
Report on the status of women in the Afghan National Police

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Afghanistan needs large numbers of empowered, well-trained and experienced policewomen for the following reasons:

- In an Islamic society, a virtually all-male organization such as the Afghan National Police cannot respond effectively to incidents involving women as suspects, complainants or victims.
- Properly empowered policewomen can react to violence against women, family violence, children in trouble, and kidnappings; interrogate, detain and investigate female suspects; provide support to female victims of crime, and ensure the security of women in communities.
- The Ministry of Interior Affairs (MOI) is not well prepared to take action by October 12, 2005 to address violations of women's rights, as required by the Afghan Inter-Ministerial Task Force in its recently released three-month plan on Combating Violence Against Women.
- How Afghanistan deals with violence against women is under close international scrutiny. A recent evaluation by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women found violence and discrimination against women and girls prevalent in Afghanistan. The ANP does not have enough empowered policewomen to handle the amount of violence against women that the UN Special Rapporteur has identified.
- Afghanistan has obligations under the United Nations *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. At present there is discrimination against policewomen because they are unduly limited in their role, and women in the general population are not receiving the security protection they are guaranteed.
- Afghanistan has a constitution declaring that men and women are equal, and has integrated, or "mainstreamed", gender into the National Development Framework, the National Development Budget, and into government at all levels. The MOI therefore has an obligation to contribute to the attainment of national goals on gender equality.

Canada is supporting Afghan government efforts by funding a gender advisor for the MOI. This report is part of that support. It describes the current status of gender equity in the MOI, and identifies the matters requiring attention for gender equity to become a reality. The report is based on a survey of a group of policewomen, and information gathered from a variety of sources in the capital and in the provinces. It is not a complete picture, but it assembles more information on policewomen than has previously existed, so can serve as a measure for future gender progress equity.

Police women in the Afghan National Police

In fiscal year 2004-2005, there were a total of 53,400 paid police personnel of which policewomen constituted between 160 and 180. This number represents about 0.3% of all police personnel, which suggests that, from the numbers alone, gender equity has not yet started in the ANP. Uncertain MOI information on the present number of women in policing, their ranks and their locations and the lack of good statistics mean there is no reliable database for gender planning, monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Most policewomen are literate, “professional” police; that is, of sergeant or officer rank. A few policewomen in the provinces are illiterate and are employed below these ranks. Most work in Kabul and their length of service ranges from one to nearly 30 years. Their recruitment took place under a variety of political regimes, which appears to have coloured their perception of their role. Many see their function as solely serving the interests of the state, maintaining order, and controlling crime, rather than helping individuals, communities, or other women. Some entered policing as early as 12 years of age, but the recruitment age is now around 16 years.

While the training of policewomen is supposed to be equivalent to that of men, even at the officer level many have had little training. The norm seems to be three months of basic training. In addition, few have received any advanced training, professional development, or human rights training. They also lack experience in practical police work. Virtually none perform what are regarded as police functions. Apart from body searches and occasional interviewing of women, they merely assist male police, or perform clerical and menial functions. Nor are they mobile in their work and, apart from an odd public ceremony, they are usually invisible to the public. Given their situation, it is not surprising that they do not receive the same promotional opportunities as men. In effect, they have little presence in the ANP or in the public mind and, consequently have virtually no impact on policing in Afghanistan.

It is evident that the return on present investment in recruitment, training and maintenance of policewomen is poor because of the failure to employ policewomen in value-producing work. Consequently there is a waste of human capital, failure to protect the human rights of policewomen, and missed opportunities for using policewomen to advance government objectives for security and human rights, including the duty to provide the female half of the Afghan population with security services and access to justice.

Gender activities in the MOI and the ANP

Examination of the efforts of the MOI to recruit and advance women in policing revealed some serious difficulties.

Organizational inertia

Despite some efforts, the MOI seems unable to spark action to make the organizational changes necessary for recruiting and employing women in useful police work that is compatible with religious beliefs, as other Islamic countries have done. Organizational inertia is perhaps the underlying cause of all the other problems associated with gender equity in the MOI and ANP. There are a number of reasons for this seeming paralysis:

- No active supporter or “champion” at the executive level, such as the Minister or a deputy minister. With no strong direction from the top, the rest of the organization does not take gender seriously
- A lack of the necessary leadership and expertise to bring about change. Few MOI or ANP managers are trained in strategic planning, project or organizational change management, or program direction
- A prevailing belief that policewomen already have equality, and that only increased female recruitment is needed to achieve gender balance.

- A tendency to focus on the obstacles to women advancing in policing, rather than on strategies for surmounting the obstacles.

Failure to finance the gender priority

Another major factor in the failure to address the gender issue is the lack of financial resources for gender equity. This year, Germany has provided €10,000 for gender programming, but otherwise there is no specific budget in the MOI for a recruitment or incentive program to attract women to policing. A priority is not a priority if it is not funded; therefore, without funds, there is likely to be no significant change in the present situation, even though modest investment could yield cost-effective results.

The absence of gender policy and programs

While there is usually a good response when a gender inequity comes to light, there do not appear to be any formal gender policies, programs, financial resources or even sufficient staff to integrate gender rights into the organization and operations of the ANP. Consequently, there is no strategic gender plan to direct desired change, no programs to identify and remove systemic bias against women in policing, no affirmative action programs, and no serious consideration of what the role and responsibilities of policewomen should be. The good news is that there seems to be no active resistance within the police, or in communities, to police gender equality. Such tolerant attitudes, however, may be a result of organizational inertia. With actions to improve the status of policewomen, tolerance may disappear and strategies become necessary to counterbalance the reaction.

The recruitment problem

While recruitment is said to be a priority, there appears to be only isolated, unplanned recruitment activity and little focussed effort to make it a reality. There is mention of a recruitment plan, but little evidence of it. Consequently, female recruitment is not occurring at a pace that will result in any appreciable increase to present numbers in the foreseeable future.

Support for gender equity from other Afghan government agencies

The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) both have human rights and gender responsibilities and relations with the MOI. The MOWA has an agreement with the MOI to provide gender training, and departments of women's affairs in the provinces welcome the prospect of increased recruitment and expanded roles for policewomen. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission in Kabul and its representatives in the provinces also encourage the notion of strengthening gender in the ANP and employing policewomen in providing services to women and families.

International support for gender equity in the Afghan National Police

Individual donor countries have had a number of imaginative and successful gender projects in policing but, there is little planned and sustained attention to the issue, or coordination of activities to ensure synergy and impact. Some reasons for this are:

“Cross-cutting” can mean neglect

Despite gender being a priority, it frequently escapes attention when plans are developed and budgets allocated. This is because gender cuts across all sectors of policing. The expectation is that it will receive funding attention within each

individual activity, so no allocation is made specifically for gender equity programs. But, its funding is also neglected within specific programs. This may be why no specific LOTFA funds have been made available for gender. It is not a separate funding item because it could be funded under other priority sectors. But, in fact, it receives no special attention under any of them.

Potential conflict in policing approaches

Lack of coordination in international support for reform efforts could create future problems for the ANP. There are two important examples where this is the case.

In the first instance, German and Norwegian police advisors train educated “professional police”, while American police train the largely illiterate or minimally educated “soldiers” or constables. Both groups pursue their programs independently. The reference point for the Germans and Norwegians is the European state policing model, while the American frame of reference is the common law, local policing model. The ANP is organized on the European model, but the common law model has high value for police reform because it generates popular support and trust for the police. It is a model in which policewomen could work effectively, since it emphasizes the service aspect of policing. Both approaches have merit but, without careful coordination, training higher-level police in one system and lower level police in another could lead to organizational conflict and confusion, bring reforms into disrepute, and undermine gender reform.

In the second case, there is inherent conflict in the thinking and methods for reforming the ANP. The German police favour a methodical reorganization and re-building of infrastructure. They therefore concentrate on those parts of the organization and the country where there is still some infrastructure on which to build. An example is the Police Academy and the professional police training program. This approach is crucial to reform, but it is a long process and, in the meantime, there are other pressing problems, particularly in the provinces. The Americans therefore favour a more pragmatic approach and have implemented many ad hoc solutions to deal with immediate problems. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but they are treated that way by their proponents. Moreover, in both cases, the issue of gender mainstreaming is ignored. In the rational approach with its emphasis on hard and soft infrastructure, the view is that gender matters “come later” and, in the pragmatic approach, odd gender projects are undertaken, but there is no systematic planning for the attainment of gender objectives.

Gender and policing: two cultural solitudes

There is a cultural divide between Afghan police and international gender experts that undermines efforts to promote gender equality in the ANP. Gender reformers tend to see the police culture as conservative, impenetrable and resistant to change. Yet they know little about how police organizations function, so their recommendations for police gender reform usually fall short of the mark. For their part, police tend to regard gender reform as a criticism of their profession, difficult to implement, and unnecessary. They regard the police organization as immutable, and changing it to accommodate gender concerns impossible. The inability to find common ground hampers progress on the police gender front.

Conclusions

Despite protestations to the contrary, there are few signs that either countries contributing to police reform or the MOI understand gender mainstreaming or take it seriously. Yet, the longer the delay in implementing effective gender equity programs, the more the MOI will be seen as failing in its obligations to women, to communities, to its own government and its Constitution, and to the world community in which Afghanistan is a member. Accepting gender equity will lead to radical change in police organizational culture and operational practices. It will cause temporary turmoil but, properly managed, the rewards will be worth the trouble. The MOI will be able to respond effectively to external pressures and demands, and will have sufficient numbers of empowered policewomen to deal effectively with female offenders, victims and children. The proof of this is provided by many western police organizations, where the growing number of women entering policing has contributed appreciably to a shift from repressive command-and-control approaches to an emphasis on human rights, police professionalism, crime prevention and service to communities. Crime rates have dropped, people feel secure, and high percentages of national populations declare themselves pleased with the police.

There are a number of factors on which the ANP must concentrate to make gender equity possible:

- **Political will:** Until there is a display of political will from both the donor countries engaged in police reform and the MOI to make the hard decisions and take the first difficult steps, there will be very little change in the status quo.
- **Cooperation among donor countries:** Cooperation and joint decision-making are needed to optimize the international support for police reform. A shared focus would eliminate fragmentation, promote synergy, support gender equity, and ensure that international funding yielded effective results.
- **Counteracting organizational inertia in the MOI :** The development of a strategic plan with clear objectives on which all the Afghan and international stakeholders can agree is a necessary first step to overcoming organizational inertia and taking effective action. Important issues to consider in the strategic plan would be the creation of a gender unit reporting to the highest level of the organization, the development of a reliable statistical base for planning and evaluation purposes and, the identification and elimination of systemic barriers that militate against gender equality.
- **Dedicated financial resources:** If the status quo is to be changed, adequate funding will have to be found. The allocation of funds will be a primary measure of political will and crucial to achieving strategic objectives. Gender equality is not likely to be an expensive proposition, but the return on investment could be very high in terms of human rights reform, delivery on the interministerial three-month work plan, provision of police services to women, and compliance with the Constitution and international agreements.
- **Leadership development:** Selection and intensive training and development of police officers with high-performance potential is urgently needed to raise the leadership and management competencies of both male and female senior police officers. Competent, progressive leadership will

also allow the contemplation of a broader view of the police role to encompass service to citizens as well as repression of criminality and disorder. Competent leaders at the senior levels of policing with the vision and know-how to make change happen will counteract organizational inertia and lead to progress on the reform agenda. This initiative will also require funding and expert planning since leadership development is an intensive, sustained program rather than a short-term training course.

- **Raising the profile of gender equity in the Ministry of Interior:** For gender to succeed, the Minister or his deputy responsible for security must give it active and consistent support. If the initiative has a high profile, even resisters will understand that it is in their interests to give it their support. Moreover, high-level support could encourage recruitment. Since recruitment of police women received the strong support of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nihyan in Dubai, there is a list of well-educated female candidates waiting to joining the police. Nor should the emphasis be merely on recruiting women into policing. While a critical mass of women is needed to have impact, gender equity is not a numbers game. Attention will have to be paid to acquiring and retaining high-quality recruits, providing good development opportunities, removing systemic biases that prevent gender parity occurring, and then empowering women with the necessary authority and autonomy to carry out the policing responsibilities that they are able to do the best within the framework of Islam.
- **Bridging the cultural divide between gender advisors and police:** Separately, gender advisors and police cannot achieve their objectives, because neither group has the expertise to develop and implement mechanisms for eliminating systemic bias and providing affirmative action programs for policewomen. Mechanisms for understanding each other and working together will be needed to capitalize on the value each group can contribute.

Resolving these issues will be only the beginning not the end of the effort; it will merely create the right conditions to pursue what should be a consistent, sustained program for the foreseeable future. Creating gender equity will require change in the organizational culture of the ANP and this cannot be achieved quickly. Police women will need to be helped to acquire the necessary competencies to assume an equal position with men; police men will require help in learning how to work on a basis of equality with women; and police leaders in the ANP will also require advice and support to manage the considerable organizational change that true gender equality will generate. Long-term, sustained and concentrated effort from both national staff and international police gender experts will be necessary to make gender equity a reality in the MOI and the ANP.

Next steps

The following steps should be taken to start the process of making gender equality in the MOI a reality.

Short term (6-12 months)

1. Develop a joint strategic plan with agreed-upon objectives for implementing gender equality in the ANP.

2. Submit a budget proposal to LOTFA based on the plan
3. Gain commitment from LOTFA, or one or more donor countries, to fund for five years at least one expert advisor on police gender issues to assist the MOI in setting up a gender unit reporting to the Minister or a deputy minister, which will be the focal point for all gender policy and programming.

Medium term (9 months to 2 years)

1. Obtain funding to establish a statistical system for gender planning, direction, performance management and evaluation
2. Obtain funding for a comprehensive leadership competency development program for high-potential police officers.
3. Identify high-potential police officers of both genders, but with a particular emphasis on women to ensure equity, to undergo intensive leadership competency development.
4. Develop police programs in which policewomen can provide services to women in the community while gaining experience in acting autonomously and decision-making. The Kabul District 10 family violence unit provides an example that might be followed here.

Long term (1-5 years)

1. Elimination of systemic biases against policewomen and the introduction of policies and programs, including the provinces as well as the capital, to ensure that women have equal opportunity with men for recruitment, meaningful work within the limits of acceptable Islamic practices, and opportunities for advancement.
2. Integration of the gender unit as a regular program funded by the annual budgeting process of the Ministry.

THE REPORT

Context

Afghanistan needs large numbers of empowered, well-trained and experienced policewomen for the following reasons:

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- Properly empowered policewomen can react to violence against women, family violence, children in trouble, and kidnappings; interrogate, detain and investigate female suspects; provide support to female victims of crime, and ensure the security of women in communities.
- The Ministry of Interior Affairs (MOI) is not well prepared to take action by October 12, 2005 to address violations of women's rights, as required by the Afghan Inter-Ministerial Task Force in its recently released three-month plan on Combating Violence Against Women.¹
- How Afghanistan deals with violence against women is under close international scrutiny.² A recent evaluation by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women found violence and discrimination against women and girls prevalent in Afghanistan. The ANP does not have enough empowered policewomen to handle the amount of violence against women that the UN Special Rapporteur has identified.
- Afghanistan has obligations under the United Nations *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. At present there is discrimination against policewomen because they are unduly limited in their role, and women in the general population are not receiving the security protection they are guaranteed.
- Afghanistan has a constitution declaring that men and women are equal, and has integrated, or "mainstreamed", gender into the National Development Framework, the National Development Budget, and into government at all levels. The MOI therefore has an obligation to contribute to the attainment of national goals on gender equality.

To give reality to the constitutional principle of gender equity, the Afghan government, with the support of its donor countries, launched a government-wide effort to integrate gender into the National Development Framework and the National Development Budget, and to "mainstream" or integrate gender considerations into all aspects of government activity and all levels in government.³ The expectation is that Ministries will:

- Generate relevant female data on men and women to improve the capacity to analyse gender

¹ UNIFEM, *Media Release: "Government Task Force for Combating Violence Against Women Releases a 3-Month Workplan"*, Kabul July 18, 2005.

² United Nations Commission on Human Rights, *Press Statement by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women*, Kabul, Afghanistan, July 19, 2005.

³ Government of Afghanistan, Ministry of Finance, *Project Document for 'Gender Units': Mainstreaming Gender in Government*, 3.2.1. Public Administration and Reform, document no. AFG/04701; *Public Investment Programme in Advocacy and support for the Integration of Gender into the into the national Development Budget (SY 1382-84)*.

- Provide gender budgets to support national planning
- Produce studies and pilot initiatives to reduce gender disparities
- Monitor gender contributions to the national agenda
- Create gender units comprising both international staff and international experts.

Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), funded the gender advisor position for the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MOI) for ten months. The gender advisor was contracted through CANADEM, a non-governmental agency funded by CIDA. This report is part of the terms of the contract. It describes the current status of gender equity in the MOI. It can therefore serve as a description of the present status of women in Afghan policing, as a diagnostic tool, and as a yardstick for measuring future gender-equity progress.

The MOI is responsible for the direction of the Afghan National Police (ANP). The ANP is the focus of intensive international assistance, led by Germany, because policing is crucial to establishing security and human rights in Afghanistan. In the fiscal year April 2004 to March 31, 2005, there were a total of 53,400 paid police personnel throughout the 34 provinces of Afghanistan⁴. By one count⁵, 180 of this number were policewomen. By another⁶, there were 164 policewomen. By either count, the female component of the ANP at present constitutes no more than 0.3% of total police personnel. In terms of numbers alone, then, gender equity is far from being a reality in the ANP.

Methodology

Information on the status of policewomen was collected in interviews with key MOI officials; police men and women; officials in other Afghan ministries and agencies, such as the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Independent Human Rights Commission in both the capital and the provinces; and, international gender and police advisors. There is little written information on policewomen, but a few documents were located.

Visits to some regional centres and police stations provided first-hand information on conditions for policewomen in Kabul and the provinces. Some regional information was gathered by means of structured interviews. An electronic survey of American police advisors in the nine regional training centres was also conducted. A survey of a group of policewomen took place in May 2005 during a workshop organized by the German and Norwegian police for policewomen to discuss their role and training needs. Twenty-eight participants constituting between 15.5% and 17% of all Afghan policewomen attended the workshop. All but one of the participants completed questionnaires on their background and experience in policing. The survey formed part of this study.

⁴ Ministry of the Interior, Support to Law and Order Trust Fund Project, *Phase II 1383 Annual Report*, Kabul, 2005, p. 5.

⁵ Ibid p.7.

⁶ Ministry of Interior Affairs, Human Rights Directorate, *ANP female police personnel in the capital and provinces*, summary translated from the Dari, 2005, one page.

Police Women in the Afghan National Police

1. Uncertainty about the number of women in policing

There have been women in the ANP since at least the 1970s, but the present number of policewomen is difficult to ascertain because of contradictory or missing data. At present, according to the MOI Human Rights Department figures, there are a total of 573 women in the Ministry of Interior Affairs. They are distributed among a number of different classes of employees, including tailors and “servants”, and between the capital and the provinces as shown in Table 1.

Level	Kabul	Provinces	Total
Officers	52	28	80
Sergeants	33	51	84
Civilian clerks	41	15	56
Support staff (civilian)	303	50	353
Total			573

Source: Human Rights Department, Ministry of Interior Affairs, May 2005

According to the Human Rights Department figures, there are 164 professional policewomen. Most are situated in Kabul, and only a third of the 34 provinces have any policewomen at all. Table 2 shows the provincial distribution according to the Human Rights Department.

Province	Female Sergeants	Female Officers
Baghlan	X	X
Balkh	X	X
Bamyan	X	
Farah		X
Faryab		X
Ghazni	X	
Helmand		X
Heart	X	X
Jawazjan	X	X
Kabul		X
Kandahar	X	X
Kunduz	X	X
Ningarhar	X	

Source: Human Rights Department, Ministry of Interior Affairs, May 2005

On the other hand, figures supplied by the Law Enforcement Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), put the present level of policewomen at 180. Excepting recent graduates from the Police Academy, they show distribution by rank.

Rank	Badakhshan	Baghlan	Balkh	Farah	Herat	Jouzjan	Kabul	Kandahar	Kunduz	Nemrouz	Ningarhar	Central Offices, MOI	Total
General													0
Lieutenant General													0
Major General													0
Brigadier General												2	2
Colonel					1							9	10
Lieutenant Colonel												3	3
Major				1			1	1				6	9
Senior Captain												7	7
Captain				1								2	3
1st Lieutenant							2	1				3	6
2 nd Lieutenant					2		1					2	5
3 rd Lieutenant							2					7	9
Head Sergeant	1		2		1	1	1			1	1	1	9
1 st Sergeant		1					2					4	7
2 nd Sergeant							7					6	13
3 rd Sergeant		1	4			1	22		1		2	11	42
Recent graduates – Police Academy													55
Patrol													0
Total	1	2	6	2	4	2	38	2	1	1	3	63	180

Source: Law Enforcement Trust Fund for Afghanistan, February 2005.

Both sets of data refer only to those women in the officer and sergeant ranks who constitute what is called the “professional” police. But there is also a patrol level, once staffed by mainly illiterate male “soldiers” or conscripts, which now contains some illiterate women. The women at this level lack the educational qualifications to be professional police, but have received a basic training course of four to five weeks. Neither of the two sources shows data on these policewomen, yet three regional training centres (RTC) in the north and the south report training a total of 28 illiterate women at this level in 2004, and there may be others.⁷

Comparison of the three tables reveals significant discrepancies between the data from the two sources. Apart from variations in numbers, both rank and provincial distribution vary. To take only one example, Table 2 places at least one sergeant in Bamyan and at least one sergeant and one officer in Kunduz. Table 3, on the other hand does not mention Bamyan and places only a third sergeant in Kunduz. Recent visits to both provinces confirm that there were no policewomen Bamyan, and four

⁷ Only slightly more than half of the regional training centre questionnaires have been returned so far, so this number could be higher. It is likely that those remaining of the 28 trained are not included in the support level personnel figures in Table 1, but this has yet to be verified.

illiterate women at the patrol level in Kunduz, who are not qualified to join the sergeant or officer ranks.

The figures provided by the Human Rights Department were collected recently expressly to establish the number of policewomen in the ANP, while the LOTFA figures are based on computerized payroll data for policewomen. The computerization of the LOTFA payroll data are not yet completely computerized but should be accurate for what exist, while the custom-collected data should also reflect the present situation. The discrepancies are therefore puzzling. It is unlikely that they can be explained by recent personnel changes, since the two data sets were collected in roughly the same time period and, given the small numbers and fixed rank structure, variations in terminology or data collection methods are not likely to have varied greatly. There must therefore be other reasons why the two data sets do not coincide. In any case, the degree of variation between the two brings both into question and makes it difficult to make any reliable statement about the numbers, rank and provincial distribution of policewomen. The problem also highlights the lack of a good statistical reporting system in the Ministry of the Interior

2. Characteristics of Afghan policewomen

Most policewomen are literate, “professional” police; that is, of sergeant or officer rank. A few policewomen in the provinces are illiterate and are employed below these ranks. Data from a survey of participants at a May 2005 Police Academy workshop for professional policewomen, together with data in the above tables, suggest some common characteristics of Afghan policewomen.

a) Location

Most policewomen work in Kabul. Excepting recent graduates from the Police Academy whose location is not shown in Table 3, only 19.2% of policewomen are assigned outside of Kabul. Of the 101 identified as working in the capital, 63, or 62.3%, work in the Ministry of Interior Affairs as opposed to the ANP, and are not employed in what would be described as police activities.

b) Length of Service

The length of service of policewomen ranges from one to nearly 30 years, and their recruitment took place under a number of successive political regimes: independent Marxist, soviet Russian, the civil war period and the post-Taliban era. The service of policewomen was interrupted during the Taliban period when many were confined to the home, but others were retained to work in women’s prisons and carry on necessary work dealing with women.

c) Views of their role as policewomen

The training and indoctrination that policewomen received under the different ideological regimes may well have influenced their present view of their role. For example, questionnaire comments of many of the participants in the workshop suggested that they saw their role as repressive rather than preventive, in the interests of the state as opposed to the individual or community, and a patriotic duty. While many of the respondents indicated they joined the police to help people, they did not demonstrate that they thought policing was designed to be anything other than dealing with crime

and disorder. There was no mention of safe guarding human rights or helping to assure the security of women in Afghan society. A possible explanation for a lack of awareness of the preventive role of policing is that it was not a feature of their training. This attitude may change over time given that police training since 2002 has emphasized the values of democratic policing and human rights, but present policewomen appear to be no more open to a broader, more democratic role for policing than their male colleagues.

d) Age of entry

The minimum age for entry into the police has been as low as 12 years of age but is now around 16 years. A number of serving policewomen joined at 12 or 13 years of age and there are recent graduates from the Police Academy who are 17 years old. The reason why some policewomen join so young is not known, although a similar practice in the Dubai police is explained as a way to ease family economic pressures. In these cases, rather like apprentices, young girls act as police helpers and gradually assume more responsibility as they grow older⁸. The Dubai recruitment age remained low until conditions improved, female interest in policing increased and the police were able to choose among candidates. If the same dynamic is at work in the ANP, raising the recruitment age above 16 years is unlikely to happen soon since recruitment is still low. With the present short training period, this means that young adolescent women (and men) with neither the judgement nor the authority of age to help them effectively exercise a policing role, will continue to be turned out.

e) Training and development

The educational requirement for entering the officer cadre is 12 years of education. Sergeants require at least six years of education. Both men and women are said to receive the same training. Theoretically, the officer cadre receives five years of theoretical and practical training, and the sergeant level receives one year. Many professional policewomen, however, have had considerably less training than that. The norm appears to be three months of training.

There also appears to be no correlation between length of basic training and rank. For example, a colonel who participated in the Police Academy workshop had received only two months of basic training and, apparently, no training thereafter. Another woman of officer rank had received no basic training at all. Few policewomen appear to receive any training or development after basic training and, despite the new emphasis on human rights, the number of policewomen who have been exposed to human rights training is low. Since 2002, a few policewomen have been able to participate in courses at some of the new regional training centres, particularly in Mazar-e-Sherif, but it is reported that some of the RTCs have resisted the entry of women or have been directed by the MOI not to recruit women.⁹

⁸ Major Fawzeyer a Taha al Shawery, Dubai police, personal communication, June 13, 2005.

⁹ Reports from Kunduz, Kandahar and Gardez, 2005. There is the possibility that MOI direction of recruitment and training may be misunderstood at the provincial level. As in many operational organizations, there is a tension between HQ and the field, which is exacerbated in Afghanistan by the tradition of local autonomy. Central direction is therefore not always welcome. MOI insistence on

f) Experience

Lack of training is further compounded by lack of experience for policewomen. There appears to be little rotation of policewomen through different police units. Many work in the same position all their careers. The units in which policewomen typically serve include administration, training, criminal investigation, the passport office, detention centres and police hospitals. The functions they perform, however, are not the same as those performed by male police officers in these units. Apart from body searches of women, and interviewing women when necessary, they are in an assistance role to male police, or perform clerical and menial functions. Generally, they do not work outside of the building in which their unit is located and they do not act autonomously. Their first-hand knowledge and experience of policing is therefore limited.

g) Promotion

Given such limited experience, it is not surprising that policewomen do not appear to receive the same promotional opportunities as men. Although it has not been objectively verified, the Police Academy workshop survey suggested that policewomen receive an average of only 2.38 promotions in their careers. Entry into policing before reaching maturity, and lack of public visibility, training and experience all contribute to stifling promotional opportunity and perpetuating the status of policewomen as assistants to male police officers. Police women therefore generally have little autonomy, little status and little authority.

h) Attitudes to policewomen

While limited career opportunities, poor pay and other disadvantages are disincentives to recruitment, family and public disapproval does not appear to be an insurmountable barrier. Many policewomen have male and sometimes female relatives who are police officers. This is a phenomenon seen in policing in other parts of the world. It means there is usually family support for the career choice. This seems to be the case in Afghanistan where 79 per cent of participants in the Police Academy workshop reported that they usually received family support for their career choice. While slightly over half reported opposition to their career choices by others in the community, given that policing is not a traditional occupation for women, even in western society, and that Islamic society has an even more conservative attitude to women working, the significant finding is that there is less opposition than one would expect. This is borne out by personal interviews of policewomen who believed that they were generally accepted by the community as long as their personal conduct conformed to community norms.

i) The visibility of policewomen

In general, policewomen have not challenged tradition in joining the police. Despite stories in the western media of female drug “narco-cops” and female gains in policing, few Afghan policewomen perform non-traditional tasks and

provinces following recruitment standards may be interpreted provincially as a veto of local recruitment efforts, particularly with respect to the recruitment of illiterate women.

they have limited exposure to the public. Generally, they are not mobile in their work, and apart from an odd public ceremony, they are usually not on public view. While they are issued a uniform that by the standards of policewomen's uniforms in other Islamic countries is western in concept, many do not wear it at work or cover it when they leave the confines of their police compounds. In some of the provinces policewomen are required to wear a birqa over their uniforms.

Support for gender activities in the Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Afghan National Police

1. The recruitment problem

It is reported that last year the Minister of Interior Affairs set a target of women forming 10% of the ANP by the end of 2005. Such an extremely ambitious goal should have galvanized the MOI into action but, despite expressions of good intent and some isolated initiatives, not a great deal seems to be occurring in the Ministry to make the target a reality. There is mention but no evidence of a plan, and what activities are taking place appear uncoordinated and unfocused. For example, a female police general has made presentations in girls' schools in the Kabul area to persuade young women to join the police. At the same time, activities to recruit women in the provinces have been discouraged because they did not conform to central policies, but the MOI has not given direction or material support to the provinces to institute acceptable recruitment practices. A well-developed, multi-faceted national recruitment strategy for recruitment does not appear to exist. Consequently, the recruitment of women is not occurring at the pace that it should to achieve even a small percentage of the envisioned target.

The MOI Education Department and the Police Academy appear to have been given the sole responsibility for recruitment. The next class begins in August 2005, but no one seems to know how many, or if indeed any, women have applied or been selected. The Commander of the Police Academy has visited the Ministry of Women's Affairs to request it to recruit 100 women, but there seems to be no follow-up and no knowledge of whether the MOWA is recruiting the requisite number of women. This seems to be a shifting of responsibility to another Ministry that has its own mandate and priorities to achieve, and which, therefore, may not be able to devote the degree of effort required to help the MOI. On the other hand, it appears that the Education Department and the Police Academy has the responsibility but not the financial resources, the statistical planning tools, or the corporate support needed to develop policies, projections of recruitment requirements, or programs necessary to pursue a vigorous recruitment campaign.

2. The absence of gender policy and programs

Apart from recruitment, other gender matters in the MOI seem to be the responsibility of the Human Rights Department, under the Deputy Minister of Administration. While the Director of the Human Rights Department is well qualified, competent and committed, the Department does not appear to have a prominent presence, visibility, or strong influence in the Ministry. The Human Rights office has an obscure location with no sign to facilitate easy access for those with human rights complaints. The deputy head of the unit, a female police general, has no office at all. Her role seems to consist primarily of representing the MOI at human rights gender meetings and

conferences, and solving ad hoc gender problems, but she does not supervise a gender equity program with a mandate, responsibilities, procedures or staff. Another deputy, a male police officer, is responsible for the educational component of human rights. While he has an office, he has a similarly limited scope. Whether the Human Rights Department has a policy or a program responsibility, or both, is not clear. While there is a good response when a gender matter comes to light, there do not appear to be any new gender policies, a strategic plan, programs, financial resources or sufficient staff for the Human Rights Department to be either a strong policy-making unit or an effective program capable of taking bold, proactive action to integrate gender rights into the organization and operations of the ANP.

Gender equity and, indeed, the whole range of human rights concerns, are ministerial and international priorities. They are cross-cutting policy and program objectives that affect the whole organization. As good organizational management practice, they should be treated as corporate rather than merely administrative or training issues. In other words, the policy aspects of gender and human rights at least should come under the direction of the Minister and his corporate staff rather than under deputies with operational or administrative responsibilities. This has not happened, so gender equity fails to gain high-level attention or profile in the Ministry.

3. Organizational inertia

Despite evidence to the contrary, there is a prevailing belief that policewomen already have equality with male police, and that growth in female recruitment is all that is needed to achieve the requisite balance. This belief is yet another obstacle to gender equity being taken seriously in the MOI. As a consequence, there are no programs to identify and remove systemic bias, no affirmative action programs, and no thought devoted to considering what the role and responsibilities of policewomen should be. A belief that no problem exists discourages action, encourages complacency, leads to organizational inertia and results in no change taking place. This seems to be the present situation in the MOI with respect to gender equity.

Another important factor that induces organizational inertia is lack of expertise to bring about change. There is no evidence in the MOI that there are sufficient personnel trained in strategic planning, project management or program direction to deploy to the implementation of mechanisms to promote gender equity. Unless the necessary staff are acquired or trained to give direction to the initiative, no appreciable results will be obtained.

A third reason for organizational inertia is a preoccupation with the obstacles to women advancing in policing, rather than with developing the solutions and mechanisms necessary to overcome the obstacles to achieve gender parity. There is much discussion of such problems as security and mobility. While the preoccupation is no doubt owing to real concerns, it is never made entirely clear what the security danger is to policewomen, but it is constantly cited by men both inside and outside the MOI as a problem for policewomen. Police women themselves, either in surveys or interviews have not identified security as something they worry about.

Another perceived difficulty is transportation to and from work, which is also linked to the matter of security. Given the distances to and from work, the lack of transport in many areas, the fact that women do not normally drive any means of transport and

sometimes disapproving attitudes to their walking on the street alone, their mobility is restricted. But security, mobility, public attitudes and a variety of other difficulties will continue to be obstacles to the advancement of women in policing, unless the focus is switched to clearly describing the problems, so that solutions can be found. Until this happens, concentration on obstacles will continue to perpetuate organizational inertia.

Finally, the lack of a ministerial or deputy ministerial champion for establishing gender equity in the MOI also induces organizational inertia. If there is no strong message from the top and active involvement by high-level officials in the issue, the rest of the organization is not likely to take the matter seriously. If ministerial and deputy ministerial support is visible and unequivocal, whatever the views and attitudes of others in the organization, it will be seen as in the best interests of everyone to support the issue. The consistent commitment of the MOI leadership is essential if gender mainstreaming is to become a reality in Afghan policing.

4. Failure to finance the gender priority

A major factor in the failure to address the gender issue is that no financial resources have been allocated to programs for achieving gender equity, increasing recruitment, or for providing special training programs for policewomen. It is an axiom in public sector planning that only those initiatives that are adequately resourced are achieved. Without proper financial support therefore, it is unlikely that there will be any significant change in the present situation.

The 2003-2004 LOTFA budget process included two gender proposals that were not funded. In any case these were project not program proposals. They would not have resulted in the implementation of permanent organizational mechanisms necessary for promoting and sustaining gender equity over the lengthy period required to ensure its successful integration into the organizational culture and operation of the ANP. Other than these two proposals, there have been no LOTFA budget plans or allocation for gender.

It must be recognized that LOTFA is under-funded and that the first priority is provision of police salaries, which benefit policewomen as well as police men. Tension among competing budgetary demands is a fact of organizational life anywhere, but persistent neglect to fund a priority program means that despite the rhetoric there is no real commitment to the program.

Funding gender policies and programs in the MOI would not require large annual expenditures. The provision of relatively modest resources could yield excellent cost-effective results. For example, judging by the reported interest of women in the provinces in joining the police, a properly planned and resourced recruitment strategy could regularly deliver the required number of qualified female recruits to the Police Academy and regional training centres. Resourcing a properly mandated and well-organized gender unit could also achieve value for money by providing consistent direction to the attainment of gender equity objectives.

5. Attitudes to policewomen

The good news is that there appears to be no active resistance in the MOI or ANP to the notion of gender equality in policing. While policewomen in interviews and

surveys talk about systemic discrimination against them, in general they do not complain of active discrimination from their male colleagues or supervisors. Paternalist and traditional attitudes exist, but these are not necessarily hostile to the notion that women in society need to have female representation in the police to ensure that their interests are served. These are sentiments that could be built on to win the support of male police officers for gender equity programs.

Such tolerant attitudes, however, may be a result of organizational inertia. As long as the status quo is not challenged there is no need for concern. Everyone can safely pay lip service to the value of having more women in policing if nothing is likely to change and no one's interests are threatened. If steps to improve the status of policewomen have effect, the tolerance could well disappear. It will be important therefore to ensure that male police are not disadvantaged in improving conditions for women, and that male police officers are helped to appreciate the necessity for and implications of gender balance.

Support for gender equity from other Afghan government agencies

The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) both have human rights and gender responsibilities and relations with the MOI.

The MOWA has an agreement with the MOI to provide gender training, but it has yet to be ascertained how active the agreement is. Correspondence between the two ministries suggests that the MOWA has provided gender training which some MOI personnel of both genders have attended, but it does not appear that this is a regular arrangement.

Given its responsibility for the advancement of women, the MOWA is interested in supporting gender mainstreaming in the MOI. There is also the promise of practical help from the departments of women's affairs in the provinces, which welcome the prospect of increased recruitment and the notion of expanding the role and responsibilities of policewomen. While in some regions the representatives advise on proceeding with caution so as not to offend community norms, they believe that it would be feasible for policewomen to work with other community help groups to improve conditions, and particularly security, for all women.

The AIHRC in Kabul and its representatives in the provinces also encourage the notion of increasing the number of women in the ANP and expanding their roles and responsibilities. Given the numbers of domestic violence and other complaints they receive from women, AIHRC representatives believe that more policewomen with the necessary authority and competencies could be helpful in giving women in the community better access to justice.

International support for gender in Afghan policing

There is stated international support for gender mainstreaming in policing in Afghanistan but, apart from the present Canadian police gender advisor, there is little focus on the issue or coordination of activities to ensure synergy and success.

Consequently, the efforts of the international community have lacked impact and influence in improving the gender situation in the ANP.

1. Cross-cutting can mean financial neglect

Again, lack of dedicated resources for gender mainstreaming is one of the contributing factors to weakness in this area. Gender fails to gain requisite funding because it is regarded as a priority that cuts across all policing activities. The expectation is that it will receive funding attention within each of the individual activities and not require separate resources. Frequently, however, gender is neglected, comes second to more pressing needs, or is not considered relevant within a particular activity. The result is that though considered a priority at the policy level, at the program level it receives less attention and frequently no funding.

This seems to be the dynamic with the LOTFA funds. Gender is not one of the five funding pillars, although it could be funded under two or three of them: training, institution building and possibly remuneration. In reality it receives no special attention or funding under any of them. With no specially allocated funds from LOTFA, asserting that gender is a priority appears as no more than empty international rhetoric.

2. Potential conflict of policing approaches

The lack of coordination in providing international support to the reform efforts of the ANP could create future problems for Afghanistan. There are two important examples where this is the case.

In the first instance,, the German and Norwegian police advisors concentrate on training for the educated “professional police”, while the American police train the largely illiterate or minimally educated “soldiers” or constables. Both groups pursue their own programs independently. The reference point for the Germans and Norwegians is the highly-centralized, European state policing model, while the American frame of reference is the “Anglo Saxon”, common law policing model which is decentralized and focuses on local accountability and community policing. While the European model is the one on which the ANP is organized, the common law model has particular value in bringing about police reform because it has the potential to build popular support and trust for the police. It is also a model in which policewomen could work effectively, since it emphasizes the service aspect of policing. Both approaches have merit but, training the higher levels of police in one style of policing and the lower levels in other could lead to organizational confusion, bring reforms into disrepute and, in the process, undermine or counteract gender reform.

In the second case, there is inherent conflict in the thinking and methods for reforming the ANP. The German police favour a methodical reorganization and re-building of infrastructure. They therefore concentrate on those parts of the organization and the country where there is still some infrastructure on which to build. An example is the Police Academy and the professional police training program. This approach is crucial to reform, but it is a long process and, in the meantime, there are other pressing problems, particularly in the provinces, not receiving attention. The Americans in particular therefore favour a more pragmatic approach and have

implemented many ad hoc solutions to deal with immediate problems. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but they are treated that way by their proponents. Moreover, in both cases, the issue of gender mainstreaming is ignored. In the rational approach with its emphasis on hard and soft infrastructure, the view is that gender matters “come later” and, in the pragmatic approach, odd gender projects are undertaken, but there is no systematic planning for the attainment of gender objectives.

3. Gender and policing: two cultural solitudes

Another circumstance which undermines efforts to promote gender equality in the ANP is the cultural divide between Afghan police and international gender experts. Gender reformers tend to see the police culture as conservative, impenetrable and resistant to change. As the reforms within western policing in the last twenty years show, this is not necessarily the case but, because policing is a specialized field, gender reformers require some policing knowledge to understand organizational dynamics so that they can prescribe appropriate gender reforms. For example, gender specialists often concentrate on awareness raising and training to bring about change, but in highly structured police organizations this is not enough. Changes in attitude will not lead to changes in behaviour if the organizational policies and procedures that direct activities are not also changed. The result is that gender recommendations for policing are too vague or theoretical to have much effect.

Police on the other hand tend to regard gender reform efforts as a criticism of their profession, difficult to implement and unnecessary. They operate within a structure that they regard is immutable so that changing it to accommodate gender concerns seems impossible. They therefore tend to concentrate on the obstacles to change rather than on the possibilities that gender mainstreaming offers for improving policing. Success depends on understanding the dynamics and imperatives of both the gender and the police communities and reconciling the differences. This has not yet occurred so international concern for gender matters has not had much influence on Afghan policing.

4. International contributions to promoting gender concerns

There have been a number of international efforts and initiatives to support gender matters in policing. While the results have sometimes been mixed, there has been some individual success and some lessons learned. Some of the most important initiatives are described below.

a) Germany

The German government has provided considerable funding and effort to the reform of the ANP. It has re-built the police academy, provided equipment and training and, most imaginatively, built a residence for policewomen at the Police Academy, with facilities for their children. This last effort was to provide secure, good quality accommodation for women recruited from the provinces for training at the Police Academy. For this fiscal year, Germany has provided €10,000 for gender programming in policing.

Through GTZ, the German international development agency, a residence was built in Kandahar for the benefit of female university students. The residence was turned over to the Afghan authorities but, for a variety of reasons, it is not

being used for its intended purpose. In addition, GTZ has provided a number of developmental programs for women, including taking a group of female criminal justice professionals for a developmental tour of criminal justice institutions in Germany. Two senior Afghan policewomen took part in the developmental tour. Funding was also provided by GTZ to make a film, “Qanoon”, which features a fictional Afghan police woman. The purpose of funding the film was to provide a role model for policewomen, to make them aware of the possibilities their work holds, and to promote the recruitment of women into policing.

b) Norway

The Norwegian government promotes human rights principles and is concerned that the aid it provides is directed to where it is needed and achieves results. Consequently, it has carried out two evaluative studies in Afghanistan. One in particular has concentrated on gender, including gender in policing. In addition, the Norwegian police provide human rights and management training to the professional¹⁰ police at the Police Academy in Kabul. There are six to seven police officers, including one woman, in the Norwegian mission, and there is the possibility of increasing the number to 10, if it is thought to be useful and necessary. The training they provide is largely in-service training, and the former chief of mission has observed that the participants sent for the training are senior MOI officials, rather than police officers. Moreover, policewomen have not been sent for human rights and management training.

To expand their human rights commitment, in company with the German police, GTZ and the Canadian gender advisor, the Norwegian police are designing a week-long course solely for policewomen. The curriculum will include human rights (including the Afghan Constitution and the principles of gender equity), case management, management, and computer training. While this course will provide much needed professional development for policewomen, by itself it cannot provide the degree of intensive training and development required to bring Afghan policewomen to a competency level where they can perform police functions autonomously. The Norwegian police therefore regard it as a stop-gap until a more comprehensive program for preparing policewomen to take on a wider range of responsibilities is developed. At present, the financial resources to bring in the necessary expertise for developing personnel and designing curriculum do not appear to be available to do more than is already being done

c) Canada

Canada is providing a female gender advisor, with executive-level experience in policing, to the Ministry of the Interior

d) United States

Although not specifically mandated to focus on gender, in some cases the American police advisors who work at the nine ANP regional training centres

¹⁰ “Professional” is the term applied to the ranks of police from sergeant up. Professional police are literate and trained in policing. Below the sergeant level is the patrol level. Members of this level were formerly conscripted, untrained and often illiterate. They were therefore not considered “professional” police. The ranks of the police are listed in Table 3.

(RTCs) and attached to some police stations have contributed to supporting women in policing. Both female recruits and policewomen have been trained, or re-trained, in some of the RTCs. In some cases, illiterate women have been trained for work at the patrol level. In Marzar-e-Sharif in particular, 34 women at both the patrol and the officer level were trained in 2004. At District 10 police station in Kabul, a small family intervention unit staffed by policewomen has been established by one of the American police advisors, and two female American police advisors are acting as mentors for the project. This is the first such unit in Afghanistan and could serve as a pilot for other police stations in Kabul and the provinces; however it was established spontaneously and with no financial support. Its future existence may therefore be fragile without some tangible official support for its existence. In general, the American gender efforts have been *ad hoc* local initiatives started by creative police advisors. They have demonstrated the need for and value of such programs but have not attracted official support or financing.

d) United Kingdom

The United Kingdom provided crime scene investigative training to Afghan police officers, including eight women. It is reported that none of the policewomen is at present employed in carrying out crime-scene investigations. There may be other gender initiatives supported by the UK, but a contact between the MOI gender advisory and the UK police aid personnel has not yet been established.

e) Provincial reconstruction teams

Some of the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs), which concentrate mainly on military and civil security, and are staffed by the military and police of different donor countries, have also contributed to the gender equity effort. Some of the PRTs have human rights officers or other aid and social development professionals who are sensitive to gender issues attached to their operations. Thus, the Consultant in Human Rights, Democracy and Civil Society in the German PRT in Kunduz ensured that dismissed illiterate policewomen were reinstated, and has monitored their progress in the police since. However, it is worthy of note that an otherwise excellent strategic plan for policing in a province having no policewomen, which was developed with the assistance of PRT members, made no mention of gender as an issue for policing and security. Now that the omission has been brought to their attention, they have undertaken to amend the plan to include gender considerations.

f) The United Nations

The United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) has also contributed to the promotion of gender equity in policing. The Gender Advisor to the Special Advisor to the Secretary General of the United Nations, who leads the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), has been a central clearing point for gender matters in policing. She also organized training for the policewomen who are now staffing the family intervention unit of the Kabul District 10 police station. In addition, human rights officers of UNAMA have developed a human rights course for police officers, have monitored the rights of policewomen in the provinces, and have been

instrumental in bringing provincial anomalies to light. One was the refusal of the police commander of an eastern province to admit women to the regional training centre because it was against local tradition. The UNAMA intervention enabled the MOI to rectify the situation, and media headlines subsequently appeared praising the admission of the women into the training centre.

g) Law Enforcement Trust Fund for Afghanistan

The MOI budget for fiscal year 1382 (March 2003 to March 2004) included requests for funding for two gender projects¹¹. The project proposal documents requested a total of \$US 2 million in capital and services over four years, and a permanent annual budget beyond of \$US 100,000. While the projects were approved, the funding was not made available, so the projects were not implemented. In any case, both project descriptions appear vague in concept, planning and performance measures. They seem to put nearly all the eggs into the training and awareness basket. While training and awareness are important, on their own they are not capable of achieving the very broad, although important, goals of the two project proposals. A \$2 million budget allocation to these projects from the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) might therefore not have achieved what was projected. Given the agreement in principle to the proposals, they might be re-focused, re-written and re-submitted for funding.

Conclusions

Despite protestations to the contrary, there are few signs that either countries contributing to police reform or the MOI understand gender mainstreaming or take it seriously. Yet, the longer the delay in implementing effective gender equity programs, the more the MOI will be seen as failing in its obligations to women, to communities, to its own government and its Constitution, and to the world community in which Afghanistan is a member. The separation of the lives of men and women in Islamic tradition requires the ANP to have sufficient numbers of policewomen to deal with female offenders, victims and children to be an effective police organization¹². Accepting gender equity will lead to radical change in police organizational culture and operational practices. It will cause temporary turmoil but, properly managed, the rewards will be worth the trouble. The MOI will be able to respond effectively to external pressures and demands, and will have sufficient numbers of empowered policewomen to deal effectively with female offenders, victims and children. The proof of this is provided by many western police organizations, where the growing number of women entering policing has contributed appreciably to a shift from repressive command-and-control approaches to an emphasis on human rights, police professionalism, crime prevention and service to

¹¹ Ministry of the Interior, *Project Document for Promoting Gender Sensitivity in the Police Force: National Police, Law Enforcement and Stabilisation*, project document number AFG/04712; and Ministry of the Interior, *Project Document for Women in the Police Forces – promoting access, efficiency and effectiveness: Police: Security & Governance*, number AFG 04707.

¹² This insight was provided by Zuza Fialova, Consultant in Human Rights, Democracy and Civil Society, German Provincial Reconstruction Team, Kunduz.

communities. Crime rates have dropped, people feel secure, and high percentages of national populations declare themselves pleased with the police.

There are a number of factors on which the ANP must concentrate to make gender equity possible:

- **Political will:** Until there is a display of political will from both the donor countries engaged in police reform and the MOI to make the hard decisions and take the first difficult steps, there will be very little change in the status quo.
- **Cooperation among donor countries:** Cooperation and joint decision-making are needed to optimize the international support for police reform. A shared focus would eliminate fragmentation, promote synergy, support gender equity, and ensure that international funding yielded effective results.
- **Counteracting organizational inertia in the MOI :** The development of a strategic plan with clear objectives on which all the Afghan and international stakeholders can agree is a necessary first step to overcoming organizational inertia and taking effective action. Important issues to consider in the strategic plan would be the creation of a gender unit reporting to the highest level of the organization, the development of a reliable statistical base for planning and evaluation purposes and, the identification and elimination of systemic barriers that militate against gender equality.
- **Dedicated financial resources:** If the status quo is to be changed, adequate funding will have to be found. The allocation of funds will be a primary measure of political will and crucial to achieving strategic objectives. Gender equality is not likely to be an expensive proposition, but the return on investment could be very high in terms of human rights reform, delivery on the interministerial three-month work plan, provision of police services to women, and compliance with the Constitution and international agreements.
- **Leadership development:** Selection and intensive training and development of police officers with high-performance potential is urgently needed to raise the leadership and management competencies of both male and female senior police officers. Competent, progressive leadership will also allow the contemplation of a broader view of the police role to encompass service to citizens as well as repression of criminality and disorder. Competent leaders at the senior levels of policing with the vision and know-how to make change happen will counteract organizational inertia and lead to progress on the reform agenda. This initiative will also require funding and expert planning since leadership development is an intensive, sustained program rather than a short-term training course.
- **Raising the profile of gender equity in the Ministry of Interior:** For gender to succeed, the Minister or his deputy responsible for security must give it active and consistent support. If the initiative has a high profile, even resisters will understand that it is in their interests to give it their support. Moreover, high-level support could encourage recruitment. Since recruitment of police women received the strong support of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nihyan in Dubai, there is a list of well-educated

female candidates waiting to joining the police. Nor should the emphasis be merely on recruiting women into policing. While a critical mass of women is needed to have impact, gender equity is not a numbers game. Attention will have to be paid to acquiring and retaining high-quality recruits, providing good development opportunities, removing systemic biases that prevent gender parity occurring, and then empowering women with the necessary authority and autonomy to carry out the policing responsibilities that they are able to do the best within the framework of Islam.

- **Bridging the cultural divide between gender advisors and police:** Separately, gender advisors and police cannot achieve their objectives, because neither group has the expertise to develop and implement mechanisms for eliminating systemic bias and providing affirmative action programs for policewomen. Mechanisms for understanding each other and working together will be needed to capitalize on the value each group can contribute.

Resolving these issues will be only the beginning not the end of the effort; it will merely create the right conditions to pursue what should be a consistent, sustained program for the foreseeable future. Creating gender equity will require change in the organizational culture of the ANP and this cannot be achieved quickly. Police women will need to be helped to acquire the necessary competencies to assume an equal position with men; police men will require help in learning how to work on a basis of equality with women; and police leaders in the ANP will also require advice and support to manage the considerable organizational change that true gender equality will generate. Long-term, sustained and concentrated effort from both national staff and international police gender experts will be necessary to make gender equity a reality in the MOI and the ANP.

H. Next steps

The following steps should be taken to start the process of making gender equality in the MOI a reality.

Short term (6-12 months)

4. Bring together key Afghan and international stakeholders to develop a joint strategic plan with agreed-upon objectives for implementing gender equality in the ANP.
5. Develop an action plan from the strategic plan, including a multi-year budget, time-frame and identification of MOI personnel responsible for achieving the projected results.
6. Submit the action plan to LOTFA for funding.
7. Gain commitment from LOTFA, or one or more donor countries, to fund for at least five years, at least one expert advisor on police gender issues to assist the MOI in setting up a gender unit reporting to a deputy minister in the MOI, to be the focal point for all gender policy and programming.

Medium term (1 to 2 years)

5. Obtain funding and expert assistance to design and implement a statistical system for the planning, direction, performance management and evaluation of gender equity programs
6. Obtain support and funding for the design and implementation of a leadership competency development program for high-potential police officers, with a view to building a cadre of competent police leaders of both genders.
7. Identification of high-potential police officers of both genders, but with a particular emphasis on women to ensure equity, to undergo intensive leadership competency development.
8. Development of police programs in which policewomen can provide services to women in the community while gaining experience in police work, acting autonomously and decision-making. The Kabul District 10 family violence unit provides an example that might be followed here.

Long term (1-5 years)

3. Elimination of systemic biases against women and the introduction of policies and programs, embracing the provinces as well as the capital, to ensure that women have equal opportunity with men for recruitment, meaningful work, and opportunities for advancement.
4. Integration of the gender unit as a regular program funded by the annual budgeting process of the Ministry.