



Weekly Activity Update

March 12 - March 18 • Issue 79

Strengthening the Government

Women Ministerial Delegation visits Washington, DC

"In Afghanistan, we women have our rights: they are guaranteed in the new Constitution. But the reality in Afghanistan is that women will never find equality unless they have education and health care." This strong message was delivered by the new Minister of Women's Affairs, Dr. Masoouda Jalal, in her visit to Washington March 5-11. It was echoed repeatedly by her colleagues, Mrs. Suraya Paykan, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, and Dr. Nadera Hayt Burhani, Deputy Minister of Reproductive Health and Mother and Child Health of the Ministry of Public Health. The delegation met with the President and Mrs. Bush, Secretary of State Rice, Under Secretary of State Dobriansky, House and Senate members, Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz, civil society organizations, and the press. On March 8, International Women's Day, USAID hosted a reception and photo exhibit to honor women of Afghanistan, Iraq and tsunami-affected countries. Secretary of State Rice, Senator Kay Bailey-Hutchinson and USAID Administrator Natsios spoke, along with the women's ministers from Afghanistan and Iraq. To support the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs to develop its efforts in advocacy, policy, and programming in 17 provincial women's centers, USAID committed \$2.5 million in funding.



First Lady Laura Bush visits with Minister Jalal and Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Ms. Paykan. Photo courtesy of State Department.



Secretary Rice visits with Dr. Jalal and Iraq's Minister Othman at the Women's Day photo exhibit.

Economic Governance: Land Titling

Proper ownership records are an essential foundation for economic growth. A real estate title is the most common form of collateral for commercial lending which, in turn, supports new business start-ups, business expansion and education. Working in cooperation with *shuras* and other Afghan institutions, the LTERA (Land Titling & Economic Restructuring in Afghanistan) project will identify broadly acceptable, easy-to-implement methods of formalizing property ownership in order to improve tenure security of urban dwellers. Tenure insecurity is a constant concern for many Afghans, the majority of whom have no legal title to their homes.

On March 5, in Kabul's District 7, the men and women's *shuras* (traditional Afghan bodies for resolving community problems) met with LTERA staff to discuss tenure and related issues surrounding land titling. The *shuras* pledged to work together with LTERA to engage the community in identifying mechanisms for dispute resolution that will accelerate the process of land titling. LTERA and the *shuras* agreed that District 7 will serve as one of two pilot neighborhoods for a local LTERA office. The office will promote efforts to clarify property rights for both men and women.



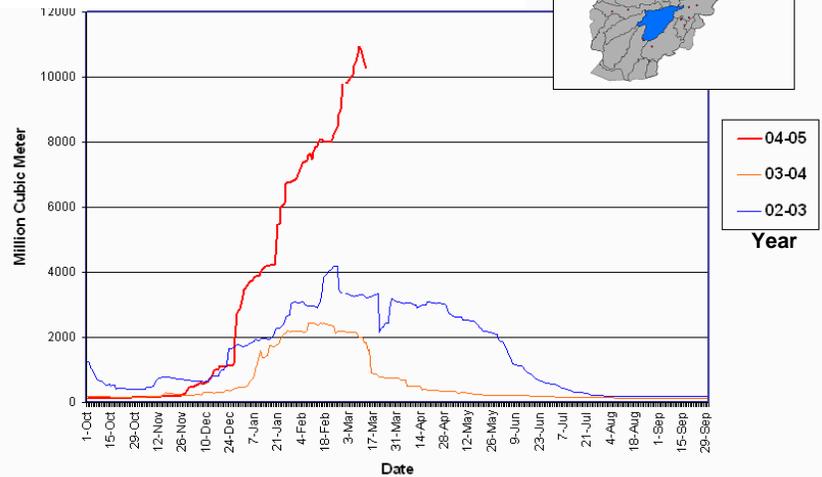
Men and women's *shuras* from a Kabul neighborhood pledge to take a leadership role in one of the Land Titling and Economic Restructuring Project's pilot efforts to involve the community in addressing the problem of tenure insecurity.

Severe Winter Effects Continue

Record snowfall likely to result in significant flooding

Afghanistan's record snowfall and severe weather conditions this winter have significantly affected the lives and livelihoods of everyone in Afghanistan - from the Kam Air plane crash to the distribution of critical medical supplies and food aid. Often heavy snowfall leads to secure water supply, but due to recent above-normal precipitation and temperatures, experts expect Afghanistan to experience significant flooding. For example, the accompanying graph indicates a 150% increase in snow water volume for the Kajaki basin (highlighted in blue on the map) compared to last year.

Annual Snow Water Volume for the Kajaki Basin



Security Incidents

Note: Hostile attacks are reported through USAID's security contractors and the Associated Press

- **Number of Hostile Attacks:** During this reporting period, there were four hostile attacks resulting in nine injuries, one death, and one kidnapping and subsequent release.
- **USAID Related:** During this reporting period, there were no hostile attack directly affecting USAID related projects and/or staff. There were two other attacks against other aid agencies and NGOs.
- **Latest Attack:** On March 9 in Maimana, Fayrab Province, two explosions took place in front of the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA) training center. Three police officers and one local person were injured. One man was kidnapped and released the following morning. The governor of Fayrab Province has set a deadline for the investigation and arrest of the perpetrators. CHA is an Afghan national organization that implements health projects in rural areas.

