

From gender paragraph
To gender mainstreaming

Evaluation of the
Institutional Capacity Building Support
for mainstreaming of gender in Afghanistan
by UNDP during 2002-2006

Acknowledgements

The Evaluators wish to thank the staff members of UNDP/ICB, who gave their time to talk with us, explaining the activities undertaken under the UNDP/ICB programme, sharing their views on the development of the various activities as well as the organisational structure and indicating the programme's strengths and weaknesses as well as the aspirations for its future. We wish to thank everyone for the time spent in workshops, meetings and individual interviews for this evaluation. A special word of thanks to the ICB staff members that made all the arrangements for the interviews, meetings and document collection and to the UNDP drivers to take us around safely and efficiently.

We also like to thank the minister and deputy minister of MoWA, (deputy)ministers and other officials of other ministries, senior management of UNDP and other UN agencies, UNDP Assistant Country Directors and Programme Managers, the UN Gender Team as well as officials of the University of Kabul, NGOs, donors and others engaged in the many fields of gender mainstreaming and women's rights, for sharing their views on the UNDP-ICB programme and UNDP's own gender related capacities, reviewing the added value of the ICB programme and the scope they see for its future.

We wish to state here that we, as independent consultants, have no personal stake in UNDP or MoWA as institutions. We are interested in the UNDP/ICB programme for the roles it can play to enhance gender mainstreaming and the promotion and protection of women's rights in development. We consider the existence of the UNDP/ICB programme an important function in this process: a means rather than an end in its own right.

The report and possible mistakes, omissions, misquotations or otherwise are the sole responsibility of the Evaluators.

June 2006

Jan Reynders
(team leader)

Table of contents

Acknowledgments

Abbreviations and acronyms used

1	Introduction	
1.1	Background of the UNDP-ICB/MoWA evaluation	1
1.2	Objectives of the evaluation, team composition and methodology	1
2	The Afghanistan context	5
2.1	Socio-economic conditions and developments in Afghanistan	6
2.2	Government position and policies regarding women	7
2.3	Roles of civil society and NGOs in Afghanistan	10
2.4	Women's organisations and gender mainstreaming	11
2.5	Donors and international NGOs gender related issues: needs and realities	12
3.	UNDP Institutional Capacity Building support to MoWA	13
3.1	The UNDP-ICB Programme objectives and areas of work	13
3.2	ICB programme activities	14
3.2.1	Capacity building for gender mainstreaming at the national level	14
3.2.2	Building MoWA's internal and provincial capacities	14
3.2.3	Advocacy campaigns	15
3.2.4	Improvement of infrastructure and facilities of MoWA	15
3.3	Appreciation of programme and activities	15
3.4	Relevance of objectives and strategies	15
3.5	Effectiveness, impact, sustainability and coherence of activities	16
3.6	MoWA-ICB management, programme planning, monitoring and evaluation	18
3.7	Cooperation with other TA providers to MoWA	19
3.8	Obstacles and opportunities for ICB in and outside MoWA	19
3.8.1	Women's rights: legal rights and wrongs	20
3.8.2	The Gender Training or Gender Studies Institute	21
4.	Gender in UNDP Afghanistan	23
4.1	History and position on gender	23
4.2	Instruments to promote gender in UNDP	23
4.3	Scope for new policies and practices: make addressing gender inequalities non-negotiable	25
5	Challenges, strategic choices and options for the future	27
6	Conclusions and recommendations	29
6.1	Main conclusions	29
6.2	Way forward: main issues and recommendations	30
6.2.1	UNDP- Afghanistan gender mainstreaming and prioritising	31
Appendix 1	Terms of Reference	35
Appendix 2	Evaluation programme/people met/interviewed	38

Abbreviations and acronyms

AIHRC	Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission
AITM	Afghan Institute of Learning and Management
AWN	Afghan Women's Network
CO	(UNDP) Country Office
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DoWA	Department of Women's Affairs (satellite offices of MoWA)
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
GSI	Gender Studies Institute
GTI	Gender Training Institute
HR	Human Resources
(I)ANDS	(Interim) Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ICB	Institutional Capacity Building
I-NAPWA	Interim National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NDF	National Development Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
TAD	Training and Advocacy Department
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
TA	Technical Assistance
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the UNDP-ICB/MoWA evaluation

When the peace and reconstruction agenda of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was launched in 2001, women's empowerment was recognised not only as part of the human rights agenda but also as an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable peace and development. To enhance women's empowerment and support women's equal rights after a long period in which development opportunities were not available to women, the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) created the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA). Its mandate is the mainstreaming of gender for the establishment of women's human rights and the achievement of lasting peace and development in Afghanistan.

As many government institutions, including the newly established MoWA had to be (re-)established in line with the new GoA's development principles, UNDP responded to the urgent needs of the government for assistance towards building and enhancing the capacity of governmental institutions. One of the undertakings in this regard was the Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) support through providing technical assistance (TA) to the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The objective was to equip MoWA to deliver as per its mandate.

Though the ICB programme has been operational since 2002, no systematic effort was undertaken to date to assess and analyse the achievements and contributions of the ICB programme towards systemic changes, which are required for the mainstreaming of gender and the promotion of women's empowerment. Hence UNDP called for an external evaluation.

Realising that since the start of the ICB programme major changes have taken place in the country, in terms of the political development process (establishment of a parliament), policy development (I-ANDS, I-NAPWA), donor support (Afghanistan Compact, February 2006), security issues as well as economic development, UNDP wants the evaluation to be stocktaking of past performance as well as forward looking: what was appropriate at the start of the programme four years ago may not be appropriate any longer, while new opportunities need to be harnessed. UNDP thus called for a revisiting of the scope and strategies for capacity building support particularly for the advancement of women's status and gender equality in order to reposition itself as a strategic partner and ally to MoWA and other key institutions for the promotion of gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan.

As such partnership requires UNDP to be well equipped to provide the required technical assistance, UNDP intended the evaluation also to assess its own capacities, strengths and weaknesses in the field of gender equality promotion.

1.2 Objectives of the evaluation, team composition and methodology

This evaluation is initiated by UNDP, facilitated by three external consultants. Whereas most programmes, organisations and institutions financed with grants from funding agencies only undergo external evaluations because of contractual obligations with their donors, this evaluation is based on UNDP's own realisation that a critical reflection is required on the performance, output, impact and relevance of their capacity building support to mainstreaming of gender in Afghanistan.

The Objectives of the UNDP/ICB Evaluation were stated as follows:

- To *"analyse the achievements of ICB and examine UNDP's contributory potential to further strengthening the capacities of national machineries for the mainstreaming of gender, achievement of equitable development and justice in Afghanistan"*.
- *"(i). take stock of achievements of ICB, and challenges/problems and opportunities within its current framework;*
- *(ii) verify the continued relevance and pertinence of the project in the new environment;*
- *(iii) determine specific recommendations for UNDP's future strategy to promote gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan;*
- *(iv) ascertain UNDP's added value for the mainstreaming of gender"*¹.

¹ The full text of the Terms of Reference is provided as Appendix 1

The evaluation took place between May 16th 2006 and June 5th 2006 and was carried out by three independent consultants Jan Reynders (The Netherlands, team leader, specialist in evaluation of development support, technical assistance/capacity building, organisational change and gender issues), Horia Mosadiq (Afghanistan, national gender specialist) and Taghrid Khuri (Jordan, international gender specialist).

Methodology and process

In line with generally accepted principles of evaluating, it is not UNDP as provider of the technical assistance that is directly responsible for, or can directly claim achievements in the field of gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan. Many forces are at play and UNDP's capacity building support constitutes only one element. Rather than attempting to prove any causality and direct attribution, the review therefore needs to look at the plausibility of contributions to positive changes brought about by UNDP/ICB.

Much of the work undertaken in capacity building is rather indirect and will show its impact only in the longer run in terms of improved capacities of relevant host institutions to plan, train, develop and influence policy and practices. The actual design and implementation of new policies and practices that may contribute to gender mainstreaming and an improved position of women lies in the hands of the elected bodies, ministries and institutions at central, provincial, district and community level. The changed policies, practices and attitudes will impact on the communities, on the women and men in Afghanistan and - based on principles of democracy - also vice versa.

UNDP/ICB therefore needs to be assessed in terms of the quality and relevance of its capacity-building support to the various GoA institutions. In other words: the added value of UNDP/ICB needs to be reviewed in relation to needs, expectations and existing capacities.

The methodology thus included a review of the activities undertaken under the ICB programme against the existing strategies and plans: training and advocacy activities, building training capacity, development of manuals and support to publications. Apart from meeting with the UNDP/ICB staff, as providers, this would ideally also have included substantial time and interaction with government and civil society staff trained under the programme and operating in their different institutions in Kabul and the 10 provinces covered so far in order to understand their increased capacity. The security situation, however, did not allow for visits to provinces except to Parwan. Also in Kabul only staff members of MoWA that were trained under this programme could be met.

As the ICB programme cannot operate in isolation and is part of a larger assistance programme by UN and other agencies to the GoA and the Afghan civil society, the methodology included meetings with many other development and funding agencies with whom the ICB programme either has contacts already or may need to develop contact and partnerships in the future.

The evaluation process started with a briefing by UNDP staff responsible for the programme. Next a workshop was held with staff of the ICB programme and UNDP-CO support staff and later also with the gender trainers of MoWA to make an inventory of expectations and possible anxieties with respect to the evaluation, to discuss the major issues and constraints with respect to promoting gender mainstreaming and women's rights in Afghanistan and to discuss answers to the issues and constraints as perceived by the staff concerned. We also jointly assessed the strengths, weaknesses and the dreams for the future for the programme and its organisational structure. Somewhat similar workshop/meetings were later held with the UNDP Assistant Country Directors and the UNDP Project/Programme managers focussing on gender in UNDP CO and the different programmes administered by UNDP in support of the GoA. A separate workshop was held with members of the UN Gender Team, bringing together members of the various UN Agencies present in Kabul, who function as gender focal points in their agencies. These workshops and meetings provided a wealth of views, critique as well as hopes and aspirations with respect to actual and required activities to promote gender mainstreaming and women's rights. This feedback from different angles helped to focus the questions for individual interviews, document reading and the further selection of interviewees.

Apart from these group-wise meetings individual interviews and meetings were held with UNDP senior management and advisors, the MoWA Minister and Deputy Minister, TAD officials, high officials of various ministries and relevant government departments, policy units and commissions, women parliamentarians and their staff, the University of Kabul and UNESCO as involved partner, donor agencies, other TA providers to MoWA including UNIFEM, selected (international) civil society institutions, some of whom were partner in the ICB programme and of course the staff of the ICB programme as well as its backstopping unit in the UNDP CO. A one day visit was made to Parwan

district covered under the programme. This was the only district that could be visited because of prevailing security measures and time constraints.²

After the first few days of jointly operating, the evaluation team divided the interviews and reading of documents between them, related to the expertise of the different members, the time available and the responsibility for various sections of the evaluation report.

To facilitate maximum transparency on the ICB evaluation and foster discussions on the need and scope for further cooperation in the field of gender mainstreaming a de-briefing workshop was organised for which all people interviewed in and outside the UNDP had been invited. The evaluation team presented their preliminary findings, the challenges to be addressed as well as possible options for future development of the programme and cooperation with different agencies. The feedback from this meeting has been incorporated in the evaluation report. Taking into account the comments received from UNDP on the draft report, this final report was prepared.

Scope and limitations

The first days in Kabul, when orientation meetings, workshops and a number of interviews were held, provided the basic information of the UNDP/ICB programme activities. Because of the prevailing security situation, the inadequate registration of people trained under the programme and the total time available only a few interviews could be conducted with people, who actually participated in the different training programmes. As a result of time limitations and the prevailing security situation, only one province could be visited out of the ten covered under this programme and only a few people trained in Kabul. Feedback from ex-trainees is therefore anecdotal rather than systematic. It was also realised that the objectives of the programme were too broad to serve as the basis for assessing impact. Apart from output indicators no adequate indicators were formulated to measure progress or impact for the different activities. Selection criteria for trainees were not available. As a consequence a written survey among ex-trainees as part of this evaluation was not considered a useful instrument.

Whereas the ToR for this evaluation indicated that the entire evaluation team would be hired for four weeks, the actual time for which the evaluators were available and contracted were respectively 26 days, 13 and 18 days.

Notwithstanding the limitations mentioned above, we believe that the information gathered from workshops and interviews and the analysis of the available documents have given a fair overview and an adequate basis for the analysis of the ICB programme to date, as well as the challenges and opportunities for the future of this programme.

Apart from praise for the positive elements of the ICB programme, we have also described and analysed weaknesses, relevance and (in)appropriateness of the programme as requested in the ToR. These critical remarks are not intended to underestimate the efforts made and the labour invested so far but to look at the value and relevance of activities, etc. under the changed circumstances, to reach the longer term objectives of gender mainstreaming as required under the mandates of MoWA, GoA and UNDP.

Whatever strong positive or critical remarks and statements are provided in this report, whether related to activities undertaken, appropriateness of strategies, policies and practices, capacities of staff, etc. almost without exception these have come from people well acquainted with the ICB programme, MoWA, UNDP and the realities and prevailing needs in Afghanistan. Interviewees shared their experiences and views to assist UNDP and the ICB programme to learn, improve and become stronger in living up to their mandate. We are confident that this report will not surprise UNDP but will rather contribute to the learning and strategising process as UNDP needs to continue to meet the challenges faced in gender mainstreaming and promoting women's rights in a constantly changing Afghanistan.

Synopsis

In Chapter 2 we shall look at the position of women and the socio-economic and policy context of Afghanistan in which the ICB operates. Chapter 3 provides analysis and assessment of the activities undertaken under the UNDP/ICB programme, including the obstacles faced and the opportunities available. Chapter 4 looks at gender in UNDP as development partner in Afghanistan. Chapter 5 presents a number of challenges and possible options to be considered for the future. We conclude the evaluation and provide recommendations for the future in Chapter 6.

² The evaluation programme and listing of people interviewed is provided as Appendix 2.

2 The Afghanistan context

This chapter³ looks at the socio-economic and policy context in which the ICB programme operates. It will look at developments in the government as well as civil society in general and more specifically in relation to the position of women, gender mainstreaming and promotion and protection of women's rights. This chapter will analyse the difficulties and constraints, but also the urgency and opportunities for the promotion of gender mainstreaming and enhancement of women's rights.

Introduction

Afghanistan, a land-linked country, is home to more than 23 million people of different ethnic origins: Pashtun, Tajick, Uzbek, Hazara, Turkmen and others, mostly followers of Islamic faith. Traditionally Afghanistan is a male dominated society with cultural and religious limitations to women's participation in public life, notably in (local) governance, education and employment.

Since the start of international development cooperation with Afghanistan in mid 1970's, the country has been categorised among the least developed countries. It ranks 173 out of 178 on the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index (2004). Life expectancy today is approximately 44.5 years, with healthy life expectancy at birth estimates at 33.4 years. One out of five children dies before the age of five, and one woman dies approximately every 30 minutes from pregnancy related causes. Maternal mortality is amongst the highest in the world. Female literacy rate is only 10%. Vulnerability to natural disasters has been high, as demonstrated by recent droughts, earthquakes and floods. Development problems are reinforced by armed conflicts since 1978.

Formerly at the forefront of Cold War hostilities, then the play ground for regional conflicts, Afghanistan is now the location, where part of the war against terrorism is fought.

Since the Russian invasion in 1978 there was 14 years of fighting between the communist regime, which was backed by the Russian government and the Mujahideen groups, supported by the USA government. Following the collapse of the communist regime in April 1992, the Mujahideen took power but soon a civil war started between different Mujahideen groups. During the civil war period Kabul became a front line between different Mujahideen factions till 1997, when the Taliban movement took power. Mujahideen groups united again and started fighting the Taliban forces from 1997 – 2001.

During the Taliban rule – the most extreme regime in Afghanistan's history – women were subjected to serious behavioural, dress and movement restrictions. The issue of Afghan women became a global concern. Following the 9/11 tragedy in the USA, the US government considered the Taliban government a threat, as they assumed it to be allied with Al-Qaeda terrorist groups. The US government led a military action against the Taliban forces in Afghanistan, in collaboration with some of their allies in the International Coalition Forces and the Afghan Northern Alliances Forces. With the collapse of the Taliban regime in November 2001, women in Afghanistan started organising and looked for a legal base (the Constitution) to ensure their fundamental rights.

The design for a new Afghanistan was formalised by the international community and its Afghan partners in the Bonn Agreement of December 2001. It was made operational by funding pledges at the Tokyo Donor Conference of January 2002, which reflected the perceived urgency of the tasks. Although the Bonn Agreement placed the responsibility for the peace building process with the Afghans, the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established to assist the political rehabilitation and development process and NATO was charged with providing security through the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

During the London conference on Afghanistan, on 31 January and 1 February 2006, the Afghanistan Compact was launched: the framework for international community (a/o financial) engagement in Afghanistan for the next five years. *"It sets outcomes, benchmarks and mutual obligations that aim to ensure greater coherence of effort between the Afghan government and the international community"*.⁴

³ Various public documents have been used for this chapter; amongst others the documents resulting from the different donor conferences on Afghanistan, GoA and UN documents (a/o Afghanistan National Human Development Report 2004, Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan 2001- 2005). Only when documents are literally quoted we provide the detailed reference. We have also used the information gathered through interviews and workshops as well as from unpublished documents from civil society. As an evaluation of this nature is different from a purely academic exercise, full referencing is neither necessary nor feasible.

⁴ GoA ANDS website

At this conference GoA also presented its Interim National Development Strategy (I-ANDS) to the international community: *“The strategy sets out the Government’s priorities for accelerating development, increasing security, tackling the drugs trade, and strengthening governance”*.⁵ The (I)ANDS and the Afghanistan Compact are the key policy documents to guide the promotion of development in Afghanistan at present.

The Bonn and subsequent conferences addressed not only the development, finance and security aspects of Afghanistan’s development, it also addressed governance, elections and constitutional issues, which have a bearing on the position of women. Based on the provisions of the Bonn Agreement, the Transitional Administration of Afghanistan was mandated to set up a constitutional commission to draft a new constitution, which would be reviewed, discussed and adopted at a Constitutional Loya Jirga. The Bonn Agreement envisaged that the future constitution should meet international standards and provide for democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights, women’s empowerment and create independent institutions aimed at ending conflicts in Afghanistan and promoting national reconciliation for lasting peace and stability. The Bonn Agreement speaks of the right of the people of Afghanistan to freely determine their own political future in accordance with the principles of Islam, democracy, pluralism and social justice. It was agreed in Bonn that apart from the constitutional commission, an Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, a Judicial Reforms Commission, an Administrative Reforms Commission and a separate Ministry of Women Affairs would be established. The Bonn agreement included the presidential election, parliamentary election, Provincial Councils and District Councils elections. The constitution was approved by people’s representatives in the Constitutional Loya Jirga in January 2004.

In October 2004 the presidential election was held, in which President Hamid Karzai was elected for a period of five years as president of Afghanistan. During the presidential election - for the first time in the history of Afghanistan - a woman, Dr Masouda Jalal, stood as one of the candidates. She later became the (third) minister of Women’s Affairs. In September 2005 parliamentary and provincial council elections were held. During the parliamentary and provincial councils elections many women presented themselves as candidates. As a result 68 out of 240 members of parliament are women.

2.1 Socio-economic conditions and developments in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. As a result of the different armed conflicts since 1978, some six million people fled to the neighbouring countries as refugees. The conflicts caused massive destruction of infrastructure and paved the way for warlords to rule over large parts of the country. For long Afghanistan’s security and development has been interrupted by internal and external aggression: by the interest of fragmented groups claiming political legitimacy in the absence of a state, or by global and regional interests. The country has hardly seen any significant span of time of stability during the past two and half decades. Control over areas have changed hands frequently between warring parties, resulting in further destabilisation of the country and migration of the people to safer places. The years of conflict and neglect have taken a devastating toll, as shown by dramatic drops in human, social and economic indicator levels⁶.

Since 2002 some 3.5 million refugees and more than one million internally displaced persons have returned. The majority of these returnees are back in the country without any professional skills other than farming. Yet most of them have to stay in big cities like Kabul, Herat, Jalalabad, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar, as they are unable to return to the place of their origin because of the landmines, the security situation and a lack of local job opportunities. This adds to the problem of poverty in the country, because after 23 year of conflict Afghanistan is not capable to accommodate these huge numbers of returnees, all in need of accommodation, jobs and basic needs of life.

The Afghan economy today is based on agriculture for more than 50%. Especially since 2002 agricultural products, which constitute a major share of Afghanistan’s exports, contribute greatly again to economic growth. The recovery of the agriculture sector happened as a result the return of many farmers to their land, the end of a long drought period, mine clearance and reconstruction of irrigation systems. Over 60%

⁵ GoA ANDS website

⁶ Documents detailing facts and figures of various development indicators, based on different surveys are publicly available. As the UNDP-ICB review was not intended to collect such data or address their consequences in detail, we shall only mention a few statistics in our brief analysis the context.

of Afghanistan labour force is absorbed in the agriculture sector, with men working the fields and women responsible for (post) harvest activities and livestock management, be it that their contribution is non-monetised and undervalued.

Afghanistan never had much of an industrial sector. Whatever industry there was in earlier days got damaged during the different wars and fighting. Since 2001 the Afghan government has encouraged private capital investments by Afghans and international investors. Some industries started re-establishing, but there have been many security risks and resources limitations. Private investment increased dramatically in the big cities like Kabul, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif. So far, however, these new industries hardly employ female workers.

While the many years of war have had a devastating effect on Afghan livelihoods, the traditional Afghan culture, which places additional constraints on women's lives, mobility, health and wellbeing, has survived. Many poor families, for example, especially in rural areas where job opportunities are limited, choose to marry off their girl-children at a very early age (from 9 years onwards). They receive a dowry for the girls and after the marriage, have one less mouth to feed. Such child marriage has a devastating effect on a young girl's life chances: she will not be able to continue her education; she will be completely dependent on her husband's family, where she is usually fully occupied with household chores, and she will often have her first child already at a very young age. Many women end up having over ten children, which in turn has a serious impact on women's health and well-being, and severely constrains their potential to participate actively in society outside the family.

Supported by international organisations, the Ministry of Health and a good number of non-government organisations are undertaking programmes to improve women's health.

Also in terms of education the prevailing situation is deplorable. The literacy rate in Afghanistan today is the lowest among developing countries. Female literacy is only about 10% among adults and 43% among adult men⁷. The new constitution in Afghanistan acknowledges the right to education and explicitly also as a girl's right and mandates compulsory education up to grade 9⁸. Some progress has been made and more than 4.3 million children attended primary and secondary school in 2003. While the comparatively high enrolment in grades 1 and 2 can probably be attributed to an increased interest in education after the fall of Taliban for boys and for girls, drop-out rates have been high and it is likely that these will continue to be a major issue. Though reliable data are limited, it is estimated that 74% of girls and 56% of boys drop out of school by the time they reach grade five. Based on these figures for every four girls in grade one, today only one will remain by grade five if the situation does not improve. As a result of the present unrest and insecurity in some provinces, newly or re-opened schools, especially where girls were taught, had to close again.

At the highest level of education statistics show that while general enrolment in university has certainly increased in recent years, only one of out five students is female⁹. This will have an impact on the availability of academically qualified female candidates for (higher) positions both in the government and private sector.

2.2 Government position and policies regarding women

Afghanistan is traditionally an Islamic country. Throughout Afghanistan's history, discussions about women's rights have been stifled by both religious fundamentalists and those leaders promoting their own understanding of the country's traditions.

When the president of Afghanistan appointed the 35 members of the constitutional commission, seven were women. These women have played a significant role in ensuring the equal rights of men and women. Women activists also became involved the drafting process of the constitution and based on the recommendations of the civil society groups and the Bonn provisions a public consultation started to involve people in the drafting process.

The new Constitution re-affirms that women and men are entitled to equal rights. It guarantees the minimum age of marriage of girls at 16 years. Women's rights are stronger stated than in the 1964 Constitution in that women are explicitly recognised, rather than merely implied in the wording 'Afghan citizens'. The new Constitution also goes further than its predecessors in that women are ensured a quarter of the seats in the Parliament.

⁷ Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2005

⁸ Education Report Card (Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium- 2004)

⁹ Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2005

The new constitution provides that the state must promote especial projects to improve women's conditions and allows them to oppose inhuman and un-Islamic traditions that violate their rights. Some specific articles in the constitution in support of equal rights:

- Article 22 para 2, *"The citizens of Afghanistan "men and women" have equal rights and duties before the law"*
- Article 83 para 6, *"In the elections, legal measures should be adopted so the elections system shall provide general and just representation for all people of the country, and at least two female candidates should be elected from each province for the National Assembly"*.
- Article 83 para 5, *"The president appoints 50% of the appointed delegates for the National Assembly from among the women"*.
- Article 33, *"The citizens of Afghanistan have the right to elect and to be elected"*.
- Article 43, *"Education is the right of all citizens of Afghanistan, which shall be provided up to B.A level, free of charge by the state"*.

The new Afghanistan Constitution makes discrimination on the basis of gender illegal. It guarantees women's participation in governance, education, health and other sectors. To further the protection of women the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was signed and ratified by the Government of Afghanistan in March 2003.

Since the transitional government took office in early 2002, a number of policy and strategy documents have been written, which include references to gender. I-ANDS and the Afghanistan Compact, referred to earlier in this chapter, constitute the main policy environment for Afghanistan's development and both address gender issues. The GoA aims at mainstreaming gender and elimination of *"...discrimination against women, develop their human capital and promote their leadership in order to guarantee their full and equal participation in all aspects of life in Afghanistan"*.¹⁰

The Interim National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (I-NAPWA) further outlines the policies and commitments to advance the status of women, based on the I-ANDS. The MDGs for Afghanistan are fully integrated in these policies.

Whereas the present statistics and analysis of realities still show a deplorable situation for many women, the strategy and policy plans of the GoA ambitiously address the opportunities for girls and women as is shown by their benchmarks.

I-ANDS: Gender benchmarks¹¹

- *By end 2010: The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan will be fully implemented; and in line with Afghanistan's MDGs, female participation in all Afghan governance institutions, including elected and appointed bodies and the civil service, will be strengthened*
- *By end 2010: In line with Afghanistan's MDGs, net enrolment in primary school for girls and boys will be at least 60% and 75% respectively; a new curriculum will be operational in all secondary schools; female teachers will be increased by 50%; 70 percent of Afghanistan's teachers will have passed competency test; and a system for assessing learning achievements such as national testing system for students will be in place*
- *A human resource study will be completed by end 2006, and 150.000 men and women will be trained in marketable skills through public and private means by end 2010*
- *By end 2010, in line with Afghanistan's MDGs, maternal mortality will be reduced by 15%*
- *By end 2010, the number of female headed households that are chronically poor will be reduced by 20% and their employment rates will be increased by 20%*

The Afghan government, its ministries and their provincial departments have yet to develop explicit strategies to address gender-based inequalities and to promote equity.

For UNDP as development partner to the Afghanistan Government, the Afghanistan MDGs and I-ANDS constitute the benchmarks for their support.

¹⁰ I-ANDS Summary Report, p. 21

¹¹ I-ANDS Report

Protection of women's rights in the judiciary system.

The long period of militarization and the pervasive culture of violence have had devastating effects on all Afghan people, but especially on women and children. During the years of conflict in Afghanistan, violence against women was used as a weapon and women were targeted by different armed groups. Women were kidnapped, forced into marriages and raped. Women also suffered due to destruction of livelihoods, increased poverty and when they were forced to leave their homeland.

But even today, as a result of continued lack of public security and the rule of law, women are denied enjoyment of their human rights. Women continue to face systematic and widespread violence and discrimination in public and private spheres, often based on customary practices.

The Afghan judiciary system has so far failed to provide adequate protection for women against domestic and other types of violence. Flaws in the legal system remain a key problem in addressing human rights particularly in rural areas. All stages of the legal process are hampered by corruption, the influence of armed groups, lack of supervision mechanisms, non-payment of salaries and inadequate infrastructure. The culture of impunity in Afghanistan, which has been in practice for so many years, supports criminals and allows them to continue violating human rights.

Many women are suffering in prison for no reason other than internal family disputes. Family courts exist to solve these problems but its judgments are neither reliable nor consistent throughout the country. Most women have little chance of receiving true justice.

In June 2005 the government established an inter-ministerial council aimed at combating such violence against women. By the end of 2005 some legal provisions to protect women had been promulgated but only a few are implemented yet.

Afghanistan has ratified CEDAW, without reservations, in March 2003, but it will require more efforts to meet its obligations under CEDAW.

Achievements in the field of gender mainstreaming and policy making

The formulation of the I-ANDS as well as the Afghanistan Compact shows that gender is not seen in isolation of other aspects of development: *Gender Equity is cross cutting issue 1* (out of five) in the I-ANDS formulation. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is given the responsibility to provide the lead.¹² Given the history of women's development in Afghanistan, this should certainly be recognised as a political gain that provides both opportunities as well as challenges.

I-ANDS outlines a three pronged goal for gender development:

- Eliminate discrimination against women
- Build women's human capital
- Promote women's leadership to guarantee full and equal participation in all aspects of life

The Ministry of Women's Affairs was established as the lead ministry for promoting women's advancement, tasked to facilitate the development of capacities among government ministries to make women's concerns an integral part of their respective policies and programmes, projects and services. The I-ANDS strategy is translated into an action plan, the I-NAPWA. Activities to achieve the I-ANDS goals are thus seen as a responsibility for all ministries, not only the Ministry of Women Affairs. Full implementation of the (I-)NAPWA is considered the main measurable benchmark for success.

The Ministry of Finance has introduced a very simplified form of 'gender budgeting' into the National Development Budget process. All ministries are required to indicate which of their programmes relate to gender mainstreaming and development of women. This information is then collected by the MoF to assist with programme prioritisation. This is a positive step and constitutes a form of gender training, though the lack of understanding within some ministries makes it difficult to monitor the actual work done in this field.

Origins of the Ministry of Women's Affairs

The Ministry of Women Affairs is based on the heritage of three different women's associations that have existed over time: the Royal Family's Women Association or Anjuman-e-Naswan, the All Afghan Women's Council of the communist regime and the Afghan Women's Association of the mujahideen groups.

¹² I-ANDS, Volume three

The idea of a women's association originated during King Zahir Shah's time. This led to the establishment of Anjuman-e-Naswan, an organisation that provided services for women. It was set up as a programme implementing agency rather than for policy making. Anjuman-e-Naswan provided vocational training for women and exhibitions of women's handicrafts. At the time of King Zahir parks were created for women's gatherings and entertainment: Bagh-e-Zanana (Women's Garden). Under the same programme a vocational high school for women was established. According to the rules and customs of Afghanistan at that time, a girl was not allowed to continue her education in regular schools after marriage. She had to go to the Women's Vocational High School, in which she studied and at the same time learned skills. This system continued till 2002. Slowly this practice was changed by MoE. During the communist regime the earlier Anjuman-e-Naswan was changed to Shura-e-Sar Tasari Zanan-e-Afghan (All Afghan Women's Association). This new association not only provided vocational training for women, they also provided assistance for female members of martyred families, especially for mothers of those killed in the war with Mujahideen forces in 80's/early 90's.

After the victory of Mujahideen in 1992, another women's group, which was part of the Mujahideen groups, joined the existing Association. However, each Mujahideen group had their own women's wing and the Mujahideen women's group that joined the Association did not represent all women wings of Mujahideen: it belonged to a particular faction. From 1992 to 1997 the Association remained only in name but could not deliver any services. Also during the subsequent Taliban rule the Association did not play any significant role.

After the collapse of the Taliban regime and under the provisions of the Bonn Agreement, the government of Afghanistan committed itself to support women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming efforts. In succession to the earlier Association, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, MoWA, was established in early 2002. Different from the earlier Association, which was meant to be service delivering, MoWA's role is policy making only, in support of the line ministries and other institutions of the government. From the earlier Association, MoWA has inherited 2800 staff members, a number of buildings and women's gardens (mostly in a poor state of maintenance) and the public image of being an implementing agency of and for women's vocational training, and handicraft development. MoWA receives about 0.1% (approximately US \$ 1 mln. annually) of the budget of the Government of Afghanistan to run its operations and undertake its mandated activities. Most of this budget is spent on salaries, administration and fuel.

2.3 Role of civil society and NGOs in Afghanistan

Civil society in Afghanistan shows a great variety of organisations, traditions and histories. Modern - externally funded - development NGO's are of relative recent date in Afghanistan.

Traditional community councils of different styles and sizes, mostly referred to as a Shura, have long historical roots in Afghan society. Traditionally an Afghan Shura is a structure where all men in the community meet and discuss issues of common interest. All adult men have the right to attend the Shura's meetings. Members are mainly the elder men and those, who have (or are assumed to have) religious knowledge as well as people with economic and social powers. None of the Shuras' or Jirgas' members are women. Even if a matter of great relevant to a woman's life is discussed, neither she nor any other woman has the right to attend the Shura.

However, in late 2003, for the first time in Afghan history a women's Shura was established in the Southeaster province Paktia. Though reportedly, this Shura does not have any decision making role and members are usually not part of the male Shura meetings, the change is seen as a first step.

Religious leaders and their organisations have always played a prominent role as civil society forces in Afghanistan. In times of crisis, Islamic networks have taken on key functions by providing services, by legitimising resistance, or by forming the backbone of resistance.

Externally funded NGOs are a relatively recent phenomenon in the Afghan context, with national organisations being established only from the late 1980s onwards, mainly within the Pakistan based aid environment among Afghan refugees. The number of NGOs, however, both the national and international organisations, exploded since the collapse of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. During 2002 already more than 1000 NGOs were registered with Afghanistan government and their number increased fast in the following years. Different types of NGOs can be found. The majority of NGOs are involved in emergency and reconstruction aid. NGOs have played a primary role in implementing development

assistance projects over the past more than two decades, especially because donor governments were reluctant to send their aid directly to the Afghan government. From 1978-2001 the Afghan government was unable to deliver any services to the people in remote areas of the country either due to the lack of capacity or legitimacy. But even after the collapse of the Taliban regime many health services are provided by NGOs rather than by the government. Many professionals continue to join (international) NGOs and UN agencies because of better salaries and facilities provided by these agencies compared to what the government can offer. There is a legitimate complaint by the government that (international) development agencies attract the best people, leaving the government with a lack of implementing capacity.

NGOs have become main implementers of assistance projects at the community level. It is estimated that more than 70% (some say even 90%) of the health care in Afghanistan is handled by the NGO sector. Also in the field of primary education, NGOs play a leading role. As a consequence links between communities and the local administrations are often weak, as traditional government services are provided by NGOs. Because of the fact that the government does not have much capacity yet and that donor agencies often even insist on the involvement of NGO, much development work is even formally contracted out by the government to the NGO sector. Many NGOs have thus become “contractors” for government services, thereby often losing or at least weakening their independent position as civil society groups. Whereas in many countries the government takes a role as service provider, in Afghanistan’s I-ANDS the government is regulator, but contracts the actual services out to NGOs. At the 2006 London conference the government of Afghanistan did not speak of an independent role of civil society.

A certain tension exists between NGOs and the Government and between NGOs and the general public. This is partly related to the better financial position and facilities that NGOs have and at the same time the lack of public accountability of NGOs. The government does not favour donor funding going to NGOs directly. When a good number of NGOs moved from undertaking development activities to lucrative construction business, still benefiting from a favourable tax regime, the government changed the registration system, distinguishing between profit/construction and non-profit development services. The registration of hundreds of local NGOs was nullified on account of their ineffectiveness or for-profit activities.

Apart from development NGOs, various voluntarily associations have also been established including professional groups, youth groups, student associations, labour unions, etc. This phenomenon, however, is limited to the major cities like Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar, Jalalabad, etc.

Only a relative small number of NGOs is focused explicitly on issues such as human rights, women’s rights or peace building, maintaining an independent civil society position.

2.4 Women’s organisations and gender mainstreaming

Traditional civil society in Afghanistan supports the ideological position of male authority over women in the public domain. But Afghan women have started their own organisations, networks and political advocacy groups. These did not gather around one preferred solution regarding the transition and reconstruction work, but reflected the variety of opinions as it existed in the exile community. One well known organisation is the Revolutionary Afghan Women’s Association (RAWA), which headed several international campaigns against both the Rabani and Taliban regimes. In the active NGOs’ milieu in Peshawar, the Afghan Women’s Resource Centre (AWRC), the Afghan Women Network (AWN), the Afghan Women Educational Centre (AWEC) and the Afghan Women Council (AWC) were established organisations with links to the international humanitarian arena. In December 2001 Afghan women gathered at the roundtable conferences in Brussels and Peshawar and called on the international community to support their rights and leadership in reconstruction¹³.

Apart from these well known organisations from the earlier phase, however, women’s NGOs or organisations specifically addressing women’s rights or gender issues have not been much developed yet as part of an independent civil society in Afghanistan. Lack of available human capacity (limited education, training and exposure, lack of experience and self-confidence, etc.) within the country and the risks associated with expressing views on women’s rights and gender-based inequalities appear to contribute to that. It certainly takes courage to stand up and organise activities as independent women’s or

¹³ Afghanistan and Civil Society, Commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs December 2002

gender-issues focussed NGOs under the prevailing cultural context. The few available women's NGOs are mostly contracted by international organisations for training and other service activities.

An independent women's rights movement, as it is seen in other countries in the region, does not seem to be developing as yet. Afghan women returning after a long stay and study abroad, who could possibly function as catalysts, appear to get absorbed in the government or international organisations. Some women note that their long absence and stay in western countries made some of them as alien to their original culture as many expatriate development workers are.

2.5 Donors and international NGOs gender related issues: needs and realities

In Afghanistan the term 'gender' does not easily translate into local languages and some Afghan groups, including men and women, regard the concept with considerable suspicion. For many people in government as well as among NGOs and the general public, gender, moreover, is seen as a 'women's issue'. Understanding of gender issues is weak among most actors, which also demonstrates their lack of awareness of its importance.

Since 2001 the lives of women in rural areas have not changed as much as the lives of women in urban areas. Social and cultural norms, which influence a woman's ability to exercise her rights, present major constraints throughout the countryside, albeit to differing degrees. Women in urban areas have far greater freedom and opportunities. There appears to be an imbalance in funding of gender-related activities in favour of urban areas. This is also the result of a lack of local expertise outside the urban centres.

In development cooperation policies of many donor agencies and international NGOs, gender and environment often feature as key concerns to be mainstreamed and to be integrated in each activity. Addressing gender inequality has been a highly publicised factor in Afghanistan related funding. It was highlighted in the Bonn Agreement, where it was stated that "*the participation of women and attention to their rights and status are both a requirement and a vision of the national peace and reconstruction process*". All subsequent GoA policy documents (I-ANDS, etc.) as well as the Afghanistan Compact emphasise the need to strengthen the position of women and address gender inequalities.

Women's rights were a main focus in international assistance throughout the Taliban period and conditionality of the aid was closely tied to women's rights. Yet it has been noted by many Afghans as well as outsiders that now that the climate of promoting women's rights and empowerment is much better than before - not the least because of the popular discontent with the harsh policies of the Taliban - there is comparatively little focus on the situation of women in Afghanistan. The focus appears to be on construction, structures, systems and services, beside security and narcotic control. Some say that development is back to traditional gender blind approaches¹⁴.

It is disappointing that no overall needs assessments have been done in the field of gender to form the basis for concerted and focussed activities in this field. Ad hoc gender monitoring and evaluation systems have been developed by some individual NGOs, but beyond this there is no national baseline information upon which to establish future monitoring and evaluation surveys.

Traditionally, NGOs have used various forms of rapid or participatory needs assessment methodologies, ranging from decision making processes that exclude beneficiaries to more extensive participatory processes that include both men and women. The most beneficiary oriented process seems to have been performed by NGOs involved in integrated community development programmes, for which a rather extensive need assessment was done, including separate need assessment for men and women.

Some international NGOs, for whom gender is already a priority area, have constructively dealt with gender issues by directing their attention first on their own organisational structure. Oxfam, DACAAR and the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan developed internal staffing guidelines on gender. Likewise, when donors insist to support gender awareness, this is often limited to the work of their own national NGOs working in Afghanistan. Little efforts are seen by donor organisations to make the required expertise and funding available to ensure that gender is mainstreamed or specifically prioritised in the activities they fund. As a result, gender concerns and official commitment to women's rights easily remain rhetoric only.

¹⁴ Based on interviews, workshops and conferences. As no adequate baseline exists and no specific research is done in this field, these statements cannot be further substantiated.

3 UNDP Institutional Capacity Building support to MoWA

History

Based on the Draft National Development Framework, resulting from the Bonn Agreement, UNDP engaged with the Afghan authorities in 2002 through its Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme (ITAP). Under this broad programme framework a number of activities were started in collaboration with different ministries.

The newly established Ministry of Women's Affairs called on UNDP and UNIFEM for urgent support for a technical assistance and capacity building programme. MoWA's mandate is to catalyse, facilitate, initiate and build capacities of the entire government machinery enabling them to mainstream women and gender concerns in all aspects of their work. MoWA is tasked to ensure that government institutions understand the gender differentiated impact of their policies and programmes, how those can safeguard women from being marginalised, while expediting the attainment of gender equality and human development.

3.1 The UNDP-ICB programme objectives and areas of work

In response to the request by MoWA the Institutional Support and Capacity Development Project, (generally referred to as Institutional Capacity Building – ICB or ICB programme¹⁵) was initiated by UNDP in 2002. The objective was to support the process of building the institutional capacities of the ministry to fulfil its tasks.

Long-term objective:

The proposed project on Institutional Support and capacity development for MoWA aims at providing technical assistance and capacity building support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs, as a response to the urgent need expressed by the Minister of Women's Affairs, in order for the Ministry to operate effectively and efficiently.

Immediate Objective:

To provide support to the entire process of building the Ministry's institutional capacity in the following competency areas: office managements and repairs, finance information technology and human resource management, gender awareness training, legal advocacy and human rights training, leadership training, publications programme for the Ministry and resource mobilisation.

Project document approved by MoWA on 2.10.02

Four areas of intervention were foreseen for the UNDP-ICB support programme to MoWA:

- capacity building for gender mainstreaming at the national level;
- building MoWA's internal and provincial capacities for effective institutional functioning as lead ministry for women's advancement;
- advocacy campaigns to raise public awareness on gender and women's concerns;
- improvement of infrastructures and facilities of MoWA;

Based on a Memorandum of Understanding between MoWA, UNDP and UNIFEM of December 2002, the ICB programme started in February 2003. A Programme Manager was recruited and deployed in the Ministry. A small programme office for the UNDP-ICB and UNIFEM staff was set up in MoWA and a support team was recruited and deployed.

New project documents were drafted and approved in 2003 and 2004 to cover continuation of and additional support, amongst others related to the Training and Advocacy Department (TAD training Centre) and the establishment of the Gender Training Institute.

UNDP was tasked to provide technical assistance and capacity building support to the Training and Advocacy Department (TAD) of MoWA, for them to be able to handle MoWA's training and advocacy activities. The TAD department was set up to play a bridging role between MoWA and the key line ministries to:

- (a) build internal and inter-ministerial capacity for gender mainstreaming in the government;
- (b) support the efficient and effective institutional functioning of MoWA's key departments in management and administration.

¹⁵ In the official documents and reports ICB is referred to both as project and as programme.

3.2 ICB programme activities¹⁶

3.2.1 Capacity building for gender mainstreaming at the national level

Two sets of partnership protocols were signed in 2003 and 2004 between UNDP, MoWA and in total 11 ministries for general gender orientation through seminars and for the training of resource people in these ministries in support of gender mainstreaming. In the early stage of the programme part of the actual gender training was contracted out the Afghan Women's Network (AWN) as MoWA did not have the training capacity in-house yet. Part of the training was done or arranged by UNIFEM staff, in cooperation with a UNV volunteer.

AWN also provided gender training to MoWA's own staff in Kabul and DoWA staff in five provinces as well as to staff of other departments and a number of NGOs in the provinces.

Two rounds of trainings to improve women's leadership capacities were provided to MoWA senior officials and staff.

For most trainings organised for government officials under the ICB programme incentives were paid to the trainees.

The Training and Advocacy Department of MoWA was trained and supported to facilitate and provide training on technical as well as gender-related subjects. After an initial round of developing a manual for Gender Awareness Training by seven local experts under the guidance of OXFAM, an international expert (UNV volunteer) was employed to develop a set of gender training manuals for TAD. Three modules were developed: Gender Awareness Training; Gender and Development; Gender Analysis.

Late 2005 the UNDP-ICB programme recruited five gender master trainers with the intention to enhance the capacity of MoWA-TAD trainers as well as the total training capacity of MoWA, through a training of trainers process (ToT). These master trainers have replaced the trainers earlier contracted through AWN.

With the objective to enhance the training capacity in the field of gender in Afghanistan, a plan was developed in 2004 to establish a Gender Training Institute. After an initial consideration to establish this institute in MoWA itself, it was decided that it should be hosted by the University of Kabul under an agreement with MoWA, UNDP and the Ministry of Higher Education. When the shift was made to the University of Kabul, UNESCO became involved as well to support the process with their expertise. Once formally established, the institute is expected to provide training at different academic levels.

In preparation for the Gender Training Institute an international expert was employed by UNDP under the GTI project to develop a gender manual by reviewing and improving the existing training manual modules to meet the standards required for academic training. The three existing training modules developed for use by TAD were upgraded. Two more modules were foreseen: on Gender Mainstreaming in Health, Education, Legal, Economic Empowerment and on Curriculum Development (in partnership with gender trainers, Kabul University and other MoWA TA experts).

Under the heading of the GTI support staff members were also employed at the ICB secretariat in MoWA.

Over and above the agreed assistance by UNDP, MoWA frequently made additional request to the UNDP-ICB programme by for one-time activities, events, publications, etc. Many of such requests have been accommodated to date.

3.2.2 Building MoWA's internal and provincial capacities

The Afghan Institute of Learning and Management (AITM) was contracted as implementing partner to provide training in management related skills including project development, finance, accounting and report writing. These trainings were provided to MoWA staff in Kabul as well as to DoWA staff and others in five provinces.

Under the ICB programme there has also been training in computer usage. An English language teacher was recruited to teach English to selected MoWA staff.

¹⁶ As the reports of the activities undertaken under this programme are well known to UNDP and MoWA, we shall not go into detailed descriptions and only describe and analyse the key features of the ICB programme.

3.2.3 Advocacy campaigns

In the field of advocacy the ICB programme supported a number of events, celebration of special days, seminars and public awareness campaigns related to gender and women's rights. Brochures were produced in different languages, explaining the roles and activities of MoWA.

Two periodicals of MoWA ('Mirmon' and 'Ershad-ul-Naswan') have been supported financially under the programme. A designer was employed to improve the publications.

Under the ICB programme training in legal advocacy for women's rights was also foreseen in cooperation with the newly established Human Rights Commission. This activity has not yet started.

3.2.4 Improvement of infrastructure and facilities of MoWA

In the first year of the programme the assistance consisted of support to the physical facilities of the Ministry including repair and refurbishing of its buildings and facilities and providing IT connectivity equipment. A computer centre was also established at MoWA.

In 2003, after securing additional donor funding, the support to MoWA included the construction, refurbishing and fully equipping of a training centre for MoWA. A resource library is part of the centre as well. This training centre was established to enhance the capacity of MoWA's Training and Advocacy Department. A van and driver service was provided to TAD as well, to facilitate transport related to TAD's work.

3.3 Appreciation of programme and activities

Generally the material, financial and training inputs provided under the ICB programme have been much appreciated by MoWA. The construction of the TAD training centre, the MoWA building repairs, equipment, communication facilities, etc. have all improved the infrastructural facilities of MoWA.

MoWA and TAD staff members were satisfied with the trainings they received. Each person met in Kabul or the provincial head quarter of Parwan referred to the trainings they received as useful and providing new skills and insights. AITM trainers noticed certain improvements in the trainees' skills in planning and report writing, conducting advocacy activities and documenting after participating in the training sessions.

Observations:

The TAD training centre building has certainly increased the facilities for MoWA. It is surprising, however, that the design of the actual two training halls is not very conducive for non-lecture training sessions. The construction and the materials used, moreover, are not very durable and maintenance appears to be poor. At the time of the evaluation, some toilets were already dysfunctional. Some basic training aids were out of order already. The rather poor finishing of the building and the use of inferior materials is rather surprising as the Programme Support Unit of UNDP-CO was designated to monitor the construction. UNOPS was involved as well in supervision. During the construction process the ICB staff realised that the actual construction deviated considerably from the original plan. Extra money was required to compensate for weaknesses in the construction.

Reports indicate that in the original design of the TAD training centre no heating was foreseen to save on cost. This is a strange way of saving cost as it would mean that for the winter months the building could not have been used in that case. A heating system was added in a late stage of the construction.

3.4 Relevance of objectives and strategies

The original objective to assist MoWA to build its capacity in order to assist other ministries in their gender mainstreaming efforts is very relevant and well appreciated. The long term and immediate objectives portray the ICB programme's broad delivery expectations, yet they are not refined enough to provide the guidelines for a strategy, on the basis of which activities can be undertaken.

Based on these broad objectives a number of activities have been undertaken that could strengthen the capacities of MoWA and the DoWAs for their tasks. One condition that needs to be fulfilled for a

successful ICB programme is that the mandate of MoWA and subsequently the DoWAs is understood and accepted at all levels of MoWA itself, the DoWAs as well as the line ministries, whose gender related capacities are to be enhanced. This does not appear to be the case.

Even though all documents clearly state that the mandate of MoWA is policy development, rather than programme implementation, it became clear from discussions in MoWA and from the DoWA staff interviewed, that there is a strong desire and inclination to be involved in direct implementation as well. Obviously the heritage of the institutions (including the buildings and 2800 staff members) on the basis of which MoWA was created, still have an influence: the earlier institutions were directly involved in women's development and supported women's productive (a/o handicraft) activities. The old image and public expectations have not changed as yet. To enhance the new image and convince other ministries that they must undertake gender mainstreaming and adequate gender budgeting for each regular or special activity they undertake, MoWA could benefit from having an advocacy expert on board as well as a strategist trainer.

DoWA staff members interviewed were convinced that unless they themselves would undertake activities in the field of health, education, economic empowerment, job creation, etc. nothing would happen. Not only did they feel it is their task to work for women directly, they also did not expect any activity benefiting women specifically from other departments at the provincial level. The provincial DoWA, which has a similar structure as MoWA, with departments in different fields of services: health, education, economic empowerment and legal affairs, is ready to implement activities for women in direct execution, if money would be available.

Unless there is clarity and acceptance about the mandate and tasks of MoWA, the broad objectives of the ICB can not be realised. Line ministries may have appreciated the gender orientation and training they received, but they expect MoWA to contribute financial resources if any activity has to be undertaken benefiting women specifically or promoting gender equity. This expectation indicates either a lack of understanding or a non-acceptance of gender equity as cross cutting issue under the I-ANDS and Compact and thus a task for each ministry to be undertaken with their own funding and staff.

The ICB programme objectives have so far confined ICB to stay within MoWA, whereas the power and authority to make things happen differently, in favour of women, lie outside MoWA. Unless there is adequate political pressure from the parliament, civil society and the donor community, most line ministries will not make major changes in their programmes and budget to benefit women and promote equal rights and better opportunities. Individuals in ministries may be trained and willing and realising the needs for such changes. Yet, no changes can be expected unless they are in power positions themselves or the ministries are compelled by others to change their planning and budgeting.

From their side, MoWA will have to shed its historical role to directly implement projects for women. MoWA needs to be empowered and capacitated to concentrate on policy making and training in support of others. MoWA needs to be developed as a ministry that can not be missed or bypassed by any ministry for their programme planning, budgeting or programme reviews. For quite some time MoWA has portrayed itself as an NGO, doing campaigns and projects. MoWA has to strategically and politically position itself as a ministry that is wanted and needed for sustainable development and gender harmony in Afghanistan.

To strategically contribute to women's empowerment and women's equal rights, it will therefore be necessary for UNDP to broaden the scope of the ICB programme and to engage with other vital ministries and decision making bodies as well.

The initial stage of supporting and capacitating the setting up of MoWA as new ministry is more or less completed. ICB now needs to focus on support to the strategic positioning of MoWA in relation to other ministries, institutions and political entities that have the financial power and implementing capacity to make the changes happen in reality beyond the mere policy decision to enhance women's development.

3.5 Effectiveness, impact, sustainability and coherence of activities

So far the ICB programme has managed to increase the capacity of its immediate staff as well as a pool of trainers and others in MoWA/TAD. Apart from these direct beneficiaries, some 600 people have been trained since the start of the ICB programme. However, training large numbers of people in the field of gender or in project design and reporting as such is no guarantee that the training has a longer term impact and has therefore been efficient towards gender mainstreaming.

No strategy has been developed so far on the basis of which trainees could be selected, trained and further supported. Neither has there been any monitoring of the training processes or an assessment mechanism with respect to the effectiveness of training provided and its effect on increasing capacity.

No follow up activities or further orientation has been planned under the training component of the ICB. Training has been provided as a one time affair. Yet it is known from around the world that training as a one-off affair is not an effective way to enhance sustainable change processes. Unless training is based on a needs assessment and a careful selection of trainees and includes the creation of a conducive climate to practice the new skills and use the new knowledge, its effectiveness is likely to be very low.

We therefore have to conclude that the training activities under ICB cannot be considered effective.

Quality of training is an issue that needs attention as well. Even though, within the limited scope of this evaluation, no quality assessment of the trainings as such could be organised, it was reported that some of the trainers employed under the ICB programme use a training style that is not conducive to learning. Training in gender related issues involves discussing attitudes, power, social roles, cultural practices, etc. that are generally seen as sensitive. Unless training creates settings, where such issues can be handled sensitively, the needed behavioural and attitudinal changes are not likely to be promoted. Gender training can not be done through lectures and instructions, but requires exercises of various types related to the nature of the (job) responsibilities of the trainees.

From 2002-2005 the AWN was contracted to conduct gender training for MoWA staff, in part with the intention to build the capacity of MoWA, especially TAD, to be able to deliver such training themselves. In October 2005 UNDP hired 'Master Trainers' under the ICB programme to increase the training capacity of TAD. Apparently the quality of the existing trainers of TAD was not considered of high enough standard. TAD training staff observed that coordination between MoWA and UNDP-ICB with respect to the needs for further training has not been adequate. If the quality of the TAD trainers was not considered adequate, why was their quality not upgraded in an earlier stage? The need for costly master gender trainers would not have arisen.

The quality, moreover, of some of the newly recruited master trainers is being questioned as well. The training skill's quality and capacities of the new master trainers has obviously not been sufficiently tested at the time of their recruitment. Reportedly, no probation system was observed and the planned training of three months of the master trainers did not take place.

Now there are two groups of trainers, one paid by TAD (= MoWA), one paid by ICB (= UNDP). Reportedly they do not differ significantly in quality. Yet there are vast differences in their salary levels (appr.1:6), which creates conflict and jealousy rather than synergy and cooperation, required for further capacity building. To build the capacity of MoWA, obviously upgrading the TAD trainers to a higher level of capacity and quality would have been more sustainable, if their basic job related capacities and skills were adequate.

From the early days of the ICB programme a number of staff members of MoWA have received a topping-up of their salaries. Topping up of salaries has been a common practice in UNDP programmes in Afghanistan, even though UNDP policies do not permit this. Given the low salary levels the GoA can afford to pay, it is understandable that UNDP programmes tend to top up salaries in order to increase the work motivation of government staff, actually buying their loyalty to the programme. Yet, it is unsustainable as the responsibility of paying regular salaries lies with the national government, and any UNDP programme is time bound. Offering additional skill training that will both help the programme as such and the career opportunities of staff may be a better option, if that can be conditioned by staying on the job for a minimally fixed period of time.

Providing 'topping-up' for the use of mobile phones for some MoWA staff, as is practiced under the ICB programme, need to be viewed as job perks rather than as programme expenditure that can be adequately accounted for.

Two international gender experts have been hired by the ICB programme, respectively as training coordinator for TAD and as gender manual expert under the GTI project, for the purpose of developing a set of gender training manuals. The second expert, exclusively hired for this purpose was to upgrade the manuals already prepared for higher academic usage and to incorporate case studies and exercises. She would also prepare an additional manual for Gender Mainstreaming, in four specific fields related to women's empowerment and protection. It has been rather surprising that after one year and an extension of nearly six months, only the upgrading of two existing sets of the training manuals could be completed. The third set is ready for editing but the new, important manual on concrete gender mainstreaming has not been prepared. No real testing of any of the manuals has been done so far. This is a very meagre result

of this high investment in human resources.

Apart from the activities officially planned under the ICB programme and adapted under the new project documents of 2003 and 2004, a number of ad-hoc request to publications, instant meetings, travel, translations, etc. have been accommodated by UNDP-ICB from additional sources. MoWA's contingency budget is likely to be very small and it is understandable that not every single activity can be foreseen when drafting annual plans and budgets. The phenomenon of additional small grant requests may also be a reflection of either inadequate planning in MoWA, or the view and experience that UNDP can be seen as continuous financier of activities that are actually the responsibility of MoWA itself. As was observed in discussion with TAD, the term 'technical assistance' is often explained as grant giving for hardware, etc. rather than providing expertise through human resources.

Ad-hoc activities generally are not likely to increase the coherence of the ICB programme. In absence of a focused training strategy and plan, coherence of the entire ICB programme is in question.

3.6 MoWA-ICB management, programme planning, monitoring and evaluation

Staffing and management

The management structure of ICB is simple, mainly due to the small number of programme staff: a Programme Manager in charge, a Gender Manual Expert, a sr. Programme Assistant, an Administrative Assistant, five Gender Master Trainers, two Translators, two drivers and a Cleaner¹⁷. The programme is back-stopped by a Programme Officer in UNDP-CO.

The ICB Programme Manager reports to the UNDP Senior Deputy Country Director Programme.

Two of the staff members (gender manual expert and secretarial support), were recruited for the Gender Training Institute. The GTI was approved as a plan in 2004, but the institute is yet to materialise. After conceptual changes in 2005, only now the feasibility study takes place. Though at the time of developing the original conceptual framework for the GTI within MoWA, a need to prepare training materials was foreseen, the actual recruitment and extension of contract of an expert with a ToR to mainly upgrade existing training manuals, without further clarity about function and needs of the institute as such, appears to be inappropriate and untimely.

Since the arrival of a new Programme Manager for the ICB programme in February 2006, regular work planning and review meetings take place. Task division has become clear and there is a general conducive and mutual supportive and respectful work atmosphere in which staff is clear and comfortable about their responsibilities. It was reported that such atmosphere did not exist in the earlier phase of the programme: no clarity about responsibilities, little common planning and reviewing of work and regular non-acceptance of lines of authorities. In the earlier period the functional relation between the ICB PM and the UNDP Country Office was minimal: neither was the CO much concerned with the ICB programme, nor did the ICB PM have much contact with the backstopping staff in the country office, even though the ICB programme is a direct execution programme of UNDP. However, close contact existed between the PM and the MoWA Minister.

Since the arrival of a new Programme Manager in February 2006 the situation has changed considerably: there is regular contact between the ICB programme and the CO.

Until early 2006, the administrative systems in the ICB office were of poor quality. No systems were maintained for correspondence, reports, etc. Progress and annual reports were sent by ICB to the UNDP-CO. No copies were kept on file in the ICB office. No correspondence was available with respect to communication regarding the ICB with the external donors that - apart from UNDP - funded the different programmes to date: the Governments of Belgium and France and the Government of Luxembourg, through the Central Trust Fund. It was reported that liaison with donor agencies had been the responsibility of the UNDP-CO, but even in the UNDP CO offices correspondence with and reporting to the donor agencies could not be traced.

Programme planning, monitoring and evaluation

It has been a positive step of UNDP to respond positively to the emergency request for Institutional Capacity Building support in the early phase of reconstruction of Afghanistan: indeed an emergency

¹⁷ In earlier years the ICB staff has also included a Financial Management Advisor, an English Teacher for MoWA, a sr. Programme Officer, a Monitoring Officer, a sr. Translator cum Secretary for the Minister and a designer for MoWA publications.

response to emergency needs. But as a professional global development institution, with vast experiences in development also in post conflict situations, it has been surprising that UNDP did not call for the ICB programme to be reviewed or evaluated so far: no evaluation has taken place in the last four years, nor have the financial contributions been audited during this period, even though the annual expenditure would require annual audits according to UNDP's own rules. Apart from narrative annual reports, the programme did not undertake annual reviews toward assessment of its performance or to identify the gaps and constraints it faced.

A review after the first or second year of the emergency response in 2002 might have helped to rectify some of the weaknesses in the programme design and management. Over the years the ICB Programme seems to have digressed in several areas without much attention to its strategic role vis-à-vis national gender mainstreaming. Instead of endorsing its strategic goals and translating them into action plans, the ICB programme worked in a piecemeal manner, often responding to ad hoc requests instead of following its strategic service delivery mandate.

Adequate indicators could have been developed to facilitate the monitoring of progress. UNDP has different monitoring tools including their Results Framework. However to date, no such evaluation mechanism was put in place.

3.7 Cooperation with other TA providers to MoWA

Apart from UNDP a number of other international agencies are providing technical, financial and other capacity support to MoWA. UNIFEM was the first agency to respond to the call of MoWA. GTZ from Germany, JAICA from Japan and the Asia Foundation from the USA have (or have had) a presence in MoWA with their own staff. A few more agencies support MoWA, financially or with Technical Assistance.

So far little coordination has existed between the different agencies to avoid overlap or, more positively, to promote synergy between their different efforts. Having many different agencies involved, each with their own agendas, funding and TA staff and in absence of a coherent and common strategy, some insiders spoke of capacity substitution rather than capacity building.

Even between UNIFEM, the fund for women's development, administered by UNDP and the UNDP ICB programme there has been rather little cooperation and coordination till recently. It was reported that at the start of the support programme to MoWA there was confusion and disagreement between the two agencies at their higher levels with respect to responsibilities, lines of authority, funding control, etc. The mandates were not adequately separated. Once the focus difference between the two programmes was clear this was resolved: the ICB programme focuses on training aspects, mainly through TAD and UNIFEM focuses on policy and planning aspects: mainly the MoWA Planning Department. Different approaches continued to exist with respect to the independent roles and ownership of the programmes in relation to MoWA. A good understanding has now been developed between staff of the two agencies.

Since all agencies supporting MoWA will somehow have women's rights and empowerment at heart it is important for all of them to share their thoughts together and with MoWA to address the difficulties MoWA faces today. As UNDP often takes a lead role in coordinating support to a common partner, perhaps the ICB, supported by the UNDP-CO can initiate closer cooperation in Afghanistan too.

3.8 Obstacles and opportunities for ICB in and outside MoWA

The ICB programme has not been easy sailing so far and its impact in terms of sustainable capacity building at vital positions has been limited. Within the context of the ICB programme a number of opportunities to increase the impact of ICB present themselves. In section 3.4 it was already indicated that to become more effective, ICB will have to partially move out of the boundaries of MoWA and engage at levels where decisions are made about policies, programmes and budgets.

ICB could also contribute to a different level of empowerment that builds strength among women at the bottom end of decision making: the communities. Strengthened women at community level can influence decision making to their benefit. Their knowledge and information can inform national policy making when adequately organised. Under or closely linked to the UNDP-ICB programme there are opportunities to promote legal literacy at community level, and there are opportunities to collect and provide data that

will help to understand the status of women in Afghanistan. Training for legal advocacy was already included in the original project document, but did not get implemented. Nationwide research to establish the status of women could well be among the initial activities of the Gender Studies Institute that will be established in cooperation with the Kabul University and UNESCO.

3.8.1 Women's rights: legal rights and wrongs

No nationwide 'status of women' survey has been conducted in Afghanistan as yet, but it is well known and it was clearly mentioned in many interviews during the evaluation that one of the problems that women face is their lack of knowledge about their legal rights. This refers to their constitutional rights, but also to their rights under the Sharia law and under customary laws of their particular ethnic group. This lack of knowledge is partly caused by their illiteracy but also by the general lack of awareness and knowledge about the laws of the country. This again is the result of the long period of wars and unrest, but also the patriarchal traditions of the country in which men control the laws and their application in practice.

At present, however, even many male community- and religious leaders are ignorant or do not adequately know the laws and legal system well. They often use interpretations that were passed on to them by other ill-trained leaders. Given the male dominant traditions, the interpretations are rarely to the benefit of women. Domestic and family violence are very common and in clan feuds' settlement is often said to involve the exchange and abuse of women.

Changing this situation through improving the formal legal system, the training of (religious) leaders and the awareness of the general public through a better education system and higher literacy is necessary but will take a long time. A number of mutually enforcing short term measures may be considered to support women to get justice under the existing laws and practices and to strengthen their role in conflict resolution at community level as well.

- **Para-legal training.** Along the lines of having para-medics, (volunteers/part-time paid women or men with basic training in diagnosing and treating common diseases, where medical doctors are not available or considered too expensive) a cadre of para-legal workers could be created and trained. Such para-legals' programmes are found in many countries, where the legal system is inadequate or cannot reach remote areas.

Under such para-legal programme a cadre of active women from the communities, with some education, could be trained in the basics of family-, property- and other relevant laws. They could then serve as source of information, documentation and referral contacts in conflicts, domestic violence, etc. Their training, supervision and support could be organised through a group of UNV volunteers as legal advisors (national and international, but Dari and/or Pashtu speaking) stationed at provincial level. They could be linked to and supervised by the UNDP programme assisting GoA in its legal reforms.

The para legal workers can also perform a watchdog/prevention function against trafficking in women and children. It is very unlikely that Afghanistan is spared the trafficking mafia that is active in all of its neighbouring countries: trafficking for sex-work, forced marriages, slavery in domestic work, factories, agriculture, etc. In cooperation with UNV legal advisors and IOM, the para-legal workers could start a prevention campaign.

- **Religious leaders training.** As community and religious leaders are often consulted for their knowledge and simultaneously represent the seats of power, training them in the new laws of the country and adequate interpretation of religious and traditional laws would enhance better legal systems and protection for women (and men as well). Similar to successful experiences in other countries, religious and other leaders could be trained in the knowledge and application of the legal system, as their views will continue to be sought in case of conflicts. The UNV team of legal advisors could organise and conduct such training activities.

- **Internet/email booth.** Bringing the community closer to its government and vice versa bringing the government closer to the community is a difficult task under the present situation in Afghanistan. Given the prevailing cultural restrictions and literacy levels this is even more difficult when referring to women. Modern technology could help to bridge the gap to some extent. Internet/email booths run by local, basic trained staff, at the lowest levels in the country, where (solar) electricity and internet/telephone and staff is available, could help to pass information on about new laws, government programmes, subsidies,

applications, etc. and vice versa pass on request for information from community/district level. In other countries such programmes have shown to be very successful under somewhat comparable situations of low literacy, vast geographical areas under minimal administrative capacities and a need to increase communication. Through an internet-accessible database but perhaps more feasible, through updatable CD/DVD-ROM' databases could be made available to the internet-booth operators. The database from the central and/or provincial government could include information on laws, development- and other programmes, with all application forms, complain forms, calculation sheets, etc. To be useful, this will of course require a fast response system from the government side at district or central level. The booth PC/operator could also serve as database and for the communication between the para-legal woman worker at community level and the UNV legal advisors, when internet facilities are available. When these booths are managed by women (perhaps part-time by men as well) they can also serve as resource base for women's development opportunities in a broader sense than only in relation to legal rights. In some countries such booth are run commercially as 'customers' pay for the services, for which they otherwise have to travel long distances, losing work time and money on travel. In those settings the basic investments are covered by a loan. Given the development level in rural areas in most of Afghanistan, this may not be feasible as yet.

- **Women's community radio.** The high level of illiteracy among women is considered one of the factors contributing to the present position of women. Setting up women's community radios could fill the gap of illiteracy to some extent as radios are often used.

Setting up of such community radios, but also the internet booths could well be contracted out to a specialised (inter)national NGO operating in Afghanistan.

- **Women's leadership capacity training.** Under the ICB programme two rounds of training were provided to for leadership skills for women staff members of MoWA. In many countries women leadership training courses have shown to be an effective way to mobilise women with leadership aptitudes to strengthen their skills and self confidence to play an active role in support of women's empowerment. Contracted out to, or in cooperation with specialised NGOs, such leadership training courses could be organised. Women leaders could be part of community level organisations, local government institutions, NGOs, parliamentarians, etc.

3.8.2 The Gender Training or Gender Studies Institute

Under the GTI budget expenses have already been incurred by recruiting a Gender Manual Expert and a sr. Programme Assistant. Yet the fact that the establishment of the planned Gender Training Institute has been delayed is perhaps a blessing in disguise.

Obviously more thinking has now gone into the needs and opportunities for this institute and more people got involved in the planning process. The need for greater training capacity in Afghanistan in the field of gender is obvious. Yet, in case the institute had already been established under the single and direct supervision of MoWA, it might have had a limited outreach. By institutionalising gender capacity training as an academic pursuit, such an institute can go beyond training only and play a dynamic role in policy influencing/formulating at the national political level. As part of the academic outfit of Kabul University, the activities will naturally go beyond training only. Academic training, whether at Diploma, Bachelors or Masters' level will require research. Rather than basing training on knowledge about gender generated in other countries, Kabul University could be supported by one or two research institutes abroad with known experience in gender development in generating its own research data within Afghanistan. This in turn could not only feed into the needs of cases for its gender related teaching and practical gender training, but also provide home-grown gender related scientific data for policy making at government level.

It will advisable to change the name from Gender Training Institute to Gender Studies Institute as that will reflect the broader scope the institute will have in a university setting.

Sex disaggregated data and its analysis are not readily available in Afghanistan. Research on the position of women has so far been very limited as well. Also the Afghanistan National Risk and Vulnerability Report (NRVA) had little reliable data on women. Yet, without adequate data available it is difficult to design effective policies to improve the position of women or to convince politicians to invest more in women's development.

Under the auspices of the new Gender Studies Institute a country-wide 'status of women' study could be undertaken. If this is done in close cooperation with other universities in the country it will broaden the academic contacts of the Institute and localise the knowledge generation. If for the data collection

women's groups at community level can be involved, the research could also lead to baseline data for women's development that is locally owned and can thus also be locally monitored. Such a study could be a great opportunity for women's empowerment, while generating data for policy making and gender training.

4. Gender in UNDP Afghanistan

4.1 History and position on gender

UNDP plays a key role in supporting the implementation of the Bonn Agreement, which provided the commitment and support of the international donor community and which drew the roadmap for the establishment of a democratic state. Women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming feature as important element in the Bonn Agreement.

*"Gender mainstreaming requires that all instrumentalities of government examine and redesign their policies, programmes, budgets, systems and mechanisms to address issues in their respective sectoral areas of concern"*¹⁸

Working in close cooperation with and in support of the policies of the Government of Afghanistan, this approach to gender mainstreaming applies to UNDP as well and is fully in line with the UNDP global policy on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment from a women's rights' perspective.

Between 1984 and 2005, UNDP has been working in Afghanistan on a project-by-project basis. In 2005 a new Country Programme was prepared in full consultation with the Government and in line with the first UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

The mission of UNDP, as stated in the first UNDAF for Afghanistan (2006-2008) is to support the Government in its enormous human development challenge through sustained capacity building and resource mobilisation to achieve human security and peace building.

UNDP focuses its activities on three global areas: poverty reduction, democratic governance and crisis prevention and recovery. UNDP aligned itself to the Interim Afghan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS) formulated by the Government in 2005. Gender equity is encompassed as one of the five cross cutting themes of this strategy.

Guided by Afghanistan's National Development Framework (NDF), UNDP's programmes and projects reflect its mandate to enhance the Government's institutional capacity to provide public services and to create an enabling environment for long-term development. Accordingly, the UNDP Afghanistan programme of activities is organised thematically into three pillars: State-Building and Government Support, Democratisation and Civil Society Empowerment, and Promotion of Sustainable Livelihoods. Among the cross-cutting issues, UNDP addresses gender equality as a foremost cross-cutting priority within the country's National Development Framework.

UNDP's corporate gender policies require all programmes to adequately address gender issues.

4.2 Instruments to promote gender in UNDP-Afghanistan

Within the UN system in Afghanistan the UN Gender Team, consisting of gender focal points or contact persons of the different UN agencies, meets to exchange information and to coordinate the landscape of gender related activities in Afghanistan, in which they are involved.

The UNDP Country Office in Afghanistan does not have a formal Gender Focal Point. However, the International Programme Officer for Gender and Disability, who backstops programmes in these two areas (including the ICB support to MoWA), also performs a number of functions as Gender Focal Point in the Country Office. To enhance the understanding with regard to gender issues and gender mainstreaming this Programme Officer together with the Programme Manager for the ICB programme recently offered an orientation meeting for UNDP staff on gender mainstreaming.

A Regional Gender Advisor is available in the regional office in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Recently UNDP at global level introduced an on-line gender training course to enhance the understanding of staff members. Earlier a compulsory on-line course was introduced for UNDP staff on sexual harassment: "UN Prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority in the Workplace".

¹⁸ Quoted from MoU between UNDP, MoWA and six ministries concerning their cooperation in support of gender mainstreaming.

Observations

Even though UNDP-Afghanistan is committed to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment on the basis of its own mandate and global UNDP policy, as well as the Afghan Government policies, so far UNDP-Afghanistan has not developed a clear implementation strategy on gender for its work in Afghanistan. The UNDP corporate gender policy provides the policy guidelines for its work in Afghanistan but a translation into strategic instruments is yet to be developed for its actual work, programme formulation, prioritising, monitoring, etc., as well as its internal management systems that are appropriate for the situation in Afghanistan.

Partly as a result of this, gender mainstreaming is more or less left to the individual Programme or Project Manager. Some UNDP programmes are keenly focussed on promoting gender equality and women's rights, for others gender mainstreaming is not a priority and features at best as compulsory add-on paragraph in the project document.

While monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects in general was reported to be rather weak already, no system has been developed so far to integrate gender issues in monitoring and reporting systems, nor do staff performance evaluations require an assessment in this field. No results-based management has been introduced yet, neither have indicators been developed.

Programme managers reported that, partly as a result of existing work pressure, the interest to focus on gender concerns in many programmes is low: notwithstanding official policies, gender is not a high priority. Some managers indicated that their own understanding with regard to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in their specific fields is poor. In addition to that, it was reported that communication between some of the programmes and the UNDP-Country Office was limited. Some consider the CO even as a burden to their work: bureaucracy and procedures but little support related to content. Programme Managers did not feel much encouragement and support from the Country Office for a more active gender focus. Short periods of employment in Afghanistan (for many of the expatriates) and thus frequent staff changes, do not make a conducive climate to consistently address the gender issue in programmes either.

Though UNDP-Afghanistan senior management has certainly made a number of efforts to strengthen gender mainstreaming, programme managers so far have felt little pressure or proactive support from the CO to actively promote gender concerns and women's empowerment in programme related work or its organisational aspects.

Specific measures in the UNDP-CO or the programme offices to enhance the scope for equal opportunities in UNDP national jobs for women do not exist, while these are indispensable, given the inequality women face in the traditional role patterns and the circumstances and traditions in Afghanistan.

References made to the CO as a 'burden rather than as a support' to programmes, indicate that further promoting gender mainstreaming as crosscutting issue by UNDP-CO, could well be seen as an 'additional hurdle' to be taken before programmes, reports, budgets, etc. get approved and may thereby trigger opposition rather than support. For gender to be strongly promoted, therefore, the quality of the relationship between some programmes and the CO will have to improve.

General policy documents of UNDP require that staff to be recruited should be acquainted with gender issues and operate accordingly. This has not been operationalised. There is no checking system at the time of recruiting staff, whether the gender related knowledge is adequate for the jobs to be performed. No gender orientation packet is made available nor is an introduction meeting on gender organised, when new staff arrives for their jobs.

UNDP-Afghanistan management is aware of the weaknesses in gender mainstreaming and it is in the process of introducing new measures as earlier attempts did not prove to be adequate:

- Though not formally a gender focal point, the international Programme Officer, who backstops a/o the ICB programme is also engaged to 'check' on inclusion of gender aspects in programme documents and to promote gender skills and knowledge among the staff;
- The tasks of the Programme Manager for the ICB programme, recruited early 2006, have been broadened to include gender related activities within UNDP-Afghanistan as well, beyond the boundaries of the ICB programme with MoWA;
- The present evaluation of the ICB programme to MoWA also includes a basic review of UNDP-CO's own capacity to support gender mainstreaming and was asked to provide recommendations for its improvement;

- A gender mainstreaming orientation session for CO and programme staff was conducted in May 2006 and a series of basic gender training is planned;
- At the time of the ICB evaluation, UNDP-CO management was considering to create a gender resource pool, involving staff from different programmes to maximise engagement and benefits, rather than establishing a separate gender focal unit.

4.3 Scope for new policies and practices: make addressing gender inequalities non-negotiable

Neither the circumstances for UNDP staff, nor the cultural traditions and recent history of Afghanistan make it easy to actively engage in gender work. Yet to do justice to half the population of Afghanistan, which has been denied her rights to socio-economic security, development opportunities, safety, etc, for so many years, and under the new policy circumstances that support her equal rights and empowerment, UNDP has the obligation to incorporate women's rights and gender justice in each and every activity it undertakes.

A gender mainstreaming implementation strategy specific for UNDP-Afghanistan is required, strongly supported and checked by UNDP senior management for its actual implementation, to enhance the climate for an active approach to gender mainstreaming. The UNDP global gender mainstreaming evaluation clearly indicated the vital role of senior management support for success in this field.

A next or simultaneous step should be to make gender concerns an active non-negotiable part of every step in planning, staffing, implementing, managing, monitoring and reporting of every activity undertaken by UNDP.

A dedicated fund for gender mainstreaming at the disposal of the UNDP-CO will be required to finance staff orientation/training/guidance and a gender resource unit. It could also help to bridge the period until each programme has integrated gender concerns in their own budgeting. Adequately integrating gender concerns in all planning, monitoring and reporting systems may require some funding as well.

To enhance the UNDP-Afghanistan staff's own capacities in the field of gender, a strong resource unit for gender issues needs to be established to organise gender training and thematic meetings, as well as follow up support. This unit could take the lead in developing instruments for gender mainstreaming, gender focussed planning and budgeting.

A team of gender resource persons could be set up spread over all UNDP's programmes. When each programme undertaken by UNDP selects a staff member to monitor, report and provide feedback about their programme's gender performance in regular meetings of such a gender resource people pool at the Country Office level, it can lead to a common approach and mutual support, and will simultaneously increase the quality of content communication between the UNDP-CO and the Programmes.

Coordination with other UN institutions in Afghanistan in the field of gender could be strengthened to make the UN gender team meetings more productive. (Inter)national civil society organisations could be invited to participate, thereby creating opportunities for mutual support and scope for complementarity and synergy between programmes and organisations.

5 Challenges, strategic choices and options for the future

“Every day is a gender day”

The world over, and certainly in post conflict or post disaster situations, development plans are often made and implemented without adequately understanding, inventorying and responding to the needs, rights and opportunities for women. Plans generally follow ‘standard’ economic and social policies that have generally denied women their due role and share in development efforts. The result of such traditional, gender blind and therefore male-biased policies and development investments is unbalanced development, ignoring the prevailing development contribution as well as potential of women and simultaneously denying women their right to development. Undoing such unequal development at a later stage requires much more effort as systems have become firmly established in an unequal way and already existing male vested interest have been firmed.

Whether therefore in direct reference to the UNDP-ICB programme to support the Government of Afghanistan or related to UNDP as the institution to manage and operate the capacity building programme, ‘gender mainstreaming’ and the ‘promotion of women’s rights’ are loaded with challenges. Relevant documents in Afghanistan mostly do mention the equal rights of women, the need for equal opportunities in the job market, in education, health, in politics, in government, the need for protection against violence, etc. and few people will publicly speak against women’s rights, yet the realities are mostly very different. Even if protecting policies are in place, the implementation strategies and actual measures to make the changes happen, including monitoring activities and accountability for implementation in line with policies, is often weak, if not absent. Few policy or programme documents will pass these days without any mention of gender or the position of women, but mostly as add-on, as gender paragraph.

Gender is about power and thus changing power balances in favour of women’s rights. Gender equality is met by many obstacles.

The MDGs and UNDP’s own policy documents have women’s rights and gender mainstreaming as clear objectives. Yet when UNDP as global organisation itself was evaluated in 2005 on their gender mainstreaming practices, the review indicated that the attention and money for gender mainstreaming has actually gone down in the last five years. Also in UNDP-Afghanistan most programme managers indicated that gender mainstreaming and promoting women’s equal rights is not a high priority. Several interviewees indicated that the UN had more attention for women’s development and protection during the ‘Islamabad’ period. Once the reconstruction and development phase started in Afghanistan, women’s rights’ attention lost its earlier priority against traditional mainstream development thinking.

Afghanistan’s own development policy documents are clear about the need to promote and protect women’s rights. Donors too, in the joint policy document (Afghanistan Compact) for support to Afghanistan’s development have emphasised women’s rights by endorsing I-NAPWA and Afghanistan’s MDGs. Yet, the reality shows that apart from the health and education sectors, not much progress is made yet in terms of improving the position of women and girls.

Challenges ahead

Apart from the attention for gender mainstreaming, often limited to obligatory paragraphs, there are challenges with respect to the interpretation of the concept, its scope for increased economic, food- and other security issues and its applicability in the cultural context of Afghanistan.

- Though the concept of gender mainstreaming has clear definitions and loads of documents exist that explain the concept from the perspective of women rights, in the reality of much development planning gender mainstreaming often does not go beyond token involvement of women in the men’s world, whether in terms of numbers or decision making: mainstreaming easily is reduced to ‘male-streaming’. Women are tolerated in the men’s world, not accepted on their own terms. Also in Afghanistan women ask: what is “main” in which we have to be fitted, who decides about the mainstream? Who determines the conditions under which we can join the mainstream? The question was raised by a number of interviewees: Do we get the space to change the terms of development and be equal partners in the planning too? Obviously only if equality is accepted by men and women, real changes in power distribution, policy making and actual work, etc. can be expected to have a positive impact on women. Conceptual clarity about mainstreaming, with respect to equality and the need for changed attitudes and practices will have to be promoted at all levels in UNDP, GoA, donor agencies, civil society, etc. As much of the traditional conflicts within families and communities and between different communities have their origin in male power abuse, addressing gender power issues by men

and women will have a direct impact on the security situation at home and at large. Gender mainstreaming will therefore have to address gender power issues.

- Having been trained in aspects of gender based discrimination, recruitment, domestic violence, responsibilities and division of household duties, etc. as such, through the ICB programme, will not change the realities for increased food security or protection against abuse, etc. In fact, in isolation, gender training especially of women in terms of their (constitutional and human) rights, etc. can easily lead to frustration as changing the realities needs more than being conscious. Consciousness does not fill stomachs, or protect against violence. Activities that support economic empowerment of women may be more effective to positively change the power balance and recognition of women's position in families and ultimately lead to a more secure situation for all family members. Promotion of gender mainstreaming through the ICB programme will therefore have to be closely linked to activities in support of poverty alleviation and economic empowerment, undertaken by others. Further, legal knowledge for women regarding their rights is required, but unless men and the community leaders are also aware and further educated it may not lead to any change. Hence the need to address both women and men in the different activities.
- Often remarks are made about gender being a western concept and addressing gender issues are seen as western cultural dominance that does not fit Afghanistan culture or religion. The word 'gender' as such may be alien to traditional Dari and Pashto, gender based power differences and abuse are not new and alien at all. Afghanistan has and has had its own great women leaders that raised the issues of gender power abuse and the rights of women and fought for them, be it with different terminology. Domestic violence is known in many families and so is abuse of women in many cruel ways as part of family and clan feuds. Islam clearly describes and protects the rights of women and it said to be local interpretation by some religious and other leaders in Afghanistan that condones the subjugation of women and denial of their rights. Enlightened religious and other leaders therefore can play important roles in changing the situation. The risk of gender being seen as alien or even a threat to Afghan culture, when addressing gender power issues can be avoided by the use of terminology, training methods, examples, etc. that are acceptable to the Afghanistan cultural and religious context.

From rhetoric through conviction to action

The greatest challenge to be addressed by UNDP internally and in its support to the Government of Afghanistan is to be internally convinced and subsequently accept the consequences that, unless development efforts adequately address the existing unequal gender power differences and take into account the impact that policies, practices and budgeting will have on women and have to be to their long term benefit, development in Afghanistan will not be sustainable. Whether accepted from a women's rights perspective to development or from a business perspective of efficiency in the use of scarce human and material resources made available by the international community for Afghanistan, the existing inequalities have to be addressed in order to lead to sustainable development.

Unique opportunities

Given that many government and civil society institutions in Afghanistan are still developing their internal capacities and many of their programmes are still in an early stage of development, there are golden and rather unique opportunities to integrate gender-related concerns at every level. UNDP is supporting the GoA through many programmes related to different ministries. They are well placed and obliged by their own mandate to play a vital role in this field by inclusion of a clear gender focus towards enhancing the equality of women in every stage of each of the programmes they support: needs assessment, design, feasibility, staffing, implementation, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic options

To increase the scope for gender mainstreaming and the enhancement of women's rights, UNDP's assistance for gender mainstreaming to the GoA needs to go **beyond the boundaries of MoWA**. While MoWA needs to be supported to deliver as per its mandate by contributing to policy making in different ministries, UNDP capacity building support for gender mainstreaming to GoA could be enhanced by **integrating gender in each of its support programmes**, prioritising the 'hard core' ministries of finance, labour, agriculture and rural development in terms of economic development and the ministry of justice and support to the parliament in terms of adequate legal policies.

UNDP itself will have to develop the human resources and the analytical, delivery and monitoring capacities to be able to **fulfil its own mandate on gender mainstreaming** and advancing women's rights.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Main conclusions

ICB programme output in relation to plan

During the past four years UNDP has provided a diverse range of material-, financial-, and human resources as well as training support to MoWA under the UNDP-ICB programme:

- Material support included repairs and refurbishing the MoWA building as well as installing communication equipment. It also covered the complete constructing and fully equipping of the TAD training centre adjacent to the MoWA complex, to facilitate the Ministry to undertake and manage training for government and non-government staff members of different ministries and programmes at national and provincial level. The support also included the rental of a van for TAD, provisions of stationary as well as mobile telephone sets and monthly top-up cards.
- Financial assistance has included payments for publications, topping up of MoWA (government) staff salaries, DSAs for trainers and trainees (from provinces), incentives to advisors to the minister as well as payments related to campaigns, conferences and seminars.
- Human resources support consisted of the ICB programme staff that managed the UNDP programme, two consecutive gender training manual developers, gender master trainers and a designer for the MoWA publications.
- UNDP-ICB programme facilitated gender training workshops, ToT in gender, training in development planning and other aspects of programme management, English language, computer training as well as the organisation of advocacy campaigns, preparation of conferences, workshops and presentations and in organising exhibitions. Under the ICB programme two sets of gender training manuals were developed. In the early stage of the programme training was contracted out to two NGOs: AWN and AITM, respectively related to gender training and programme planning, book keeping and management issues. Since the end of 2005 the gender training is handled by the Master trainers hired under the ICB programme together with MoWA TAD staff.

The material support and other financial inputs have been much appreciated by MoWA and its TAD department and so where incentive payments to MoWA advisors, salary top-ups and perks like mobile phones, etc.

Formal feedback from the different training sessions indicates that many of the trainings have been appreciated as the issues covered were new to the participants. The NGOs that provided the management, planning and bookkeeping training sessions felt that at least the understanding of programme planning mechanisms increased. No system was developed under the programme to monitor the applicability and usefulness of approach of the training provided nor the impact the training may have had. Feedback during the evaluation could only be anecdotal as no systematic meetings with ex-trainees in and outside Kabul were feasible.

Impact and relevance in terms of gender mainstreaming

Some 600 people have been trained in gender issues and various programme planning and management skills both in Kabul and in 10 provinces, yet there is no evidence that this has had or will have much impact in terms of the ultimate objective of gender mainstreaming. No training strategy existed so far, no trainee selection system has been developed, nor has there been monitoring or follow-up to the training provided.

After one set of gender training manuals was developed for use by TAD, the need was felt for another international expert to come and prepare a second set of manuals in preparation for the Gender Training Institute. No testing, however, has been done so far. The investment in foreign expertise has not delivered the expected output.

Programme planning and strategy

Even though all the activities under the ICB programme have been covered by the original and revised project document, the activities were not based on a well conceived plan and strategy for support to MoWA towards their mandate of gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan.

In the first year after the establishment of MoWA and the mostly emergency response by UNDP to support the ministry to build its capacity, a rather loosely structured support is understandable. However, after an initial year of searching and trying, it would be expected from UNDP, with its vast international experience in development, also in post conflict situations, that a thorough analysis is made of the situation followed by a plan and strategy. None such reflection or internal evaluation has taken place,

however, and the programme continued for four years. Till this evaluation took place the ICB programme was neither evaluated nor financially audited.

In retrospect this has to be seen as a serious omission by UNDP, which cannot be condoned with reference to the general situation in Afghanistan. Even if the political conditions in the country and the support for MoWA have gone through considerable turmoil, there was a clear mandate, on the basis of which UNDP together with MoWA should have formulated a relevant capacity building programme.

ICB support has mainly been focussed on the capacities of MoWA itself, whereas this ministry is mandated to support policy development for gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women's rights through other ministries, and not to implement programmes itself.

We have to conclude that the present ICB programme has contributed very little to support MoWA to deliver in relation to this mandate.

Even if the work undertaken by UNDP/ICB cannot be directly linked to concrete improvements in gender mainstreaming and women's human rights and no causal relation can be established between the level of any improvements and the quality of UNDP/ICB's work, the strategies and subsequent programmes should have been clear in their direct and indirect contributory potential to such longer term improvements. This has not been the case.

Cooperation and synergy

Apart from UNDP through its ICB programme, at least seven other international development and technical assistance institutions have supported MoWA. Each of these organisations had their own bilateral programme agreement with MoWA, related to capacity building. The different activities were undertaken in isolation from one another, there was no common plan, neither has there been much synergy between the different programmes.

UNIFEM, the UN agency for women's development administered by UNDP also had and has a support programme with MoWA from the very start, separate and only partially coordinated with the UNDP ICB programme under review. Even if coordination with all agencies may have been difficult, close coordination and common approaches with respect to the cooperation with MoWA, between these two UN agencies should have been the policy.

Gender in UNDP-Afghanistan

The staff recruited by UNDP for the ICB programme has not been adequate in quality for the responsibilities it shouldered for the period under review, nor has there been sufficient backstopping and supervision from the UNDP-CO to rectify the weaknesses in programme design, staff capacity monitoring and adequate administration.

UNDP-Afghanistan itself had no gender strategy for its programmes, activities, and systems even if the UNDP corporate mandate requires all its programmes to contribute to women's equal rights and development, along the lines of the MDGs and laid down in UNDP's own policies. As a consequence many of the UNDP administered programmes in Afghanistan are weak in gender mainstreaming and the support to women's equal development, nor does the UNDP-CO in Afghanistan have gender clearly integrated as priority in staff recruitment, orientation, guidance and job performance assessment.

6.2 Way forward: main issues and recommendations

Staff of the UNDP-ICB programme, the backstopping unit in the UNDP-CO as well as the UNDP-Afghanistan senior management are well aware of the weaknesses of the ICB programme to date and the gender capacities of the Country Office. In the process of this evaluation they have shared various ideas about ways to redesign the ICB programme and simultaneously strengthen the CO capacities.

Many recommendations, based on the analysis of the present programme, the relevant policy documents and mandates of the organisations concerned as well as the needs and opportunities shared in interviews held, have already been mentioned in the foregoing sections of the report. Some refer to a broader approach to UNDP's role in mainstreaming gender in Afghanistan, some to concrete activities that could be considered under a new ICB programme and some are recommendations, which could be promoted and stimulated by UNDP but to be undertaken by others, as they will enhance gender mainstreaming but do not necessarily fit under UNDP's own mandate or its comparative advantages. This chapter section synthesises the recommendations that the evaluators believe UNDP-Afghanistan could consider as the basis for its future strategy and programme design.

The choice of the issues is guided by the following considerations:

- UNDP exists to effect change in the external environment, in this case in the capacity of the Government of Afghanistan to enhance peace, stability and development for its citizens, women, men and children. Its activities must therefore be results-oriented and UNDP needs to demonstrate its impact on the ground. In the case of the ICB this means that **training should not be provided as a product in its own right, but as a means to change attitudes, policies and practices**. Change is a process that needs to be nurtured and sustained over a period of time. Training as a routine activity, or facilitating seminars and workshops on gender as a one-off debate on a particular issue, whether for MoWA or other ministries' staff, DoWAs, parliamentarians, etc. is not likely to trigger a spontaneous and sustained change process. ICB needs to enhance and support follow up activities, collaborative efforts and synergy between government and civil society organisations to effect lasting changes towards sustainable and gender-just development.
- Further to the above point, **clarity of the vision and strategy is essential to charting the way forward and to the assessment of progress**. National (interim) policies exist that indicate the basic direction for the development of Afghanistan. The need to focus on the position of women is included in these documents as well. Beyond these acknowledgements a clear strategy needs to be developed how the different policy making and implementing institutions in Afghanistan can be supported to instrumentalise the accepted focus on the position of women. A prioritisation is required to maximise the scope for changes at the different levels. Not only is it necessary to clearly understand the present position women are in, in the different cultural and economic settings of the country, it is also necessary to know what obstacles exist to improve their position, how mainstreaming is perceived and wanted by women and men, what opportunities exist and who can be involved in promoting the changes required.
Clarity of vision and strategy is also required with respect to the role of MoWA as policy making rather than implementing ministry.
- **Strategic partnerships** are critical to successful change programmes in the field of gender mainstreaming. In this respect, the **strategic importance or potential of the different programmes with GoA that UNDP is already involved in need to be assessed for their scope to enhance gender mainstreaming and women's development**. In areas that UNDP is not involved other development partners may already exist. Collaboration needs to be sought and synergy developed.
- As a global organisation, UNDP operates in various socio-cultural and socio-economic and political environments. Especially in relation to gender power issues and the position of women, **sensitivity to the Afghanistan cultural setting** needs to guide choice and design of programmes. Yet culture and religion cannot be used as excuse not to actively address gender power issues and women's rights, neither can it be relegated to second priority, in favour of traditional gender blind development assistance. UNDP-CO needs to develop all necessary instruments to assist in development adequate activities in Afghanistan, which fulfil the criteria of its own global gender policies and the MDG requirements.

6.2.1 UNDP- Afghanistan gender mainstreaming and prioritising

UNDP-CO: gender strategy development

The corporate UNDP policies on gender, the MDGs' requirements, nor the policy documents for the development of Afghanistan, emphasising the need for women's empowerment, have so far sufficiently guided the Country Office and the programmes of UNDP in Afghanistan to adequately prioritise the crosscutting issue of gender mainstreaming and women's rights.

For UNDP-Afghanistan to become effective in gender mainstreaming and the promotion of women's rights it will be necessary to translate the existing gender policy documents into adequate strategies for its work in Afghanistan. Subsequently UNDP has to design systems, measures and accountability instruments that will enhance its programmes to be effective in this field. UNDP Afghanistan management holds the key to effectively and consequently implementing gender policies in UNDP's support activities.

UNDP-ICB programme: strategic repositioning

In light of the achievements to date and the lessons learnt through the previous phase, the ICB Programme needs to be redefined. While the original objectives for the ICB programme hold in their broad sense, the strategic position and concrete goals of the programme need to be reassessed and further articulated in light of the available Afghanistan development policy plans I-ANDS, I-NAPWA and Afghanistan Compact. Of critical significance is to define the pertinent roles of the ICB and its linkages with MoWA as policy ministry (and subsequently DoWAs) and key implementing ministries and related institutions.

Beyond the need to develop adequate strategies and policies for UNDP-CO and to reposition ICB, the evaluation team recommends the following concrete measures for consideration, clustered under broad categories related to: the UNDP-CO organisation; UNDP-Afghanistan programme; ICB strategic positioning; and ICB direct and related activities.

Note that some of the concrete measures or activities are included in this listing, not because they are necessarily a task for UNDP itself, but because they are considered elements in packets of mutually reinforcing activities for women's empowerment. Such activities could be promoted by UNDP to be implemented by other agencies, with which UNDP can seek partnerships.

UNDP-CO organisation and human resources related:

- ♥ Testing the gender-knowledge and sensitivity at the time of recruitment, based on inclusion in each and every ToR, when advertising vacancies;
- ♥ Gender skill testing, orientation and when necessary job-related training for staff already employed by UNDP-Afghanistan;
- ♥ A gender-related orientation upon arrival/recruitment of new staff (similar to other orientations), including a gender policy documentation packet;
- ♥ Gender related skill training to improve on basic (ToR) gender requirements;
- ♥ Resource documentation on gender;
- ♥ Clear policies on gender-power related behaviour like harassment, including a reporting system and person of confidence;
- ♥ Inclusion of gender mainstreaming performance in job assessments;
- ♥ Office policies that will enhance equal opportunities for women staff members in all levels of UNDP, supporting parental responsibilities of UNDP staff members, (often assumed to be women's roles only), by arranging child care facilities during office hours, adjusting meeting timings;

UNDP Programmes/activities related

- ♥ Inclusion of women's rights/gender issues at all stages of UNDP programmes: conceptualisation, formulation, negotiation, funding, (including funding conditions), staff requirements, implementation, programme performance monitoring, evaluation;
- ♥ Setting up of a UNDP-Afghanistan programme-wide pool of gender resource people, with gender-issues contact persons (focal point) in each of the programmes implemented with UNDP support, compulsory (two-directional) reporting about gender issues in the programme concerned;
- ♥ Regular and structured meetings of gender resource pool persons to monitor progress, obstacles and need for support;
- ♥ A women's rights/gender work capacity building and support structure for UNDP programmes at CO level (including resource materials, training opportunities);
- ♥ Strengthen UN Gender Coordination Committee to enhance gender mainstreaming through all UN members;
- ♥ Arrange a dedicated fund at UNDP-CO level for gender mainstreaming activities;

UNDP-ICB: strategic positioning, priorities and partners

- ♥ Redefining of the UNDP-ICB programme strategies, objectives and priorities for gender mainstreaming and the promotion of women's rights in Afghanistan, based on the mandate of MoWA, the responsibilities of each ministry and the accepted policy documents Afghanistan Compact, I-ANDS and I-NAPWA as well as the Afghanistan MDGs;
- ♥ Continue presence in MoWA to in designing an advocacy strategy on the need to mainstream gender in all government activities. An advocacy and strategy trainer may be required. Continue

capacity building of MoWA to become the 'wanted', valued resource that no ministry can afford to miss; assist MoWA in designing and maintaining a link/resource rich website for reference and information;

- ♥ Start presence of UNDP gender experts in 'hard-core' ministries of GoA: MoF, MoA and/or MDDR and available 'on call' to CSO and other departments based on needs inventory; engage with MoF to promote gender budgeting;
- ♥ Maintain close contact and possible part-time UNDP gender expertise presence in Kabul University to enhance establishment of Gender Studies Institute, in cooperation with UNESCO;

UNDP- ICB: activities

- ♥ Together with UNESCO, further the establishment of the Gender Studies Institute under Kabul University for national capacity building, research and policy support;
- ♥ Support a 'status of women' survey, organised in collaboration with Kabul University and its Gender Studies Institute as initial activity, involving other universities and civil society groups active in the field of women's rights;
- ♥ Involve Village Development Committees and District Development Committees in the status of women survey/PRA as basis for community/district level developed and locally owned base-lines for development planning and monitoring by these committees, specifying status, desired changes and (economic) opportunities specifically controlled by women
- ♥ Support the Central Statistics Office in generation and analysis of sex-disaggregated data;
- ♥ Support analysis and policy advices based on status of women survey to strengthen parliamentarians as well as government in policy and law making;

-
- ♥ Continue content support to TAD based on their capacities and a needs assessment
 - ♥ Together with TAD make inventories of the gender training needs and policy development support of MoWA, DoWAs, line ministries and design training and other programmes accordingly, calling on the GSI when required;
 - ♥ Together with TAD make an additional inventory of the gender awareness training needs among parliamentarians, community and religious leaders and others;
 - ♥ Together with TAD consider the option of leadership training for women leaders;
 - ♥ Together with TAD develop training strategies and plans, based on the needs assessments, training use-capacity and scope for (TAD's) supervision, support and follow-up activities; in this regard clearly distinguish general capacity building and gender related training;
 - ♥ Pilot, review and adapt the existing gender training manuals for specific target audiences;
 - ♥ Assess the qualities and capacities of the TAD and the ICB trainers and identify scope for upgrading skills though ToT, exposure and internships;
 - ♥ Consider to plan horizontal expansion in the trainer pool under the auspices of TAD, or in cooperation with civil society organisations in light of the scale of coverage at national/central and provincial levels. Additional ToT will be required for this purpose;
 - ♥ Develop participatory monitoring, evaluation and follow-up and experience-exchange tools for all training and capacity building activities under ICB
 - ♥ Join hands with other institutes to make an inventory of available capacity building/training opportunities;
 - ♥ Based on such inventory, identify critical partners and forge partnerships that will help to expand the outreach of gender training strategically.

-
- ♥ Promotion of recognition of existing economic roles by women esp. in food production/processing and enhancing of opportunities for entrepreneurship with micro-credit for economic empowerment, possible in cooperation with BRAC-Afghanistan and other (inter)national NGOs;

-
- ♥ Legal literacy and conflict resolution through paralegals, under UNV guidance, as basis for women's protection, rights enhancement and greater involvement in community/family clan conflict resolution in close cooperation with Ministry of Justice/UNDP support programme;
 - ♥ Promote leadership capacity training for women through relevant NGOs
 - ♥ Prevention campaign regarding trafficking in women and children in collaboration with paralegal volunteers, UNV and possible IOM;
 - ♥ Training of religious and community leaders in support of women's rights/against domestic violence with UNV assistance;

- ♥ Internet/email booths at community or district level wherever possible, managed by local women for information about government/laws/policies and in a later stage for business/market information;
- ♥ Promotion of women's community radio by relevant NGOs perhaps supported by UNV volunteers to counter problems caused by low literacy rates;

ICB programme management

- ♥ MIS system. A management information system needs to be developed to address the programme components in terms of programmatic interventions, activities and training delivery;
- ♥ Human resources assessment. In light of its repositioning and developing a new programme, ICB needs to assess its human resources requirements, both current and future. Re-profiling will be required and job descriptions may need to be modified in light of the assessed capacity of the existing staff;
- ♥ M&E. To enable the ICB programme to assess progress and impact, it is imperative that the next phase begins with identifying the indicators that will feed into a monitoring system.

Appendix 1 Terms of Reference

EVALUATION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT FOR THE MAINSTREAMING OF GENDER IN AFGHANISTAN

TITLE:	Consultancies for Institutional Capacity Building Support Evaluation
DURATION:	Short-term: 4-week assignment
STARTING DATE:	As soon as possible preferably early May 2006
HIRING UNIT:	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Afghanistan CO, Kabul

1.0 Background

The peace and reconstruction agenda of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was launched in 2001 with a strong commitment for the promotion of women's advancement. To this end, women's empowerment was recognised both as human rights agenda as well as an indispensable requisite for the attainment of sustainable peace and progress. In 2001, the government created the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) with the mandate of mainstreaming gender for the establishment of women's human rights and achievement of lasting peace and development in Afghanistan.

In its recent endeavours UNDP, as a co-operating partner, responded to the urgent needs of the government for the enhancement of capacity of governmental institutions for the promotion of gender equality and human rights. One of the major undertakings in this regard was the Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA).

ICB has been operational since 2002 with the aim of providing technical assistance and capacity building support to MoWA. This was an instantaneous response to help equip MoWA to deliver on its mandate. Over the past four years UNDP support through ICB facilitated achievements of some tangible gains. Nevertheless, there has not been any systematic effort to analyse actual achievements and contributions of ICB as to what extent these gains are catalytic to influence systemic change for the mainstreaming of gender and promotion of women's empowerment.

In 2006 the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan introduced the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), which is a new platform and the output of twelve-months of intensive consultations among and between different organs of the government as well as stakeholders outside the government bodies including the international community. The I-ANDS builds upon the benefits/gains/experiences of the past four years. Within the overall framework of I-ANDS the government expressed its priorities and commitments for the lasting and equitable development for the citizens from all walks of life. The main objectives of the I-ANDS are to attain security, governance, economic growth and poverty reduction. To help implement the commitment of the government for equitable development and justice for all in March 2006, MoWA launched its first Interim National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (I-NAPWA).

In February 2006 the international community reaffirmed their commitment and determination to strengthen their partnership with the government of Afghanistan to improve the lives of Afghan people, and to contribute to national, regional, and global peace and security, which resulted in the formulation of Afghanistan Compact. In the context of the above developments, UNDP considers revisiting its scope and strategies for capacity building support particularly for the advancement of women's status and gender equality critical. Hence this evaluation bears significant importance particularly with regard to UNDP's repositioning itself as a strategic partner and ally to provide technical assistance to MoWA and other key institutions for the promotion of gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan.

2.0. Objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation will essentially analyse the achievements of ICB and examine UNDP's contributory potential to further strengthening the capacities of national machineries for the mainstreaming of gender, achievement of equitable development and justice in Afghanistan. The evaluation will provide a set of specific recommendations for UNDP's future strategy vis-à-vis the project and gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan.

The main objectives of the evaluation are to: (i). take stock of achievements of ICB, and challenges/problems and opportunities within its current framework; (ii) verify the continued relevance and pertinence of the project in the new environment; (iii) determine specific recommendations for UNDP's future strategy to promote gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan; (iv) ascertain UNDP's added value for the mainstreaming of gender.

3.0. Scope and elements of evaluation

The evaluation will cover the following: (i) on-going ICB support to MOWA; (ii) achievements of the project vis-à-vis output targets/objectives; (iii) future strategies for UNDP to provide gender technical support within the framework of I-ANDS, (I)NAPWA and Afghanistan Compact; (iv) potential outcomes and sustainability.

The implementation of ICB and its activities will be assessed in order to take stock of the achievements, compare them with what was planned. The evaluation will assess the overall outputs of the project and compare quality of the outputs produced with what was planned. The evaluation team will determine whether the outputs produced are of value to MoWA and other beneficiaries. Based on these assessments, the team will identify specific constraints and opportunities, which should inform specific recommendations for UNDP to undertake new initiatives/programmes. Make specific recommendations for UNDP's future strategy for the promotion of gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan.

Based on its assessment and findings the consultants will make conclusions and recommendations for UNDP's future initiatives/programmes in the area of gender.

4.0. Objectives and tasks of the assignment

The main objectives of the assignment are (i) to evaluate the implementation of ICB in relation to its aims and objectives; (ii) to outline a set of recommendations for UNDP's future strategy to promote gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan; (iii) to recommend specific initiatives, programmes for UNDP to consider for the advancement of women's empowerment and gender equality in Afghanistan, and (iv) to prepare a report on the findings, with recommendations, to be submitted to UNDP.

The following tasks will be undertaken by the evaluation team in order to reach the main objectives of the assignment:

- ❖ Meeting with ICB team, Programme Manager and UNDP CO management and programme team;
- ❖ Review all documentation related to ICB (project document, work plans and budgets, reports, minutes, concept papers, addendums, etc.), ANDS, NAPWA, and Afghanistan Compact, and other relevant documents.
- ❖ Consultation with the current counterparts of UNDP particularly MoWA and its departments (impact, challenges and contributory potential of the project);
- ❖ Consultation with UNIFEM and other relevant UN agencies and international and donor agencies working on gender issues to determine UNDP's added value.
- ❖ Consultations with relevant stakeholders, potential partners/counterparts (governmental and non-governmental) to determine possibilities for a consolidated programme/initiative (possibilities, challenges and specific needs, and impact);
- ❖ Consultation with representatives of donors particularly the signatories of Afghanistan Compact;

- ❖ Review of the ICB progress monitoring mechanism to assess effectiveness and learn lessons for future initiatives;
- ❖ Preparation of preliminary and final reports of the evaluation with conclusions and recommendations for UNDP's future considerations. The preliminary report should be presented to UNDP before departure of the team and the final report two weeks after the mission completion. The draft report, Executive Summary, final report and recommendations will be done in English.

5.0. Expected outputs

The following are expected outputs of this consultancy assignment:

- Evaluation Report
- Specific recommendations to strategies and design integrated gender programme for UNDP Afghanistan based on findings, consultations and analysis of the findings
- Specific results of recommended initiatives for future

6.0. Time Frame

The evaluation team will be hired for four weeks and the proposed evaluation is expected to commence as soon as possible preferably early May 2006.

7.0. Team and profile of the consultants sought

The evaluation team will consist of one International Team Leader, one International Gender Specialist and one National Gender Specialist.

The profiles of the consultants sought are as follows:

1. Team Leader

Higher university degree in Social Studies/social science; knowledge of and experience in gender, organisational change and development, institutional capacity building; experience in results-based programme analysis. Minimum 20 years experience in the field of development with extensive experience in project/programme evaluation/appraisal; critical analytical ability and quality report writing ability. Experience in leading evaluation team in complex situation; fluency in English.

2. International Gender Specialist

MA in gender/women's studies; knowledge and experience of programme/project evaluation and critical analysis; understanding of evolving change process in governance; report writing capabilities; minimum 15 years experience in the field of social development, gender mainstreaming, organizational change; proven experience in carrying out project/programme evaluation and/or similar analytical exercises; experience in preparation of reports for similar assignments; fluency in English.

3. National Gender Specialist

MA in social studies/science preferably in gender, women's studies, sociology; 10-15 years experience in social development with specific focus on women's rights, gender and institutional development. Extensive knowledge and understanding of Afghanistan as a post conflict country; knowledge and understanding of the ANDS, Afghanistan Compact, I-NAPWA processes; understanding of Afghan national machineries and climate of international co-operation and donor agencies based in Afghanistan. Report writing ability; fluency in Dari and English.

8.0. Reporting and management

The Evaluation Team will report to the Senior Deputy Country Director, UNDP, Afghanistan and on a day to day basis will work under the overall guidance of the Programme Manager ICB and the Gender Focal Point in the UNDP Country Office.

Appendix 2 Evaluation programme/people interviewed

EVALUATION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT FOR THE MAINSTREAMING OF GENDER IN AFGHANISTAN 16 May to 5 June 2006

Activities	Person/Organisation met	Agency	Time		Location
			From	To	
Tuesday, 16th May 2006					
Arrival of International Consultants			15:00 hrs		
Security Briefing	Security Unit of UNDP	UNDP, Security Unit, UNDP	16:00 hrs		UNDP
HR Briefing	Ms. Elizabeth Bailly Ms. Asma Rahimi	Human Resource Unit, UNDP	16:30 hrs.		UNDP
Initial Briefing to the Evaluation Team (including national consultant)	Ms. Shipra Bose, Ms. Shabnam Mallick	UNDP	17:00 hrs		UNDP
Wednesday, 17th May 2006					
Meeting with Programme Team	ICB Programme Team/CO support team	ICB Programme Office MoWA	10:30 hrs	12:00 hrs	TAD/MoWA
	Programme meeting continues	ICB Programme Office MoWA	13:30 hrs	14:30 hrs	TAD/MoWA
Courtesy Call on the Minister	H.E. Dr. Massouda Jalal	Minister, MoWA	15:00 hrs	16:00 hrs	MoWA
	Programme meeting continues	ICB Programme Office MoWA	16:00 hrs	17:30 hrs	MoWA
Thursday, 18th May 2006					
Consultation with Regional Gender Advisor	Ms. Cecilia Valdivieso	Gender team UNDP Regional Service Centre, Colombo	08:30 hrs		Serena Hotel
Meeting with Partner	Mr. Sardar Muhammad Samoon	Afghan Institute of Learning and Management (AITM)	10:30 hrs.	11:30 hrs	AITM
Meeting with UN Agencies	Ms. Meryem Aslan Programme Director	UNIFEM	14:00 hrs		UNIFEM Main Office
Meeting with CIDA	Dr. Nipa Banerjee	Counsellor Development/ Head of Aid, CIDA	16:00 hrs		CIDA
Saturday, 20th May 2006					
Meeting with TAD	Mr. Farooq Sawab and the team	Head of TAD and the Team, MoWA	09:00 hrs	12:00 hrs	MoWA/TAD
Meeting with MoWA	H.E. Ms. Mazari Safa Deputy Minister	MoWA	14:00 hrs		MoWA
Meeting with TAD	Mr. Farooq Sawab, TAD	MoWA	15:00 hrs		MoWA/TAD
Meeting with UNDP Sr. Mgt and gender Team	Ms. Anita Nirody, CD a.i. Ms. Marcia Castro, Sr. Adviser to CD	UNDP	19:30 hrs	21:00 hrs	

Sunday, 21st May 2006					
Meeting with Partner	Ms. Hafifa Azim, Ms. Shukria Kazim	Afghan Women's Network (AWN)	9:00 hrs		AWN
Meeting with UN Agencies	Dr. Malama Meleisea Country Director	UNESCO	11:00 hrs.		UNESCO
Meeting with the Programme	Ms. Sitara Ms. Shipra Bose Ms. Shabnam Mallick	UNDP	12:00 hrs		UNAMA Restaurant
Meeting with the Senior Advisor to the CD	Ms. Marcia Castro Ms. Sitara Ms. Shipra Bose	UNDP	13:00 hrs		UNAMA Restaurant
Meeting with BRAC- Afghanistan	Mr. Jalaluddin Ahmed Country Head	BRAC Afghanistan	14:30 hrs		BRAC Office
Meeting with EU	Mr. Ville Varjola Head of Sector	EC/EU	16:00 hrs		EC Office
Monday, 22 May 2006					
Meeting with ANDS Secretariat	Ms. Khwaja Kakar	Process Manager ANDS	10:30 hrs		ANDS
Meeting with Civil Society Organisations	ACBAR, ACSF, FCCS, EA, CSANDS	Major players, CSOs, Afghanistan	14:00 hrs	16:00 hrs	TAD/MoWA
Tuesday, 23 May 2006					
Meeting with Governmental Institutions	H.E. Abdul Razaq Fakhri, Deputy Minister and Head CSO	CSO	9:00 hrs		CSO
Meeting with Government Institutions/Partner	Dr. Wali Hamidzada	Head, Training, Civil Service Commission	10:30 hrs		Civil Service Commission
Meeting Parliamentarians	Meeting with Female Parliamentarians and other Staff Members	Parliament	13:00 hrs		Parliament
Meeting with Governmental Institutions/Partners	Mr. Mustafa Mastoor Head, Budget Department Ms. Larisa Taheri, Gender Focal Point	Ministry of Finance (MoF)	15:00 hrs		MoF
Wednesday, 24 May 2006					
Meeting with International/Donor Community	Mr. Ruedi Hager Country Director	Swiss Cooperation Office Afghanistan	9:00 hrs		SDC
Meeting with MoWA Technical Assistance Providers	Ms. Jane Williams-Grube Ms Susan Reesor	Asia Foundation	10:30 hrs		ICB Meeting Room
Meeting with UN Agencies	UN Interagency Gender Group	UN	14:00 hrs	16:00 hrs	UNAMA Compound B
Thursday, 25 May 2006					
Meeting with International/Donor Community	Mr. Rolf Eriksson Counsellor, Head of Office Ms. Sofia Orrebrink Second Secretary, Development	SIDA	9:00 hrs		SIDA
Meeting with MoWA Technical Assistance Providers	Ms Rachel Wareham Gender Advisor Gender Mainstreaming	GTZ - German Technical Cooperation	11:30 hrs		GTZ
Meeting with International/Donor Community	Ms. Marianne Olesen First Secretary Development	Danish Embassy	14:00 hrs		Danish Embassy

Meeting with MoWA Technical Assistance Providers	Ms. Ernie Valdeavilla Ms. Homa Sabri	ICB/UNIFEM	15:30 hrs		ICB Meeting Room
Saturday, 27 May 2006					
Provincial Visit	DoWa MoLSA Ddept BRAC-Afghanistan.	Parwan Province	Day long		Offices of different agencies
Sunday, 28 May 2006					
Meeting with Partners	Ms. Nargis Nehan Administrative Vice-Chancellor	University of Kabul	10:00 hrs		Kabul University
Interview with Programme Officer/Backstopper for ICB in the Country Office	Ms. Shabnam Mallick	UNDP	14:00 hrs		UNDP
Meeting with International/Donor Community	Mr. Hans Knynenburg Head of Development Co-operation	Royal Netherlands Embassy	16:00 hrs		Royal Netherlands Embassy
Monday, 29 May 2006 ('White city' curfew, document reading at UNDP CO)					
Tuesday, 30 May 2006 ('White city' curfew, document reading at UNDP CO/internal meetings)					
Wednesday, 31 May 2006					
Consultation with UNDP	Meeting with Assistant Country Directors	UNDP	10:00 hrs		UNDP Conference Room
Thursday, 01 June 2006					
Consultation with UNDP	All UNDP Programme/Project Managers	UNDP	15:00 hrs	17:00 hrs	MoWA Conference Room
Saturday, 03 June 2006					
Meeting with Governmental Institutions/Partners	Mr. Md. Asif Rahimi Deputy Minister, Programmes	MRRD	10:00 hrs	11:00 hrs	MRRD
Individual interviews with ICB staff	Ms. Rokeya Khatun Ms. Marzia Zafarzada Mr. Mirwais Sadaat	ICB/UNDP	11:00 hrs	14:00 hrs	ICB Meeting Room
Sunday, 04 June 2006					
Meeting with International/Donor Community	Mr. Pieter Leenknecht Head of Representation	Belgium Embassy	9:30 hrs		Belgium Embassy
Meeting with International/Donor Community	Mr. Olivier Guillaume Conseiller de cooperation et d'action culturelle	Embassy of France in Afghanistan	11:30 hrs		Embassy of France in Afghanistan
Meeting with Human Rights Commission	Dr. Seema Samar Head, AIHRC	AIHRC	14:00 hrs		AIHRC
Interview with ICB Programme team	Ms. Shipra Bose Programme Manager	ICB/UNDP	15:30 hrs	17:30 hrs	ICB Meeting Room
Monday, 05 June 2006					
Preparing debriefing presentation					
Evaluation Team Debriefing Meeting	Evaluation Team	UNDP	14:00 hrs	15:30 hrs	UNDP Conference Room