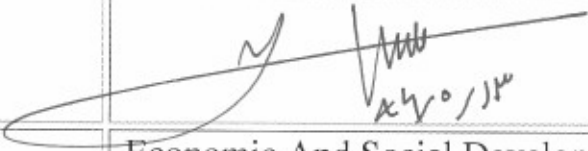




ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION STRATEGY  
FOR  
AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  
(WITH FOCUS ON PRIORITIZATION)

Prepared by	Strategic Planning Steering Committee, MoE  led by  <i>H.E. Mohammed Haneef Atmar</i> , Minister of Education
Signature	 ۱۳۸۵/۱/۳
Pillar	Economic And Social Development - Education
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*In March 2007, the Ministry of Education completed its five-year National Education Strategic Plan:1385-1389 (NESP) which lays out the roadmap for the fulfilment of the iANDS benchmarks, as well as targets in other areas under the Ministry's mandate. The NESP was developed over a six-month period through a consultative process involving all stakeholders and comprises a set of eight programs with prioritized and costed projects. Given below is a compilation of the main features of the NESP. The full document is available at [www.moe.gov.af](http://www.moe.gov.af).*

## **SECTION ONE: OVERALL SECTOR GOALS AND RESULTS**

### **1.1 Vision**

To facilitate the development of a vibrant human capital by providing equal access to quality education for all and enable our people to participate and contribute productively to the development, economic growth and stability of our country.

### **1.2 Overall Goal (Long-term Goal)**

Regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status or religious affiliation, all school aged children and youth will have equal access to quality education in order to develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required for a better future – both for themselves and for their country.

### **1.3 Millennium Development Goal for Education in Afghanistan (Medium-term Goal)**

By 2020 all children in Afghanistan, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary education.

### **1.4 Afghanistan Compact (Immediate Goal)**

By 1389 the net enrolment rate for boys and girls in primary grades will be at least 75% and 60%, respectively; a new curriculum will be operational in all secondary schools; female teachers will be increased by 50%; 70% of Afghanistan's teachers will have passed a competency test; and a system for assessing learning achievement such as a national testing system for students will be in place.

### **1.5 Expected Results**

#### **A. Priority Expected Results [qualitative and quantitative] by 1389:**

- 7.7 million children enrolled in schools, with 60% girls and 75% boys in general primary education.
- 75% of school-age children are within reach of a school with significantly reduced gender and provincial disparities.
- A national cadre of qualified school teachers that will improve the learning achievements of all students by training at least 140,000 competent teachers and 26,000 school principals. 70% of teachers passed a national competency test, 40% of teachers are women and located proportionately in urban and rural areas.
- Quality modern national curriculum for primary and secondary schools built on Islamic principles that meet regional and international standards, including the development, design, printing and distribution of textbooks and accompanying teacher guides. New curriculum for secondary schools taught to increased numbers of students. National testing system to assess learning achievements of students being administered.
- Over 90% of schools have buildings, with appropriate facilities for girls and boys through the construction of modern, cost-effective, equipped and sustainable education infrastructure including at least 9,200 schools, as well as 34 teacher training centres, 364 multi-purpose resource and community learning centres and 42 vocational education schools.

- *Madrassas* teaching hatred and violence no longer part of the system and Afghans are provided with broad-based Islamic education in-country through a modern curriculum, trained teachers (at least 2,500) and at least one Centre of Excellence in each province.
- 50% of high school graduates meet entry level standards for tertiary or post-secondary vocational education and are prepared for competition in the job market. Relevant and quality technical and vocational education opportunities for at least 40,000 male and female Afghans in marketable skills for use in-country and in the region.
- Fewer than 8 million Afghans are illiterate through community-based learning that provides literacy and life skills training.
- Education receives 15% of its operating budget for non-salary costs and an increased share of the total unified budget with 50% of capital expenses managed through the Afghanistan Financial Management Information Systems (AFMIS).
- A Ministry of Education that is an effective, accountable, fully funded and functioning public institution right up to the school level.

## **B. Other Expected Results**

An effective, efficient and better quality education system that promotes security and national unity by ensuring fair and equitable access nationally; a holistic education the content of which is responsive, relevant and representative, and the implementation of which is sustainable, accountable, transparent and led by Government.

## **SECTION TWO: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

### **2.1 Analysis of the Current State of the Sector**

Afghanistan is one of the poorest and least educated countries in the world. The overall literacy rate is about 33%, with a very large gender disparity and a significant difference between rural<sup>1</sup> and urban areas. According to UNESCO and others, up to 90% of rural women and 65% of rural men over 15 years of age are illiterate. Although urban rates of literacy are slightly higher, gender disparity is still wide.

The 1382 Constitution mandates that the State will provide free and compulsory education from Grade 1 to Grade 9 and a free education to the completion of tertiary level. In general terms, the Constitution and the structure of the government assign the responsibilities for all education up to completion of secondary school and some vocational education and training beyond that to the Ministry of Education. This includes provision of schools, teachers and materials; regulation of private education providers; pre-primary education; development, accreditation and monitoring of curriculum standards; training of teachers in subject knowledge, pedagogical skills and attitudes; technical and vocational education; and special education.

Under the Constitution, education is to be consistent with the tenets of Islam; therefore, the responsibility of the Ministry extends to the oversight of *madrassas* and the integration of religious and faith-based education into the overall system. The Constitution also stipulates that, "The State is required to provide the opportunity to teach native languages in the areas where they are spoken." This requires that the Ministry conduct public consultations on this issue and take the necessary measures to achieve this requirement.

In the past five years (1381-1385), the people of Afghanistan have affirmed their commitment to their children's and Afghanistan's future by sending their children, particularly girls, to school in unprecedented numbers. In some areas, communities have not waited for donors or the Ministry to refurbish or provide school accommodation but worked together to establish schools in homes or with

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<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that 75% of the Afghan population are in rural areas.

land and buildings completely financed and constructed by the community. Even with this response it is likely still that only about half of all school-aged children attend school today.

In the same period, the response to these overwhelming challenges in the Ministry has been sporadic and uncoordinated, with a high turnover in the leadership of the Ministry. Virtually all responses have been directed at trying to cope with the demand from students, with significant supply

side constraints. Donors have invested heavily in infrastructure in several districts and have begun supporting specific areas such as teacher education, primary level curriculum development and text book development and printing. Apart from some important efforts associated with the PRR process, investment in the human and institutional capacity of the Ministry to absorb and manage the change on the basis of effective policy directions, has received little attention. The Ministry now seeks to strengthen the relationship between the Ministry and donors, begin breaking out of the crisis management mode, and to improve the degree of coordination and effective prioritization of the investment in education.

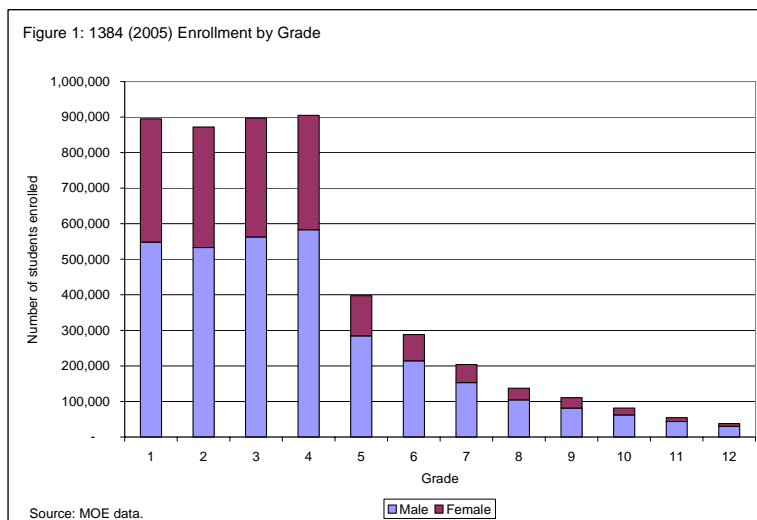
According to Ministry of Education statistics almost 4.9 million children and youth were enrolled in school in 1384 (2005), an increase of nearly four million children since 1381 (2002). This is a remarkable achievement for any country and has been accomplished through the efforts of the Ministry of Education and its many partners in the international community.

The Constitution makes it illegal to refuse access to schools on the grounds of gender, faith or ethnicity. Although there has been progress in the past five years, at the national level the enrolment of boys in primary schools is nearly twice that of girls, while at the lower secondary level it is three times higher and at the higher secondary level boys are almost four times more likely than girls to be enrolled. In urban areas girls are approaching gender equity at the primary level but that boys are almost twice as likely to be enrolled in secondary school as girls. In rural areas, girls' participation declines precipitously. Boys are more than twice as likely to be enrolled in primary school and more than ten times as likely to be enrolled in post-primary education. This dramatic difference is certainly influenced by the shortage of girls' schools and female teachers in the rural areas, especially at the post-primary level. It is also a product of long-term social and political exclusion.

Access to education for special groups is also generally short, particularly for nomadic children, those with learning disabilities, pre-school children and those who have missed on the first years of basic education and now want to enter the system.

The quality of education in Afghanistan is perceived to be quite low and is affected by multiple factors which include the lack of teachers with a thorough content-based knowledge and an understanding of effective teaching methods; the lack of safe, conducive learning spaces; and the lack of quality teaching and learning materials (including textbooks). The classroom environment and the quality of education are particularly affected by the quality of teaching. Although there has not been a comprehensive study on violence in classrooms, there are anecdotal reports of physical punishment of students as a classroom management technique.

In addition, teachers rarely target their teaching to address the specific learning needs of each child in their class. Efforts are mainly centred on the brighter children and little attention is given to children



who are experiencing difficulty. Existing classroom-based methods are not effective in teaching students to read and write and they do not develop the critical thinking and analytical skills of students. Teachers either do not know how to implement more student-centred methods or are not motivated to change their teaching style. Improving the pedagogical skills of teachers as well as their content knowledge is critical to improving the quality of education in Afghanistan.

At the systemic level, the low level of teacher salaries is a major problem for both the teachers and the education system. Teachers' salaries range between \$32 (for a grade 12 teacher with no experience) to \$88 (for a teacher with a Master's degree and 40 years of experience). The average teacher salary is approximately \$US74 per month which includes a meal allowance and the recent pay rise.

Teachers are recruited at both the central and the provincial levels, but only teachers recruited through the Ministry receive permanent status. Teachers recruited at the provincial level are "contract" teachers. According to the regulations, graduates of the two-year Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) are required to teach for four years and graduates of the universities (four-year programs) are required to teach for eight years. In practice, however, graduates from these institutions often do not fulfil these obligations. The current recruitment processes are unconstrained, beset by corruption and nepotism and the presence on the payroll of "ghost" employees.

For applicants who are graduates of Grade 12, the Ministry has conducted a test to determine whether they can be posted as teachers to the provinces.<sup>2</sup> In the past, this test has been strictly content based. There have been components that attempt to test the applicants' teaching skills or attitudes.

The system of teacher supervision is primarily administered through the Provincial Education Departments. The system does not currently lend itself to supporting the teachers' professional development. Supervision visits are rare particularly in rural areas where there is a lack of transport and schools are scattered over large geographical areas. Supervisors are primarily inspectors who do little to improve the methodology and teaching practices of the teachers. Moreover, there is no systematic reporting and feedback on findings and recommendation from the supervisory staff back to the Central level.

Most school facilities in Afghanistan were destroyed or damaged during the years of war. The number of schools rehabilitated or reconstructed so far lags way behind demand. In 1384 (2005), out of 8,397 schools in Afghanistan, only 25% were categorized as "useable" and just over half actually had a building. Most schools also lack essential facilities; only 20% have access to water and 33% are not equipped with proper sanitation. Many Afghan school pupils study in rented premises, in tents or in the open air.

The Ministry estimates that up to 73,000 additional and refurbished classrooms will be required by 1389. In addition, the Ministry needs 34 new teacher training colleges by 1389 and up to 400 additional buildings for in-service training and local teacher resources. If higher participation rates at secondary school level are to be achieved, up to 16 dormitories need to be built by 1389. The Ministry's strategy also indicates that 61 technical and vocational schools and training centres need to be rehabilitated, reconstructed and established over the next five years.

In the Ministry, the response to these challenges and demands has been sporadic and uncoordinated. The Ministry suffers from high turnover at the top and the effects of long-term erosion of virtually all management skills. Technology has not penetrated the Ministry.

Clear indicators of management weakness in the Ministry include virtually uncontrolled and inappropriate recruitment of teachers; the low standard of teachers employed; very low fractions of operating budget resources available for non-salary overheads; very low levels of expenditure of core

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<sup>2</sup> In Kabul, teachers can no longer be hired who have fewer than 14 years of education.

budget and off-budget funds on priority projects; generally poor coordination; and lack of visibility of the extent and effectiveness of donor/NGO participation in the education sector.

Interventions by donors, their NGO partners and local communities have been constrained by financial, security and other limitations. These efforts have not been well coordinated with the Ministry, with one result being that information is still inadequate for strategic decision making.

## **2.2 Analysis of Key Strategic Elements and Processes in Past Programming that Contributed to Success**

In some areas, communities have not waited for the Ministry or donors to refurbish or provide school accommodation but have worked together to establish schools in homes or with land and buildings completely financed and constructed by the community.

Apart from some important efforts associated with the PRR process, investment in the human and institutional capacity of the Ministry to cope with seemingly overwhelming challenges has been inadequate. The Ministry is strengthening its relationship with donors, to move on from the current crisis management mode, and to improve the degree of coordination and effective prioritization of investment in education.

## **2.3 Analysis of Constraints, Restraints and Assumptions**

### **2.3.1. Regulatory and Governance Environment**

There is an urgent need for the development and passage of a new Law on Education that is consistent with the Constitution and establishes the role and authority of the Minister and the Ministry of Education. The Ministry plans to cooperate with other national and government institutions in order to formulate laws, regulations and policies. The most important of these is the Education Law which, once drafted, will have to be ratified by Parliament. In order to meet the demands of increased enrolment and changes in the education system, existing policies, regulations and guidelines will be reviewed and updated to incorporate necessary changes. Policies in urgent need of development or updating relate to teaching and learning in native languages; early childhood development, establishing and upgrading primary, middle and secondary schools including the establishment of outreach classes; establishing and running private schools; and agreed mechanisms for supervision, monitoring and evaluation.

The government recognizes the vital role that the private sector can play in meeting the current demand for education but in order to ensure that quality education is provided to all Afghan students, policies and guidelines for registration and operation of private schools and certification of students will be developed. The Ministry will define the curriculum framework for all schools in the country, but private schools will retain some flexibility in order to give students various choices with regard to the selection of additional study subjects. The General Education Department will be responsible for registering and monitoring private schools and the Teacher Education Department will define standards for teacher accreditation.

Opportunities for pre-primary education in Afghanistan are extremely limited but the Ministry recognizes that early childhood development experiences are critical for children's future success in education. Quality pre-primary education enables children to enter school ready to learn. Research will be carried out to identify current good practices in the area of child development and early childhood education in Afghanistan and in the region as part of the development of formal pre-school education. Pre-school education within existing schools, mosques, community centres and in homes will be reviewed. The General Education Department, in close coordination with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSA) will develop policies and guidelines for establishing and running pre-school education centres throughout the country – those supported by the government as well as private pre-school programs. The General Education Department will develop

policies, regulations and guidelines for pre-school education, and will run two experimental pre-school centres.

Clear policies are also needed for children with special learning needs. The “National Framework for Action on Disability in Afghanistan” has been submitted by MoLSA to the Cabinet and is currently under review. The framework recommends a coordinated approach to development of guidelines for the education of children with disabilities.

In order to address these policy and regulatory challenges, the Ministry will:

- Review and update regulations for basic and secondary education by the end of 1386 including regulations for establishing new schools and teaching in native language.
- Formulate and approve a policy framework for private schools (pre-school, primary and secondary) by 1386.
- Register all private schools (pre-school, primary and secondary) in the country by 1389.
- Develop policies, regulations and guidelines for pre-school education by 1386; and run two pre-school centres by 1389.
- Provide additional incentive for teachers to remain in the system as well as to encourage mobility and attract more women teachers, the Ministry of Education is developing a programme of land allocation for teachers. PRR and Pay and Grading reforms, due in 1386, should help with both attraction and retention of better qualified teachers.
- Introduce merit based recruitment and progression as part of the implementation of PRR and Pay and Grading Reforms.
- Review and update regulations for basic and secondary education by the end of 1386, including regulations for establishing new schools and teaching in local native languages.
- Develop policies, regulations and guidelines for pre-school education by 1386.
- Formalize policy on establishing and running outreach classes by the end of 1385.
- Develop policies and guidelines for counselling and guidance of students, teachers and parents.
- Develop a coherent legislative and rules based framework for the delivery of quality education in Afghanistan.
- Prepare and obtain Cabinet approval of Regulation on Private Schools and consequent internal rules by the end of 1385.
- Prepare and obtain passage through the National Assembly of a “Law on Education” in 1386
- Develop an Annual Legislation Plan by the end of the first quarter of each year.
- Build a full set of regulations, instructions and manuals for operation of the Ministry based on the Education Law by 1388.

In Asad 1385 (August 2006), the Minister commissioned a full review of a draft Law on Education for submission through Cabinet to the National Assembly. The purpose of the Law will be to:

- more clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry and Minister under the relevant sections of the Constitution
- provide a better defined legislative base for policy development
- align the management of the Ministry to other legislation including the *Public Finance and Expenditure Management Law* and the *Public Administration and Civil Service Reform Law*.
- formalise the authority to make regulations and other instruments for regulating and managing the non tertiary education sector in Afghanistan.

In effect, this Law will formally “establish” the Ministry. In addition, an Institutional Framework is being developed as part of the process of establishing critical policy areas to be reflected in the development of the draft Law.

The Ministry is one of three pilot line ministries that will begin the process of program budgeting, as a step towards unification of the budget. This process will also support the strategic approach to the management of the Ministry that is reflected in this Plan. It will act as an enabler to bring about significant improvements in financial management, budgeting and reporting for both capital and recurrent budget expenditures and for reporting results against program plans. This will be a critical success factor for the Ministry and the donor community in building a closer partnership and shared priorities. Concurrent with the participation in the pilot combined program budget (which will include the central office and three regions) the Minister has requested accelerated access to a minimal number of AFMIS terminals in order to improve the systems support for financial management, analysis and reporting.

A government-led education program needs to be supported through building an accountable and transparent system of education financing and administration. As the Government becomes more responsible for financial accountability of its funds sourced through bilateral and multilateral partners as well as the growing tax base in Afghan society, a greater level of trust will be built, paving the way for future investments in the education sector. In the newly developing democratic environment of Afghanistan, the Ministry recognizes that it is accountable to the children and adults of Afghanistan to deliver on its constitutional promise of the provision of an education system to all. Central, provincial, district and school level monitoring and evaluation systems will be strengthened, building a close partnership with communities, civil society and government to ensure that this promise can be held.

### 2.3.2. Capacity Analysis

In the past, with limited Government capacity, the Ministry of Education was unable to take the lead in developing and implementing educational strategies. Overlap and duplication has caused an ineffective use of valuable financial and technical resources. The strategic plan prepared by the ministry is the first step towards providing the necessary direction from the Government for education planning and programming in Afghanistan ensuring a coordinated, systematic approach to education. In line with the proposed activities outlined in the plan, the Ministry will seek to 'buy' international and national expertise to fast track some of its initiatives. The Ministry values the contribution made to education by other partners, and will seek to enhance the value of this contribution through improved understanding and collaborative implementation.

**General Education:** The education system in Afghanistan has suffered extensively during the past years due to conflict, lack of adequate resources and capacities and absence of a strategic direction. Until recently, the majority of school-aged children and youth did not have access to schooling. Those who did were not satisfied with the quality provided. During the Taliban period, girls were banned from schools and only a limited number had access to home-based education.

The Ministry of Education has made major achievements since 2001, but the education system is still facing immense challenges. According to the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) household survey of 1382, only 57% of primary school-aged children were in school. It is still possible that half the potential population is still outside the system. Significant gender gaps and geographic disparities exist with regard to access to education at all levels. The vast majority of students are enrolled in Grades 1-4; very few are enrolled in secondary education where the curriculum has yet to be updated. The education of girls is still facing threats and challenges due to political and socio-economic conditions.

Fewer than half of the schools in the country have a building and only 26% of existing buildings are useable. Only 33% of schools have any access to sanitary facilities and only 20% have potable water. Laboratories, libraries and sport facilities are almost non-existent. Efforts have been made to develop new textbooks for primary schools but many children still do not have the textbooks and supplies that they need. In many areas, schools are over-crowded due to shortages of schools and teachers. All teachers need in-service training and better support and supervision. Student activities and basic services, like health services and counselling, are still lacking.



Children with special needs are not receiving attention and measures to facilitate the integration of returning refugee children and access to education for nomadic children are needed. In addition, there are no clear policies on pre-primary education and the main government support to pre-school aged children is provided by the MoLSA in the form of kindergartens (or day care centres) for government employees. Parents are not fully engaged in and informed of school affairs in the absence of formal School Advisory and Support Councils.

**Teacher Training:** The conflict in Afghanistan has not only destroyed the physical infrastructure of the education system, but also the human resources that are so critical to developing a quality system. The majority of teachers throughout the country do not meet the official requirements to be a teacher and the lack of quality teacher training has resulted in poor instructional quality in the classrooms of Afghanistan. In 1384 (2005), only 22% of all teachers in the country met the official qualifications of 14 years or more of education. To date most teacher training has been conducted in urban areas with few opportunities for students in the districts and villages to attend pre-service teacher training programs. In addition, while female teachers play an essential role in increasing the enrolment of girls, they represent only 28% of all teachers in the country.

The low level of teacher salaries is another major problem that faces both the teachers and the education system. The average teacher salary is \$75 per month including a food allowance of \$32 per month but even with this allowance most teachers are not able to sustain a basic standard of living.

**Lack of Educational Facilities:** Most of the school facilities throughout Afghanistan have been destroyed or damaged as a result of the years of war. Although the Ministry of Education (Ministry) and numerous development partners have made efforts to provide safe and conducive learning spaces for children, the number of schools rehabilitated/reconstructed so far lags behind actual demand. A majority of students do not have access to adequate learning spaces and attend classes in rented premises, in tents or in the open air. As of 1384 (2005), out of 8,397 schools in Afghanistan only 25% were categorized as “useable” and just over half of the schools had a building. Most schools also lack essential facilities such as access to clean drinking water and toilets. Furthermore schools with buildings are overcrowded resulting in the use of two or three shifts of classes to cater for all the enrolled children, which seriously impacts on the quality of teaching and learning. Approximately 3,000 schools have been rehabilitated and/or constructed since 2002; however, costs, design and quality vary widely and many schools have been built by partners without coordinating efforts with the Ministry.

Assuming that the Ministry adopts a short-term policy of two shifts per school, it is projected that approximately 73,000 classrooms still need to be either fully reconstructed or established (land allocation, construction and registration) over the coming five years to ensure that all children enrolled in schools have access to an environment that is conducive to learning.

Walking distance is a problem for many students, particularly in the rural areas. In some areas, it has been reported that children walk as many as four hours per day in order to attend school but there is no official data to verify this. The lack of reliable data makes it difficult to make decisions and to plan the (re)construction effort in a coherent and effective manner. An effective school mapping system is badly needed in order to identify construction needs for existing schools and to identify communities where new schools are needed. (See also the General Education program.) The low capacity at central and decentralized levels to monitor the construction of the thousands of schools every year is also an obstacle to ensuring that learning spaces are constructed in line with Ministry quality standards.

**Curriculum Development and Learning Materials:** Afghanistan’s curriculum in the past was socially and economically unrepresentative of the needs of the Afghan nation. During the 1970s and the ensuing war, different competing groups throughout the country developed their own curricula that often promoted various political ideologies rather than academic content. In 1381 (2002), the Department of Compilation and Translation (which is responsible for curriculum development and

learning materials) developed a new curriculum framework for general education. The focus of this framework was the development of a standardized curriculum to be used throughout the country. While the updating and revision of textbooks for primary education (grades 1-6) is nearly complete, more effort is required to upgrade the text books and curriculum for secondary education. In addition, the curriculum is overburdened and does not reflect the actual learning interests of students and teaching capacities of teachers. The content of the textbooks needs to ensure that it is relevant to the histories and cultural values of all the people of Afghanistan as well as ensure that it can respond more effectively to the economic development needs of the country. In addition to this, more effort needs to be placed on providing good quality learning materials for children with special learning needs (gifted children as well as those with learning and physical disabilities), for accelerated learning classes and for pre-primary education.

Since 2002, there have been many challenges related to the production and distribution of learning materials. On the production side, there is limited capacity within Afghanistan to print the millions of textbooks that are required each year and distribution is challenging in a country with rugged terrain and destroyed or non-existent physical infrastructure. Initial distribution efforts have been plagued by inefficiency and many textbooks that were destined for school children were lost in transit.

**Islamic Education:** During the last three decades of war and political turmoil, the Islamic education system and its *madrassas* have played a vital role with regard to the education of young Afghans but have occasionally been misused for political purposes. In spite of some educational shortfalls and setbacks, *madrassas* education has retained a unique influence and control over Afghanistan's educational, political and social milieu. In the recent past, Afghanistan's *madrassa* education has served multiple purposes. *Madrassas* have served as educational institutions for basic education and centres of advanced learning in Islamic studies and have produced many of Afghanistan's political leaders.

It is the official policy of the Ministry to admit students to the Islamic education system from grade 7 onward. At present, the curriculum of most of the *madrassas* is designed for grades 7 to 12, but a few *madrassas* teach from grade 7 to 14. In areas where general education schools do not exist, *madrassas* may also admit students from grade 1. In such cases, the Ministry plans that the *madrassas* will implement the curriculum of general education for grades 1 to 6, with optional lessons on religious issues. It is argued that while the curriculum of general education provides considerable lessons on religious issues, children who are admitted for grades 1 to 6 in *madrassas* should also be able to choose at the end of the primary cycle (grade 6) whether they want to continue with specialized Islamic education in *madrassas* or would like to join the mainstream general education system. This policy will allow students to move between the general and Islamic education system after completing their primary education.

Currently, the Islamic education system is developing national curriculum for Islamic education and textbooks. The Islamic Department still faces challenges in developing teachers' capacities, providing physical spaces (*madrassa* buildings) and teaching and learning materials, and developing an effective administrative and management system.

**Technical and Vocational Education and Training:** The development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is an essential cornerstone for the recovery process and poverty alleviation in Afghanistan. In recent times, this sub-sector has been under stress from war and significant under-investment in both new knowledge and infrastructure. The Afghan labour market currently faces an acute demand for skilled and semi-skilled people in order to cope with the rapid pace of reconstruction of the country. However, unemployment remains persistent among young Afghans because many do not have the technical skills that are urgently needed for reconstruction efforts as well as the overall economic development of the country. In absence of sufficient local skilled labour the country has to hire skilled workforce from other countries and pay high wages out.

In spite of the reopening of all technical and vocational institutes (TVIs) in the country, TVET is still facing a number of serious issues and a great lack of resources. Access to TVET is severely hampered by the lack of sufficient and properly equipped learning spaces and facilities. At present, there are only 42 Ministry run technical schools (and four run by other Ministries) for the entire country, the vast majority of which require either rehabilitation or complete rebuilding and equipment. Consequently access to TVET is low with a total enrolment of only 15,000 students in 1385/2006, only 10% of which are females. The very low participation of girls raises issues related to the social constraints they are facing and the relevance of the training opportunities offered to them. The existing curriculum offered in the TVIs does not fully match the needs of the labour market and needs to be updated in order to strengthen the quality of TVET in the country. Other factors such as the low qualifications of teachers, low salary levels that make it difficult to recruit people with the necessary qualifications and professional experience and high pupil/teacher ratios also affect the current quality of TVET. To date, there are only 674 TVET teachers for the whole of Afghanistan. In addition, the management capacity and systems that are necessary in order to respond quickly to the emerging needs from the central Ministry down to the school level are weak.

**Literacy and Non-formal Education:** Afghanistan faces a daunting task in reducing illiteracy rates in the country. As of 1385/2006, there are an estimated 11 million illiterate Afghans aged 15 and above. Improving literacy rates will require the combined efforts of the Ministry of Education and other partners within the Government of Afghanistan as well as the support and participation of communities, the private sector and non-government actors. The current literacy efforts within the Ministry of Education focus primarily on formal literacy training and an accompanying structure of government-financed literacy teachers, supervisors and textbooks. Using this approach to access millions of people throughout the country is not sufficient for two reasons. First, it would be cost prohibitive due to the number of literacy teachers, facilities and materials that would be required to reach every community. Second, the current approach relies heavily on one formal curriculum, which may not be relevant to all learners – hence limiting participation in the program.

**Management and Capacity Building:** Education for all is one of the most basic needs of any nation wishing to improve the well being of its people, the ability to compete in its region and the world and reduce the incidence and effects of poverty.

Rapid transformation of the Ministry is likely to be inhibited by three significant problem areas relating to the management of the Ministry and its capacity to absorb and effectively allocate the resources required to transform the education sector over the next 5-15 years:

- Neither data nor information are of sufficient quality to support more than intuitive decision making and policy development, sound budget formulation or effective priority setting.
- The Ministry's legal mandate is very weak below the level of the Constitution, with few current regulations and outmoded applicable law.
- Management capacity is extremely weak, with low technology penetration, obsolescent systems, poor internal communication and inadequate skills base.

Indicators of management weakness include virtually uncontrolled and inappropriate recruitment and standards of teachers; very low fractions of operating budget resources available for non-salary overheads; very low levels of expenditure of core budget and off budget funds on priority projects; weak coordination; and lack of visibility of the extent and effectiveness of donor/NGO participation in the sector.

### 2.3.3 Security Situation

Insecurity in Afghanistan poses a real threat to the implementation of the education strategy. Furthermore, the lack of certainty regarding many aspects of this plan necessitates continuous review and revision to take into account changing conditions and the availability of new and better data.

In general, parents want both their sons and daughters to attend school but they are more reluctant to send their girls to school if schools are not located close to their homes and if they are concerned for the safety of their daughters. Where schools are not located within a short walking distance from their homes, parents are less willing to send their female children to school. The shortage of female teachers is of particular concern because it affects the ability of girls, especially older girls, to enrol in and attend school.

In some parts of the country general insecurity and attacks targeted directly at schools are also a major threat to education. Sadly, these attacks have been increasing. Throughout 1384 (2005), there were 72 attacks on schools in seven provinces in the country. In the first half of 1385 (2006), 73 schools in 26 provinces had been attacked. In Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan female teachers have been murdered, as have other teachers in government schools or those built with foreign aid. These attacks are a serious threat to the gains in enrolment made by the education system in the last four years. If parents do not think that their children will be safe in school or *en route* to school, they will keep their children home.

## SECTION THREE: STRATEGY

### Overall Strategy for Achieving Expected Results

The principal underlying approach of the Ministry, in ensuring that all children have access to an education, is to develop a strategy that is national in scope. In all accounts, each of the Ministry's national programs will encompass each province and district in the country. Access in many parts of the country is constrained by limited financial and/or technical resources, or a heightened level of insecurity. In these circumstances, special measures will be required to overcome this constraint to ensure that the education system does not further exacerbate social and cultural differences in the country.

Education programming needs to respond to the specific socio-political and security environment that is Afghanistan. There is a complex dynamic between education, tradition, society, government and the economy, and the education system needs to adopt a responsive approach to programming in order to meet these multidimensional demands. The Ministry will need to ensure that education is provided throughout the country despite the complex environment in which it is delivered. In this regard, education content and the mode of delivery must be relevant to the actual learning needs and abilities of Afghan society. Afghan families need to feel confident that investing in education for themselves or their children will provide an overall social or economic return in the medium to long term. Some opportunities might be taken to provide teaching in a native language in the area where it is spoken.

The Ministry is committed to providing an education system through the development of content and delivery structures that is representative of the range of social, cultural and historical values of all people of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is one nation, but within this nation is a rich kaleidoscope of cultures and traditions. The Ministry celebrates these differences and sees this as strength of Afghan society. All members of Afghan society will be represented in the new education curriculum, including teaching of tradition, history and cultural values. Building tolerance of others within Afghanistan and beyond will become a cornerstone in the longer term state building efforts of our country.

The strategy outlined below corresponds to eight priority programs, which will be detailed in the following section.

**General Education:** In order to address these challenges and to achieve the I-ANDS and Compact targets, the Ministry of Education has developed a multi-dimensional General Education Program which aims at:

- increasing access to primary and secondary education
- improving the quality of general education
- improving the management of schools and the overall system of formal education

The implementation of the various components of this Programme will be the responsibility of various departments within the Ministry, not only that of the General Education Department. The establishment of curricula and the development and provision of textbooks in the various national languages stipulated by the Constitution; construction, rehabilitation, maintenance and furnishing of physical facilities; recruiting and training primary and secondary teachers; and conducting national tests to assess the learning achievements of students at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades are all detailed in other Programs of this strategic plan.

Cooperation with donors, international development partners and the private sector will be essential in order to meet the enrolment targets stipulated in the I-ANDS and the Millennium Development Goals since Afghanistan still lacks the financial resources and the technical expertise and capacity to reform and develop the education system. The Ministry will encourage the development of private schools (pre-primary as well as primary and secondary) but will regulate the schools and require that all schools use the Government's approved curriculum. In return, private schools will be able to access textbooks and the national teacher training program in order to improve the quality of their teachers. NGOs will be encouraged to participate with Ministry in the provision of education, especially for preschool children and children with disabilities and special needs, including the gifted. Ministry is already shouldering immense responsibilities and tasks and must seek the participation and contribution of willing and capable organizations and the community at large if it is to increase, diversify and improve the quality of educational services delivered. Many NGOs have deep roots and widespread presence in numerous geographic locations throughout the country; and through these linkages NGOs are well placed not only to assist the Ministry in the delivery of special education programs, but also to provide independent supervision and monitoring support.

The participation of local communities in the construction, maintenance, protection and development of schools as well as in the promotion of education in various districts and provinces will also be actively encouraged and sought through mobilizing parents and community leaders to be actively engaged in School Advisory and Support Councils (*Shuras Mashwarati wa Himayati Maktab*). The School Advisory and Support Councils will function as the education sub-committees of the Community Development Councils that have already been established under the National Solidarity Program (NSP). The Ministry believes that awareness-raising within local communities and the involvement of people in the lives of the schools will result in a sense of ownership towards schools and, hence, their protection. Schooling will be brought closer to children's homes through building smaller schools and establishing community-based outreach schools/classes in order to increase the enrolment of all children with a special focus on girls.

**Teacher Education and Working Conditions:** Over the coming five years, the foundations of an education training structure will be developed with pre-service teacher training facilities established in every province and linked to district Teacher Resource Centres that will provide in-service teacher training. The Ministry will expand its scope to support teachers in community-based schools who may or may not be currently employed by the Ministry but who, through a series of training programs, will have the option of full time employment. All teacher training modules will be available through audio visual and radio-based programs, with every provincial Teacher Training College linked to internet and video conferencing facilities. Radio-based programs will be expanded to ensure all teachers, especially women, and those in difficult to reach areas, are able to access training opportunities. The Ministry is committed to providing upgrading opportunities for teachers, but also to providing training and technical assistance for school principals, administrators and other staff whose role it is to support teachers.

In addition to the above programs, a special housing scheme for teachers will be established to attract women to the teaching profession and to increase the number of male and female teachers in the rural and underserved areas of the country. In this regard, the Ministry will work towards establishing an environment that will attract people to the teaching profession so teaching in Afghanistan will once again be a respected and sought after profession.

**Education Infrastructure Development:** Rehabilitation and (re)construction of schools and other types of educational facilities is a top priority of the Ministry. The General Education Department in cooperation with the Departments of Planning and School Construction will initiate a school mapping process to identify the location of existing schools and where additional schools are needed. New smaller size schools will be established (primary, middle and community based outreach schools/classes) to provide easier access and shorten the walking distance for children. Existing school buildings will be repaired and new buildings with water, sanitation, playgrounds and other facilities will be constructed to provide a conducive learning environment for students. An acceleration of school construction is necessary to ensure physical access to education for all in Afghanistan.

In order to ensure the quality of the educational buildings (re)constructed and equity in their distribution throughout the country, Ministry will plan and supervise the construction effort according to Government standards. Provincial and district educational services will be strengthened for this purpose. The communities will be involved, trained and drawn upon for the daily management and maintenance of school buildings. Financial and technical support of development partners will be needed throughout the rebuilding process and to support training efforts with local communities. The private sector will be relied upon for physical construction but will be under the technical supervision of central and decentralized educational authorities.

**Curriculum Development and Learning Materials:** The development of a quality curriculum that responds to the real educational needs of Afghanistan is a critical element in building the human capital of the country and in developing the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that the nation wants its children to embrace. The Ministry of Education will establish a National Institute of Curriculum Development that will be responsible for all curricular needs in the country, including general primary and secondary education, Islamic education, and education for children with special learning needs (including *kuchis*, gifted children, and children with physical or learning disabilities).

While curriculum development is an overarching initiative of the Ministry, this section deals only with curriculum development for primary and secondary education. Curriculum development for Islamic and technical and vocational education is discussed separately in their respective sections of the Plan.

During the next year, special emphasis will be placed on completing a new curriculum and textbooks for secondary students. This is critical as a quality secondary education curriculum of an international standard that is relevant to the reconstruction efforts of the country will help Afghanistan effectively build its human capital and develop economic opportunities both within the region and globally. Over the last four years, record numbers of students have enrolled in schools. As these children progress through the educational system, a strong and relevant secondary curriculum plays an important role in helping to retain their continued interest in learning.

The processes of production and distribution of learning materials will become more effective and efficient as a result of lessons learned from past experiences. In addition, the Ministry will seek to build the capacity of its staff with regard to production and layout of textbooks and other learning materials and new government regulations will make the system more transparent. This will help ensure that textbooks are delivered to schools on a timely basis and in sufficient quantities so that the investment in textbooks benefits all learners in Afghanistan.

**Islamic Education:** The Ministry's main strategy is to improve and develop Islamic education as part of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's rehabilitation and reconstruction program. The Ministry proposes to further develop the Islamic education system by initiating a process of public consultation and dialogue to build national consensus on the system of Islamic education; reviewing the Islamic education curriculum to bring it up to an internationally recognized standard of excellence; and providing support and training to teachers to improve their ability to more effectively teach Islamic education.

The overall strategy of the Ministry is to make quality Islamic education accessible to boys and girls across the country. To do this, the Ministry plans to build a secondary *madrassas* (grade 7-12) in each of the 364 districts in Afghanistan. In addition, the Ministry plans to construct 34 higher secondary *madrassas* (grade 7-14) and dormitories for boys and 34 higher secondary *madrassas* and dormitories for girls in each of the 34 provincial capitals. Of these 68 higher secondary *madrassas*, 8 of them will be developed into centres of excellence (*Darul-Ulum*) in Islamic Education. The implementation of these plans will make quality Islamic education accessible to approximately 90,000 students by 1389.

**Technical and Vocational Education and Training:** The Ministry of Education is committed to training Afghanistan's future technicians, skilled workers and civil servants by providing vocational and technical education and training opportunities in appropriate trades and management skills for all Afghans of both genders regardless of geographic location, ethnicity, language, religion or physical abilities in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. This will be achieved over the coming five years through the expansion of the existing formal TVET system, through a closer partnership with the private sector and through the provision of short-term training courses in various technical and vocational fields that will be targeted at unemployed youth and young adults, both male and female. The training offered will be based on the existing educational backgrounds of the students and offer programs for non-literate youth to grade 12 graduates. The program will consider technical education for students with a stronger educational background and vocational training that will build basic productive skills. Technical education will touch upon public administration, construction, information and communication technologies (ICTs), agriculture and industry. Vocational training will be more practical skills based and will be offered in both urban and rural areas. These training programs will not necessarily be offered through an official school based system but rather targeted more towards on-the-job training.

Given the pressing need for skilled workers, all the existing technical and vocational institutes will be rehabilitated and equipped and new ones will be opened according to the needs of the labour market. A reform of the curriculum and textbooks will be implemented based on modern TVET principles and a focus on the skills that will support economic growth and poverty reduction and that will encourage a larger and more skilled private sector, providing opportunities for people to enter self employment, particularly in the services and agriculture sectors. New teachers will be recruited and trained in order to cope with the foreseen increased demand for TVET. Similarly, the TVET management structures and systems will be strengthened for the existing non-teaching staff and through incremental recruitment of administrative staff as the sub-sector expands. The Ministry will seek to improve the low social status of TVET through a national communication campaign to sensitize the population to the benefits of TVET.

**Literacy and Non-formal Education:** The Ministry of Education's overall strategy with regard to literacy and non-formal education will include directly implementing literacy programs as well as establishing policy; setting and monitoring standards of student assessment and facilitator certification; training and supporting trainers and facilitators down to the village level; encouraging and supporting best practices, materials and curriculum that are appropriate to the life of each learner; collecting, analyzing and disseminating data; and coordinating donors and facilitating partners (NGOs and other organizations) to ensure national coverage. To reduce costs and increase impact, the Ministry of Education will build upon existing development programs such as the National Skills Development Programme (NSDP) and the Vocational Training Centres of the MoLSA and ensure that district level facilities are available through the establishment of community learning centres. The

overall literacy strategy will be conducted through the Ministry of Education, the National Literacy Center, Provincial and District Ministry Offices, and Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and will encourage the use of multiple approaches and materials in order to make the learning process more relevant to the needs of adult learners.

***Education Administration Reform and Development:*** As the largest government employer and one of the most dependent on external financing for its physical and human capital and investment requirements, the Ministry intends to work closely with the donor community and build confidence in the Ministry's ability to manage change. The Ministry's vision for organizational change includes increasing reliance on its own people and systems and adherence to public administration standards to achieve a sustainable ability to finance and support the delivery of improved quality education from Grades 1-12 and in certain other specific areas mandated for the Ministry. To achieve this will require developing the institutional, financial, human, physical and technological capacity within the Ministry.

Given its reach and the critical nature of education improvements to socio-economic and security improvements, the Ministry will also establish a unit, initially within the Office of the Minister, to develop a community information and consultation program and facilitate the development of the community engagement at the school level.

## SECTION FOUR: PROGRAMMING

The programs of the Ministry have been developed to ensure a holistic approach to the education sector. Access to primary education alone will not build the social and human capital so urgently required in the current state building efforts of the country. The Ministry's education program is inclusive of infrastructure needs, technical requirements, systems development and program objectives and priorities. Technical education, secondary education and education for special groups each becomes an integral part to building a knowledge based society that is able to respond to the current economic needs of Afghanistan and the region. The eight priority programs of the Ministry of Education include the following:

1. The **General Education** Program will consist of the following components:
  - *Policy frameworks, rules and regulations:* Ministry plans to cooperate with other national and government institutions in order to formulate laws, regulations and policies. The most important of these is the Education Law which, once drafted, and reviewed by the Cabinet, will have to be ratified by Parliament (see also the section Managing Capacities and PRR).
  - *Establishment of new schools:* To meet the continuing increased demand for education and in order to achieve the I-ANDS net enrolment targets, it is estimated that the Ministry will need to establish another 9,125 new schools over the next five years. While construction of the new schools will be planned and monitored by the School Construction Department, the General Education Department will ensure staffing the newly established schools.
  - *Special programs for special groups:* The Ministry of Education's overarching goal is to ensure that **all** children and youth in Afghanistan have access to education regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and religious affiliation. In order to achieve this goal, the Ministry will implement numerous strategies as outlined in this Plan. For girls as well as children with disabilities, gifted children, Kuchis and youth who have been denied access to education in the past, special programs will be established to ensure that their right to education is not denied.
  - *Extra-curricular activities, sports and scouts:* In close consultation with the National Olympics Committee, the Ministry (Curriculum Development Department and Physical Education Department of General Education Department) will develop policies and guidelines for physical education and sports in schools. Physical education teachers will be trained by Physical Education Department and Teacher Education Department and sports material and



equipment will be provided to all primary and secondary schools. Every school will also have a dedicated play/sports ground. Special physical education and sports materials/equipment will also be provided for children with disabilities.

- *Student services (health, counselling, school feeding):* With the cooperation of other Ministries, health and school feeding services and student activities will also be provided. School meals and health care are not only good incentives for children to attend school and for their families to send them to school, but they are also factors in successful achievement at school. Through a pilot project, research will be designed and conducted on the effects of school feeding to promote learning achievements. Policies and guidelines will be developed for school feeding and food assistance to students.
- *Supervision and monitoring:* Education supervisors will be trained by General Education and assigned at district, provincial and national level with clear terms of reference. Supervisory guidelines and checklists will be developed in close consultation with teacher training, curriculum development and general administration departments to facilitate the work of these supervisors.
- *Management and community participation:* School Advisory and Support Councils are essential to ensuring well-managed and safe educational environments. These Councils will serve as an important monitoring mechanism to ensure that teachers and administrators are accountable to local communities and to students. They will also be instrumental in maintaining local schools, ensuring “green” facilities and using educational facilities for events that serve the entire community.

2. The **Teacher Education** and Working Conditions program will consist of the following components:

- *Construction and upgrading of teacher training facilities:* To facilitate in-service and pre-service training programs the Ministry will work towards establishing a number of facilities at the central, provincial and district levels. At the central level the Ministry will establish a national Teacher Training Institute (TTI). Its focus will be on training trainers for the provincial Teacher Training Centres (TTCs) rather than training teachers directly.
- *Pre-service teacher training:* A new pre-service teacher education curriculum is being developed that is linked to the new primary education curriculum textbooks and is grade specific. It will also incorporate elements of modern pedagogical methods and will be competency based in order to prepare teachers for the nationally administered teacher competency test
- *In-service teacher training:* There are currently almost 140,000 teachers in Afghanistan. Few of these teachers have the necessary teaching skills and subject-based knowledge to teach effectively. Based on the competencies of the pre-service curriculum that will be developed by the Ministry and building on the materials already developed through the Teacher Education Programme, the Ministry will develop a set of in-service teacher training modules. These modules will respond to the specific training requirements of teachers in terms of both pedagogy and subject knowledge.
- *Distance Education:* TED is developing a multimedia in-service distance learning program for teachers. Teachers who attend and complete the program will be issued certificates. The teacher education department will work closely with educational radio-television to develop audio-visual materials. Programs will be monitored upon implementation.
- *Education Administration:* To perform their jobs properly, the key personnel of the Teacher Education Department, TTI, TTCs and experimental schools need to acquire the basic skills of management, monitoring and evaluation in order to improve the quality of education in their respective organizations. To meet this objective, regular refresher workshops and short- or long-term scholarships will be provided on an annual basis.
- *Research and Standards:* The teacher registration and assessment efforts that are being conducted by the Ministry (see also the Priority Programme on Managing Capacities and PRR) will lay the foundations for developing a teacher credentialing system that will in turn

set teacher pay and grading levels. This credentialing system will enable unqualified teachers who participate in specified in-service training courses to ultimately be accredited.

3. The **Education Infrastructure Development** Program will consist of the following components

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- *Education Infrastructure Construction & School Mapping Facilities:* Considering the scale of the school (re)construction and expansion efforts that are needed throughout the country, a national chain of responsibility from the central level down to the school level will be put in place. This administrative mechanism will rely on a number of councils and will decentralize responsibilities from the central to the provincial and local levels. The Ministry will create three main administrative entities: (1) the School Construction Planning and Coordination Committee at Ministry level, (2) a Provincial Education Council in each of the 34 provinces and (3) a School Advisory and Support Council (SASC) in each Government school
- *Technical capacity of MoE Construction Department at central and provincial levels:* The Ministry Department of School Construction is responsible for coordinating and technically supervising the construction of all educational facilities in the country. Presently, the Department has 5 engineers which is not sufficient for the multiple number of construction projects that are needed over the coming five years. Consequently, its capacity will be increased by the recruitment of 16 specialists surveyors, engineers. In addition, engineer will be recruited for the provincial teams discussed in the following paragraph.
- *Educational facilities infrastructure and furniture:* The Department of School Construction is responsible for informing all partners (decentralized education authorities and development partners) about the existing standards for school rehabilitation and construction and for enforcement of these guidelines. Ministry guidelines related to the school construction process, the sharing of responsibilities and the technical specifications needed for quality cost-effective Government schools have been developed.

4. The **Curriculum Development and Learning Materials** program will consist of the following components:

- *Review of national curriculum framework:* Public consultations will be held on the draft framework to ensure that views of relevant stakeholders are considered when finalizing the framework. The curriculum framework will be printed in both Dari and Pashto and widely circulated. In addition, the framework will be reviewed again after the new syllabi have been drafted (see component 2). Once the framework has been finalized, it will be submitted to the Government for approval.
- *Syllabi development for lower and upper secondary education:* As agreed during the UNESCO-IBE Secondary Curriculum Development workshop, a team of approximately 40 Afghan subject specialists (Islamic education, language education, mathematics, sciences, social studies, arts and culture) will convene in Amman, Jordan for one month at OBEIKAN Research and Development to draft the new syllabi in consultation with international consultants/high level specialists for different learning areas/subjects. During this time, the draft curriculum framework will also be reviewed and revised accordingly.
- *Textbooks and teacher guide books:* In order to meet the needs associated with the projected increases in enrolment, production and distribution of textbooks must increase dramatically. Over the next five years, enrolment in the primary grades is projected to increase to almost 5.3 million – an increase of approximately one million new students. As the millions of primary students progress through the educational system, this will create tremendous new demands on lower and upper secondary education where the corresponding projected enrolment increases are approximately 1.5 million and 350,000, respectively.

- *Provision of other pedagogical materials and equipment to schools:* The destruction of the school infrastructure throughout the country and under-investment in education has resulted in an almost complete absence of teaching and learning materials such as audio-visual equipment, science laboratories and school libraries. In addition, only a few schools in the country have computer facilities that will enable young people to learn computer and technological skills. Over the next five years as new schools and classrooms are constructed, the Curriculum Department will be responsible for equipping them with teaching and learning materials that will help improve the quality of education.
  - *Improving central Department offices:* The Ministry plans to establish a national Institute of Curriculum Development that will maintain a level of political independence. The Institute will house a team of subject specific curriculum development specialists, syllabi specialists, people with script writing expertise, artists and a team of graphic design staff. Specialist teams will be established to provide learning materials for pre-primary students, general education students, students with special learning needs and Islamic education students. Materials will be continuously evaluated and upgraded to reflect the changing learning needs of Afghanistan's children.
  - *Human resources and capacity building:* The capacity of the Department to produce quality curricular materials on a timely basis will depend not only on an investment in physical facilities and equipment; it will also require an increase in the number of staff and the recruitment of staff with specific skills that include curriculum development experience, field testing and evaluation, as well as graphic layout and design. During 1386, at least 72 textbook authors will be contracted to write the new secondary school textbooks.
  - *National Standards Board:* Together with the Institute of Curriculum Development, the Ministry will establish a national Standards Board by the end of 1386. This semi-independent board will develop a national system of student assessment and evaluation during 1386 and 1387. The process will involve training of test item developers, development of test items for each grade and subject (a question bank) and pilot testing of the examination questions to ensure reliability. The completed examinations should be ready for full-scale implementation during 1388.
5. The **Islamic Education** program will consist of the following components:
- *Development of a national Islamic education system:* The program's key strategy is to build broad-based consensus and political support through bringing Afghanistan's key political, religious and academic figures into the process of consultation and discussion. This process of public consultation has already begun and has laid the foundation for further collaborative consultation and discussion, which will be continued through a series of small-scale public discussions in Kabul and in main regional centres during the next five years (1385-1389).
  - *Development of a curriculum framework for the national Islamic education system:* The Islamic Education Department plans to review curriculum frameworks from other Muslim countries and conduct various seminars, workshops and conferences in order to prepare a new curriculum framework for the Islamic Education system. Once the curriculum framework has been completed, syllabi will be drafted for each subject and grade of Islamic Education.
  - *Publication and distribution of textbooks and teacher guide books:* The main strategy is to design and write all titles for grades 7-14 and submit them for review and editing to the National Council for Islamic Education (NCIE) by the end of 1386. After the review and editing process, the textbooks will be printed and distributed in 1387. The Department of Islamic Education plans to conduct a further review of textbooks in 1388 in order to make necessary revisions and print new textbooks.
  - *Construction, rehabilitation and equipping of madrassas:* As the facilities and learning culture within the current madrassas are not at an acceptable quality and standard, it is planned that 8 of the 34 provincial *madrassas* will be developed into centres of excellence in Islamic education. While national in scope, this program will give particular attention to the more unstable areas within the country.

- *Development of administrative and management capacities:* In order to achieve the overall goal and objectives for the Islamic education system over the next five years, the administrative and management capacities of the system must be strengthened. The Department will seek to accomplish this by providing various technical courses and educational programmes in administrative, management, financial and accounting affairs.
  - *Teacher education:* The main strategy to achieve the targets for this component is based on providing training for the existing teachers, arranging educational courses and recruiting new teachers. The Islamic Education Department plans to train 2,000 *madrassas* graduates (potential teachers) by providing them scholarships to foreign countries over the next four years (1386-89). It is envisaged to provide scholarships for 500 *madrassas* graduates each year through 1389.
  - *Development of policies for private and cross-border madrassas:* Many returning Afghan refugees have studied in the *madrassas* in Pakistan and Iran. Because the *madrassas* in Iran and Pakistan are not linked with the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan, it is difficult for the Islamic Education Department to differentiate between authentic and forged certificates. In order to assess the learning achievements of the returning students and certify their studies, the Islamic Education Department plans to evaluate the returning students.
6. The **Technical and Vocational Education and Training** program will consist of the following components:
- *Infrastructure and equipment:* The current state of destruction of almost all TVET school buildings and equipment and the prospect of increased enrolment by 1389/2010 will require a massive (re)construction and rehabilitation effort. The TVET Department of Ministry, the Department of Construction, the School Mapping Unit and the Ministry Department of Administration will work in a coordinated manner towards achieving these targets.
  - *Curriculum development:* The Ministry TVET sub-sector is currently embarking on an ambitious program of change to make TVET more relevant and more closely integrated with the private employment and micro-financing sectors of the economy, as part of the overall economic renewal of the country. The focal point for curriculum design will be the labour market requirements – including the requirements for sustainable and professional civil servants capable of applying modern principles of public administration.
  - *Development of technical capacities:* The implementation of the new curriculum and the expansion of the TVET sub-sector will also require the upgrading of the technical skills of the teaching and non-teaching personnel. A large share of the teachers will require training in new methods, the application of new technology and an understanding of the principles underlying the curriculum and its focus on usable skills in a growing economy.
  - *Management:* Over the coming five years, the TVET system will expand dramatically. The enrolment in the formal technical and vocational schools is foreseen to reach 46,000 students by 1389/2010 and short-term technical and vocational courses will be delivered to 25,000 Afghans (see Component 5). The need for effective and efficient management of TVET will become vital. In order to cope with this increase in demand for TVET, both the teaching and the management/administration forces will be strengthened.
  - *Short-term educational courses:* The TVET Department will provide short courses aimed at equipping up to 4,000 young people and existing civil servants (at least 40% of whom will be female) over the next years with the basic skills in administration management, finance, accounting and information and communication technology (ICT) needed to meet the requirements of delivering responsible and accountable services, in the Government and private sector.
7. The **Literacy and Non-Formal Education** program will consist of the following components:

- *Development of a National Literacy Strategy:* A National Literacy Strategy that aims for national coverage will need the full endorsement of the President and Cabinet. Numerous ministries may wish to provide literacy classes that are specific to their programs and target populations. Therefore, the Ministry of Education will work with the Government of Afghanistan to establish a National Literacy Centre to give high profile support to nation-wide literacy programme.
- *Development of teaching and learning materials:* The current Literacy Department curriculum will be used where needed. In addition, organizations already implementing literacy courses will have their materials approved by the Ministry of Education. Beginning in 1387, the National Literacy Programme will transition to the use of a ‘learning kit’ of materials for each class, from which teachers and individual learners can draw. The content of these materials will be related to participants’ lives and the need for productive skills. In this way literacy teaching will not be only textbook-dependent, but will also build upon best practice materials inside and outside Afghanistan.
- *Training and Capacity Development:* The National Literacy Centre will provide national support for literacy facilitator training at the provincial and district level. The NLC will develop national training guidelines and standards. Training programmes will be conducted through a cascade model at the district and community level and will be further supported by NGO partners. The Ministry will increase its staff of literacy facilitators from 4,000 who are currently primarily based in Kabul to a more nationally based coverage of 10,000 by 1387.
- *Delivery of National Literacy Program:* Communities are a key partner in improving literacy in Afghanistan. While the Ministry of Education will support some direct implementation of literacy courses, its role will be heavily focused on supporting implementation. Although the Ministry intends to increase the number of literacy facilitators over the coming five years, the tremendous need for literacy training will need to draw upon communities to provide additional community based learning spaces, local materials and where possible volunteer literacy facilitators. To eventually reach all households in Afghanistan, support to literacy through the mass media, including radio and information and communication technology will be necessary. The mass media campaign will need the support of national religious and business leaders in order to reach as many Afghans as possible. While radio and television cannot substitute for teaching new literacy students, it can create the awareness of literacy and some enhancement of numeracy and life skills.
- *Monitoring and evaluation:* Literacy programs will be designed and monitored to demonstrate accountability to the government and the people. Progress in learners’ abilities related to communication, numeracy, working with others, and solving community problems must be demonstrated if the program is to be truly meaningful. In order to do this, systems will be put in place to measure and report dependable information including enrolment, attendance and learner achievement to the ministry and the community.

8. The **Management and Capacity Building** program will consist of the following components :

- *Financial and Management Systems:* The Minister of Education is one of three Ministries that will participate in a program budgeting pilot in Afghanistan. This will be an initial step towards unification of the National budget and will support the management approach that is reflected in this Strategic Plan.
- *Information systems and Information Communication Technology (ICT):* The Ministry has an interim central ICT network in the Head Office, currently serving 125 users and providing internet access as well as networked printing capability to a number of offices. An ICT strategic plan will be developed as part of developing the overall capacity to manage the Ministry. With donor assistance, progress is being made on the development of an Education Management Information System (EMIS) and the first data collection surveys have been completed.
- *Public administration reform:* The highest institutional reform priority for the Ministry is to develop an organizational and institutional structure that can support the Ministry over the

medium term and provide the basis for major public administration reforms throughout Ministry. The Ministry will be structured and managed along program lines, with a core policy and management oversight capacity in the Central Office and decentralised management of all resources and program outputs down to the individual school level.

- *Human resources and capacity building:* Like many areas of the civil service, the Ministry has suffered a near total breakdown of even the most basic of public administration standards and there is little organisational memory of effective management principles or practices. The Ministry's ultimate goal is to ensure a well-trained and competent workforce. This will require continued capacity building efforts and shorter-term measures to complement the existing Ministry staff with outside expertise. In cooperation with donors, the Ministry will adopt a strategy of buying capacity in the short to medium term to assist in building capacity for the longer term.
- *Legislative framework:* There is an urgent need for the development and passage of a new Law on Education that is consistent with the Constitution and establishes the role and authority of the Minister and the Ministry of Education. As part of the structural reform process, provision has been made for in-house legal advice and drafting of the legislation for education.

## SECTION FIVE: ROLE ANALYSIS

While the Ministry of Education has primary responsibility for education throughout the country, other ministries also support the overall system of education in Afghanistan. However, there are overlaps in mandate among some of the key ministries.

- Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for tertiary education including educating higher secondary school teachers (Grades 10-12).
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is responsible for non-formal vocational and skills training programs, e.g. adult literacy programs, and day-care centres (kindergartens) provided by government.
- Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development → school construction through the NSP.
- Ministry of Public Works → school construction
- Ministry of Transport and Aviation → management of some technical and vocational schools
- Ministry of Water and Power Supply → management of some technical and vocational schools
- Ministry of Communications → management of some technical and vocational schools
- Ministry of Information & Culture → management of some technical and vocational schools
- Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled → definition of clear policies for children with special learning needs.
- Ministry of Health → develop school health initiative.
- Ministry of Pilgrimage and Religious Endowments (Ministry of *Haj wa Awqaf*) → strengthen the Ministry's system of Islamic Education

There is a need for close coordination among the various ministries that support education in the country.

The Ministry of Education has many partners in the international community, including:

- UNESCO/IIEP, Norway, Italy → education planning, education and media
- World Bank, CIDA, USAID, UNICEF, SIDA, WFP → general education
- USAID, World Bank, UNICEF, Germany, Japan and Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) → teacher education
- USAID, India, Saudi Arabia, Japan, UNICEF, PRTs → school construction and rehabilitation
- DANIDA, UNICEF, UNESCO, Afghanistan Academic Council → curriculum development and textbook production/distribution

- World Bank, USAID, Norway → Technical/Vocational Education and Training
- USAID, UNESCO → Literacy and Non-formal education
- World Bank, DANIDA and USAID → Management, Administrative Reform and Capacity Development
- INGOs and NGOs → accelerated learning programs; community-based schools (CBSs); education of disabled children, children with special needs, gifted children; teacher training courses; preschool education; provide support for independent supervision and monitoring of schools;
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