



**United Nations Development Programme
Afghanistan
Institutional Strengthening for Gender Equality Project (GEP)
[Third Quarter Project Progress Report – [2010]**



Feedback Workshop after the return of mullahs' delegation from Turkey in July 2010
presided over by Hon. Minister for Haj and Religious Affairs, Dr. Niazi)

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ACRONYMS

ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CDC	Community Development Council
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOHRA	Department of Hajj and Religious Affairs
DOWA	Department of Women's Affairs
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDCG	Gender Donor Committee Group
GEP	Gender Equality Project
GRB	Gender Responsive Budget
GSI	Gender Studies Institute
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KU	Kabul University
LHC	Legal Help Centres
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock
MoEc	Ministry of Economy
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHRA	Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NAPWA	National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan
TAD	Training and Advocacy Department
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP-GEP	Gender Equality project

Executive Summary

During the quarter of 2010, the draft project document for the next phase underwent a major revision. The key outputs with their corresponding activities and outcomes were fine-tuned to two specific categories: i) *deepening gender mainstreaming initiatives among partner organizations* and ii) *focusing on increasing women's presence in governance and strengthening initiatives for their socio-economic empowerment*. Based on this revision, the project document along with the budget for the Initiation Phase was finalized for approval. The current project was extended for a further period of two months; August and September, to bridge the intervening period after which the Initiation Phase would commence.

The major achievements of Output 1 for **enhancing the gender mainstreaming capacity of partner organizations** included provision of support for the establishment of the Monitoring & Evaluation Unit (M&E) at the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) for supervising the implementation of National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) indicators in the line ministries. This included the selection and appointment of two advisers under a Letter of Agreement (LOA) arrangement for MOWA to take them on board and undertake relevant activities in this connection. The organization of the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) workshop for officials of the Budget Directorate and Ministry of Finance officials with external consultants provided the necessary technical inputs to strengthen the GRB cell set up at the Budget Directorate. The advocacy initiative for integrating GRB principles into other line ministries was undertaken by organizing a two-day workshop for officials of the Ministry of Economy. The close interaction with the officials of Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs (MOHRA) to advocate women's rights based on a correct interpretation of Islamic principles helped promote gender sensitivity into the preaching and sermons of religious leaders and encouraged them to mobilize communities for a correct positioning of women in society. This received a further impetus when the mullahs who had gone to Turkey after the completion of the second phase of the mullahs training program shared their experiences on the improved role of women in religious learning and the value of education for young girls. The partnership with the Department for Women's Extension in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and participation in the sub-working of MAIL's Comprehensive Food Security opened up new avenues of alliance between the Gender Equality Project (GEP) and MAIL.

Some of the major progress achieved in respect of Output 2 for **sustainable knowledge building and management on gender** was the finalization of the next research topic and preparation for organizing the first gender mainstreaming training program in the Agriculture Department, at Kabul University. Necessary ground work was also completed for organizing the month-long certificate course on "Gender, Conflict and Development" for the faculty members of Balkh University. The Gender Studies Institute (GSI) was provided with new office premises in the Sociology Department, Kabul University and necessary security arrangements have been put in place for the office to become operational. Discussions for the finalization of the publication of GSI's newsletter were completed and the first issue is expected in October 2010. The preparation of a gender sensitive template for the collection and compilation of data was undertaken in collaboration with the Central Statistical Office (CSO) – the tabulation of data has since been completed and this will be followed by its analysis and completion of the report which will be published through a joint workshop with CSO.

The main focus of the activities during this quarter under Output 3: **women's empowerment: conflict resolution, justice, security and peace at the sub-national level enhanced** was to consolidate the progress achieved through the organization of the

mullahs training programs and the establishment of Legal Help Centres (LHC) as well as continuance with regular activities to ensure the gender sensitive media centre in Herat and Balkh provinces is providing sustained support to gender-specific reporting. This was done through joint supervision with representatives from the Directorates of women (DOWA), Justice (DOJ) and Haj and Religious Affairs (DOHRA). In addition, the first income-generating activity for 150 women in Balkh was set up in collaboration with the Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL). Among the major activities at the provincial level was the training of potential female candidates for the parliamentary elections in Herat and this event was replicated in the Eastern Region in collaboration with MOWA.

During the third quarter, the main challenges were to finalize the new project document and to complete the recruitment of staff for the new project. During this transition period, the staff strength of the project dwindled considerably as some left for other opportunities and others failed to qualify during the selection process. Nevertheless, the commitment of those who remained made the achievement of targets possible on time with support from partner organizations. The withdrawal of Canadian funds posed another challenge in revising the activities vis-à-vis the source of funding but this was swiftly overcome by the provision of core funds by UNDP Country Office. The continuous support from government partners as well as the establishment of strategic alliances with other development partners yielded a rich dividend in the completion of the specific activities of the period as identified in the Annual Work Plan (AWP) and paved the way for an effective and efficient implementation for the next phase.

Context

Since 2001, gender has taken the centre stage for development initiatives in Afghanistan. A chain of developments focusing on enhancing the role and contribution of Afghan women in the development process has underscored the relevance of mainstreaming gender into the national development objectives and outcomes. The major international agreements and conventions on protecting and promoting women's rights have been ratified by the Government and national policy documents such as the Constitution, Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) have included gender as a key cross-cutting theme for achieving equitable growth and sustainable development.

To strengthen the national efforts in this direction, UNDP has, from the very beginning provided support to the Government. Beginning in 2002, UNDP with the "***Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) program for gender mainstreaming***" in support of and through the Ministry of Women's Affairs, aimed to enhance the institutional capacity of MOWA. On completion of this initiative, in 2007, the ***Institutional Strengthening for Gender Equality Project (GEP)*** was launched for a period of three years (till 2010) to consolidate the gains achieved in the first program.

The focus of GEP is to fill in the gaps identified in the first program and provide the necessary technical and financial inputs necessary to translate Government's emphasis on equitable development into practical action through strengthening the capacity of partner ministries and women's improved access to opportunities be considered as equal partners in the development process.

The **overall goal** of UNDP-GEP, therefore, is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment within the overarching gender mainstreaming goals of Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) as well as the NAPWA. This emphasis also contributes to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) outcome on governance, rule of law and human rights as well as the Country Program Action Plan (CPAP) 2006-2009 for mainstreaming a gender perspective on policy-making and development planning. The

ultimate objective is to ensure institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming is established for contributing towards women's empowerment.

The primary partners for spearheading GEP's emphasis on institutional strengthening from a gender perspective are selected ministries and the strategy focused on identifying key officials in these ministries for promoting their intellectual capability, analytical skills, developing practical tools as well as establishing demonstrated examples and workable examples to model after. In addition, the emphasis of GEP has included strengthening partnerships (horizontal) and collaboration between government institutions both at the national and sub-national levels to ensure increased and sustained capacity. The three major **objectives** of the project are:

1. Enhance the institutional capacity of partners from the government at the national and sub-national levels for improving their quality of service delivery ,
2. Promotion of gender in the sphere of developing knowledge-based products including training and strengthening of educational institutions' capacity for mainstreaming gender,
3. Mobilize influential community leaders for a better understanding of gender issues and laying the foundation of sustainable structures and capacities that would continue with this process.

The project's activities are targeted towards the following **beneficiaries**:

- Officials of key partner ministries at the national level and corresponding departmental heads at the provincial level,
- Faculty members of Kabul University and other academic institutions,
- Community leaders and members in Balkh and Herat provinces involved in improving women's access to opportunities.
- Women and men as the community level who are the recipients of the targeted interventions.

UNDP-GEP's key **implementing partners** include: Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Economy (MoEc), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), Central Statistics Office (CSO), Kabul University (KU) and Afghanistan National Development Strategy Secretariat. The project is being implemented in close collaboration with UNAMA, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNESCO and different civil society organizations (CSO).

Status of the progress towards the achievement of output/outcome

Output 1 – Modeling gender mainstreaming through selected ministries (MoWA, MoEc, MoHRA, MoF)

Output 1.2: Capacity of Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and selected ministries enhanced

1.2.1. The Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Unit established at MOWA, last quarter, was strengthened with the appointment of two Advisors supported by UNDP to begin the task of liaising with line ministries for the collection of information regarding the implementation of indicators of NAPWA and ANDS.

In the last quarter, UNDP-GEP held several meetings and attended group discussions with representatives from the different ministries, NGOs and other bilateral and multilateral institutions for the finalization of the NAPWA indicators. This resulted in the establishment of the M&E Unit at the Planning Department of MOWA. During this quarter, as a step forward, initiatives were undertaken to strengthen the capacity of the M&E Unit with the selection of two Advisers who were recruited to start the collection of data and other relevant information from the different line ministries to assess the progress achieved in this direction. Review of the work undertaken by the Advisers has been undertaken and an Action Plan has been prepared to monitor the activities to be implemented according to this Plan.

1.2.2 Completion of training programme for making potential women candidates better equipped to meet the challenges of the parliamentary elections at Herat and Nangarhar in collaboration with MOWA

After the successful completion of the training programme for potential women candidates in the forthcoming parliamentary elections in September, jointly undertaken by UNDP-GEP and the Training and Advocacy Development (TAD) of MOWA in Mazar, similar programmes were organized for the women candidates of the Western and Eastern Regions. These interventions made an impact on the level of understanding and knowledge of the participants about the election procedures, campaign activities and other necessary information that they were not previously aware of.

1.2.3 Technical Assistance to MOWA for the preparation of Priority Programs for the Human Resources Development (HRD) Cluster

Several meetings were chaired by the Deputy Minister (Technical) and Director of Planning, MOWA for the preparation of an Action Plan for the Priority Programs of the HRD Cluster as MOWA is a member of this Cluster. The donors supporting MOWA were placed into different groups corresponding to the major Cluster in order to assess their gender sensitivity: of each of the major Clusters: Governance, Agriculture and Rural Development, Human Resource Development (HRD), and Economic and Infrastructure Development. UNDP-GEP is a member of the Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) Cluster and after the preliminary round of meetings; a matrix focusing on the relevance of the different Priority Programs of the ARD Cluster to gender issues and identification of the main entry points was prepared. This has been submitted to the Chair of the group for consolidation into the main document and will be submitted to the HRD Cluster's focal point at the Ministry of Finance for onward transmission to the Steering Committee of the Cluster.

1.2.4 Review of national laws from a gender perspective

A decision to review all major national laws and other legal instruments from a gender perspective was undertaken in collaboration with the Legal Department of MOWA and UNDP Access to Justice Project. The relevant activities would include preparation of a data base on this topic for use by relevant stakeholders. Preliminary actions have been initiated with the development of an action plan to identify the major actions that need to be implemented in this direction.

1.2.5 Presentation on Gender-based Violence (GBV) at the Community-based Practices workshop at Bangkok

The project's support to MOWA in eliminating Gender-based Violence was documented in a presentation for the three-day training workshop organized in Bangkok by the office of the Regional Gender Team. The Afghanistan delegation won the best story-telling prize at this event.

1.2.6 Meeting of working group established at Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs (MOHRA) to promote a better understanding between religious community leaders and the community members about Islamic values and the role and contribution of women in Afghan society

Based on the different meetings held with Dr. M. Yousouf Niazi, Minister of Haj and Religious Affairs (MOHRA) and Maulavi Munib Deputy Minister (MOHRA) and other senior officials of the Ministry, the working group established in the last quarter had its first meeting to identify the areas of focus and listed them: launch of a quarterly newsletter on pertinent topics relating to Islam and gender, and role of women in the economy among others. It was also decided to launch a special newsletter on relevant topics, every quarter and details of the contents are currently being finalized. The training materials for the mullahs training program are reviewed by the working group to make necessary changes in the next phase of the program which is due to begin soon in Herat and Balkh provinces.

A feedback workshop was organized jointly with MOHRA on the return of the selected participants of the second phase of the mullahs training program from Turkey. The workshop highlighted the major areas of change which the participants observed in Turkey regarding the role of women in society. This was done to underpin areas in which this could be replicated with local amendments in the Afghan context. In particular, improvement in the accessibility of girls and women to education, encouraging the eligibility of female religious teachers to impart teachings to students and raising public awareness about the role and contribution of women to Afghan society were some of the identified areas

Output 1.3 – Organization of a two-day training workshop with external consultants for officials of the Directorate of Budget, Ministry of Finance and other officials of the Ministry as well as representatives from the Gender Units of line ministries on GRB; meetings with the focal point of the GRB cell held to select advocacy materials on GRB for dissemination among stakeholders.

1.3.1. As the first activity of the GRB cell that was set up in June 2010 at the Budget Directorate, a two-day training workshop was organized to familiarize the Directorate's officials engaged in budget preparation with the key principles of GRB. The two experts from India who have been involved in mainstreaming GRB into the budgetary process for the Government of India provided detailed information on the different dimensions of GRB and how these can be incorporated during the budgetary process after taking into consideration the challenges of doing so. The main tools to be applied were explained to the participants as well as how the different GRB frameworks can be adapted to the Afghan context. The participants were asked to complete exercises based on these topics to sharpen their understanding of the practical application of GRB into their official responsibilities. Following this workshop, GEP made substantial contributions to the preparation of the template for Budget Circular 2 and also in the preparation of the Budget Training Manual.

During this meeting, key activities for follow-up action were identified to strengthen the GRB cell as well as advocacy materials on GRB for publication were selected.

Output 1.4: Establishment of a sub-working group on Comprehensive Food Security by Deputy Minister (Technical), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and organization of a training workshop jointly with MAIL and FAO on Gender and Food Security.

1.4.1 The Deputy-Minister (Technical) of MAIL established the sub-Working Group on Comprehensive Household Food Security and he nominated UNDP-GEP as a member. This Working Group convened on a weekly basis to develop an Action Plan which was finalized and submitted to the Chair for approval. Once approved, the key activities identified will be implemented.

The Ministry along with FAO organized a training workshop for the technical heads of the provinces and other extension staff on the linkage between gender and food security. UNDP-GEP facilitated different sessions of the workshop on topics such as: the main areas connecting gender with food security in the Afghan context, the challenges and opportunities in this regard, highlighting some major areas of focus which MAIL needs to concentrate.

1.4.2 A joint initiative with the Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) at Mazar to improve food processing activities for 150 women was launched during this quarter with the objective of improving the skills of the participants in this area as well as linking them to markets through an integrated package of assistance.

Output 2 – Sustainable knowledge building and management on gender:

Output 2.1 – A gender studies institute is made fully operational

2.1.1 With the completion of the first research on Gender-based Violence in 3 universities, a new topic for undertaking research in the second round was discussed with the faculty members of Kabul University. A short list of three new topics was prepared: women and economic development, women and agriculture and role of women from an Islamic perspective. It was decided to select a topic from these three in the next meeting of the Deans and then identify the key activities necessary for the preparation of an action plan to determine the next steps to be taken in this regard. At the two-monthly Deans' meeting at Kabul University, it was also discussed to prepare a documentary film on gender equality with the faculty of Fine Arts and make arrangements for a film festival on films from the regional countries on the promotion of women's rights. Necessary discussions on the two issues with the concerning faculty members have begun and proposal for the preparation of the documentary film has been developed which is presently being reviewed by the departmental and project representatives. A Quarterly newsletter on the vision of the Gender Studies Institute (GSI) and its main activities at Kabul University has been finalized and will be published in the next quarter.

The curricula for organizing two gender-mainstreaming training programs in the Agriculture faculty: one on proposal writing from a gender perspective and the other general issues of gender mainstreaming that need to be understood and integrated into the faculty were discussed and finalized and have been planned to be held in October 2010.

The design and formatting of the report on Gender-based Violence was finalized in consultation with representatives of UNESCO including the preparations for a workshop to launch this report. It was decided to have a Declaration signed at the workshop on the elimination of gender-based violence from academic institutions.

In an effort to replicate the certificate course on “Gender, Conflict and Development” held at Kabul- and Herat University, arrangements have commenced to organize the course at Balkh University in October. The course content was discussed with the Chancellor and other faculty members and finalized. Facilitators for the different sessions have been identified and other necessary preparations have been put in place to start this program in mid-October 2010.

A joint refresher training workshop for three days with UNDP National Disaster Management Project was planned on engendering disaster and risk reduction strategies for the first week of October and officials from the two projects selected the topics for the workshop.

In collaboration with the officials of the Central Statistical Office (CSO), the tabulation of gender-sensitive data from the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) of 2007-8 was completed and analysis is under progress to be followed by the preparation of a narrative. It is proposed to compile the findings into a comprehensive report and publish the document at a workshop to be held together with CSO.

Additional contacts were made with other Gender Institutes in the region and the preliminary activities for establishing a data-base was launched to store this information.

2.1.2. CISCO Women’s ICT Training Academy at MOWA for building capacity of young Afghan women in IT

Training of students at the CISCO Academy continued and a batch of 30 students in the Basic Computer Course and 10 students from the IT Essential 2 Course completed their respective course and are waiting to be given their certificates at a special ceremony organized with MOWA officials. For the first time, in consultation with the Ministry of Communications, a course on teaching English was started in view of the demand from the students. The teaching materials and course content were finalized in consultation with the British Council and the office of Director-General, Information Technology, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT) who have conducted similar courses. The students were very eager to begin this course. After an initial decision was taken by MOWA to shift the CISCO Academy to the Bagh-e-Zanana (Women’s Garden), negotiations were undertaken with the concerning MOWA officials and the Director-General, IT, MCIT and it was decided by the Minister of Women’s Affairs to allow the Academy continue to operate from its present premises. This was boosted the confidence of the CISCO trainers as well as the students as there were anxiously waiting for the outcome of the final decision.

Output 3: Towards women’s empowerment: conflict resolution, justice, security and peace at the sub-national level enhanced

Output 3.1: Communities sensitised/equipped for the promotion of women’s rights

3.1.2: Evaluation and follow-up on the mullahs training programme in Balkh province

Following the successful completion of the second phase of mullahs training program in Balkh province, a network has been established among the mullahs who participated in the training event to ensure a regular sharing of information among them on issues relating to

gender sensitivity and women’s rights. A monitoring checklist was developed as a follow-up measure to assist the mullahs to network easily among themselves and this was supplemented by personal visits of Provincial Coordinator along with representatives from DOWA and DOHRA to the mosques to ensure the new learning of the training program was being practiced by the mullahs. In addition, mechanisms have been established to maintain the network according to a high standard which is based in the provincial capital and linked through the DOHRA’s district representatives, who maintain weekly contacts with the mullahs.

A significant achievement was the development of a robust feedback mechanism for evaluating the quality and impact of the mullahs training program. This involved the development of different instruments for assessing the quality of the training program as well as a tool for ensuring a long-term impact of this intervention was integrated into the evaluation strategy of the training program.

3.1.2 Organization of the first Income-generating activity of UNDP-GEP in collaboration with DOWA and DAIL.

UNDP-GEP together with DAIL at Balkh launched the first Income-generating activity for 150 local women to increase household income and improve their living conditions. The specific objective of the program was to equip the selected women with necessary skills in value addition to agricultural products such as locally available fruits to reduce post harvest losses and encourage value chain production that would enable them to improve their productivity and income.

Another important purpose of the program was to establish women’s associations to represent women’s interests and equip them with technical, administrative and logistical support. The first phase of the activity is currently going on which will be followed by the provision of marketing support in the next quarter.



3.1.3 Monitoring of mullahs in Herat who participated at the training program on gender awareness

After the second phase of the training program for the mullahs, a joint monitoring exercise of their activities by UNDP-GEP in collaboration with DOHRA was undertaken. It was observed that women have begun to participate in Friday prayers (previously this was not possible) from a specific place in the mosque which has been specially built for this purpose. In addition, there has been an increased presence of women in different social activities which is a new development as a result of the training program.

During the focus group discussions with key religious leaders of 4 districts in Karokh, Rabat Sangi, Gulran and Guzara, it was discovered that overall- women have begun to participate more in the social activities of their respective communities which was denied to them before and the mullahs have requested for more awareness raising sessions to be held for the community members with their help. They have even requested for official responsibility to be granted by DOHRA to enable to sensitize the communities within their jurisdiction effectively on Islam and gender topics. This openness of approach exhibited by the mullahs was a recent development and it is facilitating the introduction of concepts relating to gender equality and the status of women in society for the project. The mullahs after undergoing the training program have demonstrated support for the elimination of gender-based violence based on their understanding of the concept of equality between women and men from an Islamic perspective which was discussed during the training program. It was observed by the supervision team that during the Friday sermons, the mullahs disseminated messages about gender equality. They also revealed to the supervision team that they experienced initial resistance from the men in their communities which they have been able to overcome by applying the knowledge gained during the training program.



3.1.4 Organization of three day training program in Herat for sensitizing potential women candidates to participate in the parliamentary elections.

A three-day training workshop was held at Herat for potential female candidates of the parliamentary elections. About 23 candidates from the 4 provinces of Herat, Farah, Ghor and Badghis participated at this event which was conducted UNDP-GEP in collaboration with MOWA and DOWA who provided the facilitators. The primary of the training workshop was to enhance the knowledge and skills of female candidates as they prepared for the elections and election campaigning. Some of the topics discussed were: parliament history and function, different aspects of campaigning, and the laws and regulations that promote women's participation in the political process. According to the feedback received from the participants the workshop was rated highly for providing information about women's political rights and their participation and especially the techniques to be adopted during election campaigns.

3.1.5 Organization of a two-day seminar on gender equality for 38 UNAMA staff

About 38 national staff of UNAMA in Herat province participated at a seminar organized by UNDP GEP for sensitizing them about gender concepts. As a joint effort with DOWA, DOHRA and Herat University and in coordination with Human Rights section of UNAMA, the participants were informed about different aspects of gender and gender mainstreaming including Islam and gender issues, gender equality and equity and other relevant topics. The feedback received from the participants confirmed highlighted that they benefitted from the seminar and were able to increase their knowledge about gender equality and particularly women's participation in the community.

Output 3.2 Communities and local institutions capacitated to promote women friendly local level justice system and facilitate women's access to justice in selected provinces

3.2.1 Consolidation of services being provided by Legal Help Centres (LHC) through participatory evaluation in Balkh province

Since the establishment of the 4 Legal Help Centres (LHC) in the previous quarter, the focus of activities shifted in this quarter towards conducting relevant training programs for paralegals and women members of Community Development Councils (CDC). The primary emphasis was on the supervision of services being rendered through the LHCs and assessment of the impact on the beneficiaries. According to the current statistics reported by the managers of LHCs, over 190 GBV cases have been registered since the establishment of the LHCs in Balkh covering all the 14 districts. UNDP-GEP has been closely monitoring the functions of the LHCs jointly with officials of DOWA and representatives from CDCs and information gathered during the course of monitoring has been analyzed to evaluate the achievements against the agreed work plan. Unexpected problems or divergences from the original plan are currently being discussed with all concerned stakeholders and with representatives of the communities and feedback is being collected from the service users to inform future course of action.

3.2.2: Supervision of Legal Help Centres at Herat

During the 3rd quarter, supervision of the 4 Legal Help Centres (LHC) established at DOWA, DOJ, Herat Women Shura (HWS) and Zindajan Women Shura (ZWS) was undertaken

along with officials from DOJ through a participatory approach. Meetings, field visits and evaluation of the monthly progress reports of the paralegals based at the LHCs were regularly held to ascertain the impact of the Centres among the target groups. About 115 women were provided with legal consultations, follow-up advice and protection by the paralegal staff of the LHCs. The community leaders and other members in two districts: Injin and Zindajan covering more than 20 villages were provided with information on women's rights and gender-based violence related issues. The paralegal volunteers (20 of whom 18 were women and 2 men) who are based in the communities as part of this initiative and after receiving more specialized training on legal issues are providing better legal support to women in the villages within their jurisdiction.

Output 3.3 Gender Sensitive Media Established

3.3.1 Collaboration with local media agencies for reporting on gender sensitive issues and follow-up activities in Balkh Province

UNDP GEP in Balkh province is engaged in regular interactions with representatives from local media (TV, radio and print) through a series of provincial level consultations on gender and media issues. Together with DOWA and other stakeholders in Mazar-e-Sharif city, interventions for supporting women's use of media as a channel for promoting their empowerment and for the development of their communities were undertaken. The focus has been on advocating women's full and equal participation in public life with the objective of integrating their multiple responsibilities and diverse interests into the public agenda encompassing different facets of national development and growth. Another area of focus has been highlighting the incidence of violence against women in Afghan society. New initiatives were implemented to underscore through media representation women's peace-building roles and their participation in the peace and reintegration efforts.

During this quarter, a comprehensive inventory of the active local Medias (TV, radio and print) in Balkh province was conducted and the following information was compiled based on the following format:

- a) The local media organizations and their activities, including: type, year of establishment, objectives, key areas of work, major achievements, outreach and views on women's development and violence against women.
- b) The local media's coordination with governmental directorates, UN agencies, CSOs, CBO, and other national & international organizations.
- c) The programs and broadcasting focus of the local media organizations to ensure that issues on gender equality and human rights are regularly broadcasted.

In addition, UNDP GEP in Balkh province undertook a wide range of activities on gender and communication issues, including advocacy at sub-national/provincial and rural levels, organizing seminars/workshops and supporting women's networking mechanisms that have been established. The thematic focus of all these initiatives was to ensure a fair and balanced gender representation in the local media and equate women's right as an integral part of fundamental human right.

3.3.2 Supervision of the gender sensitive media centre established at DOWA office in Herat

The work of the gender sensitive media unit established at DOWA was supervised especially in its development of links with main media outlets (TV and radio). It was observed that increased number of programs on women issues and reports on the situation of women in society with their challenges and opportunities were included and a special emphasis was placed on gender based violence related news items. The media unit at DOWA continued with the production and dissemination of "women in society," a weekly TV program that focused on women rights, their activities in the province and the position of women in society. A training program for local journalists was organized to inform them about the major techniques for reporting on gender sensitive issues.

Challenges

One of the major challenges that UNDP-GEP faced during this quarter was to recast the new project document into two major objectives and outputs. This required streamlining of the existing draft into a more compact format with a focus on two key issues: strengthening gender mainstreaming among development partners at the national and sub-national levels for an improved presence of women in governance and their enhanced socio-economic empowerment.

The other major challenge was continuing with the recruitment of the project staff in accordance with the main requirements of the project's technical objectives and ensuring selection of the right personnel for an effective team to be taken on board. This was matched by the challenge to mobilize adequate resources to fund the specific activities of the next phase of the project.

Risks

The major risks experienced during this quarter were the disruption of movement and White City clamp downs before and after the Kabul Conference (20th July) and around the time of the elections (18th September) which affected the smooth running of project office. As a result, some of the activities as planned according to the AWP such as monitoring of the LHCs in Herat and Balkh, supervision visits to the mosques to assess the impact of the training program on mullahs, and mobilization of communities for improving women's access to training and economic empowerment opportunities were considerably reduced. In addition, the security restrictions during the organization of the training program for potential candidates of the parliamentary elections in Herat caused some uncertainty about the exact time and duration of the program and some of the participants had to drop out of the event. Moreover, the non-availability of armoured vehicles at the provincial level meant restricted movement for the Provincial Coordinators who had to cut down visits to the districts and communities to monitor the impact of the third Component's activities but a reduced level of supervision and grass-roots level interventions continued by using vehicles from other UNDP projects.

Issues

The issue that required priority attention during this quarter was the completion of recruitment formalities for the new project and this activity was time-consuming and placed considerable pressure on the existing staff members in view of the few staff left in the project. This also meant additional pressure had to be exerted to meet the target of the project's development interventions which the staff were able to cope due to planning in advance and collaboration with other development partners. Other major issues on the operational side included the departure of the Project and the Human Resources Associates and their duties had to be shared among the present staff. As the project is awaiting the arrival of the newly selected staff, during this interim period, the workload has been divided among the present staff members that have placed immense responsibilities on them.

Lessons Learned

The continuing uncertainty regarding the actual date for the commencement of the new project exposed the staff to new experiences and provided a few lessons that could be applied in the immediate future. These are as follows:

1. The need for some flexibility in revising the terms and conditions of specific positions in view of the difficulty to recruit suitable candidates for the advertised posts,
2. The need for swift decisions on recruitment processes to fill in the gaps left by departing staff and for ensuring a smooth transition to the new project,
3. The necessity to consolidate the gains achieved in the present project to serve as a spring-board for new activities during the implementation of the new project,
4. Acknowledgement of the value of networking with development partners to reinforce the impact of interventions which needs to be nurtured over a long period of time,
5. Development of a broad range of partnerships with different ministries to replicate the best practices achieved at the sub-national level in the new project.

Future Plans

The approval of the Initiation Plan is the first major goal to be achieved. This needs to be followed by the completion of the new project document according to the recent guidelines and launch of the specific activities that have been identified in this regard. This would involve the following actions to be taken:

- Finalization of the new project document,
- Preparation of the implementation plan in the first quarter for the new project,
- Establishment of 2 new Provincial Coordinators' offices in Bamyan and Nangarhar,
- Identification of appropriate focal points at the Provincial and District Governors' offices to launch the project's activities efficiently at the sub-national level,

- Establishment of a strengthened Monitoring & Evaluation Unit at MOWA for supervising the implementation of NAPWA indicators by the line ministries.

With the approval of the new project document, the focus would be on developing specific activities to implement the two key objectives at the national and sub-national levels. This would require considerable planning and establishment of strategic alliances with other development partners for a deeper impact of the initiatives among the target groups. In particular, the new activities relating to the assessment of international agreements and national policies influencing the status of Afghan women needs to be carefully designed and implemented. Other focus areas would include the development of need-specific gender-based knowledge products that would underscore the role that institutional learning can achieve in this direction. The underlying theme of the new project would be the empowerment of women in the spheres of governance and socio economic development on a sustained basis. The success of efforts in advancing women's roles in these spheres would depend upon their sustainability and acceptability by the communities. This would be the litmus test of the project and all the relevant project activities need to be designed and implemented in a manner that would ensure they pass this test.

Financial Section

Table 1. Total Income and Expenditure

Donor	INCOME				EXPENDITURES			BALANCE	Remarks
	Total Commitment (approx US\$)	Total Received (approx US\$)	TRANSFERS	Total Receivable (approx US\$)	Total Cumulative Expenditures as of Dec 2009	Current Year 2010 (Cumulative) as of the current Quarter	Total Expenditures	Total Received minus Total Expenditures	
00137 - ITALY	3,262,411	3,262,411		-	1,667,068	568,751	2,235,819	1,026,593	
00550 - CIDA	2,824,778	2,824,778	661,491	-	1,825,086	273,155	2,098,241	65,046	
00012 - UNDP Core	1,407,492	1,407,492		-	1,196,980	138,380	1,335,360	72,132	
00551 - DFID	100,716	100,716		-	56,393	12,365	68,758	31,958	
Total	7,595,397	7,595,397	661,491		4,745,527	992,651	5,738,178	1,195,728	

Note:

Negative expenditure figures are adjustments to prior year's commitments. Please note that the expenditure varies from the last quarter due to certain necessary expenditure adjustments. The differences will be adjusted toward the end of the year.

Table 2. Expenditure by Major Outputs (2010)

Project Output	Budget (AWP 2010)	Cumulative Expenditure as of the current Quarter	Delivery Rate	Remarks
Output 1 - Modelling gender mainstreaming through selected ministries (MoWA, MoEC, MoA, MoF)	75049	19,470	26%	
<i>GMS (7%)</i>	-	-		
Sub-total Output 1 - Modelling gender mainstreaming through selected ministries (MoWA, MoEC, MoA, MoF)	75,049	19,470		
Output 2 - Sustainable knowledge building and management on gender	108,546	78,546	72%	
<i>GMS (7%)</i>	5,500.87	3,243		
Sub-total Output 2 - Sustainable knowledge building and management on gender	114,047	81,789	72%	
Output 3 - Towards women empowerment: conflict resolution, justice, security, and peace at the sub-national level	425,471	308,842	73%	
<i>GMS (7%)</i>	32,024.70	23,277		
Sub-total Output 3 - Towards women empowerment: conflict resolution, justice, security, and peace at the sub-national level	457,496	332,119	73%	
Project Management Cost	645,128	525,993	82%	
<i>GMS (7%)</i>	41,031.14	33,281		
Sub-total Project Management Cost	686,159	559,274	82%	
Grand Total	1,332,751	992,651	74%	

Table 3. Expenditure by Donors (2010)

Donor	Project Output	Budget (AWP 2010)	2010 Cumulative Expenditure as of the current Quarter	Delivery Rate
00012 - UNDP	Output 1 - Modelling gender mainstreaming through selected ministries (MoWA, MoEC, MoA, MoF)	75,049	19,470	26%
	Output 2 - Sustainable knowledge building and management on gender	35,463	35,463	100%
	Output 3 - Towards women empowerment: conflict resolution, justice, security, and peace at the sub-national level		(403)	
	Project Management Cost	100,000	83,850	84%
Sub-total UNDP		210,512	138,380	66%
00137 - ITALY	Output 3 - Towards women empowerment: conflict resolution, justice, security, and peace at the sub-national level	329,500	213,274	65%
	Project Management Cost	367,160	315,664	86%
<i>GMS (7%)</i>		<i>52,436.77</i>	<i>39,812.54</i>	
Sub-total Italy		749,097	568,751	76%
00550 - CIDA	Output 2 - Sustainable knowledge building and management on gender	73,083	43,083	59%
	Output 3 - Towards women empowerment: conflict resolution, justice, security, and peace at the sub-national level	95,971	95,971	100%
	Project Management Cost	134,746	114,980	85%
<i>GMS (7%)</i>		<i>22,866.67</i>	<i>19,120.87</i>	
00550 - CIDA Total		326,667	273,155	84%
DFID - 00551	Project Management Cost	43,222	11,499	27%
<i>GMS (7%)</i>		<i>3,253.27</i>	<i>865.52</i>	
00551 - DFID Total		46,475	12,365	27%
Grand Total		1,332,751	992,651	74%

Annexes

Annex I: Performance Tracking Matrix

Result/Goals	Performance Indicators	Baseline Info	Performance Benchmark and Targets	Implementation Progress in reporting quarter
1.Modelling gender mainstreaming through selected ministries (MOWA, MRRD, MOHRA, MOI, MOJ, MOF)				
1.2.1 : Capacity of MOWA enhanced		Non-existence of adequate information in MOWA & line ministries; weak capacity of MOWA to monitor.	Development of targets and indicators for assessing the outputs of M&E unit of MOWA	Strengthening of functioning of MOWA's M&E unit
1.2.2 MOHRA capacity increased to undertake advocacy on Islam & Gender		Absence of appropriate linkages between MOHRA and gender related development issues	Preparation of schedule of meetings to be organized; identification of an outline for the newsletter	Preliminary working group meeting held; discussion on the topics to be included in the newsletter
1.2.3 Ministry of Economy capacity strengthened for gender sensitive assessment of budget submissions		No targeted training on GRB principles held before	Training module developed in consultation with concerning officials	Training on GRB organized and follow-up being planned in November 2010

<p>1.2.4 Technical capacity of MAIL increased</p>		<p>Absence of developing a national food security strategy from a gender perspective</p>	<p>Built an alliance between specific activities of the Action Plan & GEP's outputs in the next phase</p>	<p>Fine-tuning of specific activities under are under progress</p>
<p>1.3 Budget Directorate, Ministry of Finance capacity increased for Gender responsive</p>		<p>Lack of understanding among budget officials about GRB's core principles</p>	<p>Strengthened functioning of GRB cell at Budget Directorate, Ministry</p>	<p>Future advocacy and inputs into BC 2 and Budget Training Manual prepared</p>
<p>2. Sustainable knowledge building & management on gender</p>		<p>No gender mainstreaming training programs organized previously</p>	<p>Preparatory meetings held and training undertaken for 30 (women and men) participants in each program</p>	<p>Finalized training module with faculty members</p>
<p>2.1 Discussion with faculty members of KU for next research topic</p>		<p>No previous involvement of faculty members in the selection of research topics</p>	<p>Meetings held with faculty members to finalize one topic</p>	<p>Developed criteria for the final selection of the next research topic</p>
<p>3. Towards women's empowerment: conflict resolution, justice & security and peace at the sub-national level</p>		<p>Absence of proper understanding among female candidates about the electoral process</p>	<p>Trained over 70 women from eastern provinces</p>	<p>Discussions on-going with MOWA's Training & Advocacy Department for follow-up programs for women MPs</p>

<p>3.1 Communities & local institutions capacitated for the promotion of women's rights</p>		<p>No previous record of monitoring of activities and revision of strategy accordingly; Training of 150 women on income generation in collaboration with DAIL</p>	<p>Visit & supervision of 8 LHCs (4 in each province) and major mosques in each province by Provincial Coordinators & evaluation of performance</p> <p>Establishment of integrated chain of economic activity in food processing</p>	<p>Development of a schedule for regular monitoring of interventions of relevant project activities</p> <p>Value chain analysis & market access to assist women entrepreneurs under progress</p>
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Annex II: Risk Log

RISK LOG

Project Title: Institutional Capacity Building for Gender Equality	Award ID: 00045877	Date: 30 September 2010
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#	Description	Date Identified	Type	Impact & Probability	Management response	Owner	Submitted, updated by	Last Update	Status
1	Tense security situation during the Kabul Conference & Parliamentary Elections	July – September 2010	Security	The security situation posed major restrictions on project staffs' mobility and the delivery of different outputs. The withdrawal of soft skin vehicles and movement being restricted to only armoured vehicles was another major area of concern in the absence of adequate numbers of such vehicles being made available to the project.	Project staff movement restricted to only by armoured vehicles. All precautionary security measures observed.	Project Manager	Project Manager	Sept 2010	

Annex III: Issue Log

ISSUES LOG						Date: September 2010
Award ID: 00045877- Institutional Capacity Building Project for Gender Equality					Project: 00054320	
ID	Type	Date Identified	Description	Status/Priority	Status Change Date	Author
1.	Operational	July 2010	The draft project document for the next phase underwent a seismic template shift – from 3 objectives and outputs, it was streamlined to 2 with a major emphasis on the socio-economic empowerment of women with the peace & reintegration component being deleted	High	August - September 2010	Project Manager

2.	Operational	August 2010	The recruitment process for the new phase of the project continued, however, the completion of the procedures witnessed some significant changes in the existing leaving the project or the non-renewal of their contract as a result of which the staff strength was considerably reduced thereby placing considerable pressure on the remaining staff to complete the delivery for the quarter	High	August-September 2010	Project Manager
3.	Operational	September 2010	The determination of the salary scale for the Provincial Coordinators based at the 4 provinces was subjected to a revision in view of the recent revision of salary scales for national staff working on SCs. The posts had to be re-advertised according to the new scale.	High	September 2010	