



# The New **Afghanistan**

A TRANSFORMATION IN PROGRESS



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## A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT GHANI

### AFGHANISTAN HAS MADE GREAT PROGRESS

since the Taliban regime was ousted in 2001. Today we are a nascent democracy whose people dream of living in a modern, prosperous, peaceful country.

**Afghanistan is on the move.** When the international coalition brought an end to the Taliban regime in 2001, our country was in an unimaginable state of chaos. The economy had collapsed. Independent media were banned. Children were not being educated and girls were prohibited from going to school entirely. Health statistics were shocking, with maternal mortality rates among the world's very worst.

The process of recovery has been long and difficult, but it has begun. In September 2014 our country completed the first successful democratic transition in its history. By December 2014, our National Unity Government presented a six-point reform agenda that promised to create jobs in a market economy fueled by private sector innovation, improve the quality of governance, bring development services to ordinary Afghans, institute the rule of law, and integrate Afghanistan into a politically stable, economically dynamic regional economy.

We are a little more than one year into that process. It has not been an easy journey but the stories and data in this booklet describe progress. They show that we have planted the seeds of hope for the future. Our children have returned to school. The economy has begun to grow. We are inexorably rooting out corrupt practices and replacing them with fair, transparent transactions that are backed by the force of law, and a dialogue to bring about peace has started.

Afghan democracy is flourishing. We are proud that our media and civil society are both vocal and free. We have rebuilt friendly ties with our neighbors that are advancing trade and bringing stability to a region that has seen very little of either. We are developing deep ties with other nations and leaders that believe that tolerance, freedom, and ending poverty are values to cherish and defend.

Afghanistan is a country with a long and noble history. We have passed through an era of darkness but there is light on the horizon. This booklet can only describe the barest outline of the changes that are underway. My countrymen and I invite you to join us on this journey towards that light, and we encourage you to discover more about our country and our people.

### **Mohammad Ashraf Ghani**

President of the Islamic Republic  
of Afghanistan

# FROM DESTRUCTION TO DEMOCRACY

## A decade of state-building

Today, Afghanistan is a functioning democracy with a thriving civil society and a free media that provides education, health care, and other essential services to its citizens. In 2001, Afghanistan was nearly bankrupt with most infrastructure destroyed. The international community's memories of that era, and media stories that continue to portray Afghanistan as a failing state, overshadow the fact that major progress has been made.

1

### A Fundamental Change in the Role of Women

More women are in government now than at any time in Afghanistan's history. In 2001, women were not allowed to work or leave their home unaccompanied.

**40**  
PERCENT

of Afghans who voted in the 2014 presidential and Provincial Council elections were women



**4** OUT OF **25**

Cabinet ministers are women



#### FIRST LADY **Rula Ghani**

plays an active role in advancing women's economic and health care rights through the Office of the First Lady, a first for Afghanistan.

“ The western media has depicted the Afghan woman as a helpless, weak individual. I have said it before and I shall repeat it: the Afghan woman is strong, the Afghan woman is resourceful, the Afghan woman is resilient. ”

— SPEECH DELIVERED NOVEMBER 2015, ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN CONFERENCE, BERLIN

**22.6%** of Afghans said that women contributed to their families' income in 2015. This is a nearly **10% increase** from 2009.

2

## A Growing National Defense Force

DECEMBER  
**2014**

**SUCCESSFUL SECURITY TRANSITION FROM  
COALITION TO AFGHAN SECURITY FORCES**



Afghan National Security Forces have reached 92% of recruitment targets

—A FORCE OF

**331,944** (INCLUDING CIVILIANS)



3

## Afghan Schools and Universities are Educating Millions of Students

**MORE THAN 9 MILLION STUDENTS**

are enrolled in school, including 3.6 million girls (compared to less than a million boys and no girls during the Taliban era)

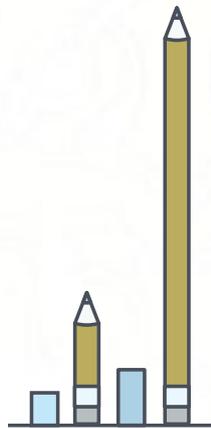


Gross Enrollment Ratio for students in primary school increased from

**21%**  
IN 2000

TO

**106%**  
IN 2013



**135**

public and private universities and higher education institutes across the country, with over 250,000 students enrolled



**4 A Thriving Media and Civil Society**

**BOOMING PRIVATE MEDIA SECTOR**

One of the freest in the region – with hundreds of news agencies, TV stations, radio stations, print, and online media outlets.

DURING THE TALIBAN REGIME, TV WAS BANNED



**ACTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY**

with thousands of registered civil society organizations



**5 Economic Activity Revived**

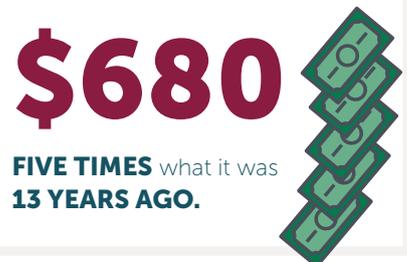
Afghanistan trade volume (export plus import) has expanded **362%**



Total export increased by **515%**



**PER CAPITA GNI IN 2014 WAS**



**2015**



World Trade Organization approves Afghanistan's accession

**GDP REACHED A RECORD HIGH OF**



**IN 2015,** Revenue collection increased drastically by **21%**



prompting a **\$75 MILLION** bonus from the **INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND**



1) Income data according to a survey of the Afghan people, by Asia Foundation. 2) Gross enrollment ratio (GER) is the total enrollment in primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population of official primary education age. GER can exceed 100% due to the inclusion of over-aged and under-aged students, because of early or late school entrance and grade repetition. UNESCO Institute for Statistics – <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.ENRR/countries?page=2>. 3) Economic data provided by the World Bank. 4) Under-five mortality rate is the probability per 1,000 that a newborn baby will die before reaching age five, if subject to age-specific mortality rates of the specified year. Estimates developed by the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UNICEF, WHO, World Bank & UN DESA Population Division). <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.MORT/countries?page=2>. 5) Infant mortality rate is the number of infants dying before they reach one year of age, per 1,000 live births in a given year. Estimates developed by the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UNICEF, WHO, World Bank & UN DESA Population Division). <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.IMRT.IN>

6

## An Infrastructure Built

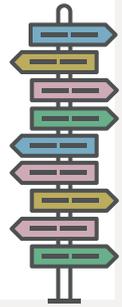
**2001**

The country was almost bankrupt with most systems and infrastructure destroyed and state institutions either non-existent or nonfunctioning.



**THOUSANDS OF KILOMETERS**

of national and regional highways and provincial roads have been built, cutting travel times between population centers by three quarters



**CIVIL AVIATION TOOK OFF WITH MULTIPLE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS.**



**INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SECTOR** is thriving today, and access to electricity has more than doubled.

More than **20 MILLION** or **85%** of Afghans use a cellphone and have access to the internet



7

## Public Health Care Expanded Nationwide

The infant mortality rate reduced from

**95**  
IN 2000

TO

**70**  
IN 2013



(per 1,000 live births)

Life expectancy in Afghanistan has risen from

**55**  
IN 2001

TO

**60**  
IN 2012



**NOW MORE THAN**

**57%**

of Afghans have access to basic health services

**COMPARED TO**

**9%**  
IN 2002

The under-5 mortality rate fell from

**136**  
IN 2000

TO

**97**  
IN 2013



(per 1,000 live births)

'Realizing Self-Reliance' is the National Unity Government's roadmap to reform. It was endorsed by international partners at the London Conference on Afghanistan in December 2014, and again at the Senior Officials meeting in Kabul in September 2015. The strategy identifies key reform areas which the government is focusing on. Here are a few achievements from 2015.

# REALIZING SELF-RELIANCE

Implementing a vision for a brighter future

## I. Improving security and political stability

- An intensive dialogue on bilateral cooperation with Pakistan emphasizes the need to end the undeclared hostilities and begin a peace dialogue.
- Action plan for Women, Peace, and Security launched to dedicate resources to protect women from violence and ensure their equal voice in the peace and political process.
- A landmark moment in the renewed partnership with the U.S. was President Obama's decision to leave U.S. troops in Afghanistan throughout 2016 to train and assist the Afghan security forces.

## II. Tackling corruption

- Aggressive pursuit of the Kabul Bank probe included re-launching the cases and passing a procedure for the recovery of assets. \$440 million has been recovered for the national treasury.
- A National Procurement Agency, overseen by President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah, improves public procurement, which was a major source of corruption. **Over \$132 million has been saved.**
- President Ghani has approved the National Counter Narcotics Plan (2015-2019) to reduce the cultivation, production, and smuggling of drugs.
- Heroin interdictions were up 500% in just the first nine months of 2015.

## III. Building better governance

- President Ghani signed the Access to Information Law, which mandates government agencies to respond to citizen and media requests.
- Dozens of corrupt officials have been dismissed after clear evidence of guilt was presented.

- The Special Election Reform Commission was established and submitted their final set of recommendations.

## IV. Restoring fiscal sustainability

- Domestic revenue rose by 21% and customs revenues increased 17% in 2015.
  - The financial sector is now stable. Afghanistan's private banks have produced reform plans in coordination with the Central Bank, and anti-money laundering legislation has been put into effect.
  - Taxpayer registrations increased by over 25% in 2015.

Domestic revenue rose by 21%, prompting the International Monetary Fund to award a \$75 million bonus.

## V. Reforming development planning and management

- Development priorities have been consolidated through the review and approval of 12 National Priority Programs (NPPs), which guide the development agenda across sectors.
- Ministries have transformed the way they function by adhering to hundred-day action plans, allowing for effective management of important tasks.

## VI. Bolstering private sector confidence, promoting growth, and creating jobs

- **President Ghani launched the Jobs for Peace program in 2015, which supports 100,000 families.**
- The Afghanistan Airfield Economic Development Commission was established and signed a memorandum of understanding with Chord Group to convert military bases to Special Economic Zones.
- The government completed new power distribution systems that provide electricity to 43,700 poor households.



President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah during their March 2015 trip to the USA

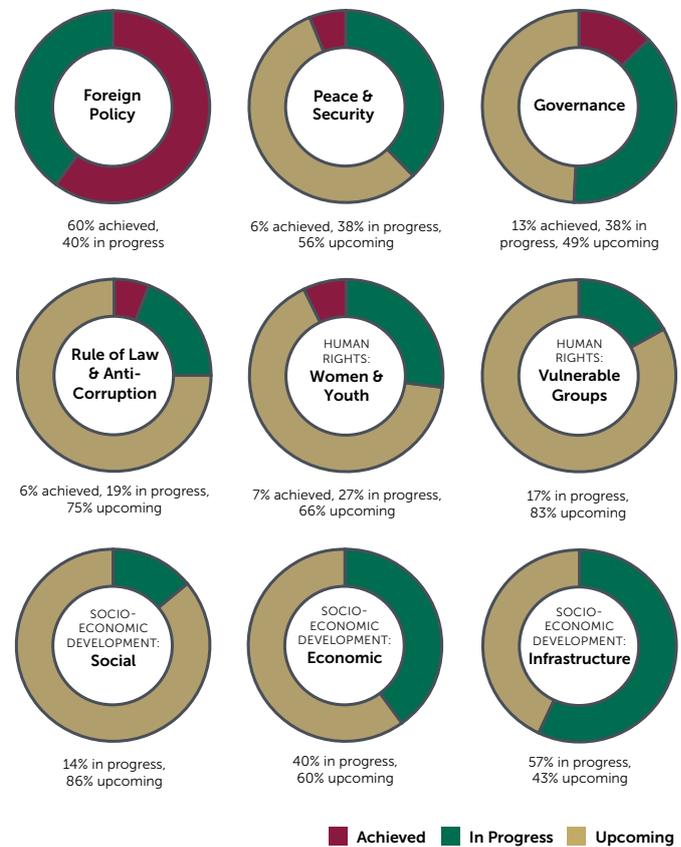
## REFORM TRACKER

### VII. Ensuring citizens' development rights and a fairer system of justice

- President Ghani ordered the review of cases of women detained on accusation of so-called moral crimes. Of 402 women detained, 255 have already been released.
- The Ministry of Interior is halfway towards its goal of **recruiting 5,000 female police officers** to increase access to justice and security for female citizens.
- The National Priority Program for the Economic Empowerment of Women is being prepared and will provide economic opportunities to rural women.

### VIII. Establishing development partnerships

- **Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India inaugurated the \$10 billion TAPI gas pipeline** project in December 2015, which promotes trade and economic ties in the region.
- The four-country CASA 1000 energy transmission project is signed after a decade of delay, and will enable a transfer of up to 1,300 MW of power to Pakistan, with 300 MW going to Afghanistan.
- Afghan India Friendship Dam, inaugurated in July 2015, adds 42 MW of capacity for Herat and provides electricity to districts along the route, enabling development of the agricultural and marble industries.



CREDIT: TOLO NEWS

## A YEAR OF TRANSITIONS

### Achieved



1. First peaceful democratic transition of power in the history of Afghanistan

2. Creation of the National Unity Government, unprecedented in Afghanistan's history

3. Afghan National Security Forces assumed full responsibility of defense of the nation from coalition forces

4. One year anniversary of National Unity Government

### Ongoing

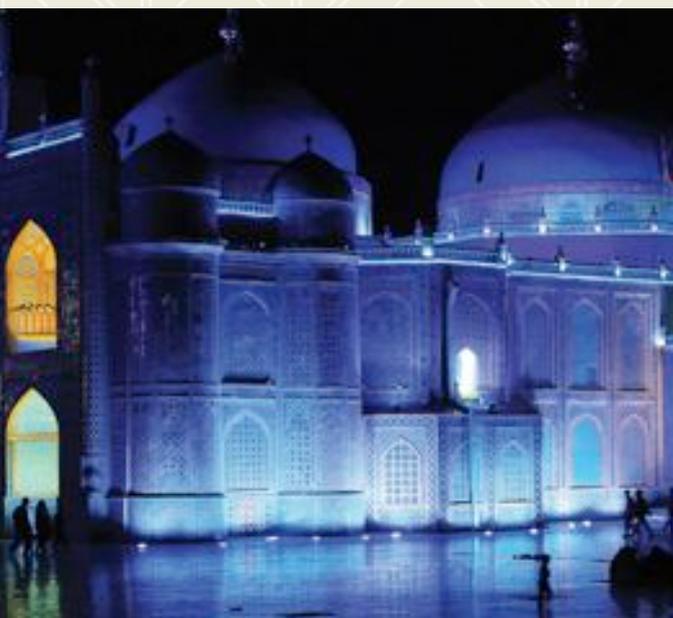


5. Expanding friendly and strategic ties with countries in the region

6. Transitioning the economy toward self-reliance

7. Pursuing peace and reconciliation





## Progress in Pictures

SNAPSHOTS FROM A COUNTRY IN TRANSITION

*Clockwise from top right:* 1. Students at the American University of Afghanistan 2. Young Afghan girls 3. The Blue Mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif 4. Watermelon harvest 5. A busy urban marketplace 6. Jeweler at the Turquoise Mountain Institute 7. Handmade pottery in the village of Istalif 8. Wool yarn production 9. Bamiyan province



PHOTO CREDITS: 1. AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF AFGHANISTAN, 2 -5. NAJIBULLAH MUSAFER, 6. TURQUOISE MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE, 7. CORBIS IMAGES, 8. RADA AKBAR, 9. FAIQA SULTANI

# The Third **PILLAR**

Strengthening Afghanistan's economy

*"We have inherited perhaps  
the most difficult economic  
situation on earth."*

– President Ghani, December 2015



## INFRASTRUCTURE



**The Afghan-India Friendship Dam,** funded by India and located in Herat, was inaugurated in July 2015 and will produce 42 MW of electricity and water to 75,000 hectares of farmland – bolstering agricultural production in the area and allowing the Herat industrial park to be self-sufficient for electricity.

After successful political and security transitions, Afghanistan faces the complex challenge of transitioning the economy. **Afghanistan's National Unity Government is making real progress on its comprehensive economic reform plan** to build a sustainable economy through trade, an empowered public sector, and public investments that promote market-driven growth. But it is doing so during a severe economic downturn triggered by the end of the NATO ISAF mission's massive military spending.

## STEPS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Bolstering private sector confidence

- Afghanistan's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2015
- Systemically rooting out corruption
- Increasing energy supplies and reliability (300MW by 2016)
- Simplifying land access and titling
- Stabilizing financial sector and access to finance
- Simplifying registration for private businesses

### Increasing women's access to the labor force

- Implementation of the National Priority Program for Women's Empowerment to increase economic opportunities to rural women

### Investing in agriculture

- Ceasing food imports within four years
- Creating a minimum of 2 million jobs in agriculture through investment in power-generating infrastructure

### Creating infrastructure for development

- Building 17 small dams across the country. One dam alone will increase the irrigated land in a province by 80,000 hectares
- In November 2015, new power distribution systems that provide electricity to 43,700 poor households were completed

President Ghani launched **JOBS FOR PEACE** in 2015, a jobs-focused stimulus program lasting 24 to 30 months to bridge the gap between the drawdown of U.S. and coalition forces and the beginning of the recovery expected from the government's comprehensive economic reform plan. In its first phase, the program covers 12 provinces and provides months of food security for nearly 100,000 families. The program will cover all 34 provinces of Afghanistan by mid-2016.



## PRIVATE SECTOR SUCCESSES

**Large companies, medium-sized enterprises, and small businesses have been profitably and safely operating in Afghanistan for years.**

- *Coca Cola*, which has both manufacturing and distribution facilities in Afghanistan. *Pepsi* is trying to catch up with its competitor by building a logistical network.
- Entrepreneurs like *Zabi Ullah*, who opened Afghanistan's first 24-hour, counterfeit-free chain of pharmacies, allowing customers to check the authenticity of medicines via text message.
- Mid-sized business like *Nangarhar Aluminum Factory*, which recycles aluminum waste into cooking pots, sinks, and dishes.
- Sectors such as the telecom sector, which continues to grow with 90% coverage throughout the country.
- *Zaranj Motorcycles*, operating out of Nimroz province, the largest motorcycle assembly line in Afghanistan, producing at least 16 types of 2- and 3-wheeler passenger and commercial transport cycles.

# THE 6 BUILDING BLOCKS OF peace



## **1 Creating a regional consensus on peace and stability**

Problems like terrorism, illegal drugs, and human trafficking are global issues that threaten all nations. Criminal networks do not respect boundaries, so nations must join together in partnerships to destroy them. Afghanistan is working with Pakistan and other neighbors to create a regional commitment to peace and stability, and build avenues to address these challenges. Peace will not be sustainable unless Afghanistan's neighbors accept the principle of a stable, prosperous Afghanistan and create legitimate channels to address their legitimate interests. An economic framework will help to foster cooperation.



## **2 Reconciling with insurgent factions who have legitimate grievances**

The government will pursue talks with insurgent factions in Afghanistan who have legitimate grievances and are willing to accept reconciliation, but it will not compromise on the principles enshrined in the Afghan constitution, especially progress on women's and human rights.



## **3 Maintaining political stability**

The peace and reconciliation process will only succeed if it maintains the existing political balance. The logistics of reconciliation will be carefully and strategically considered to ensure that this balance remains intact even as a new national order takes shape. The National Unity Government represents the interests of all Afghan citizens and protects everyone's rights – this is the foundation of an enduring peace.

THE PATH THAT LEADS TO PEACE AND RECONCILIATION is neither short nor straightforward. There are necessary steps that are being taken to ensure that the journey ends in success. The National Unity Government's strategy to bring peace to Afghanistan involves simultaneous efforts in support of each building block of peace, so that the end result is sustainable, upholds the Afghan constitution, maintains political stability, protects advances in women's and human rights, and is based on regional cooperation.



#### 4 Implementing the strategic reform agenda

Criminal and insurgent networks thrive when state systems are weak and corrupt. Implementing sweeping reforms across government will starve these networks of the funds they need to survive, because corruption will be dramatically reduced and transparency will be greatly increased. Reforms that strengthen state systems will diminish the grievances that drive people to take up arms, and improve delivery of basic services to Afghan citizens.

#### 5 Ensuring strong defense of citizens and the nation

While our citizens and officials are being attacked, Afghanistan must ensure that its army, police and intelligence services are able to defend the people and its core national interests, and deter further threats. Investing in Afghan men and women in uniform and giving them the support and confidence they need to defend the nation is at the core of efforts to advance peace and stability.

#### 6 Creating economic opportunities

Making citizens stakeholders through job creation and economic investment will provide opportunities to citizens and cut into efforts by Daesh and other terror groups to recruit Afghans into their ranks.

## SECURING THE NATION



**Over 330,000 Afghans, including more than 3,000 women, are part of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF),** which includes the Afghanistan National Armed Forces, the Afghanistan National Police, Afghan Border Police, and members of the National Directorate of Security. In December 2014, the ANSF successfully took full responsibility for security of the country, as coalition and U.S. forces assumed a train, advise and assist role.

# The Way Forward

## OVERCOMING OUR CHALLENGES

Afghanistan is on a path to stability and self-reliance, but the journey is not without challenges. The government inherited a list of problems that flourished unchecked for 40 years, and upon taking office immediately began working on solutions. Afghanistan will not be able to realize its potential as a modern, stable nation until destructive forces like illegal narcotics, enemy insurgents, and endemic corruption are vanquished, and democratic principles like equal rights for women are fully respected and embraced. **Facing down enemy threats will require the continued critical support of international allies, whose own national security is also threatened by terror networks and the illegal drug trade.**

### SECURITY

The Afghan National Security Forces have exceeded expectations since assuming primary responsibility for the country's defense. But Afghanistan is being simultaneously preyed upon by two different groups that also threaten the region and world. The Taliban aims to destabilize and divide the country, and the emergence of Daesh has made the need for a united international military response more urgent than ever. **The National Unity Government is committed to pursuing sustainable peace and has moved decisively toward that goal;** in July 2015, it authorized the first direct talks with the Taliban, and it has launched an intensive dialogue on bilateral cooperation with Pakistan. Afghanistan's long-term partnership with the United States and continued support from NATO are critical pillars of the government's strategy for bringing peace to its people.

### ILLEGAL NARCOTICS

The drug trade fuels Afghanistan's corruption problem and funds violence and instability by providing warlords and insurgents with at least \$100 million annually. Tragically, nearly three million Afghans are now drug addicted.

President Obama said in 2014 that Afghanistan "requires continued international support" to eradicate the powerful forces behind the drug trade. The National Unity Government's strategy targets the production base as well as the handling and refining of narcotics.

Enforcement programs are being implemented in conjunction with programs that provide licit alternatives for rural livelihoods. President Ghani has approved a four-year National Counternarcotics Plan aimed at reducing poppy cultivation, opium production, and drug smuggling, and **in just the first nine months of 2015, the number of heroin interdictions by law enforcement was up 500%.**

"We're with you. We stand by you. And we must continue to work hard together to do what we said we would do – give a bright future to the Afghan people and a strong security partner to America."

– ASHTON CARTER  
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
DURING HIS TRIP TO AFGHANISTAN,  
DECEMBER 2015

### WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women have made great gains in Afghanistan over the last decade but much more needs to change. Domestic abuse, forced marriage, and a lack of access to justice are all still pervasive problems. The National Unity Government has made women's rights a priority. President Ghani – who declared, **"As long as I am president, women's rights will be protected"** – ordered the review of every case of a woman jailed on accusation of moral crimes, appointed two women as provincial governors, counted four women among the ministers in his cabinet and



Afghan National Army soldiers; Opium eradication poster



nominated a woman for the Afghan Supreme Court. The government is implementing a groundbreaking National Priority Program for Women's Economic Empowerment to provide economic opportunities for rural women.

### CORRUPTION

Endemic corruption increases the cost of development and service delivery, affects revenue collection, and damages credibility and legitimacy of the government in the eyes of its people and partners. The main drivers of corruption in Afghanistan have been collusive procurement practices, weak rule of law and abuse of the legal system, and arbitrary regulations that build-in incentives to pay bribes. **The government's strategy is to strengthen enforcement and reduce opportunities for corruption**, which includes reforming procurement procedures, sacking corrupt officials, canceling tainted contracts, and replacing opaque government systems with ones that are transparent and accountable.

بعد از هر تاریکی، روشنی است.  
 Ba'd az har tariki, roshanai ast  
 After every darkness there is light  
 – AFGHAN DARI PROVERB

## What to expect in 2016

- Steady increase in gross domestic product and government revenue collection as a result of anti-corruption measures and regional economic cooperation
- Decrease in unemployment level
- Majority of the government's 12 National Priority Programs will be launched
- Regional economic and trade cooperation will turn into bricks and mortar construction, i.e. the TAPI pipeline and CASA 1000 energy project
- Farmers' income, both male and female, will increase as irrigation infrastructure is completed to allow access to water, and high-yield seeds are distributed
- Community Development Council elections will be completed and the Citizen's Charter program will be launched, bolstering rural development across the country
- Construction will start on the new women's-only public university in Kabul

## WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT



**Farkhunda Zahra Naderi is one of Afghanistan's youngest parliamentarians.** She was elected in 2010 to represent Kabul province, and is a strong proponent for women's rights, notably her efforts for the inclusion of a female on the Afghan Supreme Court. She is the recipient of the 2012 UNDP N-Peace Award.

# In the Spotlight

## PROFILES

### ART AS ACTIVISM



**ArtLords is a youth movement that uses public art to counter corruption** and spread a message of peace. The Pacifying Walls campaign saw the movement transform concrete security walls around Kabul city into beautiful murals depicting a powerful message of peace, love, and unity. In 2014, ArtLords held its first international exhibition in Berlin.

### BUILDING AN INDUSTRY



**Afghanistan is a global leader in carpet production, its second largest employment sector.** Over one

million Afghans work in the production of carpets, with millions more working in wool

production, cutting, washing, and design. Afghan rugs regularly win international accolades at the Carpet Design Awards held every year in Hamburg, Germany.



### WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE



**The National Solidarity Program** is the Afghan government's rural development and local governance program that has reached 85% of rural communities. Community Development Councils established in each village elect and manage development projects that improve their communities and quality of life. Women play a key decision-making role in these local councils – 34% of council members across the country are currently women, with the number increasing each year.

### WOMEN IN SECURITY



2nd Lieutenant Niloofar Rahmani is the first female pilot to be trained in the Afghan Air Force in more than 30 years. She earned her wings in 2013, and was awarded the International Women of Courage Award by the U.S. Department of State.

***"I believe actions talk louder than words. Being a man or a woman doesn't matter – we only need to have self-confidence and trust in ourselves that we are equal."*** – Niloofar Rahmani

## UNITY THROUGH MUSIC



**“Music is the greatest communicator. It flies beyond boundaries and brings about tangible changes to people’s mindset!” – Farhad Darya**

Award-winning singer, composer, activist, and philanthropist Farhad Darya has been celebrated as Afghanistan’s most famous voice across the world. During his national Life is Beautiful campaign, he performed in Helmand, the stronghold of the Taliban, for over 40,000 people and encouraged millions by declaring, “War and violence are not the only alternatives for Afghans!”

## AGRICULTURAL GEMS

**The world’s finest saffron is cultivated in Afghanistan** in several provinces, a total area of around 250 hectares involving about 1,300 farmers. Due to country-wide investment in the sector, 14 private Afghan companies are now engaged in processing and marketing saffron and the interest in buying Afghan saffron abroad is increasing, particularly the U.S., the UAE, and Europe. Afghanistan produces 4 tons of saffron every year.

## VIBRANT MEDIA



**Afghanistan has one of the freest media in the region.** The private media sector in Afghanistan exploded after the fall of the

Taliban in 2001, and today thousands of media outlets inform and entertain the Afghan public. One of the leading Afghan media companies, Moby, is headquartered in Kabul and exports media services to the region, including the UAE and Middle East. In 2014, the government deployed its first satellite in partnership with Paris-based Eutelsat to help enable broadcasters to reach all corners of the country.

## EDUCATING THE FUTURE



**There are now more than 135 public and private institutions of higher learning in Afghanistan,** including in most of the provincial capitals. Over a quarter-million students are enrolled in classes. The American University of Afghanistan is a private, nonprofit, independent university currently

preparing more than 2,000 Afghans from all over the country to be future leaders. U.S. Ambassador Michael McKinley has called the university one of America’s greatest legacies in Afghanistan.

*Photos throughout this booklet have been generously contributed by Afghan photographers and organizations. A very special thanks to Sulaiman Edrissy, Rada Akbar, Faiqa Sultani, Najibullah Musafer, Omar Ehrari, the Free Women Writers, the American University of Afghanistan, Friends of the American University of Afghanistan, the Turquoise Mountain Institute, the French Medical Institute for Children, ArtLords, the Afghanistan National Institute of Music, and calligraphers Samira Kitman and Saleh Amini. For more information about the photographers or the photos, please contact the Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington, DC at [press@embassyofafghanistan.org](mailto:press@embassyofafghanistan.org)*

## INVESTING IN HEALTH



**Public health services now reach over 55% of the population** and investment in the health sector means quality and diversity of services has greatly improved. The maternal and infant mortality rates have dropped while life expectancy has risen drastically. The French Medical Institute for Children is an innovative public-private partnership between the Afghan government, the French government, La Chaîne de L’Espoir, and the Aga Khan Development Network. In August 2015, years of investment in Afghan health care professionals were evident in the hospital’s successful separation of conjoined twins from Badakhshan province.



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