



# UNDP Afghanistan Newsletter

01 February 2006

## Afghan Civil Society to Call for ANDS Support in London

The message from the Civil Society will appeal to the International Community to recognize the role of Afghan Civil Society and empower them with the authority to take part in the monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the ANDS.

A meeting organized by Afghan Civil Society Forum and funded by UNDP, DFID and CIDA has paved the way for the representation of the Afghan civil society movement at the London Conference, a factor that is indicative of the distance covered since the Bonn Conference in 2001 in the political landscape in the war-ravaged country.

More than 100 representatives from civil society organizations from all over the country gathered in Kabul between Jan 21 and Jan 23 for the “**Afghan Civil Society Voice to London**” forum to decide on the message to be taken from the Civil Society to the London Conference and to select the messengers to convey it.

Included among the participating organizations



*Civil Society representatives listening to President Karzai*

were professional associations, youth groups, unions of disabled citizens, NGOs, political parties and independent intellectuals.

The forum heard President Karzai address its delegates with a strong emphasis of the role he expects the civil society to play in the reconstruction process of the country. Mr. Karzai insisted that the civil society would have a crucial role to play in institutionalizing democracy in Afghanistan.

The Forum, at the end of three days of discussions and deliberations decided that the voice of the Afghan Civil Society would not veer, but add harmony to the tune of the Afghan delegation in London: Aziz Rafiee, Managing Director of the Afghan Civil Society

Forum and Marzia Basel, Chairperson of the Afghan Women Judges Association should call on the international community to support Afghanistan’s National Development Strategy (ANDS). But the message from the Civil Society will also include an appeal to the effect that International Community should recognize the role of Afghan Civil Society and empower them with the authority to take part in the monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the ANDS.

Delegates to the forum now hope to hear from London a reciprocative tune that will encourage them to get down to the business of speeding up the reconstruction process.

### Inside this issue:

- DIAG Continues in Full Swing **2**
- Afghan International Law Students Preparing for International Challenge **3**
- Arresting Land Degradation **3**
- CNTF Board Holds First meeting **4**
- U.S. Congressional Delegation Visit **4**
- A Pair Gloves and A Resolution of Solidarity **5**
- Afghanistan Officially Part of WWW **6**
- Calendar of Events **7**
- Farewell to Fulya Vekiloglu **7**

## DIAG Continues in Full Swing



Ammunition that is now under ANA control

Commanders Mohammad Hakim Gul Khan, Amir Mohammad Jan Khan and Abdul Akbar surrendered, on January 25, some 10 tons of ammunition, including heavy calibre ammunition, as well as a mixture of light and heavy weapons to the DIAG\* weapons collection team. The ammunition and the weapons were transferred to the custody of the team in the City Hall of Gardez and some of them have already been carried to Poli-Charki central weapons collection point where they are now under the surveillance of the Afghan National Army (ANA). Weapons and ammunition will be either used by the security forces of the elected Government of Afghanistan or – if not serviceable - destroyed.

The three commanders voluntarily surrendered their weapons, thus actively participating in the Disbandment of Illegal

Armed Group (DIAG) process.

In the speech he gave during the hand over ceremony, the Governor of Paktya, Hakim Tanaiwal praised the Commanders for their support to the DIAG process. "It is now time to free ourselves from weapons, to make our villages safe and receive support for development, he said. The war is over and weapons are not useful for us anymore; they belong to the Government of Afghanistan and should be transferred to our security forces". The Governor also appealed to other commanders to support DIAG and hand over their weapons.

The ceremony was attended by the Head of the Shuras of Mullahs of Paktya, the ANA Deputy Commander in Paktya, the Head of the provincial Department of Information and Culture of Paktya, the Head of the National Security

Directorate (NSD) of Paktya, the Director of the Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) and the Head of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Gardez.

*The DIAG process was launched on 11 June, 2005 with the official announcement by Vice President Khalili. By 18 January, 2006, 16,850 weapons as well as 25,506 pieces of boxed and 69,255 pieces of unboxed ammunition had been handed over to and verified by ANBP collection teams in Afghanistan. 4,857 of the collected weapons have been handed over by 124 candidates to the parliamentary and provincial council elections.*

**DIAG is supported by Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, UK and Switzerland (SDC)**

*\*Disbandment of Illegal Armed*



Amer Mohammad Zadran with his certificate received for his surrender of his weapons earlier

## Afghan International Law Students Preparing for International Challenge

A group of six Afghan international law students have been engaged in intense study sessions these days in preparation for the third participation of Afghan teams in the Philip C. Jessup Moot Court Competition in Washington in the final week of March 2006.

In the course of this prestigious event, members of the Afghan team will take over the role of conflicting parties in an imaginary case of international dispute and try to vigorously defend the interests of their clients as if they are before the International Court of Justice. In their preparation for this legal battle, they are being assisted by Tina Gewis, the Programme Officer in charge of Human Rights and Justice with the UNDP, who has been visiting the Law Faculty of Kabul University regularly to coach and guide the team in their preparations. UNDP

will also fund the trip of the legal team to Washington.

Ms. Gewis says the competition is an excellent opportunity for the

**“Since many countries draw their leaders from the ranks of the legal community, Jessup Week (the period of competition) is an opportunity for tomorrow’s leaders to meet for the first time.”**

### Organizers

young Afghan students of international law not only to gain experience in the defence of a case, but also to start to build contacts with hundreds of other students coming from some 80 countries around the

world. The organizers say “Since many countries draw their leaders from the ranks of the legal community, Jessup Week (the period of competition) is an opportunity for tomorrow’s leaders to meet for the first time.” The event is regarded with so high esteem that some countries send more than one team to take part in the competition.

Earlier, the first Afghan team that could make it to the competition in 2004 was awarded by the organizers for putting up a well prepared defence of their case in their first ever participation to the event.

Ms. Gewis says the challenge now is to ensure that Afghan participation to the international competition is set on a regular footing as well as that the Kabul University’s Faculty of Law takes over the ownership of this initiative in the years to come.

## Arresting Land Degradation

The fact that the recognition came from the Afghan Government is, in itself, an important factor of encouragement: “The extent and impact of land degradation is not widely appreciated in Afghanistan, but in reality it is affecting the lives of the majority of Afghans who are living in the rural areas” said Deputy Technical Minister Jawad at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Forestry (MAAHF).

It is based on the realization of that impact on the lives of the Afghan people that early steps are now being taken to first stop the decline in and then to redress the land quality. In line with Afghanistan’s commitments under the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and within the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) framework, a medium-sized project has already been drawn up with GEF pledging to contribute half of the total project cost of \$1m.

Under this project, a series of re-

search initiatives will be undertaken both to identify the root causes of land degradation in Afghanistan and to develop solutions to the identified problems through a participatory approach, which will also involve community development. The project also aims at establishment of a unit within the MAHF, National Centre for Sustainable Land management, which will, gradually, ensure national ownership of efforts to address the problems of land degradation.

Vince Hart, the international consultant working on the medium-sized project says: “This project is firmly rooted in community development. Consequently, it will be the communities who play a key role in providing planning data and determining pilot schemes, based on locally defined land units that will provide the solutions to Land Degradation problems at the macro scale.”

One of the other main outputs of the



*Desertification: This is what is to be stopped and overturned*

project will be the production of “National Land Degradation Hazard Map” that will show not only types and geographical coverage of physical impoverishment but also the scale on which it is taking place. The National Map will be subdivided by watersheds, biogeographical areas and ultimately into manageable land units.

## CNTF Board Holds First meeting

The Board of Management of the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund, which was established last November, held its inaugural meeting on January 19 to discuss the implementation modalities of the project and procedural matters regarding the work of the Board.

The high level meeting was attended by, alongside Habibullah Qaderi, Minister of Counter Narcotics, representatives of Ministry of Finance, British Embassy in Kabul, Director of UNDP Country Office, Representative in Afghanistan of the UN Drug Control Agency (UNODC), various international and national advisors and UNDP staff members in charge of project implementation.

The meeting first approved the Terms of Reference for the main bodies of the CNTF and took up mainly operational issues that should determine the functional procedures that will allow the review, acceptance or rejection and the implementation of the projects.

CNTF will fund projects that meet

the criteria set out in Afghanistan's National Drug Control Strategy, namely those serving the causes of:

- Δ Developing Alternative Livelihoods
- Δ Building Institutions
- Δ Public Awareness
- Δ Law Enforcement
- Δ Criminal Justice
- Δ Eradication
- Δ Drug Demand Reduction and Treatment of Drug Addicts
- Δ International & Regional Co-operation

The composition of the Board also includes Asian Development Bank and for one more donor representative that is to be selected by the Steering Committee in its first meeting to be held in the near future. World Bank has an observer status within the Board.

Unlike the Board of Management, the Steering Committee will hold only quarterly meetings and it will

include primarily of representatives of the donor community.

Raul Gasteazoro, the CNTF Manager with the UNDP, says he expects a substantial increase in donations to the Fund once the London Conference comes to a conclusion. Foremost among the expected donors is likely to be Britain with an estimated £30 m over three years, with an early £8 m contribution coming possibly as early as this spring.

**The CNTF has currently some \$16.3m in its coffers to be spent on counter-narcotics projects as the below table shows:**

Donor	US\$
Australia	1,526,718
New Zealand	352,609
EC	14,117,647
Estonia	50,000
UNDP	300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,346,974</b>

## U.S. Congressional Delegation Visits Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) Cisco Networking Local Academy

A four-strong U.S. Congressional delegation visited the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) Cisco Networking Local Academy on January 23, accompanied by representatives from USAID, The Asia Foundation, and the U.S. Embassy. The visit was aimed both at observing the real life results of the Cisco Academy project and at marking the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between MoWA and USAID to work in partnership to implement the MoWA Initiative to Strengthen Policy and Advocacy (MISPA). Minister Dr. Massouda Jalal was on hand to witness the Cisco classroom visit with a view to demonstrating the Government's support to the IT training program.

The Cisco Networking Academy Program is a comprehensive e-learning program that includes significant hands-on learning and skill-set development and a direct route to industry-standard certification. In the Cisco courses, students learn how to design, build, and maintain computer networks. The Cisco Networking Academy Program qualifies students to pursue a number of industry-standard certifications, including the Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) and Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) Network+ certifications. Through a partnership among UNDP, Cisco Systems, USAID, and the

International Telecommunication Union, the Cisco Networking Academy Program in Afghanistan is hosted by Kabul



*Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen chatting with Cisco students*

## U.S. Congressional Delegation Visits ...

University's Faculty of Computer Science, the Ministry of Communications' Telecommunications Training Center, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Herat University, Balkh University, and Khost University. There are currently 727 students enrolled in the Cisco Academy Program, 32% of which are women. A core component of the program is to increase women's access to IT training and career opportunities. The MoWA Cisco Academy has adopted a policy to enroll women students in keeping with the Ministry's mandate to provide access and opportunity to women. The majority of the MoWA Cisco students are from high school and NGOs.

During the delegation's visit to MoWA Cisco Academy, the Cisco students sat with Asia Foundation representatives,

including Asia Foundation Country Director Jon Summers, and presented lessons to them about technical concepts such as network designing, IP Address, and LANs (Local Area Networks). Ms. Jane Grube, MISPA Project Director, said of her lesson, "I learned more in one day about computer connections than I ever knew in all my years of working with computers! The girls are really knowledgeable and eager to start a career in the IT field." The U.S. Congressional Representatives met with Cisco students in the classroom and the interviews were captured by C-SPAN television and the Miami Herald. Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen from Florida State, Head of the Delegation, interviewed a Cisco Instructor Ms. Wagma Mughulzai, about her experience as a woman in the Cisco

Academy Program. Wagma shared her story with Ms. Ros-Lehtinen and the accompanying delegation, and thanked the U.S. Government for supporting women's education in Afghanistan. Last month Wagma graduated from Kabul University's Faculty of Computer Science with a B.S. degree in Computer Science. She completed her Cisco CCNA certification during her university studies, and now she is employed as a Cisco Instructor at the MoWA Cisco Academy. Representative Todd R. Platts and Representative Jim Gerlach from Pennsylvania State, along with Representative Stephen F. Lynch from Massachusetts State and USAID Mission Director, Alonzo Fulgham, also heard from the Cisco students about their training.

## The Unlikely Benefit from Workshop: A Pair Gloves and A Resolution of Solidarity

Artistic imitation of life inspired some highly emotional soul searching during a four-day MoWA training workshop on gender awareness, held in Maidan Wardak between January 22 and 25, ending with some improbable resolutions.

It was an interesting event in various ways: It was one of those rare occasions where 30% of the participants were female with the range of participants' age spanning teens and late 50s. The participants were from the Provincial Women's Affairs office, Health and Education Department and selected non-government organizations.

The most interesting aspect of the workshop was the discussion on gender discrimination and religion, triggered by references to such classic movies as "The Message" and the "Ten Commandments" in addition to Indian movies like Mangal Pandey, Antargali Jatra, and Istrir Patra with the latter group focusing on the sufferings of women in India.

In classroom discussions, group work and analyses of real life situations dealing with topics on the situation of women and men in Afghanistan, patriarchy, women and religion, and gender concepts with respect to the socio-cultural settings in Afghanistan, all participants both female and male opened up their minds and explained their life experiences.

One of them, Ms Nadera, described violent behavior of a brother who had burnt his sister's feet because she was enrolled in a vocational training centre. She explained that such behavior was a definite reflection of societal attitude and masculine aggression towards women. Women are seen as being devoid of feelings and potentials, she said.

Dr Sahira, another participant, almost broke down in tears while she narrated how her mother helped her to become a doctor. Her mother used to guard the secret that Sahira was studying in school and instead had told her father-in-law that Sahira was just attending elementary classes. When the father-in-law had a serious ailment and Sahira came forward for his treatment, only then did he come to know the truth. He had been opposed to her education all along.

She also spoke about the oppression of the Taliban and how they had tried to set fire to her while she refused to close a hospital for women.

But the most visible impact of the workshop was probably on the male participants: "Ask your wife when she had last felt really happy, think about the lives of your mother and sis-

ter, could their lives have been made better?" were some of the questions that the participants found themselves against. One immediate and tangible result of the workshop was the purchase by one male participant of a pair of gloves for his daughter alongside a resolution for greater husband-wife cooperation in household chores (e.g., by helping in turning on wood stove.)



*Philosophical discussions on gender and religious issues*

## Afghanistan Officially Part of WWW

By Tamim Samee and Aslam Popal

Every country is denoted on the world map by its name. Likewise, every country is represented in the proverbial Cyber Space by what is known as a Country Code Top Level Domain (ccTLD). In the last 3 decades, the world community formulated and joined the World Wide Web (WWW) while Afghanistan was in the throws of war and domestic turmoil. With the stability returning, Afghanistan has been joining various regional and global organizations to assume its rightful place in the community of nations.

To assist the transitional government, UNDP's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) project stepped in to help re-establish Afghanistan's Internet presence. By working with the Ministry of Communications, UNDP's role was to restore a DNS service, to build technical and administrative capacity within Afghanistan, and to "shift technical operations to a community-based management structure inclusive of multiple sectors within Afghanistan when feasible and appropriate."

On January 8<sup>th</sup> 2003, UNDP's efforts paid off and the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) assigned the .af (dot af) ccTLD as the unique designation in cyber space for Afghanistan. The Internet domain name system is considered a public asset, and the .af ccTLD is the asset of the people of Afghanistan and is under the sovereign control and administration of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The Ministry of Communications (MoC) is designated as the Manager of .af ccTLD along with technical support through national staff of UNDP.

Since the assignment, UNDP has established systems and processes to assist the MoC with the

Management of .af. To date, UNDP has established comprehensive governance, administrative and control policies and has finalized plans to officially launch .af and on line registration. The launch will occur during the National ICT Conference planned for first quarter 2006. Marketing campaigns will encourage businesses, NGOs, Foreign agencies and individuals who operate in the context of Afghanistan to register their domain names. Revenues from registration will be used for sustainability of the required infrastructure and Human Resources in MoC to manage this very visible responsibility.

Even before the official launch, the demand for .af domain names has been very high. To date, 350 domain names have been registered and are operating. Government agencies and the newly formed parliament have gained web presence with .af domain names.

To satisfy the technical reader, The .af ccTLD is using a shared registry software called CoCCA Registry software. This software supports the Best Practice environment and views policy development, core technical functions and commercialization as discrete administrative functions - even if carried out by the same entity. Like all good open source software, CoCCA software is constantly enhanced and has been in use for over 4 years by a variety of small ccTLDs around the globe. The decision to select this software for .af was based on its proven stability, open source code and adaptability to variety of computer Operating Systems. The software utilizes proven and readily available open source software packages such as postgres database and Resin java interpreter. The software is written in New Zealand with voluntary financial and other contributions from CoCCA.



With the support from the local staff from MoC and close coordination with the ministry directorates, the .af ccTLD is currently administered and supervised by the UNDP ICT project team. After the official launch of .af, UNDP feels confident that the trained local MoC staff will have the capacity and skills to successfully assume full responsibility for managing this important function and resource in Afghanistan.

As the next exciting feature, Internet users in Afghanistan will enjoy using one of the most advanced features in domain name registry – the ability to create names in the local Dari and Pashto languages. The feature known as IDN (Internationalized Domain Names) is now being rolled out in other non-English speaking countries and opens the door for endless possibility to create imaginative and culturally relevant domain names. UNDP will continue to assist in bringing this feature to the Internet community in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's road to recovery and modernization is assured with cooperation between the government and International development organizations such as UNDP. Global representation of Afghanistan on the World Wide Web is yet another prime example of the excellent cooperation between UNDP and the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

For more information on .af ccTLD please go to: [www.nic.af](http://www.nic.af)

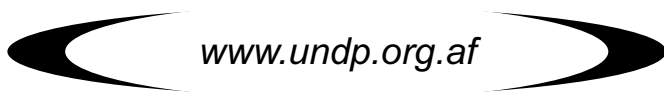


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## Calendar of Events:

- ⇒ CNTF: Steering Committee's first meeting (date to be finalized)
- ⇒ CNTF: Second meeting of the Board of Management February 23
- ⇒ ANBP: Donor Conference February 9
- ⇒ Regional Trade Cooperation Project: 25-member Government and private sector delegation leave for Malaysia for a week long visit to look into economic cooperation prospects
- ⇒ Gender and Development Trainings in Kapisa, Wardak and Panjsher; Project management and report writing trainings in Balkh and Jozjan provinces to be conducted under the Institutional Capacity Building at MoWA project.

## Farewell to Fulya Vekiloglu

Fulya Vekiloglu, the focal point for UNDP's Institutional Capacity Building Project at the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), said good-bye in January to her colleagues both at the UNDP and at the Ministry at the end of an almost-four year stay.

Having arrived in Kabul in 2002 and she worked first for the Rehabilitation of Public Baths project and successfully managed the rehabilitation process of over 30 public baths before taking on her role as the Programme Manager for the Institutional Capacity Building project with MoWA.

In that capacity, Fulya helped the Ministry to establish a training department and conduct programs for training and advocacy. UNDP gender training program at MoWA has advanced to become the only systematic gender program at the inter-ministerial and provincial level in Afghanistan and over 700 people have benefited from the training sessions offered. Despite the change of leadership at MoWA twice,

the relationship between the Ministry and the UNDP got even stronger thanks to Fulya, who has also acted as advisor to two Ministers.

She will be remembered with her attachment of special importance to Afghan ownership of the project.

Dr. Masouda Jalal, the Minister, made the point at the farewell event



*Fulya with Minister Dr. Jalal during the farewell dinner at the Ministry by saying that Fulya had always been there to provide support whenever needed.*

## An image of Afghanistan



Anita Nirody, Sr. Deputy Country Director UNDP, paying tribute to her efforts, said "When Fulya assumed this position almost three years ago, the MoWA project was in its infancy and there was limited capacity. But the MoWA team under Fulya's leadership, addressed many of the challenges, and were able to do so with tremendous success."

Sitara, Assistant Country Director with UNDP, gave Fulya the credit for, among other things, establishment of strong links between MoWA and national and international partners as well as for a clear vision for the institutionalization of the programme and the sustainability of its outcomes.

### Other departures:

The month of January also saw the departure from the UNDP CO of Emma Sutcliffe, the Communications Associate, who returned to her native New Zealand. Baryalai Daudzai of the Human Resources Unit also left UNDP.