

# Country strategy for development cooperation

with Afghanistan

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REGERINGSKANSLIET

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# Country strategy for Afghanistan: 2002–2004

## 1 Executive summary

The present country strategy was drawn up by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida as a guide for Swedish assistance to Afghanistan during the forthcoming three-year period. It is based on a recently conducted experience analysis of development assistance during the period 1995–2000 and a country analysis of Afghanistan.

The conclusions of the experience analysis were that development cooperation programmes for the latter period were successfully implemented and significant results were achieved, despite very trying working conditions and severe difficulties. Sweden, which has contributed an average of SEK 100 million per year, is the fourth largest donor after the EU, the USA and Japan. Over the years, Sida, along with its Swedish and international cooperation partners, has acquired considerable experience of assistance to Afghanistan.

In many respects, the picture which emerges from the country analysis of conditions in Afghanistan is extreme. Twenty years of conflict and recurring natural disasters have devastated the economy and its social institutions.

The country strategy sets out the objectives and guiding principles for all assistance programmes and identifies appropriate sectors and channels for implementation.

It is considered that Afghanistan will continue to need extensive humanitarian assistance. As well as being guided by basic humanitarian principles, Sida will be turning its long experience in this field to account and building on earlier successes. Thus assistance will continue to focus on humanitarian mine clearance, food safety, education and health and the return of refugees. The UN, the Red Cross movement and Swedish NGOs will continue to serve as the main channels for support. Particularly vulnerable target groups such as women, children, people with disabilities and oppressed ethnic minorities should be given special priority.

The development-related aspects and long-term focus of previous humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan are made clear in the strategy; these are seen as a stage in a gradual shift in focus towards recovery assistance and reconstruction.

As regards rehabilitation and reconstruction, there is still no clear picture of the country's needs and the political situation is not yet fully stable. The strategy is therefore a relatively open-ended framework within which Swedish measures will be prepared as needs become clearer and the comparative advantages of Swedish efforts can be assessed.

Sida estimates that two new one-year appointments financed by specific appropriations will be needed to administer and effectively follow up the growing volume of assistance during the period. An office responsible for monitoring assistance will also be set up in the Afghan capital, Kabul.

A budget framework of SEK 750–1 000 has been approved to cover all assistance over the three-year strategy period. Strategy implementation will be followed up after one year.

## **2 Introduction**

The terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 also transformed the situation in Afghanistan. Although representatives of the international community have admittedly made various attempts to establish conditions for peaceful development in the country, a coordinated effort will now be made for the first time. The civil assistance programme will be headed by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, Lakhdar Brahimi, who has overall responsibility for all UN assistance efforts in the region. It is to be hoped that the regional players who have helped prolong the conflict by lending their support to the different sides involved will reflect and realise that a truly sovereign Afghanistan can contribute to peaceful development and regional cooperation, and thereby benefit economic and social development in the region as a whole.

Although military operations are still in progress and peace has not been restored to all parts of the country, a political agreement largely brokered by the UN and involving the main anti-Taliban factions was reached in Bonn on 5 December 2001.

Afghanistan will be governed for the next six months by an interim administration composed of representatives of the country. The new administration took office on 22 December 2001 when power was handed over by the former 'president' of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, Burhanuddin Rabbani, to the chairman of the administration's executive council, Hamid Karzai, at a ceremony in Kabul. For the next six months the country will be governed by a 30-man cabinet. An Emergency Loya Jirga – a traditional Afghan tribal council – will be convened within six months of the establishment of the interim authority. This body will decide on a transitional administration, which will take over from the interim administration. The new administration is to be genuinely representative. The Bonn agreement expressly states that this transitional administration must in its turn hand over power to a freely elected "fully representative government" not later than two years from the date on which the Emergency Loya Jirga is convened. The agreement, which is not regarded as ideal by Brahimi, its chief promoter, also envisages the introduction of sweeping reforms in Afghanistan, including a new constitution. An independent human rights commission will also be set up.

Moreover, the parties to the Bonn agreement have directed a number of specific requests to the UN: a general appeal to the international community for assistance in the work of reconstruction and help with voter registration, census-taking, etc.

Fulfilling the intentions of the agreement and then extending the process to include areas as yet unregulated will present severe challenges to Afghans and the international community alike. The first task will be to improve security in the country; an agreement to set up an international force for this purpose in the Kabul area has now been reached. It can safely be said that improved security is a precondition for genuine reconstruction in Afghanistan.

However, large areas of the country have not yet been brought under the control of the interim administration. It may take time before the legitimacy of the central authority is acknowledged throughout the country. Meanwhile dissension and rifts between the various factions in the interim administration are an ever present risk. The Northern Alliance probably wields more influence than the Pashtun faction is prepared to accept, and there are also signs of divisions and personal tensions between some of the leading figures in the administration. Local warlords, too, will no doubt be reluctant to give up their ascendancy. It is therefore essential that the interim administration begin functioning as soon as possible and provide an accepted cooperation partner for the international community.

In spite of these reservations, many Afghans are in hopes of a change for the better and an end to the long-drawn-out armed conflict that has been devastating the country for more than 20 years. They are counting on the rest of the world to provide the help needed to settle their internal disputes and lay the groundwork for peaceful development and economic growth.

Swedish humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan between 1982 and 2000 amounted to approximately SEK 1.2 billion. This support was aimed primarily at alleviating the effects of armed conflict and natural disasters on the civilian population. That strategy will continue to define the direction of Sweden's support to Afghanistan over the coming three-year period 2002–2004. The strategy is based on the conclusions of an experience analysis of Swedish assistance between 1995 and 2000 and on a country analysis of Afghanistan.

The strategy rests on the following considerations:

1. Afghanistan is in the throes of one of the world's biggest humanitarian crises, with a gigantic refugee problem and major food shortages in much of the country. The need for humanitarian assistance will continue to be great.
2. The Taliban regime has been overthrown and replaced by a broader interim government, opening the way for a peace process in the country. If the present favourable trend continues, more long-term rehabilitation measures will become possible. The international community has begun examining more vigorous, long-term reconstruction efforts.
3. Sweden has provided extensive assistance to Afghanistan since 1982. Sida has extensive experience of development assistance to Afghanistan, acquired over a

long period of cooperation with Swedish and international partners. This has served as a basis for the priorities and delimitations which will apply during the coming three-year cooperation period.

4. Sweden intends to increase support to Afghanistan during the period. Substantial support will also be provided by other donor countries, the World Bank, etc., and there will be a continued, strong UN presence.

5. The strategy is being drawn up at a time of enormous turbulence in and around Afghanistan, and will need to be updated as conditions change.

### **3 The country analysis: conclusions**

The situation in Afghanistan is extremely grave. Over two decades of civil war have laid waste a country which was already one of the poorest and least developed in Asia. The country's infrastructure, production facilities and social sectors lie in ruins and the central government administration has virtually ceased to function. So far over a million people are estimated to have died as a result of the fighting, which still continues. Afghanistan is one of the most densely mined counties in the world. More than 3 million Afghans are still living as refugees abroad while a further million plus are internally displaced.

The state superstructure has crumpled under external and internal pressures. Legislative activity, the administration of justice, democratic institutions and the media have all ceased to function. In the ensuing vacuum, power rests on armed violence. This relationship is illustrated by the rise and fall of the Taliban and the dissolution and return of the Northern Alliance. As a consequence of the breakdown of the country's institutions, increasing numbers are turning to criminal – often war-related – activities such as drug production and smuggling to earn a living.

Afghanistan has an ethnically diverse population. The Sunni Muslim, Pashtu-speaking people form the largest ethnic group and the dominant position they have enjoyed for over two hundred years has led the Pashtun to grow used to wielding political power. The Persian-speaking Tajiks make up the largest minority group. Traditionally a relatively well-educated people, the Tajiks have had considerable political influence and a strong presence in the state administrative apparatus. While the majority of the population are Sunni Muslims, the Hazaras are Shi'ites. Long an oppressed minority, they now form a large proportion of the unskilled labour force in the cities. The Uzbeks and Turkmen, dominant in the fertile northern plains, still maintain their ancestral contact with their ethnic kinsfolk in present-day Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

The civil war has destroyed the historically fragile balance between the various ethnic and linguistic groups in Afghanistan. The 1990s saw a growing and increasingly distinct division of the country into separate regions. Ethnic

affiliation has become an increasingly significant factor; it is perhaps the only available source of security in an otherwise chaotic world. This absence of equilibrium and a climate of growing mistrust are what give birth to and destroy the alliances that fuel the civil war.

Human rights violations are legion. Torture, abuse and summary execution are common occurrences. Imprisonment without cause, forcible recruitment of civilians, including children, into armed units and persecution of ethnic minorities take place all the time.

Violations of women's rights have attracted particular attention. The main cause of these violations were the draconian rules introduced by the Taliban. These not only prevented women from moving about freely; they also severely restricted their freedom to work, study and access health care services. It should be noted, however, that these prohibitions correspond fairly closely to traditional observances in the Afghan countryside. Women in rural communities have only been able to exercise their convention-based rights to a limited extent, and the Taliban's fall from power has done nothing to change that situation.

Economically, Afghanistan has reverted to subsistence farming. Food production, which showed signs of recovery in the mid-1990s, has declined once more following three years of severe drought. The country is highly dependent on imported food.

The civil war, which is still continuing, has so far forestalled efforts to bring about unity at national level and prevented major reconstruction work. The success of the Taliban movement in the 1990s recapitulates – albeit in an extreme form – previous rural-based reactions against attempts by successive Kabul governments to modernise and internationalise Afghanistan's polity. Internal conflicts have been continually fanned by neighbouring countries in pursuit of their own economic and political interests and by their more or less open support for the various protagonists involved.

The terrorist actions in New York and Washington, followed by the USA's vigorous response, changed the situation in Afghanistan virtually overnight. The Taliban regime collapsed and the Northern Alliance took control of 80 per cent of the country, including Kabul. The international community, with the UN occupying a central role, acted swiftly, contributing to the establishment of a broad-based political solution to the conflict in order to be able to support the sustainable reconstruction of Afghan society once peace has been secured.

#### **4 Swedish assistance in 1995–2000**

The overriding aim of Swedish assistance has been to support and promote the right of the people of Afghanistan to a decent life after more than 20 years of occupation and civil war, exacerbated by recurring natural disasters, including earthquakes and drought.

Swedish development assistance programmes have been informed by international humanitarian law and the principles it embodies of needs-related, politically impartial support. Another fundamental principle has been to contribute to long-term solutions as part of a development-promoting humanitarian approach.

While the Taliban were in control, assistance provision was hampered by chronic, low-intensity conflict, punctuated by recurrent natural disasters, in a country ruled by an unpredictable, fundamentalist and totalitarian Islamist regime. These difficulties led to delays and interruptions in programme delivery and implementation, which in turn created extensive administrative problems. Sida nonetheless considers that the majority of assistance programmes and projects were completed successfully and maintained an acceptable degree of relevance.

#### 4.1 Summary of results for the period 1995–2000

- Sweden was the fourth largest donor after the EU, the US and Japan between 1995 and 2000. Total bilateral support channelled to Afghanistan through Sida in this period amounted to approximately SEK 582 million.
- Swedish assistance efforts were mainly channelled through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the UN system and the Swedish Afghanistan Committee (SAK).
- The number of support programmes and projects carried out during the period in question was extensive, as was the number of Swedish NGOs involved. The most prominent Swedish organisations involved were the SAK, followed by the Swedish Red Cross and Swedish Save the Children.
- The largest cooperation partner in the UN system was the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA). Its responsibilities included running the UN's extensive landmine clearance operations as well as logistics and assistance coordination programmes. The UNHCR, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) also received extensive Swedish support.
- During the period in question, just over 3.3 million Afghans took part in mine awareness activities, giving them information about and training in landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). By the end of 1998, some 150 square kilometres of terrain were cleared of landmines and UXO.

- During the period, the number of people injured or killed by mines fell by just over 50 per cent, from 8 000 to 4 000 per year, as a result of the UN's landmine clearance programme. An estimated 5 million landmines and UXO items remain in Afghanistan. It could take as long as 5–10 years to clear the remaining areas assuming the same level of total assistance. Over 530 000 Afghans are once more living in residential areas cleared of mines and UXO. This figure includes 170 000 former internal refugees, who have been able to return to their home areas. Over 3 000 public buildings, including schools and hospitals, have been re-commissioned after years of delay due to the presence of mines and UXO.
- Swedish bilateral support for food assistance through the WFP was extensive in the initial stages. Over the last four years, Sida has allocated a growing share of Swedish support to long-term projects in the agricultural sector in an effort to promote more lasting solutions to the food problem in Afghanistan.
- During the period, UNHCR was a major cooperation partner for Swedish support for refugee programmes in the region. Refugee and repatriation programmes constituted the third largest category in terms of total international assistance during the period.
- In the absence of a functioning national health care structure, donor countries and organisations have designed a medical care system which has afforded thousands of Afghans a certain measure of – albeit limited – security. There is a manifest need for more coherent strategies and common guidelines aimed at making health care support more effective in the future.
- Over the last six years, UNICEF has covered just over 40 per cent of Afghanistan's vaccination needs through its cooperation organisations. A total of seven comprehensive national vaccination campaigns were carried out during the period and over 4 million children were vaccinated.
- While much of the assistance focused on children and women, the target groups were often difficult to reach. A major obstacle was the Taliban's negative attitude to support for women.
- Just over 1 million children, young people and adult women and men received primary or adult education during the period. 80 per cent of the pupils who received six years of instruction under the SAK and other education programmes left with pass grades in reading and writing. 20 per cent of the pupils taking part in SAK education programmes were girls in the 1<sup>st</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> grades. Support for education filled an important social, political

and democratic function and served as a counterweight to the more one-sided education provided by the Koran schools.

- Funding for Kabul's water mains and pumping systems was cut off in 1997 because of fighting and has not been resumed since. The water situation and levels of sanitation in Kabul were extremely bad throughout the period.
- Apart from projects directly linked to natural disasters and the conflict itself, most of the assistance provided was associated with relatively long-term undertakings which often proved difficult to phase out or turn over to local or national structures.
- It should be noted that the most marginalised population groups in Afghan society have been highly dependent on assistance. There are no indications that this reliance decreased during the period.
- During the period, Sida funded a small number of reviews and evaluations. Examples include an evaluation of SAK's activities in the field (1997), carried out in cooperation with the EU. Though largely favourable, the evaluation report contained proposals for the restructuring and further development of SAK's field operations. On the basis of this report and of other experiences in this sector, Sida decided to discontinue support for the SAK agricultural programme.
- Assistance programmes in Afghanistan have had relatively good geographical coverage. This in turn suggests that different ethnic groups have benefited from the measures taken.
- Extended via some 16 channels in 6 sectors, the Swedish portfolio of measures was both substantial and relatively well distributed. The relatively large number of channels made it difficult for Sida to monitor and follow up operations in the field. In many cases, reporting – particularly by the UN – was both tardy and inadequate.
- Sida has had a development assistance officer posted at the Embassy in Islamabad since 1999. This was designed to give the agency greater access to and more control over the activities that it finances in the field, and to help with the practical work of international assistance coordination. This measure has had favourable results.
- Sweden's commitment to the coordination of international development assistance in Afghanistan has been considerable. Sweden chaired the

international donor group – the Afghanistan Support Group (ASG) – during the first six months of 1999. On the whole, the group has performed well.

#### 4.2 Assistance from other donors

- A number of countries, including the USA, chose not to support long-term development cooperation in Afghanistan so long as the country was governed by a regime that harboured terrorists and remained a leading opium producer. Support consequently tended to be limited to measures aimed at 'keeping the patient alive'. However the constantly growing number of people in need of such stopgap measures created a situation that was unsustainable in the long term.
- The major areas of activity during the period in question were the food sector (mainly covered by WPF and ICRC), followed by disaster relief (ICRC, IFRC, UNHCR, UNOCHA, MSF and others). The third largest sector was return of refugees (UNHCR, IOM) and humanitarian landmine clearance (UNOCHA and others). Few programmes were concerned with reconstruction and national capacity development.
- The EC extended support for development promotion via the former Directorate General responsible for education and health (DG1) and the Directorate General responsible for agriculture (DG8). Other EC projects (via ECHO) were of a short-term humanitarian nature. Contract periods for ECHO-run programmes (health, water, sanitation, food, etc.) were never allowed to exceed 12 months. The EC was the single largest donor to Afghanistan during the period. The EC was also an active member of the strategic framework for Afghanistan (including ASG).

### 5 Strategy for the period 2002–2004

#### 5.1 Assistance objectives

The goal of humanitarian assistance is to help vulnerable groups of people and save lives. The over-riding objective of Swedish development assistance is to reduce poverty.

Other important aims are to:

- promote stable development in the country and help build up the country's infrastructure and basic social institutions
- contribute to the development of a democratic society
- strengthen the position of women in the society

- seek a gradual transition from humanitarian aid to development cooperation.

## 5.2 General strategic considerations

Poverty is a root cause of the problems in Afghanistan. It helps explain both the country's structural weaknesses and the current conflict. Even when addressing conflict, a poverty perspective is therefore central to future development assistance.

Peace and political stability are the principal preconditions for real poverty reduction, genuine development cooperation and long-term sustainable development in Afghanistan. Only when there is a lasting peace (in a broader sense than the mere absence of armed conflict) will it be possible for the Afghan people to turn their energies from survival to development. Extensive efforts are now being made to find a durable political settlement in Afghanistan. Support should be given to initiatives that have the potential to promote reconciliation and peaceful development.

Strengthening the position of human rights and freedoms is a task of fundamental importance in Afghanistan. In recent years Sweden and several other donors have stepped up their commitment to the human rights sector. Save the Children Sweden, for example, has worked jointly with UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOPS/CDAP, SAK and the Pakistan Commissariat for Refugees to improve monitoring of children's rights. To the extent that the UN or NGOs with recognised expertise in the area come to take a role in further action to promote human rights and/or develop functioning legal systems, there should be potential for supporting them.

Given the great complexity of Afghan reality, institutional and individual experience is decisive for the success of development cooperation. Swedish support should therefore rely in the first instance on players that possess this experience, primarily parts of the UN system and a number of NGOs. Sweden should push for other development cooperation to be mediated or coordinated by these players as far as possible.

Development assistance planned and financed via Sida should be viewed from the perspective of development promotion. It must therefore be possible to show that there is a clear link between support for short-term life-sustaining operations and a longer term development strategy. This perspective requires Sida and its cooperation partners to build up and maintain cooperation relations in Afghanistan (e.g. cooperation with civil society or national public authorities).

The expected rapid increase in support to Afghanistan, combined with an extremely weak central government apparatus and a prolonged state of war, brings a substantial risk of corruption. The strategy has taken this risk into account. In selecting channels for development assistance, the need to minimise the risk of economic wastage and corruption has been duly considered along

with other relevant factors. Sida will pay continuing attention to the risk of corruption in its dialogue with cooperation partners.

There are huge environmental problems in Afghanistan. Landmines have removed large tracts of land from production, extensive forest areas have been laid waste in the devastation of war, drought and flooding are due at least in part to environmental damage. Sida is aware of the environmental problems and their various interconnections with poverty, peace and basic economic activities. Nevertheless, in the short-term perspective, where the security situation is uncertain and there is a continued necessity for humanitarian aid to dominate, action targeting environmental problems must wait, and this will remain the case during the initial, most urgent phase of reconstruction cooperation.

### *5.2.1 Gender equality*

The lack of gender equality has often served as a symbol of the difficulties faced by the donor community in Afghanistan. The vulnerable position of women – often caused by a combination of traditional norms in rural areas and an extreme interpretation of Islam – has proved a serious challenge for donors. In recent years international development assistance planning has been increasingly sensitive to the issue of gender equality, while pragmatic solutions have been developed in the field.

From a Swedish perspective it is important that gender equality considerations are mainstreamed in all development assistance planning and that donors maintain their requirements that women and men be treated equally. One point that it remains important to monitor is that women gain increased representation in development assistance organisations (whether national or international). A determined emphasis on the gender perspective, however, must never lead to conditions being attached to aid that completely rule out initiatives which bear only indirectly on the situation of women. An emphasis on the gender equality dimension is needed in particular in the dialogue with leading political groupings in Afghan society. Attention must be paid to gender equality among children, i.e. to the circumstances and rights of girls and boys. High priority must be assigned to giving girls as well as boys the opportunity to pursue education.

### **5.3 Points of departure and guiding principles**

Bearing in mind the experience of development assistance in Afghanistan in previous years and the very turbulent course of events in autumn 2001, future development assistance arrangements should allow room for a great deal of flexibility. Over the next three years humanitarian measures are expected to continue to play an important role, though these measures should have a clear orientation towards development. Even with an interim government in place

that represents major groups in Afghanistan, the country will need humanitarian aid alongside preparations for longer term reconstruction initiatives. Provided developments continue favourable, it should be possible to phase out humanitarian support completely three to five years after peace is secured.

It is anticipated that the UN will retain its central role in Afghanistan in the future. In the best case the UN-led peace efforts will win the necessary legitimacy among political groupings in Afghanistan. In such a situation, it will be important for the UN to have access to competent personnel, in which case the Swedish resource base should be of interest. Sida is now taking stock of its resources with this in mind.

The design of development assistance over the next three years must be based on principles proceeding from a common international framework. It should continue to be possible to channel humanitarian assistance via the joint humanitarian appeals launched annually by the United Nations. Where reconstruction cooperation and long-term cooperation are concerned, special mechanisms are now being established. Support to organisations that occupy positions outside the framework of international assistance coordination should not be financed by Sida (unless special reasons can be adduced to the contrary, as in the case, for example, of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which works under a special mandate from the Geneva Conventions).

Sweden should seek to promote active and concrete cooperation between development assistance actors so as to arrive at common priorities and maximise efficiency. At the earliest possible juncture, representatives of a legitimate Afghan government should be given a role in the framework of development assistance planning in preparation, in the long term, for taking over full responsibility for directing and managing the work of development. (See also below, Section 5.4.7 "Coordination".)

As long as warlike conditions obtain in Afghanistan, Swedish action must be guided by the principles of humanitarian law. As far as applicable, a conflict prevention perspective should be brought to bear on the measures that are planned.

Particular attention should be paid to vulnerable population groups such as women, children, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities.

Over and above the exertions already being made by the international community, there should be a capability to support Afghan initiatives on behalf of peace and reconciliation.

Priority should be given to initiatives in Afghanistan and measures that are not primarily linked to short-term needs for food.

With respect to humanitarian actions, support should be given in the first place via organisations with which Sida has a practice of cooperation. As far as this is possible given safety and security constraints, Sida should encourage its cooperation partners to concentrate exclusively on assistance operations inside

Afghanistan. The number of organisations should be limited to facilitate the checking and monitoring of performance.

Peace and reconciliation measures should have priority, to the extent that it is possible to undertake such measures. It should be possible to support disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of soldiers (DD&R) if a process of this kind is initiated by the political parties.

As reconstruction initiatives become a viable option, they should receive high priority.

#### 5.4 Areas of cooperation

In recent years, Sida has come to be involved in a large range of sectors, which has led to problems in terms of control and follow-up. Over the next three years, Sida should focus on the areas listed below (in no particular order). In the longer term the number of areas will diminish, partly because of a natural phasing out process and partly due to results and the commitments of other donors.

##### *5.4.1 Education and health (including support to people with disabilities)*

During the initial part of the period, support for education and health should concentrate on primary health care and primary school education. Support for larger-scale education systems (universities or upper secondary education, teacher training colleges, etc.) should be considered only when the political situation in Afghanistan is sufficiently stable for the government of the country to be able to assume overall responsibility for operations. Through the Swedish Afghanistan Committee (SAK), Sweden has long given substantial support to primary education in Afghanistan. SAK has paid the salaries of approximately 5 000 teachers. Together with UNICEF and other UN organisations, SAK can continue to play an important role in the primary school sector. A planned initiative on the part of the interim administration in Afghanistan aiming to give all Afghan schoolchildren a uniform start in school provides an opportunity for the Afghan school system to show that a new chapter has begun in the history of the country. One objective should be to expand Swedish support in this area to something in the order of SEK 50 million.

Where preventive health care is concerned, SAK, ICRC, UNICEF and other UN bodies can play an important part. The preventive health opportunities that lie in such areas as water supply and sanitation should be heeded.

#### *5.4.2 Humanitarian mine clearance*

Activities in this area are expected to remain an urgent priority in the next three years. Sweden has long been a committed actor in the sector and the results of efforts in the last few years have been encouraging. The main channel to use should be the UN mine clearance organisation (UNOCHA de-mining). Other potential actors should be supported only in so far as they exhibit clear comparative advantages and coordinate their operations with the UN mine clearance organisation.

#### *5.4.3 Return and repatriation of refugees*

If political developments continue positive and the security situation in Afghanistan stabilises, it is highly likely that there will be a vast increase in the number of refugees returning to the country. Additional positive factors are an end to the drought and grants to support repatriation. Bearing in mind that 140 000 people returned in 2001, it can be assumed that in more favourable circumstances considerably more would return.

Even if the return of refugees mostly occurs spontaneously and does not require organised repatriation, mass-scale return will make major demands on humanitarian organisations as returnees will need protection and support to help them re-establish themselves. Sida has given this type of assistance in various other places, e.g. the Balkans, and will be able to draw on its experience in providing future support.

Swedish support should pay particular attention to initiatives focusing on the repatriation of Afghans with special skills who have the potential to play an important role in the reconstruction of the country (e.g. teachers, health care personnel, administrators, engineers and technicians, economists, agronomists). The current pilot project, carried out jointly with IOM, should be evaluated and – provided the outcome is positive – perhaps expanded during the next three years.

#### *5.4.4 Agriculture*

In the food sector, longer term support to Afghan agriculture should be considered. Support in the last six years has had mixed results to show. The problems have been associated more with channels and resources than with the implementation of aid. Agricultural initiatives have proved cost-effective. As the economic basis of Afghan society rests on agriculture this sector is particularly important. Sida should refrain from giving support to food distribution, as several major players are already deeply involved in this sector and additional resources are therefore not considered to be necessary. Moreover, there is a risk

that a prolonged supply of food aid will undermine the country's own productive capacity.

#### ***5.4.5 Support for international law and peace-support operations***

Support based on international humanitarian law is provided primarily via ICRC, and to a limited extent also via UNHCR and other UN agencies. In view of the continued uncertainty of the military and political situation, measures to protect human rights and freedoms should continue to receive support.

Sida should take a positive stance on initiatives aimed at building security and promoting dialogue and on longer term conflict prevention measures. This means that there should be capacity to finance requests for intervention support from UNSMA or similar actors, given that these requests are in line with Sida's broader priorities and strategy for conflict management and peace-building.

#### ***5.4.6 Coordination***

Support for coordination is expected to remain very important, both coordination between donors and technical coordination on the ground. Support to coordination should be able to include continued support to the SMU (Strategic Monitoring Unit).

Sweden should actively promote the greatest possible efficiency in coordination, building on the foundation laid by the work of the ASG. High priority should be attached to enabling the government of Afghanistan to take over responsibility for coordination at as early a date as possible. The long-term goal should be to establish a Consultative Group (CG), in which the World Bank and UNDP share the task of leading coordination with the Afghan government.

#### ***5.4.7 Support for reconstruction and longer term measures***

When the security situation allows, a massive international reconstruction initiative is expected in Afghanistan. The devastated economic and social infrastructure must be restored. Later there will come the laborious, long-term task of re-establishing and developing Afghan institutions and systems in education, health care, communications and all other sectors of society.

Sweden should be a vigorous participant in these reconstruction efforts. In the shorter term, the primary focus should be on participation in the restoration of the economic – and institutional – infrastructure in a number of strategic areas, such as water, energy and communications systems. A coherent assessment of priority sectors should be made, based on the needs analysis and plans presented at the Tokyo meeting.

In January 2002 Ericsson begun the installation of a mobile GSM network in Kabul and the surrounding area. This temporary, humanitarian service, which is being performed at no cost to the users, has been commissioned by the World Food Program (WFP). In this project, Ericsson is working jointly with Telia and the satellite systems company SWE-DISH. A total of 200 SIM cards and telephones will be made available to humanitarian actors such as the UN, the Red Cross and NGOs in Afghanistan for a period of six months, after which another actor will take over responsibility. At the request of the WFP, Sida provided part-financing for freight charges. The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan has since expressed an interest in using parts of the Swedish contribution to the development of the interim administration to provide telecommunications equipment to the Afghan government, which at present, practically speaking, completely lacks internal communications facilities. This may prove to be an appropriate sector for further Swedish support.

Assessments of the specific initiatives that Sweden should engage in, and of suitable forms for providing aid, should be made in consultation with national authorities, other donors, the UN and the World Bank. That said, Sida should be prepared at short notice to assess and take a position on which initiatives are appropriate for Swedish cooperation. The possibility of including Afghans in international courses must be taken into account.

In this connection, the possibilities of reactivating cooperation with HABITAT on the water supply in Kabul may be considered. This initiative was interrupted in 1996/97 and was mothballed pending a more stable political situation in the country.

In the longer term, a link-up is envisaged between components of Swedish humanitarian aid that are characterised by the long-term perspective (cf. previous sections), e.g. in the education and/or health sectors, and efforts to re-establish and develop Afghan structural capacity and institutions. In this connection, administrative support in such fields as statistics, auditing and central bank issues, may be considered. Forms for providing such assistance and the degree of Swedish involvement in its implementation must be decided at a later point.

Action to protect the cultural heritage should be open to consideration. The purpose of such action would be to prevent damage due to ignorance and chaotic circumstances. Examples of possible measures in this area are protecting objects of cultural value during demolition and clearance work and taking stock of the need for other protective measures.

Afghanistan is a country that is regularly hit by more or less severe natural disasters. Building capacity to cope with natural disasters should therefore be considered as a possible area for support.

## 5.5 Breakdown by channels

In future too, support to Afghanistan should be channelled in the first place via the UN system and in the second place via non-governmental organisations. With regard to the strategic importance of these operations, humanitarian support via the UN system is estimated at an average of SEK 70-100 million per year over the three-year period.

SAK has received support from Sida since 1982. It should be possible to provide substantial continued support of approximately SEK 30 million per year over the three-year period (under the budget heading "Humanitarian assistance"). The Red Cross movement (ICRC, IFRC and SRK) should also continue to be a major channel for Swedish assistance, receiving about the same allocation as SAK (under the budget heading "Humanitarian assistance"). Total support via NGO channels should be unchanged, i.e. approximately SEK 10 million per year over the three-year period.

In combination, the UN system and the NGOs mentioned should in principle provide adequate channels for Swedish humanitarian support.

Reconstruction initiatives will probably require new forms of cooperation in part, and here the Swedish resource base (including the experience base of the Swedish business sector) and its comparative advantages should be taken into account.

## 5.6 Administration and follow-up

The interim administration of Afghanistan assumed its duties on 22 December 2001. The administration consists of 30 members who represent most Afghan ethnic and religious groups. Initially a number of groups withheld their support from the interim administration, but as a result of various measures, the administration now enjoys the support of most groups in the country. It is important to show support for the interim administration so as to enhance its legitimacy. Furthermore, it is important to respect the sovereignty of Afghanistan. The Bonn agreement lays down that the sovereignty of Afghanistan shall be rooted in the interim administration, which shall represent the country in international forums and organisations. Against this background, it should be possible to regard the interim government as a national dialogue partner. However, it is crucial that the interim administration actively supports the work of establishing a transition government not later than June 2002, by the agency of the Emergency Loya Jirga. Until this government is in place, the interim administration should serve as the national dialogue partner for Swedish activities in Afghanistan.

In recent years aid to Afghanistan has amounted to approximately SEK 100 million per year and has been financed under the budget heading "Humanitarian assistance". It has been managed mainly by Sida's department for humanitarian

assistance. As long-term development assistance grows and gradually replaces humanitarian assistance, the regional department for Asia will assume a stronger role, increasingly resembling the role normally played by the regional departments.

Follow-up from Stockholm has mainly been conducted by means of annual field visits.

Since 1999 Sida has had an officer based in Islamabad who has had principal responsibility for dialogue and follow-up of operations in the field. Sida intends to establish a development assistance monitoring office in Kabul and post an officer there as soon as the security and political situation permits. Even before this office opens the officer will spend more and more of his time in Afghanistan. The office will require the additional services of at least one local employee and possibly also a further staff member from Sweden. There are no plans to open an embassy in Kabul. There will be dual accreditation from Islamabad.

In total, Sida is likely to experience a sharply increased need for capacity in Afghanistan over the next three years, which means that a maximum of two new appointments financed by specific appropriations will need to be made for a period of not more than one year.

The experience analysis indicates a need for evaluations in several areas. This applies to cooperation with organisations such as IOM, ICRC and FAO and to Swedish logistics and communications support.

## **5.7 Proposed budgetary framework for 2002-2004**

Assuming that nothing extremely dramatic occurs in Afghanistan over the next three years, future humanitarian aid should be financed under the budgetary heading "humanitarian assistance and conflict management" and also, to a lesser extent, under the heading "non-governmental organisations". Support should amount to approximately SEK 100-135 million per year over the next three years. Assuming it is possible to implement reconstruction initiatives, Sida should be able to contribute an additional SEK 150-200 million per year (under the budgetary heading "Asia") over the coming three years. The annual allocations may vary, with lower amounts being provided at the beginning of the period. Altogether, Swedish assistance to Afghanistan could thus amount to as much as SEK 750-1000 million over the coming three years, which would represent a very substantial increase.

If the situation in Afghanistan stabilises and there is a gradual transition to peaceful conditions, the possibility is envisaged of replacing humanitarian assistance step by step with long-term reconstruction assistance. After three to five years of peace, it would be possible to phase out humanitarian assistance and cooperation could assume long-term forms. A scenario of this kind,

however, builds on a number of positive assumptions regarding developments in the country, assumptions that at present are very uncertain.



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