

# UN Women in Afghanistan



Women's rights and civil society activists in Kabul raise awareness about safe public spaces for women and girls. Photo: UN Women

UN Women's aims to assist countries and the United Nations system to progress more effectively and efficiently towards the goal of achieving gender equality, women's empowerment and upholding women's rights. It does this by offering normative support in the formulation and application of global standards and norms; through technical and financial support to implement such standards; and by holding the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality.

UN Women has been working in Afghanistan since 2002 (as UNIFEM until 2010) and has supported the development, monitoring and implementation of policies and programmes that both protect and promote the rights of women.

## Key areas of support

All of UN Women's programmes are directed towards strengthening national women's machineries, both governmental and non-governmental, through financial and technical support, as well as forming national partnerships for

the delivery of programming. UN Women channels its funds through national civil society and also supports various ministries in their efforts to mainstream gender responsive policies and planning throughout their institutional processes.

UN Women Afghanistan's programme has three thematic Pillars: Eliminating violence against women; political and economic empowerment, and; coordination and advocacy.

## **Eliminating violence against women**

UN Women's support works to address violence against women (VAW) from both the protection and the prevention angles. The agency has provided much needed technical and financial support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs and civil society in: management and operation of 13 Women Protection Centres and 2 Family Guidance Centres; advocacy and awareness raising to promote VAW prevention; operation of the provincial Elimination of Violence Against Women Commissions and Resource Centres, and; training of and coordination between stakeholders concerning legal reform. UN Women also has a tripartite agreement with UNFPA and WHO to develop a gender-based violence (GBV) referral system, linking services and providers to GBV survivors.

## **Political and economic empowerment**

UN Women's work in this area is focused on:

- Enhancing women's political participation in the 2015 parliamentary elections by engaging all stakeholders in embracing women's right to participate in the elections, thereby ensuring a gender responsive electoral process.
- Capacity development of national institutions, youth, local leaders/influencers and academia to apply international conventions and resolutions such as UN Security Council Resolution 1325, related resolutions and Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women in the Afghan context.
- Capacity development of women's advocates/leaders to act as agents of change in political arena. .

UN Women also spearheaded the development of a multi-agency programme introducing Safe Markets, starting in 2015. The multi-sector initiative will improve engagement of men and women in economic activities in rural and semi-urban environments by improving market spaces. This will include infrastructure and skills enhancement, gender responsive municipal planning, and improved information exchange opportunities on issues that affect communities' development and rights awareness.

## **Coordination and advocacy**

UN Women supports outreach to all stakeholders within the UN Country Team, the international donor community, civil society and national women's machineries in order to fulfil national and international obligations to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as to undertake proactive advocacy on key issues concerning women and girls in Afghanistan. This work particularly focuses on institutionalizing accountability mechanisms to ensure gender-responsive and result-based programming and priorities.

**PROGRAMME BUDGET:** \$16,412,105/year

**STAFF:** 6 international, 55 national

**PROGRAMME SECTORS:** Leadership and participation, economic empowerment, violence prevention, national planning, normative support

**REGIONS ACTIVE:** Countrywide

**OFFICE LOCATIONS:** Kabul

**NATIONAL PARTNERS:** Ministry of Women's Affairs; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Public Health; Ministry of Information; Ministry of Culture and Youth; Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs; Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development; Attorney-General's Office, Supreme Court; Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission; EVAW Commissions; Parliament and the Women's Commission; High Peace Council; Central Statistics Organization

**RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS (year ratified by Afghanistan):** International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1983); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2003); Beijing Platform for Action (1995); UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and associated resolutions (NAP currently under development); Convention on the Rights of the Child (1994)