Poverty Reduction in Asia

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3 Poverty Reduction in Asia

Today's world has greater resources and know-how than ever before to tackle the challenge of infectious disease, low productivity, lack of clean energy and transport and lack of basic services such as clean water, sanitation, schools and health care. The issue is how best to apply these resources and know-how to benefit the poorest people.

Human Development Report 2003, UN Development Programme

3.1 Two thirds of the world's poor live in Asia where 800 million people survive on less than $1 a day. 70% are women. Reducing poverty in Asia is key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Considerable progress has been made, but there are still numerous constraints: social exclusion, conflict, HIV/AIDS and governments that do not focus on poverty reduction.

3.2 Asia's development problems vary hugely across the region. Poverty is dominated by high levels of inequality, exclusion and discrimination against ethnic minorities, women and lower castes. While income poverty is likely to be halved by 2015, malnutrition persists in much of South Asia, particularly among women and children. Conflict is worsening in a number of countries, which risks the stability and security of the region. Degradation of the environment also persists, undermining the prospects for long-term economic growth.

3.3 DFID’s country programmes reflect the fundamental differences across the region. We focus our resources on the poorest people in the poorest countries supporting Poverty Reduction Strategies or their national equivalent; working with partner governments, civil society and multilateral agencies; and supporting the provision of basic services to poor people, especially in health and education. To improve our impact on the livelihoods of poor people we need to understand the motivation and political realities of decision makers at all levels and build genuine partnerships with them. Over the next two years DFID will increase its development spending in Asia by around 69%, working for solutions at a regional level as well as in individual countries.
Public Service Agreement Objective II

■ Reduce Poverty in Asia

3.4 The second Public Service Agreement objective encompasses all of the work that DFID carries out in Asia to reduce poverty, although not all work is measured through the target. Progress against the target indicators is monitored in four countries: Bangladesh, China, India and Pakistan. These countries all have large numbers of poor people and in the financial year 2002/03 accounted for 68% of the Asia programme budget. However, our work in Afghanistan, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Burma, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam and in our regional programmes remains integral to our overall success in Asia.

3.5 The table below sets out our latest assessment of progress against the Public Service Agreement objective in Asia. It presents a mixed picture with four indicators judged to be on track, three judged to be too early to say and two – Maternal Mortality and Tuberculosis Control – off track.

Box 3a Guide to ‘traffic light’ assessment in this report

[Green: Means we judge we are on course to meet the target/indicator.]

[Amber: Means we cannot make a judgement on progress against this target/indicator. This may be because performance has not changed in either direction or because progress may have been made in some countries but not others.]

[Red: Means there has been slippage in progress against this target/indicator.]

[Grey: Means that progress against this target/indicator cannot be assessed due to unavailable data.]

The circle superimposed on each assessment gives an indication of likely or anticipated progress against each target.

Revised baselines are given where more complete and up to date data sets have become available.

A full report of progress against the Public Service Agreement is included in Annexe 3.
### Target 2: Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in 4 key countries in Asia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Latest outturn:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  A sustainable reduction in the proportion of people living in poverty from 15% to 10% in East Asia and the Pacific (includes China and South East Asia)</td>
<td>Too early to say</td>
<td>14.5% living in poverty in East Asia and the Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  A sustainable reduction in the proportion of people living in poverty from 40% to 32% in South Asia</td>
<td>On course</td>
<td>31.9% living in poverty in South Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  An increase in gross primary school enrolment from 95% to 100%</td>
<td>Too early to say</td>
<td>95% gross enrolment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised baseline is 96%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  An increase in the ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary school from 87% to 94%</td>
<td>Too early to say</td>
<td>89% girl to boy ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  A reduction in under-five mortality rates for girls and boys from 92 per 1000 live births to 68 per 1000</td>
<td>On course</td>
<td>80 per 1000 under-five mortality rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised baseline is 89 per 1000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  An increase in the proportion of births assisted by skilled birth attendants from 39% to 57%</td>
<td>Too early to say</td>
<td>36% assisted births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised baseline is 34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Prevalence rates of HIV infection in vulnerable groups being below 5%</td>
<td>Too early to say</td>
<td>UNAIDS will publish global HIV/AIDS figures in July 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  A tuberculosis case detection rate above 70%</td>
<td>Slippage</td>
<td>29% tuberculosis detection rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  A tuberculosis cure treatment rate greater than 85%</td>
<td>On course</td>
<td>84% tuberculosis cure treatment rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although overall progress is encouraging, there are a number of areas of underperformance. DFID’s efforts to counter these as part of the international community are explained here.

Box 3c Working to improve performance in Asia

**Primary education enrolment**

In three of the four Public Service Agreement countries, despite considerable regional variation within each country, gross enrolment now exceeds 100%. This is largely due to children repeating grades and the enrolment of under and over-age children. Erratic data for Pakistan make it difficult to judge overall progress. Security constraints and the unstable political process have had a negative impact, but DFID is continuing its commitment to a number of existing education projects and further programmes are being developed in Punjab and the North West Frontier Province.

**Gender equity**

In order to calculate gender equity in primary education – equal numbers of boys and girls – we calculate the total primary school enrolment ratio for girls as a percentage of the ratio for boys. In Bangladesh and China, equity has been achieved, again due to grade repetition and the enrolment of older children. Further work is still needed in India and Pakistan. In India, DFID is planning increased support to education through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme (India’s Universal Elementary Education Programme), which pays specific attention to girls’ access to basic education. DFID’s education projects in Pakistan all have a strong focus on equality for girls.

**Under-five mortality**

There have been sharp reductions in under-five mortality rates in Bangladesh and Pakistan. There has been slower improvement in India, where DFID is considering up to £250 million support for the government’s Reproductive and Child Health II programme, which will also help tackle maternal mortality. In Pakistan, further support is being given to Lady Health Workers, malaria control, nutrition and polio immunisation. A project with the UN and USAID on contraceptive social marketing will have an impact on under-five mortality, as will a new initiative to improve maternal and neonatal health.

**Maternal mortality**

China is well above the 57% target for births assisted by a skilled birth attendant – already 70%. India has increased to 42% but there has been little movement in Pakistan – 20% – and Bangladesh – 13%. Reducing maternal mortality also requires access to emergency obstetric care, and in rural areas, transport and communications systems are critical. Combating exclusion from services because of caste, race or cost requires approaches designed for each specific context. We anticipate increased investment in maternal and neonatal health in Pakistan with international partners from 2004.
Public Service Agreement Focus Country Programmes

India

India is the focus of DFID’s largest country programme, now worth nearly £200 million annually, where some 35% of the country’s population of over 1 billion are classified as poor. This represents over a quarter of the world’s poor. On current trends, India will meet the Millennium Development Goals for both income poverty and primary school enrolment. However, inequality and exclusion on the basis of caste or gender, and the inefficiency of systems remain significant challenges to achieving the goals of eliminating hunger and reducing maternal and infant mortality rates.

Tuberculosis detection and cure rates

The World Health Organization’s STOP TB global initiative has two targets for 2005: a 70% detection rate and an 85% cure rate. Many developing countries have incorporated these targets into their own national planning processes; yet they remain ambitious and huge additional efforts will be required to meet the detection rate. However, there are some grounds for optimism due to the increase in areas covered by the Directly Observed Treatment Short Course (DOTS) methodology, which aims to detect and cure tuberculosis. There has been significant DFID investment in China as part of a $100 million blended loan with the World Bank, and further financial support for India in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Pakistan remains a challenge since the country started from a near zero detection rate a few years ago. Recent data indicate a doubling in detection rates to 20%, which is encouraging.

Women at a vegetable market. With strong economic growth and policies in favour of the poor India is expected to meet the income-poverty Millennium Development Goal.
3.8 HIV/AIDS is also a major potential threat to the progress being made. DFID is expanding its support to the Government of India’s National AIDS Control Programme. This includes a grassroots initiative with sex workers in Kolkata, which has led to over 90% use of condoms, a decline in the entry of young girls to sex work, increased literacy, and a greater focus on human rights for sex workers.

Box 3d Indian focus states

DFID funds major programmes with the Federal Indian Government to respond to key issues across the country. At the state level it focuses its contribution in four states: Orissa, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

- In Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, DFID continues to provide budgetary support for broad programmes of policy reforms.
- In Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh DFID has worked with the World Bank to support the Government of India’s reform of the power sector.
- In West Bengal, DFID has approved a £112 million Kolkata Urban Services for the Poor Programme tackling wider urban reforms.
- In Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, DFID has approved £16.6 million and £9.9 million respectively to support programmes that enhance the livelihoods of poor rural people in predominantly tribal areas.

3.9 Strategic partnerships are increasingly important to our work in India in order to strengthen the poverty focus of the international community. We have supported the Asian Development Bank’s analysis to sharpen the poverty focus of several major rural roads programmes, helping to improve rural growth and access to basic education, health and employment. DFID and the World Bank have co-financed national level health and education programmes and provided direct budget support and technical assistance to power and water reform. We are now discussing with the World Bank, GTZ (the German development agency) and the International Finance Corporation an enterprise development programme that leverages substantial government commitments to address the market failures in financial and business development services in Small and Medium Enterprises. We have also worked with UNICEF on water and sanitation, child health and child rights programmes. We are working closely with Japan and have agreed to explore a joint approach to promoting economic growth in West Bengal.
China

3.10 China’s economy has been growing at more than 8% over the last two decades. However, while some areas are prosperous, around 160 million people remain below the $1 day poverty line. The Prime Minister opened the new DFID country office in China in July 2003. This will help build more effective relationships with DFID’s partners in China and increase staff awareness of the country environment in which we are operating.

A schoolgirl in Jishisan Province, China. A DFID scheme has helped to raise enrolment rates for girls in the provinces by 20% over two years

3.11 DFID responded quickly and positively to the SARS epidemic in June 2003, providing a £3 million contribution to a co-ordinated programme with the World Bank, the World Health Organization and the Canadian International Development Agency. The project aims to address emergency responses to a SARS outbreak and strengthen the public health system more generally to combat the re-emergence of SARS or similar infectious diseases.

**PSA Objective II Highlight**

✅ **China:** In 2003, China increased its political commitment to tackling the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic; DFID’s financial and technical support is helping the Chinese Government turn this political commitment into action.
3.12 Progress towards universal primary education varies greatly across the country. There is a considerable difference between national statistics for school enrolment and the evidence from individual provinces, counties and schools. Millions of children do not attend school in the Western Provinces of China. In July 2003, in a unique partnership with the World Bank, a DFID grant was combined with a $100 million World Bank loan to reduce the overall cost, making it feasible for local governments to take up and repay the loan. The project is expected to benefit up to 2.4 million children. Enrolment rates for girls in provinces supported by a similar DFID scheme have risen 20% in two years.

3.13 DFID works very closely with the World Bank in China, providing high quality analytical expertise to develop the Government of China's strategic planning in three areas with a direct poverty focus: economic reforms, social and human development and natural resource management.

Bangladesh

3.14 Bangladesh has made good progress on reducing poverty from 43% in 1991 to 34% in 2000, based on the national poverty line. It has also seen a substantial improvement in its Human Development indicators. However, with 38 million people living below the poverty line, using the international comparison of $1 a day, and 50% of children malnourished, major development challenges remain. Women fare worse than men on almost all measures of development. Female mortality is one third higher than that of males; twice as many girls as boys die between their first and fifth birthdays; girls are more likely to grow up underweight than boys; and households headed by women are among some of the poorest in the country.

3.15 The new DFID Country Assistance Plan for Bangladesh, entitled Women and Girls First (22), was agreed in 2003 with an annual allocation of £80 million, which is expected to rise significantly over the next two to three years. The plan outlines how DFID will support the Government of Bangladesh's Poverty Reduction Strategy and will focus on improving gender equity through increased access for poor women to development opportunities. This will include jobs and income earning ability, market access, health care, education, security, power and social inclusion. The plan also emphasises the need for women to know and demand their rights.

3.16 Recognising the scale of the challenge, DFID has given priority to reducing maternal mortality. It has also set out a plan for a gender-based approach within the next health programme, which is due to start in early 2005. Bangladesh has significantly increased primary school enrolment and achieved gender equity through the Stipend Programme, which encourages girls into education.
school by providing a payment to the family and the cost of the tuition fees for each girl. However, improving the quality of the education provided and the completion rates remains a considerable challenge. A major Sector Wide Programme for Primary Education has been prepared under the leadership of the Asian Development Bank. This has drawn on DFID experience from the Effective Schools through Enhanced Education Management project. DFID will be contributing some £100 million over the life of this programme.

HIV/AIDS prevalence remains low among some high-risk groups, such as commercial sex workers and long-haul truck drivers; but there is a rising rate of infection among drug users. DFID is funding a significant programme of support for high-risk groups through CARE and Marie Stopes. We are also supporting the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, which is now reporting on HIV/AIDS testing for high-risk groups. DFID is also working with the Government of Bangladesh to improve national planning for HIV/AIDS prevention.

Pakistan

Salination caused by the over-irrigation of poor soil in Pakistan. Better land management and more efficient use of water remain central to DFID’s approach to rural livelihoods.

3.19 DFID has worked with the Government of Pakistan to improve its economic management. Our £55 million Direct Budget Support for the Poverty Reduction Strategy has been linked to the first ever successful implementation of an IMF Poverty Reduction Growth Facility in Pakistan. DFID is also supporting the development of a Medium Term Budget Framework, which has the potential to improve development results and enhance the effectiveness of public expenditure.

3.20 One important achievement in the last year has been the agreement of £65 million of budget support for specific sectors, allocated to seven key national health and population programmes. This has already secured additional funding from the Government of Pakistan to programmes like the National AIDS Control Programme and the Lady Health Workers programme which aims to meet the health care and family planning needs of over 100 million Pakistanis by 2005. Linked to this work, DFID is collaborating with USAID in the health sector on project identification, design, monitoring and evaluation. This should help the Government of Pakistan improve its public health provision for the poor and reduce the population growth rate.
In Pakistan, DFID values its close working relationship with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in support of the Government of Pakistan’s development work. We have collaborated closely with both Banks to assess the impact of the Government’s challenging and innovative programme of devolution, to bring government closer to the people and to discover how donors and government can work together to improve the delivery of local services to the poor.

Other Country Programmes in Asia

Nepal

Despite the uncertain political and security situation, development work is continuing in Nepal. DFID has finalised a new Country Assistance Plan and we will continue to provide direct help to some of the poorest and most vulnerable communities in Asia, as well as working with the Government of Nepal on economic and social reform.

PSA Objective II Highlight

✓ Nepal: DFID has played a central role in supporting the Nepalese Government’s Poverty Reduction Strategy to effectively address the causes of poverty and conflict, and which provides the basis for substantial support from the World Bank, IMF, and other donors.

DFID has also supported a new Government Poverty Reduction Strategy, which focuses on the causes of poverty and conflict, and the adoption of a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. An immediate action plan has been developed which prioritises reforms in order to improve the lives of poor people. DFID has also encouraged the reform of bankrupt state banks, action against loan defaulters and corrupt officials, the reorganisation of Police Headquarters and an expansion of community policing in rural areas.

DFID has continued to play a leading role in the international community on the analysis and response to the conflict in Nepal. This has included working with the Nepalese Government, international experts, the UN, civil society and non-governmental organisations to provide analysis and training on the ethnic, gender and economic dimensions of conflict and to strengthen human rights and risk management. We aim to continue to give priority support to help the country end the violence and find a negotiated solution to the conflict.
Box 3e  Development assistance in conflict area in Nepal

Over the last two years DFID has provided support for the following achievements.

- Around 500 kilometres of rural roads opening up six districts to the road network.
- More than 500 completed water supply and sanitation schemes.
- More than 400 community bridges constructed.
- Over 7,000 former bonded labourers and their families given land, shelter and access to safe drinking water.
- Adult literacy packages provided for over 50,000 people in 20 districts.
- Essential drugs packages provided to health posts in thirty districts.

Indonesia

3.25 DFID has continued to support Indonesia’s Partnership for Governance Reform. This brings together government, non-governmental organisations and donors to tackle governance issues, such as corruption and police reform, where more conventional technical assistance programmes have made little progress. Highlights in 2003 included agreements with Indonesia’s two largest religious organisations on a joint anti-corruption programme, and two Law Summits, which aimed to build a stronger commitment to reform of the judicial system.

3.26 In Maluku, funds from DFID and other donors have enabled the UNDP to support projects to rebuild villages destroyed in earlier communal violence and to assist with other peace-building measures.

3.27 DFID’s innovative Multi-stakeholder Forestry Programme provides funding and advice to a wide range of organisations across the country: community groups, local and national government, international non-governmental organisations and the private sector. It aims to help resolve conflicts over forest resources and build consensus over sustainable and equitable management of Indonesia’s forests. Often this means bringing together organisations that have not worked together before. In 2003, the Programme trained staff from the Ministry of Forestry in social forestry techniques and facilitated closer links between these personnel, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations.
Cambodia

In Cambodia, DFID is working with the Cambodian Government, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank to co-finance a $77 million Health Sector Support Project based on the Government’s health strategy. The aims include improving the health of women and children, and reducing the poverty caused by the need for high levels of private spending on health. The same three agencies have followed a joint process for producing their respective country plans, including joint consultation with stakeholders. They have also developed principles for better joint working in future. This work has already led to closer collaboration between the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank and helped to encourage better donor working in Cambodia.

Sri Lanka

The UK Government has an innovative Peace-building and Reconciliation Strategy in Sri Lanka. This brings together the efforts of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence and DFID in helping the country to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation. The strategy covers DFID’s bilateral programme and activities within the joint Global Conflict Prevention Pool. (See Chapter 5 for more information on the Conflict Prevention Pools.) It includes providing direct assistance to displaced and vulnerable people, reducing communal tensions, building Sri Lankan support for the peace process and helping with security sector reform.
Vietnam

3.30 Vietnam has already achieved the poverty reduction Millennium Development Goal and is gradually progressing towards the others. Education enrolment rates exceed 90% and continue to rise; and access to clean water is increasing. Despite Vietnam’s strong performance in reducing poverty, it remains a poor country. In particular, the slowing of poverty reduction over the last four years highlights the challenge of trying to reach the poorest of the poor, who are often in the most remote parts of the country. Recognising the country’s achievements and the many challenges that still lie ahead, this is one of DFID’s fastest growing programmes.

**PSA Objective II Highlight**

✓ Vietnam: DFID has spearheaded efforts with the Government of Vietnam and a broad range of other partners to improve the effective delivery of all aid to Vietnam and helped strengthen the poverty focus of public spending.

3.31 The new Vietnam office was opened in Hanoi in May 2003 and a new Country Assistance Plan (20) was published in January 2004. The fully devolved status of the office, and the increased complement of locally-appointed advisory and administrative staff, have produced better opportunities to engage with Government partners, and are increasing DFID’s understanding of the social and political processes at work in Vietnam.

The new DFID-funded school next to the old building in Son La province in northwest Vietnam. DFID is focusing on social exclusion and the quality of education in Vietnam to improve enrolment levels.
3.32 DFID has strongly supported the implementation of Vietnam’s poverty reduction strategy, known as the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy. We provided £10 million in budget support to the Poverty Reduction Support Credit, led by the World Bank and co-financed with The Netherlands and Denmark. This supports a range of reforms across the economic, governance and social sectors. Alongside this, DFID has been engaged in the Public Expenditure Review, which focuses on improving the effectiveness and poverty focus of public spending. We are supporting the development of Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks in several pilot sectors and a number of projects to strengthen public financial management, together with the World Bank and other donors. This includes work through the UNDP with the National Assembly.

3.33 DFID has played a strong role in education and transport. In financial terms, the education programme has seen a fourfold increase over the last year. The quality of education and the exclusion of disadvantaged children are being addressed through the Primary Teachers’ Development Project and the Primary Education for Disadvantaged Children project. DFID has worked closely with the Vietnamese Government and Japan to ensure that infrastructure is given an appropriate focus in the poverty strategy, both in promoting broad-based growth and in meeting the needs of the poorest. DFID support to the World Bank’s second Rural Transport Programme continues to provide basic access roads to local communities. DFID has also agreed to finance the design of a successor Rural Transport Programme that includes piloting budget support mechanisms to provinces.

3.34 DFID has played a pivotal role in the follow up to the Rome conference on aid effectiveness, which took place in early 2003. DFID co-sponsored a high level workshop on aid effectiveness in October 2003 with Japan, and is co-chairing a government-donor group on aid effectiveness focusing on practical action to improve the delivery of all aid to Vietnam. DFID’s partnership with Japan has deepened, and extends to collaboration on the Poverty Reduction Support Credit, as well as in the education and transport sectors.

Burma

3.35 DFID is working to help poor people in Burma in the context of wider UK Government efforts to maintain pressure on the Burmese regime for political progress. Burma is one of three countries in Asia with widespread HIV/AIDS affecting the population. DFID is the largest co-financer of the Fund for HIV/AIDS in Burma. This $21 million Fund supports activities to implement a joint UN programme to tackle HIV/AIDS, bringing together national and international non-governmental organisations, UN agencies and Government. The Fund for HIV/AIDS has the support of the leader of the opposition National League for Democracy, Aung San Suu Kyi. It has increased the scale of work on HIV/AIDS in Burma, as well as helping to strengthen co-ordination to achieve a more effective response.
Pacific

3.36 In 2001, DFID decided to end bilateral assistance to the Pacific by March 2004. The decision reflected the fact that other agencies deliver development assistance more effectively in the region and also that our commitment is to focus our efforts on the poorest countries in the world and those with large numbers of poor people. From April 2004 onwards, DFID assistance to the Pacific will be solely through multilateral channels, such as the European Union’s Development Fund, which will provide around €317 million for Pacific States and the region from April 2003 to 2007. The UK contributes just under 13% of these funds. Support will also be provided through the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. UK missions in the Pacific will continue to support important work on judicial reform, good governance, human rights, the environment and conflict prevention through DFID Small Grant Scheme funds.

3.37 In 2003, we have worked to ensure partner governments and external agencies in the Pacific fully understood the rationale for our decision to provide future support through multilateral channels. Lessons learnt from our experience of handling programme closure in the Pacific were also shared across DFID to inform the changes in funding to some middle-income countries.

Regional Work

3.38 In addition to its country work in Asia, DFID is also active in supporting work affecting the region as a whole, or sub-regions within it. We have supported research on several issues; how to maximise the economic benefits to poor people of migration; innovative approaches to HIV prevention amongst high-risk groups across a number of countries in Asia; and the benefits to poor people of good governance and institutional reform. This is already having an impact on strategies for development assistance and discussions with partner governments.

FOCUS: Afghanistan

3.39 The international community is committed to assisting Afghans to rebuild their country. At the Tokyo Conference in January 2002, $4.5 billion was pledged over five years for reconstruction. More than $5.7 billion has actually been disbursed to Afghanistan so far. At a new pledging conference in Berlin in March 2004, donors pledged another $8.2 billion over the next three years. This includes over $4.2 billion for 2004/05.

3.40 The UK is strongly involved in this international effort and has committed £500 million over five years (2002/03–2006/07). DFID has spent over £200 million since September 2001, of which £75 million was provided in 2003/04. DFID also contributed an estimated £40 million to Afghanistan through multilateral channels; the European Community, the United Nations and the World Bank. The joint DFID, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Ministry of Defence (MOD), Global Conflict Prevention Pool provided a further £16 million for
Afghanistan this year and the UK is providing £70 million over three years to support the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy.

A young girl attends school in Afghanistan – under the Taliban, it was forbidden for women to be educated. The proportion of girls in school in Afghanistan has increased sevenfold since 2001.

3.41 DFID’s priority is to build the capacity of key Afghan ministries to manage the development process and establish an effective Afghan state, which can promote and protect the human rights of ordinary Afghans and reduce poverty. We are working with the FCO and MOD to support the political process and prepare the way for national elections in 2004. We are also helping the Afghan authorities support the livelihoods of the poorest Afghans and providing humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable groups, especially returning refugees.

3.42 The UK supports the Afghanistan National Drug Control Strategy and is making £70 million available over three years. DFID is contributing to this strategy by helping to build a more effective state to enforce the laws of the Afghan government, and developing the legal economy – creating alternatives to poppy cultivation.

3.43 Security remains a major challenge in Afghanistan. A UK led civil-military Provincial Reconstruction Team in Mazar-e-Sharif, in which DFID plays an important role, is facilitating the development process in northern Afghanistan. Funding from the Global Conflict Prevention Pool is supporting the Afghan police and helping build a new National Afghan Army. We are also assisting with the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants.
3.44 This is a critical time: the Afghan traditional assembly, the Loya Jirga, has agreed a new constitution and democratic elections are due to be held in September 2004. The international community has pledged massive support to ensure that the current unique opportunity in Afghanistan is taken.

Box 3f Achievements in Afghanistan in 2003/04

- Over 4 million children have returned to school; girls make up on average 37% of the student population - up from 5% in 2001.
- 15 million children have been immunised against polio and 6 million against measles since 2002, saving 30,000 lives.
- Over 600,000 refugees returned in 2003, with a total of 2.5 million returnees since 2001.
- Economic growth is up 30%.
- Under NATO, the International Security Assistance Force’s mandate has been extended beyond Kabul and militias are being disbanded and reintegrated within civilian society.
- UK Provincial Reconstruction Team established in Mazar-e-Sharif and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants begun.
- Accession to The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- Voter registration started.
- Tribal Loya Jirga, made up of 23% women delegates, agreed new constitution.