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**Draft country programme document for the Islamic
Republic of Afghanistan (2006-2008)**

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Introduction

1. Since 1984, UNDP Afghanistan has been operating without a comprehensive country programme. The Administrator was authorized by the Governing Council and later the Executive Board to provide support to Afghanistan on a project-by-project basis until 2005. As the mandate under the Administrator's note (DP/2003/36) is due to expire at the end of 2005, a new country programme has been prepared in full consultation with the Government, and in line with the first United Nations Development Framework (UNDAF) for Afghanistan from 2006 to 2008. The present country programme document therefore marks the first comprehensive framework for UNDP Afghanistan in 22 years, aligning its time frame and scope with the UNDAF.

I. Situation analysis

2. Foreign occupation through the 1980s followed by a brutal and devastating civil war in the 1990s left Afghanistan in ruins, so that it is now the poorest country in Asia. Since the ousting of the Taliban, Afghanistan has begun to emerge from decades of conflict which left its economy shattered and its people traumatized.

3. Since 2002, Afghanistan has made rapid political progress. Loya Jirgas (Grand Councils) have been convened, a constitution adopted, and elections held. The expansion of political and civil freedoms has been impressive, particularly when the conflict and repression of the previous decades are taken into consideration.

4. However, a war-exhausted nation confronts a raft of problems. Extreme poverty, deprivation and discrimination have reinforced existing fault lines in society. Bridging those gaps requires a long-term investment in physical and social capital and the economy if the relapse/revival of conflict is to be avoided. History shows that roughly half of all countries that emerge from war lapse back into violence within five years.¹

5. The human security situation in Afghanistan is a source of deep concern. Afghanistan's Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators are below those for the majority of sub-Saharan African countries; among the population of 23 million, 70 per cent lives under the poverty line of \$2 a day; the per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is \$190 per year; and the maternal mortality rate is one of the

highest in the world. The Human Development Index (HDI) ranks Afghanistan at 173 out of 178 countries worldwide.

6. The illicit drug economy has emerged as a major source of employment and income. Currently, effective action against drugs is not viable owing to an absence of alternative livelihood opportunities and law enforcement. Thus, it is imperative to create a vibrant legal economy, primarily through the private sector. Afghanistan's entrepreneurial dynamism has to be channelled into small- and medium-sized businesses through urgent policy changes to promote investments.

7. Afghanistan continues to be vulnerable to environmental damage given the high dependency on natural resources. Limitation of available natural resources owing to its climate and geography was further exacerbated by the long strife, resulting in land degradation and lack of watershed management. Moreover, inadequate and uneven distribution of resources can be an ingredient for a new conflict.

8. Another threat to Afghanistan's peace and stability are the militias who remain outside the political system and seek to undermine the democratic process. This threat is linked to the remnants of terrorism, whose agenda is inimical both to Afghanistan and the world.

9. Faced with economic, political and security threats, peace-building in Afghanistan entails addressing four major challenges, as described below.

The challenge of physical security

10. The current level of security is not conducive to major increases of investment into the economy. Elimination of physical insecurity is an unquestionable prerequisite for the State and its population to tackle other challenges.

The challenge of poverty reduction

11. Without the rapid generation of jobs, poverty will not only worsen but also provide a continued stimulus to the drug trade. While GDP growth rates have been high in the past two years, they have had a limited impact on the poor. Thus, there is an urgent need to strengthen pro-poor policy, generate employment through private sector development, ensure education and health advances for women, ensure sound natural resource management and revive legal crop production for vulnerable groups.

The challenge of capacity development

12. Capacity development and improved governance remain key challenges, both to ensure service delivery to the people and to strengthen state institutions. Low

¹ See A/59/2005, report of the Secretary General entitled, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", para. 114.

capacity in the public sector, in particular at the local level, is one of the main obstacles to the successful realization of the Government's vision for national development.

The challenge of deepening democracy

13. The next phase of Afghanistan's evolution requires a deepening of democracy. An accountable legislature, an independent judiciary, an active civil society and free press are necessary to secure constitutional rights for all. In that connection, access to justice is the key. Unless people have an accessible and reliable process to resolve grievances, the seeds of conflict will remain.

II. Past cooperation and lessons learned

14. The commitment and support of the international community has been vital to the revival of Afghanistan. The key role of UNDP has been in supporting the implementation of the Bonn agreement, which provided a road map for the establishment of a democratic State.

15. In supporting the Bonn process, the United Nations faced an arduous task as state institutions were close to non-existent. Under the umbrella of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), UNDP was given a pivotal role in helping to establish viable governance structures. One outcome of those efforts was the historic 2004 presidential election. The elections were a success, with large voter turnout and a peaceful process. It is recognized, however, that the election was costly owing to a complex operation requiring a high proportion of external expertise. Sustainable electoral mechanisms will need to be developed for the future.

16. Support to the security sector helped to highlight UNDP relevance in peace-building: the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants has shown significant progress; ongoing efforts to stabilize the police structure was made possible through the Law and Order Trust Fund; in partnership with the United Nations Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan, the threat of landmines has been reduced. Continued efforts should be made in those sectors to promote a secure and stable environment in the country.

17. In an effort to mainstream gender, 11 ministries concluded a compact to ensure the equal rights of women. UNDP also supported the creation of a solid foundation for justice sector reform and human rights protection. Building upon the past achievements, a rights-based programmatic approach will help to yield greater results in the next cycle.

18. Capacity development efforts have been wide ranging. Support was provided for public administration, information management, information and communications technology (ICT) development, aid coordination, urban and rural development, and private sector development. Although those initiatives were successful in their own way, the compartmentalized approach to capacity development did not achieve maximum results across the public sector. UNDP will therefore need to develop a cohesive approach to capacity development under this country programme.

19. UNDP has also taken some important regional initiatives to help to create opportunities for Afghanistan. One such initiative was a Central Asian conference held in Bishkek in 2004. The success of the meeting has led to a continuing dialogue with neighbouring States, seeking to provide increased economic and employment opportunities to Afghanistan.

20. UNDP has worked in close collaboration with the Government with regard to the MDGs, but there needs to be further efforts to place MDGs at the centre of the policy agenda. UNDP is strategically placed to raise awareness and assist implementation at the local and central levels towards that end. National Human Development Reports, for example, can be used to monitor MDG progress at the provincial level.

21. Both the Government and donors have stressed the need to increase UNDP staff capacity. Inadequacies of monitoring and evaluation have been acknowledged as a problem in several projects, largely due to staff shortage and the rapid pace of implementation. Monitoring and evaluation capabilities require serious attention.

III. Proposed programme

22. Under the overarching theme of human security and peace-building, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework has identified four priority areas of cooperation: (1) improved governance; (2) the creation of sustainable livelihoods; (3) improvement in the quality of health and education; and (4) addressing the needs of the environment and management of natural resources.

23. During this cycle, UNDP will focus its efforts on deepening democracy and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods, which are closely related to the first, second and fourth priorities of the UNDAF. UNDP will also align itself with the National Development Strategy formulated by the Government in 2005.

24. UNDP will also build on the targets laid out in the Millennium Declaration and its goals. UNDP will pay attention to building its programme on six cross-cutting principles: developing national capacities; enhancing national ownership; advocating and fostering an enabling policy environment; seeking South–South solutions; promoting gender equality; and forging partnerships.

A. Deepening democracy

25. UNDP has a strong comparative advantage in the UNDAF's first priority; under which the UNDP objective is twofold. The first objective is *to strengthen the democratic state and government institutions at all levels to govern and ensure quality public services through advocacy, policy advice and capacity development*. UNDP assistance includes support to civil service reform, budget-making processes, information and communications technology (ICT) development, information management within ministries and the fight against corruption. Having paid the salaries of the police for more than two years, future support for the rule of law will include institutional development for the police.

26. Deepening democracy will also focus on enhancing public sector capacity at the individual and institutional levels. It will include supporting the development of technical, sector-specific, and cross-cutting capacities. The capacity to plan, manage, and implement activities, at the national and subnational levels, is essential for the achievement of Afghanistan's development objectives.

27. Recent experiences and lessons learned suggest that successful capacity development requires that these efforts be owned and carried out by a country itself. UNDP will support the government-owned framework for capacity development that will define its objectives and strategies.

28. UNDP will also address governance from another angle, directed towards the rights of the people. The second objective is thus *to deepen democracy through empowering people to participate in democratic processes and ensuring increased access to justice, information, human and constitutional rights*.

29. For that objective, UNDP will support the establishment of the new parliament and help to lay the foundation for a sustainable electoral mechanism, to ensure that a functional legislature is in place. The programme will work further to reform the judicial system at the central and local levels, aimed at increasing access to justice to ensure the rights of the people enshrined in the constitution.

30. UNDP will strengthen its support to the promotion of human rights with a broad programmatic approach. Drawing upon corporate tools such as its Gender Strategy and Action Plan, UNDP will support the promotion of rights of vulnerable groups, such as women and people with disabilities, through mainstreaming gender, assisting women entering the labour force, and influencing, inter alia, health and education policies to benefit disabled people.

31. Acknowledging that a solid civil society is a prerequisite for a democratic State, UNDP will support the strengthening of civil society, including political parties, elected councils, and free and independent media to ensure broad representation of the population in decision-making.

B. Promotion of sustainable livelihoods for the poor

32. The third objective for UNDP Afghanistan places people's quality of life at the centre. In this area, UNDP aims *to improve sustainable livelihoods and the quality of life for poor people through MDG-focused initiatives such as mainstreaming gender, broadening economic opportunities, and realizing sound natural resource management*.

33. That will be an area of expanded UNDP activities. Currently, the main UNDP activity is the National Area-Based Development Programme under the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. UNDP will increase its support to pro-poor policy formulation and poverty reduction in both rural and urban areas. In this connection, the National Human Development Report will be an important tool for strategic analysis and policy dialogue. Joint work with the United Nations country team for MDG and HDI monitoring will also help the Government to enhance its accountability.

34. That objective will include enhancing repatriation and reintegration of refugees as well as supporting the counter-narcotics efforts through the newly created Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund. A holistic approach is required to address interlinked issues such as fostering regional development, providing a secure environment by reintegrating ex-combatants and illegal militias into civilian life, and breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and illicit crop cultivation. Echoing UNDP global advocacy for unleashing entrepreneurship, the programme will also increase its support to the private sector.

35. Environmental and natural resource management is also addressed under that objective, which will cover both

man-made and natural disasters. UNDP will continue to build national capacity to undertake mine action activities. In addition, UNDP will seek Global Environment Facility (GEF) resources, including the Small Grants Programme from the GEF, to address livelihood-related environmental management, such as alternative energy management.

36. Afghanistan is prone to natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods and drought. They have resulted in some of the highest risk indicators on earth. Building on its recent work on risk reduction and vulnerability analysis, UNDP will continue to work with the key actors to build capacity for natural disaster risk reduction and response.

IV. Cooperation strategies

37. UNDP cooperation with other development partners has been reflected during the preparation of the UNDAF. Cooperation modalities are consistent with the OECD/DAC harmonization process.

38. Given the programme focus, and based on lessons learned, cooperation strategies will tackle related constraints along the following lines:

(a) Make the achievement of MDGs the core objectives in all priority areas, with a strong emphasis on linking policy with pro-poor, rights-based development approaches;

(b) Target capacity development in UNDP focus areas and avoid a thinly stretched programme;

(c) Mainstream gender in all areas, ensuring that it is an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all programmes and projects;

(d) Adopt innovative and strategic programme approaches exploring cross-sectoral linkages and programme synergies for programme integration and coherence;

(e) Identify and disseminate good practices, and connect national partners to global knowledge, as well as expertise from the UNDP global network.

39. Guided by national consultations, the Government and UNDP intend to pursue a partner strategy with other United Nations agencies, multilateral and bilateral institutions, and civil society in implementing the new country programme.

40. *The United Nations system.* Through parallel or joint programmes, the United Nations system provides a package of technical and financial assistance within the UNDAF areas.

41. *Bilateral and multilateral institutions:* UNDP has received strong support from many bilateral donors, among which some of the largest contributors are Canada, the European Commission, Japan, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Donors have emphasized the need for regular consultations. UNDP will strengthen consultation mechanisms, such as review meetings and steering committees. UNDP partnership with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank will be built around poverty reduction policy development and monitoring.

42. *Civil society organizations, the private sector and academic institutions.* Further initiatives will be pursued to build and expand collaboration with these actors at all levels. These will centre on: civil society participation in national development processes; participation in the national poverty monitoring system; and execution of UNDP-funded programmes. UNDP will seek academic partners to undertake applied policy research; and collaboration with the private sector, which will be central to UNDP work in livelihoods and entrepreneurship.

V. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation

43. Direct execution has been the main modality for the UNDP programme, and national execution (NEX) has been used where capacity existed. While UNDP will work with the Government to increase its efforts towards NEX, it will also explore non-traditional execution and implementation modalities such as non-governmental organization (NGO) execution, United Nations Volunteers, and South-South cooperation: all have proved useful in the past and can be improved further.

44. In the continued application of results-based management, outcome indicators have been agreed with the Government and other key stakeholders. Results-based management will be systematically integrated across all UNDP-supported programmes and projects. In addition, comprehensive participatory approaches for monitoring and evaluation will be developed and applied in partnership with project implementers and beneficiaries to ensure that basic programme and project monitoring systems are in place and aligned with the results framework.

45. Limited core resources will serve as a catalyst for UNDP-supported programmes. Successful implementation of the country programme will, however, depend largely on donor engagement and non-core funding, including bilateral, multilateral and national resources. Given the

critical need for leveraging limited core funds, emphasis will be placed on consolidating existing partnerships and proactively seeking new opportunities. Priority will also be given to enhancing alliances with corporate and regional institutions. The partnership and resource mobilization strategy for the country programme will hinge on regular policy and operational dialogue with the Government and UNDP strategic partners.

46. The country office structure and staffing pattern will evolve during the country programme period to provide greater service to clients by developing staff capacity and strengthened monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the office will use extrabudgetary resources to complement core positions with technical expertise to strengthen country office capacities. UNDP Regional Centres will be tapped as a technical resource for the formulation of programmes and for continued knowledge development in the country office.

Annex. Results and resources framework for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2006-2008)

National priority or goal:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued development of a system of governance based on the rule of law and the promotion and protection of the human rights of the Afghan people in order to reinforce national unity, as laid down in the Afghan Constitution; the Government is committed to strengthening the institutional and organizational mechanisms that will translate these rights into practice (Berlin Declaration) To strengthen the rule of law and implement measures that enhance the confidence of Afghans in their Government; to create a modern and effective civil service with gender equity in government offices (National Development Framework) 					
UNDAF outcome 1: By 2008, government at all levels and civil society, including communities and individuals, are better enabled to realise improved governance based on the rule of law and human rights, with particular emphasis on women and marginalized groups					
Programme component	Country programme outcomes	Country programme outputs	Output indicators, baselines and targets	Role of partners	Indicative resources by goal (in thousands of \$)
<p>MYFF goal:</p> <p>Fostering democratic governance</p> <p>2.2 Parliamentary development</p>	<p>The democratic state and government institutions strengthened at all levels to govern and ensure quality public services through advocacy, policy advice and capacity development</p>	<p>National electoral institutions strengthened at national and subnational levels;</p> <p>Fully operational and efficient parliament established and recognized by all the people of Afghanistan</p>	<p>Indicators: Number of training sessions for the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC); number of civic education and awareness campaign; establishment of the legal framework; an extent to which the Commission will rely on external experts in the next elections</p> <p>Baseline: Newly established IEC staff lacks capacity and proper information and decision-making processes, still dependent on external expertise</p> <p>Indicator: Parliament secretariat strengthened with sufficient staff training and sound legal framework; public information activities undertaken, number of female representatives in parliament</p> <p>Baseline: Parliament still non-existent</p>	<p>- Office of the President and IEC to provide policy direction and technical inputs</p> <p>- UNAMA, other United Nations agencies and CSOs to implement and monitor</p>	<p>Regular resources</p> <p>1 800</p> <p>Other resources</p> <p>24 500</p>
		<p>2.7 Public administration reform and anti-corruption</p>	<p>Public sector capacity at the individual, organizational and institutional level strengthened through the development of capacities in the areas of civil service management, law enforcement, information management and budget processing</p>	<p>Indicator: Number of coverage of civil service wide-training programmes; disbursement rate of external assistance at ministry level; number of government agencies that have successfully implemented Priority Reform and Restructuring programme (PRR); number of staff receiving PRR salaries</p> <p>Baseline: training policy and short-term training programmes in pipeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Average disbursement level between 25% to 30% (2004 estimate) - Multiplication and duplication of ministries, departments and agencies - Total of 11,653 staff receiving PRR salaries - Weak capacity for project cycle 	<p>- Ministries including Ministries of Finance, Communications, Interior and Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission to provide policy direction and technical inputs</p> <p>- UNAMA, other United Nations agencies, multilateral institutions including the World Bank, ADB, DfID to support the Government's initiatives</p>

			management, information and knowledge management, financial management and public communication		
2.4 Justice and human rights 1.7 Civil society empowerment	Democracy deepened, with people empowered to participate in democratic processes; and increased access ensured to justice, information, and human and constitutional rights	Access to justice by the disadvantaged increased through the application of human rights- based approach; Human rights culture and protection mechanisms enhanced	Indicator: Number of Judicial institutions restructured according to the constitution and a new legal framework for administration of justice; quality and acceptance of the reports produced by the government on its obligations to the human rights treaties. Baseline: Legislation related to administration of justice enacted Indicator: Percentage of disadvantaged groups have more access to constitutional and legal rights; number of poor and disadvantaged households benefiting from the reformed institution; number of females participating in public and judicial organs. Baseline: No data Indicator: Implementation of national policies on gender and disability Baseline: No date	- Ministry of Justice, Supreme Court, Attorney General's office, Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled to provide policy direction and technical inputs	Regular resources \$2 400 Other resources \$ 36 600
		Mechanism established through which CSOs enabled to more effectively participate in the development and political processes	Indicator: Average numbers and frequency of formal consultations with local communities, CSOs and citizens by newly elected institutions Baseline: Lack of formal mechanisms to consult communities, CSOs and citizens	- CSOs, private sector, media, academic institutions, and United Nations partners to implement and monitor	Regular resources 360 Other resources 1 500

National priority or goal: 2 To create the conditions necessary for the people of Afghanistan to secure sustainable livelihoods in the legal economy, and to lay the foundations for the formation of long-term human development (Securing Afghanistan's Future)

National priority or goal 4 To encourage social protection in rural and urban areas through assisting the development of a comprehensive approach to management and use of the natural environment and resources of Afghanistan (NDF)

UNDAF outcome 2: By 2008, more Afghans, particularly vulnerable groups, will have increased and equitable access to assets, activities and entitlements that improve individuals' sustainable means of living

UNDAF outcome 4: By 2008, development and implementation of environment and natural resource policies strengthened at all levels of government, including the community level, to ensure proper management of, and appropriate education on, rare and important natural resources

Programme component	Country programme outcomes	Country programme outputs	Output indicators, baselines and targets	Role of partners	Indicative resources by goal (in thousands of US\$)
MYFF goal: Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty 1.1 MDG country		Poverty status better monitored through strengthened statistical capacity for MDG reporting; Second National Human Development Report produced	Indicator: MDG achievements tracked and monitored with the use of data and information management systems, including DevInfo established at CSO Baseline: NHDR 2004, DevInfo database Indicator: Number of the baseline data for economic and social indicators Baseline: Very limited availability of data	Line ministries, Central Statistic Office, CSOs, academic institutions, United Nations country teams to provide data	Regular resources 450 Other resources 1 500

reporting and poverty reporting					
1.3 Local poverty initiatives 1.5 Private sector development 1.6 Gender mainstreaming	Livelihoods and the quality of life for poor people improved through MDG-focused initiatives such as mainstreaming gender, broadening economic opportunities, and realizing sound natural resource management	Social and economic opportunities for the vulnerable, including ex-combatants and returnees, broadened through local poverty initiatives, private-sector development, counter-narcotic measures and empowerment of women	<p>Indicator: Number of people benefiting from programmes implemented to improve conditions in urban and rural areas including employment opportunities; number of women, disabled, and ex-combatants receiving job opportunities Baseline: No data</p> <p>Indicator: Increased numbers of poppy farmers accessing alternative livelihood opportunities Baseline: No data</p> <p>Indicator: number of legal, policy, institutional frameworks established incorporating women, with active involvement of national institutions Baseline: No data</p>	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics to provide policy guidance	<p>Regular resources 5 119</p> <p>Other resources 512 000</p>
4.4 Mine action 4.5 Natural disaster reduction		Conducive environment for sustainable livelihoods created by strengthened environmental protection and natural resource management, and by reduced natural and man-made risks, including landmines	<p>Indicator: Increased number of communities implementing sustainable environment and resource practices; number of GEF-funded projects and Small Grant Programme implemented Baseline: No data</p> <p>Indicator: Disaster risk reduction and management framework established and operationalised Baseline: No data</p> <p>Indicator: Number of high/medium landmine impacted communities Baseline: Landmine Impact Survey</p>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Disaster Preparedness to provide policy guidance	<p>Regular resources 600</p> <p>Other resources 122 000</p>