

## Press release

The Paris conference of June 12th 2008 is a chance to review aid policies in Afghanistan; if the international community wants to succeed in Afghanistan more of the same aid is not an option. Integrity Watch Afghanistan's new report **"Afghanistan: bringing accountability back in, from subjects of aid to citizens of the state"** argues that the international community must significantly improve its aid policies. The report is based on interviews of major aid actors and a survey of 1000 Afghans across 18 provinces which sets out how to bring integrity back in to the reconstruction and meet the expectations of the Afghan population.

The report highlights why it is necessary to address the poor levels of accountability towards ordinary Afghans by both the Afghan government and the international community. **"Afghans are still hopeful that aid can be effective but they resolutely denounce the high levels of corruption and uneven distribution of aid, integrity must become a cornerstone of the Paris conference if the international community is to succeed in the reconstruction of Afghanistan,"** said Lorenzo Delesgues today.

### The report shows that:

- 64% of respondents considered that there is corruption in aid;
- In May 2008 after President Karzai signed the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, less than 33% of respondents knew about its existence.
- 92% of our respondents recommended that the international community should spend aid through the government and 79% agreed that conditionality could be used by donors when giving money to the Afghan government.
- Only 12% of our survey respondents believe that aid is equally distributed across provinces
- A very large majority (81%) of respondents believed that less than 40% of aid given to Afghanistan really reaches the Afghan population
- A few big donors dominate aid to Afghanistan and there is a almost total absence of Muslim donors

### IWA's concerns:

1. Afghanistan is becoming increasingly dependent on aid rent. However despite high levels of aid pledged, aid remains highly unpredictable and too much aid is channelled outside of government's priorities and of the core government budget
2. The consultation of the population and its role in holding aid institutions and the Afghan government to account for their actions remain completely underdeveloped. The Afghan population has not yet become an actor of aid it is still a subject of aid.
3. The monitoring tools used by the international community to monitor aid, such as Compact/Joint Coordination Monitoring Body (JCMB) or the OECD, are mostly donor-government driven.
4. The semi-parallel system of aid delivered through PRTs, conflicting technical assistance programmes and private security companies should be better integrated in to existing structures of the Afghan state or replaced by other local resources.
5. Not enough investments are being made in higher education in order to train the next generation of Afghan specialists so that expensive technical assistance by expatriates can be phased out. After 7 years of reconstruction, Afghanistan is still extremely dependent on external TA.
6. Natural resource governance, particularly mining and gas, which is the only realistic foundation for the future development of Afghanistan, needs to be given higher priority before more large contracts are signed.

### IWA's recommendations for a better aid:

- Today the Compact is limited to a donor-government agreement with the Afghan government. It is necessary to have a greater engagement of ordinary Afghans. For this a double compact between the donor, the government and the final beneficiaries is necessary so that aid becomes accountable to the Afghan people;
- Include locally driven monitoring tools to measure the efficiency of aid as seen by the population;
- NGOs should systematically communicate the amount of aid spent in reconstruction projects following the example of the Afghan government to the general public;
- To ensure public access to information stronger legislation is required and greater involvement by Parliament and Provincial Councils in discussing aid policies.;
- Greater investment in higher education is the only exit strategy for expensive externally driven technical assistance.
- Natural resource management should be one of the main priorities of donors' assistance to Afghanistan.

### About the project

This study was conducted in April and May 2008. It relies on in-depth interviews with reconstruction broad range of actors including donors, military forces and implementers and a survey of 1000 people across 18 provinces in May 2008. It is part of Integrity Watch Afghanistan's effort to bring greater integrity to the aid sector in Afghanistan.

The Norwegian Embassy in Afghanistan has financially supported this study.

### About IWA

IWA's mission is to "increase transparency, integrity and accountability in Afghanistan's reconstruction process". IWA considers that high integrity standards must be applied in the aid sector to increase its benefits and to ensure a sustainable development of Afghanistan. To achieve this goal, IWA provides policy-oriented research and develops monitoring tools for the reconstruction actors and the public at large.

For more details and information about IWA, please see our Internet site at [www.iwaweb.org](http://www.iwaweb.org)

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