

# Good News from Afghanistan

# ACBAR

## Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief & Development

JUNE 2015



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### No Weapon Policy in ACBAR

Humanitarian inviolability is the ability of humanitarian relief agencies to act in situations of extreme human need and suffering particularly in circumstances of armed conflict, with the assurance that their personnel, their property, and their activities will not be attacked. It is a concept that is at the core of all humanitarian work, especially during conflict when the cooperation of the belligerent parties is essential to the relief of suffering and privation.

#### **It rests upon two humanitarian pillars:**

neutrality which is the assurance by humanitarian agencies that their efforts are not in military and political support of either side, and impartiality which means such effort is rendered to the non-combatants of each side without distinction and according to need.

According to this, armed guards or the presence of weapons in NGOs' offices, transports and guest houses is not accepted for several major reasons:

- NGOs take no part in the conflict and they are supposed to be no threat to anyone, and therefore not to be a legitimate target.
- The presence of weapons in transport, guesthouses or offices will likely be considered a threat. **And presence of weapons may legitimate the person as a target for hostile people.**
- The presence of weapons is sensitive, because weapons can be misused by anyone that gets them.
- Experience in Afghanistan shows that police / armed people are often a target. Any attack on police may have a spillover effect to surrounding areas and personnel.
- **Per definition, NGOs and any armed governmental organization are not to be affiliated in any way.**
- There are chances that popular support among the population will decrease if the NGOs are looked upon as affiliated with any agency which carries weapons.

According, the Code of Conduct of NGO—any members acting against the CoC will have their membership cancelled.

### What is ACBAR doing for the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS)?

ACBAR, the Agency Coordinating Body of Afghan Relief and Development in collaboration with Islamic Relief INGO conveyed the Afghan National consultations on May 21st 2015 in preparation for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul.

The Afghanistan National Consultation assembled the views, visions, and innovative ideas of varying humanitarian actors within the country. It is a starting point to inform future debates and ensure that the energy, dedication and commitment to a renewed vision of humanitarian action in Afghanistan is recognized during the WHS Central and South Asian Regional Consultation in July 2015, and ultimately the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit 2016.

The founder Islamic Relief and president of Humanitarian Forum, OCHA, MoIn, MoD, MoEco, ANDMA, ARCS, and AIHRC addressed their concerns about humanitarian action in Afghanistan during their speeches. The country is now going through a period of transition; politically, militarily and economically. Humanitarian action must understand and where necessary adapt to these transitions and ensure those affected by conflict or disasters are not left behind.

In 2015, conflict continues to increase in the south, north-east, and northwest of the country, causing more displacement, destruction and civilian casualties. Military operations in North Waziristan Agency Pakistan saw the arrival of more than 250,000 refugees in Afghanistan (with now some 205,000 refugees remaining). Acute malnutrition affects approximately half a million Afghan children today.

In a context of continued conflict, propensity to natural disasters, protracted displacement, and insufficient access to basic needs, the humanitarian community, must be prepared for a sustained humanitarian effort for the coming years.

For example, there should be a more robust water management program to cope with drought and river erosions; there needs to be a primary healthcare system that can effectively reach acutely malnourished children; and there needs to be a more robust disaster risk reduction strategy inclusive of an early warning system. This will ultimately create a more sustainable and dignified life for affected communities. The 58 participants of the National consultation were divided into four parallel working groups.

Group 1 focused on humanitarian effectiveness. In particular they discussed method of improving coordination at a local, national and regional level to strengthen humanitarian effectiveness. The group suggested that robust needs assessments should be conducted to find gaps, identify challenges and provide help to local government to support their communities.

Group 2 discussed reducing vulnerability and managing risk. They discussed better engagement with the humanitarian community and the National Disaster Management Commission in addition to national, provincial and district management committees. This would include, capacity building, analysis, mapping planning and advocacy. Existing financing and funding structures should include disaster risk reduction, management and response. Group 2 also emphasized the importance of using local knowledge in DRR strategies and ensuring broad participation and input from all community members including the most vulnerable, such as women.

Group 3 considered transformation through innovation. They identified the innovators in Afghanistan as private sector, government, NGO, CSO stakeholders, in addition to educational and religious institutions. These are the bodies that the humanitarian community should engage with more to improve humanitarian response with particular regards to speed effectiveness and building resilience.

Group 4 discussed serving the needs of people in conflict. They looked into how the humanitarian community can maintain access to vulnerable communities and better respond to conflict situations.

It is important to ensure that the experiences of those affected by crises are reflected in the WHS.

In addition to the Afghanistan National Consultation, ACBAR organized surveys with people from communities affected by natural disasters and/or conflict induced crises emergencies at a provincial level. The analysis of affected people's inputs will appear in the stakeholder report for the Central and South Asian (CSA) Regional Consultation in the last week of July 2015.

ACBAR is also producing a position paper on Afghanistan's humanitarian situation to take to the CSA Regional Consultation.

The minutes of the Afghanistan National Consultation can be found at: <http://www.acbar.org/files/downloads/WHS%20national%20consultation.pdf>



Afghanistan National Consultation Group Photo

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## Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief & Development

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Activities and achievements from ACBAR Members

### Human Resource Development Agency (HRDA)



Human Resource Development Agency HRDA is professionally overseen conferred Afghan nongovernmental, nonpolitical and not-for-profit advancement arranged association. It was created in 2002 to help Afghans powerless by battling came about because of the Soviet troops withdrawal in right on time 1990's. Prior to this, HRDA was enrolled with DoE in Kandahar however after reestablishment and renewal of enlistment framework, HRDA is now registered with Ministry of Economy with the registration number of 463 in Kabul. Its fundamental zone of work is group advancement including training/limit building, backing and civil public opinion, legitimate help, backing to formal and non-formal instruction, crisis and neediness diminishment through executing salary era and professional ability trainings with participatory methodologies.

Since 2002, HRDA has implemented over 54 projects in areas such as Assessment survey, Management, Water Sanitation, income generating, Child protection, vocational training, Disabled Skill Training, School Renovation, Literacy, IDP profiling, Shelter for IDPs, National Solidarity Program NSP, Roads Afghanistan.

HRDA has personnel widely experienced, dedicated, self-motivated, well educated, and well versed with local areas, their cultures and social norms with strong community relations, including tribal elders, Shuras and government authorities

#### HRDA Vision, Mission & Values

**Vision:** HRDA envisions Afghanistan/World a prosperous, developed and peaceful place free of poverty, violence and social injustices where its entire people have equal rights and access to resources required for a rich and dignified life without discrimination of any kind.

**Mission:** HRDA endeavors through the capacity development, advocacy & awareness campaign and effective humanitarian services delivery to change the life of vulnerable and marginalized groups positively

and forming of just society where all marginalized groups pursue their goals by active participation in social development activities to contribute towards sustainable and infrastructure development.

#### Values:

- Non discrimination
- Loyalty and Team Spirit
- Professionalism
- Ethically and Gender Sensitive
- Transparency and Accountability

#### HRDA CURRENT PROJECTS:

The National Solidarity Program (NSP) was created in 2003 by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development to develop the ability of Afghan communities to identify, plan, manage and monitor their own development projects. Through the promotion of good local governance, the NSP works to empower rural communities to make decision affecting their own lives and livelihoods. Empowered rural communities collectively contribute to increased human security. The program is inclusively supporting all of the communities including the poorest and vulnerable people. NSP strongly promotes a unique development paradigm, whereby communities can make important decisions and participate in all stages of their development, contributing their own representatives to form voluntary Community Development Councils (CDCs) through a transparent and democratic process

But in 2014, HRDA has received amendment of 4 CDCs more for Arghandab district thus, the total number of contracted CDCs reached to **213**.

#### Program Achievements:

Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) for IDP Children:

Starting Date: 15 Oct 2014

Status: Ongoing

Ending Date: 31 Aug 2015 with two years extension



Photo from MRDA project



Photo from MRDA project

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### Handicap International (HI)



Handicap International is an independent and impartial aid organisation working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster. We work alongside people with disabilities and vulnerable populations, taking action and bearing witness in order to respond to their essential needs, improve their living conditions and promote respect for their dignity and fundamental rights. The organization, founded in 1982 and co-recipient of the 1997 Nobel Prize for its work on the Mine Ban Treaty, has programs in 60 countries and acts in emergency and development situations, supporting people with disabilities and working towards the elimination of preventable causes of disability.

Handicap International worked with Afghan refugees in Pakistan since the mid-80s but has been present in Afghanistan since 1996. Currently, Handicap International has offices in Kabul, Kandahar and Herat provinces. Over all, Handicap International in Afghanistan reached more than 40 000 direct beneficiaries in 2014, including 42% of women and 45% people under 18 years old.

All over the world, Handicap International is known for work in physical rehabilitation and this has formed a main pillar of Handicap International's work in Afghanistan. We run a physical rehabilitation centre in Kandahar city since 1996. Most of the patients are from Kandahar, Helmand, Urozgan and Zabul. The PRC free of charge services includes producing, and repairing a variety of lower and upper extremity prostheses (artificial limbs), orthosis (supportive splints and braces), mobility aids (wheelchairs, crutches, walking sticks, etc) and physiotherapy services to the people with temporary and permanent impairments (loss of function due to injury or diseases).

There are male and female separate sections and annually, PRC serves around 6,500 people with disabilities, 1/3 of them are children and more than 20% are survivors of armed conflict. In 2014, Handicap International provided more than 14 000 physiotherapy sessions among these, about 43% were delivered to women.

Free overnight stays provided at its dormitory for up to 33 patients and their accompanying caregivers coming from remote areas and also ensures the provision of free three times meals with the support of Mirwais Hospital.

Due the social stigma and marginalisation faced by people with disabilities, Handicap International works with local communities to raise awareness in order to combat harmful stereotypes and support people with disabilities to develop skills that enable them to earn a living. Handicap International also supports communities to address the threat posed by mines and explosive remnants of war and therefore contributing to reduce deaths and injuries.

At National level, Handicap International works on increasing the realisation of the right for people with disabilities through campaigning for the signature, ratification and implementation of national and international disability laws and frameworks. We also raise awareness with various ministries with the aim to ensure that disability is mainstreamed in the development agenda of Afghanistan and actively participate in various meetings and technical forums to provide technical inputs to policies and strategies ensuring that disability agenda is not forgotten.



Photo from HI project



Photo from HI project