



# CANADA'S MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN: MEASURING PROGRESS

Report to Parliament

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Government  
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Canada



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## Foreword

In May 2006, Parliament voted to support the extension of Canada's mission in Afghanistan until February 2009. At the time, the Prime Minister undertook to have us, the ministers with primary responsibility for the Afghanistan file, return to Parliament with an annual evaluation of progress. Furthermore, this progress is to be measured against the criteria set out at the 2006 London Conference, which resulted in the Afghanistan Compact.

This review is an opportunity to recall why Canada is in Afghanistan, how Canada is helping the Afghan government and people achieve their objectives of building security and development, and how we are working with friends and partners in the international community toward these goals.

It is vital work, undertaken in the interests of Canada's security as part of a wider effort by other nations and allies to ensure that Afghanistan will no longer be a source of terrorism that could reach our shores and our citizens. We must not lose sight of this fundamental objective.

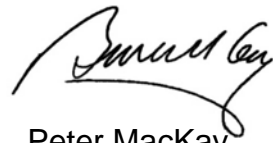
Each of us has gone to Afghanistan to show our support for the Canadians doing diplomatic, development and police training work on the ground, as well as those serving in the military. We have also been able to assess Canada's work and ask Afghans how Canada can best help them address the current challenges and succeed as a stable, self-sustaining state.

The response we hear from Afghans echoes that given by President Karzai when he addressed Canada's Parliament in September: "Afghanistan's democracy will continue to grow, will continue to develop and will continue to gain the confidence of its people, but only with the patience and with the continued support of Canada and other members of the international community." The message that we have taken away from experiences in Afghanistan is that the Afghan people are working hard to secure a better future, but that they need our continued and sustained support.

Canada is working hard to provide a secure context within which development and democracy in Afghanistan can flourish. While progress has been made, many challenges and risks remain. This progress report provides parliamentarians and all Canadians with an

overview of the situation in Afghanistan, viewed broadly in terms of Canada's main areas of contribution, the progress being made and remaining challenges.

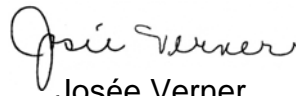
We would like to begin this report by remembering those Canadians who have paid the ultimate price in this mission. We have lost 44 brave members of the Canadian Forces and one senior and well-respected diplomat. Many others have been injured, often seriously. We extend our condolences to the families and friends of those who have sacrificed their lives and our support to those who have sustained injury in the name of Canada.



Peter MacKay  
Minister of Foreign Affairs



Gordon O'Connor  
Minister of National Defence



Josée Verner  
Minister for International Cooperation

## **The Mandate and the Mission**

Following the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) authorized the mission of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in December 2001 [Resolution 1386], to assist the Afghanistan Interim Authority in providing security in and around Kabul. The resolution is binding on all UN member states under international law. This UN mandate has been unanimously renewed by the Security Council every year since, and expanded to help provide security throughout the country and to recognize the importance of progress on security, governance, development and counter-narcotics.

The two decades leading up to the UNSC resolution were marked by violence, oppression and abject poverty for the Afghan people. Under Taliban rule, the country had become a breeding ground for terrorism. For these reasons—which ultimately touch directly on the security of Canada and its allies—Canada responded to the call of the UN Security Council. We did so through the contribution of troops, development assistance, and diplomatic and other efforts to help the new, democratically elected Afghan government.

Those commitments, which were taken by a previous Canadian government, have been supported and strengthened by Canada's New Government. On May 17, 2006, Parliament voted to extend our military mission in Kandahar Province as well as the essential work of our Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to February 2009.

In addition to the United Nations Security Council mandate, further international consensus exists in the Afghanistan Compact. To help Afghanistan realize the goals it has set for itself, Canada has become a key contributor to the Afghanistan Compact, which commits the international community (more than 60 countries as well as international organizations), along with the Government of Afghanistan and the UN, to achieve progress in three critical and interrelated areas of activity for the period 2006-11: security; governance, including the rule of law, human rights and tackling corruption; and economic and social development.

While there are many challenges, establishing security is an essential prerequisite for achieving stability and development in Afghanistan. In the Afghanistan Compact, several outcomes, or benchmarks, have

been identified as key to the success of the country's development. In the area of security, these include disbanding illegally armed groups, strengthening and developing the national security forces and counterterrorism operations, expanding the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force throughout Afghanistan, including through Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and promoting stability and security sector reforms.

Governance, the rule of law and human rights are also serious challenges. In order to build on relatively successful presidential, legislative and provincial council elections, government institutions need to be established that can combat corruption and that can uphold justice and the rule of law and promote human rights. Civil administration, police, prisons and the judiciary were all included in the Afghanistan Compact's plan to build a culture of tolerance, pluralism and a shared sense of citizenship.

Economic and social development also figured largely in the Afghanistan Compact, as the Afghan government, with the support of the international community, identified the reduction of hunger, poverty and unemployment as targets toward the restoration, promotion and development of the country's human, social and physical capital. The goal is to establish a sound basis for a new generation of leaders and professionals; strengthen civil society; and complete the reintegration of returnees, internally displaced persons and ex-combatants.

Finally, recognizing the threat that the narcotics industry poses to security, governance and development, the Afghanistan Compact calls for a sustained and significant reduction in the production and trafficking of narcotics. This problem also affects Canadians directly, since most of the heroin entering Canada comes from Afghanistan. This is a cross-cutting problem that requires, among other things, greater capacity in law enforcement and the judicial system, a wider provision of economic alternatives, improved regional cooperation and no tolerance of official corruption.

Prospects for success in implementing the Compact are greater because the international community and the Afghan people together are working toward common objectives. Canada is making a major contribution to all three priority areas. With commitments of about \$1 billion in development and reconstruction assistance—beginning

in 2001 and continuing to 2011—Canada is now among the top five bilateral donors to Afghanistan.

Thus, the situation in Afghanistan is unique. More than 60 countries as well as international organizations, sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council in cooperation with the elected government of Afghanistan, are taking action to establish security and pursue development.

We often hear comparisons between the situation in Afghanistan and conflicts elsewhere, such as in Iraq. However, the same conditions simply do not exist. Most importantly in this regard, in Afghanistan the international community is working under a UN mandate on an Afghan-designed approach to security and development.

## **Measuring Progress**

The challenges in Afghanistan are complex and diverse. The security situation will continue to be challenging. Political, social and economic development will be difficult until there is more stability and security.

Progress in implementing the Afghanistan Compact is measured by the international community through the work of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB). This body, co-chaired by the UN and the Government of Afghanistan, is composed of seven representatives of the Afghan government and 23 representatives of the international community, including Canada. As the “custodian” of the Afghanistan Compact, the JCMB meets four times a year and produces a detailed status report on Afghanistan’s progress toward meeting its Compact benchmarks biannually.

Canada’s objectives—like those of the Afghan government and our international partners—are focused firmly on the longer term and the future. We believe in the Afghan people and in their desire to have a country where security, development and good governance replace the chaos, violence and destitution of the past. This is a conviction underscored by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his meeting with Prime Minister Harper last September.

At the same time, we have a responsibility to inform Canadians—those who serve on the front lines in Afghanistan, who establish the security

and provide aid and development assistance, and the Canadian public at large—of the results of our military, diplomatic, development and reconstruction efforts. Canadians want to know whether there is progress being made and how we measure that progress. They have a right to know.

To this end, we have developed a series of key questions to help guide our evaluation. These questions include:

- *Is there a democratically elected government of Afghanistan that represents the will of the Afghan people, and does it want the support of the international community in establishing security and providing development assistance?*
- *Do the United Nations, NATO and the Government of Afghanistan welcome Canada's participation in the mission and are our allies willing to share the burden in our sector of Afghanistan?*
- *As progress is made in building the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP), is the Government of Afghanistan prepared to commit more ANA and ANP units to Canada's sector of Afghanistan? Are Canadian and allied forces making progress training the ANA and the ANP?*
- *Is progress being made in combatting corruption in Afghanistan?*
- *Is our assistance making a difference? Further, would leaving Afghanistan jeopardize the progress being made in education, the construction of basic infrastructure and the advancement of the rights of women in our sector?*
- *Is the Afghan government committed to respecting human rights, including the rights of women?*

While the three main areas in which we measure progress are security, governance, and social and economic development, we also consider across all three the level of burden-sharing in the international community. Another consideration is how Canada's contribution stands in relation to that of other nations that have also pledged to assist in Afghanistan.

We have been clear in outlining to the Government of Afghanistan and to the international community that our commitment will be shaped and determined by results and progress in the three main areas. On a broad scale, the Afghan people and government have made considerable progress, as measured against the benchmarks of the Afghanistan Compact.

For Canada, we continue to ask ourselves the essential questions outlined above about our role and effectiveness in contributing to progress. These help us in reviewing the key developments of 2006 relating to Canada's mission in Afghanistan. In responding to them, we have a better measure of accomplishments, progress and what still needs to be done.

## **Security**

Canadian Forces personnel are in Afghanistan at the request of the Government of Afghanistan and under a United Nations mandate. They are also part of a NATO-led mission there comprising military personnel from some 37 nations in total, and are working alongside Afghan security forces.

Within Afghanistan, reflecting the security assistance provided by NATO forces to the government, there are many stable regions where effective development efforts can flourish. This is not so in the south and east of the country, where the security situation is fragile and humanitarian assistance is difficult to deliver. This is why NATO has deployed increased numbers of troops.

There are up to 2,500 Canadian Forces personnel participating in the Afghanistan mission, most of whom are in Kandahar Province in the south. Their challenge is to improve the security situation, help extend the authority of the Government of Afghanistan, and facilitate the delivery of programs and projects that support the economic recovery and rehabilitation of the country. In partnership with Afghan officials and the United Nations, Canadian Forces have also provided the security and stability essential for delivering humanitarian assistance to people in need, such as the distribution of food.

The environment in which our troops and personnel are working is extremely difficult and dangerous. The insurgents, with their methods of violence and terror, are present throughout the area. They seek ruthlessly and relentlessly to disrupt all efforts toward achieving normalcy and progress. They do this through violence and intimidation, including by attacking Afghan government officials, labourers, teachers, women and children.

Canada, along with its allies in the south of Afghanistan— Australia, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, Romania, the United Kingdom and the United States—is bringing security and stability to an area characterized by poor infrastructure, high illiteracy rates and extreme poverty. It is home to many of Afghanistan's most vulnerable people. Much of the area has been beyond the reach of the central or provincial governments for many years.

Last August and September, NATO-led forces under Canadian command conducted Operation Medusa. The purpose of this operation was to remove armed insurgents from the Panjwayi and Zhari districts of Kandahar so that villagers would not have to live in constant fear of the Taliban insurgents.

In order to consolidate the gains from this successful operation and maintain sufficient security for development work, additional forces are required. Canada has already increased the Canadian Forces personnel and assets needed for this effort.

The number of insurgent attacks in the south is well down from a peak in late August/early September 2006, but it is higher than it was last year at this time. While there may be grounds for some cautious optimism, it remains to be seen whether this improvement can be sustained. The insurgents have suffered heavy casualties and a series of tactical defeats, such as during Operation Medusa. The insurgency is seasonal in nature and will be regrouping for future attacks.

Security will continue to be a concern this year. While there have been improvements, we recognize that the insurgency is seasonal in nature. The ability of insurgents to resupply from areas within Pakistan is also a challenge. Canada is discussing with Pakistan potential strategies to improve security along its border with Afghanistan.

We operate in close coordination with our partners in southern Afghanistan. While NATO members have agreed that the Afghanistan mission is their top priority, it is necessary that they demonstrate a level of commitment that reflects its importance. Canada has pushed for improved burden-sharing within NATO, including during the Prime Minister's intervention at the NATO Summit in Riga in November 2006.

There have been some recent successes in convincing allies to boost their commitment to the mission. The U.S., the U.K., Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Romania have all agreed to increase the number of their troops in Afghanistan. Other countries have softened restrictions on the movement of their troops so that they may move to where they are most needed in an emergency situation. They are also providing essential supporting elements, such as helicopters and aircraft.

Canada will continue to encourage our allies to share the burden more broadly and more fairly, particularly in the south. And, building on our partnerships beyond NATO, we are working with countries such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea to bring much-needed support.

Canada's military mission in Afghanistan is scheduled until 2009. We will continue to assess our contribution in accordance with the expressed will of the Government and people of Afghanistan and our own values, and in keeping with our international obligations and the contributions of our partners.

Canada is helping the Government of Afghanistan build its own security institutions in order that it may exercise its sovereignty and authority across the country. Canada has contributed a national training team to provide basic training for the ANA and ongoing operational mentoring and liaison teams. These teams are designed to work directly with units of the ANA in order to improve their capabilities and overall level of professionalism.

NATO and the ANA recently conducted Operation Falcon's Summit (Baaz Tsuka). The operation simultaneously drove out insurgents from towns that they dominated and facilitated the delivery of assistance to local communities. As key participants in this operation, Canadian Forces personnel were proud to be working side by side with the ANA.

***Do the United Nations, NATO and the Government of Afghanistan welcome Canada's participation in the mission and are our allies willing to share the burden in our sector of Afghanistan?***

In devising the operation, NATO and the Afghan military worked closely with provincial and local authorities to limit civilian casualties and ensure that civilians were provided for.

Despite this progress, Afghan security forces are challenged to consolidate the gains being made by the Canadian Forces. The target levels of close to 70,000 ANA forces and more than 62,000 ANP, who are professionally trained, properly equipped and strategically deployed, remain an ambitious objective for the end of 2010.

For Canada's part, we have made important financial and capacity-building contributions to help the Government of Afghanistan reach its goals. Canada is deploying 12 civilian police trainers and advisors in Afghanistan. A further 24 military police officers also participate in training activities.

In addition to significant training activities in Kandahar, Canada has distributed 470 sets of body armour and 1,500 work uniforms, winter coats and boots, flashlights, belts and gloves to police officers, allowing them to be readily identified by the public. Efforts have been dedicated to build or renovate provincial police headquarters, police stations and highway check-points. New pickup trucks were donated to the Afghan National Police.

To date, Canada's financial contribution of nearly \$20 million to the Law and Order Trust Fund is helping to pay the salaries of Afghan police officers, thus furthering the creation of a more professional police force and ensuring security for Afghans.

But the training, mentoring and sustaining of a professional army and police force that is strategically deployed and properly paid and equipped is a long-term challenge. The Government of Afghanistan has told Canada that it will increase the number of ANA and ANP in the south, but it will need more international assistance to build its forces. In response, Canada and NATO allies are making new commitments in this respect, and will continue to work collectively with the Afghan government to help it assume the ultimate responsibility of assuring the freedom, security and well-being of its people.

***As progress is made in building the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP), is the Government of Afghanistan prepared to commit more ANA and ANP units to Canada's sector of Afghanistan? Are Canadian and allied forces making progress in training the ANA and the ANP?***

## **Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights**

Afghanistan has demonstrated notable progress in the area of governance and democratic development since 2001. Let us start with democratic elections.

The October 9, 2004, presidential elections marked a watershed in Afghanistan's transition toward a democratic, self-sustaining state. President Karzai won with 55.4 percent of the popular vote. More than 10 million Afghans registered to vote in the election, which was declared valid by a three-person panel of the joint Afghan-United Nations Electoral Management Body.

*Is there a democratically elected government of Afghanistan that represents the will of the Afghan people, and does it want the support of the international community in establishing security and providing development assistance?*

Parliamentary and provincial council elections were held on September 18, 2005. Election day was a relatively peaceful event and approximately 6.8 million voters turned out (43 percent female and 57 percent male).

Afghanistan's emergence as a young democracy was also marked with the inauguration of its first parliament in more than three decades on December 19, 2005. The National Assembly is composed of 249 members of the Wolesi Jirga (lower house), all elected, and 102 members of the Meshrano Jirga (upper house), some appointed. Afghans now have a voice through their elected members, as they work to rebuild and reshape their country.

Afghanistan's parliament is proving to be an effective forum for debate and provincial councils are now functioning. These are not insignificant steps for a country only just embarking on democracy building.

Canada's investment in building governance institutions and lasting capacity is helping Afghanistan effect enduring, sustainable change. Since 2001, Canada has contributed more than \$33 million to assist the democratic process in Afghanistan and fully supported the 2004 presidential election as well as the 2005 parliamentary and provincial council elections. Canada contributed to the elections process by providing materials and equipment for voter registration, supporting civic education campaigns, and funding experts to observe and monitor the proceedings.

Canada is helping Afghanistan advance the rule of law and human rights by sharing expertise through the training of judges and prosecutors and encouraging a transparent and qualifications-based process for appointments. We have recently increased our support for the reform and development of Afghan legal and justice institutions.

In Kandahar Province, Canada's multi-disciplinary Provincial Reconstruction Team, combining development and political advisors as well as civilian police and military protection personnel, is bolstering governance, rule of law and human rights in Afghanistan. This team works with local authorities to support Afghan-led efforts to strengthen governance structures. For example, we have installed a computer network linking the provincial and national governments.

We are also working to promote regional cooperation and stability with Afghanistan's neighbours, alongside other contributors such as the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Nations, NATO, the World Bank, the European Union and the Aga Khan Development Network.

Good governance, rule of law and respect for human rights are inextricably linked to the deepening and broadening of security for the Afghan people and to the economic development of their society. These principles underlie the necessary institutions in society that protect the people of Afghanistan—their rights and the choices they make. They nurture and strengthen the roots of the new democracy. Providing security and stability is crucial if democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights are to take root.

But it is ultimately the Government of Afghanistan itself that must continue to make a genuine effort to promote human rights, empower people at the local level and combat corruption. To this end, we are encouraging Afghanistan to ratify the UN Convention Against Corruption and to adapt national legislation accordingly. With Canadian assistance, Afghanistan is indeed working to increase its capacity to comply with, and report on, its human rights treaty obligations, and to develop procedures aimed at preventing arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and corruption. Afghanistan recently adopted a clear and transparent national appointments mechanism.

*Is progress  
being made in  
combatting  
corruption in  
Afghanistan?*

Extraordinary strides have been made in only a few years, but there is still more to do on this front. We will continue to monitor closely the creation and evolution of governance structures in Afghanistan. And we will continue to contribute our share in assisting the Government of Afghanistan and the Afghan people as they build the basic institutions of democracy in their country—institutions that we in Canada often take for granted, but are only in their infancy in Afghanistan.

## **Social and Economic Development**

Development and security must go hand in hand. Thanks to NATO's operations and Canada's military presence in Afghanistan, security has improved enough for reconstruction and development to begin in earnest. Alongside the Canadian Forces—whose efforts establish the stable and secure environment in which development can take place—members of the RCMP, CIDA, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and Corrections Canada are working with their Afghan and international partners to select, plan, implement and monitor development projects.

Canada's support to economic and social development in Afghanistan is aimed primarily at helping Afghans build their communities and livelihoods, and meeting their basic needs. Canada also supports programs that seek to rebuild the infrastructure needed to support development objectives.

Where possible, Canada's assistance flows through the Government of Afghanistan's own national programs. Some of these include the National Rural Access Programme, the National Area Based Development Program and the Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan. The programs allow the Afghan authorities to show leadership in helping their people and at the same time build their capacity to deliver social and economic assistance.

A further example of a successful Afghan program supported by Canada is the National Solidarity Program (NSP). It promotes rural development and improved governance and has benefited half of the rural population in all provinces, including Kandahar.

The NSP is grassroots democracy in action. It starts with local communities selecting their leaders to form a community development council. These councils identify projects to be funded by the Afghan government that benefit the entire community. After receiving training from program staff on basic project management, the councils implement small to medium-scale projects with tangible results. These councils continue to pay dividends to their communities by providing a forum for community dialogue, offering the right-fit solutions to community needs, and creating community ownership of development.

The goals outlined in the Afghanistan Compact include the expansion, by 2010, of voluntary community development councils to all villages, access to safe drinking water for 90 percent of villages and sanitation for 50 percent. The goal also includes the construction of roads to connect 40 percent of all villages, increasing access to markets, employment and social services.

Fewer than one percent of NSP projects have been targeted or threatened by insurgents. That is the added benefit of community-led development. Additionally, these projects give councils confidence in their future and the direction their government is taking them.

The completion of development projects is important. But equally important is the establishment of a reliable structure for communicating community needs to the Government of Afghanistan and the international community. Through the elected community development councils, villages once cut off from outside support now have a voice.

Now, the community development councils are able to identify needs and channel the solutions necessary to respond to them. For instance, when the World Health Organization launched a polio eradication campaign, it turned to the councils first. When the Governor of Kandahar requested district leaders to travel to the provincial capital for discussions on the security situation, the councils elected delegates to represent Kandahar's communities. When emergency food distribution is required, the councils help to identify the most needy.

Canada's assistance is also helping to increase the role played by women and girls in society. Through the NSP, women sit on community development councils throughout the country, where they have a voice in the development of their country. Five years ago women had no voice in public life.

We see through these examples that Canada's support to the NSP is channelling assistance to where the communities themselves want it most, and that we're helping to build a strong, representative, structured foundation for long-term development at the same time.

Along with international partners and the Afghanistan government, contributions have helped Afghans form 16,000 community development councils, 407 in Kandahar, as of December 2006. More than 22,000 community improvement projects have been initiated. Of these, some 9,500 have been completed.

The capacity of the Government of Afghanistan to reach each community and district throughout Kandahar is still weak. But it is growing because of Canadian support to Afghan communities through the NSP. Canada is actively working with the Government of Afghanistan to extend the reach of this program throughout the entire province.

***Is the Afghan government committed to respecting human rights, including the rights of women?***

Canada is also supporting innovative, flexible economic development through mechanisms such as the Microfinance Investment and Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA). In partnership with the Government of Afghanistan, Canada is promoting equitable economic growth throughout the country by funding small but significant projects, particularly those that help women. Canada is the leading donor country, having contributed \$40 million since the program began in 2003.

Microfinance programs are providing savings services and small loans to more than 300,000 Afghans, 72 percent of whom are women, enabling them to start their own businesses such as tailor shops and grocery stores, or buy land and animals to better support themselves and their families. These programs are helping Afghans to build communities and a viable economy, and to create jobs.

In the area of education, Canada and the international community have helped over five million Afghan children (one third girls) go to school, compared to 700,000 (no girls) in 2001, while 363,000 teachers have been provided with teaching materials.

Recognizing that 85 percent of women and 57 percent of men lack basic reading and writing skills, the Government of Afghanistan has launched a literacy program. Through UNICEF, Canada is supporting programs to teach basic reading, writing and arithmetic to 4,600 Kandaharis, 80 percent of them women.

Led by the Afghan Ministry of Education, Canada is helping implement a girls' education project that will establish up to 4,000 community-based schools and after-school learning programs and provide training for 9,000 new female school teachers. In 11 of the 34 provinces (including Kandahar), 120,000 schoolchildren (85 percent girls) will benefit from these programs.

In order to address the basic needs of Afghans, Canada has, for example, provided winter survival kits, including blankets and warm jackets, for up to 20,000 families in need, as well as food aid. Canada is also providing support to a measles vaccination program targeting 189,000 children and 10,000 women of childbearing age, as well as the vaccination of some 350,000 children under the age of five against polio in Kandahar province.

In the area of infrastructure development, in Kandahar, as of November 2006, construction had begun on several large water reservoirs and another five kilometres of water distribution networks to supply much-needed water to Kandahar and its residents. More than one hundred kilometres of irrigation canals are being rehabilitated. A network of provincial roads and electrical grids is being repaired, resulting in close to 170 kilometres of new roads and bridges, 69 microhydro initiatives and 42 diesel generators, for instance.

Canada is also funding the implementation of a number of quick-impact projects in Kandahar. These projects include rural infrastructure, the promotion of income security, and humanitarian relief efforts. They are designed to meet both the basic needs of internally displaced persons, especially those most affected by military operations, and the needs of more stable communities. Canada's spending on quick-impact and other projects in Kandahar is expected to meet or exceed \$20 million this fiscal year—about one fifth of our annual development budget for Afghanistan.

***Is our assistance making a difference? Further, would leaving Afghanistan jeopardize the progress being made in education, the construction of basic infrastructure and the advancement of the rights of women in our sector?***

Despite progress made over the past 15 years, Afghanistan is heavily contaminated with explosive remnants. The goal of making Afghanistan free of mines and unexploded ordnance takes on greater significance, considering an average of 60 Afghans are killed or injured by mines every month. Half of those victims are under the age of 18.

The Afghanistan Compact's objective is to reduce by 70 percent the land area contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance—estimated at 720 million square metres—by the end of 2010. As a signatory to the Ottawa anti-personnel mine ban treaty, Afghanistan has received a substantial contribution from Canada to fund the clearance of anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance scattered throughout the country which is helping to improve the safety of the Afghan people and to promote development.

Demining activities such as minefield survey and clearance, stockpile destruction, mine-risk education, victim assistance and capacity building are ongoing in Kandahar Province and across Afghanistan to open up more land for agriculture, pasture and housing.

In summary, Canada's engagement and assistance in Afghanistan go far beyond our military contribution to security and stability. Achieving our objectives is dependent on progress being made in economic and social development in Afghanistan. Most importantly, it is dependent on working closely with Afghan authorities, representatives and communities—all aspects of society—to give support, encouragement and desperately needed funding to help to rebuild the country.

More than that, it is giving a lifeline to those whose potential, whose means of subsistence, whose opportunities for a better life have deliberately and often viciously been curtailed by the Taliban and its supporters.

Would our departure jeopardize progress in social and economic development, in human rights and education? The evidence we present on what Canada is doing gives only one answer: an unequivocal yes, it would.

## Conclusion

This report provides an overview of the Canadian contribution in achieving the objectives set out in annual UNSC resolutions and in the 2006 Afghanistan Compact agreed to between the international community and the Government of Afghanistan.

We want to help the Afghans build their country, where human rights are respected and where development, rule of law and good governance go hand in glove. In so doing, we can advance and protect Canada's security, which is, and will remain, a significant reason for our presence and our contribution in that country.

Canada's mission in Afghanistan remains difficult and dangerous. Canadians and our allies on the ground are doing courageous and important work in trying and threatening conditions. The violence will undoubtedly continue and has been known to ebb and flow with the seasons. Taliban insurgents may, in fact, step up their activities this year in response to our successes.

Nonetheless, Canadian programs are supporting the ability of Afghanistan and its people to manage their own development after years of civil war, strife and oppression. The difference that we make there is a testament not just thanks to our efforts, but also rightly due to the hard work and determination of the Afghan people.

Measuring progress in social and economic development in the difficult environment of Afghanistan is a challenge. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to see the Government of Afghanistan starting to take ownership of its development agenda and priorities.

This is a relatively new government that has made progress to establish a comprehensive development framework for international assistance that includes detailed implementation and monitoring mechanisms as well as a crisis management group to deal more effectively with the four southern provinces where security is most problematic. The Afghan government recognizes that poor security in south and southeast Afghanistan is slowing the pace of development projects and the growing narcotics trade is helping to fuel the insurgency.

Canada will keep all development projects under constant review to ensure that our development efforts align closely with the intent and purpose described in annual UN Security Council resolutions, and with the development benchmarks established by the international community in the Afghanistan Compact.

Canadians can be proud of the sacrifices and contributions made by our forces and personnel in Afghanistan in 2006. We are a country standing up for our interests, a country actively protecting our security, and engaged where it counts.

We invite you to share this report with all those who are interested in understanding Canada's role in Afghanistan. More information on Canada's mission in Afghanistan is available at [www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca](http://www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca)