

# Afghanistan



UN-HABITAT

Afghanistan

## Empowering People to Overcome Poverty and Building Peace in the Communities



### Building Community Solidarity

UN-HABITAT has a long history of working in Afghanistan. For the past 16 years UN-HABITAT has been involved in wide-ranging initiatives, the natures of which have undergone considerable changes with the emergence of a legitimate government in 2002. In the past during the time when the country was virtually under anarchy UN-HABITAT worked directly with communities in meeting their essential basic needs - shelter, services, employment, and social inclusion. Therefore while the outputs of the initiatives that UN-HABITAT pursued during that period was always "physical", the underlying outcomes were social cohesion, empowerment, emergence of community institutions, and widening of the opportunity to engage in socially meaningful and economically productive activities. Women and youth assumed important positions in the UN-HABITAT activities in the country right from the very beginning. With the legitimate government in place, the scope of engagement has diversified, so have the actors with the ability and resources to take up widening urban/development agenda.

More recently, UN-HABITAT has been assisting the Government of Afghanistan through an expanding number of self-standing projects, both urban and rural, but with a common theme of community empowerment. A core element of its recent strategy has been to shift its support to the Government, both in terms of technical assistance and in terms of addressing key policy and normative issues. Within the government, working with municipal governments assumes a strategic importance in UN-HABITAT country strategy.



### Supporting to Increase Security

The security situation in Afghanistan has been deteriorating over the last year especially in the South and South West. Our assessment is that this is an outcome of marginalization of villagers as a result of state sponsored development not reaching them. These remote parts have become fertile grounds for recruitment of anti-government elements. It does not take much convincing for a person living without any hope for the future to become a suicide bomber. Very interestingly we have found that in the villages that we have been implementing NSP, people have resisted anti-government elements. This demonstrates that empowerment and community level governance coupled with Government's development assistance is the strongest deterrent to intrusion of anti-government elements.



- Working with the government at different tiers
- Emphasis on capacity building for Governance
- Community empowerment for poverty reduction peace building
- Support to policy analysis in promoting pro-poor policy

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