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AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION: *Working Toward Stability and Economic Growth*

"We'll continue to support reconstruction, economic development and investments that will help educate and build the skills of the Afghan people."

—President George W. Bush

Years of civil war, compounded by Taliban rule and drought, have devastated Afghanistan. Virtually all the country's institutions and much of its infrastructure were destroyed. The U.S. is working with the Afghans to build a safe, stable society that meets the needs of its people and eliminates an environment that breeds terrorism.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION NEARLY DOUBLED

Agriculture is a way of life for 80% of Afghanistan's people. Instability, coupled with the region's 4-year drought, devastated the country's farms. U.S. agencies provided assistance to renovate irrigation systems and provide fertilizer and seeds and build roads to markets. As a result, agricultural production has nearly doubled, increasing farmers' incomes.

GIRLS GO BACK TO SCHOOL

In 2002, 97% of the country's girls did not attend school. Eighty percent of existing schools were either severely damaged or destroyed at the end of the Taliban rule.

MORE AFGHANS GET BASIC HEALTH CARE

The health status of Afghans is among the worst in the world. Roughly one in five Afghan children dies before the age of 5, and the number of mothers who die due to pregnancy complications is one of the highest in the world.

- The U.S. provides health services to more than 2 million people, 90% of whom are women and children; and
- The U.S. has assisted in polio vaccinations for 9.9 million children and funded malaria treatment.

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

- Distributed textbooks, school supplies, and training materials;
- Built or refurbished 477 schools;
- Trained 65,000 teachers; and
- Built a women's dormitory at Kabul University.

AFGHAN GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENED

Years of corruption, brutality, and tyranny imposed by the Taliban reduced Afghanistan to political, economic, and social ruin. The U.S. has supported the new democracy by:

- Registering 10 million Afghans to vote in the September 2004 Presidential elections and the September 2005 Parliamentary elections;
- Providing constitutional and legal experts to work with the committees drafting the constitution and new laws; and
- Funding a radio network to connect the central government with the remote provinces to communicate reliably.

ECONOMY STRENGTHENED

For years, Afghanistan's economy was based on illegal drug trading and war. The U.S. is working to enable the Afghans to support their families and rebuild their country by:

- Creating short-term jobs for 3 million people;
- Providing \$7 million in small- to medium-size loans to help Afghans start their own businesses, giving people jobs and incomes; and
- Helping convert the old currency to a new one by training staff, transporting money, and providing counting machines.

All parts of the economy struggle when poor roads prevent the transport of goods or a shortage of clean water affects a community's health.

- The U.S. has rebuilt roads to clinics and markets and reopened the Salang Tunnel, high in the mountains, which has reduced travel time dramatically; and
- The reconstruction of 389 kilometers of the major Kabul-Kandahar highway has revitalized entire villages.