Afghanistan: From Transition to Transformation. July 8, 2012. Accessed March 12, 2013. http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/afghanistan/tokyo_conference_2012/tokyo_declaration_en1.html	<p>Under Security and Peace Process, Section 9 emphasises respect for the rights of women during the peace and reconciliation process, and stresses the importance of the participation of civil society organizations and women's groups in support of the peace process and the culture of peace and human rights in Afghan society.</p> <p>Under Private Sector and Civil Society, Section 20 calls for emphasis on the importance of job creation and initiatives targeting youth and women employment.</p> <p>Section 22 reaffirms the importance of women's participation in private sector conferences as reinforcing the need for inclusive development and recognition of women's rights.</p> <p>Under the Accountability Framework annex, Section 10 (Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights) affirms that, "strengthened governance and institutions with a particular focus on the rights of women are prerequisites for strong and sustainable economic growth, employment generation and prosperity for the Afghan people."</p>

Place	Date	Declaration	Source	Description
				<p>Goals addressing women include improved access to justice for all, in particular women and children, by ensuring that the Constitution and other fundamental laws are enforced expeditiously, fairly and transparently and ensure that women can fully enjoy their economic, social, civil, political and cultural rights.</p> <p>Indicators include to ensure respect for human rights for all citizens, in particular for women and children, and allow the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations to perform their appropriate functions; and to demonstrate implementation, with civil society engagement, of both the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law and the National Action Plan for Women on an annual basis.</p>

List B: Multilateral Treaties and Resolutions - United Nations

Treaty/Convention/Protocol	Date	Source	Description
International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age	Deposit: 12 November 1947; Entry into Force: 24 April 1950	http://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/UNTS/Volume%2053/v53.pdf	<p>Convention on agreement to punish those involved in trafficking in women.</p> <p>Signed 12 Nov 1947, without comment or reservation.</p> <p>Concluded at Geneva on 11 October 1933, as amended by the Protocol signed at Lake Success, New York, on 12 November 1947.</p>

Treaty/Convention/Protocol	Date	Source	Description
International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children	Deposit: 12 November 1947; Entry into Force: 24 April 1950	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=VII-2&chapter=7&lang=en	Concluded at Geneva on 30 September 1921, as amended by the Protocol signed at Lake Success, New York, on 12 November 1947. Convention on agreement to punish those involved in the trafficking of women or “girls of full age.” Signed 12 Nov 1947, without comment or reservation.
Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War	Deposit: 12 August 1949; Entry into Force: 21 October 1950	http://treaties.un.org/pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=0800000280158b1a	Agreement on protection of non-combatants, prisoners of war, and hors combat during war, armed conflict and occupation. Signed 12 Aug 1949
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others	Deposit: 21 March 1950; Entry into Force: 25 July 1951	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=VII-11-a&chapter=7&lang=en	Agreement to punish those exercising traffic in persons and prostitution. Accession 21 May 1985, without comment or reservation.
Convention on the Political Rights of Women	Deposit: 31 March 1953; Entry into Force: 7 July 1954	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVI-chapter=16&lang=en	States the right of women to participate in political life on an equal basis as men, including voting, and running for and holding public office. Accession 16 Nov 1966 without comment or reservation.
Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages	Deposit: 10 December 1962; Entry into Force: 9 December 1964	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVI-3&chapter=16&lang=en	States that free and full consent of both parties is required to enter into marriage. Calls on States Parties to enact legislation to specify a minimum age for legal marriage. No participation by Afghanistan.

Treaty/Convention/ Protocol	Date	Source	Description
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	Deposit: 7 March 1966; Entry into Force: 4 January 1969	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-2&chapter=4&lang=en	<p>Agreement to condemn and eliminate racial discrimination; particularly condemn racial segregation and apartheid; guarantee rights of everyone before the law, political and civil rights.</p> <p>Accession 6 Jul 1983, with reservation (referral to International Court of Justice by one party only) and declaration (arts 17 & 18 - ratification) have discriminatory nature against some states.</p>
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESC)	Deposit: 16 December 1966; Entry into Force: 3 January 1976	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-3&chapter=4&lang=en	<p>Agreement on rights of economic, social and cultural matters. States Parties guarantee non-discrimination based on sex.</p> <p>Article 3: ensure the equal right of men and women to enjoyment of economic rights.</p> <p>Article 6: right to freely choose and accept work.</p> <p>Article 7: women guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those of men.</p> <p>Article 10, item 2: special protection should be accorded to mothers for a reasonable period before and after childbirth, including paid leave or leave with adequate social security benefits.</p> <p>Accession 24 Jan 1983, with declaration (para. 1, 3 of art. 26 contradicts international character in that some countries cannot join.)</p>

Treaty/Convention/ Protocol	Date	Source	Description
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	Deposit: 16 December 1966; Entry into Force: 23 March 1976	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&msgid=no=IV-4&chapter=4&lang=en	<p>Specifies the rights of all humans to life, prohibition of slavery, right to equality before the law, freedom from interference in private life, freedom of thought, expression and assembly, freedom of marriage, protection of minors, and freedom from discrimination.</p> <p>Article 3: equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights.</p> <p>Article 23, item 4: ensure equality of rights and responsibilities of spouses as to marriage, during marriage, and its dissolution.</p> <p>Accession 24 Jan 1983, with declaration (para. 1, 3 of art. 48 contradicts international character in that some countries cannot join.)</p>
Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts (Protocol I)	Deposit: 6 August 1977; Entry into Force: 12 July 1978	http://treaties.un.org/pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=08000002800f3586	<p>Reaffirms provisions of original Geneva Conventions concerning international armed conflicts; adds specific articles (76, 77) protecting women and children against assault while in detention.</p> <p>No participation by Afghanistan.</p>
Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts (Protocol II)	Deposit: 6 August 1977; Entry into Force: 7 December 1977	http://treaties.un.org/pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=08000002800f3cb8	<p>Reaffirms provisions of original Geneva Conventions concerning non-international (internal) armed conflicts and the protection and humane treatment of civilians, particularly those detained.</p> <p>No participation by Afghanistan.</p>

Treaty/Convention/ Protocol	Date	Source	Description
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	Deposit: 18 December 1979; Entry into Force: 3 September 1981	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en	<p>Calls for States Parties to pursue a policy of eliminating discrimination against women in all aspects of life.</p> <p>Article 11: ensure equal rights to women in employment, including choice of career, remuneration, job security and social benefits, and safeguarding against discrimination based on maternity.</p> <p>Article 13: rights of women to access financial credit.</p> <p>Signed 14 Aug 1980; Ratified 5 Mar 2003 without comment or reservation.</p>
Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	Deposit: 10 December 1984; Entry into Force: 26 June 1987	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-9&chapter=4&lang=en	<p>Agreement to prevent torture within borders and not transport people to states where torture may occur.</p> <p>Signed 4 Feb 1985; Ratified 1 Apr 1987, with declaration: does not recognise authority of committee (Art. 20) and disputes sent to ICOJ with consent of all parties, not just one.</p>

Treaty/Convention/Protocol	Date	Source	Description
Convention on the Rights of the Child	Deposit: 20 November 1989; Entry into Force: 2 September 1990	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en	<p>Human rights of children.</p> <p>Article 18, item 1: recognition of the joint responsibility of both parents concerning the upbringing of a child.</p> <p>Article 18, item 3: children of working parents to be ensured of the right to benefit from all child-care services for which they are eligible.</p> <p>Signed 27 Sep 1990; Ratified 28 Mar 1994, with declaration: reserves right to express reservations on all provisions incompatible with Shari'a law.</p>
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	Deposit: 25 May 2000; Entry into Force: 12 February 2002	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11-b&chapter=4&lang=en	<p>Agreement to ensure children under age 18 are not conscripted to armed forces, or if volunteer, do not directly participate in hostilities.</p> <p>Accession 24 Sep 2003, with declaration: minimum age for recruitment to active military service "limited by the age of 22 to 28"; recruitment is voluntary.</p>
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families	Deposit: 18 December 1990; Entry into Force 1 July 2003	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-13&chapter=4&lang=en	<p>The civil and political rights of migrant workers and their families, including right to liberty, freedom from slavery, equality before the law, and equality with nationals of the State of employment in terms of remuneration and other conditions of work and terms of employment.</p> <p>No participation by Afghanistan.</p>

Treaty/Convention/Protocol	Date	Source	Description
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	Deposit 17 July 1998; Entry into Force: 1 July 2002	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-10&chapter=18&lang=en	Establishes the International Criminal Court, defines war crimes, and defines court procedures. War crimes include violence against women during war, such as rape, forcible pregnancy, and abuse. Accession 10 Feb 2003 without comment or reservation.
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Deposit: 13 December 2006; Entry into Force: 3 May 2008	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-15&chapter=4&lang=en	Civil rights of disabled persons. Calls on States Parties to eliminate all forms of discrimination against disabled persons. Article 6: appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women with disabilities. Article 27: rights of disabled persons to equal and non-discriminatory employment. Accession 18 Sep 2012, without comment or reservation.

List C: United Nations Security Council Resolutions

Resolution	Date	Source	Description
UNSCR 1325 “Women and Peace and Security”	31 October 2000	http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf .	<p>Role of women in security, conflict and peace building. Calls upon UN Member States to:</p> <p>Ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels concerning conflict resolution and peace processes</p> <p>Incorporate gender-sensitive training guidelines and materials into training programs for national military and civil police</p> <p>Adopt gender perspective when negotiating and implementing peace agreements</p> <p>Respect rights and protection of women and girls during armed conflict</p> <p>Exclude sexual violence from amnesty provisions</p>
UNSCR 1888 “Acts of Sexual Violence Against Civilians in Armed Conflict”	19 June 2008	http://www.refworld.org/docid/485bbca72.html	<p>Sexual violence against civilian women during armed conflict. Calls upon Member States and parties to armed conflict to:</p> <p>Cease acts of sexual violence against women and girl children</p> <p>Take appropriate measures to protect civilians from sexual violence</p> <p>Exclude sexual violence from amnesty provisions</p>
UNSCR 1889 “Women and Peace and Security”	30 September 2009	http://www.refworld.org/docid/4ac9aa152.html	<p>Sexual violence against civilian women during armed conflict. Calls upon Member States and parties to armed conflict to:</p> <p>Undertake legal and judicial reforms to ensure access to justice</p> <p>Investigate and bring to justice alleged perpetrators</p> <p>Increase access to health care, legal assistance and psychosocial support for victims</p> <p>Encourage leaders to play active role in sensitising communities</p>

Resolution	Date	Source	Description
UNSCR 1325 “Women and Peace and Security”	5 October 2009	http://www.refworld.org/docid/4acdd8512.html	Sexual violence against civilian women during armed conflict. Calls upon Member States and parties to armed conflict to: Further improve women’s participation in all stages of peace processes Ensure gender mainstreaming in all post-conflict peace-building and recovery processes Ensure women’s empowerment and involvement are taken into account during post-conflict recovery processes Ensure equal access to education
<p>Status: There is, currently, no National Action Plan in Afghanistan that addresses the above-mentioned Security Council Resolutions. While the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law (2009) was brought into effect through a Presidential decree, it has not been passed by Parliament. The National Consultative Peace Jirga (June, 2010) had 21 percent women representatives with nine women (out of 70 seats) on High Peace Council overseeing Afghanistan Peace and Reconciliation Program. The National Reconciliation, General Amnesty and Stability Law (2009) gives amnesty to all currently in government for conflict crimes, including for crimes against women and for sexual crimes</p>			

List D: International Non-Binding Agreements

Agreement	Source	Description
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations), 1948	Source: http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml	“International Bill of Human Rights” outlining rights of all humans, including right to life, liberty and security of person; education; participation in cultural life; freedom from torture or inhumane treatment; freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Voted in favour at UN General Assembly.
Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Geneva, 23 March - 16 June 1964	Source: http://unctad.org/en/pages/MeetingsArchive.aspx?meetingid=22966	Establishes UNCTAD as principal organ of UN dealing with economic and trade issues of developing nations. No mention of women’s roles or issues concerning economic development. Afghanistan attended; votes on multiple items indicated within the proceedings.

Agreement	Source	Description
<p>Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and Their Contribution to Development and Peace</p> <p>World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico City, Mexico, 19 June - 2 July 1975</p>	<p>Source: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/mexico.html</p>	<p>"International Bill of Women's Rights" concerning their health, education, role in security and economy. States the equality of men and women and calls for recognition of rights of women. Principle 15 in particular notes the need for the maximum participation of women and men in all fields to realise full and complete development of any country. Principle 20 calls for the elimination of discrimination in work and for provision of education. Section D of the Plan of Action calls on governments to ensure equal opportunity, education and support of women in work.</p> <p>Afghanistan attended; declaration adopted by consensus.</p>
<p>Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace</p> <p>World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen, Denmark, 14 to 30 July 1980</p>	<p>Source: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/copenhagen.html</p>	<p>Affirms and restates the points made in the 1975 Mexico City declaration.</p> <p>Afghanistan attended.</p>
<p>Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace</p> <p>World Conference to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, Kenya, 15 to 26 July 1985</p>	<p>Source: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/nairobi.html</p>	<p>Reaffirms and restates the points made in the 1975 Mexico City declaration. Notes the negative impact the slow global economic growth has on women.</p> <p>Afghanistan attended.</p>
<p>Vienna Declaration and Program for Action</p> <p>World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, Austria, 14-25 June 1993</p>	<p>Source: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ABOUTUS/Pages/ViennaWC.aspx</p>	<p>Affirms human rights laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Women's rights are given particular attention (Part I, Paragraph 18-19), noting that women's rights and gender-based violence are legitimate international issues. Part II, Paragraph 38 calls on the General Assembly to adopt the draft Declaration of the Elimination of Violence Against Women and urges states to combat violence against women.</p> <p>Afghanistan attended; declaration adopted by consensus.</p>

Agreement	Source	Description
<p>Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women</p> <p>United Nations, 20 December 1993</p>	<p>Source: http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm</p>	<p>Defines gender-based violence, asserts women's equal rights, calls on states to condemn such violence and take actions (sanctions, national plans of action) to eliminate it.</p> <p>General Assembly resolution adopted without vote.</p>
<p>Report of the International Conference on Population and Development</p> <p>International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, Egypt, 5-13 September 1994</p>	<p>Source: http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/sitemap/icpd/International-Conference-on-Population-and-Development</p>	<p>Action plan concerning population and development for 20 years, including the empowerment of women. Goals include family planning universally available by 2015, educating girls, reducing infant and maternal mortality, and dealing with internal and international migration. Chapter IV deals specifically with equality, equity and empowerment of women. In particular, it calls on governments to ensure women can buy, sell and hold property; obtain credit; exercise legal rights to inheritance; and eliminate gender discrimination in employment and income. Chapter VII deals with reproductive rights.</p> <p>Attended by Afghanistan.</p> <p>Statement: reservation about use of word "individual" in chapter 7 (reproductive rights) and about parts not conforming to Shari'ah.</p>
<p>Copenhagen Declaration and Program for Action</p> <p>World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1995</p>	<p>Source: http://social.un.org/index/Home/WorldSummitforSocialDevelopment1995.aspx</p>	<p>Recognises need to put people at centre of development. Calls on states to take measures to overcome poverty, enable full employment, and foster safe societies. Chapter 3 specifically calls for the recognition of unremunerated work done by women, empowerment of women, gender analysis of policy development, equal employment and wages, and flexibility in working arrangements.</p> <p>Afghanistan attended.</p>

Agreement	Source	Description
<p>Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action</p> <p>Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, September 1995</p>	<p>Source: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/fwcwn.html</p>	<p>“International Bill of Women’s Rights” concerning their health, education, role in security and economy.</p> <p>Item 16: Women’s involvement required for eradication of poverty based on sustained economic growth, social development, environmental protection and social justice.</p> <p>Item 26: Promote women’s economic independence, including employment, and eradicate the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women by addressing the structural causes of poverty through changes in economic structures, ensuring equal access for all women.</p> <p>Item 35: Ensure women’s equal access to economic resources, including land, credit, science and technology, vocational training, information, communication and markets, as a means to further the advancement and empowerment of women and girls.</p> <p>Signed 15 Sep 1995 by representative to Conference.</p>
<p>Millennium Development Goals</p> <p>United Nations, September 2000</p>	<p>Source: http://www.undp.org.af/undp/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=62&Itemid=68</p>	<p>Eight broad areas: End poverty and hunger, universal access to education, gender equality, child health, maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability, global partnership to achieve goals.</p> <p>Goal 3 specifically addresses women’s rights: Promote gender equality and empower women.</p> <p>Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament</p> <p>Targets for Afghanistan, March 2004</p> <p>Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity at all levels of education no later than 2020. Target 5: Reduce gender disparity in economic areas by 2020. Target 6: Increase female participation in elected and appointed bodies at all levels of government to 30 percent by 2020. Target 7: Reduce gender disparity in access to justice by 50 percent by 2015 and completely by 2020.</p>

Appendix 3: Strategies and Laws with Relation to Gender

Strategies

Strategy	Date	Source	Description
Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC)	2002		Established in 2002 through a Presidential Decree as one of the provisions of the Bonn Agreement of 2001, the AIHRC ³²² is an independent institution mandated by Article 58 of the Constitution of Afghanistan. Its remit covers: monitoring people's access to their human rights and freedoms, promoting human rights, and protecting human rights. ³²³ It does so through leadership, education, empowerment, advocacy and monitoring and investigation. It has reported to the reported to the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Rights of the Child and to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.
Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme	2002	Source: Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People (Islamabad: UN Coordination Office for Afghanistan, 2002).	The roles of women are addressed in the following key Sectoral Strategies and Activities for 2002: Food Assistance; Food Security, Agriculture and Environment; Health; Protection and Promotion of Human Rights; Education; Refugees, Returnees and Reintegration; and Employment. Gender is a category on its own; the primary strategies for women's empowerment include building and deepening the knowledge of women's situation; engendering governance; strengthening access to economic security and rights; ensuring social development; and promoting an end to violence against women and respect for women's rights.
National Development Framework	2002	Source: National Development Framework (Kabul: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. April, 2002., http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan016262.pdf (accessed 12 March 2013).	The emphasis on women in the nation's development is stated in the section on Pillar 3 - Private Sector Development, in the sub-section "Gender." Here, it calls for "specific programs directed to enhancing the capabilities of our girls and women" as well as "all programs must pay attention to gender" (p. 12). However, the Framework does not offer specific strategies concerning these specific programmes or direction on the incorporation of gender-sensitive approaches.

Strategy	Date	Source	Description
Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals (AMDGs)	2004		<p>In 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration³²⁴ and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the Millennium Summit. Derived from various UN Conventions and Human Rights Resolutions and set against the baseline of 1990, the body decided upon eight goals to be achieved by 2015.³²⁵ In 2004, Afghanistan signed the Declaration with the enhancement of security as a ninth goal. The Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals (AMDGs) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; • Achieve universal primary education; • Promote gender equality and the empowerment of women; • Reduce child mortality; • Improve maternal health; • Combat HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria and other diseases; • Ensure environmental sustainability; • Partnership for development; and • Enhance security. <p>The AMDGs have an extended timeframe of 2020, a baseline of 2003 and additional targets to those in the MDGs in fields such as gender equality and maternal health. Moreover, the definitions of the first eight goals, and their targets, between the MDGs and the AMDGs have some variation;³²⁶ these modifications are based upon the extreme deprivation that Afghanistan faces due to the extended conflict, context-relevance and to some extent, the unavailability of baseline figures (comparability over time, quality and coverage). The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS, 2008-13) is the strategy vehicle for implementation of the AMDGs.</p> <p>The third goal of the AMDGs, “Promote gender equality and empower of women,” is looked at (as within the MDGs) through the targets of female enrolment in education, work participation and political participation. Goal 3 of the AMDGs has four targets: eliminate gender disparity in primary education no later than 2020, the indicators being the ratio of girls to boys in primary education and the ratio of literate females to males (15- to 24-year-olds); reduce gender disparity in economic areas by 2020, the indicator being the ratio</p>

Strategy	Date	Source	Description
			<p>In this third goal there are variations between two targets of the AMDGs and MDGs. The MDGs ask for women's work participation to be judged by the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, while the AMDGs restrict it to women's employment in the government and in governmental institutions.³²⁷ The baseline data for AMDGs indicate that 29 percent of central government employees and 17 percent of provincial government employees are women.³²⁸ Its target for 2020 is 1:1 indicating a target of 50 percent female representation at central and provincial levels of government. The MDGs indicator for women's political participation is the (unspecified) proportion of seats held by women in national parliament. The AMDGs are clearer and widen the scope by aiming for a 30 percent representation in all levels of government. Further, in the Afghan specific context where violence against women is seen as endemic and where women's status is extremely low, this fourth target is an additional target for Afghanistan. The Vision 2020 also specifies that, as part of Goal 3, indicators for all other AMDGs must be disaggregated by sex so as to report key dimensions of gender inequalities (AMDG, 2005: 35-40). Overall, given the enormity of the challenge, the Vision 2020 could be called both courageous and ambitious.</p>
Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	2004	Source: http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/document/the-constitution-of-the-islamic-republic-of-afghanistan	<p>Articles Related to Women:</p> <p>Article 7: The state shall observe the United Nations Charter, inter-state agreements, as well as international treaties to which Afghanistan has joined, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.</p> <p>Article 22: Any kind of discrimination and distinction between citizens of Afghanistan shall be forbidden. The citizens of Afghanistan, man and woman, have equal rights and duties before the law.</p> <p>Article 33: The citizens of Afghanistan shall have the right to elect and be elected [...]</p> <p>Article 43: Education is the right of all citizens of Afghanistan, which shall be offered up to the B.A. level in the state educational institutes free of charge by the state [...]</p> <p>Article 44: The state shall devise and implement effective programs to create and foster balanced education for women, improve education for nomads as well as eliminate illiteracy in the country.</p>

Strategy	Date	Source	Description
			<p>Article 48: Work is the right of every Afghan[...]Choice of occupation and craft shall be free within the bounds of law.</p> <p>Article 52: The state shall provide free preventative health care and treatment of diseases as well as medical facilities to all citizens in accordance with the provisions of the law [...]</p> <p>Article 53: [...] The state shall guarantee the rights of retirees, and shall render necessary aid to the elderly, women without caretakers, disabled and handicapped as well as poor orphans, in accordance with provisions of the law.</p> <p>Article 54: Family is the fundamental pillar of the society, and shall be protected by the state. The state shall adopt necessary measures to attain the physical and spiritual health of the family, especially of the child and mother, upbringing of children, as well as the elimination of related traditions contrary to the principles of the sacred religion of Islam</p> <p>Article 58: To monitor respect for human rights in Afghanistan as well as to foster and protect it, the state shall establish the Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan. Every individual shall complain to this Commission about the violation of personal human rights [...]</p> <p>Article 83: Members of the House of People shall be elected by the people through free, general, secret, and direct balloting [...] The elections law shall adopt measures to attain, through the electorate system, general and fair representation for all the people of the country, and proportionate to the population of every province, on average, at least two females shall be the elected members of the House of People from each province.</p> <p>Article 84: Members of the House of Elders shall be elected and appointed as follows: [...] one-third of the members shall be appointed by the President, for a 5-year term, from among experts and experienced personalities, including two members from among the impaired and handicapped, as well as two from nomads. The President shall appoint 50 percent of these individuals from among women.</p>

Strategy	Date	Source	Description
Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy	2005	Afghanistan National Development Strategy: An Interim Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Kabul: Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. No date. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/AFA4970B33A0505E49257107000811C6-unama-afg-30jan2.pdf Accessed March 12, 2013.	<p>The Interim Strategy for Afghanistan was planned to lay out specific strategies and deadlines for development priorities throughout Afghanistan until a comprehensive development strategy is written. Under Governance, Rule of Law, and Human Rights Priorities, it calls for the full implementation of NAPWA and for strengthened female participation in all governance institutions, as well as separate prison facilities for women by the end of 2010. Strategies include the development of the National Action Plan for Women; capacity-building of government agencies for gender analysis; a national advocacy campaign to broaden citizen support of women's rights; improved access to health and education; promotion of economic empowerment; targeted social protection for especially vulnerable women; and improved access to political participation.</p> <p>While Pillar One, Security, does not mention women, the following are the relevant points for women under Pillars Two and Three:</p> <p>Pillar Two: Governance</p> <p>Sector Two: Governance, Rule of Law, and Human Rights programs:</p> <p>Program 3: Religious Affairs: 2. By 2010, concrete measures will be put in place to ensure that the status and participation of women in Islamic activities increase, both locally and internationally.</p> <p>It has three pillars: Security, Governance, and Economic and Social Development.</p> <p>Program 5: Human Rights, Including Women's Rights Program: The Government will continue to promote and protect women's rights through harmonising the women's provisions in the major policy frameworks of the country, improving access to justice, and raising awareness on issues such as child marriage, domestic violence, and women's employment (pages 36-37).</p>

Strategy	Date	Source	Description
			<p>Pillar Three: Economic and Social Development programs:</p> <p>Sector Six: Agriculture and Rural Development</p> <p>Program 3: Community Development: Women will have a share of grants and equity in village decision-making processes.</p> <p>Program 4: Rural Financial Services: Women will have access to rural credit and microfinance.</p> <p>Sector Seven: Social Protection</p> <p>Program 2: Support to Vulnerable Women: Describes steps to reduce number of chronically poor female-headed households through their employment.</p>
Afghanistan National Development Strategy, 2008-2013	2008	Source: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Afghanistan National Development Strategy, 1387-1391 (2008-2013): A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction, http://www.undp.org.af/publications/KeyDocuments/ANDS_Full_Eng.pdf (accessed 12 March 2013).	Building upon the I-ANDS, the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) sets out development goals and strategies for the 2008-2013 period. It operates under three Pillars: Security, Governance, Rule of Law; Human Rights; and Economic and Social Development. Seen as Afghanistan's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, it lays the foundation for the achievement of Afghanistan's Millennium Development Goals, 2005, "Vision 2020." Gender equality is recognised as a cross-cutting issue across all sectors, and the goal for gender equality is "an Afghanistan where women and men enjoy security, equal rights and equal opportunities in all spheres of life." Three of its immediate goals concern gender: 1) attain 13 gender-specific benchmarks of Afghanistan Compact/I-ANDS and 5-year priorities of NAPWA; 2) realise gender commitments in ANDS sectors; and 3) develop basic institutional capacities of government on gender mainstreaming.

Strategy	Date	Source	Description
			<p>The three main outcomes that this strategy aims for are: 1) significant number of government entities embracing and implementing gender equity efforts, increased expenditures on gender equity, and increased number of ministries with functional gender equity-promoting mechanisms and technically-capable professionals; 2) measurable improvements in women's status, including control over income, equal wages for equal work, increasing leadership, greater economic opportunities, access to and control over productive assets and income, access to gender-sensitive justice systems, and reduced vulnerability to violence; and 3) greater social acceptance of gender equity. Its implementation framework objectives are: capacities in government will be strengthened at national and sub-national levels; NGOs are encouraged to target women as project participants and beneficiaries, and increase their participation in management of NGOs; an advocacy and public communication strategy will be deployed across the nation; government will establish mechanisms to facilitate, monitor and coordinate activities; and baseline statistics will be updated annually. There is specific consideration of gender within the following pillars and sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security Pillar: increase number of qualified female staff; promote gender mainstreaming and balance; increase awareness of rights; increase women's decision-making role; ensure equal employment opportunities within sector; recognise equal rights in all policies and programmes; set monitoring mechanisms; reduce violence and harassment in workplace. • Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights Pillar: full implementation of NAPWA by end-2010; legislation on affirmative action, reserving a specific percent of seats for women in elected district, municipal and village councils, as well as civil service corps; education reforms for women. • Social and Economic Development Pillar: considers the following sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy: improved local energy can reduce traditional women's household burdens.

Strategy	Date	Source	Description
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport: government transport agencies will increase female participation through additional training and new opportunities. • Water Resource Management: access to clean water will improve health. • Information and Communications Technology: mobile and electronic commerce will make it possible for women to work at home and be commercially viable without offending cultural sensitivities. • Urban Development: women will benefit from improved living conditions; could enhance levels of education; access to housing finance and economic development initiatives. • Mining: “Women in Mining” employment initiative. • Education: reduce barriers for women both as students and teachers. • Culture, Media and Youth: issue covered by all state media. • Agriculture and Rural Development: gender mainstreaming and balanced development; involvement in community representation and decision-making; income-producing activities; skills development. • Health and Nutrition: female health staff employed at every facility; raising women’s decision-making role in relation to health seeking practices. • Social Protection: introduce benefits for chronically poor female-headed households, victims of violence; legislation to ensure women’s rights to inherit; introduce free legal advice for “at risk” women and improve women’s access to justice. • Private sector: programmes to provide greater access to training and credit facilities, encourage women-owned and operated businesses.

Strategy	Date	Source	Description
Social Protection Sector Strategy	2008	Source: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Social Protection Sector Strategy, 1387-1391 (2007/08-2012/13), 30 March 2008, http://moec.gov.af/Content/files/Social%20Protection%20Sector%20Strategy%20-English.pdf (accessed 12 March 2013).	This strategy summarises the state of the social protection sector as of 2008 and lays out strategies for addressing changes in the social support system, pension reform and disaster readiness. Gender equality is considered a cross-cutting issue; the promotion of gender equality is viewed as an important priority and the strategy calls for the government to ensure women's property rights, especially inheritance. Its targets include the government employing women as 20 percent of its workforce by end of 2012; legislation reinforcing women's rights to inherit land and assets by mid-2009; and special attention for "women at risk," including shelters, skills development, employment in public work schemes, microfinance options, legal advice, and drug addiction rehabilitation.
National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan: 2008-2018	2008	Source: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA), 2008-2018, http://www.unifem.org/afghanistan/media/pubs/08/NAPWA_EN.html (accessed 12 March 2013).	<p>The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) was approved in 2008 as the main document for the Government of Afghanistan to implement its commitments to gender equality as outlined in the Afghanistan Compact and the ANDS and to bring to fruition the provisions for women's rights that are mandated in the Constitution and international treaties. Its three main outcomes are stated as: gender equality within government entities; measurable improvements in women's status; and greater social acceptance of gender equality. As a ten-year Action Plan, it focuses on six sectors: security; legal protection and human rights; leadership and political participation; economy, work and poverty; health; and education.</p> <p>The economic empowerment of women is placed under Pillar 3: Economic and Social Development, Section 7: Economy, Work and Policy to "create an enabling economic and social environment that is conducive to the full development and realization of women's economic potential." Its objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender analysis of macroeconomic policies; • Adoption of affirmative action policies in recruitment; • Allocation of trainings and business services to bring gender parity; • Development of gender-sensitive socio-economic surveys; • Development and strengthening of institutional mechanisms and reform of policies, procedures, laws to create more conducive environment; and • Incorporation of critical gender concerns into all aspects of programs and activities designed to increase access to employment.

Strategy	Date	Source	Description
			<p>It identifies the following issues and constraints: limited access to education/ vocational training; high fertility and inability to exercise reproductive rights; limited access of women to work outside the house; limited access to productive assets; wage discrimination; limited participation of women in governance; and weak position in the informal economy.</p> <p>It outlines the following as its policies and strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to education, vocational training and employment; • Legal protection; • Promoting recognition of women as economic agents; • Development and adoption of a population policy; • Promoting women’s leadership in the economic sector; and • Development and adoption of policies to address the needs of women working in the informal economy. <p>The governmental vehicle for implementation of NAPWA is the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, which is to provide leadership, policy advice and monitoring for all ministries; the MoWA remit is also to establish provincial representatives to the Department of Women’s Affairs (DoWA) in each province as part of the Provincial Development Plan.</p>
National Agricultural Development Framework	2009	Source: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock. National Agricultural Development Framework (NADF), http://mail.gov.af/en/page/2233 ; Economic regeneration program: http://mail.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/meDocumentfinal2	<p>The Framework outlines a strategy for the development of the agricultural sector; programmes include natural resource management, agriculture production and productivity, and economic regeneration. In the agriculture production and productivity programme, attention specifically for women includes backyard poultry and gardening, requiring the training of female extension agents. Kuchi women will have specially targeted training programmes in agriculture and vocational education. In the economic regeneration programme, women’s producer groups and self-help groups are identified as an important part of the production chain. Gender is considered a cross-cutting issue and the ministry will be guided by its gender mainstreaming policy to address the integration and mainstreaming of women in aspects of agricultural production.</p>

Strategy	Date	Source	Description
Education Interim Plan	2011	Source: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Education, Education Interim Plan 2011-13, January 2011, http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_NEIP.pdf (accessed 12 March 2013).	The Plan notes the strong correlation between lack of female teachers and low girls' school attendance, especially in the provinces. To encourage female teachers, an incentive of US\$60/month is paid for the two-year training programme in 18 provinces. States that female education needs to be carefully designed and executed through community-negotiated programmes to ensure its success in insecure provinces. Section 6 addresses gender, noting obstacles to education and that lack of education restricts women's participation in the economy. Targets for the Ministry of Education by end of 2014 in this area include: provide and enforce universal access to education; increase the number of female teachers by 50 percent; increase female enrolment by 60 percent; facilities for girls' education in 75 percent of schools; improve female literacy from 15 percent in 1389 to 43 percent in 1393. The ministry plans to mainstream gender equality in all its work.
Gender Policy for Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program	2011	Source: Joint Secretariat, APRP. Gender Policy for Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP). September 2011, https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/afg/Documents/Reports/APRP percent20Gender percent20Policy percent202011.pdf (accessed 12 March 2013).	The policy recognises the critical need for women to participate in peace and reintegration, and the impact war has had on women. Gaps that hinder women's participation include limited understanding of the process, lack of capacity building at sub-national level, absence of gender analysis of post-conflict reconstruction, and lack of gender mainstreaming. It calls for increased recruitment of women in the security sector, consultations with women for reintegration programmes, eliminating gender-based violence, increasing information networking, and developing a gender-sensitive early warning system. It proposes a Gender Oversight Committee for the High Peace Council, Gender Unit in the Joint Secretariat, and provincial and district level Gender Steering Committees.
Ministry of Public Health - National Gender Strategy	2012	Source: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Ministry of Public Health, Gender Department. National Gender Strategy, 2012-2016, http://moph.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/MoPH_National_Gender_Strategy_Final_English_2012164201212934246553325325.pdf (accessed 12 March 2013).	The goal of the strategy is to improve the health and nutrition status of women and men equally, as well as improve gender equity in the health sector. Outlines four strategic directions: incorporate a gender perspective in all MoPH programs; advocate that all MoPH policies and procedures are gender-sensitive; work to ensure equal access to health care free of discrimination and addressing gender-based violence; and create and monitor gender-sensitive indicators for all health programmes.

Strategy	Date	Source	Description
Government of Afghanistan - Towards Self-Reliance	2012	Source: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Towards Self-Reliance: Strategic Vision for the Transformation Decade, 8 July 2012, http://mof.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/Towards-Self-Reliance-27-6-2012167201210282583553325325.pdf (accessed 12 March 2013).	The strategic plan notes the importance of the role and participation of women in economic and social growth. Gender is considered a cross-cutting issue, and is mainstreamed throughout the National Priority Programs by the gender mainstreaming task force of the Human Resource Development Cluster, chaired by MoWA and UN Women. Notes that MoWA is charged with strengthening the capacity of line ministries concerning gender affairs. Gender oriented vocational training to help assimilate women into the workforce is planned.

Laws

Note: Original language copies of all laws are available at the Ministry of Justice: <http://moj.gov.af/content/files/Pages/summary1.htm>

Law	Source	Description
Commercial Law (Commercial Code)	Usulnameh on the Commercial Law of Afghanistan, published 1955/12/15 (1334/09/21) Source: http://afghantranslation.checchiconsulting.com/documents/laws/Commercial_Code_1955_ET.pdf	It presents laws governing commercial transactions and on the establishment and dissolution of companies; description of commercial documents, including recording transactions; and governance of commercial agreements. Section 12: Small businessmen are considered those whose commercial activities are based on physical strength or whose income is so little it barely suffices for their living. Section 13: Small businessmen are not affected by bankruptcy regulations. There is no specific mention of women in this law from 1955, in terms either of supporting their economic empowerment or preventing it. Sections 12 and 13 are interesting because women are likely to fall into this category given that their income barely suffices for their living, in which case they are not affected by bankruptcy regulations. However, it also means that they will subsequently not be protected by bankruptcy law.

Law	Source	Description
Education Act	Official Gazette No. 113, published 1968/09/22 (1347/06/31 A.P.)	<p>Declaring education to be a fundamental right it provides for education to be mandatory up to the secondary level and free up to the college level. This Act presents definitions of types of educational facilities, official regulation of education, and similar.</p> <p>Article 4: Equal terms of education are available for all regardless of sex, racial consideration, religion or economic status. Article 6: Education is compulsory for all boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 13.</p> <p>Article 22: Girls and boys can study together in elementary school.</p> <p>Education is fundamental to economic empowerment. The Education Act of 1968 only addresses women's education in terms of basic education for children, compulsory until age 13. Of note too is the statement that girls and boys can study together in elementary school, a statement that is not included in the sections addressing secondary and higher education, leading to the implication that the genders are segregated.</p>
Law on Marriage	<p>Official Gazette No. 190, published 1971/08/08 (1350/05/17 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: http://afghantranslation.checchiconsulting.com/documents/laws/Law_of_Marriage_1971_ET.pdf</p>	<p>It prescribes laws for establishing the marriage contract, the procedure for registering the marriage with officials and laws for divorce. A Shari'ah divorce is the right of the husband, but he may surrender the power of divorce to the wife in a Shari'ah document or in the marriage contract. No mention made concerning the mahr in the section on divorce.</p> <p>Article 18: The mahr (marriage portion) is the right of the bride and must be paid to her. The mahr is to be defined in the marriage contract. A woman's economic empowerment may come from the investment of her mahr.</p>
Penal Code	<p>Official Gazette No. 347, published 1976/10/06 (1355/07/15 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: http://www.cicr.org/ihl-nat.nsf/6fa4d35e5e3025394125673e00508143/845809a497304d8fc12571140033ac69/\$FILE/</p> <p>Penal Code Afghanistan EN.pdf</p>	<p>It codifies laws on crime, defines criminal acts and sets out punishments.</p> <p>Article 359: If a person is ordered by the court to pay for the livelihood of his wife, but he refuses although able to do so, the punishment is short imprisonment and/or cash fine.</p>

Law	Source	Description
		<p>Section 2, Chapter 2 deals with abortion done by someone other than the pregnant woman, which is punishable by long, medium or short imprisonment depending on the method. Article 405 addresses abortion initiated by the pregnant woman; her punishment is short imprisonment or cash fine. Section 2, Chapter 7 deals with kidnapping. Article 420 is kidnapping of a girl; punishment is long imprisonment (no more than 10 years); Article 425 states taking a woman older than 16 for the purpose of marriage who wilfully complies is not an act of kidnapping.</p> <p>Section 2, Chapter 8 deals with adultery, which is punishable by long imprisonment.</p> <p>Section 2, Chapter 22 deals with crimes pertaining to trade, such as fraudulent bankruptcy, falsification of commercial transactions. The laws on crimes having to do with trade do not mention women specifically.</p>
Civil Law (Civil Code)	<p>Official Gazette No. 353, published 1977/01/05 (1355/10/15 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: http://afghantranslation.checchiconsulting.com/documents/laws/Civil_Code_1977_ET_LargestFileSize_NEW_ET.pdf</p>	<p>Article 70: Marriage shall not be considered adequate until the male completes the age of 18 and the female the age of 16.</p> <p>Article 71(1): Where the girl does not complete the age provided under Article 70 of this law, the marriage may be concluded only through her father and the competent court.</p> <p>Article 71(2): The marriage of a minor girl whose age is less than 15 shall never be permissible.</p> <p>Laws concerning marriage, including the exchange of mahr for marriage (Articles 98-114), and maintenance during marriage (Articles 117-130); and divorce (Articles 131-216), including alimony are included in the Civil Law. A woman can expect the husband to provide marriage-portion (moveable or immoveable property) and fulfilment of her basic needs during marriage. In divorce, she retains the mahr and any personal property, but can instigate divorce through returning the mahr.</p>

Law	Source	Description
		<p>Article 86: Polygamy is permitted when there is no fear of injustice between wives, the husband can provide for all wives, and when legally expedient (such as if the first wife is childless or suffers from illness).</p> <p>Article 110: A woman can exercise any ownership power over her mahr.</p> <p>Article 118: Maintenance consists of food, shelter, clothing and medical treatment in proportion to financial power of husband.</p> <p>Article 156: Marriage can be dissolved upon the return of the marriage-portion by the wife.</p> <p>Article 186: [...] In the event when there are no relatives of the two sides, the conciliators shall be appointed from those who would have sufficient information about the conducts of the couple and would be able to resolve the differences of the spouses.</p> <p>Article 230: The court shall recommend the assignment of conciliators in cases where the court senses willingness on the part of the parties for settlement.</p> <p>Article 231: If the settlement takes effect during the proceedings and the trial, the settlement is recorded in the decision and a judgment is issued allowing the settlement and an end to the dispute between the parties.</p> <p>Article 249: The care period of a male child shall be ended when he attains the age of seven, and a care period of a female child shall be ended when she reaches the age of nine.</p> <p>Article 289: Executors of testaments shall be male.</p> <p>Article 1208: Revocation of gifts between spouses is not permissible, even after separation.</p>

Law	Source	Description
		<p>Article 1310: Compromise is not allowed in pertaining affairs of personal status and public order. However, compromise on the financial rights arising from personal status or crimes, is permissible</p> <p>Inheritance law - Articles 1993-2267: Customary law is also recognised. Inheritance is based on degree of relation to the decedent. In general, female descendants and relatives receive half as much as males. The Civil Code regulates personal life of women through laws on marriage, divorce and inheritance. The law on the marriage-portion clearly states a woman's ability to use her marriage-portion as she sees fit, without the need for permission of her husband. The laws on contracts and other commercial transactions do not specifically mention women, again suggesting women are not commonly considered business people. Inheritance affects a woman's accrual of wealth. Based on Islamic law, the Civil Code is very specific about the degrees of relation one has to the decedent and therefore the proportion to be given as mandatory inheritance. Women receive half the amount men do, which has an impact on a woman's ability to accrue wealth and subsequent economic independence. Under the laws on contracts, debts, partnerships, leases, employment, mortgage there is no specific mention of women.</p> <p>According to the Civil Law, under some circumstances the law allows a girl to be married at the age of 15 with the permission of her father or the competent court.</p>
Traffic Law	<p>Official Gazette No. 484, published 1981/06/21 (1360/03/31 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: http://www.aisa.org.af/laws/l.2(A) %20 %20Economic %20Laws %20in %20Force/484 %20traffic %201360 %20+ %20regs.doc</p>	<p>Laws on vehicles and traffic. Regulation of types of vehicles, power of traffic police, punishments of violations. No specific mention of women.</p> <p>In a gender-segregated society such as Afghanistan, a woman's ability to transport herself and goods may be limited. The Traffic Law does not specifically mention women as drivers nor does it specify public transport modes for women. It does not provide for women-only buses, for example.</p>

Law	Source	Description
Civil Procedure Law	<p>Official Gazette No. 722, published 1990/08/22 (1369/05/31 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: http://afghantranslation.checchiconsulting.com/documents/laws/Civil_Procedure_Code_1990_ET_ET.pdf</p>	<p>The Law sets forth procedures in civil court cases.</p> <p>A woman is entitled to maintenance and support by her husband while they are married, which is often the sole means for her survival. If the husband abandons her, she can sue for maintenance. The Civil Procedure Law determines where the case can be held, based on the husband's residency.</p>
Income Tax Law	<p>Official Gazette No. 845 published 2005/03/20 (1383/12/30 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: http://mof.gov.af/Content/files/IncomeTaxLaw.pdf</p>	<p>It presents regulations concerning income taxes.</p> <p>Article 20: Non-deductible personal expenses include wages paid to any person for services rendered to the taxpayer or his family.</p> <p>For women, this might affect employment as they are not able to deduct potential childcare expenses, but given the traditional role of female family members as caregivers, this might be moot.</p>
Juvenile Law	<p>Official Gazette No. 861, published 2005/09/11 (1384/06/20 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: http://www.aisa.org.af/laws/l.2(A)EconomicLawsinForce/861CivilServiceLaw.pdf</p>	<p>Under Laws on the Civil Service, Management of Civil Service, processes for performance review and appeals, regulation of Civil Service activities.</p> <p>Article 27, Item 5: Provides for safety from harassment and discrimination based on sex, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, religion, political affiliation, appearance, and civil status.</p> <p>The Civil Service Law regulates the work of the employees of the government. The guarantee against harassment and discrimination based on sex sets forth the protection of women in the government workplace.</p>
Civil Service Law	<p>Official Gazette No. 861, published 2005/09/11 (1384/06/20 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: http://www.aisa.org.af/laws/l.2(A)EconomicLawsinForce/861CivilServiceLaw.pdf</p>	<p>Under Laws on the Civil Service, Management of Civil Service, processes for performance review and appeals, regulation of Civil Service activities.</p> <p>Article 27, Item 5: Provides for safety from harassment and discrimination based on sex, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, religion, political affiliation, appearance, and civil status.</p> <p>The Civil Service Law regulates the work of the employees of the government. The guarantee against harassment and discrimination based on sex sets forth the protection of women in the government workplace.</p>

Law	Source	Description
Law on Non-Governmental Organizations	<p>Official Gazette No. 857, published 2005/07/06 (1384/04/15 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: http://www.aisa.org.af/laws/1.2(A)EconomicLawsinForce/857NGO.doc</p>	<p>This Law regulates the establishment, administration and dissolution of non-governmental organisations. It articulates unauthorised activities, including participation in political activities and campaigns, and fundraising for political purposes. It lays out registration processes with Ministry of Economy, administration and dissolution processes.</p>
Labour Law	<p>Official Gazette No. 914, published 2007/02/21 (1385/12/02 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/MONOGRAPH/78309/83636/F774573068/AFG78309.pdf</p>	<p>The law governs work in the government, independent commissions, national and international NGOs, administrative employees of elected organisations, military, police and national security. It guarantees freedom to work for all people, without discrimination. Women are guaranteed benefits while pregnant and breast-feeding.</p> <p>Article 9: Forbids discrimination in recruitment, salary, benefits or profession; benefits for pregnant and post-partum women; freedom to choose a profession</p> <p>Article 31, Item 3: Work hours for pregnant women are reduced to 35.</p> <p>Article 54: Guarantees 90 days maternity leave.</p> <p>Article 120: Women and youth are not permitted to engage in physically arduous work.</p> <p>Article 121: The management is not authorised to assign women and youth on night duties.</p> <p>Article 122: Pregnant women and women with children under 2 cannot be assigned overtime.</p> <p>Article 123: Women assigned to lighter work while maintaining wages during pregnancy.</p> <p>Article 124: Nursing mothers given 30 minute break (included in work time) every three hours to breastfeed.</p> <p>Article 125: It is forbidden to refuse to employ women or to reduce their wages because of pregnancy or nursing (feeding) their children.</p>

Law	Source	Description
		The Labour Law makes clear specifications about the protections guaranteed to women who are pregnant or breast-feeding. The Labour Law was revised in 2009, but the articles related to women's labour rights were not amended to enhance women's rights to employment. Lack of disbarment implies that women are equally entitled to overtime and benefits.
National Reconciliation, General Amnesty, and National Stability Law	Official Gazette No. 965, published 2008/12/03 (1387/09/13 A.P.) Source: http://dkiafghanistan.um.dk/da/~-/media/dkiafghanistan/Documents/Other/National percent20Reconciliation percent20and percent20Amnesty percent20Law.ashx	It calls on armed opposition groups to join the reconciliation process; amnesty if offered for political factions and hostile parties involved in hostile actions prior to Interim Administration. There is no mention of women or of gender-based violence.
Shi'ite Personal Status Law	Official Gazette No. 988, published 2009/02/07 (1387/11/19 A.P.) Source: http://afghantranslation.hecchiconsulting.com/documents/laws/Shiite_personal_status_law_English_translation_April_09.pdf	This law regulates the civil life of Shi'a Muslims. It provides definition of person; regulations on marriage, mahr, divorce, inheritance, and family lineage. Article 131: Item 2: The husband is not entitled to ownership or use of the wife's mahr. Article 133: Places a woman's right to work, education, access to health care and other services under the authority/permission of her husband. Item 2: If the wife is employed at the time of marriage and provisions are made in the marriage contract, the husband cannot oppose her employment unless it is against the interest of the family. Item 5: A wife is the owner of her own assets and can possess them in any form without her husband's permission. Article 177: A husband is obligated to provide maintenance to his wife. Article 180: Income derived from a woman's occupation is hers, unless she pays some part of the home expenses with the permission of her husband. Inheritance regulations are complicated; in general a woman is eligible to inherit one-half of a male comparable descendent. Article 226: Regulates inheritance rights between couples. A woman can only inherit moveable property from a deceased spouse while a man can inherit both moveable and immoveable property.

Law	Source	Description
		<p>The Shiite Personal Status Law is similar to the Civil Law, but applicable only to the Shi'a Muslim population. It has an important effect on the economic empowerment of Shi'a women, due to the explicit statement of the husband controlling a woman's right to work, education and access to health care. The law does state that a husband cannot oppose the employment of his wife if she is already employed before marriage, unless it is against the interests of the family, which he implicitly determines. However, if a woman works, then the law clearly states that the earnings are hers alone, unless her husband allows her to contribute to the home expenses (for which he alone is responsible). The section covering inheritance in the Shiite Personal Status Law is similar to the Civil Law, with the same description of rights to inheritance based on degree of closeness to the deceased. In general, as with the Civil Law, women under the Shiite Personal Status Law are guaranteed a portion of inheritance, but always at most half of what a male relative would receive. Also of note is that a woman cannot inherit immovable property (land or buildings) from her spouse, thus limiting her accrual of wealth. Article 94 raises the marriageable age for women and men to 16 and 18 respectively while the Shi'a rules allow for marriage from the age of puberty (nine for girls and 15 for boy).</p>
<p>Law Eliminating Violence against Women (LEVAW)</p>	<p>Official Gazette No. 989, published 2009/08/01 (1388/05/10 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: http://www.saarcgenderinfobase.org/includes/showFile.php?id=85</p>	<p>Prohibits some of the violence against women and also specifies penalties.</p> <p>Article 5: Identifies 23 violent acts, including rape, compulsory prostitution, burn, baad, dispossession from inheritance, prohibiting a woman from access to personal property, deterring a woman from education and work, and forced labour, beating, rape.</p> <p>Article 30: Harassment/persecution of a woman carries a penalty of no less than three months imprisonment; if harassment is based on abuse of power, the penalty is no less than six months imprisonment.</p> <p>Article 33: Prevention from inheritance carries a penalty of restoring the inheritance and imprisonment of not more than one month.</p>

Law	Source	Description
		<p>Article 34: Refusing to pay the mahr carries a penalty of restoring the mahr and imprisonment of not more than one month.</p> <p>Article 35: Prevention of the acquisition of property carries the penalty of the property being restored to the woman and the offender being sentenced to not more than three months imprisonment.</p> <p>Article 36: Prevention of the right to work and education carries a penalty of not more than six months imprisonment.</p> <p>Article 37: Forcing a woman to work carries the penalty of not more than six months imprisonment.</p> <p>The law formalises acts of violence against women and the resulting penalties provide women a means for ensuring their right to certain freedoms, including the freedom to work. The law specifically addresses issues concerning economic empowerment through the articles concerning the refusal to pay mahr, the prevention of acquisition of property (including inheritance), and the prevention of the right to work.</p>
Regulation on Personal Affairs of Civil Servants	<p>Official Gazette No. 992, published 2009/08/17 (1388/05/26 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: Available by request from the AREU Library, no English translation available online</p>	<p>It regulates on the employment of civil servants and provides the processes for hiring, termination, promotion, capacity-building, retirement. This law does not include mention of protection against harassment, unlike in the Civil Service Law.</p>
Public Health Law	<p>Official Gazette No. 1004, published 2009/12/12 (1388/09/21 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: Available by request from the AREU Library, no English translation available online</p>	<p>This Law regulates on the free delivery of health services for the public, coordination between Ministry of Public Health and other ministries and NGOs.</p> <p>Article 5, point 10: Scientific principles of sanitation supply programs in reproductive health, child and maternal care.</p> <p>Article 23, point 1: Establish health care centres, child support, mothers and maternity wards; point 2: Examinations of pregnant women, the healthy development of the foetus, first aid medical supplies; point 4: Family guidance and taking other measures to support the child and mother through the officials of health institutions.</p>

Law	Source	Description
		<p>Women have special health and reproductive needs. Making sure a woman is healthy and is able to plan children contributes to her ability to work.</p>
Electoral Law	<p>Official Gazette No. 1012, published 2010/03/01 (1388/12/10 A.P.)</p> <p>Source: http://afghan2010.com/resource/afghanistan-electoral-law</p>	<p>This law lays out regulations concerning elections of government officials at national, provincial, district and village levels. It defines the eligibility of candidates, eligibility of voters, processes and procedures for voting.</p> <p>Article 4: Equal rights of both men and women as entitled voters to vote.</p> <p>Article 19: On average, out of total number of seats in each province, at least two female members shall be elected to Wolesi Jirga.</p> <p>Article 23: Allocation of seats in the Wolesi Jirga for female candidates. Orders Election Commission to develop procedures and formulae to determine the number of female candidates in each province; if there are not enough female candidates in a constituency, the Commission is ordered to adopt measures to prevent the allocated seats from remaining empty.</p> <p>Article 29: At least one quarter of seats in Provincial Councils should be allocated to females; if not enough female candidates, Election Commission will take measures to prevent the seats from remaining vacant.</p> <p>Article 32: If an elected candidate cannot fulfil duty, the seat is awarded to next highest candidate of the same gender, if none, then seat goes to candidate with highest votes</p> <p>Women's rights are best represented by women; the requirement to have women in decision-making positions can address this. However, the requirement for women representatives is only at the national and provincial level, not at the district or village level.</p>

Law	Source	Description
Law on the Rights and Benefits of People with Disabilities and Martyrs' Families	Official Gazette No. 1037, published 2010/09/06 (1389/06/15 A.P.) Source: Available by request from the AREU Library, no English translation available online	This law establishes the rights and benefits of disabled people, including the right to work in any organisation, the elimination of violence, provision of financial support and community awareness. Disabled women represent a particularly vulnerable group in terms of societal and economic rights. They are doubly disabled, as women and as people with disability, but there is no particular mention of or provisions identified for disabled women.

Appendix 4: Projects Undertaken by the World Bank in Afghanistan Relating to Women

Project Title	Commitment amount in US\$ million	Status	Approval Date
Adolescent Girls Initiative - Afghanistan	3.0	Active	22 Aug 2011
National Solidarity Programme III	40.0	Active	29 June 2010
Strengthening Health Activity for the Rural Poor Project	49.0	Active	2 June 2010
AF Rural Enterprise Development Program	30.0	Active	9 March 2010
Afghanistan - Strengthening Health Activities for the Rural Poor (SHARP)	30.0	Active	24 March 2009
Afghanistan - Second Education Quality Improvement Program	30.0	Closed	31 Jan 2008
Expanding Microfinance Outreach and Improving Sustainability	30.0	Closed	8 Jan 2008
Public Financial Management Reform Project	33.4	Closed	29 May 2007
Afghanistan: Emergency National Solidarity Project II	120.0	Closed	7 Dec 2006
Emergency National Solidarity - Supplemental	28.0	Closed	20 June 2005
Education Quality Improvement Program	35.0	Closed	29 July 2004
Afghanistan: Emergency National Solidarity Project	95.0	Closed	23 Dec 2003
Health Sector Emergency Reconstruction and Development Project	59.6	Closed	5 June 2003
Emergency Education Rehabilitation & Development Project	15.0	Closed	6 June 2002

Source: Modified from World Bank, http://www.worldbank.org/projects/search?lang=en&searchTerm=&countryshortname_exact=Afghanistan

Appendix 5: Examples of Agricultural Women's Group Projects

Agriculture Market Infrastructure Project (AMIP)³²⁰

“AMIP has two primary objectives:

- i. Improve market support through the agricultural market.
- ii. Provide consultancy to MAIL staff (Private Sector Unit, Horticulture Unit and Farmer's Cooperative Unit).

AMIP will operate in two sectors:

- For Livestock Support (LS) plan to establish five slaughterhouses (two in Kabul and one each in Mazar, Herat, and Kunduz). They are also looking into building a milk processing plant in Jalalabad.
- For Horticulture Support (HS) plan to establish 200 collection centres in seven agricultural zones. The collection centres will support farmers/producers in collection as well as processing, packaging, and marketing (including cold storage if needed).
- AMIP is looking into pistachios, almonds, apricots, and raisins. They will be hiring consultants to do value chain analyses for these products and will have the survey results available by November. The study will then be their guide when they implement this HS. The collection centres will be owned by farmer groups, associations, cooperatives, with priority given to women's groups.
- Women's associations will be trained to run the collection centres and learn what to plant based on the market demand. The project will also assist in providing market information through various media (flyers, brochures, radio, and TV).
- AMIP plans to finish the value chain study in 2010 and establish the centres in 2011.
- The project will also support the dried fruit and nut sector by reequipping the Dried Fruits and Nuts Directorate under the Ministry of Commerce. They will provide laboratory equipment that is acceptable for WTO certification and will also provide training to laboratory technicians. AMIP will be hiring a female staff member with a background in agriculture and business economics. She will be in charge of their gender mainstreaming component and will provide support to women's associations.
- The project will provide women's groups with opportunities for trading and marketing. The groups will also manage small infrastructure projects.”

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA)³²¹

MEDA has worked with women producers to develop and own vegetable value chains by forming women's producer groups, providing extension services, developing female sales agents in value addition and marketing, and linking women with MFIs. “MEDA's technical assistance includes social mobilization, extension services, support for marketing and value-adding interventions, and linkages with input suppliers and MFIs. In collaboration with Kabul University, community-based facilitators identified by the Afghan Women's Business Council form producer

320 The World Bank, “Understanding gender in agricultural value chains,” 125

321 The World Bank, “Understanding gender in agricultural value chains,” 27.

groups of 20-25 women each. The groups facilitate joint savings and credit in addition to learning through the Farmer Field School approach. The group chooses one or two entrepreneurial women, generally lead farmers, for additional training in productive and commercial skills, including marketing, managing equipment or infrastructure to add value to their products, or additional business activities (such as operating greenhouses, underground storage facilities, or drying equipment; or acting as sales agents for a number of women farmers). To set up the value-adding infrastructure, MEDA has provided matching grants to a few entrepreneurial women.

“MEDA facilitates linkages with Women for Women, which provides individual and group (four to five women) loans. Women who need credit for inputs form groups within the association to take group loans.”

Horticulture and Livestock Project (HLP)³²²

“HLP helps producers adopt improved practices to increase horticultural and livestock productivity and production. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock implements the project in 11 focus districts in 11 provinces in north eastern and central Afghanistan. The project has mobilised 160 women’s and 225 men’s producer groups with a membership of approximately 4,000 women and 6,000 men respectively. Mobilization usually involves both females and males in the same households to facilitate better extension knowledge at the household level.” Each focus district targets male and female Farmer Producer Groups established by the Farmer Organization Development (FOD) component of the HLP.

- Female Farmer Producer Groups have been established following the creation of Horticulture Interest Groups. The male participants introduced their female family members, other relatives and friends to the Facilitating Partners for creating female Farmer Producer Groups. This is a significant change as HLP shifted its focus from individual farmers to households to reflect the reality of farming activities in the households. These groups have been mainly selected out of the Horticulture Interest Groups established by Facilitating Partners for the horticultural activities.
- Women Extensionists: They expect to have 100 from the current 25. More are to be hired and trained. Training for women has been adjusted - they are provided training on intercropping rather than pruning.
- There are 1,000 groups (60 percent male, 40 percent female) implementing Farmer Field Schools. They are provided technical training as well business services provision, inputs, and marketing linkages. Women’s groups are provided training on orchard management and savings boxes. From the money they collected from savings boxes, the women financed economic projects and agricultural production. If they need more loans, they are linked to WOCCU, Ariana Financial Services (Mercy Corps), and First Microfinance Bank (Aga Khan).

HLP’s implementing partners are:

- i. Roots of Peace (provides technical support in livestock and horticulture via 150 Horticulture Extensionists, 25 of whom are women; they also have 11 Livestock Extension Workers).
 - ii. FAO (poultry production).
 - iii. NGOs, including SDO, Global Partnership for Afghanistan, Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), ZoA, Afghan Aid and Hand in Hand (implement the social mobilization component). The project ends in 2011.
- Financing is not accessible to almond growers since most micro loans are for one year and monthly repayments are required. Almond production requires four to six years before the first fruit is harvested and sold. AAIDO reports that farmers’ other issue is that charging interest is not Islamic.

322 The World Bank, “Understanding gender in agricultural value chains,” 19, 125-6.

Appendix 6: Government Ministries and Gender Units

Ministry	Role	Gender Department
Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)	Responsible for oversight, administration, facilitation and development of agriculture, crop irrigation, and livestock.	Gender Department: Established in 2011; reports to DM Finance and Administration. Responsible for capacity building of female MAIL staff nationwide. The gender unit has prepared a gender policy (“Women’s Economic Security and Rights”) and uses it as a tool to raise gender awareness and also encourage women’s economic empowerment through training in English language, leadership skills, computers and communications.
Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI)	Responsible for oversight, administration, facilitation and development of commerce, industries and trade.	Gender Department: Established in 2007; falls under Administration and Finance Deputy Ministry. Purpose is to ensure equal opportunities for the economic and social advancement of women within MoCI and Afghan economy as a whole. Within MoCI, responsible for reviewing current position of women and identifying initiatives to improve their status in the ministry. Within economy more broadly, plays role in ensuring equal opportunities for women in key sectors, and encouraging greater female representation in business associations and advocacy groups.
Ministry of Economy (MoEc)	Responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the ANDS; analysing data and progress measured by indicators provided by line ministries and the Central Statistics Organisation. Main coordinating body for social and economic policies.	Gender Department: Established in 2010; falls under Administration and Finance Deputy Ministry. Responsible for capacity building of MoEc staff, such as conducting workshops on management, NAPWA, ANDS and the Afghanistan labour code. The directorate also provides English and computer courses for MOEc employees for two years and from these programmes 45 persons have graduated thus far. Ninety-five percent of MoEc employees have received gender awareness training. The Gender Directorate also publishes a quarterly which covers all gender related topics and is usually used for awareness and informative purposes.
Ministry of Education (MOE) .	Responsible for development and oversight of policies and governance of education outside of higher education (i.e. public and private elementary and secondary schools, technical and vocational education).	Gender Unit: Established in 2011, falls under Administration and Finance. Activities are to build capacity of MOE employees and conduct training and workshops on gender and employment of females in MOE and implementation of NAPWA in MOE.

Ministry	Role	Gender Department
Ministry of Finance	Responsible for management and execution of the budget, collection of taxes, organisation and control of public expenditure and payments to the government, including customs.	Gender Unit: Activities started in 2010. Limited activity and capacity; has been able to conduct only a number of trainings.
Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs	Responsible for oversight of religious affairs.	Gender Unit: None exists. There is a Women's Representative.
Ministry of Higher Education	Responsible for oversight, administration and development of institutions of higher education (universities and colleges).	Gender Unit: Established in 2008. Provides training on gender-sensitive budgeting and NAPWA to ministry staff.
Ministry of Interior Affairs	Responsible for security within the borders of Afghanistan, including oversight of the Afghan National Police and anti-corruption.	Gender Unit: Established in 2008. Works to attract more women to police and civil service departments. Women, Children and Human Rights section has a gender unit hotline, recruitment information for women, female policing activities, information about Family Response Units, and police programmes for women.
Ministry of Justice	Central institution in executive branch responsible for upholding rule of law and the government's judicial affairs.	Gender Unit: Established in 2011.
Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyred and Disabled (MoLSAMD)	Responsible for the management and organisation of the labour law, labour conditions, pension management, support and advocacy for the martyrs and disabled, and also the only government organisation that works for the protection of children and defending their rights.	Gender Unit: Established in 2008. Provides gender training for all MoLSAMD staff.
Ministry of Public Health	Responsible for the oversight and administration of programmes related to the health and nutritional status of Afghanistan.	Gender Unit: Established in 2006.

Ministry	Role	Gender Department
Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development	Responsible for development and implementation of programmes promoting responsible social and financial growth in rural areas, primarily in the non-farm sector of all 34 provinces.	Gender Unit: Established in 2011; gender policy was made 4 October 2011 and is a compilation of different gender related issues and definitions. Since 2011, consultant reporting to minister coordinates on implementation of gender policy and NAPWA by providing proof-reading and advisory options. A Women's Council was established in 2011; quarterly publication raising awareness on gender. Internal capacity building, internal women's issues trouble-shooting. CDC/DDA councils monitoring is done by regular monthly reporting, as well as scheduled visits. Reports are first submitted to sub-offices and then onto the women's councils.
Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA)	Responsible for managing the affairs of Afghan women in the national and international arenas. It aims to create an enabling, discrimination-free and supportive environment for women to promote, support and provide direction, build inter-ministerial collaboration and develop the capacity of government agencies to ensure that policy formulation, planning, implementation, reporting and monitoring equitably respond to the differential needs and situations of women and men.	Gender Unit: Main goal is capacity-building of women inside the ministry. There is a "Women Consultation Board," consisting of women active in sectors like culture, law and social activities. The board is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's economic empowerment, health, social participation, legal advocacy and cultural assistance; • Defining indicators for related sub-offices in accordance to MoWA policies and strategies for women; • Identifying potential obstacles in front of developing effective policies for women; • Coordinating between MoWA and other related organisations like civil society organisations; and; • Introducing expert women for administrative positions in the government.

Appendix 7: Agencies and Organisations with Programmes and Projects Pertaining to Women’s Economic Development and Rights

For contact information for organisations listed, please consult the AREU *A to Z Guide to Afghanistan Assistance*.

Multilateral organisations

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	All
Gender Strategy	Gender issues fall primarily under the human rights sector, as a priority area “violence against women.” The current mandate calls for the need to ensure women’s participation in the peace process, their protection from violence, and faster implementation of NAPWA and EVAW.
Partners	Relevant ministries, all bilateral donors, embassies, other UN agencies
Projects	Projects carried out by other UN agencies
United Nations Development Program (UNDP)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural development, Economy, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	Gender is a cross-cutting issue
Partners	Relevant ministries, bilateral donors, embassies, other UN agencies, local and international NGOs
Projects	“Institutional Capacity Building for Gender Equality,” enhance MoWA, Provincial Women’s Development Councils; “Gender Equality Program,” agricultural and business trainings
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Civil society, Education
Gender Strategy	Gender is a cross-cutting issue
Partners	MoEd, MoHE, MoIC, other relevant ministries, bilateral donors, embassies, other UN agencies, local and international NGOs
Projects	Literacy, technical and vocational training; Gender Studies Institute at Kabul University
United Nations Entity for the Equality of Women and Gender Empowerment (UN Women)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural development, Civil Society, Economy, Education, Governance, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus; see AF Strategy
Partners	MoWA, MoFA, other relevant ministries, bilateral donors, embassies, other UN agencies, local and international NGOs
Projects	Implementation of EVAW; capacity development of CSOs in gender equality; legislative and governance reform
United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural development, Economy, Governance
Partners	MAIL, MoEW, MRRD, World Food Programme, UNDP, UNESCO, UNIFEM, WHO, European Union

Projects	“Strengthening the Role of Women in Agriculture;” women targeted for agribusiness, agriculture and veterinary training
United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural development, Governance, Health, Human rights
Gender Strategy	Gender is a cross-cutting issue
Partners	MAIL, MoPH, MoRR, MoWA, UNAMA, UNDP, local and international NGOs
Projects	Women returnees targeted for agriculture, vocational trainings
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural development, Economy, Governance
Partners	MoCI, MAIL, MoLSAMD, relevant UN agencies
Projects	Vocational, handicraft, business and entrepreneurship training for rural women
United Nations World Health Organization (WHO)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural development, Health, Human rights
Gender Strategy	http://www.emro.who.int/afg/programmes/gender-health-development.html
Partners	MoPH, MoWA, USAID, UN Population Fund, UN Women
Projects	Gender mainstreaming in health training; gender integration in health care packages; gender-based violence treatment protocols
International Labor Organization (ILO)	
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural development, Economy, Governance
Gender Strategy	Gender is a cross-cutting issue addressed in country strategy
Partners	MoLSAMD, relevant UN agencies
Projects	Decent Work Country Program,” women’s economic empowerment is one component; research reports on women in work
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	
Sectors	Sectors:Agriculture/Rural development, Economy, Governance, Microfinance
Gender Strategy	Gender Strategy: Gender is a cross-cutting issue addressed in country strategy
Partners	Partners:MoCI, MoEc, relevant UN agencies
Projects	Projects: No specific projects listed
The World Bank	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural development, Economy, Governance
Gender Strategy	Gender is a cross-cutting issue
Projects	“Adolescent Girls Initiative,” vocational and literacy training for young women; “Rural Enterprise Development Program,” women targeted for vocational, agriculture, business training, microcredit

Bilateral donors and some embassies active in development

AusAID	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Education, Governance, Health
Partners	Embassy of Australia, Red Cross, WHO, CARE Int'l, Save the Children, AIHRC,WFP, World Bank
Projects	“Empowerment through Education” (girls' schools)
Embassy of Canada	

Gender Strategy	http://www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/news-nouvelles/2012/2012_03_08.aspx?lang=eng&view=d
Partners	CIDA, MoJ, MoI, MoPH, UNICEF
Projects	Implementing EVAW Law; legal aid to women; literacy; girls' education
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	
Province	Badakhshan, Baghlan, Bamiyan, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Takhar
Sectors	Civil Society, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/acdi-cida.nsf/eng/EMA-218123616-NN9
Partners	Embassy of Canada, UNICEF, WFP, MAIL, MoJ, CARE Int'l
Projects	Girls' education; midwifery training; "Through the Garden Gate: Integrating Women into Markets;" "Afghan Women's Community Support;" "Responsive Fund for the Advancement of Women;" "Women's Rights & Family Law Reform;" "Women as Decision Makers"
Embassy of Denmark	
Province	Helmand
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Economy, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights
Partners	DANIDA, UNICEF, UNHCR
Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Governance
Partners	Global Partnership of Education, UNDP, AIHRC, AWN, UN Women, CSHRN, MRRD, MISFA, UNHCR, Norwegian Refugee Council
Projects	Training defense lawyers; women's shelters in rural areas
Embassy of Estonia	
Province	Helmand, Parwan
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights
Partners	Red Cross, UNHCR, UNFPA
Projects	"Sound Central Festival: Women's Day;" "Support System for Women & Children;" girls' school in Parwan
Embassy of Finland	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Education, Governance, Health, Microfinance
Partners	UNDP, Marie Stopes Int'l, AIHRC, MISFA
Projects	Reproductive health information; training women journalists
Embassy of France	
Province	Kapisa
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Economy, Governance, Human Rights
Partners	Cooperation for Peace & Unity, Int'l Law Development Org, AFD
Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	
Sectors	Sectors: Agriculture/Rural Development, Health, Microfinance
Partners	Partners: French government
Embassy of India	
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health
Partners	MoEc, MEW, MRRD, MAIL
Projects	Women's Vocational Training Ctr (Bagh-e Zanana, Kabul)
Italian Development Cooperation Office (IDCO)	

Province	Badghis, Baghlan, Herat, Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health, Microfinance
Partners	MoWA, MoLSAMD, MAIL, MRRD, MoF, ActionAid, UNESCO, World Bank
Projects	Capacity building in MOWA, Baghlan DOWA, HAWCA; vocational training, literacy; microcredit loans
Embassy of Japan	
Province	Bamiyan
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Governance, Health
Partners	MoEd, MRRD, UNESCO, UNDP, JICA
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	
Province	Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health
Partners	Aga Khan Foundation, Embassy of Japan
New Zealand Aid Programme	
Province	Bamiyan
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Economy, Health
Partners	AIHRC, Afghan National Police, Embassy of New Zealand
Projects	Increase women's participation in policing
Embassy of Pakistan	
Province	Balkh, Kabul, Logar, Nangarhar, Wardak
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health
Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)	
Sectors	Civil Society, Education, Health, Human Rights
Partners	Embassy of Spain
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)	
Province	Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan, Sar-i-Pul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights
Partners	Embassy of Sweden, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNICEF, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, Red Cross, BRAC, Hand in Hand, Marie Stopes, Int'l, Islamic Relief
Projects	Reproductive health
Embassy of the Czech Republic	
Province	Logar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health
Partners	Czech Development Agency, MoD, MoCI
Projects	Radio training for women
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany	
Province	Badakhshan, Badghis, Ghazni, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Kapisa, Khost, Kunduz, Logar, Paktia, Parwan, Takhar, Wardak
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Banking, Civil Society, Economy, Education, Governance, Health
Partners	MoF, MoPH, MoEd, GIZ
Projects	Girls' school in Kunduz; training traffic policewomen
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	
Province	Badakhshan, Baghlan, Balkh, Kunduz, Takhar
Sectors	Civil Society, Education, Governance, Health
Gender Strategy	: http://www.giz.de/Themen/en/dokumente/en-factsheet-gender-Afghanistan.pdf
Partners	MoCI, MoWA, German Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development, World Bank, Government of the Netherlands

Projects	“Gender Mainstreaming” (MoWA capacity building, gov’t training, CSO training)
Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)	
Province	Badakhshan, Day Kundi, Faryab, Ghazni
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights
Partners	MoEd, Mol, MRRD, Embassy of Norway, UN Women, UNHCR, Afghan Women’s Network, Aga Khan Foundation, Norwegian Afghanistan Committee, DACAAR, ACTED, Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian Refugee Council
Projects	Evaluations on UNIFEM
Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	
Province	Uruzgan
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Economy, Governance
Embassy of the People’s Republic of China	
Sectors	Economy, Governance
Partners	MoCI
Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan	
Province	Bamiyan, Kunduz, Samangan
Sectors	Education, Health
Partners	MoF
Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)	
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Governance, Human Rights
Partners	UNDP, Embassy of Republic of Korea
Projects	Gender training for gov’t officials, held in Korea: “Gender Equality Policy Development,” “Gender Equality & Women’s Leadership Development,” “Economic Empowerment of Rural Women” (1 AF attendee), “Gender Course for Afghan Officials”
Embassy of the Republic of Poland	
Province	Ghazni, Kabul
Sectors	Afghan Civil Service Institute
Embassy of the United Kingdom	
Province	Helmand
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	http://ukinafghanistan.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/working-with-afghanistan/Human-Rights-Afg/Women-Rights
Partners	DFID, British Council, USAID, MoPH, MoEd, Mol
Department for International Development (DFID)	
Province	Helmand, Herat, Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Economy, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	http://www.dfid.gov.uk/What-we-do/Key-Issues/Economic-growth-and-the-private-sector/Women-and-business/
Partners	MercyCorps, Zardozi, MRRD, MISFA, Embassy of the United Kingdom
Projects	Vocational training (sewing), microfinance
Embassy of the United States of America	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Education, Governance, Human Rights, Microfinance
Gender Strategy	http://photos.state.gov/libraries/afghanistan/46736/saeedix/GenderStrategyCondensed.pdf
Partners	USAID, MoCI, MoWA, MRRD, MoPH, MoFA, World Bank, International Finance Corporation

Projects	Microfinance, vocational training, women's rights advocacy projects funded by the Ambassador's Small Grants
US Agency for International Development (USAID)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Commerce, Economy, Education, Governance, Health, Human rights, Microfinance
Gender Strategy	http://photos.state.gov/libraries/afghanistan/46736/saeedix/GenderStrategyCondensed.pdf
Partners	Embassy of the US, MoWA, MoPH, MoCI, Mol, MoEd, MoEC, MoF, MISFA, Asia Fdn, CIPE, Chemonix, DAI, AECOM
Projects	Girls' schools; women's vocational and business training, literacy; gender mainstreaming in gov't; grants for women to attend American University; microloans to rural poor
European Union Delegation	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Economy, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	Gender discussed in country strategy
Partners	UNAMA, FAO, MoPH, MoLSAMD, MEW, MRRD, MAIL, Mol, MoJ, MoWA
Projects	"Empowering Women in Rural Afghanistan" (women's resource centers), "Reinforcing the Ability of Afghan Women to Improve Their Living Conditions," "Providing Legal Aid & Protection to Women"
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	
Province	Bamiyan, Samangan, Takhar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Economy, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights
Partners	Helvetas, CSHRN, UNIFEM
Projects	Vocational, handicrafts, literacy training

International non-governmental organisations

ACDI/VOCA	
Province	Balkh
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Commerce, Economy, Microfinance
Gender Strategy	http://www.acdivoca.org/site/ID/aboutus_genderequity
Partners	MAIL, MRRD, MoCN, USAID
Projects	Agriculture, vocational, handicrafts, literacy training through IDEA-NEW, microfinance through ARIES program
ActionAid	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Governance, Human Rights
Partners	HAWCA
Afghanistan Libre	
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	Smiling Children, Amitie Franco-Afghane, Groupe URD, Open Society Institute, CIDA, BRAC
Projects	High schools targeting girls, health centres and psychosocial support for women
Aga Khan Development Network	
Province	Badakhshan, Baghlan, Bamiyan, Kabul, Takhar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Economy, Education, Health, Microfinance

Partners	Asian Development Bank, EC, FAO, UNESCO, World Bank, UNODC, UNHCR
Projects	Women's wing at FMIC Hospital; microfinance for women's projects; agriculture, handicraft and entrepreneurship trainings; schools for girls
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)	
Province	Faryab, Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Economy
Partners	GIZ, EuropeAid, UNHCR, UNDP, USAID, World Bank, Norwegian Embassy, relevant GIROA ministries
Projects	Microfinance through OXUS program, Self Help Groups in Faryab province
Asian Development Bank	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Banking, Economy, Microfinance
Gender Strategy	Included in country strategy
Partners	MAIL, MRRD, MoF, bilateral donor countries
Projects	"Afghanistan Rural Business Support Project," handicraft training to women in Bamiyan Province
Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health, Microfinance
Partners	MoAg, MoEd, MoPH, MRRD, MISFA, Oxfam Novib, DFID, AusAID
Projects	Microloans to poor women, training agricultural extension agents, schools for girls, Adolescent Reading Centres
Canadian Women4Women in Afghanistan	
Province	Bamiyan, Kabul, Laghman, Panjshir, Parwan
Sectors	Education, Human Rights
Partners	ACKU, PARSA, Dupree Foundation, Afghan Women's Resource Center, CIDA
Projects	Girls' schools, women's literacy classes, teacher training
CARE International	
Province	Baghlan, Balkh, Ghazni, Kabul, Paktia, Parwan, Wardak
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health
Partners	Australian government, USAID, UNDP, MRRD, MoEd, Int'l Rescue Committee, Catholic Relief Services, Aga Khan Development
Projects	"Kabul Widows' Humanitarian Assistance," "Widows' Income through Livestock Development," "Poultry Development for Women," "Vocational Training for Afghan Women"
Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)	
Province	Bamiyan, Ghor, Herat
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education
Partners	DFID, Catholic Relief Services
Projects	Women's savings groups, women's rights education
Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid (CordAid)	
Province	Herat, Kabul, Nangarhar, Uruzgan
Sectors	Health, Human Rights
Partners	Afghan Women's Network, Afghan Health & Development Services
Projects	"Investigation: Are Women Still Safe?" "Community Midwifery Education School"
Catholic Relief Services	
Province	Bamiyan, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education

Partners	Welfare Development Organization for Afghanistan
Projects	Rural self-help groups for women, rural schools for girls
Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE)	
Province	Kabul
Sectors	Commerce, Economy
Partners	AICC, MoEc, MoCI
Projects	Tashabos high school business course (for boys and girls)
Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR)	
Province	Badakhshan, Badghis, Balkh, Farah, Faryab, Ghazni, Herat, Kabul, Laghman, Nangarhar, Parwan, Sar-i-Pul, Takhar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Economy, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights
Partners	DANIDA
Projects	Women's Resource Centres, small business training, literacy, vocational training
Equal Access	
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Education, Governance, Human Rights
Partners	MAIL, MoWA, USAID, Embassy of the UK, AIHRC, OSI, US Dept of State
Projects	Groups meet to listen to media, discuss women's rights and democracy; human rights radio drama
Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA)	
Province	Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Kunduz, Laghman, Nangarhar, Parwan
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Commerce, Economy, Microfinance
Projects	Women's Murabaha Lending Groups
Future Generations	
Province	Nangarhar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Governance
Partners	MRRD, MoEd, USIP, USAID, JICA
Projects	Literacy; midwifery, vocational training; Community Development Committees established
German Development Cooperation with Afghanistan	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Economy, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights, Microfinance
Partners	GIZ, Friedrich Ebert Fdn, Heinrich Boll Fdn, Konrad Adenauer Fdn, Mol, MoWA, MoEd, MRRD, MoLSAMD, MoPH
Projects	Computer and English workshops; Women Training Center (Balkh)
HAGAR International	
Sectors	Human Rights
Partners	UN Women, UNICEF, AusAID, US Dept of State
Projects	Women's shelter in Kabul, partner with Starlight (Afghan company) to make solar powered stoves
Hand In Hand	
Province	Balkh
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Commerce, Economy
Partners	MRRD, MAIL, Women for Women Int'l, AfghanAid, UNDP
Projects	Women's self-help groups; agriculture, vocational and business training
Handicap International	
Province	Herat, Kabul, Kandahar
Sectors	Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights

Partners	MoPH, MoMDP
Projects	Rehabilitation centre focus on women
Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation (Helvetas)	
Province	Bamiyan
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education
Gender Strategy	https://assets.helvetas.ch/downloads/12_striving_for_equality_between_men_and_women_red_final_engl_a3_landscape.pdf
Partners	MoEd
Projects	Training women teachers, literacy
International Assistance Mission	
Province	Badakhshan, Balkh, Faryab, Ghor, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Economy, Education, Health
Partners	SIDA, NORAD, Rotary Int'l, Bureau for Reconstruction & Development, Embassy of Finland, Islamic Relief
Projects	Projects: Agriculture and vocational training, literacy in Community Development Projects; Community Based Learning Groups; Business Development Services
International Relief and Development (IRD)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Governance
Partners	MoEd, MoPW, MRRD, USAID,
Projects	Vulnerable women targeted in "Afghanistan Civilian Assistance Program" for literacy and vocational training
INTERSOS	
Province	Faryab, Ghor, Herat, Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Economy, Health
Partners	Embassy of Italy, Italian Development Cooperation, UNICEF, IOM
Projects	Vocational training, support for Afghan Women Lawyers Foundation
Islamic Relief Worldwide	
Province	Balkh
Sectors	Civil Society, Education
Projects	"Home Based Education for Afghan Deprived Women," literacy and health education
Jhpiego	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Health
Partners	MoPH, USAID, Save the Children
Projects	Midwifery training; establishment of the Afghan Midwife Association
Johanniter International Assistance	
Province	Balkh
Sectors	Health
Partners	MoPH, BMZ
Projects	Midwifery training
Marie Stopes International	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Health, Human Rights
Partners	MoPH, DFID, Government of Finland, SIDA
Projects	Policy improvements for sexual and reproductive health rights, social marketing for family planning
Medica Afghanistan - Women Support Organization	

Province	Balkh, Herat, Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health, Human RIGHTS
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	Medica Mondiale
Projects	Training female medical and legal professionals; women's rights awareness
Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA)	
Province	Agriculture/Rural Development, Economy, Microfinance
Sectors	http://www.meda.org/resources/policies-logos-and-branding/204-meda-gender-equality-policy
Gender Strategy	MISFA, CIDA, USAID
Projects	"Seeds of Hope: Integrating Women into Sustainable Horticulture Markets"
MercyCorps	
Province	Helmand, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunar, Kunduz, Nangarhar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Economy
Gender Strategy	http://www.mercycorps.org/Sectors:/gender
Partners	MAIL, DFID, USAID, EC
Projects	Vocational and agricultural training targeted to women, literacy, English, computing
Mothers for Peace	
Province	Bamiyan, Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	Government of Belgium, Dutch Association of Women
Projects	Handicrafts, vocational, literacy, midwifery training through Women's Centres
National Democratic Institute	
Province	Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, Kunduz, Nangarhar
Sectors	Civil Society, Governance
Gender Strategy	http://www.ndi.org/afghanistan#women
Partners	USAID, Embassy of Denmark, Embassy of Sweden
Projects	Campaign schools, leadership training for women political candidates
Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC)	
Province	Badakhshan, Ghazni, Kabul, Laghman
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health
Partners	MRRD, MoEd, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Projects	Community Health Nursing Education School; vocational, business and formal education
Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)	
Province	Bamiyan, Day Kundi, Faryab, Uruzgan
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Economy, Health, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	See country strategy: http://www.kirkensnodhjelp.no/Documents/Kirkens%20N%C3%B8dhjelp/Geografiske%20filer/Asia/KN
Partners	MRRD, UNDP, Skills Training & Rehabilitation Society, Ghazni Rural Support Program, Coordination of Afghan Relief
Projects	Vocational, agricultural and literacy training through self-help groups and women <i>shuras</i> ; community health worker training
Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	
Province	Balkh, Faryab, Herat, Kabul, Nangarhar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Health, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	http://www.nrc.no/arch/_img/9261415.pdf

Partners	DANIDA, DFID, EC, ECHO, NORAD, SIDA, SDC, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Projects	Vocational, handicrafts, business training to returned refugee women
Operation Mercy	
Province	Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health
Partners	Embassy of the US, Embassy of Germany, Embassy of Sweden, Embassy of Japan, Embassy of Australia, UNICEF
Projects	Vocational, handicrafts, literacy training through self-help groups
Oxfam	
Province	Badakhshan, Balkh, Herat, Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Economy, Education, Governance, Human Rights
Partners	CPAU
Projects	Strengthening women in CSOs
OXUS Afghanistan	
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Microfinance
Partners	MISFA, ACTED
Relief International	
Province	Kunar, Nangarhar, Nimroz
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Governance, Health
Partners	MRRD, UNDP
Projects	Cottage Industry Cooperatives in Community Development Councils
Solidarite Afghanistan Belgique (SAB)	
Province	Bamiyan, Kabul, Kapisa, Logar, Parwan, Wardak
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development
Gender Strategy	http://www.assosab.be/pages/Nos-principes.en.php
Partners	MoEd, EU
Projects	Vocational, literacy training
Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)	
Province	Badakhshan, Baghlan, Balkh, Bamiyan, Ghazni, Jawjzan, Kunar, Kunduz, Laghman, Logar, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Paktia, Parwan, Samangan, Sar-i-Pul, Takhar, Wardak
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health
Gender Strategy	http://www.swedishcommittee.org/our-work/crosscutting-units
Partners	MoWA, MoPH, MRRD, AWN, AIHRC, SIDA, World Bank, EC
Projects	None specifically stated; implied handicrafts, agricultural, teacher, literacy trainings
The Asia Foundation	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Education, Governance, Health, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	See country strategy: http://www.asiafoundation.org/publications/pdf/751
Partners	MoWA, MRRD, AusAID, Embassy of UK, DFID, CIDA, EU, Gov't of Belgium, Embassy of the Netherlands, Embassy of the US, USAID
Projects	Women's discussion groups on social, political and civil society issues; capacity building for MoWA; scholarships to attend university; literacy, vocational training
United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)	
Province	Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development
Partners	US Department of State

Projects	Woman-headed refugees households targeted for livestock kits and training; female health worker and midwifery training
Womankind Worldwide	
Province	Balkh, Kabul, Nangarhar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	Afghan Women Resource Center, MoEd, Afghan Women's Network
Projects	Leadership training, vocational education centre in Kabul, monitor implementation of EVAW
Women for Women International	
Province	Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Economy, Human Rights, Microfinance
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	Hand in Hand
Projects	Leadership education; vocational, agricultural, handicrafts, entrepreneurship training; microloans

Organisations and institutions working at ground level

AfghanAid	
Province	Badakhshan, Ghor, Nuristan, Samangan
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Economy
Gender Strategy	Focus on women in agriculture, women's economic empowerment
Partners	European Commission
Projects	Literacy, vocational skills, agricultural skills
Afghan Civil Society Forum Organization	
Province	Balkh, Bamiyan, Ghor, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Paktia, Parwan, Samangan
Sectors	Civil Society, Education
Gender Strategy	Women are a cross-cutting issue
Partners	Counterpart Int'l; GIZ; Oxfam Novib; Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation; Finland; SDC; Asia Foundation
Projects	"Women Political Participation, Transparency and Accountability," "Women Empowerment through Advocacy," "Civic Education for Homebound Women"
Afghan Friends Network	
Province	Ghazni
Sectors	Civil Society, Education
Gender Strategy	Focus on educating girls
Projects	Scholarship program for girls to attend university, non-traditional literacy classes for widows
Afghan Health and Development Services	
Province	Kabul, Kandahar, Uruzgan
Sectors	Health
Gender Strategy	Women's health and training women in health services
Partners	European Community, USAID, WHO, UNICEF, FAO, CIDA, Save the Children, AusAID, ActionAid
Projects	Kandahar Institute of Health Sciences programme in midwifery
Afghan Institute of Learning	
Province	Herat, Kabul
Sectors	Education, Health

Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	Creating Hope Int'l
Projects	Traditional birth attendant training, reproductive education; school teacher training; women's learning centres for literacy and vocational training
Afghan Women Advocacy Coalition	
Province	Badakhshan, Baghlan, Balkh, Farah, Faryab, Ghazni, Ghor, Helmand, Herat, Jawjzan, Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Paktia, Parwan, Takhar
Sectors	Civil Society, Education, Governance
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus; focus on networking women organisations
Projects	Workshops on advocacy, media to AWAC members
Afghan Women Services and Education Organization (AWSE)	
Province	Kabul
Sectors	Civil Society, Education
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEC)	
Province	Balkh, Faryab, Ghor, Herat, Kabul, Kapisa, Logar, Paktia, Panjshir, Parwan, Wardak
Sectors	Civil Society, Education, Governance, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	Afghan Women's Network; Afghan Women Services and Education Organization; Oxfam, Inter Church Organization for Development Cooperation, DACAAR, World Bank, CAFOD, Open Society, British Council
Projects	Afghan Women Empowerment; Education; Promoting Democracy and Peace Building; Women's Rights Protection and Promotion
Afghan Women's Network (AWN)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Civil Society, Governance, Human rights
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Afghan Women's Organization	
Province	Kabul
Sectors	Civil Society
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Afghan Women's Resource Centre (AWRC)	
Sectors	Civil Society
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Afghanistan Development Association (ADA)	
Province	Balkh, Bamiyan, Faryab, Ghazni, Herat, Jawjzan, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Laghman, Nangarhar, Paktika, Parwan, Samangan, Takhar, Uruzgan, Zabul
Gender Strategy	http://www.ada.org.af/ADA/images/Website%20Data/ADA%20Policies/8.%20Gender%20&%20Sexual%20Harassment%20Policy
Partners	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Ministry of Counter Narcotics, MAIL, MoLSAMD, CARE, EC, NCA, Oxfam, Asia Foundation, World Bank, USAID, British Council, FAO
Projects	Literacy, vocational skills, girls' enrollment in school
Afghanistan Women Council (AWC)	
Province	Kabul
Sectors	Economy, Education, Health
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	CIDA, Global Fund for Women, Kabul Bank, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, World Food Program, BRAC, ICRC
Projects	Schools, clinics, microfinance, handicrafts and vocational training

Afghans4Tomorrow	
Province	Ghazni, Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health
Gender Strategy	http://www.afghans4tomorrow.org/default.asp?contentid=23&qid=87
Partners	MoF, MRRD, Afghans for Afghans, Rotary Club of Denver, Kabul University, University of Colorado
Projects	Schools for girls in Kabul, women's vocational training center in Ghazni
Assistance to Defend Women Rights Organization (ADWRO)	
Province	Balkh
Sectors	Civil Society, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	Global Fund for Women, UN Women, Counterpart Int'l, US Embassy
Projects	Advocacy for women's civil society orgs, training in organisational capacity building
Bakhtar Development Network	
Province	Baghlan, Balkh, Day Kundi, Ghazni, Herat, Jawjzan
Sectors	Health
Gender Strategy	http://www.bdnglobal.org/index.php/expertise/womenempowerment
Partners	MoPH, ARD, USAID
Projects	Training community female health workers, training midwives, advocacy and awareness for female health services, gender surveys on women accessing basic health care
Civil Society & Human Rights Network (CSHRN)	
Province	Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Nangarhar
Sectors	Education, Human Rights
Partners	Danish Institute for Human Rights, Society for Threatened Peoples, DANIDA, SDC, Afghan Civil Society Forum, Afghan Women's
Projects	Awareness-raising on domestic violence
Development and Ability Organization (DAO)	
Province	Badakhshan, Balkh, Ghazni, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Kapisa, Kunar, Kunduz, Laghman, Logar, Nangarhar, Parwan, Samangan, Takhar, Wardak
Sectors	Economy, Education, Health, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	http://www.daoafghanistan.org/women.htm
Partners	UNDP, UNICEF, UNMACA, Norway, Canada, Abilis Foundation
Projects	Advocacy, vocational training and capacity building for disabled women
Development & Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan (DHSA)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Education, Governance, Human rights
Partners	EC, Asia Foundation, Open Society Institute, French Embassy, USAID, MoIC, Afghan Centre for International Journalism
Projects	Mursal Women's Magazine
Educational & Training Center for Poor Women & Girls of Afghanistan (ECW)	
Province	Badakhshan, Baghlan, Bamiyan, Day Kundi, Faryab, Jawjzan, Kabul, Kapisa, Kunar, Kunduz, Laghman, Logar, Nangarhar, Panjshir, Parwan, Takhar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Developmet, Civil Society, Education, Governance, Human Rights
Partners	MRRD, AWN, ANCB
Projects	Civic education, vocational training, media, rights awareness, legal aid clinics
Ghazni Rural Support Program	
Province	Baghlan, Day Kundi, Ghazni, Kabul, Kunduz
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health

Partners	MAIL, MoEW, MoEd, MoEc, MoLSAMD, MoPH, MRRD, USAID, Norwegian Church Aid, Aga Khan Development Network
Projects	Small and medium enterprise development, vocational training, literacy
Global Partnership for Afghanistan	
Province	Balkh, Helmand, Kabul, Kandahar, Kapisa, Khost, Kunduz, Logar, Paktia, Paktika, Panjshir, Parwan, Samangan, Wardak
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education
Gender Strategy	http://gpfa.org/programs/ruralafghanwomen/
Partners	MRRD, World Bank, EC, USAID, GIZ
Projects	"Women Working Together Initiative," agriculture training, district women's associations
Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan (HAWCA)	
Province	Baghlan, Balkh, Farah, Kabul, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Nuristan, Samangan
Sectors	Civil Society, Education, Governance, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	http://www.hawca.org/main/en/about-us/footermenu-55/18-strategies.html
Partners	MoWA, Embassy of the US, Int'l Medical Corps, ICDO, UN Woman, Womankind Worldwide
Projects	Literacy, microcredit, vocational training
International Foundation of Hope (IF Hope)	
Province	Nangarhar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development
Partners	MAIL, MRRD, USAID
Projects	Women <i>shuras</i> through Community Development Programs, tree nurseries for women
Legal and Cultural Services for Afghan Women and Children (LCSAWC)	
Province	Badakhshan, Balkh, Ghazni, Kabul, Logar
Sectors	Human Rights
Partners	Oxfam, GIZ, Counterpart Int'l, UNIFEM
Projects	Trainings on women's rights, capacity building for CSOs on family law
Morning Star Development	
Province	Herat, Kabul, Nangarhar
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Economy, Education, Health
Gender Strategy	http://www.msdev.org/morningstar/morningstar.php?page=elevating_women
Partners	MRRD, MoPH
Projects	Vocational, agricultural, literacy, leadership training through Community Development Centers
Noor Educational & Capacity Development Organization (NECDO)	
Province	Ghazni, Kabul, Nangarhar
Sectors	Civil Society, Education, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	MoWA, GIZ, USAID, Asia Foundation, Unifem
Projects	Afghan Women Professional Education Institute, capacity building for women civil society organisations
Organization for Research & Community Development (ORCD)	
Province	Baghlan, Day Kundi, Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Education, Human Rights
Partners	Aga Khan Foundation, EC, AHDS
Projects	Literacy training, community-based self-help groups, research on women's economic empowerment
Sanayee Development Organization (SDO)	

Province	Badghis, Ghazni, Ghor, Herat, Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Economy, Education, Governance, Health
Partners	MAIL, MoISAMD, MoPH, MRRD, GIZ, Oxfam, World Bank, JICA, UNHCR, NCA
Projects	Capacity development and income generation through community-based development groups; vocational, agricultural, handicrafts, literacy, business trainings
Serve Afghanistan (SERVE)	
Province	Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Laghman, Nangarhar, Parwan
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Health
Partners	MRRD, MoEd, MoPH, European Union, CBM
Projects	Leadership, vocational, agriculture, literacy training; cow keeping programme through Community Development Programs; self-help
Skills Training and Rehabilitation Society (STARS)	
Province	Balkh, Day Kundi, Ghor, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kapisa, Parwan, Sar-i-Pul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Education, Health
Partners	NCA, USAID, CARE Intl
Projects	Animal husbandry, handicrafts, vocational, literacy, microbusiness, midwifery trainings
Welfare Association for the Development of Afghanistan (WADAN)	
Province	All 34
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Civil Society, Governance, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	Gender is cross-cutting issue; see country strategy: http://www.wadan.org/about.asp
Partners	DFID, USAID, CIDA, Embassy of Sweden, Embassy of Norway
Projects	"Women's Rights Under Islam" awareness programme
Women Activities and Social Services Association	
Province	Badghis, Herat
Sectors	Civil Society, Human Rights
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	MoWA, Christian Aid, ACBAR, Asian Development Bank, UNICEF
Projects	Social and legal counseling centers, training and outreach programmes on women's rights
Women and Children Legal Research Foundation (WCLRF)	
Province	Kabul
Sectors	Human Rights
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	MoWA, UN Women, Open Society Afghanistan
Projects	Conference on Women's Access to Economic Rights; research on women's rights in social, political, economic spheres
Young Women for Change	
Sectors	Human Rights
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Partners	Foundation for Afghanistan
Projects	Advocacy and awareness-raising about violence against women
Zardozi	
Province	Kabul
Sectors	Agriculture/Rural Development, Economy
Gender Strategy	Women are sole focus
Projects	Sells handicrafts made by women, business and production trainings

Appendix 8: Women and the ANDS

Action Points for women's empowerment in ANDS

TBD: To be decided

Objective/ Expected Outcome	Policy Actions /Activities	Category	Time Frame	Responsible Agency
GOOD GOVERNANCE				
Governance and human rights				
Corruption reduced	Mid-term plans formulated and implemented	Development	Jaddi 1387 (end-2008)	Inter-ministerial consultative group
Improved participation of women in governance	Implement National Action Plan for Women	Institutional Development	Jaddi 1389 (end-2010)	MoWA, all other ministries & agencies
	Affirmative action available to women	Legislation	Jaddi 1389 (end-2010)	MoJ, Cabinet, National Assembly, Office of President
	Piloting of a Regional Leadership Institute for Women in two areas, institutional	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	Jaddi 1387 (end-2010)	IARCSC
	Capacity building program for women in government at the level of National Assembly, Provincial Council and women laid off by the PRR processes capacity building for ministries and LGUs on gender sensitive budgeting	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	Jaddi 1389 (end-2010)	IARCSC
	Establishment of Women's Councils at the district level institutional	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	Jaddi 1389 (end-2010)	IDLG
	Gender awareness raising of senior officials of government	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	Jaddi 1389 (end-2010)	IARCSC
Justice and the rule of law				
Public can rely on effectively organised and professionally staffed justice institutions	Survey, develop and implement recommendations to improve existing career development practices in each institution with particular attention to complying with gender benchmarks	Institution Building	Year 3 on	SC, MoJ, AGO, MoWA, MoHE

Objective/ Expected Outcome	Policy Actions /Activities	Category	Time Frame	Responsible Agency
ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT				
Private sector development and trade				
INFRASTRUCTURE :Energy				
Economic activity increases in response to increased human capacity and skill sets and business services	Conceptualisation of private sector Employment Strategy for Women that will yield to pro-women employment strategies in the private sector	Other Measures/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	No time mentioned	MoCI, MoWA
Energy sector created	Gender mainstreaming in the policies in the energy sector	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	“Continue”	MEW, MoWA
Increased access to rural energy services	Special attention to gender issues in providing energy for rural areas	Development	TBD	MEW, MRRD, MoWA
Transport				
Lower road user costs	Subsidy to private bus operators to implement the policy of promoting equitable access to transportation	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	End-2008	MoTCA
Urban Development				
Strengthened institutional capacity to plan and manage urban development in a systematic and transparent manner	Comprehensive and gender sensitive reform of institutions, review and update of relevant legislations, policies and administrative processes	Institution Building/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	End-2009	KM/IDLG/MUD, MoWA
	Establish uni-urban data collection unit (encourage disaggregated data collection)	Institution Building/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	No time mentioned	MoUD, IDLG, KM
Mines and Natural Resources				
Strong regulatory framework in place	Gender mainstreaming in the policies in the mining sector	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	2008-2013	MoM

Objective/ Expected Outcome	Policy Actions /Activities	Category	Time Frame	Responsible Agency
Water Resources				
Improved water sector legal and governance structures and institutions in place	Gender discrepancies in various laws systematically uncovered	Legislation/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	2008-2009	National Assembly, MoUD, MoJ
ICT				
Enabling environment	Pilot home-based ICT related work for women	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	End-2008	MoCIT
Health and Nutrition				
Effective reproductive and child health system	A special cell is created to take care and promote all gender issues especially health of females and mothers	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	Ongoing-2013	MoPH
Education and Culture				
Education				
Improved quality of education	Strengthen institutional and staff capacities in curriculum development with special focus on gender, counter-narcotics, environment and anti-corruption	Institution Building/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1387-1389	MoE
	Increase the number of female primary and secondary teachers including retraining all female teachers who were separated from service during the PRR process and re-employing them	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1389	MoE, MoWA
	Establish/strengthen teacher training colleges in all provinces	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1386-1389	MoE, MoWA
	Adopt an enabling policy to implement the Constitutional provision of compulsory education up to intermediate level	Legislation/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1387	MoE
	Adopt a system to follow up on female drop-outs and provide incentives to return them to school	Institution Building / Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1387-1389	MoE; MoWA

Objective/ Expected Outcome	Policy Actions /Activities	Category	Time Frame	Responsible Agency
Literacy rate increased	Implement parent-oriented campaign to promote support to girls' enrolment	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1386-89	MoE; MoWA
	Conduct review class for girls who graduate from secondary schools to prepare for college entrance examinations	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1386-89	MoE
Equal opportunities for all	Construct dormitories and pro-women facilities, especially in the secondary level schools	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1386-89	MoE
	Disaggregate by sex all human related statistics	Gender Cross-Cutting Issues/ Institution Building	1386-89	MoE/MoL/NSDP/ NOC/MoWA
Improved quality of academic teaching and research	Policies that require new university professors and lecturers to be hired on the basis of academic merit and gender balance	Legislation	1386-1389	MoHE; MoWA
	Adopt strategy to hire more women professionals; re-train female teachers who were dismissed during the PRR process and re-employ them	Institution Building/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1385-89	MoHE; MoWA
Improved access to higher education	Strengthen security in the campus	Institution Building / Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1386-89	MoHE
	Conduct review class for girls to prepare them for college entrance examinations	Institution Building / Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1386-89	MoHE
	Disaggregate by sex all human related statistics	Institution Building / Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1386- 89	MoHE
Improved quality of vocational education	Target the most vulnerable women and youth in the selection of training and provision of employment opportunities	Institution Building/ Gender Cross-Cutting	1386-89	NSDP
Improved sports facilities	Adopt and implement a strategy to realise the benchmark of increasing women's access, leadership and participation in sports	Institution Building/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1386-89	MoE/NOC; MoWA

Objective/ Expected Outcome	Policy Actions /Activities	Category	Time Frame	Responsible Agency
Media and Culture				
Free and independent media	Sensitising media about the issues related to gender, anti-corruption, counter-narcotics, environment and regional cooperation	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	2010	MoIC (Youth Affairs Deputy Ministry)
Empowerment of youth				
	Promoting voluntary efforts for peace and development and establishing a youth volunteer corps for Afghanistan and also in the fields of gender, anticorruption, counter-narcotics, environment and regional cooperation	Development	2010	MoIC (Youth Affairs Deputy Ministry)
	Sensitising youth about the issues related to gender, anti-corruption, counter-narcotics, environment and regional cooperation	Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	2010	MoIC (Youth Affairs Deputy Ministry)
Agriculture and Rural Development				
Increased agriculture production and productivity	Special focus on gender in polices and plans and their implementation	Legislation / Policy/Plan/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1387-1391	MAIL, MRRD
Improved local governance	Sensitisation of functionaries of local governance on gender, environmental, counter-narcotics and anti-corruption issues	Legislation / Policy/Plan/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1387-1389	MRRD
	Special focus to gender issues in polices and plans and their implementation	Legislation / Policy/Plan/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	1387-1388	MAIL, MRRD
Social Protection and Refugees				
Social Protection				
Poverty and vulnerability reduction	Develop the policy and criteria for providing comprehensive support to female-headed, chronically poor households with small children	Other Measures/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	TBD	MoLSAMD
Poverty and vulnerability reduction, improved employment	Vocational trainings for widows, chronically poor and disabled women	Other Measures/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	Ongoing	MoWA, MoLSAMD

Objective/ Expected Outcome	Policy Actions /Activities	Category	Time Frame	Responsible Agency
Capacity building	Conduct the survey to collect data about the female headed chronically poor households with small children	Other Measures/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	By end-2008	MoWA, MoLSAMD
Improved social inclusion	Women's capacity building, and establishment of economic centres for better economic opportunities	Other Measures/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	TBD	MoWA, MoLSAMD
Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) return voluntarily according to agreed principles and procedures	Identify bottlenecks (political, security, economic, social and legal) facing returnees (refugees and IDPs) and promote sustainable solutions for them with special focus on chronically poor women, disabled and widows. (dispute settlement mechanisms land tenure, pasture management, rehabilitated livestock, productive infrastructure, vocational skills, shelters and etc.	Legislation/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	2008-2013	MoRR, MoFA
Government's capacity to manage and support return and reintegration programmes is strengthened	Data collection, analysis (disaggregated by gender) and knowledge generation	Institution Building/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	2008-2010	MoRR
	Data on Afghans in neighbouring countries (Iran and Pakistan) is analysed and Afghanistan's absorption capacity is assessed Analysis to be gender- and children-sensitive	Other Measures/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues	2008-2009	MoRR, UNHCR

Specific points in the Monitoring Matrix for women's empowerment in ANDS (2008-13)

Pillar	Sector	Expected Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Targets
Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights	Governance	Improved participation of women in governance	Index on the progress of putting plans, systems and mechanisms in place for improved participation of women in governance	Under assessment	By Jaddi 1389 (end-2010) 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 by providing a specific percent reservation of seats by enacting a law of affirmative action
	Justice and Rule of Law	Justice institutions have access to infrastructure, transportation, equipment, and supplies adequate to support effective delivery of justice services	# of adequate detention and correction facilities for women	2 (Kabul, Herat); 18 provinces with no facilities	TBD
	Religious Affairs	Religious service delivery and infrastructure	# of congregational facilities for women	-	-
Education	Education and Media, Culture and Youth	Improved quality of education	Index on the process of designing and conducting competency test for teachers, including principals	Started in 1387 (% TBD)	70% of teachers pass competency test (minimum of 40% women)
			# of competent teachers (male and female)	54,093 male (2002) 20,508 female (2002) EMIS	At least 140,000 competent teachers; Increase female teachers by 50%
			# of competent principals (male and female)	Under assessment	26,000 school principals

Pillar	Sector	Expected Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Targets
		Literacy rates improved	% of boys and girls enrolled	35% and 35% respectively	Enrolment rates (boys 75%, girls 60%) (1389)
			# of illiterates in the country (male and female)	11.2 million illiterate (1386)	Separate programme for non-formal education in place
			Ratio of boys and girls enrolled	70% boys (2002) 30% girls (2002)	50%each
		Equal opportunity for all	# of new school buildings constructed with basic amenities for both male and female	692 (1386)	At least 90%of schools and buildings have male and female facilities by 1389
			Index on the progress of providing equal opportunity for all for education	Establishment of (1,200 new schools and 1,200 CBS)and construction of 692 new schools, recruitment of 149,000 teachers (40,000 female)	Established and constructed new schools, recruitment of teachers, especially female teachers
		Improved quality of academic teaching and research	# of faculty members appointed (male and female)	To be determined	3,000 new faculty members to be recruited from the region by 1389
			# of students enrolled in the universities (male and female)	52,200 enrolled male and female (1386)	100,000 students enrolled in universities by 1389
		Improved access to higher education	# of new dormitories constructed for males; # of new dormitories constructed for females	2 female dormitories constructed	Construction of 24 new dormitories (12 for women and 12 for men)

Pillar	Sector	Expected Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Targets
		Improved access to vocational education	# of persons trained through NSDP (male and female)	To be determined	The NSDP will provide training to 150,000 unemployed Afghan women and men through competitive bidding procedures
Social Protection	Social Protection	Reduction in infant mortality	# of disabled that have gone through skill development programme	TBD	By end-2010 provide training for 150,000 people of which women should be 35% and disabled 10%
			Number of women that have gone through skill development programme	TBD	TBD
		Improved social inclusion	% of disabled in the public administration	TBD	By end-2012/13 the government will employ at least 3% disabled and 30% women in public administration
			% of women in the public administration	TBD	TBD

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