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The Afghanistan National Development strategy (ANDs)

Key Facts on the ANDs Background

Background

The Interim Afghanistan National Development strategy (I-ANDs) and the Afghanistan compact were presented at the London conference in January 2006. Since then, Government has been setting up the systems and processes to meet its commitments and to develop the interim strategy into a full strategy that meets the requirements of a Poverty Reduction strategy Paper (PRsP). Afghanistan is at a significantly different starting point from other countries undergoing the development of a PRsP. First, we have a comprehensive interim strategy that will begin implementation now. Second, we have an international agreement with benchmarks that support the specific high level goals in our interim strategy. This note responds to questions that have been put to Government on the I-ANDs, the full ANDs and the compact. It aims to help build consensus among the Government and its partners, and ensure support for the processes underway.

The relationship between the Afghanistan National Development strategy (interim and full) and the Afghanistan compact

The Afghanistan National Development strategy lays out the strategic priorities and mechanisms for achieving the Government's development vision. An interim version (I-ANDs) of this strategy was presented to the international community in January 2006. After further development and consultation a full ANDs will be published by mid-2008. The Afghanistan compact is a political agreement between the Government and the international community to work together towards five year benchmarks of progress across the three pillars of the ANDs: (1) security, (2) governance, rule of law and human rights, and (3) economic and social development. The compact fully supports the Government's development strategy with every compact benchmark reflected as a five-

year strategic objective of the I-ANDs. The implementation of the compact act is therefore intrinsically linked to and consistent with the ANDs process.

Moving from an interim to a full ANDs

Implementation of the I-ANDs is beginning now. At the same time, that strategy will be refined and deepened over the next two years into a full ANDs that is costed, prioritized, sequenced, budgeted and based upon consultations and research. The full ANDs is unlikely to be a radical departure in overall strategy as many of the priorities in the I-ANDs not only represent an overwhelming national consensus on our development priorities, but also reflect Afghanistan's multi-year commitments to the Millennium Development Goals and the Afghanistan compact.

Strengthening the strategy for achieving the compact Benchmarks

In most areas it is likely that the full ANDs will be a refinement of the existing I-ANDs, articulating how the goals will be achieved through a set of specific projects and programs, rather than changing the benchmarks. In the first years of the compact, we aim to work towards those commitments as they are articulated. If circumstances change at a later date, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) for the Afghanistan Compact may decide whether and how to revise the benchmarks as necessary.

Aligning projects and programs through Working Groups

Line Ministries will develop sector strategies, with specific costed programs. Working Groups will be used by ministries and donors to strengthen those strategies, and to align their strategic priorities and their funding allocations. Many existing programs will fit into the strategy already. Some current Ministry priorities or donor activities may not, in which case Working Groups will need to determine how they can be refined or gradually phased out. By providing Working Groups with input from national consultations and research, we aim to ensure that strategies will reflect a broad consensus on development priorities and will contain only those projects and programs that either Government or donors are likely to fund over the next five years.

The role of Consultative Groups and Cross Cutting Thematic Groups

The Consultative Groups will provide the opportunity for sector-wide review of the product of line ministries and Working Groups and will aim to identify and resolve policy issues of overall concern to the pillar. They will also engage in cross-sector costing, prioritization and sequencing discussions. Cross Cutting Thematic Groups advise Consultative Groups and Working Groups on cross cutting themes, as well as reporting to the JCMB through the Oversight Committee on the implementation of cross-cutting policies.

Integrating the budget and the ANDS

Integrating strategic planning with resource allocation decisions is fundamental to our national development efforts. Policy makers require a mechanism to make decisions between competing demands for funding, and allocations must follow from a coherent prioritization mechanism. The integration of the ANDS and the budget will take place incrementally. As line ministries produce coherent costed strategies that represent a consensus on national strategic priorities, they will be reflected in and monitored through budgetary mechanisms. Ultimately, the budget and the Medium Term Expenditure Framework will be fully consistent with the priorities and costing resulting from the ANDS process.

The timing of the ANDS

Because the Government has begun implementation of the I-ANDS, and those strategies will incrementally be reflected in policy instruments such as the national budget for 1386 and 1387, the need to complete the ANDS is determined by the best timeline to complete a comprehensive costing and prioritization with full ownership by line ministries. It will also need to integrate the product of consultations and research. In the view of the Government this can best be achieved by aiming to produce the full ANDs by mid-2008

Supporting this process with adequate data

Government will ensure that our reporting and financial mechanisms show us what activities are taking place, at what cost, and what progress is being made. This will also help us to determine where there are gaps and bottlenecks in implementation. The Ministry of Finance has restructured its database to fit with the ANDS and the Compact, and the ANDS team is developing appropriate monitoring systems. While the information on project implementation will come from line ministries and donors among others, the ANDS team will support ministry efforts to collect this information. This data will also be augmented with data on the causes, levels and nature of poverty, disaggregated by demographic population groups and region, in full alignment with PRSP requirements.

The consultation process

The input of many stakeholders, including those outside Kabul, is essential to help in the prioritization of activities, as well as to receive feedback on the overall approach. The consultative group and working group structure, which includes representation from civil society, is designed to ensure wide participation in the development of strategies. The Government is also committed to a full sub-national consultation process, which will be carried out through the permanent structures of Government. A plan for the sub-national consultation process is being developed and will be released for comment in the coming weeks.

The role of the ANDS Working Group

The ANDS Working Group facilitates the ANDS process. It helps ministries, other government entities including the National Assembly and other stakeholders engage with the process, makes sure that deadlines are met, and that activity such as the sub-national consultations are carried out in a useful way. At the moment, the ANDS team is helping establish the Consultative Groups and their working groups, is looking at the monitoring of the benchmark compacts, and is developing the sub-national consultation plan. It is also developing a detailed work plan, which will shortly be available.