

Helpdesk Research Report: Social Exclusion in Afghanistan
24.08.07

Query: What are the key issues relating to social exclusion in Afghanistan? Please include information on key trends and current issues; statistics; relevant government policies; and high profile messages and statements.

Enquirer: DFID Bangladesh (South Asia Regional)

Contents

- 1. Overview**
- 2. Key documents**
 - General
 - Rural Areas
 - Women
 - Returnees and IDPS
 - Kuchis
 - People with disabilities
 - Policies and Institutions
 - Statements and Key Messages
- 3. Additional information**

1. Overview

There is little consolidated data on the issue of social exclusion in Afghanistan. None of the literature surveyed applies the term 'social exclusion' to the Afghan context and most of the relevant discussion is couched in terms of 'vulnerable groups'. These are identified primarily as women, returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), people with disabilities, and ethnic groups such as the Kuchi nomads. Children, the elderly and ex-soldiers are also generally considered vulnerable groups, but they have received little individual attention. For all these groups, while there is some research on their vulnerability to external risks and shocks in Afghanistan, there is little systematic consideration of *how* they are excluded. Also, very few reliable statistics are available. Most of the studies cited below are based on anecdotal data and individual surveys.

Most of the available literature points to women as one of the most vulnerable groups in Afghanistan. They often face multiple discrimination - as rural women, widows, disabled women, internally displaced women, etc. This query addresses only those aspects of gender-based exclusion not covered in the earlier 'Gender in Afghanistan' query response.

In the other areas, it appears that disability issues are being addressed by the government, and various ministries have identified them as a priority. Rural areas, which contain almost 80% of the population, lag behind on most health, education and participation indicators. The issue of returning refugees and IDPs remains of pressing importance. Socio-economic concerns, land and property rights issues and ongoing insecurity have resulted in renewed waves of displacement – almost 20,000 families last year (IDMC, 2006 – see below.) The situation of the Kuchis, an ethnic nomadic group, who have been mostly displaced by drought and forced eviction, make up over 70% of the IDP population. They live in displacement camps in some of the most insecure areas.

It is argued that without a targeted strategy for rehabilitation of their lands and homes as well as projects aimed at promoting coexistence amongst different groups, their return looks almost impossible.

2. Key documents

General

- Office of the President of Afghanistan Social Protection webpage
<http://www.president.gov.af/english/np/socialprotection.msp>

This page defines vulnerable groups in Afghanistan as 'those who fall outside existing social networks'; and 'those not benefiting from community-based and self-help groups, and groups in remote areas'. The page also cites the 2006 Afghanistan Compact's (details below) categorisation of vulnerable groups. These are:

- Vulnerable women
- Unemployed and demobilised soldiers
- The disabled
- Refugees and returnees

- UN Food and Agriculture Organisation Institution Building programme webpage
http://www.fao.org/world/afghanistan/proj_inst_advoc_en.htm

This page includes a list of vulnerable groups in Afghanistan regarding food security. These categories include: women, especially those in rural areas and widows; Kuchis – a nomadic ethnic group; returnees and IDPs; and the war disabled and landmine victims.

- United Nations Development Programme, 2004 'Afghanistan National Human Development Report – Security With a Human Face: Challenges and Responsibilities', UNDP
<http://www.undp.org/dpa/nhdr/af-files/afnhdr2004-complete.pdf>

This report offers a brief description of how social exclusion is manifested in rural areas, which can be taken to apply to most vulnerable groups in Afghanistan: 'The rural poor suffer from social, economic and political marginalization. They lack access to basic services, markets, information and opportunities for political participation to influence decision-making at the local and national levels. They have minimal opportunities to participate in decision-making in the crucial areas of social life. Thus, they are generally disenfranchised and powerless, remaining outside mainstream social, economic, cultural and political processes' (p.55). Pages 37-45 describe the situation of what are termed 'groups and/or households...most vulnerable to poverty, or to falling deeper into poverty'. These are:

- *Children*: the report estimates that 50,000 children, mostly aged 8-10, work on the streets in Kabul. Page 40 includes a table on reasons for non-enrolment in schools and pages 30-31 include maps displaying the percentage of girls and boys not enrolled in school by province.
- *Widows*: A 2002 survey by Physicians for Human Rights found that 65% of widows had suicidal tendencies and 16% had actually attempted suicide.
- *The disabled*: Estimates suggest almost a million people (4% of the population) might be disabled. Most of these are physical disabilities. Half of the disabled are also illiterate. A 2003 survey also found that 84% of disabled people are unemployed. The report states: 'Political and economic inequality compounded by negative social attitudes and stereotype that see disabled people as dependent, inactive and non-productive has marginalized them to the level of seclusion, leaving an overwhelming majority of disabled Afghans and their families with social and economic deprivation. Poverty and unemployment are key factors for perpetuating this exclusion.'
- *IDPs and returnees*: Chart 2.17 on page 547 demonstrates the reasons for IDPs not returning home which include lack of water, land, livestock and employment.

Chapter 3 of this report (<http://www.undp.org/dpa/nhdr/af-files/afnhdr2004-ch3.pdf>) provides more detailed statistical information on unequal access to education based on region and gender,

including the distribution of schools, students and teachers (pp. 65-69). Pages 72-75 describe access to safe water and sanitation in rural areas. The report finds that only 2% of rural people have access to piped water compared to the national average of 8%. Map 3.6 shows the percentage of people with no drinking water by province.

- Schutte, S., 2004, 'Urban Vulnerability in Afghanistan: Case Studies from Three Cities', Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Kabul
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/123456789/21528/1/cs04sc01.pdf>

This paper discusses the exclusion experienced within urban households in the cities of Kabul, Jalalabad and Herat. It argues that the use of broad categories to identify the vulnerable in Afghanistan, such as widows, the disabled or refugee returnees, often obscures wide differences in vulnerability within these groups, while people affected by less evident sources of vulnerability (illness, domestic violence, discrimination, etc.) are forgotten. The study also found that:

- Children are excluded from going to schools because they have to work.
- Elderly and disabled men cannot compete with the young and healthy for casual labour, and their households may face regular income crises.
- When households are affected by food insecurity, a common coping strategy is the tendency to skip one meal a day in general. Women and daughters often are the ones who eat last what has been left by the male household members. This problem of eating less is true for other members also considered "unproductive," like children with disabilities and the elderly.
- War victims, the disabled and women are more prone to mental health problems which are especially prevalent amongst people left physically disabled by accidents, landmines or childhood polio. This is largely due to public and intra-family attitudes towards people with disabilities. In addition there is little public infrastructure which addresses their needs, and transport is a particular problem.

Rural Areas

- Government of Afghanistan/UNDP, 2005 'Millennium Development Goals Report: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Country Report', Kabul
http://www.and.s.gov.af/src/src/MDGs_Reps/MDGR%202005.pdf

The report assesses Afghanistan's progress in working towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It includes some statistics on regional disparities as well as other key points:

- The further away from markets that people live, the more food insecurity they experience (p.23).
- Nine provinces, mostly in the northwest and central highlands, suffer high levels of food insecurity. In Khost, for example, almost 50% of households do not intake minimum levels of dietary energy. Households in these provinces are doubly disadvantaged because they have limited access to markets, international aid and the opium economy (p.23-24).
- For 2003, net primary school attendance was 54%, or 2.3 million students. The increase in net enrolment is 50% higher in the urban areas. Map 5.1 shows that most of the out-of-school children lived in the southern and central parts of the country (p.33).
- The literacy rate of 15 to 24-year old Afghans is 34%, with 50% for men and only 18% for women. There are regional variations, with particularly low literacy rates of the population in certain provinces (map 5.2, p.34).
- A 2003 survey of rural Afghanistan found a 19% ratio of literate females to males in the 15-24 age-group. This is compared to a national but urban-focussed survey in the same year which revealed a 36% ratio. 'The report states: The difference between both estimates can, in general, be attributed to better access to facilities and educational opportunities in urban areas than in rural.' (pp.42-43)
- Afghanistan has among the highest percentages of seats allocated for women in the national parliament in the Central and South Asia region. However, women are poorly represented at the sub-national level and in local governance bodies.

- An Asia Foundation survey found that 87% of Afghans said that women would need to obtain permission from their husband or head of the family to vote. 18% of men nationally and 25% in the south said they would not let their wives vote at all (p.46)
 - 39% of urban households compared to 69% of rural households have no access to drinking water from an improved source. Also, 41% and 13% of rural and urban households respectively do not have access to improved sanitation facilities (p.53)
 - There is great healthcare inequality between provinces and districts. In Balkh, there is one doctor per 1,000 people, while in Uruzgan there is one doctor per 100,000 people. Female health staff, especially trained midwives, are also lacking in rural remote areas.
 - Immunisation rates are much higher in urban than in rural areas. As a result, child mortality rates are around 20% lower in urban areas (p.56).
 - Awareness of family planning and contraceptive methods also varies regionally (map 9.1, p.74). This has implications for reducing the risk of HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies and maternal mortality.
- World Bank, 2005, 'Afghanistan – Poverty, Vulnerability and Social Protection: An Initial Assessment', Human Development Unit, South Asia Region
http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2005/03/22/000012009_20050322100004/Rendered/PDF/296940AF.pdf

Pages 31-33 of this report include statistics from a 2003 National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) on access to basic infrastructure, facilities and services in rural areas. One of the key findings is that less than half of rural communities surveyed in the NRVA had a primary school within the community and only 13% had a secondary school. Interestingly, access to public facilities such as schools and health facilities was low for all households irrespective their welfare level.

Women

- Zalesne, D, 2006, 'The Gendered Politics of Water: Stories of Afghan Widows' Beyond the 11th, US
<http://www.beyondthe11th.org/Gendered%20Politics%20of%20Water.pdf>

This article explains that typically a woman does not inherit her husband's property when he dies, leaving her to fend for herself and her children, while often completely cut off from society due to cultural convention. Statistics on widows in Afghanistan include:

- There are 1 million widows in Afghanistan, and 30,000-50,000 in Kabul alone. 94% are illiterate and 90% have children.
 - For many, begging and sending their children to work are the only options for survival. The article cites a CARE survey which found that 32% of widows identified child labor as a source of supplementary income.
 - Women without husbands are subject to violence and intimidation and are forced to stay indoors. Even where they have some mobility, job opportunities are limited.
 - Reports indicate that widows in Kabul are more than twice as likely to suffer from malnutrition as other women in Kabul, and children of widow-headed households are five times as likely to be malnourished.
 - In rural areas, the time spent fetching water (up to 3 hours a day) could be spent on income-generating activities. This is particularly important for widows who cannot rely on a husband to support their families.
- United Nations Development Programme, 2004 'Afghanistan National Human Development Report – Security With a Human Face: Challenges and Responsibilities', UNDP
<http://www.undp.org/dpa/nhdr/af-files/afnhdr2004-complete.pdf>

There is a very brief section on widows in Chapter 3 of this report, which cites the 2003 NRVA survey and states: 'According to the NRVA, female-headed households have the highest incidence of poverty of all the vulnerable categories, and they also have a higher than average

presence of disabled members. They are more inclined to be landless, have lower ownership of cows, low access to electricity, and worse than average water and sanitation facilities.' (p.80)

- Grace, J., 2005, 'Who Owns The Farm? Rural Women's Access to Land and Livestock', Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), Kabul
http://www.areu.org.af/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=413

This study shows that women have a great deal of involvement in agriculture, yet few own land or livestock; where they do, they sometimes still lack control over it. It cites a 2004 AREU Rural Livelihoods Monitoring project, which found that of 360 households studied, only 1.87% of women owned land, and only 11% of women owned livestock individually, almost all of whom were widows. Page 27 outlines the constraining and enabling factors affecting women's access to land and livestock and table 2 on page 19 demonstrates how women's legal entitlements in terms of inheritance are overridden by cultural norms.

Returnees and IDPs

- Altai Consulting, 2006, 'Integration of Returnees in the Afghan Labour Market', Summary report commissioned by ILO and UNHCR, Kabul
<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.pdf?tbl=SUBSITES&page=SUBSITES&id=45333ed72>

This report presents the findings of a survey conducted in the rural and urban areas of Kabul, Herat and Nangarhar provinces. It finds that most returnees have displayed a high sense of entrepreneurship and many have savings to invest. They also generally believe they are better placed having been away as they have gained broader professional experience, better skills, and, in some cases the ability to speak English and use computers. As a result they are mostly optimistic about their future. While many expressed difficulties finding jobs initially, they were able to do so relatively quickly and only 11% were unemployed. These unemployed and employed casual workers are most vulnerable of the returnee groups. Page 20 outlines the issues they face:

- Some return to returnee camps while others relocate to suburban areas instead of their rural origins. This has resulted in three major barriers: the loss of social networks, loss of property, and isolation from city centres where most employment opportunities exist.
 - As a result, many struggle to find jobs. Men work part-time as casual labour; and in cases where women work, it is in the most basic jobs. Sometimes children also work.
 - Some households have already adopted a cross-border strategy, and travel illegally for several months to Iran or Pakistan to work.
- Amnesty International, 2003 'Out of Sight, Out of Mind: The Fate of Afghan Returnees', Amnesty International, New York
[http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/ASA110142003ENGLISH/\\$File/ASA1101403.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/ASA110142003ENGLISH/$File/ASA1101403.pdf)

This report is based on interviews with Afghan returnees and pages 23-27 describe their access to employment, housing, landlessness and education:

- Many returnees claimed they had been unable to find jobs. Others could not find jobs that matched their skills.
- Sharecroppers returned to land on which they had worked previously to find they had been replaced.
- Disputes over land and property ownership are widespread in Afghanistan today, and returnees are disproportionately affected. Many returnees returned to their homes to find that their land and/or houses had been occupied by other families who were often backed local commanders. Others were unable to raise the capital needed to rebuild houses on their land; this has left returnees in a position of heightened vulnerability, as their ties to the local community have suffered due to their absence.
- Unaccompanied returnee women are at particular risk of being unable to access their land. They are also denied access to traditional leaders, or even formal justice

mechanisms, especially in the absence of a male family member who is willing to plead the case on their behalf.

- In 2002, UNHCR stated that 74.3% of returnees did not have land to which they could return. Amnesty International found considerable evidence of landless returnees being forced into situations of destitution or internal displacement. Many are unable to afford rent and have been forced to move into dilapidated buildings or unoccupied land. In Kabul, the majority of these families live under the constant threat of eviction.
 - Landless returnees cannot benefit from international shelter projects which stipulate that the returnee must own a title to land, or get his community to vouch for his ownership in order for the agency to assist with rebuilding shelter on it.
 - Children are often denied access to education because they are required to supplement the small income of their family through employment.
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2006, 'Fighting in the south sets off new wave of displacement: a profile of the internal displacement situation', Norwegian Refugee Council [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/56E4BDEA45F3A679C125724C003CFD1B/\\$file/Afghanistan+-December+2006.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/56E4BDEA45F3A679C125724C003CFD1B/$file/Afghanistan+-December+2006.pdf)

This report states that although accurate figures are not available, the total number of displaced in Afghanistan in 2006 was estimated at 270,000. Most are Kuchi nomads who were forced to leave their home areas due to drought, and have been prevented from returning. Since 2002, over 485,000 internally displaced and millions of refugees in Iran and Pakistan have also returned home. However, the deteriorating security situation, lack of socio-economic progress, unemployment, drought, and land and property issues make the returnees particularly vulnerable. Renewed displacement due to economic hardship is also not taken into account in official IDP figures. The paper also includes information on IDP access to socio-economic rights, water, and food security. Pages 55-57 offer further information on vulnerable groups, including Kuchis, women, and child soldiers.

Kuchis

- United Nations Development Programme, 2004, 'Afghanistan National Human Development Report – Security With a Human Face: Challenges and Responsibilities', UNDP <http://www.undp.org/dpa/nhdr/af-files/afnhdr2004-complete.pdf>

This report includes a detailed section on the Kuchi population (pp.44-45). It finds that:

- The drought of 1998-2002 resulted in the loss of their livestock and turned most Kuchis into destitute farmers, IDPs, casual labourers and beggars.
 - Many Kuchis have been prevented from accessing grazing areas by settled communities because the traditional system of pasture rights has been compromised, there is no overall policy regarding land tenure and pasture rights, and access is determined by the local authorities and the specific attitudes of the people involved.
 - The Kuchis are often excluded from government services and development opportunities because most programmes do not accommodate their mobility.
 - Many Kuchis choose to stay in IDP settlements as conditions there are generally better than those in their areas of origin, with drinking water and access to education and health care.
- Refugees International, 2003, 'Forgotten People: The Kuchis of Afghanistan', Washington D.C. <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/detail/926/>

This article includes basic information and statistics on the Kuchis. It argues that the Kuchis have been 'forgotten' because their inhabiting of remote areas, the animosity of other ethnic groups towards them and the difficulty of finding an easy solution to their situation. The livelihoods of many have been devastated by the ongoing drought and many have been forced from their lands by Hazara, Tajik and Uzbek groups. Many now live in IDP camps. The article also argues that

very little international foreign assistance extended goes to the Kuchis. Few agencies work in the insecure areas in which they are located, and most donors emphasize short-term economic and humanitarian aid rather than the longer-term assistance the Kuchis need to rebuild their herds.

- Refugees International, 2004, 'Kuchi Nomads: Displaced and Destitute in Afghanistan', Washington D.C.
<http://www.refintl.org/content/article/detail/3017/>

This article discusses the prospects for Kuchis returning to their nomadic lifestyles, the situation in the camps in which they currently live and the Afghan government and international community's response.

- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2005 'Kuchi IDPs, the largest of Afghanistan's displaced population, need alternate solutions', Norwegian Refugee Council
[http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/\(httpEnvelopes\)/AA48B739753B7740802570B8005A70E6?OpenDocument](http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/AA48B739753B7740802570B8005A70E6?OpenDocument)

This report offers a brief overview of the issues facing Kuchi IDPs based on recent publications. It shows that Kuchis represent some 80% of the current displaced population. Most were displaced by the drought and many have had to turn to begging to survive. It is also unlikely that Kuchis will be able to return to the desert in the future.

People with disabilities

- Turmusani, M., 2004-2005, 'Applying the Minority Perspective to Disability in Afghanistan', Disability World, Issue 26, December-February
http://www.disabilityworld.org/12-02_05/il/afghanistan.shtml

This article highlights that many disabled people are at risk of discrimination on multiple grounds, for example, if they are disabled and elderly, rural, displaced by violence, refugees, children, women, or from a minority ethnic group. The study focuses on three groups of disabled people in Afghanistan who experience higher levels of exclusion than others: children with disabilities, disabled women, and elderly disabled people. The key points are:

- There is no reliable data of the incidence of disability amongst the Afghan population
- However, a 2003 UNICEF survey found that 1% of children are disabled (widely believed to be a conservative estimate). The article sites another survey which found that only 1.11% of the total students in Kabul were disabled.
- Although Afghanistan has ratified the international Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), there are no special laws to promote and protect the rights of disabled children which are prescribed by Article 23 of the international CRC.

- Turusmani, M., 2004, 'Disabled People and Education in Afghanistan', Disability World, Issue 23, April-May
http://www.disabilityworld.org/04-05_04/gov/afghanistan.shtml

This article discusses the prospects of special and inclusive education for disabled children. A particular concern is the appropriate training of staff and the involvement of disabled people in development of relevant strategies.

- Tursumani, M., 2004, 'Disability and Governance in Afghanistan', Disability World, Issue 25, September-November
http://www.disabilityworld.org/09-11_04/gov/afghanistan.shtml

This report addresses the involvement of disabled people in governance and focuses largely on the mixed success of their involvement in the National Development Commission, a semi-government umbrella organisation which serves as a platform for the participation of disabled people in decision-making. It also finds that disabled Afghans have largely been excluded from classical governance processes managed by government even where these have concerned disability issues. Written in the run-up to the election, it reports that little information was available on accessibility requirements during the election process.

Policies and Institutions

International Treaties

- United Nations Development Programme, 2004, 'Afghanistan National Human Development Report – Security With a Human Face: Challenges and Responsibilities', UNDP
<http://www.undp.org/dpa/nhdr/af/AfghanHDR2004.htm>

Chapter 5 of this report includes a list of the international human rights treaties to which Afghanistan is a party (p.149, Box 5.7). The report also highlights recommendations to apply certain criteria to national development projects proposed by Local Consultative Groups through the budget process. These are:

- Non-discrimination with regard to ethnicity, gender, residence or any other criterion.
- Particular attention or focus on the vulnerable groups of the population.
- Full transparency, so that all citizens can access information on development activities.
- A participatory approach in the design, approval and implementation of development projects, so that potential beneficiaries are consulted in all the above phases.

National policies

- The Constitution of Afghanistan 2004
<http://www.president.gov.af/english/constitution.msp>

Article 22 provides that '(a)ny kind of discrimination and privilege between the citizens of Afghanistan are prohibited. The citizens of Afghanistan -- whether man or woman -- have equal rights and duties before the law.'

- The Afghanistan Compact 2006, The London Conference on Afghanistan,
<http://www.unama-afg.org/news/londonConf/docs/06jan30-AfghanistanCompact-Final.pdf>

The 'Afghanistan Compact', is a framework for cooperation with the international community on the areas of peace and security, good governance and economic and social development. In reference to the policy, the President Karzai's website states: "There is an urgent need to protect those who fall outside existing social networks. The Government needs to establish a functioning Social protection Policy that provides targeted assistance (with the possible exception of food and assistance) to the most vulnerable groups." (<http://www.president.gov.af/english/np/socialprotection.msp>). The 'Social Protection' section of the Compact identifies these groups and the key objectives of each programmatic area:

- Vulnerable women: focus on economic empowerment; leadership development; political representation
 - Unemployed youth and demobilised soldiers: develop national youth development policy; enhance youth productivity; set up employment centres; encourage young innovators.
 - The disabled: 'The disabled form perhaps the most vulnerable group requiring social protection'. The Government aims to monitor early physical, visual, hearing and intellectual impairment and; train health and education personnel to keep accurate records on disabled children from birth.
 - Refugees and returnees: assist the return refugees; normalise their legal status; negotiate agreements with neighbouring on Afghan economic migrants; support the reintegration of internally displaced people; and formulate a strategy for refugee return.
- United Nations Development Programme, 2004, 'Afghanistan National Human Development Report – Security With a Human Face: Challenges and Responsibilities', UNDP
<http://www.undp.org/dpa/nhdr/af/AfghanHDR2004.htm>

Pages 137-141 discuss the workings and impact of National Solidarity Programme (NSP) which aims to empower rural communities to collectively address their needs in a participatory way. It describes how in the first year of NSP, the initial three districts selected from each province were targeted on the basis of existing vulnerability and refugee return data. Facilitating partners are

expected to recruit and deploy female field staff to enable the inclusion of women in the decision-making and implementation processes.

- Turusmani, M., 2004, 'Afghanistan: New Comprehensive National Disability Policy', Disability World, Issue 22, January-March
http://www.disabilityworld.org/01-03_04/gov/afghanistan.shtml

This article describes the national policy on disability which emphasises rights for all disabled people to inclusive education, as well as the need for appropriate education laws, specialist teachers, and training and public awareness for educating the public. The policy also recommends setting up educational programs in order to address preventative and ongoing family health care, early detection and assessment of impairments, family programs to teach parents about their child's impairment and appropriate home care, and pre-school opportunities, both in urban and rural areas.

- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2006, 'Fighting in the south sets off new wave of displacement: a profile of the internal displacement situation', Norwegian Refugee Council
[http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/56E4BDEA45F3A679C125724C003CFD1B/\\$file/Afghanistan+-December+2006.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/56E4BDEA45F3A679C125724C003CFD1B/$file/Afghanistan+-December+2006.pdf)

Pages 136-138 of this report discuss the IDP National Plan which was adopted in 2004 to promote the return and reintegration of IDPs by 2007. The programme is significant as it announced a shift in policy from care and maintenance of IDPs to longer-term solutions. The Government has also set up a Return Commission for the North which is responsible for promoting the return of refugees and IDPs in dignified and safe conditions; monitoring the situation in the districts most affected by violence; investigating complaints by refugees and IDPs; making recommendations to the central and regional authorities when these are against local authorities; organizing community reconciliation initiatives; and promoting social and economic reconstruction in the communities of return.

Statements and Key Messages

- European Union at the United Nations, 'EU Commission allocates €20m in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan', News summary, January 25, 2006 (paragraph 1)
http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_5608_en.htm
- Action Aid, 'Agency letter: International aid agencies flag up Afghanistan concerns', November 6, 2003 (see section entitled 'Protection of vulnerable and marginalised groups')
<http://www.actionaid.org.uk/511/statement.html>
- Asian Development Bank, 'Statement by ADB President Tadao Chino at Joint Press Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan', Tokyo, January 21, 2002 (paragraph 8)
<http://www.adb.org/documents/speeches/2002/ms2002002.asp>
- World Bank, 'Opening Remarks by Mieko Nishimuzu, Vice President South Asia region: Conference on Preparing for Afghanistan's Reconstruction', Islamabad, November 27, 2001
<http://go.worldbank.org/V2G64A9G31>

Authors and contributors

This query response was prepared by Seema Khan: seema@gsdrc.org

Contributors were:

Naila Kabeer, Institute for Development Studies
Alice Kerr-Wilson, Social Development Direct

Websites visited

AREU, BAAG, CARE Canada, Disability World, FAO, Google, Google Scholar, IDS, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, UNAMA, UNDP, Website of the Office of the President of Afghanistan, World Bank

About Helpdesk research reports: Helpdesk reports are based on 2 days of desk-based research. They are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues; and a summary of some of the best literature available. Experts are contacted during the course of the research, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged.

Need help finding consultants?

If you need to commission more in-depth research, or need help finding and contracting consultants for additional work, please contact consultants@gsdrc.org (further details at www.gsdrc.org/go.cfm?path=/go/helpdesk/find-a-consultant&)