

For a Trialogue, Monologue of the excluded Population of Kabul City

INTRODUCTION

The city of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan its history goes back up in approximately five thousand years.

Its ancient inhabitants called this city Kubha and lived on the sides of mountains by leaving the lands of the plain to cultivate there. In the last century under the influence of the strong migration and more recently by the disaster of the war, the inhabitants due to the lack of available grounds and for reason of security, built more and more towards the heights at such a level, where the access of houses is made only by tortuous paths and these houses lack infrastructure elementary and public facilities .

This study has a double interest to be presented to the Congress of Antwerp:
- Monologue of an excluded population which asks to be a part of the city by having a land legal status and to receive a minimum of infrastructures and facilities.

- While in the cities of the developed countries, the town planners and the authorities try to make the population participate during the planning and especially during the implementation, the population of excluded from Kabul, on the contrary wishes and demand strongly the assistance of the town planners and the authorities to resolve them problems and to succour them .

In front of the scale of this urban problem, the Afghan authorities remain dumb and inactive, can be by the execution too expensive and social problems which could engendered this operation. However there are solutions. It is the object of this study which furthermore must be discussed during the world Congress of ISOCARP .

In the stemming from this congress of Antwerp, this study can bring a solution in districts of the outcasts of Kabul, but also will allow to find solutions of thousands of similar districts worldwide which are in the same conditions .

A summary of solution consists in taking following measures:

- The exact identification of the zone of study as experimental project ,
- the establishment of a topographic plan and a inventory of houses by a socio-economic study
- The elaboration of a plan of rehabilitation which includes two main objectives:
 - Creation of a main road and some secondary roads including the networks of water, sewerage and electricity.
 - Elaboration of Title for land which would allow the municipality to receive some land resources and to give to the inhabitants the right and the possibility of resorting to a banking credit in aim to improve their dwelling

Upgrading activities in Afghanistan, a pilot project for Kabul city

This presentation will focus on the following.

- A brief background of needs for upgrading of urban areas in Afghanistan. .1
- EC3 project by UN-Habitat-Case study. .2
- KURP Project and its components. .3

I. BACKGROUND AND STRATEGY

A. The Conflict, the Transition, and the Emergency

1. Afghanistan is one of the poorest and longest suffering countries among members of the World Bank, ravaged by chronic conflict and political instability. An estimated 4 to 7 million people remain vulnerable to hunger with a large number dependent on inflows of food and humanitarian aid. Afghanistan's infrastructure has been destroyed or degraded; its human resource base severely depleted; and its social capital eroded. Despite resilient public administration structures, the majority of state institutions are unable to function effectively, and the economy and society have become fragmented.

2. The aftermath of September 11, 2001 precipitated major changes in the political and military situation in Afghanistan. The collapse of the Taliban regime was followed by the establishment of the *Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan* on December 5, 2001, in Bonn, Germany. The Bonn Agreement led to an understanding on a new structure of government and a process that will lead to the election of a fully representative government within a period of about 30 months.

3. The Afghanistan Interim Administration (AIA) took over central administration on December 22, 2001. An Emergency Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) took place in June 2002 during which a transitional administration was selected, paving the way for a new constitution and an elected, fully representative government within 2 years. The Constitutional Loya Jirga created the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (IRA) in December 2003. The IRA has the power to promulgate, repeal, and amend laws and regulations by decree.

4. Despite being hampered by limited capacity and a difficult security situation in many parts of the country, the IRA has improved the quality of governance and decision-making both at the center and in the provinces. It has gained widespread international recognition. The IRA has put forward a compelling vision and strategy for national reconstruction embodied in its National Development Framework (NDF, April 2002).

5. IRA is currently coping with a range of challenges in the urban sector, the most salient being rapid urban growth owing to high natural population increase and influx of returning refugees and displaced people. The country's total population of 22 million is growing at an overall growth rate of close to 2.8 per cent per year. Urban growth is probably double this figure, causing the urbanization rate to increase beyond its current level of 23 per cent. Associated shortages of services abound. The urban challenge is all the more daunting as a result of pressing land and housing needs caused by a combination of years of turmoil, a deteriorated housing stock, and a rigid master planning system.

6. IRA's strategy for responding to the challenge is embodied in the National Development Framework (NDF). Urban Management represents one of the Twelve National Programs included in the current budget process. The goal of the Urban Management Program is 'to invest in a balanced urban development program across the country to create viable cities that are hubs of economic activity, and organically linked to rural areas. The Program also seeks to 'develop urban areas in a balanced manner through housing and infrastructure investments, thereby reducing overcrowding, improving access to basic services and generating employment and economic growth'. (Afghanistan, *Rebuilding Our Nation*. March 2003).

B. Urban Sector Issues

7. The major issues facing IRA in the urban sector include urban population displacement, deficiencies in services, lack of urban land and housing, and weak urban management as outlined below.

8. *Urban Population Displacement.* Two decades of civil strife, and political conflicts have resulted in the displacement of the population both inside and outside of the country, creating new socio-economic and cultural problems. The continued movement of Internally Displaced People (IDP) and returnees from neighboring countries has intensified¹ since the creation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Repeated urban displacement of the rural population, as well as the recent influx of refugees and IDPs (the overwhelming majority of which were originally from rural areas) to cities like Kabul, Kandahar, and Mazar, is causing considerable change to the social fabric of many cities. Deficiencies in urban service provision have not only contributed to these social costs but have limited economic growth.

9. The choice of Afghan refugees to return to the cities of their country is frequently linked to the benefits and interests of urban life, particularly urban services such as water, electricity, hospitals and schools which make a material and social difference to life. There is also a greater sense of security from violence and exploitation as well as more job opportunities in urban areas. These factors have a great influence in attracting women, especially those who have already been exposed to better conditions of life and urban opportunities elsewhere. The IDP and returnee widows are the most vulnerable social group in the country and their successful integration into urban society will be a challenge for post-conflict Afghanistan.

10. *Deficiencies in Urban Services.* More than two decades of war have not only devastated Afghanistan's infrastructure but have also deprived the country of new investment that will have raised services above prewar levels. As a result, most Afghans have little or no access to conventional urban services and must either go without or rely on costly alternatives. Health costs are among the most serious, resulting from unsafe water and sanitation and indoor air pollution from burning traditional biomass fuels. Poor health, social instability and a reduced ability to seek work owing to the need to manage basic household requirements for water and fuel are the most serious results of service delivery deficiencies. Diarrhea is a major cause of infant and child mortality and is estimated to account for 27% of deaths in children between birth and 1 year and 12% of deaths of children aged 1-5. Indoor air pollution, through the use of traditional *sandalees*, affects about 82% of vulnerable households, too poor to afford other forms of heat. Finally, poor living conditions promote social instability.

11. Other elements of urban infrastructure are also severely damaged or destroyed. About 40% of urban streets are damaged and 50% of drains are broken or do not function. Solid waste collection is limited to about half of all households and there are no properly managed sanitary waste disposal sites in operation. Limited emergency efforts are on-going to address these deficiencies. In Kabul 5,000 household connections for water supply have been provided and piped water supply capacity has been doubled since June 2002. However, the programs require scaling up within an agreed policy framework, including the use of the private sector.

12. *Urban Land and Housing.* One of the fundamental issues contributing to the current urban crisis in Afghanistan is the poor performance of land markets. Impediments to a well functioning land market discourage quick development and transactions of land (efficiency), deny reasonable access to all income groups (equity), militate against sustainable use

¹ In Kabul alone IDPs and returnees number more than 1,200,000 (UNHCR, May 2004)

(environmental quality), and compromise the proper interaction of rules governing land markets with other laws and regulations governing land, such as planning and taxation (compatibility). The functioning of land markets and the value of property rights depend on formal mechanisms for defining and enforcing those rights, including the court system, police, the legal profession, land surveys, record keeping systems, and titling agencies, as well as social norms and religious customs.

13. The prolonged war has brought several impediments to the smooth functioning of both formal and informal land markets. The fact that the land administration system was in a state of abeyance for more than 20 years means that most transactions went unrecorded in this period, and even when they were recorded, there was no clear title consanguinity. In addition, many landowners left their land unattended only to find on return that in their absence it had been sold many times over, and is now occupied by someone else. In some cases, land that was left under the custody of relatives or the Government is no longer available to the original owner because another family has built a house on it. The safe haven that Kabul provided during the conflict also meant that many IDPs built improvised houses on public or State land outside the limits of the Master Plan. These houses have grown into informal settlements that reportedly constitute over half of the housing stock. The dispersion to peripheral mountainous areas, where land was more readily available and affordable, was also a direct outcome of the rigid land use patterns, inflexible development regulations and dysfunctional land and housing markets. The designation of these settlements as unauthorized developments in contravention of the land-use dictates of the master plan has contributed to the limited service coverage in these neighborhoods, despite the fact that many residents actually pay local charges and fees.

14. *Urban Management.* Towns and cities continue to function within the limited mandate accorded to district municipalities under the 1964 Constitution. Centralized administrative and fiscal mechanisms which had been standardized before the war have continued in use throughout the country, albeit without an on-going relationship with Kabul. The introduction of reforms devolving aspects of service provision to the local level must be made within the context of the existing culture within the bureaucracy, which has long favored the support for traditional central systems. Despite this, municipalities lack the resources and skills to manage the urban environment at the level required to achieve large-scale urban reconstruction and to position towns and cities as renewed engines of economic activity.

C. Government Response and Strategy

15. Afghanistan's urban vision is for well functioning cities with inclusive, efficient, and self-sustaining management systems, operated by municipalities in close collaboration with residents. Municipalities will be the principal actors for reconstruction of the urban environment. To the extent possible, urban services will be expanded into new and informal areas by integrating, formal service delivery with community interventions, ensuring that all citizens can engage effectively in city governance. Investments in private facilities, such as houses, will be the responsibility of families and communities, while public infrastructure (urban roads, sanitation, public parks, etc.) will be the responsibility of municipalities and carried out through local contractors or labor based contracts. Flexible urban planning to facilitate appropriate development of housing and municipal services is a priority need. Ultimately urban reconstruction and development activities will need to take place in the context of strengthened capacity and greater financial autonomy at the municipal level.

16. The delivery of urban water supply presents particular challenges and opportunities. The nodal agency, the Central Authority for Water Supply and Sewerage (CAWSS), lacks resources to move back into its role as a central implementer of investments. Experience

from other countries suggests that a more effective institutional model will be for decentralized service delivery with an increased role for the private sector (building initially from the existing base of small-scale contractors, NGOs and UN agencies). Municipalities are likely to play a key role in ensuring service delivery at the city level. The central government will then move into a more facilitating role, developing appropriate policy and regulatory instruments and overseeing the delivery of sustainable water supply and sanitation within an agreed framework of technical, social and environmental standards.

17. IRA, through the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH), has proposed an ambitious Urban Management Program² (under Pillar II of the National Development Framework: Physical Reconstruction and Natural Resources) for the period ending March 20, 2004. The proposed Government program includes the following expected results:

- a. *Planning and Management:* Strengthened capacity of MUDH; identification and removal of barriers to reconstruction (including resolution of property disputes); strategic urban plans for Kabul and other towns; and detailed local plans for selected areas.
- b. *Housing:* Housing interventions include serviced land for self-help housing project(s), scaled up grants program for reconstruction and upgrading, introduction of a land management policy framework that increases supply of land, promotes transparency in land allocation, and moves towards bringing State and private market prices into line.
- c. *Infrastructure:* Key infrastructure needs include increase of provision of residential water supply accompanied with demand management; introduction of modern sewage treatment in Kabul; provision of solid waste disposal facilities in Kabul and 5 other districts; increased provision of domestic power supply; road rehabilitation in Kabul and introduction of traffic management; and zoning of commercial areas.
- d. *Government Buildings:* Reconstruction of government buildings, especially in the provinces, and in a way that complements the civil service reform program.

18. The proposed project contributes primarily to NDF sub-program 1: Planning and Management and sub-program 3: Infrastructure. The project components directly support several budget line items, as prioritized by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for fiscal year 1383 (Table 1).

19. More recently, "Securing Afghanistan's Future" was presented at the Berlin Conference. The document specifically addresses urban development, focusing on urban investment priorities and reforms³. A perusal of the relevant extracts (below) show considerable overlap between the suggested programs and the KURP.

- a. *Investment priorities:* Urban development programs will cover urban infrastructure, urban land and housing, and urban planning and management. Urban infrastructure programs include upgrading of under-serviced planned and unplanned areas; rehabilitation and extension of WSS services; rehabilitation and extension of urban roads and drains; security of tenure will be improved through land titling, thereby eliminating the prospect of eviction

² MUDH, *Draft National Development Program 2.4*, March 2004

³ *Securing Afghanistan's Future*. March 17 2004. p56.

due to illegal occupancy. In order to ensure smooth implementation of these programs, municipal management and urban planning will be strengthened.

- b. *Implementation and reforms:* Municipalities are the natural implementers of urban development programs, but their implementation capacity is variable. The municipality of Kabul (KM) is independent of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) but has a weak implementation capacity. To assist KM in the short run, a central Program Management Unit will need to be formed within MUDH. Initially, MUDH will be responsible for implementing selected housing programs, but in the long term its role should be limited mostly to coordination and policy setting.

Project Description

20. In pursuit of the above project objective, the proposed Credit will finance the most urgent reconstruction in the area under the jurisdiction of Kabul Municipality and limited technical assistance requirements in MUDH and will set the stage for additional future assistance from the Bank Group and other donors in support of IRA's national development priorities in the urban sector. The need for urban infrastructure is large and the World Bank will only be able to fund a part of the requirements. The project will lay the groundwork for a follow-up project aimed at city-wide infrastructure reconstruction and service delivery in the Greater Kabul area and other major urban centers.

21. The project will also seek co-financing for additional urgent reconstruction in the area under the jurisdiction of Kabul Municipality and for technical assistance for MUDH and KM. The project is structured in six parts.

Part A: Area Upgrading in Kabul (US\$25.11 million equivalent – IDA financed + Community Contribution)

22. Area upgrading⁴ of poor, infrastructure deficient, planned and unplanned neighborhoods will be carried out in selected areas, following a participatory process involving the respective community groups. The project component is structured in two phases to enable an early start. In the context of the project a community may be a "gozar" (sub-district), a number of gozars combined or, more likely, parts of a gozar.

23. The selection of communities is currently being finalized. Vulnerability and deficiency in service delivery will be the key criteria determining site selection⁵. Vulnerability will be measured by income, the ratio of income earners vs. dependents and years living in Kabul. Deficiencies in services will be measured through access to water (piped supply, in-house well, public well, tanker), and sanitation (none in-house, latrine to night soil, improved latrine).

24. A set of principles on which the upgrading program is to be designed are to be adopted. These include:

⁴ Area upgrading is defined as the improvement of basic tertiary infrastructure and services, in this case, water supply, sanitation, access, drainage, solid waste management and street lighting that respond to community needs and demands and which are planned and designed in conjunction with communities and which are constructed in comprehensive area-based packages through local contractors and community groups, dependent on the type of work. Upgrading also includes the appropriate replanning and restructuring of the physical environment

⁵ The primary source of data will be a household survey carried out as part of the Settlement Selection exercise used to identify settlements suitable for inclusion in the project.

- *Service levels and Standards:* to be functional, designed to cost limits but also to consider life cycle costs and longer term infrastructure and utility development plans;
- *Choice and Costs:* Communities to be given choice of service level and cost implications of choice to be explained both for capital and recurrent costs;
- *Balanced Program for Impact:* Balanced programs which cover most elements on “menu” to be implemented to ensure impact/visibility to encourage further development through community/individual resources;
- *Efficiency of Infrastructure Provision:* Although community participation and choice is a fundamental principle, the efficiency of infrastructure provision also has to be considered. Thus it is important for proposals to fit with longer term plans of infrastructure/utility providers, particularly with regard to “network” infrastructure such as water supply. Infrastructure will be provided in area-based, rather than component-based packages to avoid future damage and disruption in the settlements. Local contractors will be used for “network” infrastructure and community contracting for “stand alone” facilities
- *Supervision of Works and Transparency:* Those involved in supervision and certification of works (i.e. consultants/NGOs) should involve community representatives to better ensure transparency and community satisfaction;
- *Community Upgrading Plans:* All details agreed (e.g. provision, costs, contributions, operation and maintenance arrangements) to be included in Community Upgrading Plans to be prepared by communities and consultants/NGOs and agreed by all relevant stakeholders;
- *Cost Recovery and Community Contributions:* Some level of contribution to capital costs will be made by communities to foster a sense of ownership and for longer term financial discipline reasons.
- *Trunk Infrastructure:* This should be available at present or in the foreseeable future to ensure tertiary or local infrastructure provision is able to operate effectively.
- *Social Facilities:* The project may provide extensions and rehabilitation to primary schools, kindergartens, community halls, primary health care facilities and similar facilities if these are seen to be a need and are a priority of a community.
- *Minimal Resettlement:* Physical proposals should apply planning and engineering standards flexibly to ensure sensitive, least cost proposals that minimise the need for clearance and resettlement.

25. Services to be provided include:

- *Water Supply:* Since the improvement of the water supply systems in Kabul City is underway with assistance from the German Government⁶, the project will focus mainly on providing safe drinking water to communities in the selected project neighborhoods in the shortest possible time. Proposals will follow longer term plans which will enable future individual house connections but generally serve only community standposts in the interim. Such standposts will be fitted with water meters, operated by designated community groups who will apply charges to those taking water and will be responsible for paying the Water Authority for water consumed.
- *Sanitation:* A study to examine development options for the sanitation sector in Kabul is currently in its early stages, funded through the World Bank-financed Emergency Infrastructure Reconstruction Project⁷. However, in the absence of a reliable and ample water supply, and secondary and primary sewerage and sewage treatment, sanitation will comprise improved on-plot latrine arrangements.

⁶ KfW financed Feasibility Study for Kabul Water – Draft Concept Report, July 2003 by Consultants RM Beller.

⁷ H P Gauff Ingenieure – Kabul Sanitation Improvement Project, financed by the IDA.

- *Solid Waste Management* : The project will provide fixed brick or concrete built, or similar, roadside containers. It may also facilitate the implementation of Community Based solid waste collection systems.
- *Access Roads*: Access roads will be developed to functional standards to improve all weather access, traffic flow and develop or maintain rights of way and link to the road hierarchy for the area. Surface treatment and drainage will take account of topography.
- *Hill-side steps*: In steep areas, the project will design and construct appropriate hill-side steps and provide surface water drains adjacent to these.
- *Drainage*: Stormwater drainage will be provided in communities in accordance with catchments and overall drainage plans for the area.
- *Street Lighting*: Where there is an existing operational power supply in the project neighborhoods, the project will provide street lighting. In the absence of an existing operational power supply, alternative systems will be examined, e.g., a community maintained generator with simple distribution system for street lights.

26. Services and standards will be prioritised through the formulation of Community Upgrading Plans (CUP) by Community Based Organisation (CBO) such as a Community Development Council (CDC) or Community Action Group (CAG) with technical input from local planning, design and contracts management consultants. Following preliminary engineering and costing the CUP will be taken back to the community for further discussion, modification and agreement. On completion of the consultations, the initial community proposals will be updated by the consultants and a final CUP is produced.

27. Local planning, design and contracts management (PD&C) consultants in association with CBO's will be engaged to carry out the community facilitation, planning and design and subsequent construction supervision. Advice and assistance on procurement activities will be provided by the Program Management Unit (PMU) formed in the MUDH.