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Human Rights and Women International Affairs Department

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Introduction

After fall of Taliban, and as a country in transition, Afghanistan is faced with many political, social, cultural and economic challenges. In the past three decades, the people of Afghanistan, especially women, faced various challenges but despite that, the State of Afghanistan has witnessed a series of achievements in past thirteen years by cooperation of international community.

Fortunately, after the fall of the Taliban regime and establishment of the new government and widespread presence of the international community, the situation changed. At the same time, the international community's contribution made the people of Afghanistan hopeful for establishment of a strong government that was expected to end past challenges and problems and a give a message of peace, tranquility and unity among all ethnic groups and equally defend from the rights of all citizens, especially that of women.

Ministry of Women Affairs was established under the new government structure to defend from women's rights. This is considered a big achievement. Also, during drafting of the Afghan Constitution, a series of consultation sessions were convened among different Afghan social groups, especially with women, and much attention was paid to clearly place the rights of women in the Constitution. The Afghan Constitution was approved in the presence of people's representatives, both men and

women, from all over the country, in early 2004.

In addition to the placement of women's rights in the Constitution, other laws and commissions such as the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Protection of Family Law, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, the High Commission for Elimination of Violence Against Women and the Commission for Addressing Child and Women Sexual Abuse Cases etc. have been codified and established to protect Afghan women's rights, with good results reported.

Many efforts have been made to protect women's rights through the government and international organizations and entities, which are seen as development in improvement of women's situation in Afghanistan. Despite these developments, there is still a series of challenges and problems ahead of Afghan women, and to be able to address them, we need time and effort.



Method of Work and Advisory Process

This document is the outcome of an important advisory process and active partnership of all related government entities representatives as well as civil society organizations. All ministries, governmental and non-governmental independent offices, Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations have actively taken part in preparation of this document.

The process for reporting is based on the UN related Committee guideline and major efforts have been put together to use comprehensive studies and partnership method in preparation of this document.

This document is prepared in accordance with principals of transparency, partnership, accountability, non-discrimination and comprehensiveness.

The Human Rights and Women International Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the responsible office, coordinator and presenter of the reports on resolutions, declarations, and international documents concerning women before international human rights conventions, has taken the following steps in preparation of this report:

- Preparation of action plan
- Identification of partner international entities
- Identification of partner national entities
- Establishment of responsible structure

1. Leadership Committee
 2. Technical Working Committee of Directors
 3. Technical Advisory Committee
 4. Coordination Committee
- Capacity Building for responsible structure
 - Review of national policies and programs
 - Convening various sessions of leadership committee, technical working committee and advisory committee
 - Preparation and finalization of mentioned document.

Part One:

Achievements

1. Fighting Violence against Women

In Afghanistan, women have the most challenges. In addition to the challenges in areas such as healthcare, economy and education, they face an even more complicated matter, namely the diverse forms of violence rooted in war and insecurity. Other factors go hand in hand and create this dire phenomenon, the most significant of which are: the lack of law enforcement; illiteracy (men and women); lack of awareness about women's rights and human rights; discriminatory customs and traditions; discrimination; and poverty. The most painful consequences of violence are psychological and physical. To combat these factors, the Afghan government has put in place good initiatives in the fight for violence against women.



1.1 Codification of Law on Elimination of Violence against Women

This law has been codified in the light of article 24 and 54 of the Afghan Constitution provisions and is composed of four (4) chapters and forty-four (44) articles, signed by President Hamid Karzai under Presidential Decree Number 91 dated 10/7/2009.



The Law has the following goals:

- Ensure the legal rights of women and protect their human rights;
- Protect family health, fighting against customs and traditions that are in contrary to Islamic provisions and that cause violence against women;
- Support the women who are victims of violence;
- Prevent violence against women;
- Provide public awareness and training on eliminating violence against women;
- Prosecute perpetrators of violence against women.

1.2 Paragraph 32 of Presidential Decree 45, dated 26/7/2012, concerning the elimination of violence against women states that:

- A- A vast public awareness campaign concerning violence against women shall be launched through mass media, forums and mosques as well as other informative tools for the people within a period of three months, and;
- B- The *Tashkil* and monitoring system for the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) shall be finalized, and its first report shall be submitted to the Council of Ministers within a period of six months.

1.3 Establishment of the High Commission on the Elimination of Violence Against Women

This Commission, which is composed of 12 competent representatives from different organizations was established per Presidential Decree Number 1039, dated 7/7/2005 in accordance with Article 15 of the Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women. The focus of the Commission is to fight against crimes of violence effectively and ensure coordination between government and non-government entities on the issue.

1.4 Establishment of Provincial Commissions on the Elimination of Violence Against Women



1.5 Establishment of Prosecution Office for Elimination of Violence:

The prosecution office for elimination of violence against women was established in 2009 to follow cases of sexual violence, family murders, family violence, sexual harassment, suicide, self-burning, cutting part of body, forced prostitution, preventing from right of work, preventing from inheritance and non-payment of alimony. So far it is functioning in 10 provincial offices.

1.6 Regulation on Women Protection Centers

This regulation, which is enacted based on Article 16 of the Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women consists of five chapters and 33 articles. It has been approved by the Council of Ministers and signed by the President. The goals of the regulation are to:



- Provide access to safe shelters for female victims of violence/women who are exposed to violence;
- Provide physical and psychological support to female victims of violence/women who are exposed to violence ;
- Ensure safety of the female victims of violence/women are exposed to violence;
- Provide access to justice to female victims of violence/women who are exposed to violence;
- Coordinate activities of governmental and non-governmental centers;
- Accommodate women in protection centers;
- Revive the psychological health of the female victims of violence, and;
- Prepare the ground for self-sufficiency of the women who are victims of violence or who are exposed to violence.

1.7 Completion of the Law on Guardianship of Orphans



The goal of this law is to support and assist orphans and children who have no caretaker and ensure their material and moral interests. This provision is in chapter 5 article 27 and is approved by the Council of Ministers.

1.8 Formulation of the Regulation on Elimination of Discrimination

The mentioned Regulation is composed of 5 chapters and 29 articles and is being enacted in the light of articles 4, 6, 7, 22 and 50 of the Constitution. It is based on Article 9 of the Labor Law and Article 10 of the Civil Servant Law and Code of Conduct of Civil Servant Regulation.



1.9 Signing the most important international documents

Afghanistan has signed a number of important international documents in regard to rights of women and addressing inequality and prejudices against women. These are: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention Against Torture.

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan signed the United Nations Convention against Administrative Corruption on 20 February 2004 and after processing of the Constitution in 23 December 2007 it was endorsed by Afghanistan government as per provision of paragraph 16 of article 64 of the Constitution after approval of Parliament based on article 90 of Constitution in eight chapters and seventy one (71) articles and Afghanistan became a member of this convention.

Preventing administrative corruption, facilitating and supporting international cooperation and technical assistance for prevention of administrative corruption, provision of transparent services to public and accountability of offices and government in general are the main objectives of the United Nations Convention against Administrative Corruption. This convention provides clear

guideline and standards for prevention of corruption and the fight against administrative corruption. As per the commitments of member states, all member states will be evaluated on implementation of the convention's recommendations. This has a particular impact on women who are unable to gain entry into the service structures or are overlooked in favor of men. Similarly access to services often comes at a higher than normal price, which in turn denies women as well as men from those services.

Also, Afghanistan has approached the World Trade Organization (WTO) and it will be able to join this worldwide organization by provision of requirements and measures to be followed and processed. During joining process interested countries have evaluated the manners and methods of foreign trade and Afghanistan's economic system and as per MoU inquiry process concerning different steps such as, regulation of prices, process of taxation, financial assistances will be continued for specific sectors especially for agriculture sector and regulation of exports.

While Afghanistan is committed to Open Market Economy, it also tries to develop these principals with its business partners. It is important that Afghanistan does not become a place for inflation of disqualified production of importers based on an inappropriate competition. As a country that desires to join this organization, Afghanistan wants to develop a fair and appropriate business system and settle the

disputes with our partners as per determined procedures of WTO.

It is to be mentioned that Afghanistan has received membership of WTO organization as a monitoring body in 2004 and since that Afghanistan has tried to meet requirements for being an appropriate member of this organization. The Initial Market Access Offer on Goods and Services being prepared and submitted WTO. Also, the Domestic Support Table being finalized and sent to WTO. The second working group session for Afghanistan's inclusion in WTO was successfully conducted on 8 June 2102 in WTO HQ.

1.10 Suggestion for amendments of enacted laws

Amendments to three laws and two regulations have been designed and completed by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Amendments in favor of women have been suggested in regard to 22 enacted laws of the country. A total of 101 documents have been reviewed by MoWA to ensure gender mainstreaming.



1.11 Provision of the policy for access of imprisoned women to justice

The goal of this policy is to improve legal situation and access of imprisoned women to justice and mechanism to address their cases fairly and in a timely manner. This is particularly important as women often remain imprisoned for unreasonable periods of time and for issues that are not classified as crimes in the criminal code.



1.12 Amendments to a number of articles of the Civil Servant Law in favor of women

As per the measures taken so far, a large number of cases of violence against women have been addressed through courts, EVAW prosecution court, Ministry of Interior Affairs, Ministry of Justice, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The various institutions have established databases for tracking violence cases. The Women Advisory Board, composed of representatives of Parliament, civil society organizations and women activists, has

been established. Preparing grounds for access to justice for the imprisoned women and other relevant cases of women are being evaluated through the Commission on the Remission and Mitigation of Punishments. Also, as per MoWA efforts, presidential decrees on relevant national and international days have been released for remission and mitigation of imprisoned women, except for those who committed crimes. Free legal services have been provided to women through employment of defense attorneys by cooperation of judicial and legal organizations. The condition of the women living in safe shelters has also been assessed.

2. Addressing Women's Challenges

The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) was formulated and prepared after several meetings and consultations with ministries, non-governmental organizations and civil society.



This plan has been prepared based on the women's needs, problems and challenges faced during the war and post war as well as in accordance with the country's commitments to ensure women's rights.

NAPWA is a 10 year plan which includes a timeframe of 2008-2018. The Government of Afghanistan and the international community recognized this working plan as an official document in the London Conference in 2010. Afghanistan's government committed to take greater measures in implementation of this plan with cooperation of international community.

NAPWA is part of the main efforts of the government to meet its commitments to women in a systematic, coordinated and consistent manner that aims to unify short term and long term measures the government and its partners will pursue for improvement of women's situation. It is to be mentioned that, in accordance with NAPWA, it is the general responsibility of all sectors, offices, and individuals to include relevant social gender equality concerns and issues into all areas of activities of the government i.e. policy making, budgeting, programing, project services and activities, recruitment, education, promotion and allocation of benefits and opportunities. The objective of NAPWA is strengthening gender social equality and is consistent with three pillars of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, i.e. Security; Governance, Rule of Law, and Human Rights, and; Economic and Social Development.

3. In Legal Sector

According to the Constitution, the Afghan government and all relevant entities have

the fundamental right to life, freedom and human dignity. The principals of equality and non-discrimination are clearly stated in Article 22 and, per its Article 7, these entities are obliged and committed to observe the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the international agreements and conventions to which Afghanistan is a party.



The Afghan government is looking for approaches to justify women’s rights from legal, ethical and human perspectives. Much has been done in this regard and noticeable changes have been brought to women’s condition. Strong evidence for this is the enrollment rate of hundreds of thousands of girls in schools and universities, as well as working in governmental and non-governmental organizations. The large presence of women in the nation’s legislative body places Afghanistan in 20th position among the countries that have highest level of women in legislation. The Afghanistan government has taken good steps towards obtaining women’s rights.

A. National Strategy of Legal Sector:

This Strategy emphasizes the provision of legal assistance to both women and men. Additionally, the National Strategy of Legal Sector points out the capacity development of legal and judicial staff, especially those of women, and emphasizes the need for the presence of women at all levels.



Provision of maximum resources through legal and judicial resources for the courts, interrogation and defense for women, ease in fair custody for women in accordance with international human rights standards, gender balance in recruitment, and protection of sexual harassment victims are all stipulated in this Strategy. In addition, the Strategy emphasizes the improvement of public awareness for women’s rights, consideration of women’s rights in informal justice mechanisms and consideration of women’s rights in legislation.

B. Establishment of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission:

The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission was established based on the Bonn Agreement, and is also emphasized in Article 58 of the Constitution.



In the event that government authorities do not pursue human rights violation cases or violation occurs in relation to this, individuals can visit the Human Rights Commission and request it to pursue the case. In addition to that, the Commission investigates human rights violation issues and provides the required information to the government and public. Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission designed a four year program that covered the period from 2010-2013. Its objectives are: promulgation, protection, and monitoring of men's and women's rights in the country. Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission has propounded the following five strategic objectives for its activities:

- Strengthening the leadership role of senior officials of the commission, including women;

- Training of human rights for public, including women;
- Advocating for human rights, including women's rights;
- Receiving public complaints, including from women, and;
- Evaluating registered complaints.

C. Other measures

Other measures that have been taken in relation to protection of women's rights and their political participation show the steady commitment of the Government for implementation of this objective:

- 1- Establishment of free legal aid centers;
- 2- Approval of the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women by a Presidential Decree;
- 3- Approval of the Women's Protection Centers Regulation;
- 4- Approval of the Policy for Improvement of Situation of Imprisoned Women
- 5- Drafting the Family Law
- 6- Capacity development of 1603 women staff and sending them abroad for continuation of education
- 7- Inclusion of a number of women in delegation of Hajj rites
- 8- Facilitating the presence of women in the Peace Advisory Jirga, Afghanistan's Constitution Jirga and Traditional Jirga.
- 9- Establishment of 22 gender units in ministries and other independent

governmental offices to monitor the implementation of NAPWA

- 10- Preparing the implementation plan for the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
- 11- Establishment of a monitoring committee for NAPWA, composed of MOWA, deputies and policy directors of ministries, and competent representatives of independent units and planning managers of 34 provinces
- 12- Vast presence of women in the Parliament (Wolise Jirga), Senate (Meshrano Jirga) and Provincial Councils
- 13- Facilitating the presence and participation of women in decision making governmental and non-governmental offices
- 14- Attracting coordination of governors for expanding women's partnership
- 15- Establishment of elite women advisory board for participation of women in the peace process, legislation and political partnership in different levels of the government

4. Education

Unfortunately, one of the areas that has been most effected by war and insecurity and other problems in Afghanistan is the education sector. The war has deprived our people from education, which is an undeniable right of every human, and has shut the doors of training and education centers on our faces. The women have

suffered the most and that is why education authorities pay more attention to this matter. These efforts take place in consideration of two points:

A: The religion of Islam does not consider sex as a barrier for education. According to a *Hadith* (Saying of the Prophet), the quest for education is obligatory upon both men and women. Therefore, Islam considers education as productive and decent for women.

Therefore, women's promotion in education lays the foundation for possibilities of economy, social, cultural, political, social and nurturing development. Hence, the government of Afghanistan's objective is to lay the foundation of balanced and academic education and higher education.

Up to present the government of Afghanistan has taken considerable steps towards this objective:



- 4-1 - 40% increase in number of female school students
- 4-2 - 30% increase in number female teachers

- 4-3- 15% increase in number of female students in Islamic studies
- 4-4- 16% increase in number of female students in vocational and technical education
- 4-5- 41% increase in number of female students in teacher training period
- 4-6- 39% increase in number of female students in internships
- 4-7- 14% increase in number of preliminary, intermediate and high schools for female
- 4-8- 40% increase in number of female students in literacy courses
- 4-9 Capacity building for 266 women staff
- 4-10 The number of female students in year 2010 in higher education centers was (12,465) and in year 2011 (14,826) and in year 2012 increased to (19,215).
- 4-11 In total, female compose 19% of students in higher education centers
- 4-12 Female students compose 15% of students of religious education
- 4-13 Encouragement of women in the capital and provinces to be present at schools for promoting literacy
- 4-14 Training of 200 government staff to familiarize them with Gender issues
- 4-15 Sending more than 1,584 female staff abroad through mid-term and long-term scholarships

The total undertaken steps increased the figure of female school students; for example: the number of female school students in 2001 was 5,000, while at the present it is more than 2,400,000, which demonstrates a positive process. Activities and achievements are as follows:

A. Education:

1. **General Education:** Approximately nine million students (39% female) are currently taught by 191,000 teachers (31% female) in more than 15,000 schools (including 10,000 girls' and mixed schools).



The balance of girls' participation in primary schools is 40%, in intermediate schools 35%, in high schools 34% and overall nationally considering all levels is 39%. The gross balance of participation has reached 72% (82% boys and 61% girls).

2. **Islamic Education:** approximately 250,000 (18% female) Madrasa students are taught by almost 7,000 Madrasa teachers (6% female) in more than 1,000 Islamic education institutes. Participation of girls in schools has increased because of: the growth in the number of general and Islamic education schools, convenience of public awareness campaigns, the establishment of local classes which shortens the distance between school and the students' residences, increased involvement of local and tribal elders in

decision making related to education through councils of schools, and the employment of more female teachers and construction of girls' schools.

3. Teacher Training: Approximately 72,000 (54% female) students are taught by 2,500 (20% female) teachers in more than 200 teacher training organizations. In order to address the shortage of female teachers and students, the MoE has considered regional privileges, allowances and dormitory facilities. Also, 98% teachers have successfully passed the Competency Test. Presently, 43% of teachers have degrees in education, and more than 130,000 teachers have taken teaching methods classes and courses in their subject areas.

4. Vocational and Technical Educations: 85,000 (11% female) vocational and technical students are being taught by nearly 4,000 (11% female) teachers in more than 200 vocational and technical organizations. Establishment of vocational and technical schools, and preparation of the curriculum as per the market and society needs, especially for females, has increased the enrollment rate.



5. Literacy: Approximately 500,000 (45% female) attendees of literacy courses are being taught in more than 20,000 literacy courses. During the past 12 years, 3 million (50% female) people have been educated through literacy courses, general education schools and mosques.

B. Higher Education:

- One of the achievements of the Ministry of Higher Education has been making of the foundation for proper education of females. In the past 12 years the MoHE has enrolled 22,231 female students in governmental universities and higher education institutes, from which 19,647 of them have graduated. It is notable that in the year 2002, there were no females in 19 governmental education entities.



- However, in the year 2013, the number of female students in 31 governmental higher education entities reached 24,982 and in 82 private higher education entities it reached 14,305. (In the year 2006, only 2 private higher education institutes were functional). In the year 2013, 2,944 female students

graduated from government higher education entities and 1,265 from private higher education institutes.

- The number of female teachers in the year 2002 in the governmental higher education entities was 204, but in the year 2013 this number increased to 641, which shows an increase of 314%.
- Based on the Konkori Examination (entry examination to university) results of year 2012-2013, the 1,732 female students who scored more than 230 out of 360 were admitted to faculties, while the criterion was 250 score for male students. 700 female students who scored lower than 224 to 230 were admitted to private higher education institutes free of charge, while the criterion for male students was a score of 241-250. Also, the female students who scored 167 were admitted to governmental institutes (2 years' education degree) and to private higher education institutes with the privilege of determined deduction fee.
- During the years 2012 and 2013, various gender workshops were launched in the Ministry and higher education entities.
- A portion of 30% scholarships has been given to females. In the current year, 100 female were offered out of country scholarships, from which 60 were sent; the other 40 could not travel due to family issues (this is counted as one of the challenges).

- Special consideration, or positive discrimination, is given for female students, such as:
 - Substitution from capital to provinces and from provinces to provinces without consideration of standard score.
 - Some female students separated from universities at their last year of studies, were readmitted by submission of authentic documentations through decision of leadership council of the Ministry, which is a great advantage to female students.
 - Substitution from provinces to the capital of country by consideration of two principles (marriage and permanent employment of applicant's parents in the capital).

6. Eradication of Poverty and Economic Development



Economic problems, unemployment and poverty have laid its shadow over all segments of the Afghan society, especially over women. There are a significant number of women who are the breadwinners of their families. It is evident

that poverty for women who are primary breadwinners of a family is greater than for men, and that being a woman increases the possibility of falling into poverty since the available coping mechanisms of a woman with poverty is lower. Especially, illiteracy and semi-literacy of women increases their poverty. More importantly, economic poverty directly and indirectly impacts the cultural and social situation of a family.

In consideration of the aforementioned points, one of the important elements of NAPWA is economic development, providing working opportunities and poverty reduction. The Government of Afghanistan pursues two main objectives in economic development of women. The first objective is eradication of poverty and eliminating it from families. The second objective is ensuring women play a role in economic development, considering the fact that economic development for women will not take place unless industrial activities are increased, as a result of which women will be released from economic problems and find their position in production. Women should be positioned on the path of economic development. This will not happen unless we go beyond traditional economic participation of women, such as agricultural, livestock, handicrafts and other small activities that do not generate good income. In today's world, creative women as entrepreneurs have laid the foundation of great innovations in the area of industry, production and services, and their role has been described as drivers of economic

development, national heroes, industry developers, investors, job creators, teachers of skills, and those willing to address challenges and problems for the market. We too must take such a route.

The ministries and related authorities have taken important actions in implementation of NAPWA concerning women's economic development and poverty reduction, and they also have other plans to be implemented. The actions taken so far are listed below:

- 6.1 548 companies in the private sector are managed by women
- 6.2 38,611 female staff have been sent abroad to receive higher education
- 6.3 Establishment of 55 women's saving groups
- 6.4 Establishment of loan associations for women
- 6.5 Establishment of 78 small and secondary businesses for women
- 6.6 Establishment of agricultural associations
- 6.7 Laying the ground for establishment of 6 soya bean companies in four provinces of the country (Kabul, Badakhshan, Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif)
- 6.8 Establishment of practical mechanisms for implementation of MoWA's infrastructure and economic projects for Ministry of Economy

6.9 Marketing for women in industry

6.10 Women-owned business companies have reached to 760.

6.11 Establishment of women cooperatives by women.

6.12 Conduct women handicraft exhibitions inside and out of country.

The Government of Afghanistan has taken a number of measures to promote the quality of citizens' life and to create employment opportunities and eradicate poverty. This includes participation of men and women in private businesses, agriculture, industry, and services, as detailed below:

A. Economic Program:

- Launching of 124 projects in areas of tailoring, embroidery, bee keeping, carpet weaving and gabion weaving; the number increased from zero to 4,178.



- Establishment of 3,839 saving and production groups for women in the villages; the number increased from zero to 37,205.
- Implementation of micro financing grants, each of at least 7,000 AFS.

The number of grants has increased from zero to 8,492.

B. Local Governance:

- Presence of women in 31,892 village development councils increased from 0% to 35%.
- Presence of women in 388 district development councils increased from 0% to 36%.
- Conducting professional and training programs in capital and provinces which it is beneficiary reaches almost to 150, 000 people.

C. Capacity Building:

- Conducting of training workshops, seminars and courses in management, leadership, communication, human rights and coordination: the number of women beneficiaries increased from zero to 437,000 persons.



- Sending of women abroad to obtain short-term and long-term training in different areas: the number increased from zero to 46 persons.

D. Coordination in the area of Economy:

- Paving the ground for establishment of business opportunities for women. Currently 700 businesses are managed by women (Newly established and did not exist in the past).

E. In Area of Women Partnership:

- The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disables with consideration of Gender and respect to rights of women has employed 65% women within its Tashkil (Organizational Chart) of year 2012. In the year 2012 this Ministry employed 508 women.

F. In Area of Vocational and Technical Trainings:

- In 2012 a number of vocational training courses such as; tailoring, embroidery, flower making, leathering, silk waving and curtain tailoring was conducted through the projects of Main Department for Management of Aids of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disables for (120 Women) in Kabul, (120 Women) Balkh and (120 women) Herat.



And the mentioned vocational training courses are planned to be conducted for 160 women in Kabul, in the 2013.

- In 2012, (1,883) women from different provinces graduated from vocational training courses through the projects of Department of National Programs for Development of Skills.

G. In the Area of Employment Opportunities

- In 2013, (508) women were employed in the Ministry and its related units through Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission's Open Competition Program.



- In 2012, (2,284) women were introduced to different Offices for

finding jobs and were issued Work License, through Human Resource and Employment Department.

H. Aid to Widows and Vulnerable Women:

- In 2011, (796) widows were financially assisted in Farza and Char Asiab districts of Kabul, Share Buzrg district of Badakhshan and Ab Kamarai district of Badghis province.
- In 2012, (747) widows received financial aids in Daikundi province. 400 widows received financial aids in Khuram and Sarbagh districts of Samangan and also a number of vulnerable families and individuals received assistances.

7. Healthcare

Health and access to healthcare services are basic rights of all human beings, but unfortunately they are not provided to some people, especially women in Afghanistan until current time.



The healthcare sector is faced with many challenges in our country that are explained in Part 3 of this report. Afghanistan government takes into consideration Article 12 of Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, which obliges all member states to ensure women are provided healthcare services and proper food during pregnancy and breast-feeding periods. It also takes into consideration Article 52 of the Afghan Constitution, according to which “the state shall provide free preventive healthcare and treatment of diseases as well as medical facilities for all and curative healthcare tools and facilities for all citizens in accordance with the provisions of law”. The Afghan Government is committed to work in the area of healthcare to promote women’s situation, ensure their psychological, social and physical wellbeing, and put its commitment into practice before national and international laws by increasing the healthcare special budget and quantitative and qualitative promotion of healthcare possibilities.



For this reason, promotion of women’s healthcare situation is one of the priorities of the State. With all the challenges and difficulties in the health sector, this sector

has taken valuable and important measures for women and children in different areas and has good achievements, highlighted as follows:

- 7.1 Increase in the access to healthcare services from 8% in 2001 to 80% currently.
- 7.2 Women's average life expectancy rate in Afghanistan ten years ago was 45 years, but now it is increased to 62 years. Mortality rate has reduced from 1600 to 327 per 100,000 people; a reduction of 2% to 0.3%. Ten years ago, the mortality rate was 1600 per 100,000 births which in recent years has reduced by five times. In other words, the mortality rate has declined from one death every 30 minutes to one every 4 hours. Despite these achievements, Afghanistan is among the countries in which mortality rate is high.
- 7.3 Mortality rate for children under 5 was 257 per 1,000; that has been reduced to 97. The mortality rate for children under 1 year of age was 161 per 1,000 ,and now it has reduced to 77 children.
- 7.4 Monitoring MoPH policies related to healthcare services and nurses' policy.
- 7.5 Establishment of 12 health centers for treatment of women drug addicts. Up until now 2,500 women have been treated.
- 7.6 Establishment of 10 social service centers for creating activities for those women under treatment.

7.7 60% expansion of healthcare services in cities and villages

7.8 During the last 10 years, Afghanistan has witnessed tangible progress in provision of healthcare services, especially in implementation of vaccination and immunity programs.

The reason for a decrease in mortality and children's death rate, as compared to previous years, is an increase in public awareness, access to and usage of medicines, an increase in the number of healthcare centers in different regions, and especially an increase in the number of midwives.

The MoPH has a leadership and monitoring role in drafting, preparing and managing a balanced healthcare policy. It provides free preventive healthcare and treatment of diseases through establishment of hospitals and healthcare facilities for all citizens in a well-balanced manner. It encourages and supports the establishment and expansion of healthcare services and private healthcare centers. It ensures healthcare services for the lame and disabled, as well as the survivors of martyrs, of those who have gone missing and of prisoners. It also takes necessary measures in elimination of all kinds of diseases and prevention of epidemic diseases. In addition to that, the services that are carried out during the last 12 years are as follows:

A. Vocational and Technical Services:

- The graduates of midwifery training in 28 midwife schools increased from zero to 2,339, in comparison with years 2001 to 2013.
- Female graduates from 18 nursing schools increased from zero to 1,064, as compared to the years 2001 to 2013.

B. Healthcare Services:

- The maternal mortality rate per 100,000 decreased from 1600 to 327 deaths, as compared to years 2001 to 2013.



- Infant mortality rates per 1,000 decreased from 165 to 77 deaths as compared to years 2001 to 2013.
- Mortality rate for under-5 children per 1,000 decreased from 257 to 97 deaths as compared to years 2001 to 2013.
- Fertility of women in comparison with year 2001 to 2013 decreased from 64 to 51.

C. Administrative:

- Improvement of administrative and organizational structure for women's

interest through the establishment of Gender Departments, Healthcare and Fertility, Child and Juvenile Healthcare and Family Protection Centers, Directorates of Nursing and Midwife.

- Presence of women staff in Healthcare Sector have increased from 0% to 22%.

Ministry of Women's Affairs have also provided services in healthcare, and its details are given below:

D. Healthcare Policy:

- Completion of the policy for increasing the number of women in healthcare sector (This did not exist before and is newly established).

E. Healthcare Program:

- Coordination for education of 6 girls in midwifery in Molina Raze Medical Sciences Institute.
- Conducting of door to door campaign in the capital and 34 provinces related to environmental hygiene, negative effects of narcotic drugs on health, epidemic diseases, elimination of violence against women, partnership of women in decision making, breast feeding and its importance, and child rights..

F. Maternal Healthcare Training:

Despite constant war, Afghanistan has noticeable achievements in rehabilitation of its healthcare system. This can be proven by the fact that in the year 2008, 65% of the

country's population had access to basic healthcare services while in 2002 it was only 9%. Healthcare Survey of 2006 shows an increase in the number of female staff. The figures from HMIS Department of MoPH and other sources show that basic healthcare centers have been more than doubled, from 31% in 2004 to 79% in 2009. The number of midwives has increased from 467 persons in 2004 to 1,961 persons in 2009. The Afghanistan Household Survey shows that 19% of deliveries are carried out by specialized staff, while NRVA 2007 shows this figure as 24%. During evaluation of healthcare services through the Balance Score Card method in 2006, it was found that probably women access healthcare services more than men. It is important to be mentioned that a 2009 investigation about obstacles ahead of healthcare access verifies the findings of aforementioned evaluation. The mentioned investigation shows that women visit healthcare facilities more than men and also that men prefer self-treatment or refer to Mullahs (Clergies) and shrines for treatment purposes, and only when not cured do they visit governmental and private healthcare facilities.

Afghanistan, after decades of armed conflicts, is still in need of healthcare services, especially for women and children who are in extremely severe condition. After an analysis of the number of deaths of women during their reproductive years from 1999 to 2002, which was carried out in four regions of Afghanistan, it was found

that the rate of mothers' risk of death from 6-9 persons is one. The risk of maternal death in cities is considerably lesser and while moving towards villages this number increases. Two recent World Health Organization studies conducted in 2008 estimated maternal mortality rate as 1,400. Altogether, the mentioned studies shows that despite progresses made during 2000 to present, the maternal mortality rate in Afghanistan is very high in comparison to international standards. Although, during the last seven years many efforts have been put together by Fertility Healthcare Department of MoPH in prioritization of mothers and infants healthcare and as well as access to Fertility Healthcare Services being developed, still there is much to be done.

8. Political Participation of Women in Leadership and Decision Making:

The Afghan government and all relevant entities according to the Constitution have the fundamental rights to life, freedom and human dignity.



The principals of equality and non-discrimination are clearly stated in Article 22 and as per its provision of Article 7 are obliged and committed to observe United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the international agreements and conventions to which Afghanistan is a party. The Afghan government is looking for approaches to justify women's rights from legal, ethical and human perspectives. A lot has been done in this regard and noticeable changes have been brought to women's condition. A good evidence for this is the enrollment rate of hundreds of thousands of girls in schools, universities, and working in governmental and non-governmental organizations. The large presence of women in legislative body puts Afghanistan in 20th position among the countries that have highest level of women in legislation.

In order to protect women's rights, the Afghan state is planning to lay the ground for partnership of men and women in drafting the laws and implementation of justice and criminalize d harmful traditions, underage and forced marriage, replace traditional ways of solving disputes with laws and regulations, promote capacity and awareness of judicial staff and public on citizen's rights especially the rights of women as well as provide awareness to women on their own rights. In order to develop women's leadership and political partnership, the state envisages establishing an entity called Women's Leadership Promotion Organization to introduce positive discrimination in favor of

women and establish kindergartens and nurseries for children of employed women. The initiative would strengthen the mentality of cooperation between men and women and lay the ground for increased participation of women in society.

The Afghan state uses all its strength to highlight the presence of women in political, social, cultural, academic, programmatic and economic areas. The increase of women's participation lays the ground for big changes in society. The more active the participation of women, the more progress there is in society. Below are examples of measures taken so far in protection of women's rights and political partnership that show the firm decision of Afghanistan for implementation of this objective:

- Capacity development of 1603 women staff and sending them abroad for continuing their education
- Inclusion of a number of women in delegation of Haj rites
- Facilitating presence of women in the Peace Advisory Jirga
- Establishment of 22 gender units in ministries and other independent governmental offices to monitor the implementation of NAPWA
- Preparing the implementation plan for the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
- Establishment of monitoring committee for NAPWA, composed of MOWA, deputies and planning directors of ministries and competent representatives of independent units

- Facilitating the presence and participation of women in decision making process of governmental and non-governmental offices
- Attracting coordination of governors for encouragement of women's partnership
- Active presence of women in decision making level of Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Presence of women as ambassador, minister's advisor, advisor, first secretariat, second secretariat and third secretariat in embassies of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- Active participation and presence of women in internal and external appointment committees, commissions and working groups of MoFA



- Presence and participation of 30% women in short-term and mid-term scholarships of MoFA
- Establishment of elite women advisory board for participation of women in peace process, legislation and political partnership in different levels of the government

9. Women and Media:

Afghanistan has signed the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Article 19 of the Declaration states that: "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinion without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".



The Afghanistan National Development Strategy recognizes the Media as independent, pluralist, accessible in all parts of the country and producer of authentic information about life of Afghans. The pluralism of media is one of achievements of Afghanistan's newborn democracy after the fall of Taliban regime.

The Ministry of Information and Culture as a principal partner for Media has paid serious attention in determination of women's position, the fight against family violations, the denunciation of harmful traditions, and publication of women's views as a main topic in governmental and non-governmental Media.

Regarding private Media sector, the Ministry of Information and Culture has

established legislative and disciplinary steps to protect women’s position and views in Media and to prevent violence. Similarly, the Ministry has cooperated in establishment of coordination and consensus between private and government Media concerning the aforementioned fundamental issues. This has caused an increase in participation of women to express their opinions and have improved their decision making in the Media sector. Promulgation of culture is not only the duty of Ministry of Information and Culture, but every member of society is responsible to play his or her role in cultural development of society. Especially, the training centers, Media and civil society organizations play a significant role in correction and development of society’s culture.

Achievements:

A- Escalation of women participation in decision making concerning the programs in the media, especially enhancement of women’s skills, and women’s access to Information Technology for improvement of their capacity to fight against negative images of women in different private and governmental Media.



B- Mainstreaming of gender in Media programs and policies.

C- The Ministry of Information and Culture as the main actor in media affairs has provided necessary advice and instruction to Media concerning adoption and implementation of gender equality in Media, which requires presence of men and women in all levels, from reporters to managers.

D- Support women in Media through request for women’s training; the Ministry of Information and Culture have initiated this.

It should be noted that women have found a special position overall country, especially in governmental and private Media, after the fall of the Taliban regime. There remains still a need for more technical education and knowledge so women can seek better positions in Media.

10. Women and Environment:

The National Environmental Protection Agency has taken a serious of steps concerning gender equality and women empowerment within the Agency and at country level in relation to environment,

and as per Beijing Declaration, the 4th International Conference on Women its committed to implement it.



As the women are more involve in transition of environmental culture in every country, the National Environmental Protection Agency has taken the following steps for promotion of gender equality and women empowerment:

- Convening a training workshop on Climate Change, its impacts, methods of reduction and role of women in reduction of climate change and protection of environment for 110 female teachers of Kabul high schools, MOWA, Kabul Provincial Council representatives, Geodesy and Cartography.
- Participation and active involvement of the Agency's female staff in national and international programs.
- Obtaining membership of Women Leadership Network through Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission for 4 female staff of the Agency.
- Convening environmental training workshops for capacity building of literacy school teachers, kindergarten

teachers, police soldiers and country's religious scholars.

- Convening 9 workshops under title of awareness on prevention of animal's hunting and to protect natural heritages and empower women in this area.
- Each year 14 vocational training workshops take place through Gender Unit and all female personnel of the Agency take part in it.
- 777 women from 6 region, 10 districts of Kabul and 10 provinces received awareness training.

At the end, it is to be noted that the National Environmental Protection Agency is putting all its efforts together to protect all citizens of the country, especially women and children from direct and indirect impacts of environmental and natural damages. Being insensitive about protection of environment will cause serious problems for all citizens.

11. Women and Security



Security is one of the important and vital issues for all people of society, especially

for women. There are two issues in this regard: first, the impact of insecurity severely affected women and children. The main reasons behind insecurity are poverty, ambition for power, and trafficking of narcotics and of child and women. Therefore, providing the security is one of the priorities. The second issue is the lack of presence of women in the security sector. Until now, women have not had a significant presence in the security sector due to different reasons. Women can play an effective role in solving disputes, promulgation and consolidation of a peace culture, establishment of security, and struggle against threats against women in public and private life. The women in Police Special Forces have played an extraordinary role in night raid operations.

One of the points that NAPWA has emphasized is the increased presence of women in security sector. It talks about an active presence of women in this sector both in terms of quantity and quality. The Ministries of Defense (MoD) and Interior (Mol) are responsible for implementation of this objective. These two ministries shall promote women's partnership, develop their capacity, and work more in gender mainstreaming. Good measures have been taken in these two ministries and considerable progress such as below has been made in this regard:

- 11.1 Recruitment of 2,852 women;
- 11.2 Graduation of 90 women from military training;

- 11.3 Facilitation of professional training for 784 women within and out of the country;
- 11.4 Sending 7 women staff for aviation (pilot) training out of country;
- 11.5 Expansion of Gender and Human Rights Unit to a Department ;
- 11.6 Establishment of Family Response Unit within organizational structure of Criminal Department of Mol;
- 11.7 Application of special telephone numbers to receive complaints, especially about violence against women;
- 11.8 Determination of 3,000 position for females in Mol;
- 11.9 Facilitating recruitment of women in ANA and ANP;
- 11.10 Mainstreaming of gender in Police Curriculum (placement of women in police working time table).

Part Two:

Challenges and Opportunities

For improvement of women's situation and removing obstacles, it is necessary to struggle against many existing problems and challenges in this regard. The implementation of most programs and plans for improvement of women's situation is also negatively impacted as a result of these existing challenges. Despite these challenges, activities and sacrifices have been made by the Afghanistan Government and particularly the Ministry of Women's Affairs to eliminate many obstacles, yet many challenges and obstacles remain, which require more time and effort to eliminate them. Generally the main existing obstacles are outlined as follows:



1. In line with the improvement of Rule of Law:

Rule of law is perhaps more like an idealistic thought, and its consideration in a country like Afghanistan requires a long path to be followed, in order to consider it in all aspects; in a better way and equally. There are many challenges hindering the rule of law in Afghanistan that could lead to the violation of individuals' rights.

Three major factors in the following areas can be cited:



1.1 Security of judges:

Lack of security affects all aspects of rule of law and its effects on the organs of justice and judiciary have been more considerable. Lack of security of judges has been the greatest obstacle facing the judiciary branch of Afghanistan. Judges with nothing attempt to provide justice in areas that require wide-ranging military preparation for the military forces due to high insecurity. In such a condition, naturally, the rule of law is confronted with serious obstacles.



The execution power of the judges' orders goes under the authority of the executive branch of the State, however, in rural areas of Afghanistan, if the executive bodies do not obligate themselves to obey and consider the judges' order, there is no alternative power/body to execute the judges' order.

Additionally, in such areas, the judge is obliged to be more dependent on the Chief of District and Chief of Police in order to protect his/her life, which undermines the personal independency of the judge. Hence considering the existing situations, it is possible that in most cases the order courts shall not be executed by the executive bodies, especially in the areas with high security threats and far away from the eyes of the central authority. Also, the violent nature of the armed opponents is considered as an intentional threat against the lives of judges and this could be the major obstacle against the rule of law. During the past four years, 58 judges and staffs of the courts have been killed as a result of the armed attacks by opponents and 68 others have been injured. This is a strong justification that lack of security is the major obstacle against the rule of law and provision of humanitarian rights of individuals.

The lack of security, lack of secure residential areas for the judges, lack of infrastructure for most of the courts of the country and lack of transportation system result in judges being more dependent to the local executive authorities in the rural areas. During the past four years the judiciary branch has constructed 64 new infrastructures and is in need of 1554 more new infrastructures. Hence lack of infrastructure is considered as the major challenge for provision of the rule of law and humanitarian rights confronting the judiciary power of Afghanistan.

1.2 Complexity of laws and executive regulations and bureaucratic culture governing related organs:

The complexity of laws and bureaucratic culture governing related organs itself are considered

as major factors in the lack of acceleration of the process of rule of law.



As indicated in the first recommendation, as a result of the oversight by General Directorate of the Oversight on the execution of court orders, there are many cases in which individuals remained in the prison even after serving their sentence, or even though considered as innocent. Some of the innocent based on the statement of the attorney had not yet been released; others remain due to their transfer to the provinces and local attorney offices for the execution of order. Some remain due to failure to provide guarantee till finalization of the court order. Some failing to pay fines must remain in prison until the fines are paid, and some others remain due to lack of consideration of in-charge officers concerning the end of their prison time.

The above mentioned cases indicate that complex rules, regulations and governing administrative culture in the related organs are the reasons for such kind of extra imprisonment and lack of execution of the courts' orders.

1.3 Corruption:

Corruption could be considered as the main challenge against the implementation of law and courts' orders. The statistics of crimes resulting from corruption that have been

considered by the anti-corruption criminal courts reflect this situation.

Among these, the anti-corruption courts have been confronting most of the threats resulting from culture of impunity, because among those accused and convicted of corruption, there are people who enjoy great political and social influence and power. During the reporting period, 24 decisions and judiciary statements of the anti-corruption courts in Afghanistan have not been executed. These courts have always expressed their concerns in this regard, so that the Office of Oversight of the Execution of Courts Orders put steps forward for its elimination and seriously asked the Office of the Attorney-General to take the necessary measures in this regard. This institution is considering two civil cases: one in Kunduz province and other in Kabul province, in which it is observed that powerful people have prevented the execution of decisions of the courts.

In conclusion it is to be mentioned that the Afghanistan judiciary power acknowledges that the above mentioned accomplished actions are not sufficient for the goals set in this regard and is determined to take new and serious actions in the future to achieve its goals.

2. Regarding the elimination of violence against women:

2.1 On the Government side:

Despite of that amount of work that has been done for elimination of violence against women, but yet there are many serious problems and challenges remaining confronting combating the violence against women and implementation of the NAPWA. These challenges are as follows;

- 2.1.1 Non implementation laws properly and comprehensively, among them the Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW Law), all over the country.
- 2.1.2 Lack of serious cooperation and coordination between justice and judiciary organs in regard to the implementation of the EVAW Law.
- 2.1.3 Lack of existence of special court for considering the cases of violence against women.
- 2.1.4 Existence of Gender perspective in different fields.
- 2.1.5 Low level of providing required education regarding *Sharia* and legal rights of women all over the country especially in districts and villages.
- 2.1.6 Lack of existence of a joint database between responsible authorities for comprehensive follow-up of cases of violence and violation of the law.
- 2.1.7 Lack of possibilities and opportunities in the rural areas.
- 2.1.8 Lack of sufficient and professional staffs in the legal positions.
- 2.1.9 Lack of Women Protection Centers (shelters) in some of the provinces.
- 2.1.10 Incomplete implementation of the NAPWA in provinces.
- 2.1.11 Security challenges.



2.2 The people:

2.2.1 Most of the violence that occurs has root on the inappropriate culture and traditions. To overcome these issues, it is important to change perceptions and cultural beliefs. It is also worthy to note that changes cultural beliefs is a time consuming and difficult process, and this can be regarded as the biggest challenge facing Afghan women..

2.2.2 A weak economy and poverty has added to these problems in families. It is worth mentioning that 50% of the violence is born of poverty.

2.2.3 The low level of public awareness also has negatively impacted the role of women in the society.

2. In the security field

Security is one of the fundamental and crucial demands of human needs, which itself results in cultural, scientific, economic and political development. In Afghanistan, security challenges have been one of the major problems especially as they negatively impact women's activities and have been a great obstacle against women's development and attraction to working in the security institutions.

a. Recruitment problems:

There are problems and challenges regarding women being attracted to join the security forces: negative customs and traditions, prejudices, and insecurity are cultural traditions ruling the Afghan society. It is worth mentioning that despite the mentioned challenges, the interest of women to join the ranks of National Police and National Army is increasing.

b. The problems of lack of women in the security forces:

The other major challenge confronting Afghanistan is low turnout of women in the security forces. As a result, the lack of policewomen for searching the women at the entrance gates of the cities has led to insurgents being able to enter the city dressed in women's clothing and conduct suicide attacks and destructive activities.



The lack of policewomen in the areas of criminal investigation, intelligence, administration and logistics are other major problems. Low participation of the women in the National army has resulted in most of the night operations which require women forces face serious problems.

c. Protection of Rights:

Three decades of war and insecurity caused many challenges for the protection of rights of the citizens. Achieving full protection of rights requires more time. In such a situation,

protecting all aspects of citizens' rights is a challenging task, yet the Government of Afghanistan has tried to use its all capabilities to protect the security rights of the citizens, particularly of the women, in all of its aspects: political, psychological, social, educational, professional, cultural, economic and judicial. Many challenges continue to confront the Afghan government to achieve these goals, of which some examples are as follows:

- i. Lack of judges and professional attorneys, particularly in provinces.
- ii. Lack of women's access to justice completely.
- iii. Non implementation of laws properly.
- iv. Increasing violation of women's rights, despite the fact that compulsory and under aged marriages, *baad*, exchange and sale is illegal, yet the monitoring of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and other institutions indicates that a high percentage of under aged girls are forced into under aged or forced marriage, which itself is a clear violation of women's rights and is considered as a major challenge.
- v. Deprivation of women from ownership of property and heritage continued. The great religion of Islam and civil law explicitly provide these rights to women, but this right of women is violated.
- vi. lack of access of most of the women to the judicial system and supporting services.
- vii. Parochial and racial divisions and culture of impunity are the other challenges.
- viii. lower presence of women in the field of judiciary (attorney, advocates and police

officers) results in the women's viewpoint not being considered in these fields.

3. Leadership and political participation of women:

As it was mentioned the status of women in the areas of development of leadership and political participation have changed positively, which indicates the success of Afghanistan Government towards achieving of this goal. Despite of all these achievements there are also existing challenges.



- a. As a result of the dominating role of men in most of the institutions, there are sometimes negative viewpoints against the role of women in society.
- b. Lack of female professional personnel in provinces has roots in other problems, such as the lack of educational opportunities for women resulted in their lack of development, which ultimately resulted in a lack of professional women in the society.
- c. Lack of proper and required opportunities in remote provinces.
- d. Marginalized presence of women in some institutions; in most institutions women have no major role in decision making.

- e. Violence and insecurity; these factors form one of the obstacles for women's participation in political and social fields, preventing women from playing their role as they should to do so.
- f. Economic weakness; if women are economically weak, naturally it will affect their social position.

4. Economic development, work and poverty:

So many obstacles and problems exist in the areas of economic development and provision of employment opportunities, caused women poverty and resulted in the prevention of economic development. Some of those are cited as follows:

- a. A small portion of women have access to education, due to the problems that often have been mentioned. Women have been deprived of access to the educational centers, hence naturally with illiteracy or low level of literacy it is not possible to achieve the required skills for economic development. In such a condition, the economic development of women could not be expected.



- b. Multiple births: As it was mentioned above, in Afghanistan most women are illiterate or have a low level of literacy, which resulted in them not being able to

benefit from the family planning programs or have not been able to manage the required intervals between births. This situation on the one hand weakens their capability and on the other hand results in the loss of economic opportunities for women.

- c. Restrictions and multiple factors mean that women have not been able to play their proper role in economic activities. One hand they spend most of their time in household activities and on the other hand the lack of the required security prevents them from economical activities. Cultural restrictions also are considered as a major challenge against economical activities of women.
- d. Many women are deprived of most of their economic rights as that they do not have financial resources for their economic activities.
- e. In Afghanistan there are often restrictions on women's participation in the areas of civil service, unions, chambers of commerce and local organizations; in such a condition they will lose the opportunities for participation in economic projects.
- f. Lack of presence of proper market for selling the products of women all over the country.
- g. Existence of 9% of needy women and children without access to any kind of survival facilities.
- h. Lack or absence of proper places for holding exhibition for marketing women products.

5. In the area of Health:

Security challenges create very difficult and hard conditions for the people in the area of health and their access to the medical facilities. The major challenge that the Afghanistan government is facing is to provide health services all over the country. Although many works have been done in terms of building hospitals, clinics etc., and currently Afghan citizens are not obliged to go to neighboring countries for treatments of very common disease, there still are many problems in the area of providing health services. Hence, despite partial progress, Afghan women and children face serious health challenges. The major challenges in this area are stated as below:



a. Lack of professional and experienced medical doctors In terms of quantitative and qualitative care, especially the female doctors means women are most affected. Since cultural and traditional beliefs make it difficult for women to access health services and to be treated by male doctors. Existence of 4 doctors for every 100,000 people and one bed for every 3,000 patients is the other problem. Only 24% of the doctors and 21% on nurses are female, and in 21% of the health centers, only one midwife is serving. As a result of lack of female doctors, nurses and midwives, the health of women is directly affected.

- b. Lack of continued health care during pregnancy as result of lack of professional personnel, particularly female personnel in some parts of the country (30% of health centers lack female staffs), the rate of child and maternal mortality is increasing. In Afghanistan only 19% of births take place under professional health workers, and only 12% of women receive professional and prenatal care.
- c. Regarding the problem of providing basic health services for children and mothers by primary health clinics, 40% of the population of Afghanistan has no access to basic health services, and the percentage of women in this category is higher.
- d. Lack of access to the quality health services, lack of necessary foods, shelter, drinking water, under aged marriages and multiple births contribute to the problems for women's health.
- e. Higher percentages of TB patients in Afghanistan are women.
- f. There is a higher concentration of doctors in urban centers and lower presence of medical personal in rural areas.
- g. Lack of infrastructure for some of the health centers; country-wide, 218 medical centers has no infrastructure and 81 centers are without standard infrastructures.
- h. Security challenges are the other problems that seriously affected maternal health.

In conclusion, the above mentioned challenges cause women to be faced with serious vulnerability and increase the statistics of child

and maternal mortality in Afghanistan at the international level.

6. In the area of education:

With no doubt the educational system is considered as one of the major pillars of development in any country, since development of this sector will pave the way for development of other sectors. As a result of many decades of disaster and insecurity, Afghanistan faced many challenges and problems in all sectors and particularly in educational sector. As it was indicated on the portion of development, after the new political changes in Afghanistan, the growth of education for all and particularly for women has been considerably improved, yet women continue to confront many challenges and problems.



- a. Lower access of women to education, due to refusal by their families or as a result of early marriage.
- b. Security problems in some of the provinces because of the remoteness of schools prevent girls from going to schools.
- c. Lack of educational facilities and opportunities in the rural areas.
- d. Lack of girls schools preventing them to get admitted.

- e. Lack of female teachers in some villages where parents allow their girls to attend schools.
- f. Low education levels of the teachers.
- g. Social disagreement about and resistance to girls' education.

7. In the area of Implementation of NAPWA:

The plans and programs which are linked to national priorities and considered as the main activities of the State in improvement of women's situation are faced with different challenges and problems such as below:



- a. Insufficient allocation of budget for NAPWA program.
- b. Reduction of special budget of MOWA in Budget Defense Committee of MOF.
- c. Absence of Gender Special Budget for implementation of gender issues other than NAPWA.
- d. Submission of all responsibilities of NAPWA implementation to Gender Units of each ministry; at the same time there is a low level of taking responsibility at leadership level in some ministries.
- e. Low level of cooperation with MOWA as monitoring and supervising body in implementation of NAPWA.

8. Women's Challenges in Media:

By establishment of new State in Afghanistan, widespread efforts were carried out both by the international community and national entities towards putting the foundation of democracy, human rights, women's participation and improvements of their life. This is one of the main objectives of cultural socialization to establish a pluralist culture and to envisage national and historical values of the country so that freedom of speech is practiced in Media. The Afghanistan National Development Strategy recognizes the Media as independent, pluralist, accessible in all parts of the country and producer of authentic information about life of Afghans. The pluralism of media is one of the achievements of Afghanistan's newborn democracy after the fall of Taliban regime.



Although the relevant authorities as a principal partner for Media have paid serious attention in determination of women's position, the fight against family violations, and denunciation of harmful traditions and publication of women views as a main topic in governmental and non-governmental Media, still there are challenges and problems in front of women in this regard. The low presence of women in social, political and media activities is counted as the factors of insecurity. The challenges that render women's activities in offices and community are as follows:

- a. Gender inequality ;
- b. Non-implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in Media programs and policies;
- c. Utilization of women as a campaigning tool in Media;
- d. Low Media outreach to specialists women
- e. Apparent Gender inequality in all areas of social life;
- f. Unemployment of women in all levels of Media;
- g. Women lack of understanding of enacted laws of the country ;
- h. Absence of women's efforts, courage and assurance in the society;
- i. Annoyance and harassment of women at work station.

Part Three:
Statistics and Figures

		12 Year Achievements (1380-1392)			
		Gender Statistics and Figures in State Offices			
Presence of Women in Education Sector	Sections	Issues	Percentage		
	Schools	Number of Girls	0%	40%	
		Number of Schools	.	1000	
		Number of Female Teachers	0%	31%	
	Teacher Training Institute	Female Students	0%	54%	
		Female Teachers	0%	20%	
	Technical and Vocational Institutes	Students	0%	11%	
		Teachers	0%	11%	
	Literacy	Students	0%	45%	
	Higher Education Institutes	Governmental Students	.	22231	
		Private Students	.	14305	
		Female Teachers	0%	49%	
		Scholarship for Female	0%	30%	
	Presence of Women in Public Health	Technical and Vocational Services	Midwife Graduates	.	2339
Nursing Graduates			.	1064	
Healthcare Services		Mother Mortality Rate per 100,000	1600	327	
		Infant Mortality Rate per 100,000	165	77	
		Mortality Rate for children under 5	257	97	
		Women Fertility Rate	64	51	
Administrative		Presence of female staff in Healthcare		22%	

Presence of Women in Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission	Employment	Women Employment	0%	50%
	Elections	Voters	0%	39%
		Parliament	0%	27%
	Leadership	Out of Country Representatives	0%	27%
Presence of Women in Social Entities	Peace Advisory Jirga			25%
	Traditional Jirga			18%
	Bon Conference			32%
	Constitution Loya Jirga			20%
	In Decision Making			9%
	In Legal and Justice Affairs			10%
	Civil Society			22%
	Local Council			35%
Presence of Women in Economic Development, Labor and Poverty Sectors	Civil Society Organizations			30%
	Ministry of Economics			13%
	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disables			65%
	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development			5%
	Ministry of Finance			6%
	Ministry of Business and Industry			23%
	Ministry of Urban Affairs			-
	Ministry of Mines			14%
	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock			22.4%
	Ministry of Transport and Aviation			9%
Security Sector	Ministry of Public Health			22%
	Ministry of Counter Narcotics			9%
	Ministry of Defense Ministry of Interior National Directorate of Security			5%

Protection of Human Rights	Ministry of Justice			5%
Women Leadership Development and Political Partnership	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Services Commission			17%
	Central Statistics Office			12%
	Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs			-
	Ministry of Information and Culture			12%
	Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs			13%
	Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations			9%
	Independent Directorate of Local Governance			7%
	Ministry of Borders			8%

Part Four:

Priority Areas

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has implemented useful activities within a period of more than one decade aiming to enhance women situation in Afghanistan. The Government also envisages good programs for the future through which gender equality and women's empowerment in all aspects will be strengthened, especially in areas of political partnership, gender equality, presence in international community, presence in security forces, establishment of women network, protection of women's rights, capacity building, vocational trainings, technical trainings, public awareness and promotion of women and men knowledge and information in protection of women's rights. The programs are listed as follows:

1. Continuation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan government support in widespread participation of women in political, economic, cultural and social structures;
2. Encouragement of political parties in support of women to take part in political activities;
3. Establishment of positive motivation for women in social and economic activities;
4. Enhancing women's vocational skills;
5. Increase effective measures to ensure gender equality among government employees;
6. Widespread presence of women in national, regional and international communities and networks;
7. Encouragement of women to participate in elections;
8. Women's social safety;
9. Women's access to justice in capital, provinces, districts and villages;
10. Participation of women in decision making (as a real role player not as a symbolic role);
11. Designing and implementing special programs aiming to strengthen women in recognition of their responsibilities;
12. Women's capacity building in designing and implementation of action plans;
13. Increase number of women in police structure to provide security;
14. Improvement of women's situation in prisons;
15. Strengthening, promoting and increasing monitoring on healthcare services in provinces;
16. Improving and emphasizing on quality of medicines and healthcare services;
17. Increase the number of women in police forces and training them to participate in providing better security for elections;
18. Establishment of provincial offices for the prosecution office of elimination of violence against women;
19. Establishment of special court of elimination of violence against women;
20. Cooperation of governmental entities with Independent Electoral Commission in provinces to encourage women to actively participate in elections;
21. Reporting to Human Rights Commissions that Afghanistan has joined;
22. Implementation of the National Action Plan of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 concerning women, peace and security;

23. Establishment of an overall network with participation of women from all provinces aiming to establish a specific authority for overall decision making concerning women;
24. Supporting women candidates in elections;
25. High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption, if needed, will take necessary actions in signing of regional and international documents through MoFA in implementation of United Nations Convention on Administrative Corruption and achievement of better outcomes.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs, which focuses on the improvement of women's situation in Afghanistan, has implemented useful activities and has also envisaged good programs and working plans for the future that strengthen gender equality and women empowerment in all aspects. The programs are listed as follows:

A- The program for provision of services in implementation of Afghanistan's commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment are as follows:

- Provision of technical support and capacity building for MOWA at regional and national level.
- Provision of assistance and support in preparation of information for campaigning purpose and public awareness through provincial resources centers for purpose of technical trainings, internet and English language.
- Conducting conferences and programs to strengthen peace processes and also strengthen capacity of entities in use of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

B- The program for structure reinforcement and empowerment of MOWA which are as follows:

- Empowerment of leadership and policy development in MOWA and in its Directorate of Women Affairs in provinces through employment of specialists and conducting workshops.
- Providing 300 higher education scholarships for MoWA staff.
- Strengthening public awareness sections, campaigning and MOWA's media relations and its Directorate of Women's Affairs in provinces through employment of spokesperson, funding of women related programs in Radios and sponsoring 2 TVs for public awareness program and also strengthening and supporting MOWA's relation with its Directorates of Women's Affairs in provinces.

C- Women empowerment and gender equality program which are as follows:

- Technical cooperation with Monitoring and Policy Development Sub-departments of MOWA's Planning Department.
- Development of women's entrepreneurship skills in 19 provinces of the country by launching small development projects and provision of professional trainings through NGOs under supervision of MOWA.
- Increase women's access to legal entities including enhancement of women and men awareness on rights of women through establishment of legal help centers in provinces; the legal help centers have been established in four provinces so far and it will be established in another 10 provinces.

D- The program for enhancement of female teachers educations and construction of

more dormitories and better opportunities for female students through Ministry of Higher Education is as follows:

- Construction of new dormitories and better opportunities for female students (with consideration of budget possibilities) to increase female students percentage from 25% to 30% in 3 years. In the current dormitories only 2000 female students can be placed (16% of female students). The Ministry of Higher Education has planned to place another 4000 female students in dorms in 3 years and in 5 years 4900. It is to be mentioned that lack of dorms is a challenge in front of female student increase, since the families will not allow their girls to attend higher education organizations unless these organization have proper and safe dorms for females.
- Doubling the opportunities for female teachers to obtain Master's degree in Afghanistan and encouraging leadership of universities to send their teachers abroad for obtaining Master's Degree. Also, encouraging female BA Degree holders to obtain Master's Degree and to teach as a teacher in order to increase the number of female teachers (assistant professors and professors) and the percentage of female teachers reach 20% in three years in comparison to current status which is 14.8%.

Directorate of Human Rights and women international Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic republic of Afghanistan would like to extend its appreciation to the stakeholders in this section (involved ministries and international Institutions in preparation of this report).

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