



**Quarterly Project Report (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008)**  
**United Nations Development Programme**  
**Afghanistan**  
**[Gender Equality Project]**  
**[01-01-2008 – 31-03-2008]**



**Over 2000 women were at IWD Solidarity Concert by Farhad Darya**

Project ID: 00054320  
Duration: 36 months  
Component (MYFF): 1.6 Gender Mainstreaming  
Total Budget: \$10,628,500  
Unfunded: \$ 1,976,451.00  
Implementing Partners/Responsible parties: MoWA, MoEc

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## I. Implementation progress

In the first quarter of 2008 the Institutional Capacity Building for Gender Equality (Gender Equality) project entered its second year. A full account of the implementation progress made during this period (January-March) is provided below.

### Component 1: *Modelling gender mainstreaming through selected ministries*

#### **Output 1.1: Roles, responsibilities and co-operation for gender mainstreaming among ministries clarified**

##### **1.1.1 Meetings and workshops for MoWA/MoEc staff personnel**

During the reporting period several meetings with MoWA staff and leadership on its role as a policy organ as well as strategic interventions to deliver on its mandate were undertaken. The staff of MoEc were also engaged in debates and discussions as to what role MoEc has to play in promoting gender mainstreaming both at national and sub-national level. The main objective of the exercises was to ensure that a clear understanding of MoWA's role and expectations of other entities/ministries were understood by all involved. An analysis of MoWA's current engagements and critical future interventions/initiatives as per the mandate was done.

#### **Output 1.2: Capacity of MoWA and selected ministries enhanced**

##### **1.2.1 Gender mainstreaming in the ANDS**

The ANDS Secretariat was provided with gender critical inputs. Particular support was provided to address gender issues within the Regional Co-operation cross-cutting sector strategy. The strategy was reviewed and textual inputs were provided. Technical support was also provided to define priority projects and determine their expected outputs, outcomes and impacts for the gender sector strategy. In addition to providing direct inputs to the ANDS Secretariat, advice and inputs were provided to the ANDS process through MAS, CG, CCCG mechanisms. Project staff participated in MAS meetings and provided critical inputs and guidance. Inputs were also given to the research initiative of the Independent Civil Service Commission (ICSC) on women's participation in governance. Comments were made on the research findings of ICSC on the participation of women in the civil service and governance, which is a compact benchmark.

##### **1.2.2 Strategic planning workshops for MoWA senior officials**

A two-day strategic planning workshop for MoWA senior officials was organised and held in January. The workshop was aimed at providing insights and technical guidance so as to facilitate their understanding and enabling them to locate and pursue MoWA's niche for gender mainstreaming. It was also intended to help develop their capacity in devising their annual work plan for the new solar year 1387. The workshop was attended by Heads and Deputy Heads of Departments of MoWA. A successful event, the workshop was able to generate discussions and interactions amongst the participants. It was an event that allowed many participants to critically look into MoWA's current work, initiatives and strategies vis-a-vis its mandate. They were provided with guidance so as to strategically position themselves. The workshop benefited MoWA in its annual planning exercise for 1387 solar year.

##### **1.2.3 Training for Training and Advocacy Department (TAD) of MoWA**

Apart from regular coaching and mentoring TAD staff and management, two team-building workshops were held for TAD staff. The aim of these workshops was to strengthen TAD's internal management practices and to help improve their understanding of TAD as a collective in order to foster better working relations and collaboration. The workshops were also geared toward improving the skills of TAD staff members in planning and managing their business particularly event planning/management skills. The workshops enabled TAD staff to revisit their roles and reflect on the existing internal management and practices. The exercise allowed many to take their frustration out and discuss that with colleagues with confidence. It also provided room for them to see the value each one of them could add and their critical importance in attaining the goals of

MoWA. The event planning/management workshop provided them with knowledge of various steps involved in organising/undertaking events and enabled them to follow through logics behind those. An international consultant facilitated the process while a regular staff member of the Gender Equality team continued backstopping TAD to ensure continuity of their planning exercise which they commenced earlier on.

#### **1.2.4. Commemoration of the International Women’s Day, 8<sup>th</sup> March**

One of the major contributions of the Gender Equality project in the quarter was its support to the government entities to raise awareness on women’s rights through the observance of the International Women’s Day 2008. Support was provided to various advocacy activities organised by MoWA including the main event on 8<sup>th</sup> March, which was graced by the presence of the president of the republic. In partnership with the Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) an unprecedented event—a solidarity concert for women—was organised on the occasion. The Gender Equality project also co-ordinated the participation of and represented UNDP in the UN activities to commemorate the IWD. A full detail of the contribution/support from and participation of the Gender Equality project is provided below.

**Support to MoWA:** This year MoWA started the preparatory process for the commemoration of the International Women’s Day 2008 much earlier than had been done previously. A preparatory committee and a co-ordination mechanism were established to plan and co-ordinate with various partners and stakeholders, including NGOs. The Gender Equality project provided guidance in establishing the committee and to determining interventions that are strategic for MoWA.

Support was extended to MoWA to produce and disseminate advocacy materials including special International Women’s Day edition of *Mirman* and *Ershad-ul-Naswan*. Support was extended for the production of other awareness-raising and advocacy materials such as billboards, banners, flyers, posters, leaflets on the occasion of the International Women’s Day, which were disseminated both in Kabul and in the provinces. The Gender Equality Project supported MoWA to convene the main event in the commemoration of International Women’s Day on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2008, at Amani High School. Opened by HE President Hamid Karzai, the event was attended by dignitaries from the government ministries and other state institutions, parliamentarians and members of the diplomatic corps, UN agencies and civil society organisations. HE Alexander Christopher, DSRSG, UNAMA, represented the UN family at this important event.

**Solidarity Concert for Women:** The first ever solidarity concert for the women of Afghanistan was organised in partnership with the Ministry of Information and Culture by the Gender Equality Project. The concert was held at the Loya Jirga tent in Kabul in the afternoon of 8<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The concert was organised primarily for women who are ordinarily not allowed to go to concerts that men go to. It is also meant for ordinary women who normally cannot afford to go to such concerts. The concert was given free of charge by the most celebrated Afghan musician and UNDP Goodwill Ambassador, Farhad Darya, and was attended by over 2200 women and around 500 men. The event was opened by the Minister of Information and Culture and a message of congratulations and appreciations was conveyed by the Minister for Women’s Affairs. During the concert Darya delivered messages of women’s rights, peace and equality. The concert worked as an ice-breaker. It was an unprecedented event and a great congregation of women from diverse walks of life and it resulted in ordinary people’s greater belief that peace and equality in Afghanistan is possible. The concert was a result of the efforts of the Gender Equality project, the commitment of MoIC to women’s development, and the contribution of Farhad Darya to the cause of women in Afghanistan. An information booth and a photo exhibit on women were organised at the venue of the concert. The event was funded by DFID and the Netherlands Embassy.

**Reaching out to women:** The Gender Equality project participated in the UN agencies’ co-celebration of the International Women’s Day held on 7<sup>th</sup> March at Bagh-e-Zanana. This event was attended by a large number of women and girls. Two Deputy Ministers for MoWA and Youth were among the government dignitaries present who ordinary women had an opportunity to listen to and see from very close. The Gender Equality project presented UNDP’s work for women and

gender equality and played a catalytic role to connect TAD/MoWA, Police Women (from LOTFA) and GSI with ordinary women at the event. Advocacy materials, information, booklet on women, gender and development were distributed among the participants.

#### **1.2.5. MoWA represented at the Commission on the Status of Women**

The Gender Equality project facilitated the participation of MoWA at the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. MoWA was represented in the session by a Deputy Minister. MoWA was provided with both technical and financial support from the Gender Equality project. Also the Deputy Minister was connected to various women's groups coming from other parts of the world to lobby regarding issues and concerns of women.

During the reporting period the project facilitated a meeting of the Deputy Minister (Technical) MoWA with the UNDP HQ and other UN agencies based in New York. This was a rare occasion in which the UN agencies had an opportunity to hear directly from the ministry as to what progress the country/government has made to promote women's rights and development. The Deputy Minister presented critical analysis of the challenges ahead and the plans of the government to overcome those challenges. She also called on the UN agencies to strengthen their support and co-operation with MoWA and the government for the promotion of women's rights and development.

#### **1.2.6. Support for MoWA website**

Support has continued during this reporting period to help improve MoWA's website. A comprehensive training course for MoWA ICT staff on the maintenance of the email system has been organised to enhance their technical capacity. Training on website administration for MoWA's ICT staff and the recruitment of a translator for the website is underway.

### **Output 1.3. Gender-responsive planning and practice in place**

#### **1.3.1. Strategic planning workshops for MoEC officials in Kabul and provinces**

Inaugurated by MoEC's deputy minister, MoWA's Head of Planning and Gender Equality Programme Manager, three sets of workshops on strategic planning were organised and held during this reporting period: two targeted Heads and Deputy Heads of Departments at national level and the other provincial Heads. In the latter, 18 provinces took part in the workshop held in Kabul. These workshops were effective in bringing senior officials from the national and sub-national level together and enabling them to reach common understanding in the benefits and challenges of strategic planning and prioritisation. An international consultant together with the Gender Equality Provincial Implementation Co-ordination Specialist organised and facilitated the workshop.

#### **1.3.2. Recruitment of Gender Planning Specialist for MoEC**

Recruitment of Gender Planning Specialist for MoEC was successfully completed in March 2008 and the Specialist was officially introduced to the Ministry and expected outputs of her assignment were discussed. Based at MoEC, the Gender Planning Specialist is working closely with ministry officials. As a first step the Specialist drafted the annual work plan to provide support to MoEC during 2008 under the Gender Equality project.

### **Output 1.6. Gender mainstreaming Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system in place**

Recruitment of the M&E and Learning Specialist was successfully completed in February 2008. Based at MoWA the Specialist will be working closely with other ministries and institutions, the key stakeholders of the project to develop and institute a gender sensitive M&E System. During her first month the Specialist devised and presented a work plan to MoWA, and commenced an assessment of current gender mainstreaming monitoring and evaluation practice in the public sector, in order to develop an M&E system and to embark on a comprehensive programme for building the capacity of MoWA in the use and monitoring of the M&E system by other public sector agencies. In

addition, the capacity-building programme will include training of MoEC, MoF, MoJ, MRRD, MoA, MoHRA, CSO in the use of the M&E system. A "Think Tank" consisting of representatives from ministries and gender experts from UN agencies and NGOs will be set up and trained for cascading the information on the use of the M&E system to a wider audience within the public sector.

## Component 2: Sustainable knowledge building and management on gender

### Output 2.1 Gender Studies Institute (GSI) is operational

#### 2.1.1 Facilitating Co-ordination and Curriculum Development

During the reporting period the project made significant progress for the operationalisation of the GSI. With the national GSI Co-ordinator on board, a prioritisation exercise was undertaken to determine activities of critical significance. At the outset, the GSI started operations by collecting existing curriculum materials from Kabul University faculties for the purpose of scrutinising them for general structure, gender contents and possible cross-disciplinary courses. Subsequently, materials were collected and analysed and a report was written. In addition, an attempt was made to collect gender curriculum materials from Iran and Pakistan. This review was compiled into a document that includes recommendations and comparative course listings. Also an international Curriculum Development Specialist has been selected who will take the work further. The Specialist is expected to be on board in early 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

#### 2.1.2. Identification of potential teaching staff at Kabul University to teach gender courses

Guidelines and criteria for selection of teaching staff at Kabul University in line with the Ministry of Higher Education's policy and in consultation with the Kabul University were developed in this reporting period. Subsequent to this, the guidelines and criteria were sent to relevant Kabul University teaching staff and their profiles were collected. This area of activity is on-going.

#### 2.1.3. Assessment of existing admission procedures and criteria for MA courses at Kabul University

Meetings were held with the faculties of Kabul University offering MA courses, and an assessment was made based upon information provided. Standards and procedures for MA courses issued by the Ministry of Higher Education were reviewed; a report has been written on the outcome of this assessment. The findings of the assessment will help develop the admission criteria for the gender studies programme.

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

During the reporting period, apart from developing the annual Work Plan for the component, recruitment of key posts for the component was commenced and recruitment of the Provincial Co-ordinator (PC) of Balkh province was complete. For Herat province, no suitable candidate was found in the first round of the recruitment process. The post has been announced for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time and the short listing of the potential candidates has been done. The post of the Gender Specialist (Islamic Theology) has been announced. The recruitment of support staff is on-going. The procurement of the major office equipment was complete and office space both in Kabul and in the provinces has been secured.

### Other critical activities/achievements of the period

**UNDP National Goodwill Ambassador:** One of the critical contributions of the reporting period was the support and facilitation provided to establish the role of the National Goodwill Ambassador (Farhad Darya) of UNDP Afghanistan. The launch of the National Goodwill Ambassador is a significant move towards framing UNDP's goals in Afghan terms and increasing national ownership of UNDP's work.

## Operations and logistics

### **Staff recruitment**

Staff recruitment is an on-going activity. During this quarter, the following staff (other than the aforementioned) were recruited:

Drivers: 4

Cleaner: 1

### **Procurement of equipment**

Procurement for priority outputs which includes various office equipments, furniture and vehicles have been completed.

## II. Project implementation challenges

### *Updated project risks and actions*

**Recruitment:** Delays in recruitment of staff—both national and international—due to the difficulty of finding those who fulfil selection criteria. To mitigate this risk, we have re-disseminated the information about relevant vacancies under the Gender Equality project to wider networks of individuals and institutes around the world. In addition, we have asked individual members of the networks and institutes to further disseminate within their own networks and potential and suitable interested candidates.

**Security** remains an on-going risk. This has a bearing on the speed of the implementation of the project. To mitigate this risk, caution has been exercised to avoid any kind of potential incidents as advised by the UN Security Unit on regular basis.

### *Updated project issues and actions*

**The Project Board meeting** is due and that will be convened as soon as possible.

**GSI physical facility:** the process of contracting an architectural firm shall be expedited to give effect to the operations.



### III. Financial status and utilization

#### Financial status

Table 1: Contribution overview [March 2006 – February 2010]

Donors Name	CONTRIBUTIONS		CONTRIBUTION BALANCE
	Committed	Received	
Italy	3,200,000.00	3,200,000.00	0
CIDA	4,952,048.52	862,068.97	4,089,979.55
UNDP Core	500,000.00	281,609.00	218,391.00
DFID	100,715.71	100,715.71	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,752,764.23</b>	<b>4,444,393.68</b>	<b>4,308,370.55</b>

#### Financial utilization

Table 2: Quarterly expenditure by activity

Activity	Budget 2008	Q1 Expenditures (Jan - March 2008)	Balance	Delivery
ACTIVITY02: Enhancing MoWA Capacity		1,115	- 1,115	
ACTIVITY09: Sensitisation on Women's Rights	904,671	1,703	902,968	0.2%
ACTIVITY10: Women's Access to Justice	376,413	-	376,413	
ACTIVITY11: Gender Sensitive Media	223,277	-	223,277	
ACTIVITY12: Miscellaneous Project Costs	188,383	298,431	- 110,048	158%
GMS (7%)	127,411	22,591	104,820	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,820,155</b>	<b>328,112</b>	<b>1,492,044</b>	<b>18%</b>

Table 3: Quarterly expenditure by donor [01 Jan 2008 – 31 March 2008]

Donor	Activity	Budget 2008	Q1 Expenditures (Jan - March 2008)	Balance	Delivery
Italy	ACTIVITY02: Enhancing MoWA Capacity		1,115	- 1,115	
	ACTIVITY09: Sensitisation on Women's Rights	904,671	1,703	902,968	0.2%
	ACTIVITY10: Women's Access to Justice	376,413	-	376,413	
	ACTIVITY11: Gender Sensitive Media	223,277	-	223,277	
	ACTIVITY12: Miscellaneous Project Costs	188,383	298,431	- 110,048	158%
	7% GMS	127,411	22,591	104,820	
<b>Italy Total</b>		<b>1,820,155</b>	<b>323,924</b>	<b>1,496,231</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1,820,155</b>	<b>328,112</b>	<b>1,492,044</b>	<b>18%</b>

### Annexes

Annex I Annual Work Plan 2008