



AUSTRALIAN
COUNCIL
FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

2 July 2012

Senator Ursula Stephens,
Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Defence,
Foreign Affairs and Trade
PO Box 1112
Goulburn, NSW 2580

Senator Alan Eggleston,
Deputy Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Defence, Foreign
Affairs and Trade
PO Box 984
South Perth, WA, 6951

14 Napier Close
Deakin ACT 2600
Private Bag 3
Deakin ACT 2600 Australia

P +61 2 6285 1816
F +61 2 685 1720
E main@acfid.asn.au
www.acfid.asn.au

ABN 54 645 667 467

Re: Proposed Terms of Reference for the Committee's inquiry

Dear Senator Stephens and Eggleston,

I write in regards to the proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Committee's inquiry into 'The administration, management and objective of Australia's overseas development programs in Afghanistan in the context of the 'Transition Decade'. The Australian Council for International Development, (ACFID) welcomes the parliamentary Inquiry into Afghanistan, the first in a decade.

We write to urge you to consider broadening the ToR for this inquiry to take account of major political, economic and social developments occurring in Afghanistan, which affect the future of the country and the delivery of Australian aid. The current terms of reference as set out will provide only for a retrospective inquiry. Below I have identified three examples which serve to demonstrate that the current ToR is too narrow to provide for a forward-looking assessment of the ongoing Australia-Afghan relationship.

1. Expert opinion has focused on a number of scenarios for the future political and military situation in Afghanistan, namely: a) continuation of the ruling oligarchy with attendant corruption; b) accommodation with insurgents including elements of the Quetta Shura Taliban; c) civil war; and d) return of the Taliban. Consideration of these scenarios is essential to ascertaining the future operational environment in which Australia's relationship with Afghanistan will be situated, including the delivery of official development assistance (ODA).
2. The drawdown of troops and reduction in International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is anticipated to have far reaching impacts on the Afghan society. These will include women's rights; the economy; and disarmament demobilisation and reintegration of ex combatants. In

united against poverty

ACFID unites Australia's non-government
aid and international development
organisations to strengthen their collective
impact against poverty

turn each of these issues will affect the sustainability of security in Afghanistan. For example, consideration of the main sources of wealth generation is essential for sustainable development and security. Increases in opium production, which provides 9% of Afghan GDP and is source of 90% of the world's heroin, is a real threat and viable measure to counter this trend should be identified. If there is no viable economy for ex combatants to be reintegrated into, the prospects for a secure Afghanistan will be slim.

3. Finally, given the recent Parliamentary debate on asylum seekers in Australia, and given that global asylum claims from people from Afghanistan topped all other nationalities in 2011 with 35,000 asylum applications, consideration of refugees is essential. In its 2011 report, UNHCR notes Afghanistan remains the largest producer of refugees. The Refugee Agency has a case load of 2,664,436 Afghan refugees, and 447,547 internally displaced people. This is the largest group of any nationality in the world. The transition above can have a substantial effect refugee flows, increasing the push factors which may cause greater flows of asylum seekers in coming year.

Thus, a purely retrospective inquiry will not be sufficient for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the environment in which Australia's relationship with Afghanistan will be carried forward from 2014.

Ensuring that Australia's relationship with Afghanistan post-2014 is informed by an assessment of the diverse range of factors which will affect it. A broader ToR for this inquiry might consider the questions below:

Security issues in the context of transition

1. How will the quality and quantity of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) training affect the post-transition environment?
2. How will the ANSF fulfil their international human rights obligations to all people, including vulnerable groups, in Afghanistan? How will Australia support civil society in its role of protecting and promoting human rights?
3. What progress has been made towards a secure Afghanistan including the arrangements for the transfer of responsibility for security to the Afghan National Security Forces? How well has the transfer worked in those areas where it has already taken place?
4. How sustainable is the ANSF? What considerations have been made for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ANSF

personnel impacted by the eventual settling of security force numbers?

5. What progress has been made towards a political settlement that involves Afghan women and includes plans for Australia's continued involvement in Afghanistan after 2014 as well as that of NATO and other allies including the long-term funding and other continued support of Afghanistan?
6. Can Australia work with other donors to "tackle the root causes of instability and the effects of insecurity" and what is the scope for building bridges with opposition and insurgent groups to do this?
7. What will be the role of any Australian Defence Force personnel or police remaining after 2014, and how will they be supported?

Development issues in the context of transition

8. How can the potential negative economic impacts of the military draw-down be mitigated through Australia's ongoing relationship with Afghanistan?
9. How can Australia continue to strengthen a cohesive approach to the planning, delivery, monitoring and reporting of Official Development Assistance, across government, with other donors and with multilateral organisations?
10. How will Australia contribute to reducing poverty, increasing economic stability, creating sustainable jobs, and increasing investment and tax revenues?
11. How is Australia meeting its guidelines on working in conflict affected states, particularly with regard to protracted and cyclical humanitarian needs?
12. What progress has been made in Afghanistan toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

Attached to this letter is our 2010 study of Australian aid to Afghanistan, 'In it for the long haul: Australia's aid to Afghanistan'.

ACFID is the peak body for Australian non-government organisations (ANGOs) working in the field of international aid and development. ACFID has 82 member organisations which operate in over 100 developing countries. With more than 45 years of experience working collaboratively

with communities and governments, we bring a critical perspective on international development issues to discussions with the Australian Government.

ACFID administers a rigorous Code of Conduct which represents the active commitment of 120 Australian overseas aid organisations to strive for best practice and integrity, transparency and accountability in their work. Our Code was reviewed and strengthened in 2010, and now covers 50 principles and over 150 obligations for signatories. It has an annual compliance process and includes an independent committee for assessing complaints.

ACFID represents an independent sector and the Australian community forms our member's primary supporter base.

We are happy to provide further information regarding the suggestions above.

Regards

Marc Purcell
Executive Director

cc: Dr Kathleen Dermody, Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade