

# AFGHANISTAN

## Conflict and displacement

### Crisis Overview

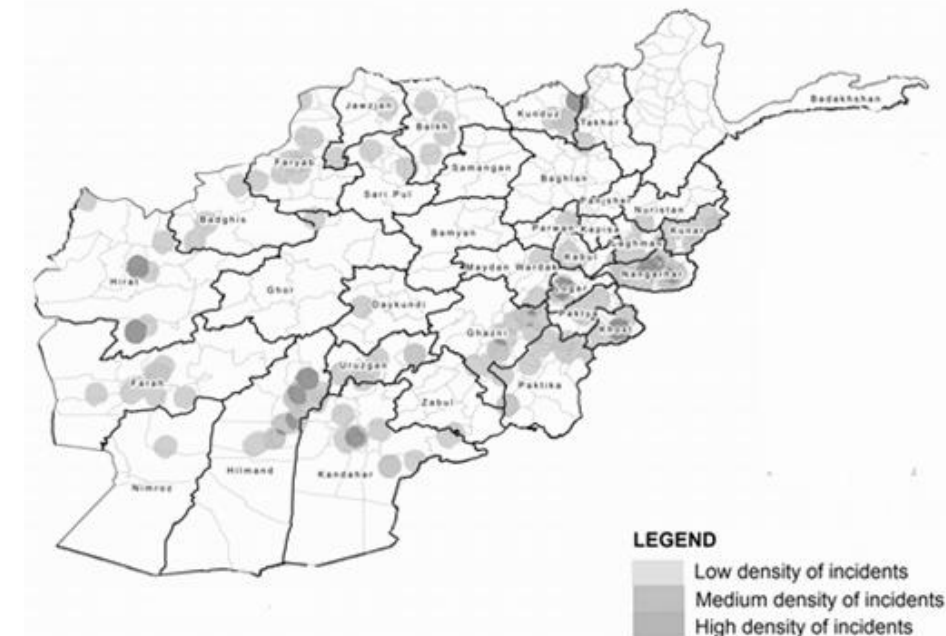
Conflict, natural disasters and a lack of development have turned Afghanistan into one of the poorest countries in the world. Although the country made significant improvements over the last years, particularly with regards to the reduction of <5 and maternal mortality rates, poverty is still widespread, compounded by a lack of health and social services. Existing vulnerabilities are compounded by frequently reoccurring natural disasters including floods, droughts, epidemics, earthquakes, landslides, storms and periods of extreme temperature. Insecurity and armed conflict continue to affect a large part of the country, leading to significant protection concerns, large scale displacement and a lack of humanitarian access. The epicentre of the conflict, which used to be in the south and east of the country, has spread to most Afghan provinces, particularly to the North.

The future of Afghanistan will be shaped by two major events. Firstly, all international forces will withdraw from the country by 2014. It is expected that along with the military transition, there will be a significant reduction in development assistance, resulting in a difficult socio-economic transition as well. Secondly, Afghanistan is the largest and most protracted refugee crisis in history. During the past 10 years, over 4.7 million refugees have returned. The possible return of an estimated 3-4 million registered and undocumented Afghans still residing in Iran and Pakistan could significantly impact the economy and security situation in the country, as Afghanistan has limited capacity to cope with these returns.

### Most affected areas

- South, southeast, northeast and west due to the fragile security situation.
- Displacement caused by insecurity, natural disasters, economic migration and the influx of returnees particularly affects urban centres and border areas.
- Poverty levels are highest in the remote east and northeast regions, and the food security situation in the north-eastern provinces of Nuristan and Badakhshan is currently classified as IPC phase 3 (Crisis).

Local (civilian) population targeted (dead and injured) in security incidents for the month of August 2012 – USAID 2012/09/02



### Priority concerns

- Restricted humanitarian access in conflict affected areas and a lack of information on humanitarian needs.
- Lack of services in informal settlements where IDPs, returnees and urban poor are residing.
- Major protection needs, including indiscriminate attacks, arbitrary arrest and torture, discrimination against women, girls and minorities, GBV and trafficking, particularly affecting children and women living in Taliban controlled areas.
- Lack of access to health care in conflict affected areas, particularly affecting children <5, pregnant and lactating women and communities exposed to communicable diseases.
- 30% of the population is food insecure with 2.1 million people classified as 'very severely food insecure'. IDPs, female headed households, persons with a disability, urban returnees and minorities are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity.

## Operational Constraints

- The general rise in insecurity over the past four to five years, spreading to both eastern Afghanistan and northern Afghanistan continues to hamper access (ODI 2012/07/03).
- In addition, access is limited by the rugged physical environment, a heavily destroyed communication structure, harsh weather conditions, and limited internal flight connectivity, particularly to remote areas (DG ECHO 2010, DG ECHO 2012/08/02).
- Limited and inaccurate information has been an endemic problem in Afghanistan. The humanitarian response is affected by the lack of accurate, available data by which to make immediate as well as longer-term planning decisions (HAP 2010).
- Humanitarian workers continue to be subject to attacks. In 2009, the Humanitarian Policy Group cited Afghanistan as one of the three most violent contexts for aid work. 14 incidents of direct and indirect attacks against humanitarian workers were registered in August 2012, including IED detonations against humanitarian vehicles, abduction, threats and intimidation and theft (HPG 2009, OCHA 2012/08/20).
- The 2012 Consolidated Appeal is underfunded at 39%, forcing clusters to scale back programmes (OCHA 2012/09/30).

## Lessons Learnt

### Humanitarian needs and response

- During the 2007/2008 National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, respondents rated the provision of improved provision of drinking water as a top development priority followed by better health facilities, the rehabilitation of irrigation systems (in rural areas), and improved roads (urban areas) (NRVA 2008).

### Displacement in Afghanistan

- In contrast to economic migrants who often move as individuals, Afghan IDPs tend to be displaced as family units (IDMC 2011, NRVA 2008).
- In Pashtun tradition, it is common for one or two men to stay behind to look after the livestock and property. The risk of family separation is high if the displacement proves protracted, but the strategy helps to protect property and facilitate returns (IDMC 2011).
- The longer a person has been displaced in Afghanistan, the more difficult it is to find a durable solution to his or her displacement situation, due to difficulties with regards to reclaiming property after many years of absence. In addition, social

support networks in the place of origin of the displaced tend to weaken over time (IDMC 2011).

- IDPs living outside camps and sites have not been adequately mapped and monitored in Afghanistan. IDPs who live in a host community – some of them with host families – have different protection and assistance needs than IDPs in camps and sites, and the absence of information has a negative impact on humanitarian redress (IDMC 2011).

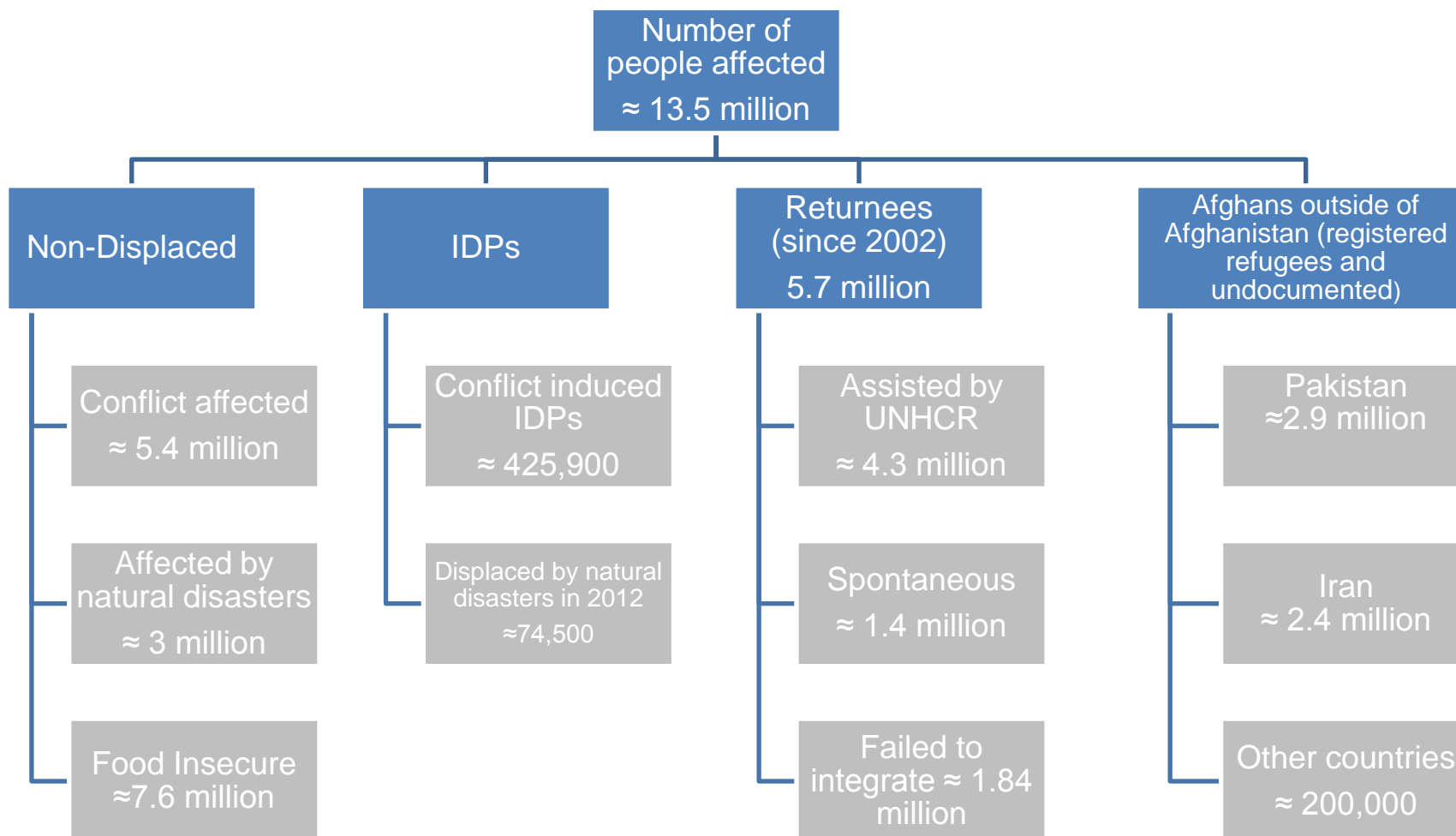
## Information Gaps and Needs

- Sex and age disaggregated data on IDPs, returnees and affected non displaced populations.
- Reliable and up to date information on population movements, including secondary and tertiary displacement.
- Lack of reliable data on livelihood sources and unemployment rates per population group.
- Lack of updated information on specific areas controlled by Taliban and other insurgent groups.

## Recommendations for further assessments

- Profiling and protection monitoring of IDPs and returnees.
- Assessment of key characteristics of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, including livelihood skills, especially among those that are likely to return to Afghanistan.
- Establishment of a needs assessment taskforce comprising of multiple stakeholders at the provincial level (Food Security and Agriculture Cluster 2012/09/14).
- Mapping of on-going and planned assessments (Survey of Surveys).
- Sex and age disaggregated data is needed to improve the analysis of specific needs of sub-groups of the population. Inclusion of sufficient female staff in monitoring teams is essential to ensure needs of girls and women are reflected (UNHCR 2012/05/31).

## Humanitarian Profile



### Humanitarian Profile

The humanitarian profile attempts to account for the number of people having humanitarian needs arising from a given emergency. It is a count of the number of “affected” people in the emergency. Different groups are identified within the humanitarian profile, such as displaced, non-displaced, IDPs and refugees. Source: IASC 2011

Estimated figures are represented as ≈. Available figures did not allow for the figures to be mutually exclusive. For example, the people that are affected by conflict may consist of people that also belong to the group of people that are food insecure. Secondary and tertiary displacement is not represented.

Sources: OCHA MYR Fact Sheet 2012/08/18, OCHA MYR 2012/06/12, OCHA 2012/08/20

## Stakeholders

### Armed Opposition Groups

#### Taliban

- Taliban emerged in the early 1990s in northern Pakistan amid violence following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Through negotiation and open fighting, the Taliban were able to conquer and administer up to 90% of the country by 1996 and formed the de facto Government until overthrown by the US in November 2001. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates were the only three countries which recognized the Taliban as the legitimate Government (CFR 2009, SAS 2009).
- Taliban militants are currently thought to be only 20,000 strong. However, they have steadily extended their influence and rendered vast tracts of Afghanistan insecure, having established through parallel governance structures in some regions of the country (EASO 2012/06; BBC 2012/09/24).
- The general objective of the Taliban is to eliminate U.S. influence in Afghanistan and reinstate Taliban rule – implying a strict form of Islamic law. However, the Taliban is not a monolith; it has several factions and groups, joined for various reasons, ranging from global jihad to local grievances (CFR 2011).
- The competition between Taliban fighters - for instance between insurgent groups associated with Mullah Omar's Quetta Shura (leadership council), the Haqqani network, and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-e Islami – has continued in 2012. Violent rivalries between commanders of these insurgent groups have resulted in more than 40 lives so far in 2012 (Aljazeera 2012/08/28).

#### Al-Qaeda:

- ISAF and U.S. intelligence networks have reported an estimate of no more than 50 al-Qaeda members currently present in Afghanistan and that this number has been stable over the past three years (CNN 2012/04/20).
- Most of al-Qaeda leadership has moved to Pakistan with a rise of affiliates in Yemen and Somalia, continuing to launch attacks on Afghan territory (ICG 2012).
- Central and leading factions of the Taliban, led by the Quetta Shura, have distanced themselves from al-Qaeda increasingly overtly, claiming that al-Qaeda has had a damaging effect on a potential reconciliation and has been the origin of many peace spoilers in Afghanistan. There has not, however, been an official renunciation of al-Qaeda by the Taliban to date (RUSI 2012/09).

#### Other insurgent groups:

- There are a number of other militant factions and groups acting in Afghanistan. The Afghan landscape has become a patchwork of militia fiefdoms with varying levels of internal organisation. Armed groups include the Haqqani Network, Mujaheddin parties, tribal militias, warlords, paramilitary organizations, a trained state officer corps, armed intelligence services, and mono-ethnic and multi-ethnic armed groups and alliances. These groups are motivated by a range of objectives and receive funding from diverse sources. Collusion between insurgents and corrupt Government officials in Kabul and the nearby provinces has increased, leading to a profusion of criminal networks in the Afghan heartland (UNAMA 2012/06, SAS 2012, ICG 2012, ICG 2011).

### Pro-Government Forces

#### Afghan Government Forces

- The current number of Afghan Government Forces, including the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP), amounts to more than 344,000. The objective for November 2012 is to have a total number of 352,000 deployed Afghan Government forces (195,000 ANA troops and 157,000 ANP troops) (Brookings 2012/09).

#### Afghan Local Police

- In 2010, the Afghan Local Police (ALP) program was initiated. The program seeks to train Afghan recruits who are not part of the main Afghan army or police. These police forces are regarded as an important stopgap to secure remote corners of Afghanistan as international troops withdraw. In 2012, the number of officers in the ALP program has increased notably, and is estimated to comprise 30,000 officers before the end of year (Brookings 2012/09).
- However, the expansion of the ALP has not been unproblematic. Firstly, it has resulted in a subsequent rise of informal militias, many operating under the guise of the ALP, posing a security threat to some rural areas. There have been numerous instances of powerful warlords pressuring local leaders to formalize pre-existing militias into the ALP around tribal, ethnic, or political lines, in order to use these units for personal avenge or influence etc. Secondly, there have been regular reports of ALP officers committing human rights abuses in their respective areas of operations. Not uncommonly these abuses have targeted girls and women. Thirdly, there has been an increase in “green-on-blue” violence, attacks from Afghan soldiers on American soldiers, with the ALP forces accounting for a disproportionately large part (Refugee International 28/06, BBC 2012/09/02, UNAMA 2012/07).



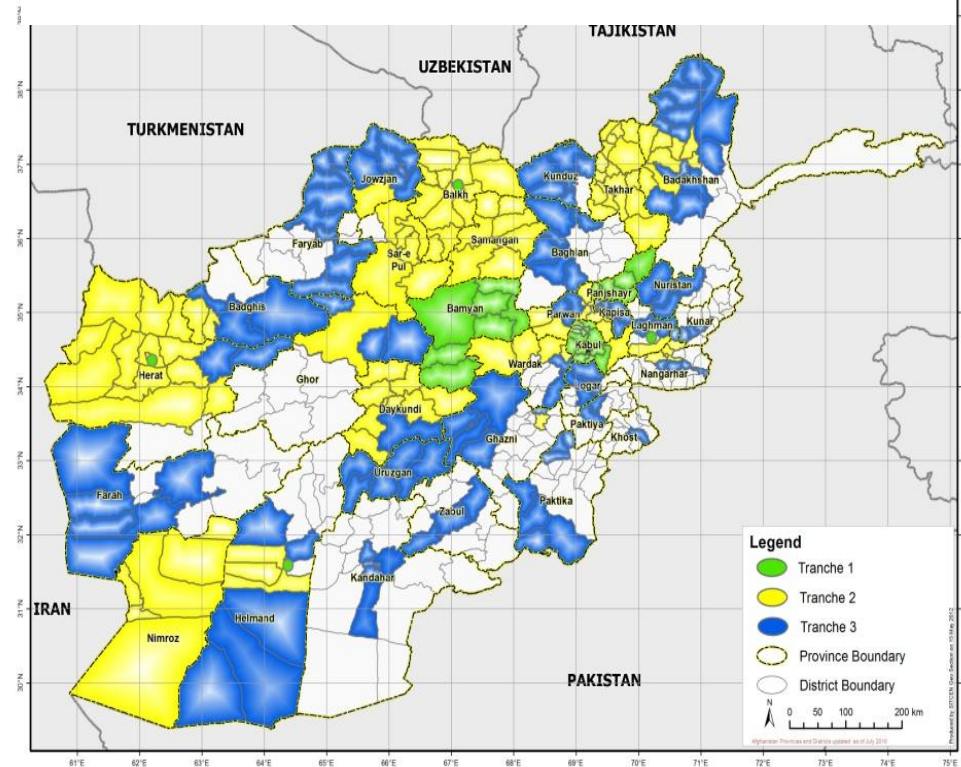
## NATO

- The **International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)** is a NATO led security mission established by the UN Security Council on 20 December 2001. ISAF currently deploys around 110,000 troops, with the US contributing the largest share (Brookings 2012/09).

## Operation Enduring Freedom

- In 2001, the US initiated **Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan (OEF)** to uproot the Taliban and al-Qaeda from the country and capture its leader bin Laden. OEF is a joint US and Afghan operation and distinct from ISAF, though both operations cover the whole country (UNAMA, 2010).
- US President Obama announced the withdrawal of 23,000 troops by the end of September 2012, marking the beginning of the complete US and NATO withdrawal from the country by 2014. President Obama's timetable and exit strategy were agreed on at the NATO summit in May 2012, reiterating that NATO troops will leave by 2014. The current number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, including ISAF and OEF amounts to 84,000. The Afghan Government Forces are expected to deploy some 350,000 troops by 2014, taking over the full security responsibility (Brookings 2012/09, CNN 2012/04/22).
- In May 2012, President Karzai announced the third Transition Tranche (out of five). Transition has begun in every one of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan, including every provincial capital, and will cover almost two-thirds of the country's districts. The transition implementation will expand to all areas of Afghanistan by 2014, albeit with continued support from ISAF in areas displaying security needs. (NATO 2012).

Afghanistan Transition Map - NATO 2012



## Displacement Profile

### Main characteristics

- There have been six major periods of displacement and population movement since the 1970s – all directly relating to periods of armed conflict and political instability: the Soviet invasion and subsequent conflict (1978–88); the Soviet withdrawal and subsequent internal armed conflict (1989–96); Taliban rule (1996–2001); the post-9/11 US-led invasion (2001–2002); the defeat of the Taliban and the establishment of the interim Government (2002–2004); and the neo-Taliban insurgency (2004 to the present) (HPG 2012).
- Data from 2009 suggests that 76% of Afghans have been displaced by conflict at least once in their lives (ICRC 2009).
- Natural disasters are another on-going cause of displacement, with recurrent droughts, floods, avalanches, landslides and river bank erosion frequently causing displacement (HPG 2012).
- Major displacement issues include: the possible return of a large number of Afghan refugees by the end of 2012, who will face increased risk of secondary displacement on return, the high volume of returning refugees unable to settle or reintegrate in their places of origin, the scarcity of viable land and the challenges of land allocation procedures, the blurred lines between migration and displacement, and the reduced options for durable solutions at a time of still on-going insecurity (Schrepfer and Tyler 2012/08, ODI 2012/07/03).

### IDPs

- As of 30 June, conflict-related violence had displaced approximately 425,900 people in Afghanistan of which a quarter of them were newly displaced in the first half of 2012. Conflict-induced displacement in the first six months of 2012 was 14% higher than in the same period last year. A further 74,500 were displaced by natural disasters. However, available statistics are not complete; there is no comprehensive monitoring of internal displacement across the country, and figures do not include many of those located in urban or peri-urban areas, nor those displaced to inaccessible and insecure rural areas (UNSC 2012/09/03 UNAMA 2012/07, HPG 2012).
- The two main reasons for displacement are armed conflict and general insecurity. Other causes of displacement are threats/intimidation, military operations, internal tribal conflict, impact of cross border shelling, extortion, illegal-taxation and land disputes (UNHCR 2012/05/31).

- The rise in internal displacement is important owing to the significant reintegration trend to date of secondary displacement and urban migration, both employed as coping mechanisms by returnees and driven also by poor security conditions in many places of high return (World Bank 2011).
- During August, around 6,500 individuals were reportedly newly displaced due to conflict and insecurity in the Central, North, South and Western parts of the country (OCHA 2012/08/20).
- The southern, eastern and the western regions produce the majority of conflict-induced internal displacement cases in Afghanistan (UNHCR 2012/05/31).
- UNHCR estimates that the number of people displaced inside the country could rise to 700,000 by the end of 2013 (Rowling 2012/07/14).
- The majority of the recorded IDP populations belong to the Pashtun ethnicity (61%), while 6% are Tajik, 2% are of Balouch ethnicity and 4% are Hazara and Uzbek (UNHCR 2012/05/31).
- Children (0-18 years) constitute the highest population group representing 64% of this population, while the elderly make up 6%. The gender distribution is almost equal with 52% male and 48% female, which is similar to the overall demographics of Afghanistan (UNHCR 2012/05/31, NRVA 2008 ).
- Causes of displacement are found to vary across regions.
  - In the south, in 2010 and 2011, the key causes of displacement were joint military operations, insecurity, threats/ intimidation and to some extent forced recruitment and illegal taxation.
  - In the west, the key causes reported were conflict/ military operations, general insecurity and land disputes.
  - In the north, conflict and military operation, threats and intimidation are main causes for displacement, while illegal taxation, forced recruitment and inter-tribal conflict are also contributing factors. In addition, alleged abuses by the Afghan Local Police are factors prompting displacement.
  - In the east, cross border shelling from Pakistan and joint military operations are the main causes of internal displacement, in addition to land disputes, threats and harassment by insurgents which also contributed to internal displacement in that region (UNHCR 2012/05/31).
- Economic incentives, act as important *pull* factors towards urban centres. Over 90% of respondents in a UNHCR study on IDPs living in informal settlements in urban centres came from a rural community of origin. Main reasons for residing in urban areas was security, better economic opportunities and lack of available/arable land in areas of origin (UNHCR 2011).

- IDPs reportedly show a preference for “non temporary” settlement and are unwilling to return to their communities of origin for reasons related to the lack of livelihood opportunities (unemployment, lack of land, food insecurity) (UNHCR 2011)
- Lack of humanitarian access to IDPs remains a key constraint almost in all regions across the country, e.g. in the south-east, humanitarian actors do not have access to almost 95% of the IDP locations while in the northern region humanitarian access is estimated at 80% and in the northeast it is 55% (UNHCR 2012/05/31).

## Refugees

- Currently, there are around 3 million registered Afghans worldwide, the majority of them residing in Pakistan and Iran. The vast majority (80%) has been in exile for over twenty years (UNHCR 2012/05/03).
- A quadripartite consultation process was initiated in 2011 to develop a multi-year ‘Solutions Strategy’ (2012-2014), which addresses the return and reintegration of Afghan refugees. This initiative involves the principal countries in the region - Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan - and UNHCR.
- With the expiration of the present Tripartite Agreement on 31 December 2012, along with the validity of the Proof of Registration (PoR) cards held by Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the future of refugees in Pakistan and Iran is uncertain. Some Pakistani officials have been quoted as saying registration cards for Afghan refugees will not be renewed, and that they will be asked to leave the country. However, the position of the Government of Pakistan towards extension of the PoR cards is currently unclear. UNHCR stated that Afghans in Pakistan will maintain their refugee status regardless of the Government of Pakistan's decision (IRIN 2012/08/24, UNAMA 2012/09/20, DAWN 2012/08/31, PI 2012/08/29).
- In addition, Iran continues to deport undocumented economic migrants back to Afghanistan, more than 211,000 in 2011, on the grounds that they are economic migrants instead of refugees (USDoS 2011, Margesson, 2007).
- Reluctance on the side of refugees to return has been reported, caused by poor socio-economic conditions in Afghanistan, lack of access to land and housing; lack of livelihood opportunities; security risks in areas of origin, and limited access to basic services (UNHCR 2012/05/03).

## Pakistan

- There are 1.9 million registered Afghan refugees and an estimated 1 million undocumented Afghans in Pakistan (OCHA 2012/08/20).

- The majority of Afghans came to Pakistan in 1979 and 1989, with other significant influxes in 1985, 1995 and 1996 (UNHCR 2012/05/03). 52.5% of them are male, and 47.5 % female (UNHCR 2012/05/03).
- Pakistan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee conventions and there is no national refugee legal framework in place (USDoS 2011, UNHCR 2011).
- Since March 2002, UNHCR has facilitated the return of approximately 3.7 million registered Afghans from Pakistan (UNHCR 2011).
- The majority of Afghans in Pakistan are Pashtun (85.1%), while the rest consists of Tajiks, Uzbeks and other ethnic groups (UNHCR 2012/05/03).
- More than 60% of Afghan refugees live in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA, which are among the poorest and most economically deprived areas in Pakistan (UNHCR 2012/05/03).
- Around 40% of Afghans live in refugee villages/camps and 60% live in rural and urban areas (UNHCR 2012/05/03).
- The majority of Afghans in Pakistan are young, with children up to 9 years-old constituting the largest group – an indication of high population growth rate among the Afghan refugees (UNHCR 2012/05/03).
- Equal to the number of people per household in Afghanistan, the average Afghan household in Pakistan consists of seven individuals (UNHCR 2012/05/03, NRVA 2008).
- An analysis of current repatriation figures suggests that the increase in Afghan population in Pakistan is higher than the number of individuals repatriated (UNHCR 2012/05/03).

## Iran

- There are 1 million registered Afghan refugees and an estimated 1.4 million undocumented Afghans in Iran (OCHA 2012/08/20).
- Iran is signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol.
- Most refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran reside in urban areas, with only some 3% living in rural areas (UNHCR 2011).
- Hazara and Tajiks represent over 70% of the Afghan refugee population (UNHCR 2011).
- Based on Government statistics, 57% of Afghans live in the provinces of Tehran, Khorasan Razavi and Esfahan, 22% in the provinces of Kerman, Fars and Qom,

13% in Alborz, Semnan and Markazi and 8% in the provinces of Qazvin, South Khorasan, Baninajar settlement in Khuzestan, Gilan and Mazandaran (UNHCR 2011).

- Almost half of the registered Afghans are < 18 years old (UNHCR 2011).






## Returnees

- Since 2002, some 5.7 million Afghans have returned home. More than 4.3 million of these returnees have received UNHCR assistance, while 1.4 million returned 'spontaneously'. As a result, nearly one quarter of the estimated entire population of Afghanistan is returnee (UNHCR 2012/08/29, UNHCR 2012/05/03, CFC 2012/03).
- While there were massive returns between 2002 and 2008, the past three years have seen a steady decline in overall return figures. This trend reflects the lack of access to livelihoods and basic services in return areas, and heightened insecurity in some parts of Afghanistan, where civilian casualties and internal displacement have been increasing (UNHCR 2012/05/03).
- However, the number of Afghan refugees returning from Pakistan has increased by 24% in the first eight months of 2012, compared to the same period in 2011. Between January and August, over 50,000 individuals returned from Pakistan, Iran and other countries. 40,000 of these returnees have come from Pakistan. The rate of return from Iran is broadly similar to last year, with slightly more than 10,000 returns so far this year (UNHCR 2012/08/29).
- An average of 213 refugees has returned to Afghanistan every day, representing a 12% increase on the same period last year when the daily average was 190 individuals (UNHCR 2012/08/29).
- Many returning refugees from Pakistan have attributed the increase to the repatriation programme in Pakistan being run throughout the year, instead of stopping during the winter months as in previous years; but also to high cost of living, increased competition with locals for employment opportunities; and escalating security issues in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (UNHCR 2012/08/29).
- A 'Solutions Strategy' for returnees, designed by the Afghan Government and UNHCR, is currently underway in Afghanistan. As part of this strategy, 48 potential return areas inside Afghanistan, including Kabul, Jalalabad, Herat and Bamyán will be identified. Under the repatriation assistance programme, registered refugees coming back to Afghanistan receive an average of US\$150 per person to cover transportation as well as the initial cost of settling back home (UNHCR 2012/08/29).
- A survey under urban returnees showed that they have lived, on average, for 15 years in exile in Iran or Pakistan (Majidi 2011/01/25).
- In 2012, the main provinces of return in Afghanistan are Kabul (21%), Nangarhar (12%), Kunduz (11%), Herat and Baghlan (6% each), Kunar (5%) Kandahar, Paktya, Balkh, Logar and Laghman (4% each). Since 2002, most have returned to four main provinces: Kabul (26%), Nangarhar (20%), Kunduz (6%), and Baghlan (5%) (UNHCR 2012/08/29).
- In terms of ethnicity, 56% of returnees were Pashtun, 25% Tajik, 8% Hazara and 11% of other ethnicities. The location where returnees settle is primarily influenced by their ethnic background and it is anticipated that future returnees will follow a similar pattern.
  - In general, there have been high Pashtun returns to eastern (35%), central (32%) and northern (12%) regions.
  - Tajik returns are concentrated in central (59%), northern (22%), western (10%), and eastern (7%) regions with a smaller number going to the south (1%).
  - Hazara returns have been predominantly to central (59%), northern (22%) and central highland (12%) regions.
  - Uzbeks (97%) returned to the north,
  - And most Baloch returned to the western region (68%) (UNHCR 2012/05/03).
- Of the returnees, 40% have not reintegrated into their home communities but rather have chosen to settle in new locations, including Kabul and other major cities (UNHCR 2012/05/03).
- Many returnees have found it difficult to integrate into Afghan life, and face problems accessing land, shelter, services and livelihoods. An estimated 1.84 million returnees have failed to integrate (Majidi, 2011 UNHCR 2012/05/03, OCHA MYR Fact Sheet 2012/08/18).
- The successfulness of reintegration is influenced by the duration of the displacement. The majority of the registered Afghan population in neighbouring countries have been in exile for more than 25 years and half of them have never lived in Afghanistan. The majority of these Afghans do not have access to land or housing in Afghanistan and have been used to living in urban areas. Reintegration will be more difficult for this group compared to the situation for Afghans that have been displaced for a relatively short period of time (UNHCR 2009).
- An estimated 15% of the returnee population become secondary migrants; many return to Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran and for those who migrate internally, around 90% move from rural to urban areas. The primary driver for secondary migration is access to employment (UNHCR 2012/05/03, WB 2012).








## Scenarios

### Probability level








	Highly unlikely
	Unlikely
	Likely
	Very likely
	Almost certain

### Impact level

	No impact
	Impact does not exceed local capacities
	Impact is likely to exceed local capacities
	Humanitarian intervention needed
	Large scale humanitarian intervention needed

The objective of the scenarios is to project the probable development and humanitarian impact of selected assumptions in the upcoming months. The scenarios can be simultaneous, and are not mutually exclusive.

### Post 2014 – Deterioration of Economy Scenario

Probability level					
Impact level					

#### Assumptions

- Decreased willingness of the international community to sustain high levels of spending, advisory effort and partnering after 2014, leading to a reduction of development assistance funds, down scaling of UN and NGO humanitarian programmes and withdrawal of technical assistance.
- Diminished Government resources. The emphasis of the Government on building and maintaining security forces will decrease the budget available for service delivery, thereby decreasing access to basic services for the population
- Construction and services sector affected by decrease of foreign investment and aid flows.
- Lack of resources to maintain contra-narcotics programmes, increasing opium poppy production and trade.

#### Impact

- Slow or negative economic growth.
- Reduction in governance and capacity building activities, aggravating issues such as corruption, inefficiencies and lack of capacity.
- Widespread loss of jobs, especially in urban centres where construction and services are an important part of the economy, thereby eroding an already volatile economy.
- Increased radicalisation due to poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities.
- Competition over resources, leading to increased insecurity and violence
- High fiscal imbalances leading to depreciation of the Afghan currency, hampering imports.

#### Operational constraints

- High levels of food insecurity among poverty affected and food insecure populations who have lost their livelihoods
- The 'Basic Package of Health Services' can no longer be sustained at current levels and quality and coverage of health care decreases.
- Accelerated deterioration of the nutrition and food security situation increasing the moderately and acute malnutrition rates.
- Increased levels of internal displacement.
- Insecurity due to increased poppy production and trade. Increased economic migration, both cross-border and to urban centres within Afghanistan

#### Priority needs

- Limited space for humanitarian operations.
- Challenges in maintaining food and medicine stocks and keeping them safe from raids.
- Challenges in assessing needs of IDPs and returnees in diverse urban and rural environments.
- Targeting of humanitarian personnel.
- Targeted food assistance to the most vulnerable groups such as women and children, IDPs and returnees as well as targeted assistance to affected rural populations and livelihoods support.
- Provision of impartial and safe access to medical care, education and justice.
- Needs profiling of IDPs and urban returnees.
- Legal support relating to obtaining secure land tenure, particularly in urban areas.

### Post 2014 - Escalation of Violence Scenario

Probability level					
Impact level					

#### Assumptions

- Inability to create an effective mix of Afghan forces to replace US and ISAF forces, who will withdraw by 2014.
- Constrained Government resources leading to desertion of security forces, including large scale defections from Afghan security bodies and 'insider' attacks by insurgent infiltrants.
- Presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2015 increase power struggles along ideological and ethnic lines and will cause an increase in violence as insurgents seek to disrupt polls.
- Power vacuum and weakness of Government security forces increases control by the Taliban and other insurgents. Creation of parallel governance structures by Taliban in areas of influence, diminishing the political authority of the Afghan Government outside of Kabul.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in violence and insecurity in communities, leading to (re) emergence of local warlords.</li> <li>• Increasing poppy production and trade</li> <li>• Afghanistan increasingly serves as a sanctuary to militant groups, causing regional increase of violence, including in Pakistan and Tajikistan.</li> <li>• Inability of Afghan forces to protect international compounds and staff in Kabul leads to down scale of UN programmes.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreasing influence and service delivery of Afghan Government in areas outside of Kabul, particularly in the south where Taliban roots are strongest.</li> <li>• Security services and proxies are subject to increasing attacks.</li> <li>• Increased (civilian) casualties.</li> <li>• Internal displacement increases rapidly including urban to rural displacement, urban to urban displacement and displacement along sectarian lines.</li> <li>• Spill over effects of insecurity in border areas of Pakistan resulting in movement of populations.</li> <li>• Increase of human rights abuses particularly in Taliban controlled areas. Lack of monitoring mechanisms and a formal justice system leads to a situation of impunity among perpetrators.</li> <li>• Loss of livelihoods due to insecurity and market disruptions negatively impacts purchasing power and leaves more people without access to basic essentials, electricity, heating or fuel.</li> <li>• Lack of health and nutrition interventions increases vulnerabilities and higher risk of malnutrition, infectious diseases and other public health issues. Decrease in vaccination coverage, leading to an increase in measles and polio cases.</li> </ul>
<b>Operational constraints</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escalating violence.</li> <li>• Limited space for humanitarian operations.</li> <li>• Challenges in maintaining food and medicine stocks and keeping them safe from raids.</li> <li>• Challenges in assessing needs.</li> <li>• (International) humanitarian actors prone to attacks and raids by armed militia groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection interventions for populations trapped in conflict areas, including women, children and those that have been cooperating with international forces.</li> <li>• Emergency health and surgical care for the injured.</li> <li>• Emergency assistance to displaced and conflict affected populations, including food assistance.</li> <li>• Profiling of IDPs and refugee returnees.</li> </ul>

Large scale influx of Afghan refugees from Pakistan Scenario		Probability level		X			
		Impact level				X	
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pakistan refrains from renewing the Proof of Registration cards held by Afghan refugees. Although several of these refugees will remain in Pakistan illegally or move to a third country, a large part of the refugees will return to Afghanistan, especially to border areas and urban centres such as Kabul, Herat and Kandahar.</li><li>• Refugee absorptive capacity remains severely strained due to poor security, armed conflict, on-going natural disasters, weak governance and poverty, impeding integration of returnees.</li></ul>						
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conflict over access and ownership to land and property along tribal and family lines, due to the lack of secure land tenure policy.</li><li>• Large number of landless refugee returnees requiring permanent shelter and land allocation support.</li><li>• Competition for access to water and sanitation, food and livelihood opportunities and humanitarian assistance leading to exacerbation of social tensions.</li><li>• Urban growth leading to greater demands on urban service providers enlarged informal settlements and an increase in the number of urban poor.</li><li>• Radicalisation of unemployed men, vulnerable to recruitment.</li><li>• Secondary and tertiary displacement for economic or security reasons.</li><li>• Adoption by returnees of negative coping mechanisms such as joining anti-Government forces or selling of assets.</li></ul>						
Operational constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulties to differentiate between economic migrants, IDPs, urban poor and returnees.</li><li>• Insecurity.</li></ul>						
Priority needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Livelihood support for returnees and host communities.</li><li>• Repair and shelter construction.</li><li>• Legal support relating to obtaining secure land tenure.</li><li>• Service delivery in urban slums.</li></ul>						

## Country profile

### Key characteristics

- Life expectancy at birth is 50 years for the total population, 49 years for males and 51 years for females. These figures place Afghanistan well below the average for the region (65.3) as well as low income countries (58.8) (CIA 2012).
- An estimated 88% of adult women and 61% of adult men are non-literate (NRVA 2008).
- The <5 mortality rate is 102 per 1,000, displaying a substantial progress over the last 20 years. However, Afghanistan's <5 mortality rate remains one of the highest in the world (UNICEF/CSO 2012).
- Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 amounts to 460. This marks a sharp decline from 2005 when the figure was 710 (WHO 2010; WB, 2010).
- 31% of the children <5 are underweight, 50% are moderately stunted, and 18% are moderately or severely wasted (CSO 2011).
- Gender Index: 1.03 males / female (CIA, 2011 est.).
- Afghanistan ranks 172/187 on the Human Development Index for 2011, having a HDI value of 0.398. These figures indicate a *low human development* (HDI, 2011).
- Afghanistan is in category 3/3 (most severe) on the DG ECHO Vulnerability Index as well as on the Crisis Index. These assessments are based on a composite measure of more than 50 indicators and point to a very high vulnerability (ECHO, 2011/2012).

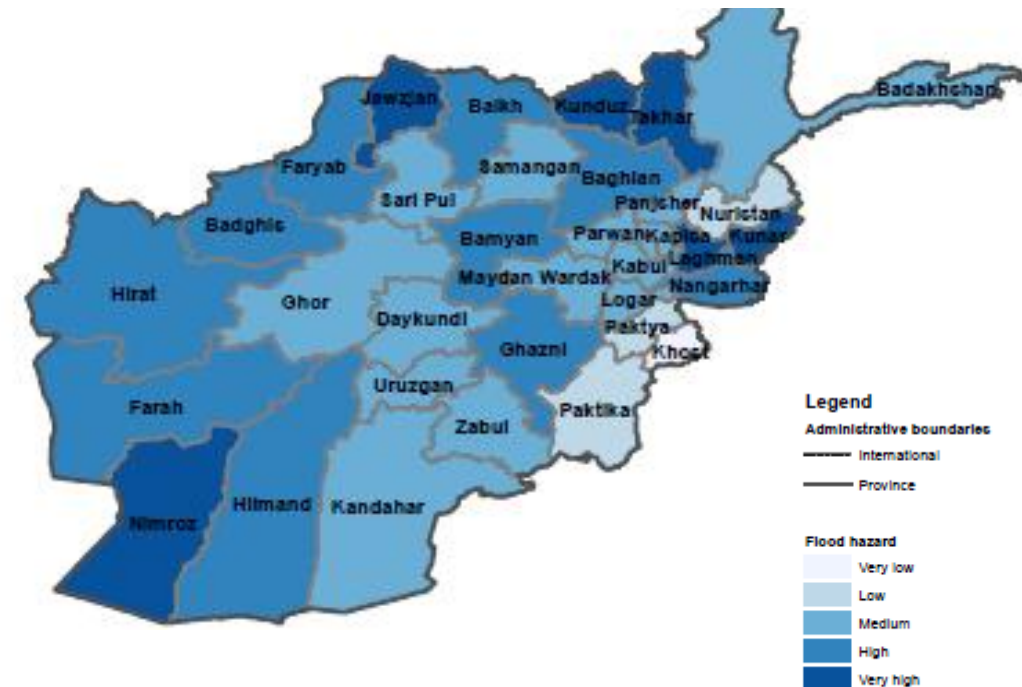
### Geography and climate

- Afghanistan has a total geographic area of 652,230 sq km, making it slightly bigger than France and ranking it as number 41 in comparison with other countries (CIA 2012).
- The climate in Afghanistan is arid to semi-arid. In winter, snows are frequent at higher elevations, and there are permanent snowfields in the Hindu Kush. Summers are dry and severely hot.
- Temperatures vary dramatically across seasons, with hot summers and cold winters; and similarly there are stark differences in elevation and terrain across regions. Nationwide average temperatures in June rise to above 25 degrees Celsius. The drought-ridden regions of the southwestern plateau typically experience average daytime temperatures above 35 degrees Celsius.

December-January temperatures typically drop down to just above zero degrees Celsius on average, with markedly colder temperatures, of -15 degrees Celsius or below, in the regions situated at high altitude (WB 2009, WB 2010).

- Afghanistan is entirely landlocked and consists mostly of rugged mountains and plains in the north and southwest. The Hindu Kush Mountains that run northeast to southwest divide the northern provinces from the rest of the country. Desert conditions prevail in the south western and northern plains (CIA 2012).
- Merely 12% of the land in Afghanistan is arable and only 0.2% yields permanent crops (CIA 2012).
- Natural resources in Afghanistan consist of natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barites, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron ore, salt, and precious and semiprecious stones (CIA 2012).

### Flood Hazard per province – OCHA August 2012 (Draft version)



## Economy

- The economy has recorded rapid growth since 2001. The main driver of growth has been the construction sector, which has been boosted by foreign efforts to rebuild the infra-structure and the development of private housing.
- The country's biggest economic sector is technically illegal. Afghanistan accounted for roughly 90% of global opium production in 2007 and opium contributes to over one third of the total gross domestic product (GDP) of the country (WHO 2010).
- In the past three years, fiscal revenues have grown by an average of 20% per annum, largely due to improvements in customs and tax collection (WB 2012).
- The gross national income (GNI) per capita has shown a notable increase, amounting to USD 400 in 2011, compared to USD 200 in 2004 (WB 2011).
- However, despite these increases, unemployment remains around 35% and factors such as corruption, security, the Government's inability to extend rule of law to all parts of the country, and shortage of skilled workers constrain development and the conduct of business (CIA 2011).
- Moreover, longer-term projections indicate a less positive development than has been the case the last ten years. Donor grants accounted for 50% of the core budget in 2010. Aid levels are expected to decline significantly after 2014, which will reduce GDP growth to levels of 4 to 5% per year. A sizeable financing gap will continue to exist through 2021 despite projections of healthy growth in domestic revenue collection. Afghanistan's biggest economic challenge is finding sources of sustainable and equitable growth (WB 2012, WB 2012/05).
- Afghanistan's formal exports have risen by almost 80% since 2004, following new trade and transport agreements with neighbouring countries. The nation's key export partners are Pakistan, India, Russia, Iran, and UAE. Most trade between Afghanistan and other countries, especially Iran and Pakistan, is informal, occurring via small traders and exporters (WB 2011).
- Recorded inflation rate in consumer prices in 2011 was 4.9%. This marks a small increase compared to 2009-2010, but a continuation of the stabilization of the inflation rate from 2008 which amounted to 9% (WB 2011).

## Socio-cultural characteristics

- Pashtun comprise the largest ethnic group, accounting for more than 42% of the total population. Other major ethnic groups are Tajik 27%, Hazara 9%, Uzbek 9%, Aimak 4%, Turkmen 3%, and Baloch 2%. The remaining 4% consist of various smaller ethnic groups (Minority Rights 2012).

- Dari and Pashto are the official languages, although more than 70 unofficial languages and dialects are spoken throughout the country (Minority Rights 2012).
- A clear majority, about 80%, of the Afghan population are Sunni Muslims whereas 19% are Shia Muslims (Minority Rights 2012).

## Education

- The total completion rate from primary education has increased steadily in the last 10 years, reaching levels above 50%. The gender balance weighs in favor of boys, of whom 66% attend primary education, whereas 40% of the girls attend primary education. In regards to secondary education, 18% of the boys attend secondary education, against a mere 6% of the girls (UNICEF 2010).
- Current literacy rates in Afghanistan are low; only 12% of the women over 15 are literate and 39% of men over 15 are literate (NRVA 2008).

## Governance

- The structure of the Afghan Government is unitary; all political authority is vested in the Government in Kabul, although in practice the Afghan state is largely decentralised. The subnational administration comprises 34 provinces and 398 districts (AGCHO - Afghanistan Geodesic and Cartographic Head Office, WHO 2010).
- Provinces and districts are legally recognized units of subnational administration. The Constitution specifies that a provincial, district and village council be elected in each province (WHO 2010).
- There has been considerable political progress in the country since 2002, including three rounds of elections. However, violence and fraud have marked these elections (WHO 2010, IoC 2012).
- The high prevalence of corruption in Afghanistan is displayed in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index. Afghanistan scored 1.5/10, suggesting it is highly corrupt and ranks 180 of 182 countries in the survey (TI 2011).
- The current president, Hamid Karzai, was reelected in 2010. His second term in office is currently coming to an end and he is barred by the Constitution from running for a third term. The next presidential election is expected in spring 2014, and election to parliament in 2015 (CEPPS 2010, AJ 2012/09/27).



## Media

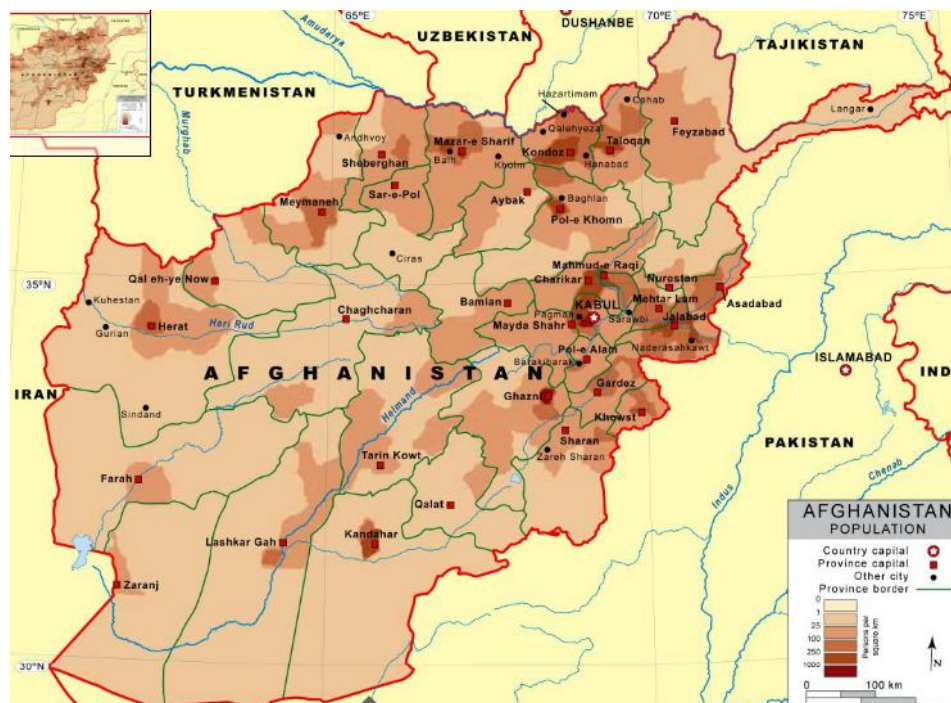
- The number of cellular subscriptions per 100 people amounts to more than 54. In 2004, the same number was 2.2, thus indicating a significant rise (WB 2011).
- An estimated 4.3 % of the Afghanistan population has access to internet. Even though this figure remains low, there has been a fourfold increase of internet users since 2006 (ITU 2011).
- Radio is the most commonly used medium in Afghanistan, reaching more than 48% of the Afghans on a daily basis (USIP 2010).
- TV is the main source of information for the urban population in Afghanistan. 89% of the urban population and 26% of the rural population own a TV. TV is estimated to be a complementary source of information to radio rather than replacing the latter (USIP 2010).
- Even though journalism has grown during the last years, investigative journalism remains limited. An expression of these limitations is found in RSF's Press Freedom Index 2011/2012, in which Afghanistan ranked 150 of 179 countries (RSF 2012, BBC 2012/March).
- Similarly, Freedom House ranks Afghanistan as *not free* in regards to freedom of speech as well as freedom of press (Freedom House 2012).

## Demographic profile

- Afghanistan's last national census was carried out in 1979, just before the Soviet invasion. However, the census was not completed and only 69% of the districts were covered for security reasons. Since then the country has been mired in conflict and natural disasters, with huge population movements. As a consequence, there is very little reliable demographic data (UNESCAP 2012/04).
- According to population estimates by the government for 2012-2013, the total population with Afghanistan is 25,500,100 people (GoA n.d.).
- According to UN estimates, from 2000 to 2015, the national population is expected to increase to reach a total of about 37 million; more than half of this growth will be in urban areas (UNHABITAT 2002).
- Nearly half of the population is under 15 (47%) (WB 2012, USAID 2010).
- The majority (97%) of households are headed by men. The proportion of female-headed households is slightly higher in urban areas (4%) than in rural areas (3%) in the country (USAID 2010).

- The mean household size for the country is around eight persons per household. The average household size is IDP households on average have nine family members (UNHCR 2011, USAID 2010).
- Urban population growth is high, and far above the regional averages of Asia. As of 2005, between 23% and 30% of the population was living in urban centres. Kabul's growth has been particularly spectacular. Over the last decade, the city's population is estimated to have doubled in size, from 2 million in 2001 to 4 – 4.5 million in 2010 (Beall 2005, UNHABITAT 2002).
- The total fertility rate is 5.1 children per woman. Fertility is higher in rural areas (5.2 children per woman) than in urban areas (4.7 children per woman).
- The elderly currently make up around 3% of the country's population. The number of elderly residents in Afghanistan is set to grow sharply posing unique contributions and challenges to the country's social services (USAID 2010).

## Afghanistan population density map – World Trade Press 2012



## Livelihoods and Food Security

### Priority Concerns

- 30% of the population is food insecure and 2.1 million people are very severely food insecure. The provinces of Nuristan and Badakhshan are currently in *Crisis* (IPC Phase 3).
- Although prices of wheat, the main staple food, have been decreasing since July 2012, price increases are expected in October and November.
- Particularly IDPs, urban returnees, persons with a disability, the Kuchi population and female-headed households are vulnerable to food insecurity, as these groups suffer from a lack of access to basic services and limited livelihood opportunities.
- Civil insecurity, and conflict often hinders market activity, increasing food insecurity particularly in the south and west part of the country. Remote areas in the east face the highest levels of poverty.

### Key characteristics

#### Poverty and food security

- The resilience of average households has been greatly undermined by the 2011 drought, the impact of a harsh and extended winter and high fuel prices. Preliminary results of 2011/12 National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment show:
  - 7.6 million (30% of the population) are food insecure (< 2,100 kilocalories per person per day).
  - Among them, 2.4 million are severely food insecure (1,500 – 1,800 kilocalories).
  - And 2.1 million are very severely food insecure (< 1,500 kilocalories) (WFP 2012/07, CSO Afghanistan, August 2012).
- The national poverty rate for Afghanistan is 36%. However, more than half of the population is consuming at a level of less than 120% of the poverty line. This means that one small, negative shock has the potential to move many individuals into poverty (WB 2010).
- Currently, most of Afghanistan is classified as *Minimal or Stressed Food Security* (IPC Phase 1 and 2). Nuristan and Badakhshan are in *Crisis* (IPC Phase 3). Households that have suffered major losses of livelihood assets or crops are classified as *Stressed* (IPC Phase 2). These households include IDPs recently displaced by spring floods or by the on-going conflict. Also, households

that recently returned from Pakistan or Iran are still in the process of trying to establish new livelihoods, making them more vulnerable to food insecurity. Along the Amu River, households that have lost their homes due to erosion are classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2). Also, some households who have lost large amounts of their crop to hail may be classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2) (FEWSNET 2012/08/31, OCHA 2012/08/20).

- Rural poverty accounts for 84% of poverty nationwide with 77% of Afghans living in rural areas (WB 2012).
- IDPs are extremely vulnerable to food insecurity because of their loss of traditional livelihoods, weak support networks and lack of skills needed to enter the national labour market. IDPs living in informal urban settlements are particularly vulnerable during initial years of settlement. The risk of being food insecure is almost 5 times higher for IDPs compared to the urban poor population (WB 2012, FEWS, 2009, UNHCR 2011).
- Urban returnees are in a particularly vulnerable economic situation. A 2009 Norwegian Refugee Council survey highlighted various types of economic vulnerability faced by urban returnees: lack of savings, lack of access to loans, lack of remittances and a lack of multiple income sources (WB 2012, IDMC March 2011).

**Proportion of population whose per-capita consumption is below the poverty line – OCHA 2012/04/12 (based on 2007/08 NRVA data)**



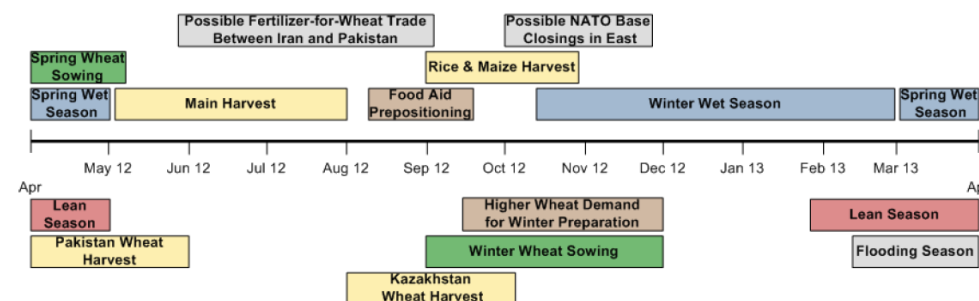
- Poverty levels are very high in the *Kuchi* population. In addition, the *Jogi*, *Jat*, *Gorbat* and *Chori Frosh* communities suffer from severe social, economic and political barriers constraining access to education and employment (WB 2012, NRVA 2008).
- Around 60% of families headed by persons with a disability have very limited access to adequate food, due to discrimination on the labour market and lack of access to land (AIHRC 2011).
- Other characteristics of poor households include illiteracy, no landownership and female headed households (NRVA 2008).
- Bamyan and Badakhshan provinces have poverty rates much higher than the national average. Roads to these areas are often blocked throughout the winter due to heavy snow accumulation forcing households to rely only on food supply that is stored before the winter (WB 2010).

## Livelihoods

- The key sectors of employment are:
  - agriculture (59% of employment),
  - services (24.5% of employment),
  - manufacturing (12.5% of employment) (WB 2012).
- The local economy mainly relies on the informal sector (including illicit activities), which accounts for 80 to 90% of the total economic activity (WB 2012).
- In rural areas, agriculture is a more important source of income than in urban centres. The main reason for this is that only 10% of urban households have access to land, against almost 70% for rural households (NRVA 2008).
- The average size of landholdings even in rural areas is small so agriculture is rarely the main source of food or income. To complement their income, about two thirds of rural households own some livestock, and farmers also work as paid labourers (IFAD 2011).
- Livelihoods based on agriculture and livestock have been negatively impacted by:
  - Decades of conflict leading to displacement of farmers and damaging agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation systems.
  - Diminished technical and market support.
  - Natural disasters including recurrent droughts and flooding.
  - Pestilence and disease.

- Lack of investment – only 8% of the Afghan budget was allocated to agriculture in 2010.
- Lack of basic resources; little arable land (12% of land coverage) and lack of access to agricultural inputs. In addition, the GoA has banned chemical fertilisers that could be used to make bombs, affecting availability of fertilisers for farmers (IWP 2/06, USAID 2012/08/06, CAP 2011, IFAD 2011, WB 2011, WB 2010).

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET Afghanistan

- Data on unemployment in Afghanistan is poor and subject to disagreement. In 2008, the unemployment rate was an estimated 35%. Seasonal and chronic unemployment is common and increasing. More than 90% of jobs can be classified as vulnerable employment because they do not secure stable and sufficient income. Unemployment figures should be interpreted in the context that the majority of people simply cannot afford to be unemployed; so while they may not be registered as unemployed, many are under-employed (NRVA 2008, WB 2012, CIA 2008).
- In 2004, an estimated 60% of Kabul residents lived in informal settlements. These households have limited access to basic services and social support, with adverse consequences for their ability to earn a sufficient income and achieve livelihood security. Only 5–6% of workers had regular employment, 20–60% was self-employed and 38% worked as casual labourers.
- Casual daily labour is the most common occupation for IDPs in an urban setting. IDP households rely on:
  - household head labour income (42% of total income);
  - labour income of other household members (32%);
  - loans and credit from shopkeepers (20%);
  - and cash/in-kind donations and remittances (3%) (UNHCR 2011)

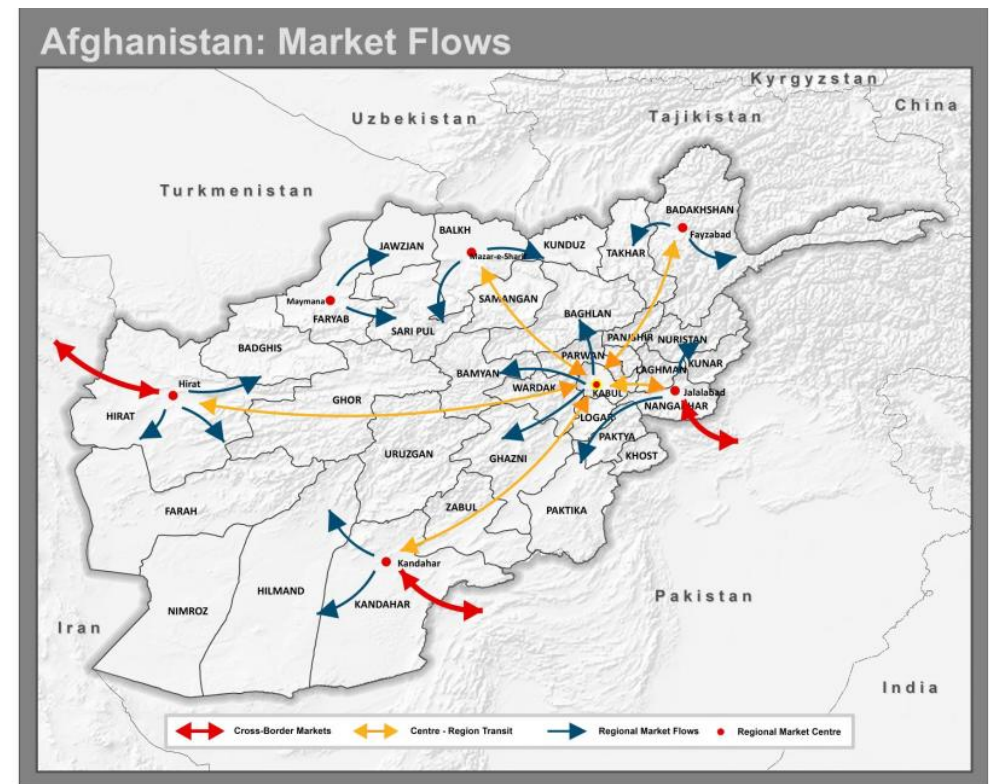


- In July 2012, the average daily wage was AFA 300 (FAO 2012/09/07).
- On average, returnee families survive on less than \$1 per person per day and one third of the returnee labour force falls under the category of unstable and unskilled labour (seasonal daily labour in the agriculture or construction sectors) (WB 2012).

### Markets and prices

- Wheat is both a major production crop and the main staple of the Afghan diet, with wheat flour contributing 57% to the total caloric content of the average bundle of food items of the poor (WB 2010).
- Owing to above-normal precipitation and sufficient irrigation water, Afghanistan's 2012 cereal harvest is the second highest harvest on record for the last 35 years. Overall cereal production in 2012 is forecasted to reach 6.32 million MT. Based on the estimated cereal requirement at 6.77 million MT, the cereal deficit in 2012 is estimated at 442,000 MT. This translates into 94% self-sufficiency in domestic cereal production.
- Wheat and wheat flour prices have been decreasing since July 2011 due to continuing supply from importing countries and good harvest prospects. In August wheat-grain retail prices averaged 18.7 AFA/Kg (FEWSNET 2012/08/31, OCHA 2012/08/20).
- However, wheat flour prices are expected to increase due to the current global wheat price increase and the fact that during October and November, households typically stock wheat and wheat flour for winter, thereby increasing demand (FEWSNET 2012/08/31).
- The main markets are located in the large population centres;
  - Kabul, the capital, supplies the central provinces and is a transit point between the north, south, east, and west.
  - Jalalabad supplies the eastern part of the country and acts as a cross-border market with Pakistan.
  - Mazar-e-Sarif supplies northern provinces and, in a good year, the southern provinces as well.
  - Faizabad supplies the northeast region.
  - Maimana market supplies the northwest region.
  - Hirat supplies the west and acts as a cross border market with Iran.
  - Kandahar supplies the southwestern part of the country and acts as a cross border market with Pakistan (FEWSNET 2012/08/7).

- Particularly in the southwestern part of the country drought, civil insecurity, and war often hinder market activity (USAID 2012/08/31).
- The depreciation of the Afghani against the U.S. Dollar is hampering imports and the unstable Afghan currency could have an upward pressure on the prices of imported food (USAID 2012/08/31).
- Food expenditure of IDP households represents 60% of their total monthly expenditure. This is 4.5% higher than the average food share to total monthly consumption of poor urban households (UNHCR 2011, NRVA 2008).



Source: FEWSNET 2012/08/03



## Health and Nutrition

### Priority Concerns

- Although a Basic Package of Health Services was introduced in 2003 to provide minimum standard of health care for the whole population, Afghans still have limited access to essential health services. Especially in conflict affected districts access to health services is severely hampered, with rates as low as 5-7% for women in the south west.
- Although there has been a dramatic drop in maternal mortality rate over recent years due to improved services, the rate is still the highest in the region. Only 34% of births are delivered by skilled birth attendants.
- Major causes for morbidity and mortality in Afghanistan are Acute Respiratory Infections, malaria, measles and diarrhoea.
- National average of Global Acute Malnutrition nationwide is 18%, with the highest rates in the south (29.5%) and north east (19%).

### Key characteristics

- Afghanistan's health indicators are among the worst in the world and far below any other country in the region;
  - Life expectancy is 50 years
  - <5 mortality rate is 102 per 1,000 live births
  - Maternal mortality rate is 460 deaths per 100,000 (UNICEF/CSO 2012, WB 2012, CIA 2012).
- Major challenges and constraints faced by the health sector include:
  - Inadequate financing and heavy reliance on external sources of funding - general Government expenditure on health as % of total Government expenditure was only 1.6% in 2010.
  - Poor quality of services provided.
  - Inadequately trained health workers and shortage of qualified female staff.
  - Insufficient drugs and medical material.
  - Difficulties in accessing health care due to dispersed population, geographical barriers and lack of transportation infrastructure.
  - Challenges reaching health facilities for both patients and staff due to violence and conflict.
  - Damages to health facilities and disruption to medicine supply routes as a result of conflict and insecurity (Health Cluster 2012/03/11, MSF 2012/08/03, WHO2010).

- Existing health risks are exacerbated by severe winters, military operations, low immunization coverage rates, increased rates of malnutrition, and lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation (OCHA MYR 2012).

### Coverage and facilities

- The Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) was introduced in 2003 by the Ministry of Public Health and provides a minimum standard of healthcare intended to be available to every Afghan. The BPHS consists of four types of health facilities: health posts, basic health centres, comprehensive health centres and district hospitals. About 85% of the population live in districts which now have providers to deliver the BPHS (WB 2012, CSO 2010).
- However, many Afghans prefer the better quality services provided by the private sector. Currently, 220 private health centres are operational across the country (IRIN 2010/12/01, GoA 2012/08/19).
- About 57% of the population lives within one hour's walking distance from a public health facility (WB 2012).
- People in conflict affected districts, particularly in the southern and eastern provinces, have limited access to essential health services (access ranges between 30 and 50%). Access to health service for women is only 5 to 7 % in the south west (Zabul, Helmand) (Protection Cluster 2010, AIHCR 2010, UNICEF 2008).
- In 2011, the United Nations received reports of 58 attacks against health facilities and personnel. Incidents included killings, abduction, suicide attacks, intimidation and the use of an ambulance in a suicide attack (UN 2011).
- There is a shortage of health workers. There is a ratio of 2 physicians for every 10,000 people, well below the regional average of 11 for every 10,000.
- The ratio of nurses/midwives is 5 per 10,000 people, compared to a regional average of 15.4 per 10,000 people (WHO 2011).
- A household of seven spends an average of US\$252 a year on health expenses. Households are often forced to borrow money on unfavourable conditions and sell assets in order to cover medical fees. Many poor families reported they were unable to pay for a complete course of treatment as recommended by doctors (AREU 2010/11/27).

## Morbidity and mortality

### Communicable diseases

#### Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI)

- ARI are a major cause of morbidity and mortality in Afghanistan, especially for children <5 (WHO 2010).
- Pneumonia accounts for 25% of deaths of children <5, with an estimated 120 Afghan children dying of pneumonia every day (StC n.d., WHO 2010).
- Tuberculosis remains epidemic in Afghanistan. The country is one of 22 high-burden countries in the world. The estimated incidence of all tuberculosis cases is about 161 per 100,000 and the mortality ratio is 32 per 100,000. Almost 80% of patients are young adults, and, about two-thirds of all patients are female (WHO 2010).

#### Malaria

- Malaria is endemic in Afghanistan and an estimated 14.5 million people live in areas at risk of malaria transmission (DFID 2011, WHO 2010).
- 80% of households do not have an Insect Treated Net.

#### Measles

- In 2012, the incidence of measles cases increased to almost 350 per million people since 2011. This is the result of a steady decline in vaccination coverage over the past three years. At the same time, the warning mechanism for outbreaks across the country had improved, ensuring better identification and reporting (OCHA MYR 2012).
- Children up to ten years of age account for 80% of recorded cases (OCHA MYR 2012).
- The estimated measles vaccination coverage stood at 62% in July 2011. In Afghanistan, measles campaign has to be repeated every 2-4 years (UNAMA 2012/07/24, WHO 2012/07/14).

#### Polio

- Afghanistan is one of the remaining four polio-endemic countries in the world and the Government recently declared an emergency status with regards to the disease. Between 2010 and 2011, the number of new case increased from 30 to 76 per year (WHO 2010, CSIS 2012/09/13).

- The majority of cases reported are in the southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand (UNAMA 2012/09/23).
- In September 2012, around 8 million children under five years of age were administered anti-polio drops during a three-day nationwide campaign (UNAMA 2012/09/23).
- Significant cross-border activity, including the movement of refugees fleeing conflict, facilitates transmission of the polio virus (CSIS 2012/09/13).

#### HIV/AIDS

- The HIV/AIDS epidemic is at an early stage in Afghanistan and is concentrated among high-risk groups; mainly injecting drug users and their partners. Reliable data on HIV prevalence in Afghanistan is sparse (WHO 2010).

#### Cholera

- Cholera is endemic in some parts of the country. Cholera outbreaks have been reported in Kabul in 2005, in Khulm, Aibak, Faizabad and Kunduz in 2001 and in Kandahar, Badghis and Jawzjan in 2000 (Protection Cluster 2010).

### Non-communicable diseases

- About 35% of all deaths in Afghanistan are due to non-communicable diseases like cardiovascular disease and cancers (CSO 2010).
- Air pollution in Kabul poses health risks to the population. The Afghan Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 3,000 Kabul residents die every year of causes linked to air pollution (Stimson 2012/08/14).

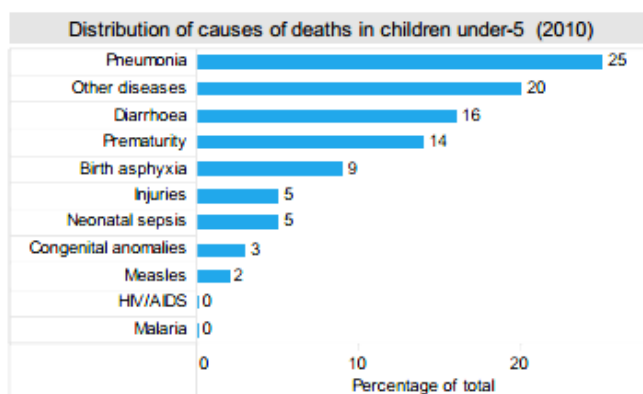
### Maternal health

- Afghanistan was ranked by Save the Children as the worst place to be a mother in 2009 and 2010. Afghanistan has the worldwide highest risk of maternal death. The adult lifetime risk of maternal death (the probability that a 15-year-old female will die eventually from a maternal cause) is 1 in 11 (WHO 2008, StC 2012/05/08).
- Although there has been a dramatic drop in maternal mortality rate over recent years due to improved services, the maternal mortality rates is still the highest in the region (WB 2012).
- Haemorrhage is the leading cause of maternal death in Afghanistan (56% of all cases) (USAID 2010).

- The key reasons for the high mortality rate are lack of awareness about pregnancy-related health issues, limited access to health services particularly in rural areas, a shortage of skilled midwives, malnutrition, customary practices and incorrect understanding of religious teachings (UNAMA 2012/04/11).
- The percentage of births delivered by skilled birth attendants has doubled from 14% in 2003 to 34% in 2010. However, 2 out of 3 births still take place without the presence of a midwife (UNFPA 2012/09/21).
- There is a serious shortage of trained midwives. There are about 4,800 community midwives instead of the 8,000 that are needed to meet WHO standards (OCHA MYR 2012).
- Currently, only 1.4% deliveries are by caesarean section. This is less than one third of the expected 5% of all births (WHO standards) (OCHA MYR 2012).
- The leading reason for not accessing health care for women is a lack of money followed by distance to a facility and transportation problems. Other obstacles reported were lack of medicines at the facility, not having someone to accompany them, lack of good service at the facility, lack of female health providers and inconvenient service hours (CSO 2010).
- More than nine in ten married women in Afghanistan know of a method of contraception but only 20% of them use some method of family planning (CSO 2010).

## Child health

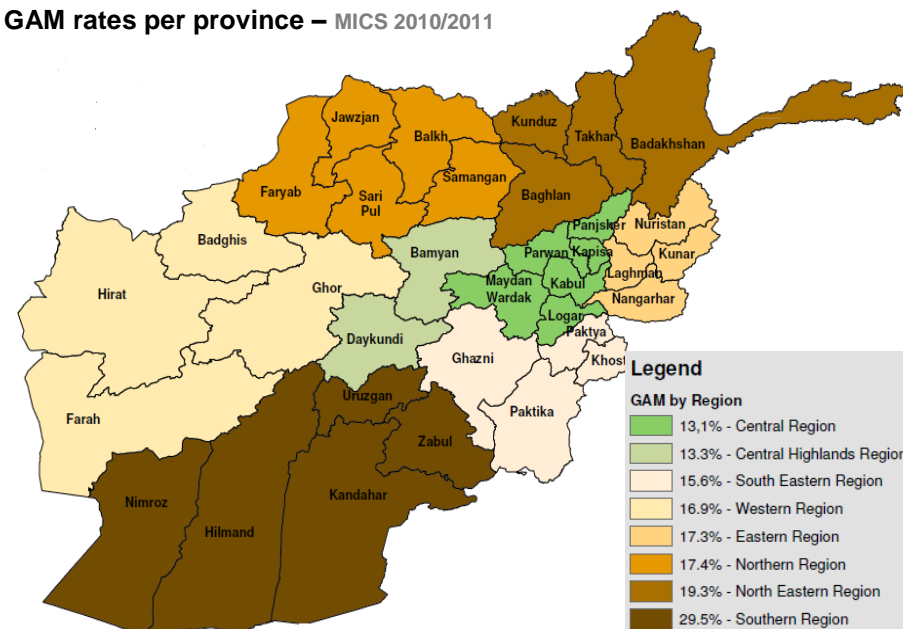
- <5 mortality rate in 2010 was 102 per 1,000 live births (UNICEF 2010).
- Several socioeconomic factors heavily influence a child's risk of dying:
  - Urban children have a lower mortality risk than rural children.
  - Wealth: children born to mothers in the highest wealth quintiles have less than half the risk of dying as those born to mothers in the poorest quintile.
  - Mortality levels are generally lower for less remote areas.



- Boys <5 have a slightly higher risk of dying than girls in the same age group (USAID 2010).

- National average GAM for children <5 is 18%. There is a large disparity between urban and rural areas: 11.9% GAM rates for urban areas against 19% for rural areas. The south has the worst rates of malnutrition in the country with acute malnutrition at 29.5% among children <5. The WHO emergency threshold for GAM is 15% (MICS 2010/2011).
- Severe stunting prevalence (-3SD) was 38% in 2010 and severe wasting prevalence was 11.3% (-2SD) (MICS 2010/2011).
- One in every two Afghan children is chronically malnourished (59%) (OCHA MYR 2012).
- Approximately 54% of infants <six months are exclusively breastfed and only 37% of children aged 0-23 months are being adequately breastfed (MICS 2010/2011).
- Anaemia prevalence among children aged 6-59 months is 34% (MICS 2010/2011).

**GAM rates per province – MICS 2010/2011**



## WASH

### Priority Concerns

- 1.5 million people affected by conflict and natural disaster have emergency WASH needs. A large increase compared to the 60,000 people estimated in 2011.
- Only 7% of identified WASH needs had been met largely due to insufficient funding.
- Children, especially those <5 (indicated by the high U5MR), elderly, female headed households, IDPs and returnees are most vulnerable.
- Central Highlands (Bamyan and Daykundi provinces) has the lowest coverage of improved drinking water sources at 25%, a significantly lower percentage compared to other regions. This region also has the lowest coverage of appropriate hand washing and the equal lowest coverage of improved sanitation (shared with the northeast).
- Access to services is a cause of tension between host communities and the displaced in urban areas. This specifically includes access to water.

### Key characteristics

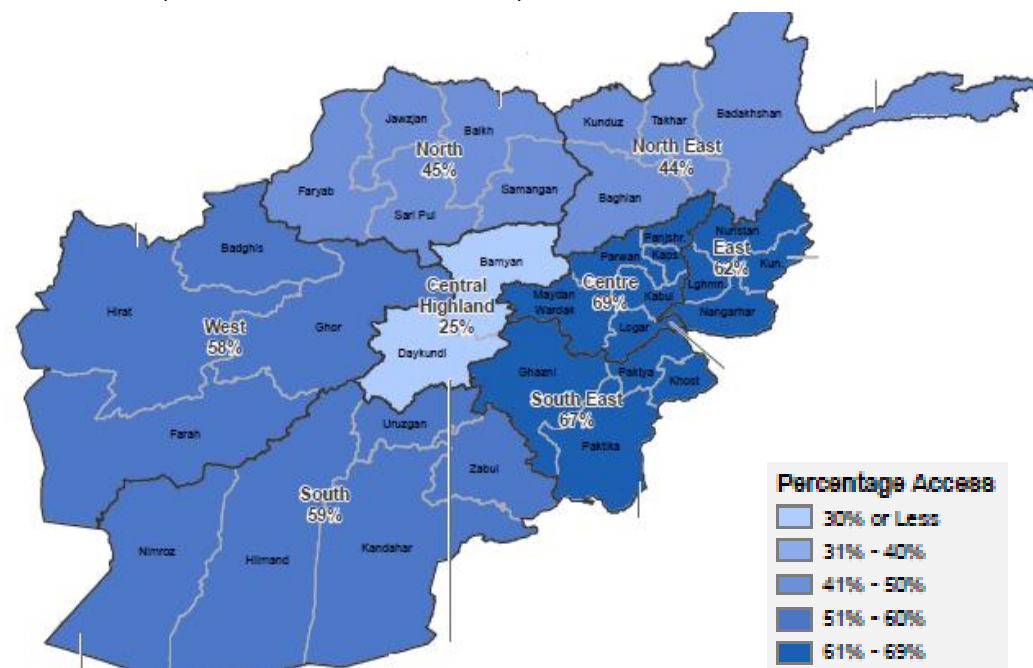
- Water supply and sanitation coverage differs significantly from province to province ranging from only 6% in Helmand province to 56% in Kabul province (AHDR 2011).
- Unplanned urban areas and illegal settlements are home to an estimated 70% of Afghanistan's urban population. Inadequate water and sanitation facilities, poor drainage and solid waste management and indoor pollution characterize living conditions in informal urban settlements and result in high vulnerability for both recently displaced and longer-term residents (HPG 2012/06).
- Poor conditions in the informal urban settlements are likely to contribute to acute respiratory diseases, diarrhoea and other array infectious diseases, especially for the most vulnerable segments of the population such as children and the elderly (WB/UNHCR 2012/05).
- New residents (IDPs) experience even more difficult access to services than longer term residents. The situation for IDPs in urban areas appears to be even worse

than that of the urban poor. IDPs in urban areas are more likely to have to get water from public sources and less likely to use a latrine (WB/UNHCR 2012/05).

### Access to water

- Access to safe drinking water is a chronic problem across the country. Overall, 57% of the Afghan population is using an *improved source* of drinking water, 82% in urban areas and 51% in rural areas. However, because many water points are damaged, the water from them may not be safe. Further damage was caused in early 2012 by flash flooding resulting in an urgent need for rehabilitation of water points and water supply systems (CAP MYR 2012, CSO & UNICEF MICS 2012/06, WASH Cluster 2011).
- Overall, 27% of people have access to *safe water* (58% in urban and 19% in rural areas) (WB/MoE 2010/07).
- Insufficient ground water is a concern; despite the significant snowfall in the winter and rainfall in March 2012, there has been no measurable rise in the ground water table (CAP MYR 2012).

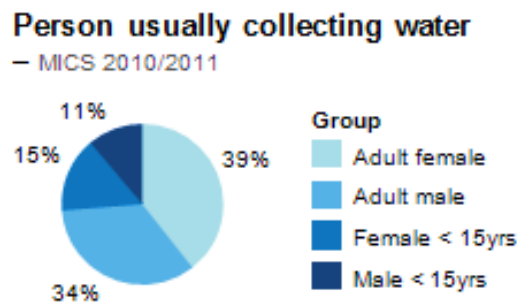
### Use of Improved Drinking Water Source - WASH Cluster 2012 (based on MICS 2010/2011)





- The situation in the Central Highlands region is considerably worse than in other regions in relation to water quality, with only 25% of the population drinking water from an improved source (CSO & UNICEF 2012/06).
- Only 18% of Kabul's residents have access to piped municipal water (HPG 2012/06).
- A quarter of drinking water in Kabul comes from shallow open wells (mostly privately owned), and 41% comes from hand-pumps (HPG 2012/06).
- 58% of household do not have immediate access to water and must travel to collect water. For 97% of them their access is within one hour of travel (NRVA 2008).
- Amnesty International report that residents of IDP camps do not have permission to dig wells. This is an effort on the part of the Government to prevent settlements becoming permanent. The Government transports potable water to the camps via tanker trucks, restricting water quantity to 10 litres per person per day (Stimson 2010/08/16).
- A study of one urban IDP area found that the ratio of people per water point is well above the recommended Sphere standard of 500 (HPG 2012/06).

- The role of water collection varies significantly between regions.



- In the Central Highlands, eastern and south eastern regions, more than 60% of adult women carry water for their households, and girls are more likely to support them than boys.
  - In urban areas men usually have the leading role in relation to water collection (CSO & UNICEF 2012/06).

- Cultural norms restrict women's movement and female headed households without male members to collect water and access other services are extremely vulnerable (AHDR 2011).
- Conflicts over water access are one aspect of the daily routine of collecting water, which cause mental stress and can affect the wellbeing of entire households (AHDR 2011).

- Issues related to accessing services cause tension between the host communities and IDPs in urban areas. As an example, IDPs have voiced frustration over differences in their water access to that of longer-term residents (WB/UNHCR 2011/05).

## Access to Sanitation

- There is a wide range of practices in the disposal of human excreta. The 2011 MICS found that 31% of the population live in households using improved sanitation facilities (60% in urban and 25% in rural areas) (CSO & UNICEF 2012/06).
- 25% of the population practices open defecation either in fields or a *darean* (a place inside or outside the compound used for waste products) (AHDR 2011).
- Across the country 5% of people have access to a sanitary toilet (WB/MoE 2010/07).
- Regional differences;
  - Residents of the central and north eastern regions are more likely to use improved sanitation facilities.
  - The highest proportion of use of piped sewer systems is found in the south region (11%).
  - 12% of households in the central region are using a septic tank.
  - In the south eastern region, more than 20% of the population uses VIP latrines.
  - In urban areas, for those using improved sanitation facilities, the most common facilities are flush toilets with a connection to a septic tank (23%), followed by pit latrine with a slab (18%).
  - Both urban and rural populations frequently use open pits or pit latrines without slabs (CSO & UNICEF 2012/06).
- Low rates of sanitary toilets among wealthier people in urban areas (only 28%) suggest that poor safe sanitation coverage reflects factors like lack of awareness about sanitary practices. Less than 30% of Kabul's residents have access to adequate sanitation. Toilet facilities in the districts reviewed for a study of urban Kabul were found often to empty out into open ditches outside homes. 90% of Kabul's sewage is released untreated into local waterways, contaminating surface- and groundwater (HPG 2012/06, CPHD, 2011, Stimson 2010/08/16).
- It appears that communities of those recently displaced suffer the worst effects associated with lack of adequate sanitation facilities. This is largely because of overcrowding. Women, who for cultural reasons are often not able to leave their homes, appear to be most affected by this (HPG 2012/06).

## Hygiene

- Country wide, 60% of households use a specific place for hand washing. Of those households, 71% had both water and soap present at the designated place (CSO & UNICEF 2012/06).
- This practice differs vastly across the country from as low as 14% in the Central Highlands to 88% in the Centre region (CSO & UNICEF 2012/06).

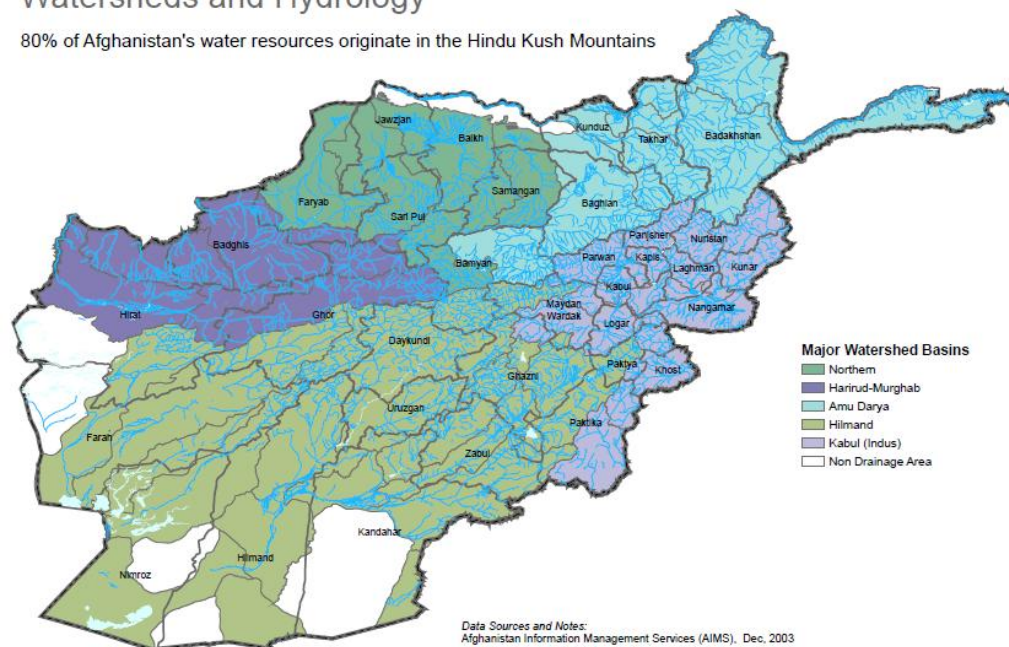
## Solid Waste Management

- Most urban households have poor access to waste collection services. These services do exist to some degree in long-standing formal settlements but are not provided to informal or illegal settlements (HGP 2012/06).
- Even where local residents associations have formed in the absence of any organised collection service there is little room for community initiatives other than burning or burying waste (HGP 2012/06).

Source: OCHA – 28/09/2012

## Watersheds and Hydrology

80% of Afghanistan's water resources originate in the Hindu Kush Mountains



## Protection

### Priority Concerns

- Widespread violence, including armed insurgent groups' killings of persons affiliated with the Government and indiscriminate attacks on civilians.
- Arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and abuse of detainees and extrajudicial killings by security forces.
- Endemic violence and societal discrimination against women and girls.
- Abuse of children, including sexual abuse, child labour.
- Discrimination and abuses against ethnic minorities.
- Trafficking in persons.
- Widespread official impunity for those who committed human rights abuses.

## Key characteristics

### Violence

- Fighting has spread to most of Afghanistan's provinces, but is still particularly concentrated in the 14 or so southern and eastern provinces. The estimated population of these provinces is 8.7 million people (DG ECHO 2012/08/02).
- Between 1 January and 30 June 2012, conflict-related violence resulted in more than 3,000 civilian casualties, a 15% decrease in overall civilian casualties compared with the same period in 2011. This decrease in incidents is assessed as the result of a number of factors, including poor weather conditions, successful efforts by Afghan and international forces, such as increased arrests, the more political posture adopted by some Taliban leaders and the uncertainty of fighters over reports of peace talks and the upcoming international military drawdown (UNAMA 2012/06).
- Despite this, August 2012 was one of the deadliest months ever recorded, with at least 374 civilians killed (OCHA 2012/08/20)

- The southern region has the highest number of civilian casualties and the highest number of incidents occurred in the provinces of Kandahar, Uruzgan, Zabul, Helmand and Nimroz (UNAMA 2012/08/16).
- Anti-Government Elements were responsible for at least 80% of all civilian casualties. The number of suicide attacks has decreased nationwide. Rather, armed clashes and improvised explosive devices have accounted for most incidents in 2012 (UNAMA 2012/07, UNAMA 2012/06).
- Anti-Government Elements increasingly targeted and killed civilians they perceive to support the Government of Afghanistan or international military forces. Government employees, off duty police officers and civilian police, tribal elders, civilians accused of spying for Pro-Government Forces and Government officials remained the primary focus of these anti-Government attacks (UNAMA 2012/07).
- There have been multiple incidents of cross-border shelling from Pakistan in areas bordering Kunar province (UNAMA 2012/07).

### Human rights violations

- In many regions, Anti-Government elements reportedly exercise de facto control of areas or entire districts. In these areas, killings, amputations, abductions and beatings and the forcible levy of informal taxes by Anti-Government elements have been reported (USDoS 2011, UNAMA 2012/07).
- There were credible reports that the Government and its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings. The Afghan Local Police (ALP) has been linked to extensive human rights abuses, including torture, disappearances and arbitrary killings (HRW 2011/09/12, USDoS 2011)

### Child protection

- The majority (94%) of children aged 0-17 years in Afghanistan live with both of their parents. Around 2% of children are living with neither parent (MICS 2010/2011).
- Only 37% of children aged <5 have had their births registered. A lack of registration cards hampers access to Government services such as school enrolment or identity cards (MICS 2010/2011).
- Child abuse is endemic throughout the country and on the increase. Such abuse includes general neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse (including by armed elements) abandonment, and confined forced labour to pay off family debts (USDoS 2011, UN 2012/04/26).

- Violence against children, corporal punishment and verbal abuse are widespread. Corporal punishment is prohibited by law in schools but not in the homes. 74% of children aged 2-14 years were subjected to at least one form of psychological or physical punishment by their mothers/caretakers or other household members. 38% of children were subjected to severe physical punishment (MICS 2010/2011, StC 2011).
- Children are increasingly recruited by armed groups, the Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan National Police (ANP). In 2011, 316 cases of underage recruitment were reported in Afghanistan, of which the majority was attributed to armed groups. Children were recruited and used by armed groups to conduct suicide attacks and plant improvised explosive devices, as well as for transporting goods. Cross-border recruitment of Afghan children to Pakistan by armed groups, was also reported (UN 2012/04/26, StC 2011, Protection Cluster 2010).
- Afghanistan is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women and children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. The majority of victims are children, with boys being more at risk than girls. Trafficking between regions within Afghanistan is more prevalent than transnational trafficking. Poverty and unemployment are among the most important causes of trafficking in persons (AIHRC 2011, US 2011).
- Children are detained because of alleged association with armed groups. The United Nations documented incidents of ill-treatment of children during detention, including beatings, electrical shocks and sexual abuse (USDoS 2011, Protection Cluster 2010, UN 2012/04/26).
- 25% of children are involved in child labour (27% of children aged 5-11 years and 22% of children aged 12-14 years) (WB 2012, MICS 2010/2011).
- Poverty and food shortages force many families to send their children on to the streets to beg for food and money. Current estimates suggest that there are 50-60,000 street working children in Kabul alone (StC 2011, USDoS 2011).
- The legal age for marriage is 16 years for girls and 18 years for boys. However, early marriage is very common. 15% of women aged 15-49 years were married before the age of 15. Urban girls and women (13%) are less likely to marry early than rural girls and women (22%) (MICS 2010/2011, USDoS 2011).

## Persons with Specific Needs:

- There are no exact statistics on the number of persons with a disability (PWD) in Afghanistan. A 2006 Afghan Disability Survey reports that around 2.7% of the population is disabled, meaning that there is a PWD in one out of every five families. Disability is more prevalent among men than women. Disabled Afghans and their families experience social and economic deprivation, denial of basic rights and discrimination (WB 2012, Handicap International 2006).
- Non-Muslim minorities such as Sikhs, Hindus, and Christians continue to face social discrimination, harassment and violence. Shia Hazaras face discrimination in the form of extortion of money through illegal taxation, forced recruitment and forced labour, physical abuse, and detention. Sikhs and Hindus face unequal access to Government jobs and harassment in their schools, as well as verbal and physical abuse in public places (USDoS 2011, USDoS 2010).
- Around 3% of the population is elderly. Traditionally older persons have a specific respected status within Afghan society. However, as there are no social security schemes to provide benefits to older persons, those that are poor and do not receive support from their family are particularly vulnerable (AIHRC 2011).

## IDP protection concerns

- The key cause of displacement for conflict-induced IDPs has been the severity of their protection conditions. These have included targeted threats, intimidation, and extortions, aerial attacks, forced recruitment, illegal taxation, night searches, and armed conflict among others (UNHCR 2012/05/31).
- Upon return, IDPs report to face risks based on allegations of affinity with particular parties to the conflict (UNHCR 2012/05/31).
- The existence of mines and other explosive remnants of war (ERWs) constitute a major threat to IDPs trying to settle in unfamiliar places (UNHCR 2012/05/31).

## Land tenure

- Land is a valuable commodity in Afghanistan and is essential to income generation and political status. However, there is a lack of national land tenure policy and land conflicts are widespread. Land disputes account for an estimated 50% of local conflicts and a survey by Oxfam in 2008 indicated that many Afghans felt that local disputes over land and water and family concerns were the main causes of insecurity in their lives (Oxfam 2008, IDMC 2011).



- A dispute between the Kuchis and the settled ethnic Hazaras over grazing land has since 2005 deteriorated into seasonal violence in the Kajab valley west of the capital, beginning in spring each year (HPG 2012 AFP 2012/08/06).
- 85% of IDPs do not have a deed (evidence of ownership or lease agreement) for their homes against 25% of urban poor households. The lack of formal property papers puts families at constant risk of eviction. Moreover, insecurity of tenure hampers IDPs and urban poor from building up assets and accessing credit, using their home for income generating activities and prevents investments in service provision (UNHCR 2011).

## Women's rights

- Since the overthrow of Taliban rule in 2001, there have been major improvements in the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan and women are currently equal before the law. However, Afghanistan remains among the lowest-ranking nations in the Gender Inequality Index (172 out of 187) (HRW 2012/03/28, ActionAid 2012/07/02, HDI 2011).
- Violence against women remains endemic in Afghanistan, with attacks on women becoming more frequent as tension grows in the run up to NATO troop withdrawal (UNWomen 2012/07/13).
- Although violence against women is criminalised under Afghan law, there is limited political will to implement the law. Estimates of the proportion of women who are victims of domestic violence are as high as 87%. Overall, 92% of women in Afghanistan feel that their husband has a right to hit or beat them for at least one of a variety of reasons, including neglecting the children and burning food. Killing, assault, and sexual violence against women commonly involved family members as suspects (USDoS 2011).
- Afghan women, especially those living outside major urban centres, are obliged to live according to strict unwritten rules of conduct. Mobility is restricted as women may be prohibited from traveling outside the village, required to have an escort, and unable to interact with men outside the family. (HRW 2012, WB 2011, Asia Foundation 2011).
- The vast majority of Afghan women do not own land. Societal factors dictate that women should not own property, especially land, although they can inherit land as widows and as children of landowners (WB 2011).
- Access to credit from financial institutions often depends on the ability to demonstrate ownership of traditional forms of collateral property such as land, machinery, and housing. Without landownership, women have less opportunity to access financial services (USDoS 2011).

- Women face discrimination in access to and terms of employment and occupation (USDoS 2011).
- An estimated 70% of marriages are forced (USDoS 2011).
- Resolution 2041 of the UN Security Council noted that the Government of Afghanistan should continue to increase women's participation in decision-making processes, and in all Afghan governance institutions. Although 25% of the seats in parliament are reserved for females, this quota has not directly translated into increased decision making for women in Government positions. A failure to include women in decision-making processes and high-level policy discussions increases fears that the desire to bring peace through a compromise with the Taliban could lead to infringement of women's rights (CGNS 2012/03/28, WB 2011, UNAMA 2012/09/11).

## Justice services

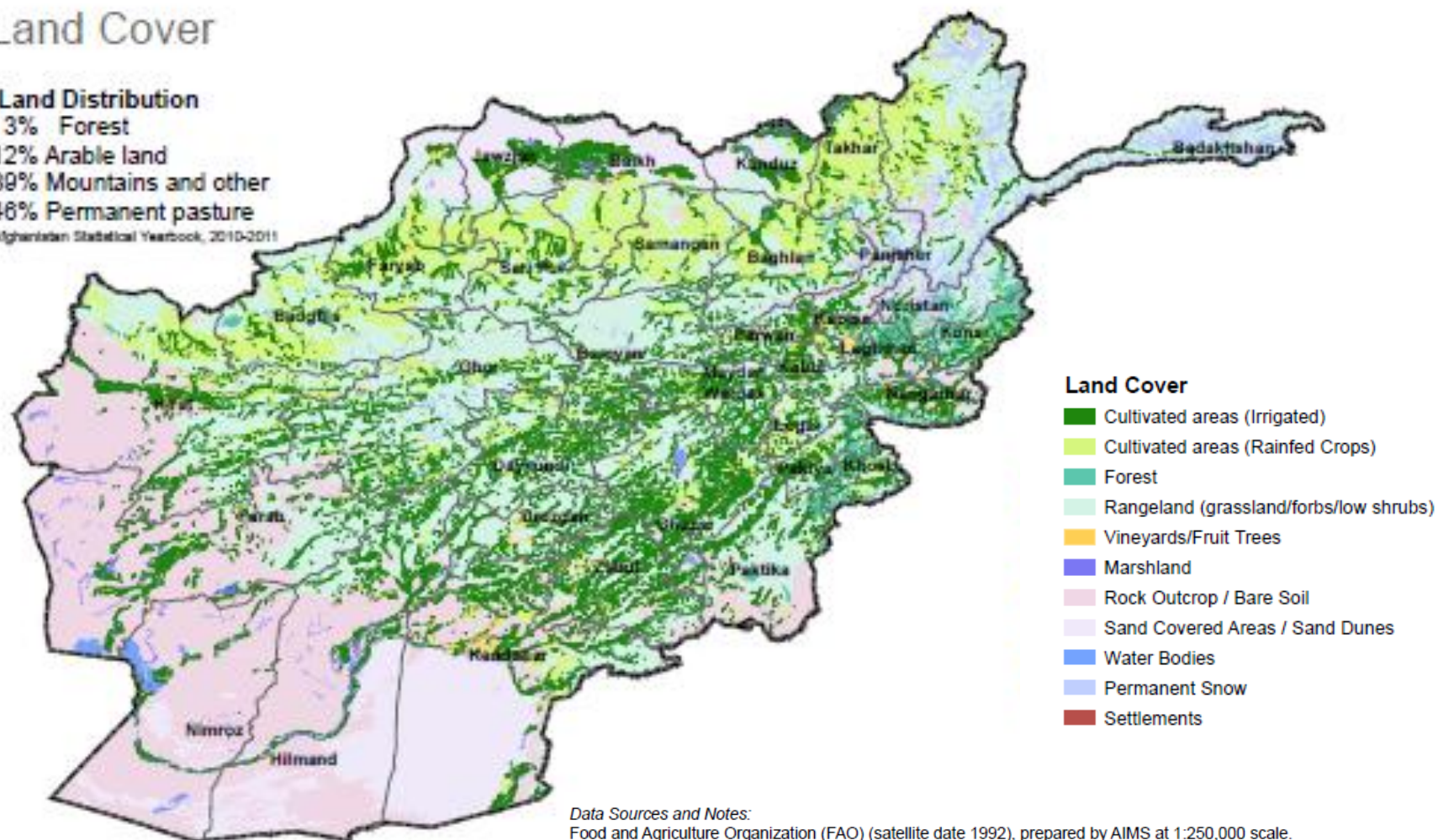
- The law provides for an independent judiciary, but in practice the judiciary is underfunded, understaffed, ineffective, and subject to political influence and pervasive corruption. The majority of Afghans still have little or no access to judicial institutions. Communities reported that the official justice system is often unable to resolve cases in a fair, timely or transparent manner, because of corruption and incompetence (UNAMA 2012/07, USDoS 2011, ICG 2010).
- Much of the judicial infrastructure has decayed or been destroyed: 98% of the country's court houses are in need of construction or rehabilitation (MDG 2009/05/09).
- Cultural norms often impeded women's access to justice and to the full exercise of their rights (MDG 2009/05/09).
- Areas under the effective control of Anti-Government Elements often have very limited access to Governmental justice mechanisms or services. Anti-Government Elements are taking advantage of this rule of law vacuum to enforce their own parallel judicial structures to take decisions in criminal cases, disputes and, in some cases, to try and/ or punish persons suspected of collaborating with Pro-Government Forces (UNAMA 2012/07).
- Prison conditions remain poor. Most prisons and detention centres, are severely overcrowded, unsanitary, and fell well short of international standards. There were reports of abuse of persons in detention. Torture of detainees at NDS and ANP detention centres and credible instances of torture and mistreatment at several other facilities by security forces was reported (USDoS 2011).

### Land Cover

#### Land Distribution

3% Forest  
12% Arable land  
38% Mountains and other  
48% Permanent pasture

Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook, 2010-2011



Source: OCHA - 28/09/2012

## Key background documents

- Afghan Public Health Institute, Ministry of Public Health, Central Statistics Organization, ICF Macro, Indian Institute of Health Management Research and World Health Organization , Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010  
<http://measuredhs.com/pubs/pdf/FR248/FR248.pdf>
- Brookings, Afghanistan Index, September 2010.  
<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Programs/foreign%20policy/afghanistan%20index/index20120918.pdf>
- Central Statistics Organisation Afghanistan and UNICEF, Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010/2011, Kabul, June 2012.  
[http://www.childinfo.org/files/MICS\\_Afghanistan\\_2010-11.pdf](http://www.childinfo.org/files/MICS_Afghanistan_2010-11.pdf)
- Centre for Policy and Human Development, Afghanistan Human Development Report 2011, Kabul, 2011.  
<http://www.cphd.af/nhdr/nhdr2010/Complete%20NHDR%202011%20final.pdf>
- Government of Afghanistan, Poverty status in Afghanistan - a profile based on the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 2007-08, Kabul, March 2012.  
<http://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/poverty-status-afghanistan-profile-based-national-risk-and-vulnerability>
- Government of Afghanistan, National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2007-08, Kabul, October 2009  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/documents/afgh\\_nrva\\_2007-08\\_full\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/documents/afgh_nrva_2007-08_full_report_en.pdf)
- OCHA, Mid-Year Review of the Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan 2012, 20 July 2012  
<http://www.unocha.org/cap/appeals/by-country/results>
- UNAMA, Protection of civilians in armed conflict, Mid- Year report 2012, Kabul, July 2012  
[http://unama.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=-\\_vDVBQY1OA%3d&tabid=12254&language=en-US](http://unama.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=-_vDVBQY1OA%3d&tabid=12254&language=en-US)
- UNHCR, Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, Geneva, May 2012  
<http://www.unhcr.org/afghanistan/solutions-strategy.pdf>
- US Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011  
<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>
- World Bank and UNHCR, Research study on IDPs in Urban Settings, Kabul May 2011.  
[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1265299949041/6766328-1265299960363/WB-UNHCR-IDP\\_Full-Report.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1265299949041/6766328-1265299960363/WB-UNHCR-IDP_Full-Report.pdf)

**Methodology** – This desk study presents estimations of scale, severity and likely impact of an on-going crisis. It aims to inform decision making for preparedness and emergency response and intends to complement and integrate assessment-related data from other agencies. Feedback to improve the DNA is welcome ([dna@acaps.org](mailto:dna@acaps.org)). ECB, NRC, ACAPS and MapAction thank agencies and NGOs who have shared data and analysis.

**Disclaimer** – Information provided is provisional as it has not been possible to independently verify field reports. As this report covers highly dynamic subject, utility of the information may decrease with time.

**References** – Please note that all sources are hyperlinked (in brackets) and that an accompanying glossary is available [here](#).