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AFGHANISTAN

Date: June 2011

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FACT SHEET

Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society II (I-PACS II)

OVERVIEW

A strong, vibrant civil society is an essential component of a flourishing democracy. USAID's Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society (I-PACS) encourages the development and growth of a politically active civil society in Afghanistan.

Since January 2005, USAID has strengthened the role and viability of civil society by providing technical assistance, capacity-building training, and grant support to civil-society organizations (CSOs) nationwide, working to enable Afghan citizens to effectively participate in the political process, solve community problems, and advocate for good governance from their leaders. . USAID awarded a new phase of activity under I-PACS II in October 2010. I-PACS II objectives are to: 1) improve civil society accountability and legal and regulatory frameworks, 2) strengthen civil society capacity for democratic processes, and 3) increase citizen mobilization and policy engagement, with a cross-cutting emphasis on gender mainstreaming.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- Addressing civil society sector regulatory issues through government/CSO dialogue mechanisms, including a Working Group on Civil Society Legal Framework and Accountability
- Supporting a participatory process for an improved legal framework to support vibrant and sustainable CSOs
- Providing training, technical assistance, and grants to build the capacity of Afghan CSOs
- Educating citizens nationwide about the role of civil-society by disseminating educational information about the role and programmatic results of civil-society in Afghanistan
- Increasing authentic public participation in governance through a nationwide community dialogue process that underscores the importance of citizens being both engaged and responsible for policy reform
- Ensuring gender equity through gender mainstreaming capacity building throughout the program
- Disbursing \$5 million in grants in support of various community and CSO initiatives per year
- Nineteen key Afghan partner organizations are providing support services to other CSOs, through resource centers, mentoring, and on-the-job assistance
- Two key Afghan partner organizations are managing grants to their CSO partners
- Twelve initiatives are being implemented by Afghan CSOs that directly serve the needs of communities or mobilize citizens in development efforts
- Nine initiatives are being led by Afghan CSOs to support good governance and engage the government

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Economy, allowing I-PACS II to give trainings to CSOs and Ministry officials on compliance with the non-government organization (NGO) law
- Expanded the I-PACS II network from two to seven Intermediary Service Organizations (ISOs) and from seven to 12 provincial Civil Society Support Centers (CSSCs); through these key partners, I-PACS II supports more than 100 local CSOs, half of which are women-run or women-focused
- Set up a civil society task force on UN Security Resolution 1325 to encourage and support CSO engagement in the advocacy of women in Afghanistan's reconciliation and reintegration process