

Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

2014 First Quarterly Progress Report



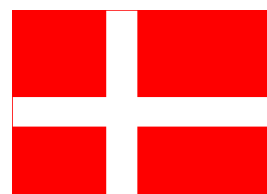
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PROJECT INFORMATION

Project ID:	00071928
Duration:	January 2013 – December 2015
ANDS Component:	Good Governance (Gender Equality as one of the six cross-cutting themes)
Contributing to NPP:	Component 6 of MoWA's NPP
CPAP Component:	Increased opportunities for income generation through promotion of diversified livelihoods
UNDP Strategic Plan Component:	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
Total Budget:	30 Million USD
Annual Budget:	7,172,105 USD
Un-Funded Amount	Fully Funded
Implementing Partner:	UNDP
Key Responsible Parties:	MOWA
Project Manager:	Gulistan Ibadat (OIC)
Responsible Assistant Country Director	Noorullah Ahmadzai

COVER PAGE PHOTO: Women's International Day Celebration in Bamyan Province where girls participated in a marathon.

ACRONYMS

AWP	Annual Work Plan
BC	Budget Circulars
BDS	Business Development Services
DoWA	Department of Women Affairs
GEP II	Gender Equality Project II
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
GSI	Gender Studies Institute
KU	Kabul University
LHC	Legal Help Center
LM	Line Ministries
METU	Middle East Technical University
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWA	Ministry of Women Affairs
NAPWA	National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan
NGO	Non-Govt. Organization
PWDC	Provincial Development Council
WPDD	Women Policy Development Directorate

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Project II (GEP II) is a three-year project implemented by United Nations Development Programme from 2013 - 2015. This report covers achievements in the first quarter of 2014 from January to March.

The primary objective of the first pillar of GEP II is to build the capacity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) to effectively perform its oversight function on the implementation of the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA). During this reporting period, GEP II support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Finance resulted in shaping the sustainability of the process of developing gender sensitive policies and budgets. On one hand, MoWA, 5 line ministries and 1 directorate (Independent Directorate of Legal Governance) could now carry out on their own policy review using a gender lens. On the other hand, GEP II supported a specific instruction pertaining to gender sensitiveness to be inserted in the guidelines for developing Budget Circular 1. Having this specific instruction in the development of Budget Circular 1 will ensure that all line ministries will have to comply and therefore contribute to the sustainability of gender responsive budgeting. In the coming quarters, GEP II will work towards linking the policy review with the budget review to ensure that gender-sensitized policies are translated into budgets thereby guaranteeing implementation of gender responsive policies.

Economic empowerment is GEP II's second pillar. Between January – March, the project conducted intense negotiations with MoWA to finalize the partnership with local NGO partners that would assist the ministry in delivering support to women entrepreneurs. Five NGO partners will support MoWA in conducting baseline assessments, training on cooperative management, income generation activities, and local and international exposure visits. Meanwhile, GEP II supported women entrepreneurs and parliamentarians to participate in the Business Symposium of Women Entrepreneurs in Central Asia. This was a learning experience for the Afghan women attending the symposium as they had the opportunity to exchange experiences, share challenges in managing business, expand and up-scale their businesses and establish contacts and networks.

The third pillar of GEP II is women's access to justice and human rights. A key activity under this component is the Legal Help Centers (LHCs). GEP II conducted an assessment of the 24 Legal Help Centers existing across the Bamyan, Balkh, Herat, and Nangarhar. The assessment revealed that the LHCs fill an important gap by providing the much needed judicial institutions for women. However, the assessment noted structural and procedural weaknesses that need to be addressed. The assessment results will be used by GEP II to design interventions that would lead to strengthening the services delivered by the LHCs.

Finally, as the International Women's Day (IWD) falls in the first quarter of the year, GEP II supported several significant activities leading to increasing awareness of women's rights. In Afghanistan, IWD was observed in GEP II supported provinces through, art exhibits, sports events and media campaigns. At the international level, high-ranking officials from MoWA including the Minister represented Afghanistan in the 58th Session of the Commission on Status of Women (CSW) in New York. The minister delivered a speech at the conference where she reported that in the past few years, Afghanistan enacted laws that were beneficial to women and girls such as the law on elimination of violence against women and the child guardianship law. Moreover, amendments have been proposed to 22 enacted laws

of the country and various policies were designed and approved for the benefit of women and for gaining their rights in areas of political participation, education, health and economic development. She appealed to the international community to continue providing support to programs in Afghanistan that support women empowerment and gender equality.

III. RESULTS

A. OUTPUT 1: MOWA's capacity of policy making and oversight of NAPWA Implementation improved.

The first pillar of Gender Equality Project II aims to provide support in building the capacity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) to effectively manage the implementation of the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (NAPWA). To achieve this objective, GEP II's activities are designed to improve the ability of MoWA officials to conduct and lead policy reviews of line ministries from a gender perspective. The project also supports activities that aim to strengthen MoWA's capacity to monitor, evaluate and report performance of line ministries in regard to the NAPWA indicators.

Besides the support to policy reviews, GEP II also assists the Ministry of Finance in implementing Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB). GRB entails incorporating a gender perspective in the budget cycle process.

From a broader perspective, achieving gender equality requires a critical mass of women and men who are aware and can advocate for gender equality. To this end, GEP II continues its support to the Gender Studies Institute (GSI) in providing trainings on various gender related topics and issues. It is also envisioned that in the long term building a Master's degree program on Development and Gender Studies will build a sustainable cadre of gender specialists in Afghanistan.

For Pillar 1, the following presents the results achieved for the first quarter of 2014.

Indicator 1: Number of gender policies or strategies reviewed by inter-ministerial task force and gender components included

It is to be noted that whereas in previous progress reports, the focus was on strengthening the skills of MoWA staff in policy review. Beginning this quarter, below named line ministries were involved and introduced to the toolkit whereby they worked on contextualizing gender sensitive policies within their respective ministries.

Women Policy Development Directorate based in MoWA, successfully conducted the first stage of a two-stage workshop on the Policy Review Toolkit¹ with 5 Line Ministries (LM) and a Directorate to build their capacity in reviewing policies and making them gender-sensitive. These ministries were: 1) Ministry of Public Health (MoPH); 2) Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD); 3) Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA); 4) Ministry of Finance (MoF); and 5) Ministry of Education (MoE) as well as Independent Directorate of Legal Governance (IDLG). Officials from the line ministries participated in the first stage workshop (mini-workshop). As a result of the workshop, the participants gained knowledge and skills on gender-sensitive policy review as they went through the review process step-by-step. At the end of the workshop, each of the LMs had on hand a policy that was scrutinized from a gender perspective and ready for adjustments to incorporate gender.

The second step is the grand-workshop whereby participants will go deeper into the review process and will receive mentoring and feedback on their policy reviews completed during the mini-workshop. Preparations are underway to organize the grand workshop in the second quarter for the staff of LM

¹ Policy Review Toolkit has been developed by the WPDD in 2013 and has been already introduced to MoWA and relevant staff has already been trained on its usage.

whose policy review has been completed. Policy review toolkit will also be introduced to more pilot ministries and the participants will be trained in using the toolkit to review their policies from gender perspective and include gender components accordingly. The planning process to conduct visit to the provinces also began towards the end of the first quarter. This is to introduce the work of WPDD and extend the policy review work at sub-national level.

To ensure sustainability of the review process, GEP II initiated meetings with MoWA Policy and Planning Department and line ministries to start work on development of a mechanism to establish a policy review committee. This will result in the organizing an inter-ministerial structure consisting of responsible staff from MoWA, relevant LM and directorates for the policy review and inclusion of gender components in the respective ministry's policies.

1.2. Number of line ministries piloted for M&E of NAPWA implementation that have functional M&E systems

GEP II supported Ministry of Women Affairs in contracting a database expert to improve the system of data collection and analysis which will be leading to evidence based policy review and policy making for ensuring promotion of women's rights and gender equality in national and provincial development processes. In the short term - the establishment of the Monitoring Database will strengthen the existing M&E system, in four sectors (health, education, economy, information and communication Technology), by ensuring improved quality of collected data and information on National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) implementation Centralized system of the collection of data and information will also enable more structured and systematic involvement of sectorial ministries² and provincial departments in tracking the progress of NAPWA implementation.

The consultant conducted initial and introductory meetings with the relevant stakeholders, government counterparts, UN and Non-UN agencies to work on the harmonized system of M&E for the implementation of NAPWA indicators. GEP II's target is to identify pilot ministries whose M&E systems could be strengthened and aligned to NAPWA indicators. One of the results of this consultancy will be to identify these pilot ministries so that a coherent reporting mechanism for NAPWA and other internationally recognized indicators to which MoWA is committed, will be established.

1.3. Number of line ministries that have functional Gender Units

During this quarter, no specific activities were implemented to support Gender Units in line ministries except for the policy review which is already reported above. However, the project will resume activities with the pilot ministries in the coming quarter beginning with a capacity assessment of gender units.

² Ministries from 4 sectors i.e. (health, education, economy, information and communication Technology)

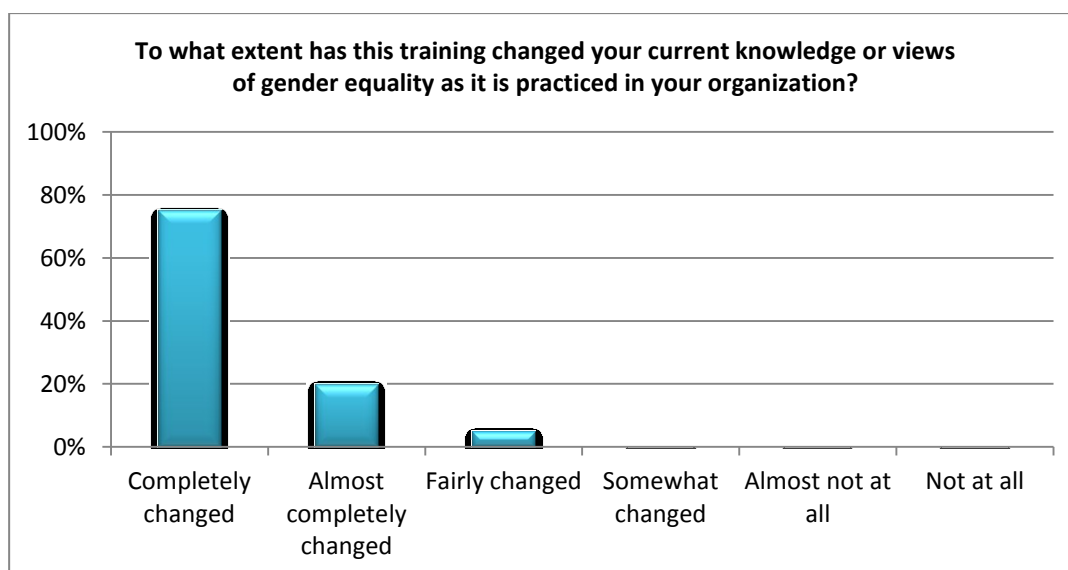
1.4. Number of ministries where GRB strategic plan is approved and implemented

The Gender Responsive Budget cell which was established with GEP II support at the MoF has reviewed Budget Circulars (BC) for the New Year and modified GRB instructions for BC1. A new paragraph in the GRB instructions was added regarding gender sensitization of Budget Circular (BC1). This was circulated to 6 pilot³ ministries for 1394 Budget. These BC1 forms will then be submitted to LM so that they can provide information on their budgetary planning. This will then be analyzed subsequently in terms of their responsiveness to gender equality.

The NGO contracted for the capacity building of relevant staff at the MoF and other LM in the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) finalized and submitted their inception report. Their scope of work is to conduct a needs assessment and develop a GRB Handbook through a participatory process of involving pilot LMs who were also selected for the policy review process reported in Indicator 1. This will ensure continuity of the planning and budgeting from a gender perspective.

1.5a. Number of gender trainings delivered to university/faculties in target regions

For 5 days beginning on Feb 23, 2014, GSI training for 50 administration staff of female hostel at Kabul University (KU) was conducted by GEP II with the support of Public Relation Department of MoWA. This training was specifically requested by Kabul University as they deemed it necessary for all staff, not just the academic staff to be aware and understand the concepts related to gender equality. It was the first time for participants to receive such training. The participants gained knowledge on various gender related issues as they were introduced to the basic concepts of gender equality, elimination of violence against women and women's socio-economic empowerment. The administration staff who received training included both educated staff at clerical position and cleaners of the hostel. After the training, GEP II M&E team conducted an assessment to gather insights from the participants on the impact of the training. The figure below expressed views of the participants. A significant number (75%) of the participants felt that the training changed their current knowledge or views on gender equality.



At the regional level, GSI conducted training on Gender Awareness for 50 students (47 female and 3 male) of Balkh University with the support of Public Relation Department of MoWA. The Post training assessment also revealed great level of satisfaction from the participants and they demanded to continue this type of training to other faculty members and students of the university.



GSI Training at Balkh University
Photo Credit: Hadi Arghand, Project Associate Balkh

1.5b. Percent of work completed on policy paper and curriculum for Master's Degree on Gender and Development Studies

To launch the Master's Degree Program on Gender and Women Studies for Kabul University (KU), initial meetings were conducted last year in Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Turkey. During this quarter GEP II worked on drafting The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between KU and METU. This draft was shared with relevant stakeholders (KU, MoHE, MoWA and METU) and the inputs were received. The MoU is an important step to formalize the partnership between KU and METU so that activities related to establishing the graduate degree program can formally begin.

The MoU contains the provisions which stated that the KU will be supported in the establishment of a Department of Gender and Woman's Studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences and technical support will be provided by short and medium term consultancies by METU. The establishment of Master's degree program will be further supported by preparing and developing policy documents and framework at Kabul University by incorporating the knowledge and experience they have attained abroad.

The MoU is just the beginning of a long process of establishing the master's degree programme in Kabul University. The MoU will be finalized in the coming quarter and the results of which will be reported in the 2nd Quarterly Progress Report.

EXPENSES FOR THE QUARTER

During Q1, a total of USD 97,602 was spent for this output. For more details, please refer to Annex 2.

Below is a snapshot of where GEP II is in relation to its annual targets after Q1:

Table 1 Progress towards Output 1

2014 Baseline	2014 Annual Targets	Q1 Planned	Q1 Actual	Comments
1.1. Review of the policies of 8 Line Ministries has been completed in 2013. No inter-ministerial structure exists. No gender policy strategies developed.	1.1a. Inter-ministerial task force established and operational. 1b. Gender policies/strategies implementation plan reviewed by inter-ministerial task force in four sectors (health, education, economy, information and communication) 1c. Formulation of 2 policy strategies	1.1. Inter-ministerial task force functional and have a schedule to review national & sub-national strategies and implementation plans	Initiated meetings with the relevant LM and directorates to establish the inter-ministerial task force.	On Track
1.2. No pilot line ministries have established M&E system. 70 staff from line ministries and 30 PC members have been trained on NAPWA implementation	1.2. Ministries from 5 sectors (Education, Health, Economy, Security, Information, Communication and Technology) are piloted to ensure MoWA has structured mechanisms for the M&E of NAPWA implementation	1.2 To develop database on the NAPWA indicators to MoWA	An international database consultant was contracted to develop a harmonized system for the gender equality and NAPWA indicators.	The database will be designed after the harmonized structure of M&E of NAPWA indicators is established
1.3. In 2013 No technical assistance have been provided to line ministries' Gender Units	1.3. Seven line ministries will have functional Gender Units	1.3. Prepare Capacity Development Plan including gender mainstreaming and monitoring in selected line ministries	No directly responsible staff is appointed to carry out the planned activity but will be recruited in	

			the upcoming quarter.	
1.4. GEP II supported MoF for 6 ministries to apply GRB principles and government officials have been trained	1.4. GRB Strategic Plan is approved and implemented/incorporated in 6 pilot ministries (MOE, MoHE, MoLSAMD, MoPH, MAIL, MRRD)	1.4. Develop 3 year action plan for GRB strategic plan to be Implemented at the GRB piloted ministries and at the sub-national level	Strategic Plan is finalized and will be launched in the next quarter where an action plan will also be developed.	– The strategic plan is not finalized yet and the action plan based on it will be developed later on. Therefore, the GRB cell continued its regular work on the submission of BC1 form to the LM.
1.5(a) Initial meeting held between Kabul University and Middle Eastern University in Ankara, Turkey for the establishment of Masters' degree program. MoU is in progress	1.5. Policy Paper and Action Plan for implementation of Master's Degree completed	1.5. MoU has been signed to initiate the work on the Master's degree program	Received the comments on MoU from KU, MoHE and MoWA and waiting for the response from METU to finalize the MoU	On -track
1.5 (b). Twelve GSI trainings have been conducted for Kabul University	1.6. GSI activities and gender trainings expanded to 10 faculties in KU and in 10 GSI trainings delivered in target regions of the project	1.6. Delivered gender awareness trainings for 4 faculties of KU and Regional Universities at the target regions of the	Successfully conducted training at Balkh University for 50 students while the	On- track (due to winter vacation at the KU the target for first quarter was not

		project	preparatory work is on-going to conduct the training in rest of the planned universities.	achieved which will be covered in the upcoming quarters.
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B. OUTPUT 2: Women's entrepreneurship skills developed for women entrepreneurs and cooperatives in 19 province

In Afghanistan, women's mobility is severely limited due to cultural constraints. While an estimated 47% of women participate in the labour force, according to a study by UN Women only 5% of businesses in Afghanistan are owned by women. This is especially true for rural women whose economic activities are confined to their homes such as carpet weaving, tailoring and sewing. Thus, the second component of GEP II focuses on women in the business sector. It aims to enhance the entrepreneurship skills of women and facilitate the increase of women's participation in income generation activities. The economic empowerment pillar will engage rural women in the targeted province in farm and non-farm enterprises strengthen women managed cooperatives and provide local and international opportunities for businesswomen to expand their market base.

Besides strengthening cooperatives, within this component, GEP II also supports the establishment of Provincial Women's Development Councils (PWDC). PWDCs play a significant role in supporting the socio-economic empowerment of women. The PWDC serves as a platform at the provincial and district levels for identifying women's issues, challenges, and solutions.

What follows are the achievements in the first quarter of 2014 under GEP II's economic empowerment pillar.

2.1. Number of Income Generation Activities (IGAs) implemented in target provinces

NGO partners were contracted, through MoWA, to implement the income generation activities in the target provinces. The implementing partners submitted their inception reports and work plans to MoWA and GEP II. MoWA and GEP II reviewed the reports and provided recommendations to fine tune the inception report as well as the activities and tools that will be implemented. In the second quarter all contracted NGOs will implement their approved activities which will result in creating more income generation opportunities across the four targeted provinces.

2. 2a. Number of Business Development Services (BDS) packages provided to women entrepreneurs.

During this reporting period, GEP II reviewed the inception reports of the contracted NGOs responsible for delivering the BDS packages at the provincial level. Based on comments from GEP II, they revised their reports and work plans. The implementation of activities will begin in the next quarter.

2. 2b. Number of institutional capacity building programs provided to women entrepreneurs

Meetings were conducted with selected and contracted NGO responsible to provide capacity building programs to the women entrepreneurs to finalize their inception report. The reports are now finalized and approved and the work plan ready to be implemented as soon as GEP II Annual Work Plan is approved and funds are available.

Meanwhile, GEP II facilitated an international visit in coordination with Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) for the women entrepreneurs and parliamentarians from the women commission who has the role at the policy level for enhancing the economic empowerment of women. (10 participants) to a business symposium of women entrepreneurs of Central Asia and Afghanistan

which was arranged at the National Library, Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The participants identified common challenges and opportunities in their businesses, exchange information, experience, skills, and business contacts for networking purposes. After the study tour to Tajikistan, the participants agreed that they arrange one-day workshop in their respective province in coordination with ACCI to share the gained experiences, skills information and contacts with at least 15 women entrepreneurs in their respective province.

2.3. Number of functional women managed cooperatives in targeted areas.

The CSO partner, who will support MoWA in providing technical assistance and trainings to strengthen women managed cooperatives have already been contracted. They have submitted their first deliverable which is the inception report and work plan in this quarter. The CSO will implement their activities in the coming quarters.

2.4. Number of new PWDCs functional in targeted areas

In a meeting in Kabul arranged for the project's regional coordinators, they expressed that one of the major demands among DoWAs was the establishment of Provincial Women's Development Councils. Efforts will be geared up towards capacity building of DoWA offices by establishing PWDCs in the⁴ new provinces of the project in the coming quarters. A Need assessment will be conducted by a partner NGO and on this basis, an action plan will be developed for the PWDCs. During this period, the NGO partner have completed their inception plan and approved by MoWA for implementation.

EXPENSES FOR THE QUARTER

During Q1, a total of USD 73,337 was spent for this output. For more details, please refer to Annex 2.

⁴ Samangan, Badghis, Diakundi, Laghman, Badakhshan, Parwan and Helmand.

Below is a snapshot of where GEP II is in relation to its annual targets after Q1:

Table 2 Progress towards Output 2

2014 Baseline	2014 Annual Targets	Q1 Planned	Q1 Actual	Comments -
2.1 One Income generation activity has been provided in Herat province benefiting 20 women and their households	2.1 Two IGAs per province (10 target provinces) benefitting 500 women and their households. Baseline survey will be conducted on the existing economic situation of women	2.1. Conduct baseline survey in four targeted provinces	Finalized inception report from the contracted NGO and payment will be released to conduct the base-line survey after approval of AWP-2014	On- track
2.2. Two BDS Packages provided to women entrepreneurs	2.2 Ten BDS package including new clean technologies as well as capacity building trainings in six target provinces	2.2. Demand- driven Business Development Services (BDS) package identified and developed	Finalized inception report from the contracted NGO and payment will be released to provide BDS packages after approval of AWP-2014	On- track
2.3. Five functional women managed cooperatives in targeted areas.	2.3 Institutional capacity development programs benefitting one women managed coop in 6 target provinces (240 women beneficiaries)	2.3.Complete capacity assessment of existing coops and develop plans based on the assessment and conduct one exposure visit for the women entrepreneurs and women coop. members	Finalized the inception report of the contracted NGOs responsible for the capacity building of women managed coop. The actual implementation will be initiated after the release of first installment after the approval of AWP-2014.	The actual implementation will be initiated after the release of first installment after the approval of AWP-2014
2.4. Provincial Women's Development Councils created and approved in 4	2.4. PWDC created and approved in 6 new provinces	2.4. Carry out a capacity assessment of PWDC members and prepare CD	Conducted regional coordinators meeting to work towards the extension of the	On-track

provinces by GEP II		plans for implementation (four PWDCs)	project activities including PWDCs in new provinces	
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C. OUTPUT 3: Access to justice for women including awareness on women's rights among men & women increased.

Gender related violence, especially to women; continue to be a major challenge in Afghanistan. Cases of violence against women are under-reported due to the cultural and social norms that prevent women from seeking for help. GEP II's third pillar is geared up towards improving women's access to justice. Availing venues for women to seek redress of abuse and grievances begins with awareness of women's rights, not just by women themselves but of men as well. To achieve this output, GEP II actively supports national and local events that would increase the visibility and awareness of women's rights. The project also designed activities that support religious leaders. This will potentially increase awareness among a large constituency because religious leaders have strong influence, wide reach and credibility in the communities. In addition, the youth, who comprise more than half of the Afghan population, will be encouraged to participate through conferences and works at universities.

In GEP II target provinces, Legal Help Centers that provide counsel and mediation for victims of gender violence will continue and will be further strengthened through an independent assessment and evaluation recommendations. Likewise, a hotline service where victims or their relatives can report cases also receives a significant technical and financial support and guidance from GEP II.

During this reporting period, below are the achievements of the project under the third output:

3. 1. Number of national and community based events organized (campaigns, trainings, conferences, seminars, TV spots) for advocacy about the rights of women and girls

The project supported 6 participants from MoWA (Minister of MoWA, heads of Policy and Planning Dept. Public Relation Dept. Central Statistical Unit, Human Rights and International Women Affairs) and Civil Society members to attend the 58th Session of the Commission on Status of Women's in New York, USA. It resulted in the provision of an opportunity to MoWA senior staff and civil society members to represent women's issues at the international level. The MoWA Minister appealed during her speech that,



MoWA Minister H.E. Husn Banu Ghazanfar presenting at the 58th CSW in New York,

"International Community should pay more attention to promotion of Afghan women's rights and should introduce new programs an interventions based on the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals)."

The celebration of International Women's Day on March 8th was one of the significant events during the first quarter of 2014. GEP II supported MoWA to organize a one-day conference for all the

ministries as well as national and international organizations working for women's rights. The purpose of the conference was to bring all the stakeholders together to take stock of achievements in support advancing women's rights and promotion of gender equality over the past ten years. Overall, MoWA concluded that with the help of the international community, they were able to significantly promote improvement in women's political, social and economic status. Gender based violence are increasingly being reported and resolved, more women are entering the work force and the business sector and more women are holding elected positions.

Other International Women's day activities (organization of advocacy workshops) were supported in Kabul, the four target regions and the new provinces (Laghman and Badghis) of the project to advocate about women's rights and gender promotion. UNDP's Gender Equality Project in coordination with UNHCR conducted a marathon and art competition under the theme "Progress for women is progress for all" in Bamyan on the occasion of IWD, in which 100 young female athletes participated.

GEP II financially supported MoWA to conduct TV campaigns over 9 national TV channels. The main messages were focusing on celebration of international women's day, encouraging women to participate in the upcoming elections and increasing women's awareness on their right to vote.

3.2. Number of cases resolved by LHCs through institutionalized Referral Mechanism

GEP II completed the assessment for 24 Legal Help Centers (LHCs) in the four target regions of the project – Balkh, Bamyan, Herat and Nangarhar. The main findings of the assessment can be categorized in three areas.

- a) Legal Matters – the term Legal Help Center connotes different meanings to target beneficiaries and also confused with other similar such as Referral Centers of UN Women. The LHC's are also not part of the Afghan government's formal judicial institutions that handle women's related cases. It's legal stance is not clear and the extent of its jurisdiction in handling cases also needs to be clarified.
- b) Capacity – Staff of LHCs work on a voluntary basis and most of them are not adequately trained to handle complex cases. Paralegals usually do not have the proper training in mediation, psychosocial services, counseling. They also don't have enough knowledge in criminal and civil laws of Afghanistan.
- c) Material and Operational needs – Some LHCs do not have the logistical and operational support to function even at the minimum level. LHCs that are not based in DoWAs do not even have an office space such that they conduct their clinics in open space.

Based on the above key findings, the assessment has recommended the following:

- Select a name to replace the current name of Legal Help Centers
- Work with national and international organizations to find out ways to institutionalize LHCs in the formal structure of government
- MoWA and Justice Directorate conduct joint monitoring and evaluation activities
- License paralegals working in LHCs
- Provide trainings in mediation, counseling, referral mechanism, Afghan civil and criminal laws and EVAW
- International donor community to look into providing logistical and operational support such as salaries or honorarium for volunteers, office equipment and supplies
- MoWA should harness various efforts and develop a coordination plan.

GEP II will reformulate its approach of support based on these findings to ensure provision of context specific technical assistance and ensure sustainability in the long run.

3.3. Number of religious leaders trained to advocate for women's rights in public

Scholarly quiz competition was conducted in madrassas in Kabul, Bamyan, Balkh, Herat and Nangharhar. A total of 1,500 students participated in this event to raise awareness about women's human's rights and gender equality. In GEP II supported activity representatives from Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA), Department of Haj and Religious Affairs (DoHRA), Provincial Governor's Office (PGOs), DoWAs, Members of Parliament, Provincial Council



(PCs) Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), and Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) also encouraged and appreciated the activity. The participants appreciated project's efforts in raising awareness about gender equality and women's rights from Islamic perspective. One of the student participants aptly summarizes the result of these quiz events. ***"Wares, a fifteen-year old participant of the competition said: "While preparing for this competition during the last month, I came to know about the distinction between the cultural practices and the actual religious laws imposed on women. This awareness allows me to know my religion and act based on it."*** These quiz competitions are effective means of engaging the youth in gender awareness in ways that are appealing to them rather than the usual classroom type of trainings.

3.4. Number of regional Peace and Security dialogues to enhance women and youth participation in policy formulation and consensus building for peace dialogue

No significant activity to report for this quarter due to delay in approval of AWP. When AWP is approved, the project will implement peace dialogues through its participation in the N-Peace Awards. It is also planned to partner with a local NGOs to conduct peace dialogues at the regional level in the next quarter should fund are secured for this specific activity.

EXPENSES FOR THE QUARTER

During Q1, a total of USD 87,420 was spent for this output. For more details, please refer to Annex 2.

Below is a snapshot of where GEP II is in relation to its annual targets after Q1

Table 3 Progress towards Output 3

2014 Baseline	2014 Annual Targets	Q1 Planned	Q1 Actual	Comments
3.1. Two events Advocacy campaigns have been conducted at sub-national level 3 events at two target provinces and at national level	3.1. Ten main national and Community Based events organized to observe UN-International days for women and girls and nation-wide campaign on the rights of the girl child	3.1. Organized one training and awareness raising sessions at national level and in each target province for women groups to increase demand for rights and justice	Women Int. day was supported in seven provinces using this occasion as a platform for the elimination of violence against of women.	On- track
3.2. LHCs supported by GEP II resolved over 1,200 cases.	3.2. Institutionalize four LHCs in existing provinces and establishment LHC in 6 new provinces	3.2. Completed assessment of existing LHCs establish LHC models based on international standards	Completed assessment of existing LHCs and recommendations were made to establish LHCs models based on int. standards. The actual implementation will be started with the approval of AWP to release the funds.	On-track
3.3. Number of religious leaders trained to advocate for women's rights in public	3.3. Approximately 2,500 religious leaders trained by GEP II to advocate for women's rights	3.3. 500 religious leaders trained to advocate for women's rights	No religious leaders trained in this quarter but trained 1500 students of religious education/Madrassas on the	On-track Note: No religious leaders were trained this quarter but

			women's rights and gender equality by organizing quiz competition.	potential leaders – the students were trained.
3.4. Number of regional Peace and Security dialogues to enhance women and youth participation in policy formulation and consensus building for peace dialogue	3.4. Twelve National and sub-national dialogues organized with the lead of DoWAs to involve women and youth at the community level and women at the provincial Councils	3.4. Two Regional dialogues organized with the lead of DoWAs to involve women and youth at the community level and women at the provincial Councils	Not Achieved – However, next quarter this will be implemented.	Not Achieved – However, next quarter this will be implemented.

IV. GENDER SPECIFIC RESULTS

The project's three pillars aimed at improving the status of Afghan women across the key sectors, policy review and support, sustainable livelihoods, access to justice and human rights and to mobilize emerging civil society in support of the women's empowerment and gender equality.

V. PARTNERSHIPS

Meetings were conducted with the Gender and Policy Units of Govt. counterparts (Line Ministries and Civil Service Commission) and UN organizations (UN-Women, UNICEF, and UNAMA), Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) to establish a consensus on the development of harmonized system for the M&E of indicators for gender equality. This will aid in the advancement of partnership circle of the project to strengthen gender equality and women empowerment

Meetings with the Canadian Ambassador were conducted by the Balkh Regional team to introduce the project activities in the Northern Region. It resulted in further planning to channel the women entrepreneurs to the international markets and boosting in the women economic empowerment.

VI. ISSUES

- Annual Work Plan for the year 2014 endorsement has been delayed because of elections and security. However, as a stop gap measure, UNDP senior management approved GEP's request to release an interim budget, from UNDP budget to fund specific activities of GEP.
- Implementing partners are heavily reliant on funding from the project to carry out their activities causing delay in implementation of activities when funds are not transferred on time. GEP II will release their first installment by mid-May to facilitate implementation of activities.
- Communication protocols between GEP II and MoWA have caused delays in supporting MoWA in their activities. Issue is mitigated by assigning focal points to MoWA and developing clear communication strategy within GEP II.

VII. RISKS

- **Security restrictions due to upcoming elections**

Security restrictions were faced in the first quarter due to elections campaigns for the upcoming elections in April 2014. Several White city and Grey city were declared both at national and sub-national levels during the first quarter which caused movement restrictions and delay in implementing project activities (to conduct meetings and workshops).

VIII. LESSONS LEARNED

- The annual work planning process has taken longer than necessary which is severely affecting implementation of activities. In future planning, the project will establish a participatory approach of planning where all donors and government counterparts take part in the formulation of plan.
- UNDP rules and regulations need to be communicated clearly to government counterparts in order to avoid lack of compliance or policies and misunderstanding.

IX. FUTURE PLANS

- Joint policy review with line ministries will continue and an inter-ministerial task force will be established
- Economic empowerment interventions will be accelerated at the sub-national level and in the new provinces particularly.
- M&E unit of MoWA will be further strengthened by establishing a harmonized database system for measuring the indicators of gender equality. The database will then gradually be transferred to the M&E and Policy unit of MoWA responsible to oversight the M&E of NAPWA and gender equality indicators.
- To ensure the access to justice and human rights through hotline services for the vulnerable and rural women will be strengthened by the implementing partner responsible (Afghan Women Network).
- To conduct the GSI trainings in Agriculture, Pharmacy and Geology Departments of KU
- To launch the Policy Review Toolkit and GRB handbook with the support of WPDD and EPD respectively

X. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: FINANCIAL TABLE

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Annex 1. Financial Table

Donor Name	COMMITMENT/ PREVIOUS YEARS RECORD				CURRENT YEAR - 2014					FUTURE EXPENSES		TOTAL RECEIVABLE		
	Commitment (a)	Revenue Collected 31/12/2013 (b)	Expenses 31/12/2013 (c)	IPSAS Adjustment (d)	Opening Balance E=(b-c+d)	Contribution Revenue (f)	Other Revenue (g)	Expenses (h)	Closing Balance I=(e+f+g - h)	Commitments (Unliquidated Obligations) (j)	Undepreciated of fixed Assets and Inventory (k)	(Future Due) L=(a-b-f)	(Past Due) (m)	Available Resources N=(i - j - k-m)
Afghanistan (MOF)	224,466	224,466	(32,045)	-	256,511	-	-	3,337	253,174	8,321	-	-	-	244,852
CIDA	2,337,108	2,337,108	1,034,551	-	1,302,557	-	-	21,415	1,281,142	43,541	(53,587)	-	-	1,291,188
Italy	813,898	813,898	186,699	-	627,199	-	-	2,737	624,462	16,825	-	-	-	607,637
Korea	11,000,000	3,800,000	-	-	3,800,000	-	-	243,156	3,556,844	60,589	-	7,200,000	-	3,496,255
Denmark	106,000	106,000	-	-	106,000	-	-	-	106,000	-	-	-	-	106,000
UNDP Core	3,219,294	2,019,294	2,019,294	-	-	1,200,000	-	556,427	643,573	361,124	147,499	-	-	134,950
Grand Total	17,700,766	9,300,766	3,208,499	-	6,092,267	1,200,000	-	827,073	6,465,194	490,400	93,912	7,200,000	-	5,880,882

Note:

- i) The figures provided in the above statement are provisional; the final figures will be known once the 2014 mid year closure exercise has been completed by end of August 2014.
- ii) Income received in currency other than USD is approximated to USD based on UN- Operational Rate of Exchange applied.

ANNEX 2: EXPENSES BY OUTPUT

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Annex 2. Expenses by Output

Project Output ID and Description	2014 Budget (AWP)	Expenses (Jan-Mar-2014)	Total Expenses	Delivery Rate
Output 1 (ID: 00085178): MOWA's capacity of policy making and oversight of NAPWA Implementation improved.	2,431,716	97,602	97,602	
Sub-total Output 1	2,431,716	97,602	97,602	4%
Output 2 (ID: 00085152): Women's entrepreneurship skills developed for women entrepreneurs and cooperatives in 19 provinces.	1,796,075	73,337	73,337	
Sub-total Output 2	1,796,075	73,337	73,337	4%
Output 3 (ID: 00085146): Access to justice for women including awareness on women's rights among men & women increased.	1,335,223	87,420	87,420	
Sub-total Output 3	1,335,223	87,420	87,420	7%
Output 4 (ID: 00085179): Project Management Cost	1,609,092	568,715	568,715	
Sub-total Output 4	1,609,092	568,715	568,715	35%
Grand Total	7,172,105	827,073	827,073	12%

ANNEX 3: EXPENSES BY DONOR

Donor Iterim Report Jan- March 2014

Annex 3. Expenses by Donor

Donor Name	Project Output ID and Description	2014 Budget (AWP)	Expenses (Jan-Mar-2014)	Delivery Rates
Afghanistan (MOF)	Output 1 (ID: 00085178): MOWA's capacity of policy making and oversight of NAPWA Implementation improved.	154,529	3,337	
	Sub-Total	154,529	3,337	2%
CIDA	Output 1 (ID: 00085178): MOWA's capacity of policy making and oversight of NAPWA Implementation improved.	379,850	6,172	
	Output 2 (ID: 00085152): Women's entrepreneurship skills developed for women entrepreneurs and cooperatives in 19 provinces.	506,110	7,128	
	Output 3 (ID: 00085146): Access to justice for women including awareness on women's rights among men & women increased.	352,662	8,115	
	Sub-Total	1,238,622	21,415	2%
Italy	Output 1 (ID: 00085178): MOWA's capacity of policy making and oversight of NAPWA Implementation improved.	635,513	2,737	
	Sub-Total	635,513	2,737	0%
Korea	Output 1 (ID: 00085178): MOWA's capacity of policy making and oversight of NAPWA Implementation improved.	1,245,240	-	
	Output 2 (ID: 00085152): Women's entrepreneurship skills developed for women entrepreneurs and cooperatives in 19 provinces.	1,279,800	-	
	Output 3 (ID: 00085146): Access to justice for women including awareness on women's rights among men & women increased.	956,880	-	
	Output 4 (ID: 00085179): Project Management Cost	318,080	243,156	
	Sub-Total	3,800,000	243,156	6%
UNDP	Output 1 (ID: 00085178): MOWA's capacity of policy making and oversight of NAPWA Implementation improved.	-	85,355	
	Output 2 (ID: 00085152): Women's entrepreneurship skills developed for women entrepreneurs and cooperatives in 19 provinces.	-	66,208	
	Output 3 (ID: 00085146): Access to justice for women including awareness on women's rights among men & women increased.	-	79,305	
	Output 4 (ID: 00085179): Project Management Cost	1,237,442	325,559	
	Sub-Total	1,237,442	556,427	45%
Denmark	Output 1 (ID: 00085178): MOWA's capacity of policy making and oversight of NAPWA Implementation improved.	16,585	-	
	Output 2 (ID: 00085152): Women's entrepreneurship skills developed for women entrepreneurs and cooperatives in 19 provinces.	10,165	-	
	Output 3 (ID: 00085146): Access to justice for women including awareness on women's rights among men & women increased.	25,680	-	
	Output 4 (ID: 00085179): Project Management Cost	53,570	-	
	Sub-Total	106,000	-	0%
	Grand Total	7,172,105	827,073	12%

ANNEX 4: ISSUE LOG

#	DESCRIPTION	DATE IDENTIFIED	IMPACT/PRIORITY	COUNTERMEASURE/MNGT RESPONSE	OWNER	STATUS
1	Annual Work Plan for the year 2014 has not been approved till the end of the first quarter which poses problems for the implementation of project planned activities.	01/01/14 to 30/03/14	I=5 P=5	GEP II continues to implement its activities despite severe constraints since funds are tied to the approval of the AWP.	Project Management	Continue
2	Implementing partners are heavily reliant on funding from the project to carry out their activities causing delay in implementation of activities when funds are not transferred on time.	15/01/14 30/03/14	I= 4 P=4	GEP II will release their first installment to facilitate implementation of activities.	M&E/Communication unit of the project	Continue
3	Communication protocols between GEP II and MoWA have caused delays in supporting MoWA in their activities..	01/03/14 30/03/14	I=4 P=4	Issue is mitigated by assigning focal points to MoWA and developing clear communication strategy within GEP II	Project Management	Solved

ANNEX 4: RISK LOG

#	DESCRIPTION	DATE IDENTIFIED	TYPE	IMPACT & PROBABILITY	COUNTERMEASURES/MN GT. RESPONSE	OWNER	SUBMITTED/UPDATED BY	LAST UPDATE	STATUS
1	Security restrictions due to upcoming elections	20 th Feb-30 th March	Political	P = 4 I = 4	The security focal point was assigned to keep track record and headcount of the staff during white and grey city.	Security Focal Point	M&E Specialist and M&E and Reporting Officer	30/03/14	The elections ended without any significant risk to the security of any staff (resolved)
2	Change in the leadership of MoWA	15 th March-30 th March	Political	P = 4 I = 4	Though it is beyond the control of the project management, however, the project will be clearly explained and introduced to the coming mgt. of MoWA	Project Management	M&E Specialist and M&E and Reporting Officer	30/03/14	Continue