



September 6, 2005

Press Release

Emergency Assistance to UNDP for Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections in Afghanistan

1. The Government of Japan decided on Tuesday, September 6 to extend emergency assistance of \$5 million (535 million yen) to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the purpose of assisting the 2004-2005 Afghan Elections Project PHASE II in Afghanistan.

2. Afghanistan's political process, based on the Bonn Agreement in December 2001, witnessed the establishment of the Transitional Administration in June 2002, the adoption and promulgation of a new constitution in January 2004, and a presidential election in October 2004. On September 18 this year, elections for Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of the Parliament) and the Provincial Council will be held. Pursuant to the provisions of the new constitution, the political process of Afghanistan will conclude with the inauguration of the parliament after the elections.

UNDP, which is in charge of the procurement and management of the election funds, requested the international community to extend prompt assistance for election costs totaling about \$150 million necessary for the preparation for elections. This includes various voting-related operations, security control, education of citizens, policy PR and monitoring, and election observation. The organization received contributions from many countries including Japan, which contributed \$8 million. It is, however, still short of \$23 million and points out that the elections might not be implemented smoothly. Against such a backdrop, on August 21 UNDP and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) requested additional assistance from the international community including Japan.

3. Japan has been extending comprehensive assistance to Afghanistan in all fields, such as political process, improvement of security and reconstruction, aiming to realize the "consolidation of peace." Taking into account the critical importance of the elections that will complete the political process of Afghanistan and the additional assistance contributed by other countries, **Japan is extending this emergency assistance of \$5 million in addition to the emergency assistance of \$8 million already extended. With this aid, Japan's cumulative assistance for Afghanistan's political process comes to a total of \$30 million.**

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