



Afghanistan Justice Sector Support Program Update *December 2007*

U.S. DOS/INL's JSSP program seeks to increase the capacity of the Afghan Government and Afghan legal practitioners to deliver fair and transparent criminal justice and rule of law services to the people of Afghanistan. To that end, JSSP advisors work with the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Justice on a wide range of initiatives. In addition, JSSP conducts police/prosecutor training in four provinces and works to promote Afghans' access to justice services by implementing provincial justice conferences, training and mentoring of defense lawyers, and working on a range of other projects.

JSSP Raises Awareness of New Advocates' Law



Minister of Justice Danish addresses members of the press and others at the 16 DEC press conference to announce the enactment of the Advocates' Law.

On Dec. 16, JSSP and the International Bar Association organized a press conference to announce the President's signing of the Advocates' Law. At the press conference, Minister of Justice Danish noted that the Advocates' Law enables the creation of the nation's first independent bar association. This new association will establish an ethics code; set minimum attorney practice standards; and regulate the legal profession. Minister Danish also shared that the law requires the Ministry of Justice to establish a nationwide legal aid program to provide lawyers for indigent criminal defendants. Twelve national and international media organizations covered the press conference.

JSSP Develops Defense Curriculum

JSSP recently completed a defense curriculum for use in provincial justice trainings. The curriculum incorporates trainings on police/prosecution coordination; the role of defense lawyers; the Afghan Independent Bar Association; anti-corruption; counter-narcotics law; human rights; and corrections. Training materials are being translated into Dari prior to distribution.

Regional JSSP Strengthens Justice Reform in Logar

JSSP, with critical support and assistance from U.S. military officials, facilitated the Logar Provincial Justice Conference on Dec. 9th and 10th. Six Kabul-based Afghan justice leaders participated in five working groups on prosecutors, police, corrections, judges, and legal public awareness. Each engaged in dialogue with group members to identify the training needs of their group as well as issues to be addressed at the national level; note the more urgent material needs of their group; and discuss various professional topics with their provincial counterparts. Prior to the conference's conclusion, the Kabul-based justice leaders and their provincial counterparts presented their findings to conference participants.

JSSP Supports National Justice Sector Strategy and National Justice Programme

JSSP worked with representatives from the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA), the United Nations Development Programme, the Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences (ISISC), and the Justice Sector Reform Project to assist with preparations for a Sector Strategy Development Group meeting. Hosted by the Afghan National Development Strategy Office, the meeting was held to formally present the drafts of the National Justice Sector Strategy (NJSS) and the National Justice Programme (NJP). In anticipation of the meeting, JSSP section leaders briefed officials at the Attorney General's Office and Ministry of Justice. The two institutions are expected to complete their final review of the National Justice Sector Strategy and offer comments on the draft National Justice Programme in the coming weeks.

Regional JSSP Launches Kunduz Police Prosecution Training Program

On Dec. 15th, JSSP held its official opening ceremony for its Year 1 training and mentoring program. Attended by James Van Laningham, Counselor of Embassy for Narcotic Affairs, INL, Deputy Governor Hamidullah Donishi and Chief of the Provincial Council Mohammadullah Wardak, the Kunduz training program will begin on January 5, 2008.