

UN Women Afghanistan

Assistance to the UN Women Afghanistan Country Programme
in the Planned period 2010-2013

Supported by The Government of Norway and
The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)

MID-TERM REVIEW

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The report and analysis here provided are that of the authors
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Acronyms Used

ACO	Afghanistan Country Office (of UN Women)
AREDP	Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Programme (of MRRD)
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Education Unit
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CLWG	Criminal Law Working Group
CSO ¹	Civil society organisation
CSO ²	Central Statistics Office
DoWA	Department of Women's Affairs
EVAW	Elimination of Violence Against Women
GBV	Gender based violence
GMTF	Gender Mainstreaming Task Force
HRD	Human resource development
IDLO	International Development Law Organisation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoHRA	Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NAPWA	National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan
NPP	National Priority Plan
RBM	Results based management
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNW	UN Women
UN Women	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence against women
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPS	Women, peace and security

INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) implemented a programme package funded by the Government of Norway and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The programme package, *Support to UN Women in Afghanistan* for SIDA¹ and *Assistance to the UN Women Afghanistan Country Programme in the Planned Period 2010-2013* for Norway, encompasses the following five major UN Women projects in Afghanistan, with the overall goal of attaining women's empowerment and gender equality.

1. Strengthening Government's Capacity to Implement NAPWA and ANDS Gender Cross-Cutting Strategy: Translating Commitments to Actions (SIDA 73410 and Norway 74132).
2. Elimination of Violence against Women: Gender and Justice (SIDA 71715 and Norway 74131).
3. Elimination of Violence against Women: Special Funds (SIDA 71960 and Norway 74130).
4. Women as Peacebuilders (SIDA 71714 and Norway 74129).
5. Grassroots Advocacy and Policy Implementation: Strengthening Women's Livelihood Opportunities (SIDA 71722 and Norway 74134).

The period covered by these projects was April 2010 to April 2013. The MTR, having been delayed, may be considered as being a review combining the first 33 months of the 36 month project period. Meetings were held with the two Deputy Ministers of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and with 45 other persons, of whom 18 were UN Women personnel and the remainder representatives of partner organisations. A field visit was organised during which it was possible to see a women's shelter in operation, an economic empowerment project for girls run by the Department of Women's Affairs, and a meeting of the EAW Commission. A full list of persons interviewed appears in the annex.

The three year programme included a great range of activities that cannot easily be summarised. The project document of April 2010 provided four overarching goals, which were:

- To provide greater accountability to women and gender equality in Afghanistan.
- That women's human rights be advanced through the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, UN SCR 1820 and CEDAW, and the effective participation of Afghan women in peace building.
- That the prevalence of violence against women in Afghanistan be reduced; and
- That there be increased access to sustainable economic opportunities by Afghan women.

These four goals were to be reached through the achievement of nine outcomes, the delivery of 28 outputs and the undertaking of some 130 activities.

Part 1 of the report provides a brief introduction to the social and political context in Afghanistan so far it affects women. Part 2 provides in tabular form a summary of the main findings from the review, lessons learned and recommendations. This is accompanied in Part 3 by a narrative describing the various activities that were undertaken with assistance from the Norway /SIDA programme. Information in that section is arranged under each of the nine intended outcomes that appear in the programme document of April 2010. Results are noted to the extent that it has been possible to record them in the absence of a thoroughgoing evaluation and collection of field data. The fourth and final part of the

¹ The UN Women SIDA multi-programme "Support to UN Women in Afghanistan" has four components: a) Strengthening Government's Capacity to Implement NAPWA and ANDS Gender Cross-Cutting Strategy: Translating Commitments to Actions; b) Women as Peacebuilders; c) Elimination of Violence against Women (EAW); and d) Grassroots Advocacy and Policy Implementation: Strengthening Women's Livelihood Opportunities. The EAW component which has two sub-programmes, EAW Gender and Justice and EAW Special Funds, will be discussed in this report separately.

report carries a set of notes that are intended to be helpful when considering the shape and content of any future programme.

Of the 22 objectives or themes listed in Part 2 of the report, almost all are judged by the MTR team as being worthy of continued support. Such reservations as have been noted relate to issues of sustainability and what more might be done to secure it. Reviewing activities under the nine intended outcomes, it is possible to report significant progress against eight of them. The one exception relates to Outcome # 9 that deals with the mobilisation of community change agents at local level. The issue is taken up with suggestions in the notes appearing in Part 4.

Given the security and personnel challenges that UN Women has faced in Afghanistan, its accomplishments have been remarkable. For most of the programme period it has been operating under pressure with limited staff and resources. The delivery rate on expenditure, comparing calendar year 2011 with calendar year 2012, showed an increase from 67 to 84 per cent. In the circumstances this may be considered a major achievement.

Recommendations for future programming include the observation that UN Women is much appreciated by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, for which continued support is required, for example advancing work on EVAW, advising on policy issues, and assisting with the professional development of the Ministry's personnel. Consideration may also be given to working with any or all of several other government ministries.

For the medium term, working through civil society organisations will have to be regarded as the primary means through which UN Women and its donors address women's social and economic empowerment. With the support that UN Women has provided to CSOs a dramatic improvement in their capabilities has been observed, although the nature and quality of the relationship needs continuing attention. Several CSOs have made suggestions on the way in which the relationship could be improved.

The availability of strong women leadership has often been a key to success. Although not a specific feature of its present programme, UN Women may wish to consider whether it can and should seek to build a cadre of women development workers and entrepreneurs. Although the current focus is and must continue to be on building the capabilities of CSOs, this provides only limited opportunities for the development of essential leadership skills, especially among younger women showing potential. Entrepreneurial skills are required to ensure the success and sustainability of most social service activities, especially – as in Afghanistan - where the state is unable to provide a budget.

Currently underway in the programme is a great number and variety of different activity streams. A certain lack of coordination between the Country Office's various units is recognised by personnel at many levels and management accepts need for a more strategic approach. The ACO needs a comprehensive country programme document providing an up to date situation analysis and needs assessment, a definition of target audiences, and a clear conceptualisation of expected outcomes with a workable plan for monitoring and evaluation.

For attitude formation and behaviour change the organisation's main instruments are communication, persuasion and lobbying. Some communications planning work has been done in the context of the SG's UNiTE *Campaign* but it is recommended that staff be provided with professional training in communications principles and practice and that all existing and new programme activities be reviewed in terms of the challenges of this type that are inherent in the work but not generally recognised.

To the present the focus of interventions has been on organising activities. The achievement of sustainable results will however require the introduction of a results based management approach with significant monitoring and evaluation components. Also required is the practice of thinking ahead to ask what needs to come after the immediate activity in view. UN Women cannot guarantee the survivability of any specific activity, but it can take the additional step of investing in the understanding and leadership skills that will help to ensure that desirable outcomes follow.

The adoption of RBM requires a revolution in the way of thinking and working. To be successful in introducing the change a substantial investment will have to be made in a staff development. Given the present level of resources available it is doubtful that serious progress could be made in this area while continuing with the present work load. Most of the activities underway are deserving of being continued, but at present funding levels, it may be necessary to sacrifice some in order to invest in capacity development for the organisation as a whole. An alternative approach might to establish a capacity development budget or fund for the strengthening national staff capacity to carry forward the work of UN Women in Afghanistan. A joint approach, combining an investment in UN Women's capabilities with those of Civil Society in Afghanistan may also be possible.

1. COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Since 2004 the Government of Afghanistan has taken on a number of commitments that affect the status and welfare of women. Many of these have been required and /or endorsed by successive international conferences. The first of these, in Bonn, December 2001, produced the Bonn Agreement that served as a framework for the establishment of democratic governance in the country. The Agreement called for attention to be given to the role of women and the establishment of a Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA). Implementation of the Bonn Agreement resulted in the adoption of a national Constitution, 4 January 2004. Article 22 of the Constitution enshrined the policy of non-discrimination and equality in rights and duties between women and men.

In January 2010 the Government signed a Compact with the international community. The Compact sought to advance the agenda for restoring peace three pillars, including security, governance, rule of law, human rights, and economic and social development. To concretise these commitments, at the Paris Conference of December 2008 the Government of Afghanistan and the international community adopted the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. The ANDS embodied an analysis of the priority problems affecting Afghan women and men and set out policies, outcomes and benchmarks for measuring progress in addressing them. Both the Compact and the ANDS reiterated a commitment to implementing the constitutional guarantees of non-discrimination and equality of women and human rights and duties. Accompanying the ANDS was a ten-year National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan 2008-2018. The full implementation of the NAPWA is the main measurable benchmark through which the Government seeks to realise its goals on gender equality.

All that UN Women has sought to achieve with the three year grant from Norway and SIDA can be explained by reference to the NAPWA. The importance of the NAPWA was reiterated at the Afghanistan Conference held in Tokyo 8 July 2012. More recently, Presidential Decree 45 has required all Government ministries to report on a six monthly basis their progress in implementing the ANDS. The first such report was submitted 28 February 2013.

Government has gradually and increasingly fulfilled its commitment to improve the status of women. It is widely accepted that very many women and girls in Afghanistan enjoy greater freedoms and equality of rights than they did a decade ago. The provision of education for girls has been a major achievement. In spite of the fact that the scales have not been weighted equally with men, women have stood in two rounds of national elections and some have been elected to Parliament. Women are now allowed to seek medical help from a doctor, to run businesses, to form associations, to travel abroad, to campaign for their rights, and to serve in the police force. Among the better informed urban middle class there is now an awareness of human rights in general and of women's rights in particular. Many women have learned skills that have enabled them to earn additional income. Shelters have been opened for women and girls who are victims of violence, and there is a significant body of articulate Afghan women that in argument are more than equal to most men. Benefits have not however been equally distributed, with the majority of rural women still living in conditions not terribly dissimilar to those of their parents.

The progress made is the more remarkable given the severity of the cultural and political obstacles that have stood in the way of implementing the Government's commitments. The President has had a difficult time in balancing demands of the international community against strong resistance to change coming from the population at large, particularly from men. Given the low level of education and extremely limited exposure to the outside world, most Afghans are steadfastly against the idea of viewing women as having equal rights. Indeed, the subject is one that is shrouded in great sensitivity.

Most of the 27 Ministries that are required to report to the Ministry of Women's Affairs on their progress in gender mainstreaming their National Priority Programmes do not display any particular enthusiasm for the task. Although most ministries now have gender units, and most departments have a gender focal person, very often these are more symbolic than practical. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is not a strong ministry in terms of its available human resources and budget, and therefore has difficulty making its voice heard. From these signs and others, one may conclude that although the existing regime has been willing to go along with the international community's demands concerning the rights of women, there is yet no deep seated commitment within government generally to see a furtherance of the gains made.

It is particularly disappointing to note that the Government has not yet been able to implement its ERAW strategy as outlined in the NAPWA. Although the Ministry of Women's Affairs has joined with UN Women in its efforts to promote the idea, few Government resources have been made available. With less than one per cent of the national budget going to the social sector, and that divided between nine separate ministries, it is perhaps not surprising that Government has not embraced this particular type of social service. In 2012 the Ministry of Women's Affairs submitted a development budget of USD 2.5 million, of which it received approval for only USD 0.5 million. Notwithstanding the paucity of funds, the allocation is of course a political decision.

The issue now is how the women's movement can or will maintain momentum. Peace moves? and the completed withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force in 2014 could imply in some form a return of the Taliban and its extremist conservative tendencies. The educated urban population is anxious about what the future may hold. It is doubtful that the situation will regress to 2002, but ten years is not nearly long enough to achieve a permanent cultural revolution.

Within the United Nations system UN Women is a relatively new entity, formed in July 2010 by bringing together four pre-existing organisations, the most active in Afghanistan being the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Thus, until around March 2011 in Afghanistan it was under the name UNIFEM that the work of UN Women was still known.² The early settling in period for UN Women was one characterized by uncertain leadership and extended periods required for decision making. As of February 2013 the situation is much improved, with very good support being provided to the Afghanistan Country Office by UN Women Headquarters. Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that for most of the review period the situation was not as now.

In addition to the problems arising from the transition, from the end of 2009 the Afghanistan programme has been beset by severe security problems. Following the attack on the Bakhtar Guesthouse of 28 October that year, in which six people including five UN staffers were killed, most of the international personnel were evacuated. Many chose not to return and for many months management and advisory positions remained unfilled. In 2011 several key national staff members resigned. All in all, 2010-2011 was not an easy period for the UN Women programme in Afghanistan.

² For convenience, throughout the remainder of the report the term "UN Women" has been used to include also the activities and management of UNIFEM.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY OBJECTIVE /THEMES

Objectives /Themes	Findings / Lessons Learned	Recommendations
1. Strengthening Government's Capacity to Implement NAPWA and ANDS Gender Cross-Cutting Strategy (Outcome # 1)		
1.1. Support to the NPP process and implementation	Considerable technical & financial support provided to MoWA in the process of NPP development and implementation. Help given in developing MoWA's NPP, enhancing MoWA's role in HRD cluster by establishing a GMTF. Challenging in terms of ensuring cooperation of line ministries to report back on the measures taken to MoWA	Important work needs to continue. However, strategic partnership with member ministries of HRD cluster and MoF required to ensure demand for MoWA's role
1.2. Support to gender and research under MoWA NPP Component 4	4 topics aligned with NAPWA pillars selected; technical advisory service provided; 4 NGOs identified to carry out the research. However experiencing long delay in implementation	Need to assess mechanisms to ensure timely implementation of activities. Need for investment in improving technical capacity of MoWA and CSOs in conducting gender studies
1.3. Gender and statistics	Support for survey of men and women in decision making; establishing a Gender and Statistic unit within CSO; and conducting training on gender audit and analysis. However, technical advice provided is short term. Financial support in long term is uncertain. Delays in funding by donors. CSO has no professional cadre to deal with gender studies	Important to continue support to ensure capacity in the gender and statistic unit. Also to assess mechanisms for ensuring sustainability of the activities. Need to integrate gender indicators to the ongoing surveys. Provide longer term TA to ensure skills transfer. Consider capacity development through short & long term courses and scholarships. Provide support to ensure use of gender disaggregated data is in place
1.4. Pilot implementation of NAPWA in sub-national level	Facilitating one UN approach. Personnel recruited and in place. Improved DoWA capacity; successful in identifying and creating visibility for the gaps. However, difficult to operate due to poor access and mobility constraints. Limited coordination of UN agencies in	Approach, mechanisms of operation, and choice of location needs to be reviewed. Developing a joint programme or projects will be more useful. Possibility of outsourcing activities to NGOs to keep the promises made to

	practice. High expectations of communities in terms of poverty reduction	communities
1.5. Providing policy support to MoF in gender budgeting	An expert placed in MoF. Initial stages of screening of NPPs completed. Potential to expand support for policy budgeting on gender related resource allocation. However, time needed to measure impact of this new activity	Should continue, as MoF may be considered as key partner. Clarify roles and responsibilities re' UNDP work in MoF. Work with gender units of line ministries to increase demand
2. Elimination of Violence against Women: Gender and Justice (Outcomes # 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7)		
2.1. Data base on VAW	Important work. Successful in establishing data base, developing intake forms, and training of partner organizations to use the form. Produced annual reports with VAW data. However difficult to ensure quality of data, and to persuade all partners to use the forms	Should continue. More support needed to ensure data base is maintained and updated. Training and capacity building needed for form users. Upgrading to online data base will be a benefit. Further support needed to development and monitoring of coordination mechanisms
2.2. Policy and Legal Reform	Very relevant to EAW. Support provided by being an active member of CLWG, facilitating sub-working group on gender and law reform. Planning to provide inputs to review process of criminal law through a civil society/ governmental /UN /donor consultative process	Need to expand activities, e.g. training on legal drafting skills; linking the sub-working group with regional networks; training on use of Islamic interpretations of laws; exposure to legal review process in other Muslim countries; working with MPs
2.3. Paralegal program	Very important work at community level in preventing harmful practices against women. Successful in developing a standard training manual now being used also by other organizations. Trained so far 180 paralegal volunteers. However limited resources to respond to the need and little coordination among agencies involved.	Need to continue, expand and coordinate with other agencies, e.g. UNDP, USAID, ActionAid and others. Define comparative advantage of UNW. More work required on supporting establishment of a network of paralegal volunteers, and developing a policy framework to support their activities
2.4. EAW Commission	Important contribution to implementation of EAW law. Aims to introduce a coordination mechanism, offer support in fast tracking cases of VAW, and provide political support to EAW. However,	Long term support needed in improving commitment and technical capacity of member organizations

	large part of the work still remains with DoWA. Will require long time to firm up commitments and develop technical skills	
3. Elimination of Violence against Women - Special Fund (Outcomes # 4, 5, 6, and 7)		
3.1. Response to VAW	<p>Very important work, successful through supporting and establishing shelters and family guidance centers. Significant results achieved, i.e. developing mechanisms for administering the Fund, producing a SOP, and a standard package of services.</p> <p>Supported the creation of a GBV framework to deal with VAW using a coordinated approach. Moved successfully from one-year to two-year funding to avoid gap in financing. However delay in disbursing funds to shelters is reported</p>	<p>Need long term donor's commitment and funding. Important to invest more in shelter capacity. Need to clarify MoWA's role in relation to shelters, i.e. monitoring vs. administration. Mechanisms needed for achieving sustainability of services through mobilizing national resources and local income generation</p>
3.2. Prevention of VAW	<p>Advocacy and awareness raising activities through partner organizations conducted, media campaigns supported; focus on working with youth is an interesting model. However delay in processing proposals, limited time in implementation of projects reported which can introduce a level of risk for quality of implementation</p>	<p>Important to continue, as investment in prevention will reduce cost for protection. However mechanisms for awareness raising should be reviewed to allow long term engagement with particular audience. One off awareness raising activities on a sensitive agenda as women rights may not have long terms impact</p>
4. Women as Peace builders (Outcomes # 2, 3, and 4)		
4.1. Support civil society participation in the peace process	<p>Important steps taken: women supported and capacity built to participate in the consultative Peace Jirga. The Jirga and High Peace Council both supported by seconding a senior staff member</p>	<p>Need to continue. However important to develop a more systematic approach and assess comparative value of UNW's contribution</p>
4.2. Improve women's presence in political process	<p>Women's participation in international political events supported by providing funds and technical assistance. i.e. for the international conferences in London, Kabul, Bonn, Tokyo, and Chicago Summit. All provided good platform</p>	<p>Continuing need for both political and financial support to maintain women's voice in international dialogues on Afghanistan. UNW's support to women in upcoming elections to be defined</p>

	for women to express their views and influence the content; useful in engaging women from communities	
4.3. Establish Women's Resource Center	Center is established inside Parliament building. Provides IT services, trainings on legal drafting, negotiation skills, and gender budgeting	For the Center to be of greater service in improving skills of women MPs, should conduct an assessment with Center users to identify further areas of work
4.4. Support research on women's peace and security	Conducting research on women and elections in 2012	Research findings and recommendations to be used for future programming. Dissemination mechanism to be defined
4.5. Enhance implementation of international obligations (CEDAW & SCR 1325)	Important steps taken: financial support to develop State Report by MoFA, and Shadow Report by CSOs. Information sharing and coordination of efforts around WPS achieved through establishment of Women, Peace and Security Working Group.	Further support needed to ensure that recommendations of CEDAW Committee are incorporated in Government actions. Need to improve capacity of CSOs to monitor implementation of the recommendations. Strategic partnership with MoFA would help. More technical support needed to improve coordination and advocacy on the inclusion of women in peace and security. Technical support to MoF on 1325
5. Grassroots Advocacy and Policy Implementation: Strengthening Women's Livelihood Opportunities (Outcomes # 1, 8, and 9)		
5.1. Support to Women Economic Security and Rights – WESR Network	Through an extensive consultation process successful in developing Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy. Promoted shared responsibility between MoWA and members of Network	Important initiative - needs to be continued. Support needed to MoWA and the Network to facilitate resources mobilization and advocate for implementation and monitoring of the Strategy
5.2. Support ICT centers in Province of Parwan	Responding to demand, trained 180 already and 80 more to come. Plan to expand to district level. However, DoWA staff does not consider this part of MoWA's mandate	Need to review sustainability. Seek MoWA ownership. Assess link with economic empowerment objectives. UNW to assess its comparative advantage and wisdom of using resources for this type of activity. Investment in larger programs (e.g. NSDP or promoting "Women friendly markets") to encourage women entrepreneurs may provide better

		results
5.3. Support to MRRD to mainstream gender in the programming	New but important steps taken to mainstream gender in rural economy. Support given to review gender policy of MRRD; capacity building of gender focal points within gender units at national and provincial levels. AREDP of MRRD is actively engaged in the WESR network and WESR strategy development process. This new activity needs time to show results	Should continue as a key area, ensuring long term results through a program that is owned by Government. Crucial as a vehicle for reaching rural communities
5.4. Support gender mainstreaming in the Independent Civil Service Commission	A new activity in the process of detailing. Aims to provide support in finalizing the gender policy of the Commission	Should be considered as major part on future programs, ensuring increased women's presence in the Government's workforce at all levels, including at senior decision making level. Seek to build capacity of policy implementers in each ministry for implementation of the gender policy for public sector
5.5. Economic empowerment of women through promoting access to inheritance and property rights	Conducted training programs and disseminated public outreach publications supporting awareness raising and mobilization of communities, activists, Members of Parliament and Provincial Councils concerning the importance and mechanisms of achieving women's access to inheritance and property rights	Important to continue with additional investment as inheritance is the only source of security that every woman may have access to. Need to engage more partners in Government i.e. MoWA, MoHRA, MoJ, MRRD and the judiciary. Also improve internal joint programming with ERAW unit in UNW
5.6. Producing data and analysis by conducting action research	Situation analysis and mapping of women economic empowerment in last 10 years	Important to establish baseline. Would be useful to continue on regular bases to register changes and progress

3. ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS BY INTENDED OUTCOMES

This section of the report elaborates more in detail the summary information provided in section 2. The activities funded under the Norway /SIDA programme and recognised achievements are here organised under the nine intended outcomes appearing in the programme document. These however, do not always correspond directly and some activities can be interpreted under more than one heading.

1. The Government increasingly fulfils its commitments to women under key policy instruments

In helping Government to fulfil its commitments to women under policy instruments, most of UN Women's efforts have been directed towards the Ministry of Women's Affairs. This has taken two forms: (i) the provision of an international consultant for six months to help MoWA formulate its own Priority Programme – devoted mainly to capacity building, and (ii) helping the Ministry to monitor the progress of other government ministries in meeting their commitments on gender under their individual NPPs. For this second purpose, UN Women helped the Ministry to administer "Cluster" meetings comprising representatives of Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, and Ministry of Health. A Gender Mainstreaming Task Force was formed to ensure the engendering of the NPPS within the HRD Cluster. Additionally, a Project Management Unit was set up responsible for managing six activity components relating to (i) the organisational reform of MoWA, (ii) provision of gender training, (iii) piloting gender mainstreaming, (iv) public education and awareness raising, (v) monitoring action on NAPWA, and (vi) research. UN Women is financially supporting the staff of the PMU.

Component (vi) fell to UN Women. This involved the setting up within MoWA of a Gender Equality Research Team and the contracting of four NGOs for the carrying out of field work. The topics currently under investigation are gender and economic policy; Afghan women in peace building; women in leadership and decentralisation; and traditional practices affecting women. An international advisor on research methodologies has been engaged. It is expected that the research results will enable the Government better to fulfil its commitments under the NAPWA as well as other policy instruments.

With assistance from UN Women a framework for action at policy level has been established, intended to help MoWA in developing the NAPWA and NPPs. Given the limited political support available to MoWA this must be regarded as a major achievement. Over the past year certain ministries have collaborated particularly well, including MoPH, MoLSAMD, MoE and MoHE.

Further work is required to assist MoWA in fomenting a more cooperative relationship with the Ministry of Finance and in developing the understanding and skills of MoF officials. This is necessary to secure proper resource allocation and gender-responsive budgeting. It is also a key to gender mainstreaming within the programming of other ministries.

Another area where UN Women has been able to contribute to the implementation of policy commitments is in the area of national statistics. Activities undertaken with the Central Statistics Office include the creation of a small Unit to take the lead on assembling and analyzing statistics in an engendered manner. With assistance from CSO's management a team of personnel has been assembled, with UN Women providing an international advisor who has adopted a strong capacity building approach. Additionally, with funds to cover the cost of IT equipment, software and printing, UNW has supported the CSO in the publication of a survey on the situation of men and women in decision making, and the publication of a handbook of statistics.

In Afghanistan the use of data for policy and planning is a relatively new area. Thus, these start-up activities are expected to be of great value for gender responsive planning. The CSO recognises the importance of work being financed through UN Women and hopes for the integration of gender thinking into mainstream work. This however, will depend on the possibility of attracting young professional statisticians to volunteer for work in the subject area. The CSO management suggested that additional scholarships would help to make the career more attractive.

2. Women mobilise to advocate for representation in peace processes

UN Women has been successful particularly in its efforts to support representatives of women's action groups in Afghanistan put their case before the international community and, hence, before the Government of Afghanistan. This has included advising and coaching the spokeswomen on drafting their presentations, and supporting groups of women speakers to travel to international and domestic conferences. The London Conference January – February 2010 led to the strengthening of the Afghanistan Women's Network by bringing together some 60 organisations working for women's interests. This was followed by the National Consultative Peace Jirga of March 2010, where an unprecedented 25 per cent participation of women was achieved. The Kabul Conference of July 2010, The Bonn Conference in December 2011 and the Tokyo Conference of July 2012 also provided international fora at which Afghan women change agents addressed the issues of Afghan women to the international community.

In preparation for the Bonn Conference, with support from UN Women a consultative process was launched with meetings held in many provinces to discuss the position paper prepared by the selected organisation. This had the aim of making the paper representative for Afghan women in general but was used also as a means of advocacy and awareness raising. The consultations contributed greatly to increasing participation of women in the political process, an activity previously unknown in Afghanistan.

UN Women has also been active in supporting women Members of Parliament, who form a little more than 25 per cent of the house, the minimum provided for in the Constitution. UN Women's support has included the establishment of a small resource centre within the Parliament building, staffed by two project personnel and equipped with photocopier machine, Internet connection and a range of literature pertinent to women's issues. Additionally, through an implementing partner, Equality for Peace and Democracy, training on negotiation techniques and gender responsive budgeting has been made available to all MPs and Provincial Counsellors. The latter resulted in Parliament requiring government ministries to add an extra column to their budget submissions showing the percentages going to address women's needs.

At the time of writing UN Women is recruiting a National Gender Advisor who will undertake research and /or develop training materials on women's issues that may be of use to all MPs, but particularly the female MPs. UNW may consider an assessment of what further support may be provided through the resources centre, for example a service linking women MPs with relevant civil society organisations.

In addition to the above UN Women has engaged the services of Afghan NGOs to carry out research whose findings will reinforce the ability of change agents to advocate for women's rights. Included under this heading has been research by AREU into women's participation in the four national elections that have taken place since 2002.

UN Women is also supporting the Afghan Women's Network to prepare the Shadow Report on the Government's Initial and Second CEDAW Report, as well as its participation in the CEDAW meetings

2013. The previous year UN Women provided technical assistance for the preparation of the Government's CEDAW report. Further assistance may be required to ensure implementation of recommendations made.

3. Public policies and programmes on conflict resolution and reconciliation reflect women's needs and experiences of war

Outcome 3 was formulated at a time when a peace process was expected. Regrettably, this has not turned out to be the case, at least not in the way that allows for public participation - much less for the participation of women. Activities have however been undertaken that contribute to a meeting of the intended outcome.

The first was the National Consultative Peace Jirga of March 2010, already mentioned. With the assistance of UN Women an unprecedented 25 per cent participation of women was achieved. From 2010 to July 2012 a senior staff member from UN Women, the Manager of the Gender and Justice Unit, was invited to join the 70-member High Peace Council that was to engage in dialogue with the Taliban on the possibility of establishing terms.

If the peace process re-emerges as a viable activity, UN Women may assist in identifying new strategic and programmatic contributions.

4. The Government and international actors demonstrate increased accountability to women's human rights through the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and 1820

By the initiative of UNW, a Women, Peace and Security Working Group was established October 2010 to bring together stakeholders including donor organisations, embassies, MPs, and members of the High Peace Council, in an attempt to consolidate and coordinate activities under several UN Security Council Resolutions, including SCRs 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889. The Group has continued to meet on a monthly basis and has served mainly as a forum for the exchange of information. *Ad hoc* events have been arranged. For example, as part of the annual UN Global Open Day, in cooperation with UNAMA, UN Women has organised meetings between women's rights activists and the Special Representative of the Secretary General. For celebrating International Peace Day (21 September) UN Women and MoWA arranged workshops in two provinces on the subject of women's participation in community development and peace building. These events have been covered widely in local news media.

An important activity related the SCR 1325 was mandated by a Presidential Decree establishing a Steering Committee to oversee implementation of the Resolution. Responsibility fell to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Directorate of Human Rights and Women's International Affairs, which formed a Technical Working Group to draft a National Action Plan. In 2012 UNW has been asked to provide technical support to the process.

A further measure aimed at protecting and promoting respect for the human rights of women and girls has involved UN Women in a joint Criminal Law Reform Working Group led by the Legislative Department of the Ministry of Justice, with the participation of the Supreme Court and the Office of the Attorney General. Civil society representatives and donors also participate. UN Women's role has been to ensure that there is gender analysis of the existing Penal Code and to advocate for a gender perspective on proposals for law reform including the integration of the EVAW Law into civil penal code.

In support of the same provision of the SCR 1325, a more direct measure championed by UN Women has been the training and certification of community volunteers to work as “paralegals.” In the Afghanistan context paralegals are mainly civil society activists who provide orientation and advice on criminal law, women’s rights, and international conventions to which Afghanistan is a signatory. When called upon to do so they also mediate in conflicts. To date 180 community workers have been trained in this way, with a further 80 to be trained during 2013. Under the project, a manual has been prepared providing guidance for the trainees; this now having been adopted and put into practice by Action Aid. The work described has been sub-contracted by UN Women to an implementing partner organisation.³

The questions now being considered include how best to link the paralegals together into some form of association that can provide ongoing support and encouragement. UN Women plans to initiate the process by first training 20 trainers who may catalyze the larger group. An equally important question is how best to standardise and formalise the system being developed, not only by UN Women but by the five other organisations working to train paralegals. As the Ministry of Justice remains for the time being disinterested in the subject, there is here both a need and an opportunity for UN Women to take the lead. This however would require additional personnel and, hence, a budget for the purpose.

5. The Government of Afghanistan effectively implements its EVAW strategy

The SC Resolution 1325 requires steps be taken to ensure the protection and respect for the human rights of women and girls. In this context the Ministry of Women’s Affairs has sought to quantify the nature and extent of violence against women across the country by establishing a national database on VAW. Creation of VAW database is mandated by EVAW law. This has involved the coordination, development and integration of a number of pre-existing surveys that had been carried out by several organisations. The expectation is that this will enable MoWA as well as other ministries to make decisions based on the priorities revealed.

In pursuit of this objective, with the agreement of Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, MoWA, UNAMA, the Independent Afghan Human Rights Commission, Afghan Women’s Network, and UN Women, standardized protocols have been established concerning what type of information should be collected. Other protocols guide how victims of violence should be treated, for example in their giving of consent to the use of the data gathered. To date a total of 7,000 forms have been distributed across all 34 provinces and training has been provided to all provincial departments of Women’s Affairs and to relevant civil society organisations.

In spite of considerable progress having been made in agreeing how the data base should be put together, many obstacles remain. Problems of limited literacy, lack of discipline in form filling, and lack of access to IT equipment have combined to make record keeping a challenge. This noted, the data collected early 2013 are considerably more reliable than when the project began in 2010. To date, three reports have been produced, the second and third edition each being an improvement over its predecessor.

6. The EVAW Special Fund catalyses significant growth in response mechanisms, and capacities for service delivery throughout Afghanistan

³ Hitherto the Justice Sector Support Programme, although a new service provider will soon be engaged to continue the work.

In order better to respond to cases where women suffer violence, UN Women has concentrated its efforts on establishing shelters or refuges to which those affected may turn for help and protection. Referral centres pre-existed publication of the NAPWA but were limited in what they could do: women having recourse there were permitted to remain for only 72 hours, which in most cases was much less time than was needed to resolve the problem presenting. In addition to shelter, assistance to victims has included the provision of emergency medical and psychosocial support, legal aid and, where appropriate, help to reintegrate into the community.

On the prevention side, activities supported from the Special Fund have included lobbying, advocacy and awareness raising. A recent development has been the launching of Family Guidance Centres whose task has been to help identify and ameliorate situations that might lead to violence, as well as to carry gender-positive message to the community at large.

Operational research aimed at exploring economic empowerment initiatives for women has also been on the agenda. Preference has been given to the funding of national NGOs, although Government initiatives have not been excluded, and NGOs having meaningful partnerships with line ministries have been encouraged.

Under the Special Fund, UN Women launched its first call for proposals in 2009. With its accumulating experience by 2012 the organisation was able to set about developing a standard package of services, including protocols to handle and refer cases according to their specific needs; determine the number of personnel required to run a shelter, manage the costs of operating such facilities, and the norms and standards of operation that should be met. Further advances have been made in developing emergency responses for the treatment in country and abroad of serious cases of gender based violence. A Memorandum of Understanding on this is expected to be endorsed February 2013 by Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UN Women, WHO, and UNFPA.

As of end 2012, seven calls for proposals have been launched, with approximately half the financial resources going to support women's shelters and the remainder to awareness raising and training. In all, 41 NGOs have been funded to work on the subject in 23 provinces. It is estimated that during this time, at a cost of approximately, USD 4 million some 2 million women have benefited from the services. A large part of the total budget has been spent on training, including training for the shelter managers and staff, as well as training for local government, police, health and community officials whose cooperation and understanding has been necessary for the success of the programme.

At the present time 17 shelters and one family guidance centre are in operation. Of these, nine were launched in 2012; the others pre-existing from 2010 or 2011. A possible six shelters and one family guidance centre await funding in the first quarter of 2013. It is hoped that later in 2013 it will be possible to fund an additional 12 shelters and at least five regional centres for women released from prison who cannot immediately be reintegrated into their community.⁴

Starting in April 2012, in addition to the proposals coming from civil society, Government was permitted to submit proposals to the Fund. At the same time management of two referral centres - one in Nangarhar and one in Parwan - was handed over to the provincial Departments of Women's Affairs with MoWA exercising supervision.

In relation to the establishments and management of women's shelters several issues still need to be resolved. These include (i) MoWA's role and responsibilities; (ii) the possible establishment of

⁴ The Norway /SIDA grant will however have expired end of the first quarter 2013.

additional shelters in the absence of a secure environment and in the absence of a clear strategy for achieving sustainability; (iii) how to provide for skills training of staff – especially in the hard to access provinces; and (iv) how to handle the perception of religious groups and the community at large that are often against the setting up of such facilities.

In relation to the conduct of public awareness campaigns and public outreach, UN Women has organised a large number of meetings with a variety of stakeholders. These have included meetings with the Ministries of Women's Affairs, Information and Culture, Public Health, Hajj and Religious Affairs, and Education, as well as with some 40 NGOs and 17 provincial youth federations. Under this heading a great deal of additional training has been provided to community members and service providers. In 2012 UN Women supported six NGOs to work in 18 provinces providing trainings and awareness raising sessions for 130,000 community members. Interest has been mobilised too among parliamentarians, academic institutions, media, art, business and sports associations. Ten expert review meetings have been conducted with UN agencies. Results of these efforts have included the drafting by MoWA of a national action plan for communications on EVAW. The plan is expected to be finalised early 2013.

Associated with the work on public awareness has been the UN Secretary General's UNiTE Campaign. This global campaign was designed to increase public awareness through the mobilisation of civil society organisations that are willing to work on behaviour change for the prevention of violence against women. The expectation was that this would be led by member country governments and that funds would be made available through UN Women. For Afghanistan, funds from the Norway/SIDA contribution have been earmarked for the purpose. Discussions with MoWA began in the fourth quarter of 2012 although arrangements have not yet been finalised.

On the question of whether "the Special Fund has catalysed significant growth in response mechanisms, and capacities for service delivery throughout Afghanistan" the answer is in the affirmative. The Special Fund was aimed initially at engaging the interest and cooperation of civil society organisations rather than that of Government. This has proved a successful strategy in so far as it has resulted in the delivery of actual services and raising public awareness of the issues. The launch by UN Women of its calls for proposals has catalysed an interest in responding to the need: pre-existing organisations have come forward and offered their services and new ones have emerged as they have recognised both the need and an opportunity. Further, the training provided by UN Women to and through its partner organisations has increased the capacities for service delivery in many parts of the country. The situation is not perfect, but is certainly very much better than it was in 2010 and capacities continue to improve.

7. On a nationwide basis EVAW initiatives are coordinated, cohesive and collaborative

To coordinate work on women's shelters a Shelter Network has been established. The expectation was that this would embrace all organisations active in Afghanistan that are involved in shelter work. The Network is presently composed of six organisations, of which the active members are three in Kabul and one in Herat. All are funded by contributions from IDLO (INL) and the Colombo Plan. The main output from the Network has been the draft standard operating procedure for shelters referred to above, a document that was submitted to MoWA for approval as a national guideline. However, the draft document requires more work before it can be approved. UN Women anticipates that it will be possible to assign an advisor to work with MoWA on this.

Beginning mid-2011 the United Nations Country Team requested that UNCT Gender Working Group, led by UN Women, undertake an initiative that would bring together UN agencies to work on

implementing the NAPWA at provincial level. As part of the Government's drive to deliver services at the sub-national level MoWA had requested that UN Women take on such responsibilities in three provinces. Daikundi was chosen as the starting point by reason of the severity of poverty on almost every indicator, as well as the enthusiasm for development and determination shown by the Provincial Governor. Also influential in the choice was the fact that UNAMA had a base at Nili that could accommodate international personnel and facilitate transportation in and out of the province. Daikundi has poor roads, and in winter, the area is snowbound and so for a large part of the year extremely difficult to access.

From September 2011 UN Women assigned an international advisor to work full-time in the province together with a national staff member. Inputs from UN Women included providing the Daikundi DoWA with furniture, equipment and a limited amount of training. The very low human resource base within the DoWA made progress at that level very slow. A women's association was formed and meetings held; elimination of violence against women was a theme often repeated.

In addition to the above, UN Women personnel were able to introduce certain themes that were relatively new to the province. These included the importance of literacy and education for girls (a theme communicated jointly with UNICEF); the importance of women's participation in government institutions (with the Governor's Office); and the importance of maternal health (with UNFPA and the provincial Department of Health). Training was provided for District Governors and focused especially on elimination of the traditional practice of *Ba'ad*, by which girls are given as recompense for offense given. The activities conducted shed light on the gaps and problems existing. However, limited coordination among UN agencies and the uncertain quality of some interventions meant that the outcome to date has not met expectations. UNW nevertheless continues to assign one national staff member in support of the provincial DoWA. UNW continues to lead the GWG in determining an alternative to the Daikundi Initiative that would afford the UNCT a joint programming model for supporting NAPWA implementation. This will be a topic at the GWG's annual retreat, planned for early 2013.

8. The Government supports an enabling environment towards the realization of women's economic rights

With the aim of helping to create an enabling environment for the realisation of women's economic rights UN Women has supported three government units at central level, a provincial government department, and two NGOs. The activities are as follows.

With UNW's support, MoWA's Department of Economic Development has created a network of individuals and institutions that have an interest in the realisation of women's economic rights, the group being referred to as the Women's Economic Security and Rights Network. The WESR Network held six meetings and launched a Task Force to advise the Ministry on the formulation of a development strategy. The broad purpose was to elaborate those aspects of the NAPWA that concern women's economic empowerment. In addition to personnel from the mentioned Department, the Task Force group is composed of representatives from Ministry of Finance, the Independent Administrative Reform Civil Service Commission, the University of Kabul Economics Department, and two others from NGOs. UN Women has been an active member of both the Network and the Task force, has provided funds to cover meeting costs, and has worked to empower the Department's leadership of the process. The draft strategy was introduced to the Network through a two-day consultative meeting. The final version was submitted to the Ministry end January 2013.

Aside from the purpose of elaborating a strategy document the Task Force meetings and workshop for Network members have facilitated a remarkable capacity building process. The meetings have contributed greatly to advancing understanding of gender in Afghanistan, a process that has promoted ownership of the issues in a way that few other activities have. Without UN Women's facilitation it is doubtful that the level of commitment achieved would have been so secure. However, MoWA is now left with the responsibility of preparing an action plan. To do this and secure the resources necessary for policy implementation will not be easy. For these tasks assistance may be called upon from Network members but further support is likely to be needed from UN Women.

The second government unit at central level with which UN Women has been working is the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. August 2012 UN Women signed a letter of agreement with the Afghan Rural Enterprise Development Programme of that Ministry with a view to providing assistance in revising its gender policy, enable the ministry do its work and planning in a gender-responsive manner, retrain its personnel, and prepare a tool kit on gender in enterprise. End January 2013 a Trainer on Gender has been provided to be based at the Ministry but working also in the provinces. The arrangement will enable UN Women to spread its messages through the Ministry's network of provincial and district offices.

Work with a third government department began late 2012 when UN Women entered into discussions with the Independent Administrative Reform Civil Service Commission, exploring ways in which the UNW could assist the IARCSC develop and disseminate its gender policy. It is intended that once finalised, the policy will be passed to government ministries for implementation, and that the gender units in each of the 33 ministries be provided with training on how the policy should be applied. To assist in this process it is anticipated that UN Women will provide the services of a full-time international consultant for six months.

At provincial level, from early 2012 work to assist a provincial department of MoWA began in Prawn province. There, UN Women financed the equipping of a Training Centre on information technology (computer operation) and basic English language for classes of 30 girls and young women. To date, one class has graduated and a second class is in progress. A second such centre is about to open in a small town 50 kilometres away. For the two centres, in addition to the investment in equipment the project covers the salary of four teachers and a manager. It is expected that some of the centres' graduates will find work with local enterprises or NGOs. Irrespective of their job prospects, through communications access the project aims to facilitate contact for the girls with the world beyond their village. To date there has been no assessment of the economic impact and, in the absence of Government financing, the sustainability of the initiative remains in doubt.

On the NGO side, in October 2012, the Women and Children Legal Research Foundation has been supported by UN Women to conduct training and advocacy on women's economic rights. This has targeted parliamentarians, women's leaders and provincial delegates. UN Women has supporting the activity by providing a grant to the NGO.

A grant to the Afghanistan Research and Education Unit (AREU) has been provided for a situation assessment and mapping of the economic situation of women in Afghanistan over the past ten years. This work is expected to provide a perspective on women's economic empowerment that should help all parties in steering future directions.

9. Gender advocates and community change agents at local level are mobilised to advocate for women's economic rights.

Of the community change agents who are visible, the majority are working with NGOs and other civil society organisations, several of which have produced training materials for work at the local level. Although not all are of the same calibre, the quality of leadership among such groups is impressive. Many civil society organisation leaders have a deep understanding of the situation concerning women in Afghanistan and sacrifice themselves financially and through hard work for the good of the community.

A community change agent was encountered by the MTR team on its visit to Parwan province. There, the Director of the Department of Women's Affairs had launched many initiatives including the building of an office complex for the Department, taking over responsibility for the opening of a women's shelter (financed through UN Women), and the setting up of the IT training centre mentioned above. Other projects in the planning stage included a park or garden to be used by women of the town for social and educational gatherings. Such demonstrated leadership by and for women provides UN Women with an opportunity for further investment in local economic development.

4. NOTES FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING

The following notes draw on the experience in implementing the Norway /SIDA programme with a view to identifying directions for the future that UN Women and its partners may wish to consider. In several cases the suggestions require a brief description of the current situation.

UN Women and its Partners

The Ministry of Women's Affairs

Compared to most other government ministries in Afghanistan MoWA is a relatively new entity, one that carries little weight on the political stage. The Ministry is very appreciative of the support that it has received from UN Women. MoWA would like to see UN Women re-establish its office within the Ministry's building. UN Women's location some 12 kilometres out of town is found to be extremely inconvenient. UN Women's own personnel find the location inconvenient in that it prevents them from meeting the representatives of other organisations with whom they need to transact business. MoWA would have no objection if the entity wished to use a satellite office in its ministerial building as a meeting place.

The question of what should be UN Women's considered role in relation to the needs of the Ministry of Women's Affairs remains to be decided. The Ministry's perspective is that UN Women's contribution should be (i) in advancing work on EAW; (ii) providing technical support to the Ministry at the policy level; and (iii) investing in the professional development of the Ministry's personnel. In relation to work on EAW both parties will need to decide what will be their respective roles and responsibilities, especially in relation to the setting up, management and financing of women's shelters. Two shelters are presently financed by UN Women but managed by the Departments of Women's Affairs. In relation to the possible provision of further technical support to the Ministry it will be necessary to formulate a plan based on what both the Ministry and UN Women is willing and able to bring to the table. Observable end results should be agreed in advance with arrangements for monitoring progress.

In relation to the possibility of investing in the professional development of its personnel, the Ministry makes the point that many of its employees come to the job with only 12th grade education. For them to be able to take on professional work, support is needed for gender studies in relation to a wide range of political, economic and development issues, with an emphasis on policy and relevant management skills.

Mainstreaming gender depends on the individual ministries putting forward and resourcing their engendered plans, but to achieve that additional training is required both within MoWA and for personnel in the gender units that already exist within most government ministries. MoWA personnel must acquire the skills of effective communication and advocacy, as well as a level of technical understanding necessary to advise other ministries. Meanwhile, the gender unit people need the skills and the status necessary to monitor what is being done - or not done - in relation to gender mainstreaming.

Civil Society

For the implementation of its programme UN Women has depended heavily on civil society organisations. From March 2010 to December 2012 UN Women made a total of 60 payments to 19 different organisations. During this three-year period implementing partners received an average amount of USD 140,432 with the maximum in one case of USD 383,698. Approximately half the payments were made to support the setting up and running of women's shelters with the other half devoted to training, awareness raising and like activities. The nature and quality of the relationship between a civil society organisation and UN Women has been and will continue to be extremely important to the success of any future programme.

With the orientation that UN Women has been able to provide to CSOs, a dramatic improvement in the capabilities of many civil society organisations has been observed. At the same time UN Women has benefited from the insight and the ideas brought to the relationship. Nevertheless, several CSOs have suggestions concerning the way in which the relationship could be improved. The culture of the UN system is bound by rules and procedures and places particular emphasis on the need to ensure accountability for the use of inputs. CSOs on the other hand tend to be more *ad hoc* in style, less bureaucratic, more anxious to get things done, less security conscious, and placing more reliance on trust secured through interpersonal relationships.

Among the suggestions are that (i) the bidding process be made less burdensome by the inclusion of the submission of a brief concept paper, on the basis of which shortlisted organisations may be invited to submit a full proposal; (ii) that UN Women adopt a more communicative approach in its dealings – including inviting CSOs to contribute to the entity's planning processes; (iii) that the training on UN procedures be run more frequently; (iv) that UN Women take the initiative to bring its partner organisations together for an exchange of experience; and that (v) a small administrative study be undertaken to determine the cause of delays arising in the making of payments, and that steps be taken to overcome the difficulties.

For the medium term, working through civil society organisations will have to be regarded as the primary means through which UN Women and its donors support women's social and economic empowerment in Afghanistan, at least so far as concerns work undertaken at field level. The Ministry of Women's Affairs will continue to need help but this may be seen primarily as a matter of ensuring continued space for the operation and development of competent civil society organisations.

Programme scope

UN Women's Afghanistan country programme is not yet closely aligned with a comprehensive situation analysis or needs assessment in relation to the entity's core roles on gender issues and women's empowerment. There is also a great number and variety of activity streams underway and a lack of coordination between the Country Office's various units and their respective responsibilities. These problems are recognised by management and the need for a more strategic approach accepted. Most personnel see the need to do this as being a key component to positioning the organisation for the future.

Recognizing that the AWP was significantly revised to reflect a more focused programme, it is recommended that the Country Office now undertake the formulation of a comprehensive country programme document, based upon an updated situation analysis and needs assessment. In formulating a strategy covering the next four years it would be helpful to elaborate several socio-political and security scenarios within which future work may be organised. Based on a full risk assessment, the document should outline a programme of likely achievable development goals and

purposes; define target audiences; and explain how the interventions proposed will result in the changes desired. The last point is particularly important, as currently many activities are underway without a clear conceptualisation of how they contribute to expected outcomes. The document should also outline the measures that will be taken to mitigate the risks, and explain how the organisation proposes to monitor and evaluate its progress.

The Norway /SIDA programme document on which the review is based was not only wide in scope but also very detailed. Given the fluidity of the situation in Afghanistan - a fluidity that continues - it may be better to have a clear view of the changes or "end state" that one wants to see in the future so that actual activities can be tailored in light of the evolving situation.

In addition to working with Ministry of Women's Affairs, consideration may be given to developing further work already undertaken and /or planned with Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs; Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development; Ministry of Finance; Ministry Foreign Affairs; the Independent Administrative Reform Civil Service Commission; and Members of Parliament. Any such initiatives should be formulated in the context of a set of clear objectives; objectives negotiated and agreed upon with the relevant parties.

In formulating a new programme, note should be taken of the fact that the availability of strong women leadership is often a key to success. Indeed, of UN Women's five goals, two begin with the words "Increase women's leadership ...". But leadership needs to be schooled. Although not a specific feature of its present programme, UN Women may wish to consider whether it can and should seek to build a cadre of women development workers and entrepreneurs. The MTR team's observations in the field suggest that this would be an excellent way of building on the potential that already exists. Working with youth as future leaders of the country and of their communities would also be an excellent investment for the future. Additionally, UN Women's international and national connections would place it well to embark on this type of work.

Programme Management

Given the challenges that UN Women has had to face in Afghanistan during the period under review (outlined in the Country Background section of this report), its accomplishments have been remarkable. For most of the programme period it has been operating under pressure with limited staff and resources. Its delivery rate on expenditure has varied from 19 to 84 per cent which, in the circumstances, may be considered excellent. Nevertheless, there are several important areas to which further attention may be given.

The first of relates to the fact that UN Women is an organisation devoted to changing attitudes and behaviour as they relate to gender; it does this cross-culturally and in very complex social and political *milieux*. Its main instruments are communication, persuasion and lobbying. In the EVAW area some good communications planning work has been done in the context of the *Unite Campaign*. Yet only one member of the ACO staff is skilled in the communications area, and that person has a heavy workload oriented mainly to what might be called public and donor relations. Defining the target audience, crystallising and enunciating the messages, selecting appropriate channels, and deciding the media and frequency of communication and monitoring the results is not common to most of the organisation's activities. It is recommended that staff be provided with professional training in this area and that all existing and new programme activities be reviewed in terms of the communications challenges that are inherent in the work.

The second managerial challenge relates to the fact that any modern development programme dealing with social issues must operate according to empirical principles. The focus must be on determining

what works and what does not; learning from doing being the key to long term success. Until the present, the focus of attention has been on organising activities and disbursing the necessary funds. For achieving sustainability this is not enough. Monitoring and evaluation are terms spoken of but usually as something to be added on if time and other resources are available. Large sums of money are spent on awareness raising and on training, but little information becomes available to show whether what is done is effective in the short term and whether its consequences (its intended outcomes) are realised and sustainable.

In addition to an enquiring mind, the achievement of sustainability requires the ability and the inclination to think ahead, to ask what can or needs to come after the immediate activity in view. This third challenge in the managerial approach applies particularly to partner organisations, most of which are limited in their time horizons by the project funding modality. In three provinces UN Women is currently assisting Departments of Women's Affairs to set up IT training centres for girls and young women. These are splendid initiatives, but are they likely to be sustainable, and can ways be found of making them so? UN Women cannot guarantee the survivability of any specific activity that it finances, but it can take the additional step of investing in the understanding and leadership skills of local people (perhaps including but not limited to the Director of the local Department of Women's Affairs) to ensure that those who are associated with the project have the chance of carrying it forward in ways that are sustainable.

Very similar points can be made in relation to other types of expenditure. For investment in any kind of training: what do the trainees do after they are trained? Do they apply the training? If not: why not? What else is needed to make the training effective? Regarding the financing of research, or the publication of statistics for example: what happens after the research reports or the statistics are published? In the past ten years or so, determining outcomes has become the *sine qua non* of fundable development projects. It would be a pity if UN Women's valiant efforts were sacrificed for want of sufficient rigour in these areas.

The adoption of results based management requires something akin to a revolution in the way of thinking and working. As with any organisational change, it has to be planned for and with due consideration of the way in which it will be perceived by staff members. UN Women's senior managers are well aware of this challenge and have already started to roll out staff development on these issues, in tandem with the development of the programmes. However, to be successful in introducing the change within a reasonable period, investment will have to be made in staff development. This will necessarily involve coaching and mentoring over a period of several months; RBM is not something that can be taken up simply from exposure to one or two short training courses.

The burden implied by moves towards to a "communications orientation," a "sustainability orientation," and a "RMB" orientation, would be significant. Given the present level of resources available to UN Women Afghanistan it is doubtful that serious progress could be made in relation to the adoption of any one of those principles while continuing with the present work load. The earlier sections of this report include recommendations that particular activities should continue to be funded. However, those recommendations do not take into account the need also to invest in capacity development of the organisation as a whole. The question that arises therefore is what can be sacrificed? An alternative approach might be the possibility of establishing a capacity development budget or fund for the strengthening national staff capacity to carry forward the work of UN Women in Afghanistan over the next three to five years.

Of particular interest to the donors are the questions of transparency and accountability. The MTR team came into contact with no information that should give cause for concern. However, it must be noted that the team was not equipped to inquire into areas of financial management. The report on an

audit carried out April 2012 will soon be available. Additionally, an audit of three implementing partners is expected to be carried out February 2013 and in due course this information too will become available.

List of People Interviewed

No	Name	Position	Organization
1	Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladdottir	Country Director	UNW
2	Pamela Fatima Husain	Deputy Country Director	UNW
3	Homa Sabri	Manager	ICDU - UNW
4	Ali Hassan Fahimi	Research National Program Officer/OIC WP&G	WESR/ WP&G - UNW
5	Mariam Khalil	Program Associate	WP&G -UNW
6	Sahar Motallebi	Special Fund Coordinator	Special Fund UNW
7	Asela Kalugampitya	Program Management Specialist/OIC WESR	WESR - UNW
8	Sher Mohamad Atef	Program Associate	WESR – UNW
9	Rosebell Chege	Sub-National Gender Officer – Daikundi program	ICDU – UNW (NorCap Advisor)
10	Nazia Noor	Operations Manager	Operations UNW
11	Khan Mohammad Sherzad	HR associate	Operations UNW
12	Abid Amanyaar	HR associate	Operations UNW
13	Victoria Diarra	Gender and Statistic Adviser	ICDU UNW
14	Blake Dawgert	Gender and Justice Specialist	G&J UNW
15	Angeela Wassel	Program assistant	G&J UNW
16	Mohd. Ishaq Poya	National Technical Adviser	G&J UNW
17	Nilab Sadat Zadran	Training Coordinator	G&J UNW
18	Sofia Moazizi	Program Associate	G&J UNW
19	Mojgan Mostafawi	Deputy Minister Technical	MoWA
20	Hasibullah Mowahed	Deputy General President	CSO
21	Sven Skaare	First Secretary	Royal Norwegian Embassy
22	Nasrin Hoseini	Senior Program Manager, Education & Gender / Second Secretary	Embassy of Sweden
23	Prof. Saehoon	Professor of Economy Faculty	Kabul University
24	Anjuma Naeemi	Head of Economic Department	MoWA
25	Mahrukh Hamidi	Head of Directorate for Cultural and Economical	MoWA
26	Najla Afshar	Gender Specialist	Civil Service Commission
27	Nekbakht Meheryar	Gender Unit officer	Ministry of Finance
28	Hussain Ali Moeen	Economy Specialist	MoWA
29	Nargis Nehan	Director	EPD
30	Chona R Echavez	Deputy Director	AREU
31	Lida Yaqubi	Deputy Director	AWN
32	Gulistan Ibadat	Gender and Economy Specialist	GEP/ UNDP
33	Nigina Abaszade	Gender Specialist	UNFPA
34	Callister Mtalo	Education Specialist	UNICEF

35	Abdul Samad Seraj	Senior Program Advisor	Equal Access
36	Anwar Jamili	Country Director	Equal Access
37	Humaira Ameer Rasuli	Executive Director	Medica Afghanistan
38	Sayed Abdul Hamid Safwat	Regional Manager	Cooperation Center for Afghanistan
39	Fozia Habibi	Deputy Minister Admin/ Finance	Ministry of Women's Affairs
40	Shajan Yazadanparast	Head of Department of Women's Affair in Parwan	Ministry of Women's Affairs
41	Aziza Ahmadi	Head of Shelter	Parwan
42	Members of shelter's mangement team	Visit to Shelter	Parwan
43	Members of Parwan Provincial EAW Commission	Attending meeting of EAW commission	Parwan
44	Coordinator and teachers of ICT	ICT center	Parwan
45	Ahmad Shikib Dost	Communication Officer	UNW
46	Habiba Shujaee	OIC DoWA in Daikundi	MoWA
47	Merja Farm	Human Rights and Gender Unit	EUPOL Mission in Afghanistan
48	Members of advisory board for EAW Special Fund	Attending meeting of the board	Kabul