



Media Note
Office of the Spokesman
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Public-Private Partnership for Justice Reform in Afghanistan

We are pleased to announce the formation of a Public-Private Partnership for Justice Reform in Afghanistan. The Secretary of State will launch this new initiative next month in Washington, DC. The Public-Private Partnership will be co-chaired by U.S. Coordinator for Counternarcotics and Justice Reform in Afghanistan Thomas A. Schweich, and Partner, Arent Fox LLP, and former U.S. Alternate Representative to the United Nations Robert C. O'Brien.

This new initiative is an opportunity for America's legal community to support development of the rule of law in Afghanistan. The partnership will allow firms to demonstrate their commitment to improving the justice system in Afghanistan by funding low-cost, high-impact projects promoting women's rights, access to justice, legal aid, professional development, and other important justice-related activities.

In 2001, the Afghan people, with the support of the United States, ousted the Taliban, which had replaced the rule of law with violence and intimidation. Working in conjunction with the Afghan government and other donor countries, we have been actively involved in rebuilding Afghanistan's justice sector. In July 2007, we participated in the Rome Conference on Rule of Law in Afghanistan, pledging \$15 million in new assistance, over and above the \$145 million allocated for justice reform over the last five years. Despite new pledges totaling \$98 million from the international community over a multi-year period at the Rome Conference, a shortfall exists in the justice sector, and the needs of the Afghan justice system are estimated at over \$500 million for the next five years. The State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs will work with the private sector in an effort to alleviate this shortfall.

Electronic Access via Internet

More information about the Public-Private Partnership is available for download from the State Department website at <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/partnership/index.htm>

Press Contacts: Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
Susan Pittman 202-647-2842
Barbara Silberstein 202-736-4144
Office of Press Relations 202-647-2492

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