



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan



# AFGHANISTAN

## VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW (VNR) 2021



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# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank	<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>AGO</b>	Attorney General Office	<b>MoFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>AICC</b>	Chamber of Commerce	<b>MoHE</b>	Ministry of Higher Education
<b>ANDMA</b>	Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority	<b>MoIC</b>	Ministry of Information and Culture
<b>ANPDF</b>	Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework	<b>MoJ</b>	Ministry of Justice
<b>ANPDF II</b>	Second Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework	<b>MoLSA</b>	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
<b>A-SDGs</b>	Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals	<b>MoPH</b>	Ministry of Public Health
<b>ASDN</b>	Afghanistan Sustainable Development Network	<b>MoRR</b>	Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation
<b>ATRA</b>	Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority	<b>MoUDL</b>	Ministry of Urban Development and Land
<b>CBN</b>	Cost of Basic Needs	<b>MoWA</b>	Ministry of Women Affairs
<b>COVID-19</b>	Corona Virus Disease 2019	<b>MRRD</b>	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
<b>CPI</b>	Consumer Price Index	<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment or Training
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organizations	<b>NEPA</b>	National Environmental Protection Authority
<b>CVD</b>	Cardio Vascular Disease	<b>NPPs</b>	Nation Priority Programs
<b>DABS</b>	Da Afghanistan Berishna Shirkat	<b>NRVA</b>	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
<b>ECOSOC</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Council	<b>NSIA</b>	National Statistics and Information Authority
<b>ESCAP</b>	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	<b>NWRA</b>	National Water Regulatory Authority
<b>ESRA</b>	Energy Service Regulatory Authority	<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>FIES</b>	Food Insecurity Experience Scale	<b>PDCs</b>	provincial Development Committees
<b>FVPO</b>	First Vice President Office	<b>PDoE</b>	Provincial Directors of Economy
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence	<b>RIA</b>	Rapid Integrated Assessment
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Products	<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>GoAR</b>	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	<b>SDR</b>	Sustainable Development Report
<b>GP</b>	Generation Positive	<b>SDSN</b>	Sustainable Development Solution Network
<b>HDI</b>	Human Development Index	<b>TVET</b>	Technical Vocational Education Training
<b>HLPF</b>	High-Level Political Forum	<b>VNR</b>	Voluntary National Review
<b>ICU</b>	Intensive Care Unit	<b>WEE-NPP</b>	Women Economic Empowerment National Priority Program
<b>IDPs</b>	Internal Displaced Persons	<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>IE&amp;LFS</b>	Income Expenditure and Labor Force Survey	<b>YTS</b>	Youth Thinker's Society
<b>iSDG</b>	Integrated Sustainable Development Goals Model		
<b>KM</b>	Kabul Municipality		
<b>LDCs</b>	Least Developed Countries		
<b>LNOB</b>	Leaving no one behind		
<b>MAIL</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock		
<b>MEAs</b>	Multilateral Environmental Agreements		
<b>MMR</b>	Maternal Mortality Rate		
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education		
<b>MoEc</b>	Ministry of Economy		

# OPENING STATEMENT



**DR. KARIMA HAMID FARYABI,  
MINISTER OF ECONOMY,  
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF  
AFGHANISTAN**

On behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, I am honored to present the Afghanistan Second Voluntary National Review (VNR 2021) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The government remains committed to the attainment of the SDGs and has taken concrete steps in the realization of this development agenda. The Afghanistan VNR 2021 takes stock of the status of SDGs, outlines major achievements so far, summarizes government's actions and policies, and provides an overview of current and emerging challenges.

Several internal and external factors are hampering the implementation of SDGs. The COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent negative impact on economic growth has reversed hard earned gains in human development over the last decade. The continuation of conflict associated with high civilian and military casualties and the withdrawal of international coalition forces will increase security burden on the government which will in turn put pressure on the limited government resources which could be otherwise used for development in the country. The return of Afghan refugees and the impact of climate change on peoples' livelihoods has put additional constraints on the economy to generate decent jobs for everyone. All these have implications for the implementation of the SDGs and the achievement of 2030 Agenda in Afghanistan.

Guided by the core principle of leaving no one behind, the meaningful implementation of SDGs requires global partnership in the form of finance, technology, capacity development, and trade. Such partnerships are vital for

less developed countries, helping them to accelerate the implementation of SDGs.

The government reaffirms its commitment to the attainment of SDGs, which complements our endeavors to achieve our national aspirations for achieving lasting peace, sustainable economic growth, and becoming self-reliant as we move into the second half of Afghanistan's decade of transformation.

This report has been prepared through a consultative process with the active engagement of all key stakeholders both at the national and sub-national levels. I would like to acknowledge the contributions of all stakeholders including the Administrative Office of the President (AOP), the Office of H.E. the First Vice President, government line ministries (particularly MoF, MoFA, NSIA, MoE, MoIC, MoPH), civil society organizations, academia, private sector representatives, provincial Directorates of Economy, UN agencies, especially UNDP for providing technical support to prepare this country report.

**Dr. Karima Hamid Faryabi,**

**11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021  
KABUL  
AFGHANISTAN**

## SUMMARY

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) has the privilege to participate in the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC and present its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) report on SDGs. The Afghan Government is committed to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda and as a first step, has developed Afghanistan SDGs, which have been integrated into national development plans, including the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF). The government has established institutional setups to provide an enabling environment for SDGs informed policy formulation, management, coordination and collaboration across multiple partners and institutions.

The government has taken significant strides towards the achievement of the SDGs since its first VNR in 2017. Afghanistan has nationalized the SDGs into 16 goals, 110 targets, and 177 indicators which correspond to the context in Afghanistan. A high level Executive Committee, with four sub-committees, was established which provided policy directions to the implementation of SDGs. Using the multi-criteria analysis approach, the SDGs have been prioritized and aligned to the ANPDF. The application of Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model for SDG integration, deployment of integrated financing instruments, SDG costing, and the establishment of a national monitoring framework and dashboard for SDGs are works in progress. The government is proud to have made these achievements towards the implementation of the SDGs despite the challenging security environment. Some key highlights are as follows.

### **GOAL 1. END POVERTY:** Persistent poverty in



Afghanistan is a major challenge, the reduction and ultimate eradication of which has been the focus of all government policies and programs. Nearly one in every two Afghans lives under national poverty line, and from every four poor individual, three live in rural areas. The government has achieved, and exceeded, its target to reduce poverty to 48 percent by 2020. According to the latest Income and Expenditure Survey, poverty has reduced from 54.5 percent in 2017 to 47.1 percent in 2020. The Government took the unprecedented step of implementing a baked bread distribution program in the capital city of all provinces during the month of Ramadan and Eid holidays which was followed by the National Food Program (Destarkhon-e-Mili). Some existing national programs are being reviewed and reconfigured to provide more direct forms of assistance to the poor, with particular attention to those suffering from extreme poverty.

1 Income Expenditure and Labor Force Survey (IE\_LFS) 2020, NSIA

### **GOAL 2. ZERO HUNGER:** Considering the



adverse impact of the COVID-19, achieving zero hunger by 2030 is a difficult target. Nevertheless, the government has already made some substantive progress towards this goal. According to the Global Hunger Index, Afghanistan's hunger score was 51 in 2000 which has dropped to 30.3 in 2020, ranking Afghanistan 99<sup>th</sup> out of 107 countries. The IE&LFS 2020<sup>1</sup> revealed that 59.5 percent of population are moderately or severely food insecure. According to the same survey, 36.9 percent of the population (11.7 million) are food insecure: 14 percent (4.5 million) are very severely food insecure, 9.8 percent (3.1 million) are severely food insecure, and 13.1 percent (4.2 million) are moderately food insecure. Stunting and wasting in children under five years of age has decreased from 40.4 percent (2012) to 38.2 percent in 2020, and 9.5 percent (2012) to 5.1 percent in 2020, respectively<sup>2</sup>.

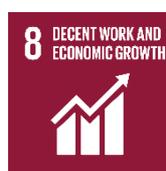
### **GOAL 3. GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:**



Over the past two decades, the government has worked ceaselessly to provide healthcare services to all Afghans and to improve the standard of healthcare provided. Basic healthcare coverage has gone from 60 percent in 2013 to 85 percent in 2020, signaling impressive progress. Maternal mortality rates have dropped from 1,450 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 638 maternal deaths in 2018. The percentage of pregnant women who had at least one antenatal check-up has increased to 70 percent, compared to just 23 percent in 2005. Neonatal mortality rate per 1,000 live births has been reduced to 37.1 in 2018 and the mortality rate per 1,000 live births for children under 5 years of age has fallen from 129.4 in 2000 to 62.3 in 2018.

COVID-19 has imposed additional health and socio-economic hardships especially for poor and vulnerable populations. The government undertook whole-of-government response to address the negative impacts of COVID-19. As a result, the government was able to keep the spread of infection and the fatality rate lower compared to most other countries. The government has invested in water management, seeds provision, and improved livestock management practices to enhance agricultural productivity and thus build the resilience of poor households.

### **GOAL 8. DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC**



**GROWTH:** Economic growth has stagnated over the past 5 years compared to an average of almost two-digit growth rates between 2002 and 2014. From 2015 to 2020 the average growth rate was 1.5 percent. The growth rate in 2015 was 1.3 percent and it

2 Global Hunger Index, 2020

reached 4 percent in 2019 before the COVID-19 shock, then it fell to -2 percent in 2020. Based on Income Expenditure and Labor Force Survey 2020, the Afghan working-age population is estimated at 17.2 million, of which 8.6 million are men and 8.7 million are women. Unemployment rate is estimated at 18.6 percent in 2020, which is higher among female population at 32 percent compared to male with 15.2 percent. Youth (age 15-24 years) unemployment rate is 23.7 percent and the share of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) is 34.4 percent. The proportion of commercial banks per 100,000 adults slightly declined from 1.9 in 2017 to 1.6 in 2020. Economic growth has stagnated over the past 5 years compared to an average of almost two-digit growth rates between 2002 and 2014. From 2015 to 2020 the average growth rate was 1.5 percent. The growth rate in 2015 was 1.3 percent and it reached 4 percent in 2019 before the COVID-19 shock, then it fell to -2 percent in 2020. Based on Income Expenditure and Labor Force Survey 2020, the Afghan working-age population is estimated at 17.2 million, of which 8.6 million are men and 8.7 million are women. Unemployment rate is estimated at 18.6 percent in 2020, which is higher among female population at 32 percent compared to male with 15.2 percent. Youth (age 15-24 years) unemployment rate is 23.7 percent and the share of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) is 34.4 percent. The proportion of commercial banks per 100,000 adults slightly declined from 1.9 in 2017 to 1.6 in 2020.

**GOAL 10. INCOME INEQUALITIES:**



The philosophy of leaving no one behind (LNOB) is almost all about improving the participation of lower-income people (poorest quintile) into broader economic growth. Inequality has decreased from 31.2 in 2017 to 30.1 in 2020<sup>3</sup>. Based on the

ESCAP SDGs data flow, the proportion of the population who are refugees by country of origin has declined from 7.2 million in 2015 to 6.7 million in 2019. The cost of remittance as a proportion of the amount remitted slightly decreased from 9.9 percent in 2017 to 9.2 percent in 2018. While the proportion of personal remittances received as a percentage of GDP increased from 1.8 percent in 2017 to 5.4 percent in 2017 and slightly decreased to 4.1 percent in 2018<sup>4</sup>.

**GOAL 12. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION:**



Afghanistan is party to 16 multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and is a member of 6 regional cooperation groups on

3 Income Expenditure and Labor Force Surveys Report, 2020, NSIA  
 4 ESCAP\_DF\_ESCAP\_SDGs\_dataflow  
 5 Second National Communication, 2017, NEPA  
 6 Environment Live /Global Material Flows Database  
 7 Income Expenditure and Labor Force Surveys Report, 2020, NSIA

sustainable environmental development<sup>5</sup>. The total material footprint or consumption per capita per ton<sup>6</sup> increased from 0.6 ton per capita to 1 ton in 2008 and then rose rapidly to 1.4 tons in 2010. Since then, it has declined gradually to 1.2 ton per capita in 2016. Urban areas are the main contributors to climate change as they consume 70 percent of the country's energy and produce nearly half of its CO2 emissions. 97.7 percent of the population has access to electricity for lighting. Solar panels have provided an opportunity for off-grid access to electricity and cover close to 60 percent of households, while the national grid covers 33.5 percent<sup>7</sup>.

**GOAL 13. CLIMATE ACTION:**



Afghanistan is one of the worst affectees of the climate change impacts. Its mean annual temperature has increased by 1.8°C since the 1950s<sup>8</sup>. The central and southwestern regions have been experiencing the highest degree increase compared to the mean national level by having a 2.4°C increase in temperature. The central region had a change in mean annual temperature of 1.6°C, and northern regions with 1.7°C.

The precipitation patterns analysis reveals that the spring precipitation decreased by up to a third, while winter precipitation has slightly increased. Spring precipitation is of paramount importance for agriculture, as spring crops are typically rain-fed crops, so a 33 percent decrease in spring precipitation means lower agricultural yields, and lower agricultural yields in an agriculture-based economy like that of Afghanistan can lead to significant economic hardships. Floods, earthquakes, and epidemics are the most frequent hazards. Approximately 50 percent of human casualties caused by natural and biological hazards have been induced by the earthquakes, followed by floods at 19 percent and epidemics at 17 percent. Floods accounted for the largest amount of economic damage, and droughts have affected the largest proportion of the population<sup>9</sup>.

**GOAL 16. PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS:**



Afghanistan has been suffering from conflict, insecurity, and limited institutional capacity and access to justice for decades. According to the recent report of the Global Institute for Economics and Peace<sup>10</sup>, the economic cost of violence for the most affected countries ranges from 23.5 to 59.1 percent of GDP. The economic cost of violence was estimated at 50.3 percent of GDP for Afghanistan for 2020.

8 NEPA report, 2017, [https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/SubmissionsStaging/NationalReports/Documents/9486351\\_Afghanistan-NC2-1-SNC%20Report\\_Final\\_20180801%20.pdf](https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/SubmissionsStaging/NationalReports/Documents/9486351_Afghanistan-NC2-1-SNC%20Report_Final_20180801%20.pdf)  
 9 Second National Communication, 2017, NEPA  
 10 Economic value of peace 2021; Measuring the global economic impact of violence and conflict, Institute for Economic and Peace

Afghanistan ranked 163<sup>rd</sup> in the Global Peace Index in 2020.

According to Transparency International's Global Corruption Perception Index for 2020, Afghanistan ranked 165<sup>th</sup> out of 179 countries. Rule of law reforms have resulted in over 482 laws and regulations drafted, passed, or enacted to provide a governance framework for state functions and operations of the free market and civil society.

## GOAL 17. PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS:



The COVID-19 pandemic has added to existing challenges and is threatening past achievements. This, more than ever, requires the meaningful participation of governments, private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs), and citizens in strengthening multilateralism and global partnerships. ANPDF II asks for the expansion of partnership tools from aid to trade, transit and investment. Building partnerships with all key stakeholders at the global, regional, national, and sub-national levels are essential for stability, peace, state, and market building, as well as for resilience building and prosperity.

The achievements summarized above notwithstanding, there are a number of current and emerging challenges which will affect progress towards the SDGs. These include the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent impact on economic growth, the continuation of war and insurgency associated with high civilian and military casualties, the negative impact of the withdrawal of international coalition forces and the increased security burden on the government, the influx of around 5 million refugees after the peace process, the impact of climate changes, as well as coping with the third wave of COVID-19, to mention a few.

However, despite all challenges, the government is committed to pursue the 2030 Agenda through institutionalized policy and programmatic responses. The Afghan government launched the Second National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF-II) in July 2020, which aims to continue the agenda of eradicating poverty, developing the country into a self-reliant and productive economy that is connected with the region and the world, investing in strong institutions, while continuing to address the risks imposed by COVID-19 pandemic. The government's development focus for the next five years will be on peace-building, state-building, and market-building. At the core of the ANPDF-II vision lies the principle that the state must respond to citizen demands—especially women and the most vulnerable in a direct, accountable, and transparent manner.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government undertook restructuring of some of its existing programs,

closed non-performing projects, and aligned all resources to help meet the immediate needs of citizens. However, the impact of COVID-19 pandemic is so severe that it would remain a challenge for the government to transition the economy to pre-COVID-19 era without international assistance. Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Afghanistan will require strong partnerships between different stakeholders including the government, civil society, private sector, academia, and the international community. The government of Afghanistan believes that the implementation of SDGs will complement and directly contribute to its national agenda for a peaceful, just, and prosperous Afghanistan.

<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EVP-2021-web.pdf>

# INTRODUCTION

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) recognizes the importance and relevance of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to its national priorities. In September 2015, during the UN General Assembly, 193 heads of state and government endorsed the 2030 Agenda and committed to its implementation. Since the adoption of the SDGs, the Afghan government has taken concrete measures to nationalize the global SDGs into Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals.

In July 2017, the government had the privilege of presenting its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) report at the second annual meeting of the HLPF, under the theme of "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". Following its first VNR, the government has focused on the attainment of SDGs by establishing SDGs Executive Committee consisting of four technical committees to provide a high-level platform for multi-stakeholder collaboration between the government, the private sector, civil society organizations, academia, and development partners. Under the policy direction of the Executive Committee a series of key actions have been undertaken: 1- the global SDGs has been nationalized into Afghanistan SDGs with 16 goals, 110 targets, and 177 indicators; 2- the alignment of SDGs with Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) and National Priority Programs (NPPs) has been assessed; 3- the SDGs have been prioritized through a Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) methodology; 4- SDGs data gap analyses have been conducted; 5- SDGs communication strategy has been developed; and 6- Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) and Afghanistan Global Trade Analysis Project (A-GTAP) models in the context of SDGs have been rendered. Besides the accomplishment mentioned, additional ongoing activities underway include 1- alignment of SDGs with ANPDF-II; 2- SDGs costing; 3- SDGs M&E/Dashboard; and 4- SDGs localization (integration of SDGs into provincial development plans).

The government launched the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF II, 2021-2025) at the International Conference on Afghanistan, held in November 2020, in Geneva. The ANPDF II aims to continue the agenda of eradicating poverty and hunger, developing the country into a self-reliant and productive economy connected with the region and the world, investing in strong institutions, and addressing the risks imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and dealing with its consequences. The vision of ANPDF-II is to achieve self-reliance and increase the welfare of Afghanistan citizens, enable today's children to realize their dreams in a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous Afghanistan. Our development agenda for the next five years is articulated

by our three main objectives of peacebuilding, state-building, and market-building.

In the economic growth and infrastructure spheres, through a sustained dialogue with the private sector, we have been able to increase exports close to \$1 billion in 2019 resulting in the reduction of trade imbalance from 21 times exports in 2014 to 7 times in 2019. Our markets are now more integrated and diversified. In 2018, Afghanistan was ranked as the top reformer in the WB Doing of Business Index (DBI). We now have several trade and industries chambers, including the Afghan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industries. The electricity network has expanded from 9 regions to 25 provinces. The Afghan-India Friendship Dam in Herat, and Bakhsh Abad Dam in Farah provinces were completed, and a series of large dams are under construction. Construction of 3,222 kms of regional highway, 4,121 kms of the national highway, 5,712 kms of provincial road and 78,000 kms of rural roads; 7800 houses; 200 MW power generation; 150 kms railway tracks; are among some of the key achievements under economic and infrastructure sectors<sup>11</sup>.

In the social sector, policymaking and implementation have been directed towards citizens' needs. In 2020, in order to promote a culture of consultation and civic participation, more than 90 government officials visited the provinces under the leadership of His Excellency the President. On average, His Excellency the President met with 5,000 citizens per month in his office at the Arg palace. Empowering women, youth, and the poor—the three numerical majorities of our country—has been the top priority of the government. Within the framework of the constitution, topics such as the preservation of the republic, the responsibility of citizens, fundamental and equal rights for men and women, balanced development, corruption-free governance, free and fair elections, and the rule of law are now openly being discussed among the people and the media, and there are significant and visible improvements in public debates on such issues.

With regard to climate change actions and environmental sustainability, Afghanistan is an active global player and is party to 16 multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and member of 6 regional cooperation groups on sustainable environmental development.

Despite these notable achievements, Afghanistan still faces the daunting challenges of persistent poverty and hunger, unemployment, slow economic growth in the face of higher population growth, as well as the challenges of conflict and insurgency, climate change, and the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, Afghanistan is committed to the 2030 Development Agenda and is honored to participate in the 2nd round of VNR and share its report with the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) under the United Nations Social

<sup>11</sup> Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF-II), 2017 - 2021

and Economic Council (ECOSOC). This report builds on the findings and commitments made in the first VNR in 2017.

## METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE REVIEW

Despite the limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this report has been prepared with the participation of many stakeholders. The Ministry of Economy organized a series of consultations, workshops, and bilateral discussions involving civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, government bodies, private sector representatives, women’s organizations, academia, and development partners. These consultations gathered input for the report and took stock of challenges facing the implementation of SDGs. Despite the threats of the third wave of COVID-19, the Ministry of Economy was able to conduct virtual consultations with all Provincial Directorates of Economy (PDoE), who serve as secretariats for Provincial Development Councils (PDCs).



The report has mostly utilized data compiled by the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) for assessing progress against SDGs targets. In addition to the data from NSIA, information and data from international sources have also been used. Where appropriate, reports produced by international organizations and civil society organizations have been referred to for data validation and additional information. Particular attention has been given to the credibility of data sources.

The structure of the report is such that we begin with an overview of the policy and enabling environment for the nationalization of SDGs and its integration into national policies and plans. This is then followed by providing progress details on each goal, relevant challenges and constraints, and the actions which the government intends to undertake to address those challenges. The last section concludes the report and outlines future steps.

## POLICY AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

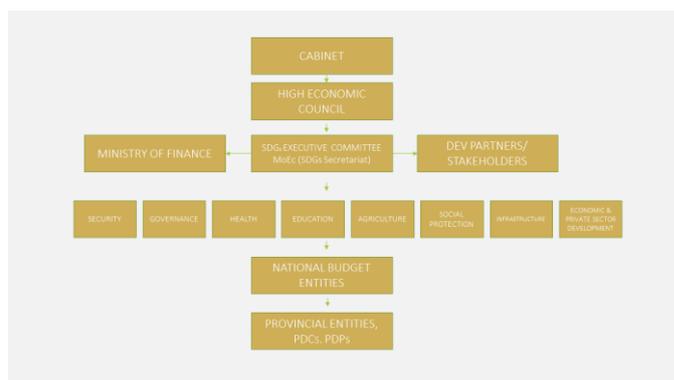
### ENSURING OWNERSHIP OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND THE VNRS

In early 2016, the government of Afghanistan designated the Ministry of Economy (MoEc) as the lead entity for coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting of SDGs implementation in Afghanistan. The MoEc led a robust consultative process across the public sector, civil society, and the business community in Afghanistan to review the global SDGs and nationalize the most relevant goals, targets, and indicators in Afghanistan. As a result, the MoEc deployed a three-stage process for SDG nationalization, alignment, and implementation.



The starting point for the implementation of the SDGs in Afghanistan was the formation of a workable institutional structure at both the policy and technical levels to coordinate efforts for the nationalization, alignment, and attainment of the SDGs. The SDGs Executive Committee was established as a high-level coordination platform within the structure of the government. This high-level policy platform provided directions and supervised the coordination process of SDGs across private sector, civil society, academia, international development partners, and government institutions. The MoEc serves as the lead line-ministry coordinating SDGs-related activities. The institutional structure for the SDGs is as follows.

The Executive Committee consisted of government institutions, private sector representatives, civil society organizations, and international development partners



Since the last VNR, the Executive Committee and its associated sub-committees held their regular meetings. Besides that, numerous meetings, workshops, conferences, seminars, and citizens' debates at the national and sub-national levels on the SDGs have been held.

A national indicator framework has been developed which has designated 28 different government entities as SDGs custodians by assigning specific goals, targets, and indicators to each of them. These agencies are responsible for prioritizing their plans based on SDGs and monitoring progress and providing reports and updates on their assigned goals, targets, and indicators. The MoEc also conducted a data gap analysis<sup>12</sup> of the SDGs indicators, which assessed the SDGs indicator framework;

the gap between frameworks of SDGs indicators and global SDGs indicators; issues with indicator codes; availability, accuracy, and comparability of baseline data; disaggregation level of baseline data; target value assessment; official and administrative statistics; and institutional settings for SDGs data management.

Institutional mechanisms to regularly coordinate the SDGs through cross-sectoral structures, in line with the integrated nature of the SDGs, have been put in place. Most of what was expected from the first phase, largely made up of planning and coordinating processes, has been achieved.

## SUB-COMMITTEES: TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS

### WORKING GROUP 1: SECURITY AND GOVERNANCE

Co-chairs: Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Independent Directorate of Local Governance:

Permanent Members: Office of the President, Office of the Chief Executive, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Supreme Court, Ministry of Women Affairs, Afghanistan Central Bank, National Directorate of Security, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Supreme Audit Office, National Statistic and Information Authority (NSIA), Attorney General Office, Ministry of Refugee and Returnees, Ministry of Labor and work, UNDP, representatives of civil society.

### WORKING GROUP 2: AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Co-chairs: Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock & Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development

Members: Office of the Chief Executive, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Interior Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy, UNDP, Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, National Environment Protection Agency, National Statistics and Information Authority, representatives of civil society, representatives of the private sector.

### WORKING GROUP 3: HEALTH, EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Co-chairs: Ministry of Education & Ministry of Women Affairs

Members: Office of the Chief Executive, Ministry of Economy, UNDP, Ministry of Labor And Social Affairs, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry for Refugees and Repatriation, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Attorney General Office, Supreme Court, Central Bank of Afghanistan, Ministry of Interior Affairs, Ministry of Energy and Water, Ministry of Information and Culture, National Statistics and Information Authority, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority, Ministry of Counter Narcotics, Independent Directorate of Local Governance, Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, National Environment Protection Agency, Afghanistan Academy of Science, representatives of civil society, representatives of the private sector.

### WORKING GROUP 4: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Co-Chairs: Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Energy and Water (ESRA and NWRA)

Members: Office of the Chief Executive, UNDP, Breshna Shirkat (DABS), Ministry of Public Health, Kabul Municipality, Ministry of Labor and Social Services, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, National Environment Protection Authority, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Energy and Water, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority, National Water Affairs Authority, Energy Services Regulation Authority, Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, Ministry of Information and Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representatives of civil society, representatives of the private sector, Asian Development Bank (ADB)

<sup>12</sup> Assessment of A-SDGs indicators for data availability, accuracy, and comparability; UNDP/MoEc, Dec. 2018

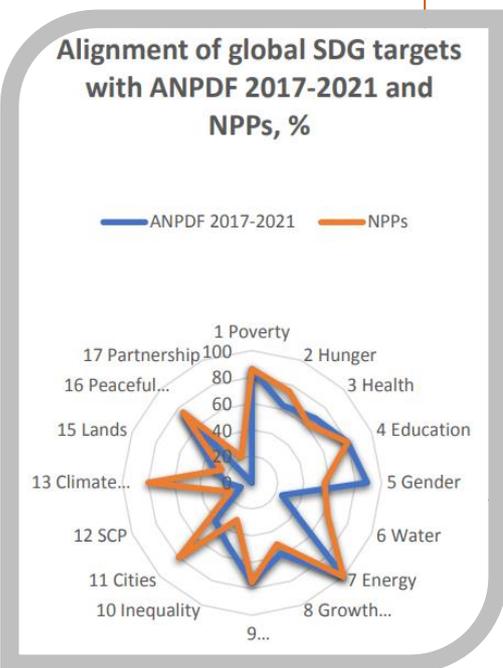
**INTEGRATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS**

There are three phases in the attainment of SDGs, namely nationalization, alignment, and implementation. The second phase is the alignment and integration of the SDGs into the national development plans. To this end, the major achievements since the last VNR are as follows:

**Rapid Integrated Assessment of SDGs with Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF-I 2017-2021):**

The Rapid Integrated Assessment<sup>13</sup> (RIA) methodology was used to assess the level of alignment of the National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF). The assessment revealed that governance and state effectiveness, social capital and nation-building, economic growth, and job creation as well as poverty and social inclusion are aligned with SDGs to a large extent. The five NPPs (Urban Development, Women’s Economic Empowerment, Citizen Charter, National Infrastructure and Connectivity, and Human Capital Development) cover approximately 47 percent of all SDG targets.

**SDGs alignment with ANPDF and all National Priority Programs (NPPs):**



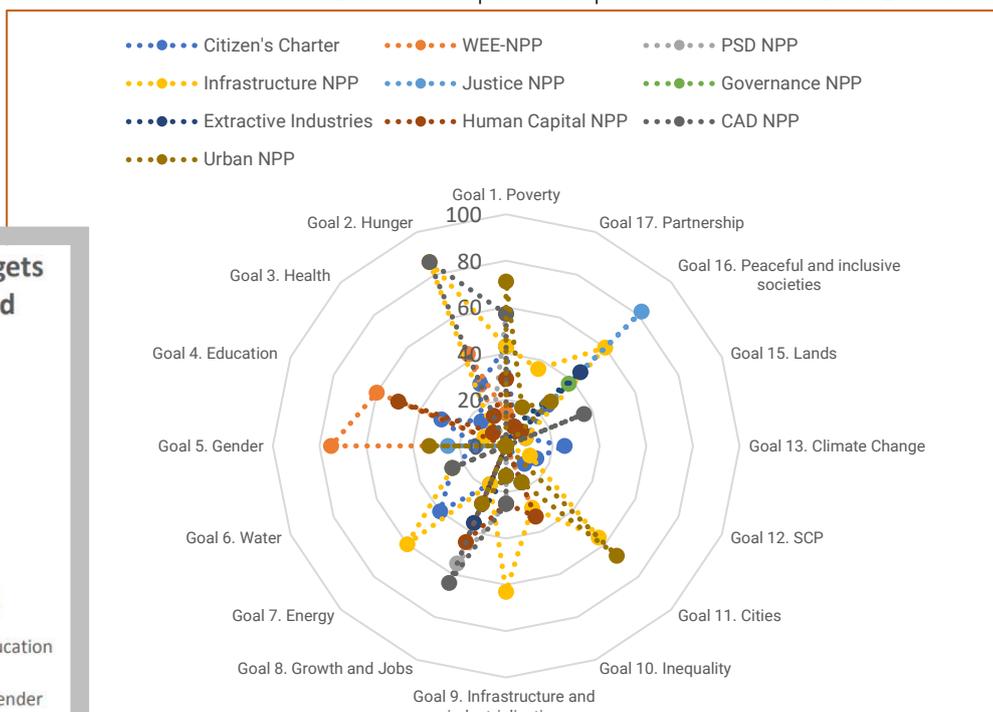
In January 2018, the MoEc and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) established a joint task force to align all the 10 National Priority Programs (NPPs) with the SDGs. The task force reviewed the programme documents of all the NPPs, organized coordination meetings with the MoF and other

13 Afghanistan Mission Assessment Report; A rapid review of SDGs and future directions for mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support, July 2018.

line ministries which are tasked with the oversight and implementation of the NPPs. The task force subsequently developed a matrix to align the NPPs with SDGs through integrating the NPPs results with the relevant SDGs targets and indicators.

The task force reviewed most of the themes, and where possible, specific programmatic outcomes in 10 NPPs and compared them against the most relevant SDGs targets. It first illustrated the alignment in the percentage of each NPP across all the SDGs. Second, it identified the thematic contribution of NPPs to each individual goal of the SDGs. Third, the relevant thematic areas of NPPs with the SDGs targets were aligned and clustered in budgetary sectors: agriculture, health, education, economy, social protection, infrastructure, security, and governance. In general, based on the alignment report<sup>14</sup>, the 10 NPPs mostly covered A-SDG goals 2, 16, 11, 5, 1, 8, 3, 4, and 9. It also partially covered SDGs goals 10, 6, and 17. Others could be considered with limited or no coverage at all.

The task force compared all the relevant NPPs to the SDGs targets and prepared the alignment report of NPPs with SDGs. The report was presented to the SDGs Executive



Committee and the High Council for Poverty Reduction.

**Alignment of SDGs with on-budget projects and activities:**

The MoEc worked closely with most of the SDGs custodian and partner agencies to draft a national alignment framework which listed all ongoing and planned projects under their relevant SDGs targets. The framework also includes an allocated budget for these projects and timelines for the lifecycle of these initiatives. This thematic

14 Aligning National Priority Programs (NPPs) with Afghanistan Sustainable Development Program (A-SDGs), MoEc, Jul 2019.

alignment was the initial effort, perhaps rightfully so, to integrate SDGs targets into mostly on-budget programs.

#### *Aligning the Afghani-SDGs with the ANPDF II 2021-2025:*

Based on the recent directions of His Excellency the President, MoEc was assigned to align SDGs with the updated version of the ANPDF (ANPDF II, 2021-2025) in close coordination with MoF and NSIA. A task force has been empaneled and the alignment is ongoing.

#### **INTEGRATION OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSIONS**

Based on the initial RIA assessment<sup>15</sup> of the ANPDF and the aforementioned NPPs, it was found that governance and state effectiveness, social capital and nation-building, economic growth and job creation as well as poverty and social inclusion are to a large extent aligned with SDGs. However, the goals on clean water (SDG 6), consumption and production (SDG 12), climate (SDG 13), life on land (SDG 15) are relatively underrepresented in the ANPDF and the NPPs. The RIA assessment report recommended the need for further mainstreaming of environmental and climate change concerns in national policies and plans.

As elaborated above, in the second round of assessing the alignment of SDGs with ANPDF and all NPPs, it confirmed that goals 7,9, 12, and 13 of SDGs have little or no coverage under the ANPDF and the 10 NPPs. Given that Afghanistan is prone to natural disasters and highly vulnerable to climate change, consideration of the relevant environmental goals and targets into ANPDF and NPPs has been highly recommended by the RIA exercise.

#### **LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND**

Peacebuilding, state-building, and market-building are the guiding pillars of ANPDF-II as instruments of nation-building. These three guiding pillars are explicitly linked to the SDGs as means of achieving peace, development, and prosperity. Its implementation will focus on the SDGs to realize the needs of the people and leave no one behind within a clear accountability and transparency framework.

The ANPDF-II identifies women, children, internally displaced persons, returnees, persons with disabilities, and the Kuchi (nomads) population as the most vulnerable to the risk of being left behind. Within these broad groups, comprising a large majority of the population, those at the greatest risk of being left behind are women and girls, people with disabilities, and Kuchis.

**Women:** Progress on women's economic empowerment over the last five years has been slower than expected and

15 Afghanistan Mission Assessment Report; A rapid review of SDGs and future directions for mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support, July 2018.

16 Report of the Secretary-General to the United Nations Security Council, Children and Armed Conflict in Afghanistan, S/2019/727, 10 September 2019. Available at: [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2019/727&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2019/727&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC)

desired. The government is committed to bolstering coordination, implementation, and results in a re-focused and re-invigorated Women Economic Empowerment – National Priority Program (WEE-NPP) over the next five years. Under this national program the focus will be given to gender statistics; improvement of women's participation in economic activities; providing access to finance, agriculture inputs; and facilitating access to creative economic markets. Women's capacity building development and skills development will continue as cross-cutting interventions.

**Children:** Almost half (48.5%) of Afghanistan population are below age of 15 years old. To reap from this potential of population dividend, a more focused attention has to be given to quality education and healthcare services. The under-five mortality rate is 62.3 deaths per 1,000 live births. The stunting rate among under-five children is 38.2 percent. Children with disabilities are more likely to be out of school and those in school are less likely to complete basic education. Violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation remain serious concerns<sup>16</sup>. An estimated 74 percent of children aged between 2 and 14-years of age experience violence including psychological violence<sup>17</sup>. The SDGs target for reduction of stunting in under-5-year children was 36.5 percent (1000 live births) for 2020, while the actual is 38.2 percent a bit behind the target. The wasting in under-5 children was targeted at 7 percent in 1,000 live births for 2020 which is currently at 5.1 percent and the target has thus been surpassed. Afghanistan has developed a National Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) Strategy and has put it to implementation for almost two years.

**Kuchis:** Education attendance among the Kuchi is extremely low, with a more heavily skewed gender imbalance than the national average. Primary net attendance is only 2.5 percent compared to a national average of 44.2 percent<sup>18</sup>.

Only 1.2 percent of Kuchi children attended secondary school in 2020. The youth literacy rate is just 6.5 percent among Kuchi youth compared to the national youth literacy rate of 54 percent. Likewise, Kuchis have lower access to basic health services, only one from every four Kuchi women have ante-natal checkups. Skilled birth attendance is just 26.2 percent. Only 35.6 percent of the Kuchi population have access to safe drinking water, as well as just 12.2 percent use basic sanitation services<sup>19</sup>.

**Persons with disabilities:** Statistically the size and circumstances of the population with disabilities are unclear, and policymaking is hindered by lack of data. The 2019 Model Disability Survey<sup>20</sup> revealed that the

17 UNICEF, Preserving hope in Afghanistan, 2019. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/media/63201/file>.

18 Income and Expenditure & Labor Force Surveys Report 2020, NSIA  
19 Income Expenditure and Labor Force Surveys Report, 2020, NSIA  
20 [https://afghanistan.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/AFG\\_HRP\\_June\\_2020\\_0.pdf](https://afghanistan.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/AFG_HRP_June_2020_0.pdf)

prevalence of disability is severe, it has risen from 2.7 percent in 2005 to 13.9 percent in 2019 among adults, with 10.6 percent of children having a moderate or severe disability. Severe disability is more prevalent among females (14.9 percent) compared to males (12.6 percent).

According to Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS 2016-17), only 17 percent of youth with disabilities are participating in schools and training. Around 37.7 percent of persons with disabilities are unemployed. Data from 17 provinces indicate that only 28.2 percent of respondents with disabilities above 8 years old could read and write a simple text (33.4 percent male, 19.4 percent female<sup>21</sup>).

The government commits, in the ANPDF-II, to address the issue of leaving no one behind (LNOB) through a comprehensive social protection system for the most vulnerable by defining a national social protection floor and strengthening coordination across all stakeholders. The government is committed to progressively increase public financing for broader social assistance; enhance linkages between emergency humanitarian responses and regular social protection; and create jobs through labor market programs, public works, and reform institutions responsible for different aspects of social protection to ensure greater policy coherence.

## PROGRESS ON GOALS AND TARGETS AND EVALUATION OF POLICIES AND MEASURES TAKEN SO FAR

As mentioned above, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted all segments of social life and all sectors of the economy. It not only amplified existing socio-economic challenges but increased the severity of challenges and most importantly, severely impacted the poorest and most vulnerable people. According to a recent UN report on sustainable development goals, 2020<sup>22</sup>, the pandemic will push 71 million people back into extreme poverty in 2020, in what would be the first rise in global poverty since 1998. It severely hurt those in the informal economy, particularly during lockdowns. The crisis slowed down the implementation of the SDGs and, globally, countries are off track to achieve the goals by 2030. COVID-19 pandemic caused significant setbacks for the national economy and for the attainment of the SDGs.

The following sections provide progress update against major indicators of each goal for which data is available.

21 Trani JF, Bakhshi P. Challenges for assessing disability prevalence: The case of Afghanistan. ALTER European Journal of Disability Research 2008

22 The Sustainable Development Goals Report, UN 2020.

# AFGHANISTAN 2021 VNR OVERVIEW

1 NO POVERTY



## END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

DESPITE ALL CHALLENGES  
**AFGHANISTAN**  
HAS ACHIEVED  
**SDG's TARGET**  
FOR POVERTY  
REDUCTION IN  
**2020.**



NUMBERS ON SDG 1:

# 50%



FROM EVERY **100** FAMILIES WITH **8** MEMBERS OR ABOVE, MORE THAN **50** OF THEM LIVE UNDER POVERTY LINE.



# 1 FROM EVERY 2

AFGHANS LIVES BELOW THE NATIONAL POVERTY LINE

# 53%



FROM EVERY **100** HOUSEHOLDS WHOSE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD HAS NO EDUCATION, **53** OF THEM ARE LIKELY TO BE POOR



# 3 FROM EVERY 4

POOR PEOPLE ARE LIVING IN RURAL AREAS.

# 22%



FROM EVERY **100** HOUSEHOLDS WHOSE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD HAS A UNIVERSITY EDUCATION, ONLY **22** ARE LIKELY TO BE POOR

# GOAL 1. END POVERTY

*End poverty in all its forms everywhere*

Persistent poverty in Afghanistan is a major challenge and has been the focus of all national policies and programs. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, more than half of the population lived under the national poverty line<sup>23</sup> with a higher level of vulnerability. COVID-19 has worsened structural poverty and has pushed large numbers of vulnerable people into situational poverty. The most vulnerable groups of people impacted by COVID-19 include, but are not limited to, returnees (especially from Iran and Pakistan); internally displaced people; female-headed households and widows; malnourished children; chronically unemployed individuals; and the underemployed. The disproportionately affected groups were the farmers, those engaged in agriculture supply chains, service sector employees, day laborers, shopkeepers, informal sector workers, and lower-ranked government employees.

Therefore, providing COVID-19 relief and recovery remain the most urgent and top priorities for the government. The government dealt with the adverse effects of COVID-19 by refocusing existing programs on relief, with a special focus on the poor and the ultra-poor communities and female-headed households and implemented a stimulus program for sustained recovery and building resilience in the long run. While economic growth remains a major focus of the government, it was considered important to have an inclusive growth strategy to ensure poverty reduction, and safeguards are maintained for the most vulnerable groups, including women, children, internally displaced persons, returnees, disabled persons, and other vulnerable groups.

The scale and scope of poverty and vulnerability required immediate bold action. Responding to the urgent needs of the people and the demands of citizens for relief, the Government took the unprecedented step of baked bread distribution program in the capital city of Kabul, where situational poverty resulting from the lockdown was particularly high. This program was rolled out in 33 provincial centers during the month of Ramadan and the Eid holiday and was followed by the National Food Program (Destarkhon-e-Mili). National programs are being reviewed and reconfigured to provide more direct forms of assistance to the poor, with particular attention to the ultra-poor.

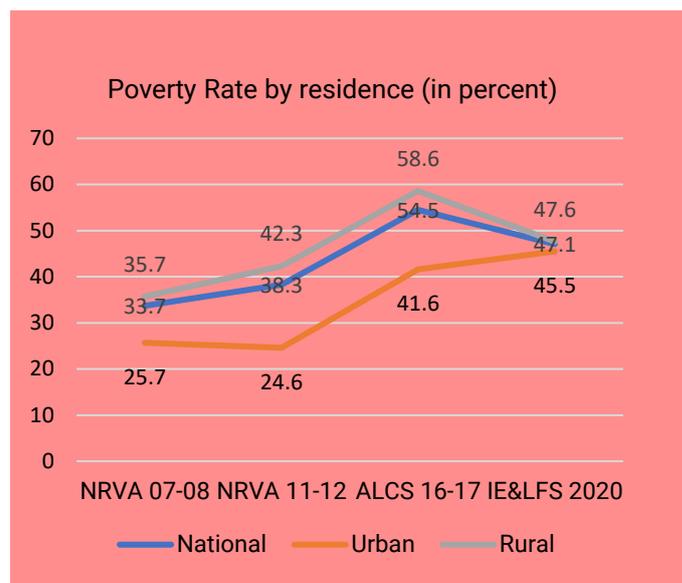
Structures and coordination mechanisms to closely coordinate among government, the private sector, the community elders, and civil society has been established to ease the supply chains of essential goods. The capacity and efforts of the private sector to ensure the delivery of

23 The national average poverty line based on IE&LFS 2020 survey data is calculated based on the Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) methodology. Its value is 2,268 Afghanis per person, per month, in 2019 Afs (more precisely, in October 2019-December 2019 prices).  
 24 The Income and Expenditure & Labor Force Survey (IE&LFS) is a series of national households' surveys previously called Afghanistan

essential goods, particularly wheat flour, which is the staple diet, has been significantly successful.

A high council for poverty reduction, service delivery, and community cooperation under the direct chairmanship of His Excellency the President was established to regularly monitor and review poverty and socio-economic outlook of the country.

According to the Income and Expenditure & Labor Force Survey (IE&LFS)<sup>24</sup> 2020, poverty has decreased from 54.5 percent in 2017 to 47.1 percent in 2020 (See the chart below).



SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCE SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

The drivers of poverty include, but are not limited to, the return of 4 million refugees from Iran and Pakistan during the last five years, a higher population growth rate (2.14%), the entry of 500,000 young people per year into the labor force, an increase in the number of internally displaced people, increase in female-headed households, and low returns on investment from quick impact projects and uncoordinated programs. COVID-19 has exacerbated structural poverty and increased vulnerabilities, which puts more people at the risk of higher situational poverty<sup>25</sup>.

Living Conditions Survey (ALCS) and National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA).  
 25 Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework-II, 2021-2025

The SDGs set a target of 3 percent reduction in the national poverty rate annually. At this rate, the target for 2020 was estimated at 48 percent. Despite all challenges, this target was successfully achieved and reflects an eight-percentage point reduction in the national poverty rate since 2017. But this achievement is highly vulnerable and as the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> waves of COVID-19 could potentially push down those people who are very close to poverty line.

Afghanistan is a predominantly rural society, with 71.4 percent of the population (23 million) living in rural areas, 24.1 percent of the population (7.8 million) living in urban areas and 4.5 percent of the population (1.5 million) are Kuchis (Afghan nomads).

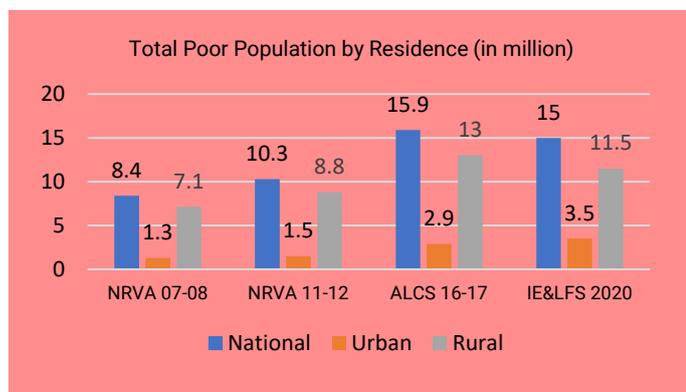
Age group	Urban			Rural		
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes
Total	3,925	3,831	7,757	11,701	11,263	22,964

	Kuchi			National		
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes
	772	688	1,460	16,398	15,783	32,181

SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCE SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

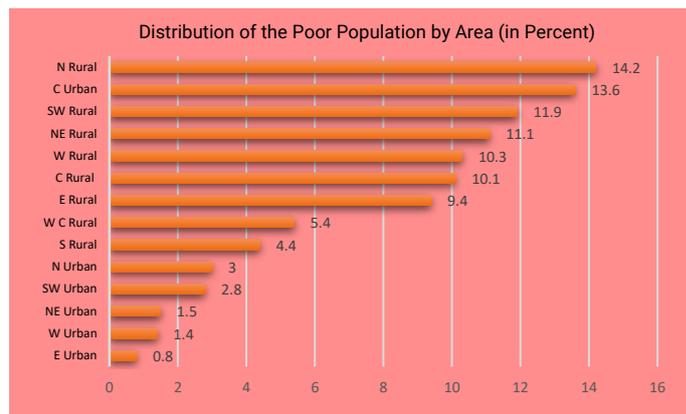
The chart below demonstrates that there is a significant improvement in closing the gap between rural and urban poverty rates. Despite that, a huge portion of the Afghan poor population (11.5 million) are living in the rural communities out of the total 15 million poor populations that were living below the poverty line in 2020. (See chart below) Afghanistan's poverty dropped from 54.5 percent to 47.1 percent, driven by a decline in rural poverty from 59 to 48 percent. Urban poverty, however, increased from 42 to 46 percent. Thus, the urban-rural poverty gap narrowed substantially, leaving a difference of only two percentage points. Poverty remains largely a rural phenomenon due to the demographic composition: close to three out of every four poor people live in rural areas.



SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCE SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

The poverty distribution across the regions and provinces varies. Gazni and Paktia provinces have a poverty rate of 9.1 percent and 14.2 percent respectively, compared to Badghis at 79.1 percent and Zabul at 89.7 percent. In general, 14 provinces have higher poverty rates than the

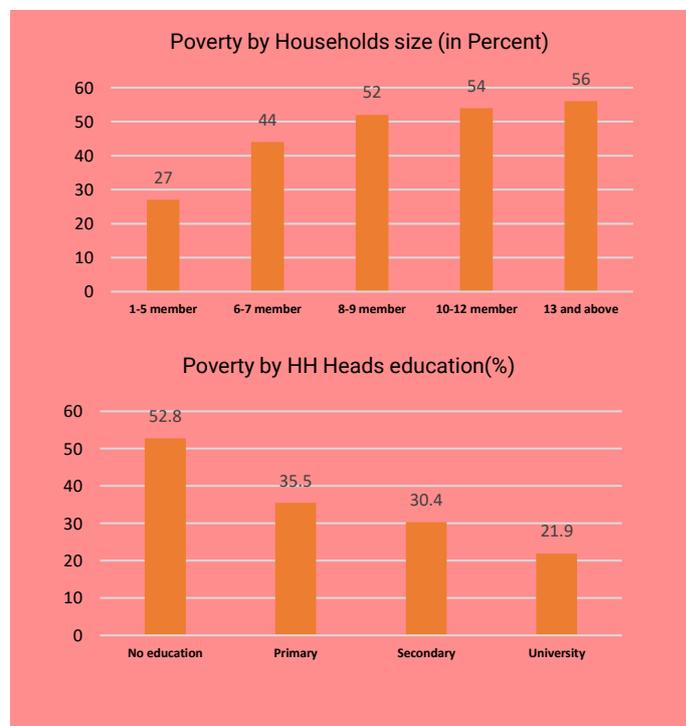
national average and the remaining 20 provinces are lower than the national poverty line. Likewise, there is a different poverty distribution pattern in Afghanistan across eight regions distinguished by urban and rural areas.



NOTE: N = NORTH, C = CENTRAL, SW = SOUTHWEST, NE = NORTHEAST, W = WEST, E = EAST, WC = WEST CENTRAL, S = SOUTH, N = NORTH, SW = SOUTH WEST, NE = NORTH EAST SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCE SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCE SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

Poverty has a positive correlation with household size, as the larger the size of the family the more likely the household is to be under the poverty line, while the smaller the household, the lower the chance is of being below the poverty line. Similarly, there is a negative correlation between poverty and the head of household's educational attainment, as the more education that is attained, the lower the chance of being poor and vice versa.



SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCE SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

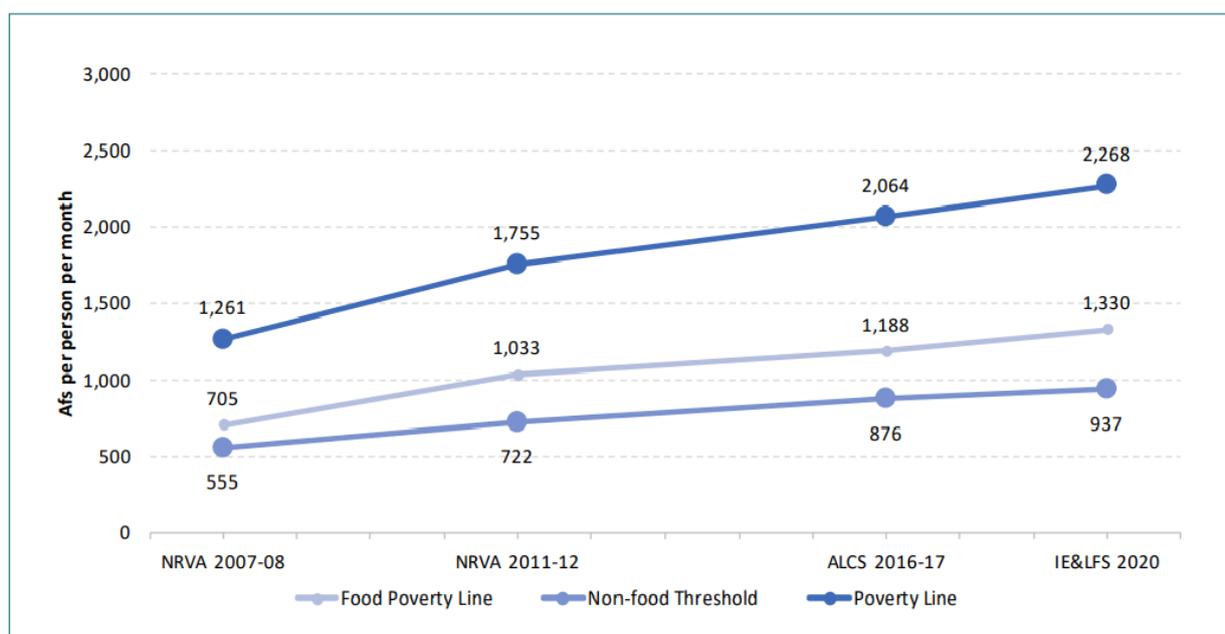
## THE NATIONAL POVERTY LINE ESTIMATE

The poverty line represents the benchmark for assessing whether an individual can attain the minimum level of welfare required to satisfy basic needs in terms of food and non-food consumption. The poverty line consists of two components: the food poverty line and a non-food threshold. The food poverty line established by the cost of satisfying basic food needs based on 2019 prices. Basic food needs have been consistently defined in a basket of items since the 2007-08 survey. The non-food threshold in 2020 has been updated using the non-food component of the national CPI from non-food thresholds defined in NRVA 2007-08.

The poverty line is a monetary threshold under which an individual is living in poverty. The poverty line consists of two components: the food poverty line and a non-food threshold. According to the CBN methodology, the food poverty line reflects the cost of consuming a food bundle corresponding to a minimum caloric requirement. In Afghanistan’s case, food poverty corresponds to the cost of attaining 2,100 kilocalories based on a typical consumption pattern. The average cost of this bundle is 1330 AFs per person per month. The remaining non-food component reflects the regular spending patterns needed to satisfy a minimum standard of living (on average, 937 Af\$ per person per month). Together, they provide a value for the absolute poverty line, which is 2268 Af\$ per person per month.

NSIA defined 14 different poverty lines to account for differences in consumption between areas of the country, each corresponding to an area defined by the combination of a region and a residence type (urban or rural). The regions are defined by assigning 34 provinces to one of 8 groups. As two of the eight regions defined only have rural areas (South and West-Central), the combination with residence type yielded 14 areas. Each poverty line was defined by following the CBN methodology, and the national poverty line is the simple average of these 14 different lines.

*National Food and Non-food Poverty line (in current Af\$)*



# AFGHANISTAN 2021 VNR OVERVIEW

2 ZERO HUNGER



END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

DUE TO THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF THE **COVID-19** PANDEMIC, ACHIEVING **ZERO HUNGER** BY 2030 WILL BE A CHALLENGING TASK



Afghanistan Hunger Index Score



NUMBERS ON SDG 2:

FOOD SECURE %



	2006	2020
ADEQUATE	39.3	49.6
BORDERLINE	16.2	13.6

FOOD INSECURE %



	2006	2020
MODERATELY	17.1	13.1
SEVERELY	14.1	9.8
VERY SEVERELY	13.4	14

Cereal yield (tonnes per hectare of harvested land)



WITH A SCORE OF **30.3**, AFGHANISTAN RANKS **99TH** OUT OF **107** COUNTRIES INDEXED, INDICATING **SERIOUS LEVEL OF HUNGER**



9.3M



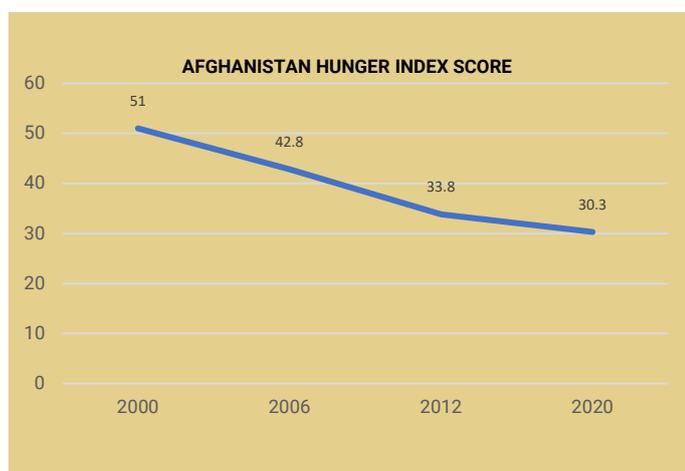
OVERALL, 9.3 MILLION PEOPLE (**29.5%**) CONSUME A DIET WITH INSUFFICIENT PROTEIN

## GOAL 2. END HUNGER

*Achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture*

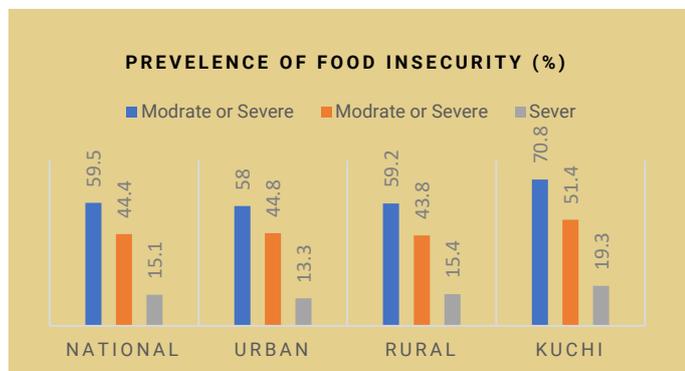
Hunger and undernutrition remain a serious global challenge. According to the Global Hunger Index 2020, around 690 million people are undernourished, 144 million children are stunted, and 47 million children suffer from wasting.

Considering the global trajectory, Afghanistan's country status, and the adverse impact of COVID-19, the goal of achieving Zero Hunger by 2030 has proven difficult to be fully achieved. On the other hand, the country's commitment and progress so far provide hope for the future.



SOURCE: GHI 2020: AFGHANISTAN

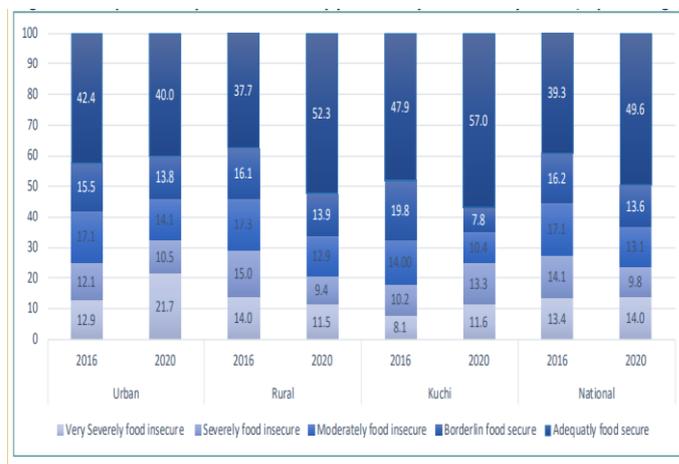
According to the Global Hunger Index 2020<sup>26</sup>, Afghanistan ranks 99th out of 107 countries and with a score of 30.3, it suffers from high level of hunger. Based on Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) methodology, and according to the IE&LFS 2020 report,<sup>27</sup> around 59.5 percent of population are moderately or severely food insecure, 44.4 percent are moderately, and 15.1 percent are severely food insecure.



SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCE SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

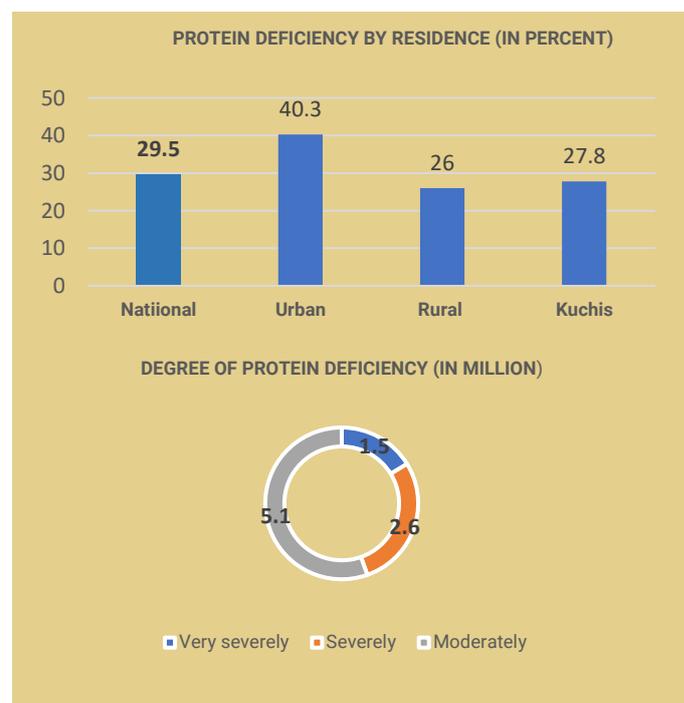
26 Global Hunger Index 2020

Likewise, based on caloric intake or consumption method, the IE&LFS 2020 report shows that more than one-third of population suffers from moderate to very severe food insecurity. 36.9 percent of the population (11.7 million) are food insecure, of which 14 percent (4.5 million) are very severely food insecure, 9.8 percent (3.1 million) severely, and 13.1 percent (4.2 million) are moderately food insecure.



SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCE SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

However, there has been significant improvement in lowering food insecurity in the rural population and among the Kuchis in 2020 compared to 2016. On the contrary, food insecurity among those that are very severely insecure worsened among the urban population in 2020 (21.7 percent) compared to 2016 (12.9 percent). Therefore, the number of food-insecure people in urban

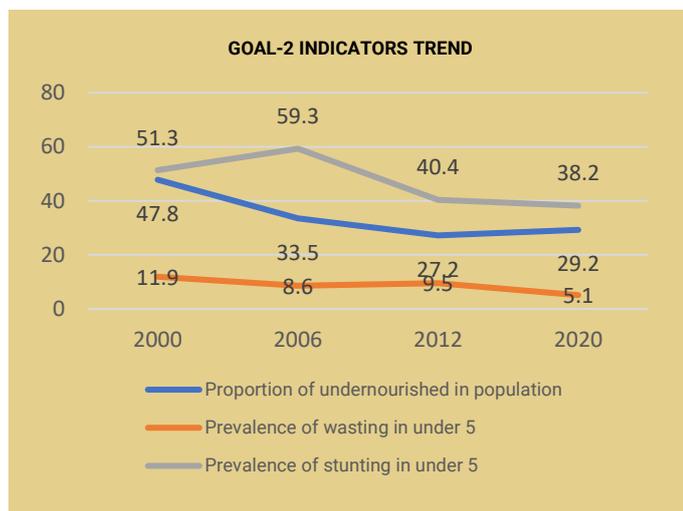


SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCE SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

27 Income Expenditure and Labor Force Survey (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

areas is higher than in rural and Kuchi, which accounted for 3.6 million food insecure people out of 7.7 million people in the urban population.

Protein deficiency is highest in urban areas compared to Kuchis and rural areas. Overall, 9.3 million people (29.5 percent) consume a diet with lesser protein, of which 1.5 million (4.8 percent) face very severe protein deficiency, 2.6 million (8.4 percent) face a severe protein deficiency, and 5.1 million (16.3 percent) are moderately protein deficient.

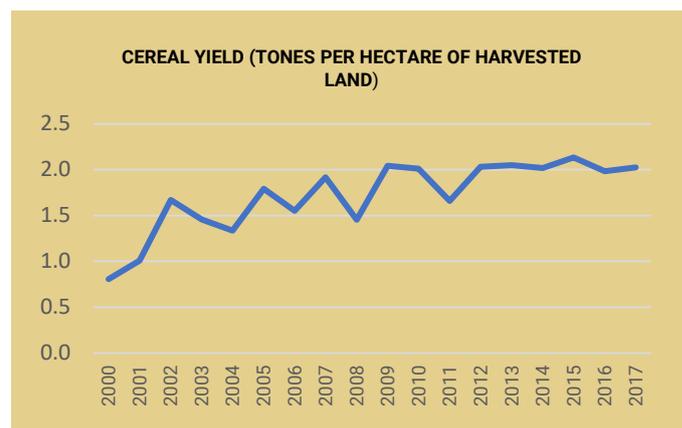


SOURCE: GHI 2020: AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan faces an increasingly dire situation as most citizens do not have access to basic needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, schooling, and energy. Based on HDI 2020 data<sup>28</sup>, the trend of the three main food security indicators reveals a slightly positive trend before the COVID-19. The prevalence of stunting among children under the age of five (SDGs 2.2.1) displays a 21 percentage-point reduction from 2006 to 2020. The SDGs target for cereal yield was 36.5 percent by 2020, which is currently at 38.2 percent. The prevalence of undernourishment (SDGs 2.1) has declined since 2000 and stands at 29.2 percent in 2020. This is an over achievement against the target of 41 percent for 2020. The prevalence of wasting in children under five years of age (SDGs 2.3) has also exceeded the SDG target of 7 percent by 2020.

28 Global Hunger Index 2020: Afghanistan

29 Sachs, J., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Laforune, G., Fuller, G., Woelm, F. 2020. The Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-



Source: SDR datasets 2020; Afghanistan<sup>29</sup>

Afghanistan ranked 110th among 178 countries in cereal yield tonnage per hectare in the World Data Atlas ranking of 2018. The cereal yield has fluctuated in the past but has increased throughout the past two decades to 2.2 tons per hectare in 2018. Generally, cereal production tons per hectare of harvested land has improved over time from a level of lower than 1 ton per hectare to 2 tons per hectare.

# AFGHANISTAN 2021 VNR OVERVIEW

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

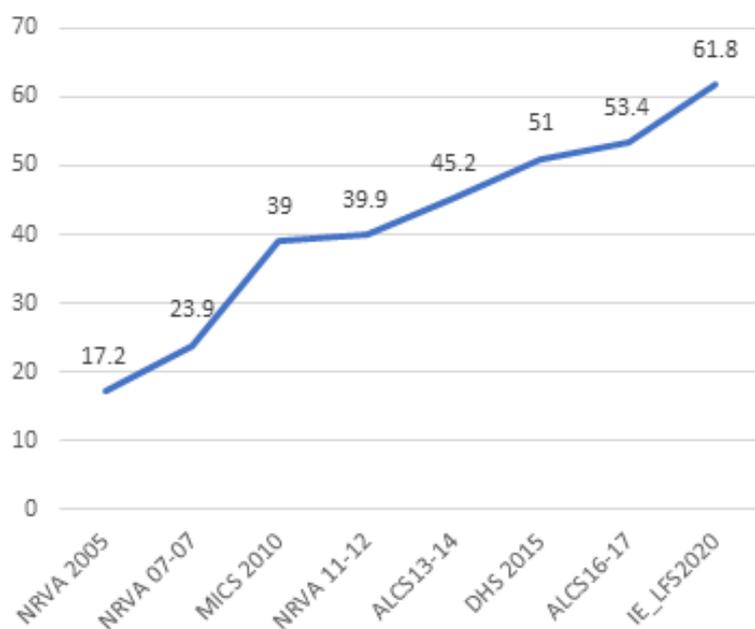


ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

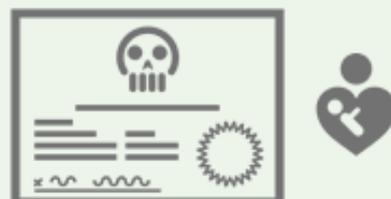


**COVID-19** HAS IMPOSED ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND **SOCIO-ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS** AND COULD **DELAY THE ATTAINMENT** OF THE SET TARGETS FOR **GOAL 3**.

SKILLED BIRTH ATTENDANCE (IN %)



NUMBERS ON SDG 3:



**638** MATERNAL DEATHS IN 2018

**MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE** DROPPED FROM **1450**

MATERNAL DEATHS PER **100,000** LIVE BIRTHS IN 2000 TO **638** IN 2018

**37.1** in 2018



**NEONATAL MORTALITY PER 1,000** LIVE BIRTHS DROPPED FROM 61 IN 2000 TO **37.1** IN 2018

**62.3** in 2018



**UNDER-FIVE MORTALITY PER 1,000** LIVE BIRTHS FELL FROM **129.4** IN 2000 TO **62.3** IN 2018

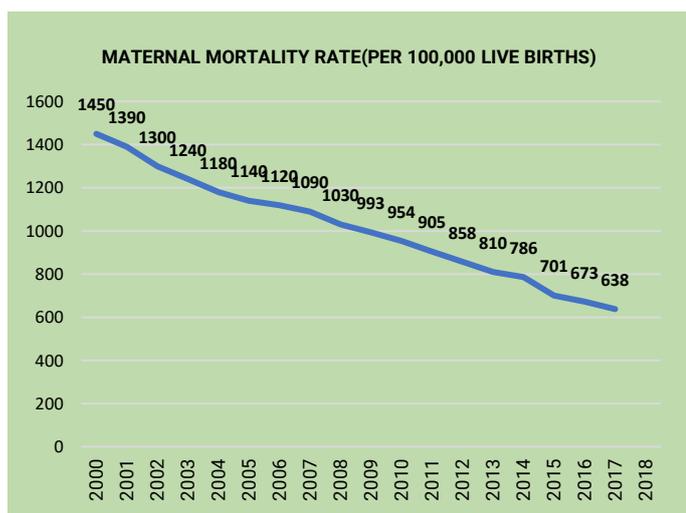
## GOAL 3. GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

*Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*

COVID-19 has imposed additional health and socio-economic hardships especially on vulnerable populations. The Government quickly recognized the seriousness of the pandemic. A whole-of-government response was executed, and unprecedented authority was delegated to the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and provincial governors to quickly respond to COVID-19.

These quick measures resulted in a lower level of deaths compared to other countries. The government established an emergency relief fund to provide all Afghans with in-kind support for two months as part of the short-term response. In the longer term, the government will support the Afghan people by building resilience among poorer households in rural areas, through increasing investment in water management, seeds, and other livestock practices to improve agricultural productivity.

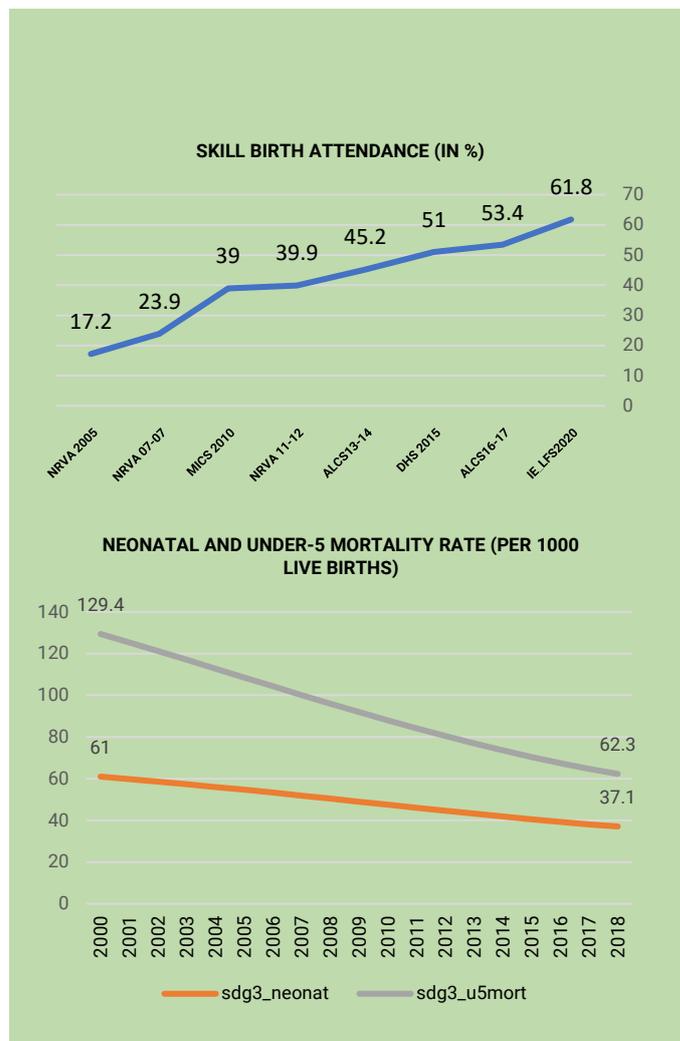
The Government of Afghanistan, together with its development partners and the private sector, has been able to provide basic health services to 85 percent of Afghans. This shows a significant increase compared to 2013 when these services were available only to 60 percent of the population across the country. The results compared to just a few years back are impressive. However, COVID-19 could slow down the progress of reducing maternal and child mortality rate, as it hampers essential health service delivery.



SOURCE: SDR DATASET, 2020

Maternal mortality rates have dropped from 1,450 deaths per 100,000 live births to 638 maternal deaths in 2018<sup>30</sup>. To meet the zero-mortality target, on average 8 percent annual reduction in maternal mortality is required. The proportion of births attended by skilled healthcare

personnel has also increased from just 39.9 percent in 2012 to 58.8 percent in 2018. This is reflective of the fact that the government has made impressive strides to improve service delivery in the health sector. The percentage of pregnant women who had at least one antenatal check-up in 2018 increased to 70 percent, while in 2005 it was just 23 percent. Afghanistan has developed a National Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) Strategy and has been implementing the strategy over the past two years.



SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCES SURVEY 2020, NSIA

SOURCE: SDR DATA, 2020

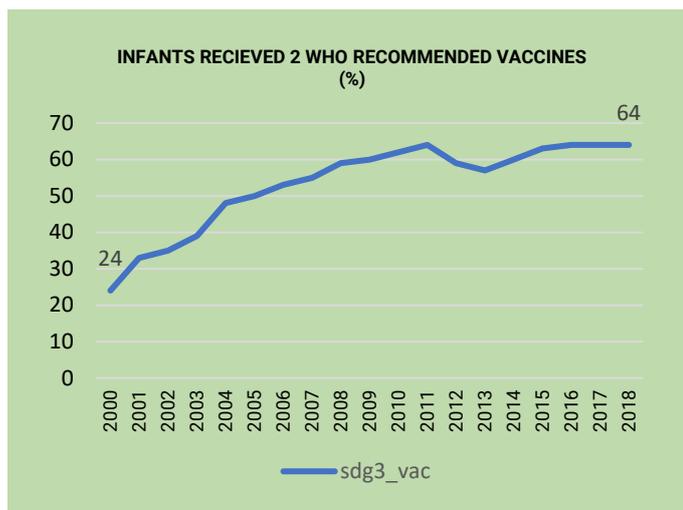
Routine health care would not be sufficient to meet the planned A-SDG Goal 3 targets

The Ministry of Public Health has also made remarkable efforts in reducing neonatal and under-five child mortality. Neonatal mortality per 1,000 live births has been reduced to 37.1 percent in 2018 and likewise, the under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births fell from 129.4 in 2000 to 62.3 in 2018. Globally, the under-five mortality rate fell from 76 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 39 in 2018,

<sup>30</sup> Online Database for Sustainable Development Report 2020

and the neonatal mortality rate fell from 31 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 18 deaths in 2018.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact essential health services and systems, disrupt routine health services, and further constrain access to essential nutrition services, hundreds of additional under-5 deaths are expected in future years. According to the SDGs Report 2020, if routine health care is disrupted and access to food is decreased, the increase in child and maternal deaths could be devastating as 118 low and middle-income countries could see an increase of between 9.8 and 44.8 percent in under-5 deaths per month and an 8.3 to 38.6 percent rise in maternal deaths per month over a period of six months.



SOURCE: SDR DATA, 2020

The percentage of surviving infants who received two WHO-recommended vaccines increased from 24 percent in 2000 to 64 percent in 2018.

**COVID-19 related disruption could also cause a spike in illness and deaths from both communicable and non-communicable diseases**

The number of adults (15+) and children (0-14) newly-infected with HIV increased from 1,300 in 2017 to 1,500 cases in 2019. Tuberculosis incidences per 100,000 persons per year was 189 in 2017 and remained at the same number of cases in 2019. Malaria incidences per 1,000 persons per year slightly increased from 27.2 in 2017 to 29 in 2018<sup>31</sup>.

The mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease (CVD), cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disease dropped from 31 percent in 2017 to 27 percent in 2020. The death rate due to road traffic injuries per 100,000 persons in a year reached 15.1 in 2017.

Current health expenditure per capita in current USD was \$81, of which \$61 was out-of-pocket expenditure in 2018.

But it likely increased in 2020, and 2021, due to COVID-19 repercussions. Meanwhile, out-of-pocket health expenditure as a percentage of current health expense was 75 percent in 2018. Increasing the number and the amount of out-of-pocket health expenditure will push more people into extreme poverty. Income loss due to COVID-19 lockdown measures will likely exacerbate the situation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed serious challenges in the capacity to diagnose COVID-19<sup>32</sup>, the procurement of medical supplies and services, to properly manage cases, and to make available sufficient human resources. The availability of Intensive Care Facilities (ICU) is also a key challenge. There are only 1,000 ICU facilities across the country of which only 520 are equipped with ventilators<sup>33</sup>.

As outlined above, before the emergence of COVID-19, there was some progress against the SDG-3 targets. The COVID-19 negatively impacted the rate of progress. Mainly due to the lockdown, fewer people have sought healthcare services outside emergency care. Routine services were severely affected with significant impacts on the capacity to treat communicable and non-communicable diseases.

31 Global Hunger Index, 2020

32 AFGHANISTAN COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Fiscal Options in Response to Coronavirus Crisis, UNDP, 2020

# AFGHANISTAN 2021 VNR OVERVIEW

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

SCHOOL CLOSURES DUE TO **COVID-19** ARE LIKELY TO DELAY THE ATTAINMENT OF **SDG4**



NUMBERS ON SDG 4:

**39.4%**  
PRIMARY



**19.4%**  
SECONDARY



SCHOOLS ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY



**59.6%**

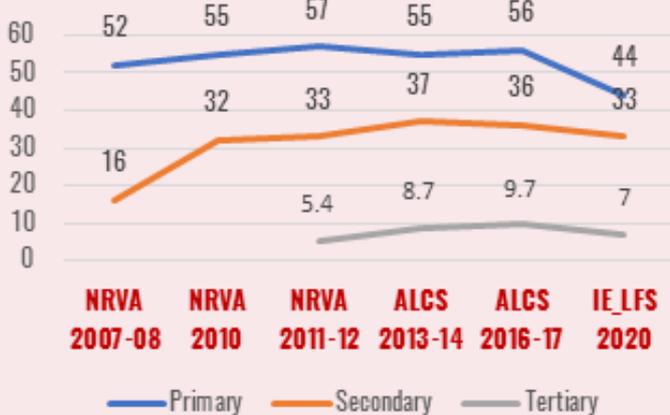
ONLY **59.6%** OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS HAVE BASIC DRINKING AND HANDWASHING FACILITIES.



**55.9%**

THE **OUT-OF-SCHOOL** RATE FOR UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPPED FROM **59.3%** IN 2016 TO **55.9%** IN 2018

NET SCHOOL ATTENDANCE RATE BY SURVEY YEARS (%)



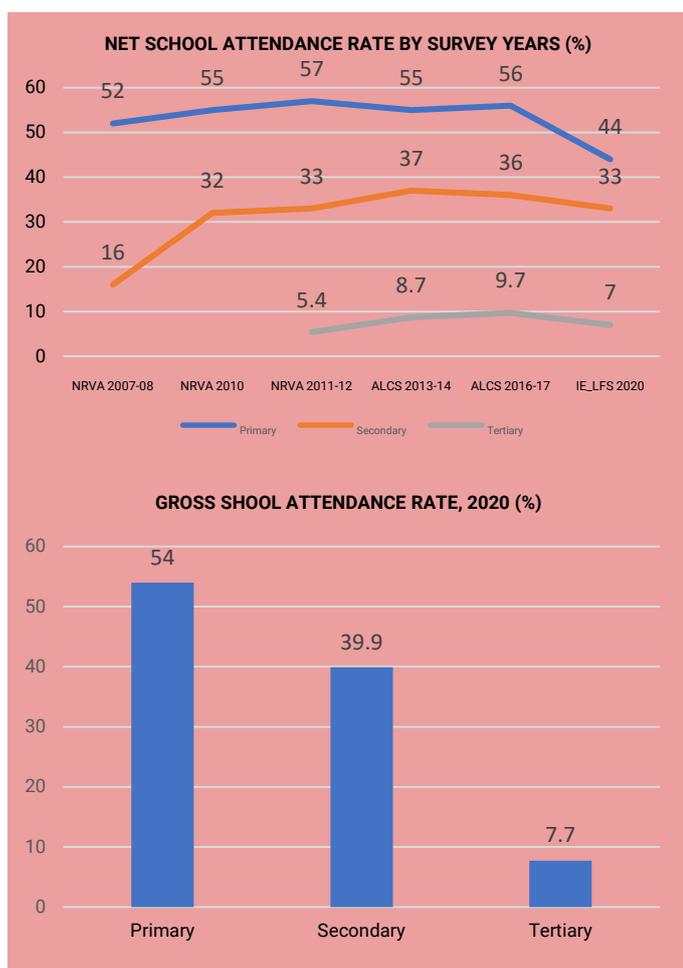
OUT-OF-SCHOOL RATE FOR UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL (%)



# GOAL 4. QUALITY EDUCATION

*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*

School enrollment over the past few decades has been the major achievement of the government. The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic caused all schools to be closed and distance learning was not possible. The recent national household survey (IE&LFS 2020) revealed that there was a significant reduction in both net and gross student attendance rates at primary, secondary, and tertiary schools. Less than half of boys and girls are currently attending schools.



SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCES SURVEY 2020, NSIA

Despite improvement in filling the gap between boys and girls in school enrollment, the problem remains high. For every 100 boys in primary school, there are 72 girls. While in secondary school, the proportion of boys to girls is 58, and in tertiary education, the net enrollment is 45 girls for every 100 boys. The same disparity can be observed in gross attendance and the differences in rural and urban areas is reflected in the chart below.

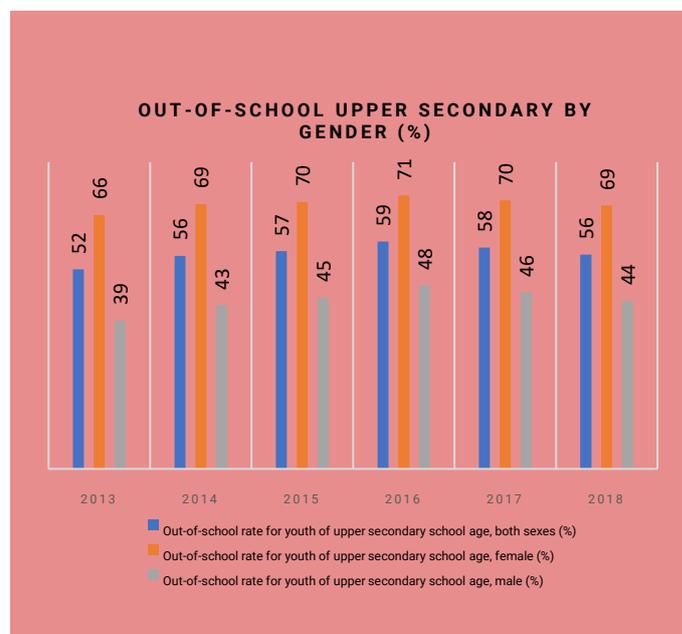
34 Global and thematic indicators for the SDG 4 by Country (2010-2020), UNESCO

Net and Gross Attendance ratio, by the level of education, residence, and sex (in percentage)

Educational level, residence	Net attendance rate			Gender parity index	Gross attendance rate			Gender parity index
	Male	Female	Both sexes		Male	Female	Both sexes	
<b>Primary</b>								
National	51.1	36.6	44.2	0.72	62.9	44.1	54.0	0.70
Urban	63.1	55.9	59.7	0.89	76.1	67.1	71.8	0.88
Rural	50.7	33.0	42.3	0.65	63.0	39.8	52.0	0.63
Kuchi	3.9	0.9	2.5	0.22	5.0	1.2	3.3	0.23
<b>Secondary</b>								
National	41.8	24.9	33.3	0.60	50.4	29.5	39.9	0.58
Urban	54.5	43.6	49.1	0.80	62.3	51.3	56.9	0.82
Rural	39.1	19.0	28.9	0.49	48.5	22.6	35.4	0.47
Kuchi	1.9	0.4	1.2	0.21	3.0	0.4	1.7	0.13
<b>Tertiary</b>								
National	9.5	4.3	6.7	0.45	10.9	4.9	7.7	0.45
Urban	14.5	9.4	11.8	0.65	16.3	10.4	13.2	0.64
Rural	7.9	2.3	4.9	0.30	9.1	2.8	5.8	0.31
Kuchi	0.7	0.0	0.3	0.00	0.0	0.7	0.00	

A higher percentage of school closures due to COVID-19 would likely delay Goal 4 of SDGs

As noted above, prior to the coronavirus crisis, the proportion of children and youth out of primary and secondary school had declined significantly. The net primary school attendance increased from 52 percent in 2007 to 56 percent in 2017, then it declined to 44 percent in 2020. Similarly, the secondary attendance rate increased from 16 percent in 2007 to 36 percent in 2017 and declined to 33 percent in 2020. Despite this progress, the current situation reflects that more than half of children and youth are out of school<sup>34</sup>. Girls face more barriers than boys at the primary and secondary levels. The disadvantage that the girls face is more prominent in rural areas compared to urban areas. The COVID-19 pandemic further deteriorated the situation and increased the percentage of secondary students out of school by 55.9 percent in 2020. The magnitude of school closures due to COVID-19 is likely to set back progress on access to education for years to come.

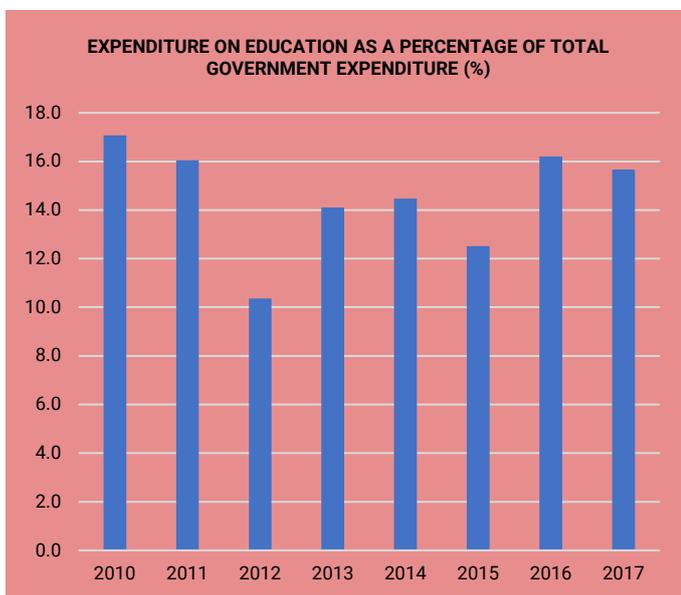


SOURCE: GLOBAL AND THEMATIC INDICATORS FOR THE SDG 4 BY COUNTRY (2010-2020), UNESCO

**Lack of basic infrastructure in schools may cause gender parity in schools' enrolment:**

According to UNESCO data<sup>35</sup>, only 59.6 percent of primary schools have basic drinking and hand washing facilities. The proportion is slightly higher for lower secondary and upper secondary schools, at 69.2 percent and 78 percent, respectively. Schools with access to electricity are only 39.4 percent in secondary schools, compared to 19.4 percent in primary schools. 25.7 percent of primary schools have single-sex basic sanitation facilities, which is higher in lower and upper secondary schools at 55.9 percent and 74.6 percent respectively. Many schools also lack other basic resources, such as electricity, clean drinking water, computers, and internet access. The lack of basic infrastructure facilities in many schools means that teachers and students do not enjoy a safe learning environment and constitutes the key cause of gender disparity in school enrollment.

revising its programs to not only mitigate the impact of COVID-19 but also to set strong foundations of human capital for the generations to come. To respond to COVID-19, the education programs will be revised to enhance access through technology for distance learning. The overall human capital program will be reprioritized to further strengthen the quality and access to education, health, and social protection programs that build and sustain productive human capital in Afghanistan, and to drive economic growth and alleviate poverty. The Human Capital NPP was approved by the Human Capital Council in November 2018. This program main components are universal and quality health care services, standardized education programs, market-driven higher education and training programs, and effective social protection programs.



SOURCE: GLOBAL AND THEMATIC INDICATORS FOR THE SDG 4 BY COUNTRY (2010-2020), UNESCO

One important step towards the goal of attaining quality education for all is getting enough trained teachers into classrooms. According to the latest available data, qualified teachers, meeting the national standards, are 79.1 percent for primary schools and 79 percent for secondary schools.

**The Government's response to quality education in the newly launched National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF II 2021-2025)**

The government's vision for quality education and strong human capital is to have educated, skilled, and healthy citizens, who will be the drivers of Afghanistan's transformation from conflict to peace and development. Given the immediate health and educational impact of COVID-19 on the Afghan population, the government is

35 Global and thematic indicators for the SDG 4 by Country (2010-2020), UNESCO

# AFGHANISTAN 2021 VNR OVERVIEW

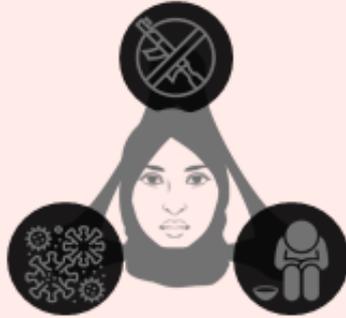
5 GENDER EQUALITY



## ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN & GIRLS

### COVID-19, INSECURITY, POVERTY

DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTING WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN.



WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN APPROXIMATELY SPEND AN AVERAGE OF **11.4 HOURS** PER DAY DOING UNPAID DOMESTIC AND CARE WORK COMPARED TO **2.8 HOURS** PER DAY FOR MEN.



THE **LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION** RATE IN AFGHANISTAN IS **41.9%**. MALE PARTICIPATION RATE IS **68.4%** AND FEMALE PARTICIPATION RATE IS JUST **16.5%**.



PERCENTAGE OF WORK-ELIGIBLE **POPULATION OUTSIDE THE LABOR** FORCE IS ESTIMATED TO BE **58.1%**. AGAIN, THERE IS A HUGE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE SEXES, WITH **31.6%** OF MALES OUT OF THE LABOR FORCE COMPARED TO **83.5%** OF FEMALES



NUMBERS ON SDG 5:

**25%**

WOMEN MAKE UP 25% OF **PARLIAMENT** LOWER HOUSE

**29.6%**

FEMALE PARTICIPATION RATE IN **PUBLIC CIVIL SERVICE** IS 29.6%.

**3.4%**

THE PROPORTION OF WOMEN IN **MANAGERIAL POSITIONS** IS **3.4%** OVERALL (**5.1%** IN URBAN AREAS AND JUST **1.6%** IN RURAL AREAS)

## **GOAL 5. GENDER EQUALITY:**

### *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*

COVID-19, insecurity, and poverty are disproportionately affecting women in Afghanistan. The government will continue to safeguard the rights of women and advance the well-being of women and their access to economic resources. However, progress since the last VNR has been slower than expected and planned.

### **The proportion of women and girls subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence**

Afghanistan has a higher rate of women's rights violations globally, ranking 170th out of 189 on the Global Gender Development Index in 2019. There are several laws, policies, national strategies, action plans, and programs in place to safeguard and advance women's rights. However, their implementation remains weak, particularly in government opposition-controlled areas. Violence against women and girls remains very high, with 87 percent of Afghan women have experienced at least one form of intimate partner violence<sup>36</sup>.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a very serious human rights violation across all ethnic, cultural, religious, and racial groups. It remains widespread, with over half (53 percent) of Afghan women have experienced at least one form of domestic violence in their lifetime<sup>37</sup>. Women's participation in decision-making is low; fewer than half of the women (48%) participate in decision-making about their health issues. The available data most likely does not account for all women experiencing GBV. Most GBV cases are concealed because of socio-cultural norms, values, and practices. Early marriage and teenage pregnancies are other significant factors for maternal mortality, and other obstetrics and pregnancy-related complications.

Conflict and instability exacerbate pre-existing gender discrimination, exposing women and girls to heightened risks of gender-based violence. The violence experienced by Afghan women is frequent, severe, and consists of multiple forms: physical, sexual, economic, and psychological.

### **The proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work**

According to a recently published UN-WOMEN report,<sup>38</sup> based on time-use survey (TUS), women in Afghanistan spend approximately 11.4 hours per day doing unpaid domestic and care work compared to 2.8 hours by men. Out of 11.4 hours, women spend 7.7 hours on housework.

Based on the new national household survey (IE&LFS 2020), the labor force population rate in Afghanistan is at 41.9 percent, of which the male participation rate is 68.4

percent and just 16.5 percent for women. Therefore, the percentage of the working population outside of the labor force is estimated at 58.1 percent. There is a huge discrepancy among males with 31.6 percent and females reaching as high as 83.5 percent.

### **The proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament and managerial positions**

The proportion of women in managerial positions is just 3.4 percent, of which 5.1 percent is in urban areas and just 1.6 percent in rural areas. To ensure women's full and effective participation, equal leadership opportunities, the government has taken concrete measures, with the Cabinet recently approving to designate one deputy governor position for each province to women. In terms of the proportion of legislative seats held by women, Afghan women make up 25 percent of the lower house of Parliament and 15 percent of the Senate<sup>39</sup>.

The government is committed to strengthening the Afghan women economic empowerment through focusing on increasing gender related statistics, removing legal barriers to women's participation in economic activities, and ensuring access to finance, technologies, and market, through a revised version of Women Economic Empowerment NPP. There has been considerable progress made in improving conditions and creating opportunities for women and advancing gender equality over the past 20 years. but that progress is under growing pressure, and whatever the outcome of the current peace negotiations,

women and girls may face several challenges. However, there is broad consensus that international assistance is essential to national recovery, and that external support is conditioned on the continued progress on the advancement of women and gender equality.

36 Global Rights (2008). Living with violence: A national report on domestic abuse in Afghanistan.

37 2015 Demographic and Health Survey

38 "The Telling Nature of Time; What time-use reveals about gender equality in Afghanistan, UNWOMEN, 2021",

39 Income and Expenditure Survey Reports, NSIA, 2020

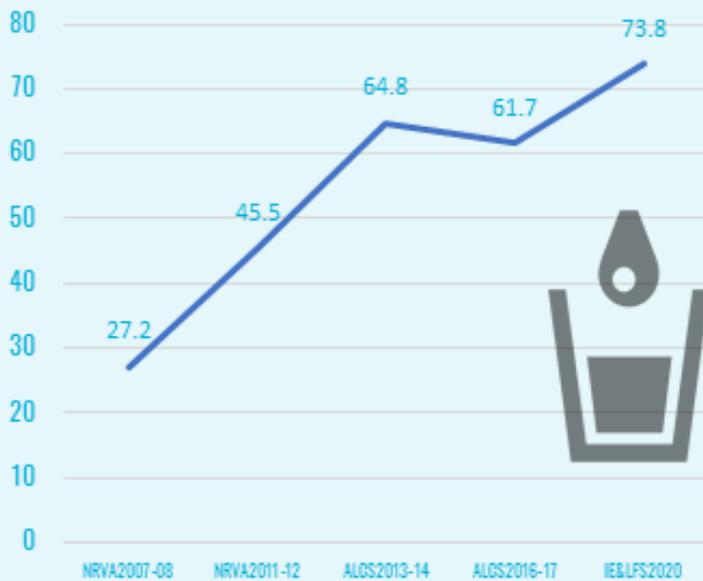
# AFGHANISTAN 2021 VNR OVERVIEW

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



## ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

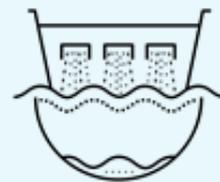
### ACCESS TO IMPROVED DRINKING WATER (%)



### NUMBERS ON SDG 6:



THE TOTAL **ANNUAL RENEWABLE WATER** RESOURCES PER CAPITA FELL FROM **5,000 CUBIC METERS** (1990) TO **LESS THAN 2,000 CUBIC METERS** IN 2017.



**DAM STORAGE CAPACITY** PER CAPITA FELL FROM **88.89 CUBIC METERS** IN 2002 TO **55.35 CUBIC METERS** IN 2017.

**67%** IN 2017



ACCESS TO **BASIC DRINKING WATER** INCREASED FROM **48%** OF THE POPULATION IN 2010 TO **67% IN 2017**.



**URBAN (96%)**



**RURAL (57%)**

**HUGE DIFFERENCE IN ACCESS TO BASIC DRINKING WATER** BETWEEN URBAN (96%) AND RURAL (57%) AREAS



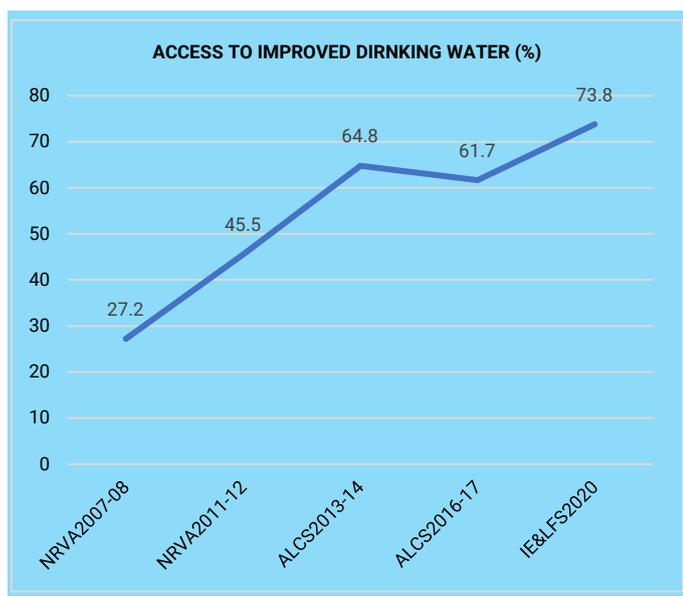
THE PROPORTION OF **POPULATION USING SAFELY MANAGED SANITATION SERVICES** WAS TARGETED **55% BY 2020**

## GOAL 6. CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION:

*Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*

Afghanistan, with an endowment of significant freshwater sources, is still struggling to increase the accessibility of safe drinking water to its citizens. The total annual renewable water resources per capita have fallen from 5,000 cubic meters per person in 1990 to less than 2,000 cubic meters in 2017. Similarly, the storage capacity of dams per capita fell from 88.89 cubic meters per capita in 2002 to 55.35m<sup>3</sup> per capita in 2017. Weaker domestic water resources management and investment resulted in a decrease of the abovementioned indices. A larger number of institutions are focusing on the water sector with significant overlapping and discoordination. Lately, the High Council of Water, Land, and Environment (HCoWLE) under the chairmanship of His Excellency the President established a governing body that focuses on water resources management and sustainable development with the consideration of the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) principle. However, these principles have been slow to be implemented and sector institutions have not fully adapted to their intended roles<sup>40</sup>.

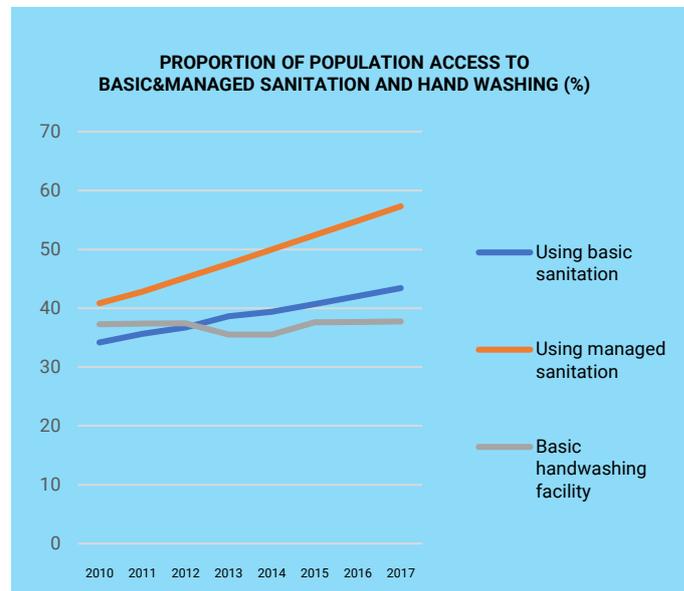
However, the proportion of the population with access to improved drinking water increased from 27.2 percent of the population in 2007 to 73.8 percent in 2020. Access to basic drinking water in urban areas is much higher (94.3 percent) than in rural areas where only 68.2 percent have access.



SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCES SURVEY 2020, NSIA

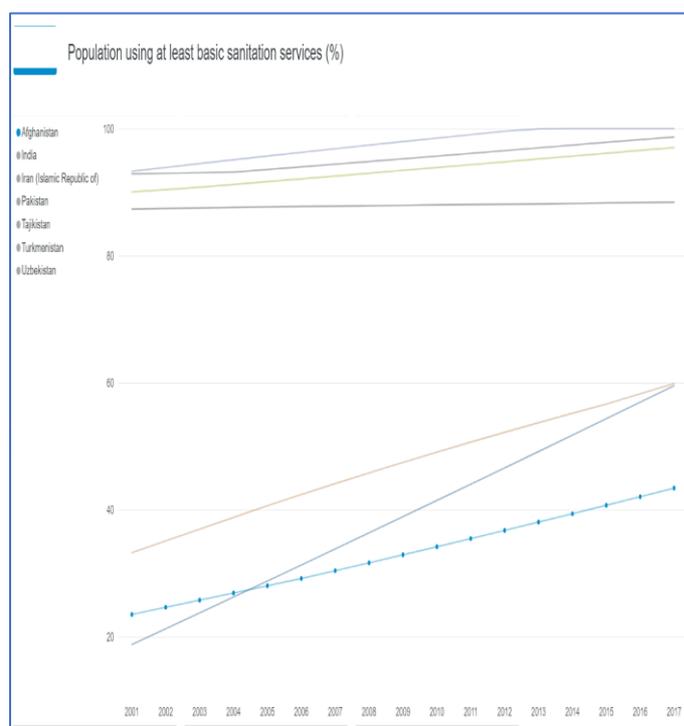
In terms of access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH)

using WHO guidance stresses that frequently washing hands with soap, wearing masks, and consideration of social distances will reduce the risks of COVID-19, and will also improve the sanitation and hygiene of citizens. Inadequate access to water and sanitation contributes to terrible health outcomes including higher mortality rate due to diarrhea in children (approximately 9 percent of all deaths under five).



SOURCE: WHO, DATABASE, GHO

The proportion of the population using safely managed sanitation services had a target of 55 percent by 2020 and, fortunately, the target was met in 2017.



40 Afghanistan National Water Information System Development

# AFGHANISTAN 2021 VNR OVERVIEW

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL;

## GDP GROWTH RATE (%)



NUMBERS ON SDG 8:

**56%**



**SERVICE SECTOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE GDP**



**16.5%**

**FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION**



**68.4%**

**MALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION**



**27%**

**AGRICULTURE SECTOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE GDP**



**58.4%**

**58.4% (9.67 MILLION) OF WORK-ELIGIBLE POPULATION ARE OUTSIDE THE LABOR FORCE.**

SEX	CHILD LABOR IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES		CHILD LABOR IN HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES	
	THOUSANDS	%	THOUSANDS	%
<b>BOTH</b>	1060.4	9	1573.6	13
<b>BOYS</b>	770.5	13	890.7	14
<b>GIRLS</b>	290	5	682.9	12

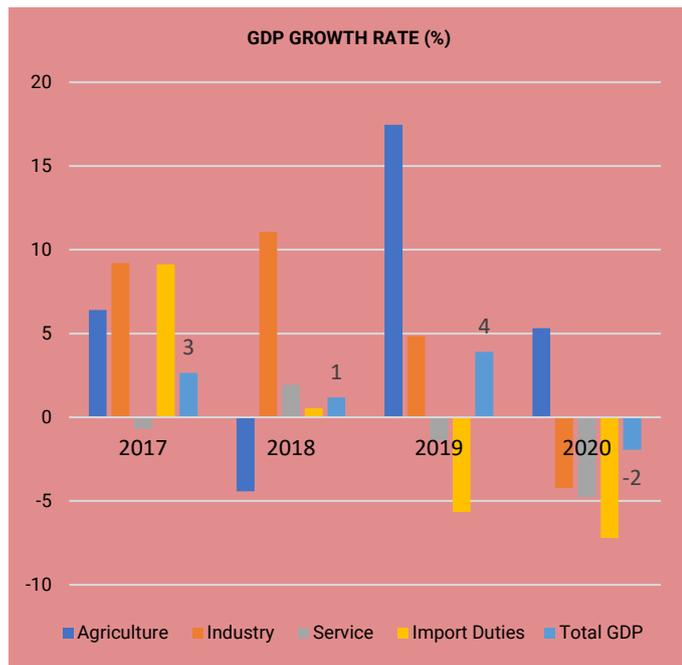
## GOAL 8. DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH:

*Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all*

The COVID-19 pandemic not only impacted the healthcare sector but had various other socio-economic effects on Afghanistan. COVID-19 induced lockdowns, slowed down the economic growth, and hurt the labor market, particularly informal workers, the self-employed, and daily wage earners.

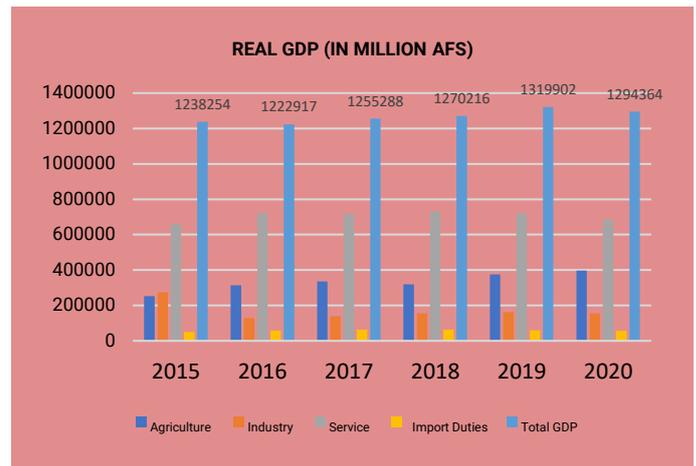
### Afghan economic growth in the face of a global pandemic

Economic growth has stagnated over the past 5 years compared to an average of nearly two-digit growth between 2002 and 2014. From 2015 to 2020 the average growth rate was 1.5 percent. Economic growth in 2015 was 1.3 percent and it reached 4 percent in 2019 before the COVID-19 shock, when it fell to -2 percent in 2020.



SOURCE: STATISTICAL YEARBOOKS, NSIA

Real GDP in constant market prices in local currency (Afs) has been on the rise every year since 2000, except for 2020. The contribution of the service sector to the GDP is significantly higher than those of the agriculture and industries sectors. The agriculture sector is highly vulnerable to climate shocks and weather fluctuations such as rain or drought.



SOURCE: STATISTICAL YEARBOOKS, NSIA

The chart above displays the percentage share of GDP in each sector. The service sector has a higher share and is driven primarily by businesses providing services to international forces, diplomatic missions, and aid projects, as much of economic growth since 2002 has been attributed to the services sector. As aid declines and international forces withdraw, the growth momentum of the service sector will slow down. The service sector has reduced from 59 percent in 2015 to 56 percent in 2020. Growth in the industrial sector is improving as a share of GDP but still has a much lower share compared to other countries in the region. The agriculture sector's contribution to GDP is also improving, but is highly vulnerable to insecurity, climate factors, and the availability of cheaper imports.

### Sectoral Contribution as Percentage of GDP Share

SECTORS	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Agriculture	25.74	26.42	22.04	25.77	27.01
Industry	10.47	10.05	13.39	14.06	12.47
Service	59.02	58.33	59.48	55.47	56.07
Import Duties	4.77	5.20	5.09	4.70	4.45
GDP (at Market Prices)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCES SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

Although the economy expanded rapidly between 2001 and 2012, this growth was driven primarily by international aid. The withdrawal of international security forces, a

decline of foreign aid due to global pandemic, prolongation of the peace process, and other external shocks, have slowed down overall economic growth. The unprecedented negative impact of COVID-19 on the economy and the above-mentioned challenges underline the need for reconfiguring future growth policies to be more equitable, integrated, and inclusive.

**The pandemic will have a particularly adverse impact on workers in the informal economy**

Based on a recent household survey (IE&LFS 2020), the very low female labor participation with 16.5 percent, impacted negatively the overall national labor force participation, which has been estimated 41.9 percent. In general, the total national working age population are around 17.2 million Afghans, of which 8.6 million are men and 8.7 million are women.

**Labor forces by residences and sex (in Thousands and Percentage):**

Residence	In thousands			In percentages		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
National	7020.8	5615.2	1405.6	41.9	68.4	16.5
Urban	1576.6	1344.2	232.4	35	60.2	10.2
Rural	5072.3	3997.6	1074.8	43.9	71	18.2
Kuchi	371.9	273.4	98.5	53.6	78.2	28.6

SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCES SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

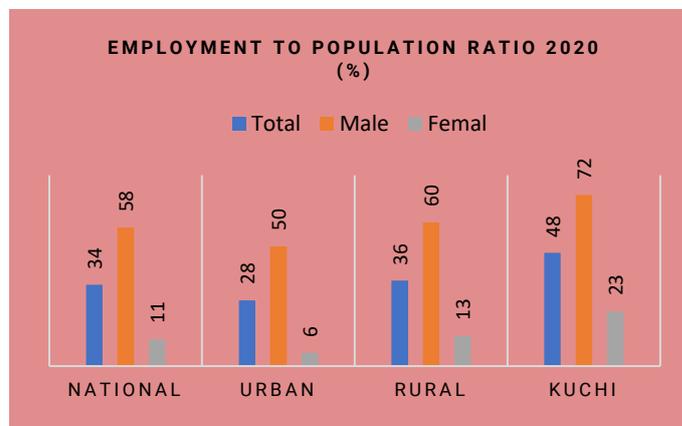
On average, around 600,000 people enter the labor market every year. In addition, internally displaced people and returnees must find new livelihoods. In 2019, the unemployment rate was 14 percent among women and 10 percent among men. Unemployment among youth (between 15-24) was 21 percent among women and 16 percent among men.

The national employment rate in 2017 was 41<sup>41</sup> percent and has been declined to 34 percent in 2020. Employment rate for female are 11.2 percent compare to male with 58 percent signals gender discrepancy.

According to the IE&LFS 2020, the unemployment rate is nationally 18.6 percent, 21 percent in urban areas, 18.3 percent in rural areas and 11.4 percent among the Kuchis. Unemployment rate by sex, shows that 15.2 percent of males are unemployed as opposed to 32 percent of females, 16.7 percent of persons with disability, and 18.6 percent of persons without disability.

41 Afghanistan Living Condition Survey, 2016-17

Four in five female rural workers are unpaid family workers, compared with only one in five male workers. Engaging in unpaid work and staying in the household – rather than acting autonomously – provides a degree of security from external threats, risks, and hazards. The low share of female employment in services reflects cultural barriers and overall levels of education.



SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCES SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

The youth unemployment rate at the national level has reached 23.7 percent (489,900), and the share of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment, or training (NEET) is 34.4 percent (2.09 million)<sup>42</sup>.

42 Income and Expenditure and Labor Force Survey, 2020

**Proportion of Child labor in Economic and household activities by sex:**

sex	CHILD LABOR IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES		CHILD LABOR IN HOUSEHOLD & ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES	
	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent
<i>Both sex</i>	1060.4	9	1573.6	13
<i>Boys</i>	770.5	13	890.7	14
<i>Girls</i>	290	5	682.9	12

SOURCE: INCOME EXPENDITURE AND LABOR FORCES SURVEY (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

The proportion of all children aged 5-17 years and work-related status, according to IE&LFS 2020 showed that from the total number of children between the ages of 5-17, which accounts for 11.77 million children, the total number of working children is 15.3 percent (1.8 million), child labor is at 9 percent (1.06 million), child workers are at 6.3 percent (740,000), and children who are not working is reported at 84.7 percent (9.97 million)<sup>43</sup>.

The number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults has reduced from 1.9 in 2017 to 1.6 in 2020. According to IE&LFS 2020, the proportion of adults (age 15 and above) with having access to a bank account or other financial institutions or who have access to a mobile money service provider are at 4.5 percent at the national level. There is huge difference among urban and rural: 7.8 percent in urban areas, 3.5 percent in rural areas and only 0.2 percent among Kuchis have access to financial services. Likewise, the differences among male and female access to banking is huge, as male access is 7.9 percent and for females, it is just 1.1 percent. Both persons with disabilities and without disabilities are closer to national average, with 3.6 percent and 4.6 percent access, respectively.

<sup>43</sup> Income and Expenditure and Labor Force Survey, 2020

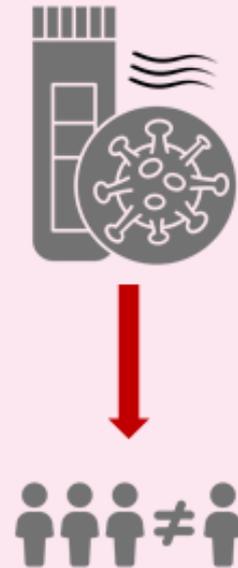
# AFGHANISTAN 2021 VNR OVERVIEW

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



## REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

THE REDUCTION IN **ODA** DUE TO THE **3<sup>RD</sup> WAVE** OF THE **COVID-19** PANDEMIC MAY **NEGATIVELY AFFECT** SOCIAL SAFETY NET PROGRAMS AND MAY DEEPEN **INCOME INEQUALITY**



NUMBERS ON SDG 10:

**30.1**



**INEQUALITY HAS INCREASED** FROM **29.3** IN 2007 TO **30.1** IN 2020

**7.6%**



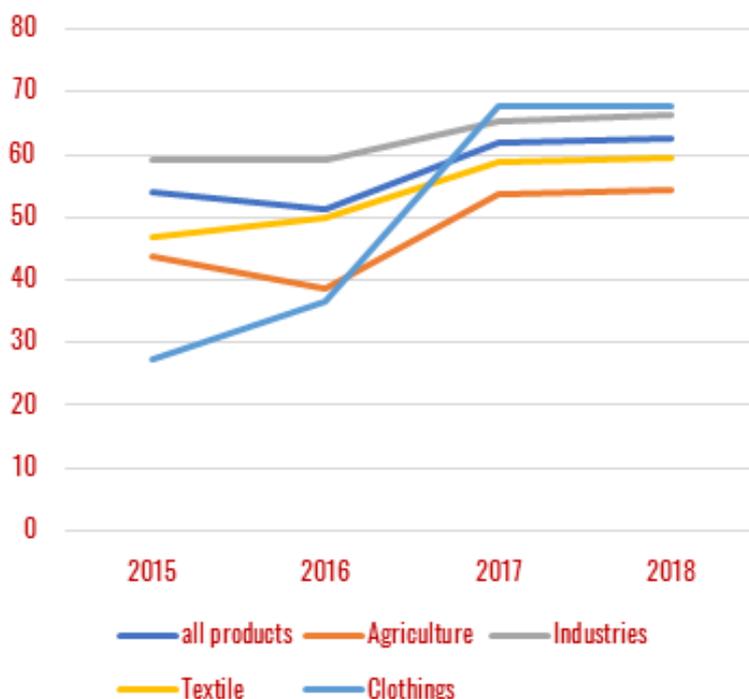
**OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCES** MAY HAVE DECLINED BY UP TO **7.6%** IN 2020

**6.7M**



The **REFUGEE** POPULATION BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN DECLINED FROM **7.2** MILLION IN 2015 TO **6.7** MILLION IN 2019

ZERO TARIFF LINES APPLIED TO IMPORT (%)



# GOAL 10. REDUCED INEQUALITIES

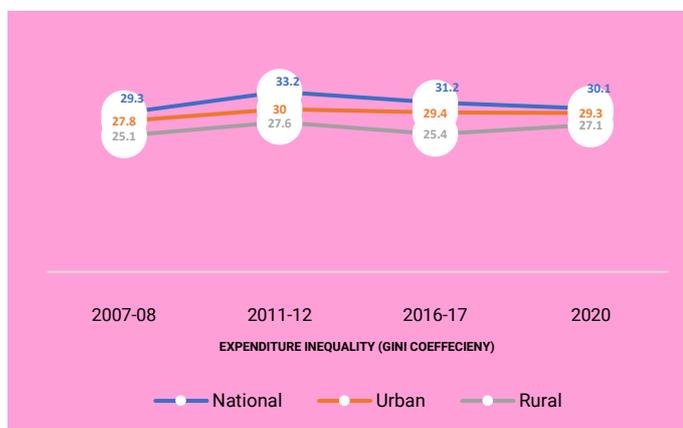
## Reduce inequality within and among countries

The philosophy of leaving no one behind (LNOB) is not only improving the participation of the lower-income population (the poorest quintile) into broader economic growth but requires combating discrimination and rising inequalities within and amongst countries, and their root causes. A major cause of people being left behind is persistent forms of discrimination, including gender discrimination, which leaves individuals, families and whole communities marginalized, and excluded.

### Inequality is on the rise

Globally, progress towards inequality is measured by the Gini coefficient. The Gini index is one of the most used measures of income inequality. It ranges between 0 and 100, where 0 indicates that income is shared equally among all people and 100 indicates the extreme situation where one person holds all income.

Inequality and poverty in Afghanistan remained a persistent challenge. Afghanistan has slightly improved inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient, at 31.2 in 2017 decreased to 30.1 in 2020. Inequality in rural areas has increased whereas in urban areas, it is largely unchanged between 2017 and 2020.



Source: Income Expenditure and Labor Forces Survey (IE&LFS) 2020, NSIA

### Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wages, and social protection policies to achieve greater equality

Social protection is a core part of social services and includes measures that prevent, manage, and overcome situations that adversely affect people's well-being. The scope of social protection measures is so long in practice ranging from policies that provide "from cradle to grave" to just a few or even one: for example, pensions for formal sector employees only. In between these two extremes, social protection policies can address tangible risks such

as unemployment, sickness, disability, and old age as well as less tangible ones, such as exclusion. Thus, social protection is faced with the problem of a loose definition, both theoretically as well as in practice.

The SDGs provide a framework for social protection, but their targets are scattered across goals 1, 3, 5, 10, 16, and 17.

Afghanistan practically starts from a low base regarding social protection, having slight prior experience about the design and implementation of comprehensive social safety net interventions. It may be because of the lowest level of social protection budget allocation and expenditure by the government. The government realized the importance of investment in social protection and considers it a priority in the ANPDF-II and its NPPs.

### The proportion of tariff lines applied to import of least developed and developing countries with zero tariffs

Developed and developing countries have committed to least developed countries (LDCs) to waive and apply zero tariffs on their imported goods and services. The chart below displays the number of Afghan imports with zero tariff, in which only clothing has shown improvement. The rest have yet to reach their optimal level.



SOURCE: SROUCE: ESCAP\_DF\_ESCAP\_SDGS\_DATAFLOW

Based on the ESCAP SDGs data flow, in Afghanistan the proportion of the population who are refugees by country of origin has declined from 7.2 million in 2015 to 6.7 million in 2019. The cost of remittance as a proportion of the amount remitted slightly decreased from 9.9 percent in 2017 to 9.2 percent in 2018. The proportion of personal remittances received as a percentage of GDP increased from 1.8 percent in 2017 to 5.4 percent in 2017 and slightly decreased to 4.1 percent in 2018<sup>44</sup>.

44 ESCAP\_DF\_ESCAP\_SDGS\_dataflow

# AFGHANISTAN 2021 VNR OVERVIEW



## ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS



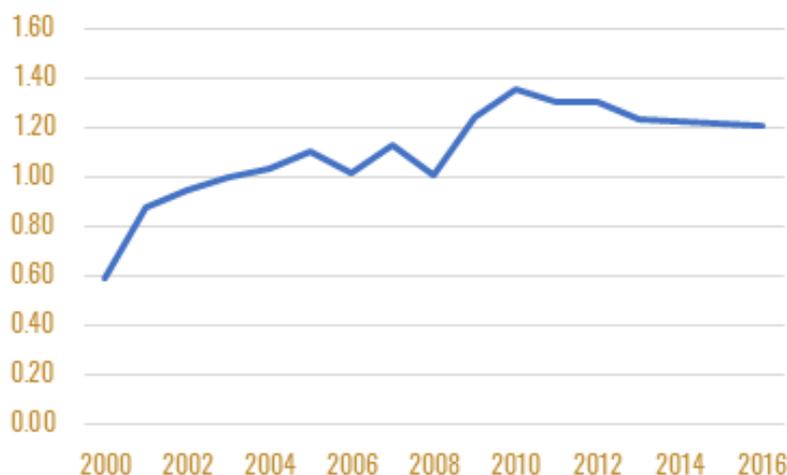
### AFGHANISTAN

IS AN ACTIVE GLOBAL PLAYER ON **ENVIRONMENTAL** ISSUES AND IS PARTY TO **16** MULTILATERAL **ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS (MEAs)**

AFGHANISTAN IS A MEMBER OF **6** REGIONAL COOPERATION GROUPS ON **SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT**



MATERIAL FOOTPRINT PER CAPITA ( IN TONNES )



NUMBERS ON SDG 12:



**97.7%**

**PEOPLE** WHO HAVE ACCESS TO **ELECTRICITY** FOR LIGHTING

**60%**



**SOLAR PANELS** HAVE PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY **FOR OFF GRID** ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY AND COVER CLOSE **TO 60% OF HOUSEHOLDS**



**33.5%**

**NATIONAL GRID PROVIDES 33.5% ELECTRICITY**

## GOAL 12. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION:

*Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*

Goal 12 aims to promote social and economic development within the significant potential of the ecosystem and to reduce the negative impact of economic growth<sup>45</sup>. Global resource depletion, pollution, environmental degradation, and climate change are the result of increasing demand for energy, food, water, and other resources. As the notion of economic growth and development is primarily reliant on natural resources and the sustainable patterns of consumption and production which measure the amount of primary material required to meet the basic needs for food, clothing, water, shelter, infrastructure, sanitation, energy, and other requirements.

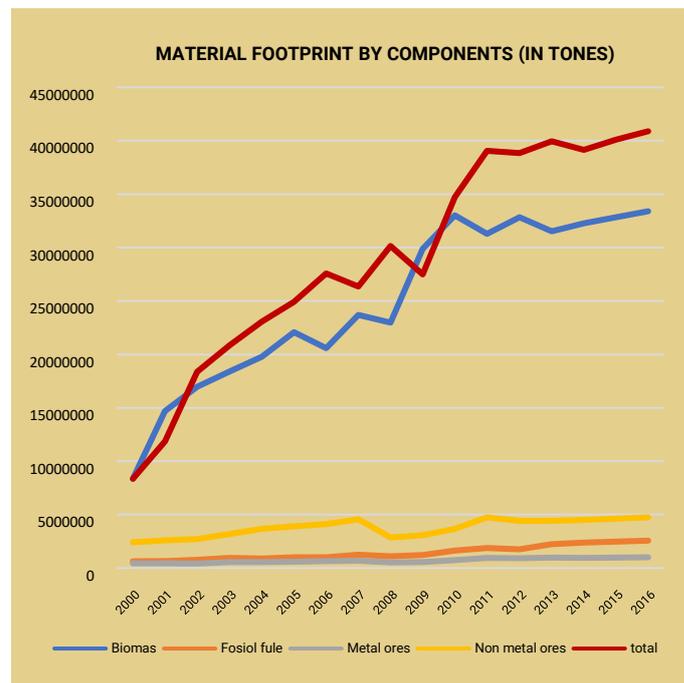
Therefore, there is an acknowledgement of the need to reduce natural resource exploitation and preserve the Earth’s life-supporting ecosystems by realizing essential tradeoffs between growth and environment-related targets. Industrialization and globalization have led to increasing consumption patterns that generate vast amounts of waste and pollutants that further harm the environment<sup>46</sup> (ILO Report 2019).

The National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) serves as an environmental regulator and policymaker. Afghanistan is a member of several multilateral organizations and is a signatory to several agreements; such as United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the South Asia Cooperative Environment Program (SACEP).

Based on SDG indicator 12.4.1, Afghanistan is an active global player on environmental issues and is party to 16 multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) including, but not limited to, the Basel Convention, the Rotterdam Convention, the Stockholm Convention, the Montreal Protocol, the Minamata Convention, the Vienna Convention, the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement. Afghanistan is also a member of six regional cooperation groups on sustainable environmental development.

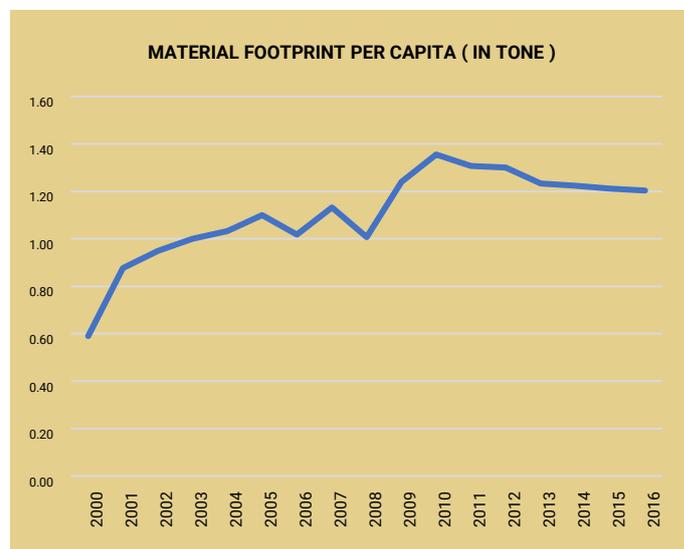
According to UNEP data, Afghanistan’s total material footprint<sup>47</sup>(the sum of the material footprint for biomass, fossil fuels, metal ores, and non-metal ores) and per capita

material footprint, which describes the average material use for final demand, is on the rise and is dominated largely by biomass consumption. See the chart below.



SOURCE: ENVIRONMENT LIVE / GLOBAL MATERIAL FLOWS DATABASE

Total material footprint or consumption per capita per ton<sup>48</sup> was raised from 0.6 ton per capita 2000 to 1 ton in 2008 and then rose rapidly to 1.4 ton in 2010, declining gradually and reaching 1.2 ton per capita in 2016.



SOURCE: ENVIRONMENT LIVE / GLOBAL MATERIAL FLOWS DATABASE

**Afghanistan’s rate of urbanization is very high:** There has been a significant increase in population growth, and it is expected that the urban population will double within the next 15 years. Fast urbanization and population growth are associated with major environmental issues including, but

45 Akenji and Bengtsson 2014

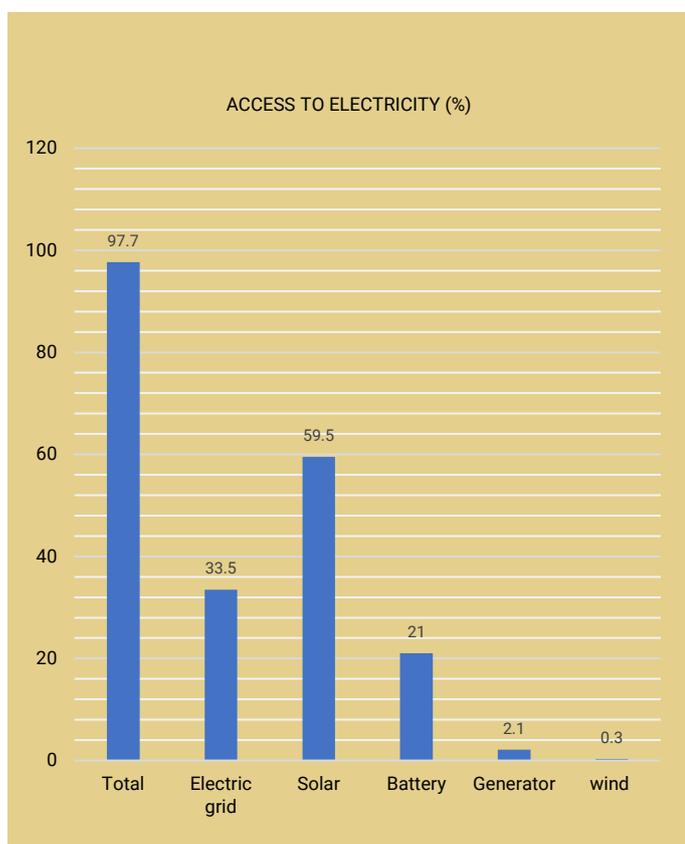
46 ILO report 2019

47 The material footprint of consumption reports the number of primary materials required to serve the final demand of a country

48 Environment Live / Global Material Flows Database

not limited to, air, water, and soil pollution; access to clean water; and solid waste management. Urban areas are also prime contributors to climate change as they consume some 70 percent of the country’s energy and produce nearly half of its CO2 emissions<sup>49</sup>. The main sources of these gases in urban areas are energy generation, vehicles and transportation, and biomass combustion for heating. The limited provision of waste management services across Afghanistan as well as the limited data availability of services, estimations, and proper planning for water and solid waste management remain a challenge.

According to a recent household survey (IE&LFS 2020), around 97.7 percent of the population has access to electricity for lighting, and it almost covers all households. Solar panels have provided an opportunity for off-grid access to electricity and cover close to 60 percent of households. 21 percent are using batteries for electrification and 2.1 percent are using generators.



SOURCE: IE&LFS 2020

There is a clear gap in providing clean energy for heating supply or provide electricity for clean energy consumption. The key barriers are accessibility, affordability, and the reliability of national grid electricity.<sup>50</sup>

49 Global Material Flows Database

50 NSIA, 2018. Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2017 - 2018

# AFGHANISTAN 2021 VNR OVERVIEW

13 CLIMATE ACTION



TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

## AFGHANISTAN

APPROVED THE ENVIRONMENT LAW IN 2007



# 1.8 °C

### MEAN ANNUAL

TEMPERATURES HAVE INCREASED BY 1.8 °C SINCE THE 1950s



# \$10.79 B



NEEDS FOR FINANCIAL, TECHNICAL, AND CAPACITY SUPPORT FOR ADAPTATION APPRAISED AT USD 10.79 BILLION OVER TEN YEARS.

NUMBERS ON SDG 13:



OVER THE PAST CENTURY, EARTHQUAKES HAVE ACCOUNTED FOR 50% OF HUMAN CASUALTIES CAUSED BY NATURAL HAZARDS, FOLLOWED BY FLOODS AT 19% AND EPIDEMICS AT 17%. FLOODS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LARGEST AMOUNT OF ECONOMIC DAMAGE AND DROUGHTS AFFECT THE LARGEST NUMBER OF PEOPLE.



DROUGHTS IN 2000, 2006, AND 2008 AFFECTED 2.58 MILLION, 1.9 MILLION AND 280,000 PEOPLE RESPECTIVELY. THE 1997-2002 DROUGHT PERIOD WAS ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL, AFFECTING SOME 5 MILLION FAMILIES AND CAUSING ONE MILLION FAMILIES TO MIGRATE TO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

## GOAL 13. CLIMATE ACTION:

### *Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*

Afghanistan approved the Environment Law in 2007, which established the regulatory framework for the sustainable use and management of the country's natural resources and provides for the conservation and rehabilitation of the environment towards achieving the country's social, economic, and environmental development goals.

Like the rest of the world, Afghanistan is affected by climate change. Mean annual temperatures have increased by 1.8°C since the 1950s<sup>51</sup>. The central and southwestern regions have been experiencing the highest degree compared to the mean national level with a 2.4°C increase in temperature. The central region had a mean annual temperature of 1.6°C, and northern regions at 1.7°C are experiencing the same level of national mean temperature changes.

The precipitation pattern analysis reveals that mean annual quantities have not changed significantly across the country, but detailed analysis revealed spring precipitation has decreased by up to a third, while winter precipitation has slightly increased. Spring precipitation is of paramount important for agriculture, as spring crops are typically rain-fed crops.

Based on these trend analyses and future projections, water, agriculture, forests, rangelands, biodiversity and ecosystems, health, and energy sectors are considered the most vulnerable with significant adaptation needs. Detailed adaptation measures have been reflected in the National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) and in Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which assert Afghanistan's commitment to a low emission development strategy and outlines needs for financial, technical, and capacity support for adaptation valued at USD 10.79 billion over the next ten years.

Afghanistan is also highly prone to natural hazards. As per ANDMA reports<sup>52</sup>, over the past three decades, nearly every province has been affected by at least one natural disaster. The most frequent hazards are flooding, earthquakes, and epidemics. Over the past century, earthquakes accounted for approximately 50 percent of hazards caused human casualties, followed by floods at 19 percent and epidemics at 17 percent. Floods account for the largest amount of economic damage, and droughts affect the largest portion of the population.

Droughts in 2000, 2006, and 2008 affected 2.58 million, 1.9 million, and 280,000 people respectively<sup>53</sup>. The 1997-2002 drought was one of the most critical, affecting some five

million families and caused another one million families to migrate to neighboring countries.

The number of research networks serving environmental analysis in recent years has grown. Availability and accessibility to data and information will further deepen analysis on environmental issues. Environmental education has been given top priority to prepare the next generation. Primary and secondary education curricula have already environmental subjects. At the tertiary level, environmental science faculties have been established at two universities.

51 NEPA report, 2017, [https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/SubmissionsStaging/NationalReports/Documents/9486351\\_Afghanistan-NC2-1-SNC%20Report\\_Final\\_20180801%20.pdf](https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/SubmissionsStaging/NationalReports/Documents/9486351_Afghanistan-NC2-1-SNC%20Report_Final_20180801%20.pdf)

52 ANDMA. (2011). Afghanistan Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) for Disaster Risk Reduction: Towards Peace and Stable Development.

53 Afghanistan. (2012a). Initial National Communication under the UNFCCC.

# AFGHANISTAN 2021 VNR OVERVIEW



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

**FIGHTING CORRUPTION** IS THE TOP PRIORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT



**UNAMA** HAS RECENTLY NOTED, THERE HAS BEEN A SHARP INCREASE IN VIOLENCE SINCE THE START OF **AFGHANISTAN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS** IN SEPTEMBER 2020



476 P



265 J

AFGHANISTAN HAS 265 WOMEN JUDGES AND 476 WOMEN PROSECUTORS. EVERY PROVINCE NOW HAS A WOMAN HEADING THE OFFICE OF PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.

NUMBERS ON SDG 16:

163



AFGHANISTAN RANKED 163<sup>RD</sup> IN THE **GLOBAL PEACE INDEX 2020**

165



AFGHANISTAN RANKED 165<sup>TH</sup> OUT OF 179 COUNTRIES IN THE **GLOBAL CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX 2020**

50.3%



**ECONOMIC COST OF VIOLENCE** ESTIMATED TO BE 50.3% OF AFGHAN GDP IN 2020.

## GOAL 16. PEACE JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS:

*Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels*

As mentioned in the previous sections, Afghanistan has been suffering from conflict, insecurity, and limited institutional capacity and access to justice over the past decades. These challenges remain an impediment to sustainable growth and development. According to a recent report of the Global Institute for Economics and Peace<sup>54</sup>, the economic cost of violence for the most affected countries ranges from 23.5 to 59.1 percent of their GDP. The cost is associated with high levels of armed conflict, large numbers of IDPs, high levels of interpersonal violence, and or large militaries. The economic cost of violence is estimated at 50.3 percent of GDP for Afghanistan for 2020 per the Global Peace Index 2020. As UNAMA recently noted, there has been a sharp increase in violence since the start of Afghanistan Peace Negotiations in September 2020. As a result, the conflict has undermined progress by reducing productive capacity and weakened governance. It has constrained market opportunities as well as the outreach of the government across the country.

In terms of children's rights, the government has taken proactive steps to promote the rights of children and build a national child protection system. However, violence (42 percent of children between the age of 2 to 14 years have experienced violent discipline), abuse (children are involved in cultivating and smuggling of illicit narcotics, 7 percent of children in juvenile rehabilitation centers in 2010 were detained on drug-related charges), neglect, and exploitation remain serious concerns. Under-five mortality rates are the highest in the region, as Kuchi children are highly vulnerable, and close to half of them are performing child labor, while child victims of human trafficking are routinely prosecuted and convicted of crimes.

The government is aware of the harmful practices which persist across the country and adversely affects the lives of Afghan children, especially girls. Meanwhile, advocacy is underway to include child protection concerns into the agenda of the current peace negotiations.

The rule of law is relatively weak, especially in rural areas. According to the Global Corruption Perception Index 2020, Afghanistan ranked 165<sup>th</sup> out of 179 countries. Opinion polls taken in 2019 showed a lack of confidence in judicial institutions. Only 66 percent of respondents found state

54 Economic value of peace 2021; Measuring the global economic impact of violence and conflict, Institute for Economic and Peace <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EVP-2021-web.pdf>

55 See the Asia Foundation, "Afghanistan in 2019: A Survey of the Afghan People", 2 December 2019,

courts to be fair and trusted and only 53 percent found them to be effective in delivering justice<sup>55</sup>. The population's trust in the informal justice system is significantly higher<sup>56</sup>, with 81 percent of respondents saying they trust local Shuras and Jirgas and 74 percent saying these mechanisms are more effective in delivering justice. The Conciliation Law seeks to connect informal and formal justice sectors. Rule of law reforms has resulted in over 482 laws and regulations drafted, passed, or promoted to provide a governance framework for state functions and operations of the market and civil society. Substantial reforms have been made within the judicial branch regarding corruption. Women's empowerment and gender equality have been advanced substantially through joint efforts between the government, the international community, and civil society. The government has taken important steps to prevent violence against women including the establishment of special courts.

Fighting corruption is the top priority of the government, particularly in the face of the current fiscal situation. The new panel code criminalized the corruption offenses, a fresh start for assets disclosures of all higher officials, access to information law, a whistleblower protection law, an anti-corruption law, and several other legislations among other initiatives. The Office of Ombudsmen has been created with the authority to receive and investigate complaints of corruption or abuse of office by high-ranking officials. Women play a significant role in the judicial branch of government, with 265 judges and 476 prosecutors. Every province now has a woman heading the office of prevention of violence against women.

Number of new anti-corruption institutions established to further improve accountability, transparency, and prevent corruption. The High Council on Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption is the main policy-making forum, the Special Anti-Corruption Secretariat oversees the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption activities and ensures coordination of efforts, the Asset Declaration Office and the Ombudsperson Office address corruption complaints regarding high-level officials, and the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC) provides independent assessments of policies and programs.

<https://asiafoundation.org/publication/afghanistan-in-2019-a-survey-of-the-afghan-people/> p. 148

56 UNAMA Anti-Corruption Report, May 2019, p. 36; UNAMA Anti-Corruption Report, May 2018,

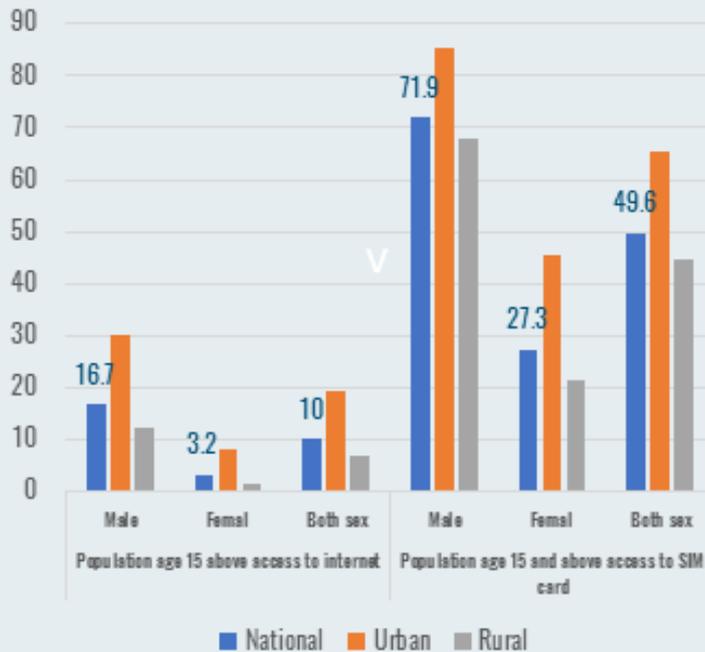
# AFGHANISTAN 2021 VNR OVERVIEW

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## POPULATION AGED 15+ WITH ACCESS TO INTERNET AND SIMCARD(%)



FALLOUT FROM THE **COVID-19 PANDEMIC** THREATENS TO UNDO PAST ACHIEVEMENTS AND HAMPER FUTURE PROGRESS. NOW, MORE THAN EVER, ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BY **GOVERNMENTS, PRIVATE SECTOR, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE PUBLIC** IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN MULTILATERALISM AND NURTURE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

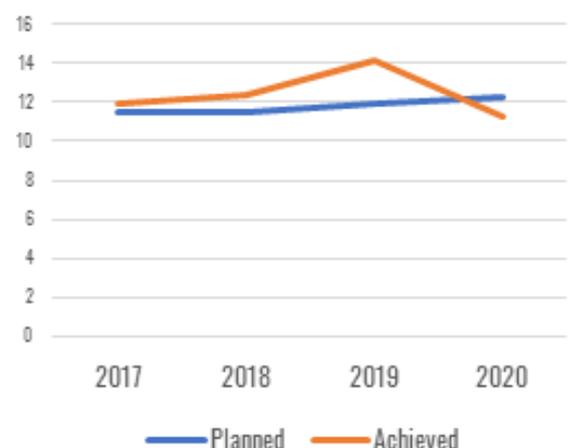
Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) 2017 to 2021

ANPDF II ASKS FOR THE EXPANSION OF **PARTNERSHIP TOOLS** FROM **AID TO TRADE, TRANSIT AND INVESTMENT**

## TRADE (IN MILLION USD)



## TOTAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE AS PROPORTION OF GDP (%)



## GOAL 17. PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS:

### *Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development*

Based on the Sustainable Development Goals Report for 2020, despite the major and persistent challenges, still the global support for the implementation of the SDGs has been steady but fragile. Financial resources remain scarce, trade tensions have been increasing, and crucial data are still lacking. The COVID-19 pandemic has added to these challenges and has hindered the pace of development and even threatened the past achievements. This report urges all stakeholders for more meaningful participation more than ever, including the governments the private sector, civil society organization, and all citizens alongside building a meaningful global partnership.

The Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF II 2021-2025) is a comprehensive framework for all development investments, on budget and off budget. It serves a platform for coordination and collaboration across government entities, development partners and other stakeholders. The framework stresses increased accountability for results and asks for the expansion of partnership tools from aid to trade, transit and investment. It envisages mutually accountable and long-term partnerships for sustainable peace and development.

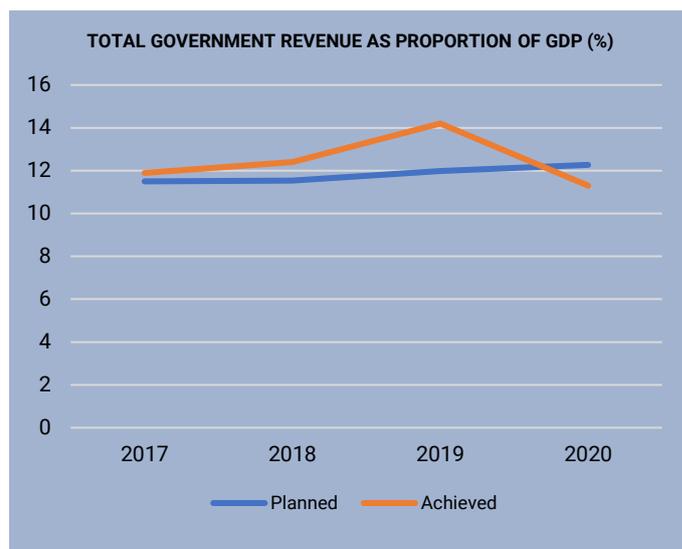
Afghan government believes in the globally agreed-upon principles for aid effectiveness – ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability. The government expects donors to align their aid to national priorities, reduce fragmentation and duplication of efforts, and use government systems such as on-budget support linked to performance and results.

**PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR:** Private sector plays a critical role in the sustainable development of Afghanistan. The government is increasingly reaching out to the private sector for partnerships for both economic and social development objectives. The government has established an Investment Facilitation Unit in the Office of the President to improve investment climate for the private sector, address administrative and policy obstacles and forge productive partnerships. The government is developing different tools and instruments including guarantees to minimize risk for private sector investments. The government constantly reviews policies and laws to enhance Public Private Partnerships, promotes entrepreneurship and increase productivity. Government efforts has resulted in improving Afghanistan’s ranking on the World Bank’s Doing Business Index. The government is paying special attention to improving access to finance for small and medium enterprises and in creating an enabling environment for

attracting foreign investments including from expatriate Afghans.

**CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION AND THE MEDIA:** Vibrant civil society and media play an important role of watchdog and oversight over the government. The government is committed to providing space and freedom to civil society organization and the media to perform their role. The government considers these institutions as partners in the implementation of SDGs. These organizations were involved in the VNR process and are regularly reached out for inputs and contributions to the implementation of 2030 Agenda in Afghanistan.

Building partnerships with all key stakeholders at global, regional, national, and sub-national levels, are essential for stability, peace, state, and market-building. Regional partnerships should promote recovery and long-term development. The current level of partnership between the government entities and other partners has room for further improvement. A new social compact which harnesses and leverages the comparative advantage of each partner should guide comprehensive multi-partner partnerships at all levels to achieve the SDGs.



SOURCE: STATISTICAL YEARBOOK,

**DOMESTIC RESOURCES FOR SDGS:** As part of its financial self-reliance objectives, the government has increased the mobilization of domestic revenue. Overall domestic revenue mobilization has improved due to both widening the tax base and enforcement. The government surpassed its domestic revenue mobilization target for 2019. However, due to COVID-19, the revenue mobilization took a downward trend in 2020. At the macro level, the government revenue as percent of GDP was 14.1 percent in 2019 which declined to 11.3 percent in 2020.

Most importantly, the government now finances more than 50 percent of its national budget through domestic revenues.

**TRADE:** The COVID-19 crisis reminded us the importance of regional connectivity and cooperation. Our efforts to turn Afghanistan into a regional hub and to diversify supply chains paid dividends during the COVID-19 crisis and prevented the shortages of food and other essential commodities. The government will continue investment in infrastructure and regional connectivity to make trade flows with our neighbors faster and cheaper. The government has improved regional cooperative arrangements and has invested in eight customs centers to expedite flows of commodities. It will continue investment to extend railway tracks and will expand business/state partnerships with countries in the region.

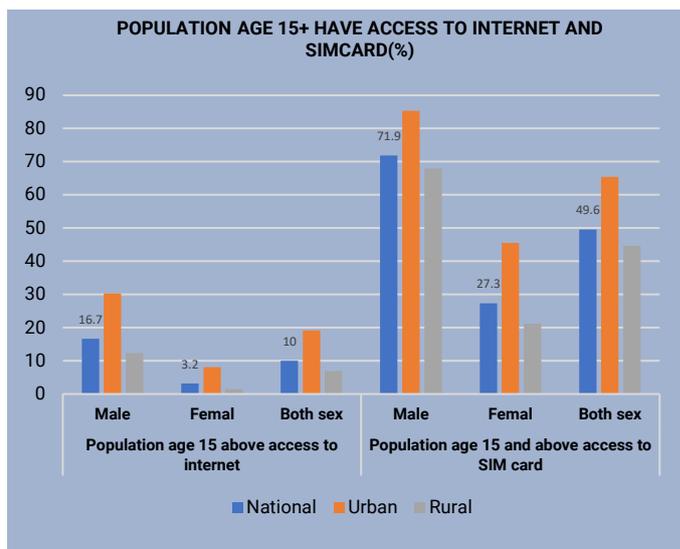
While imports continue to decline, exports have not proportionally increased, perhaps because of COVID-19. Sustained focus and investment in improving industrial base have resulted in the reduction of trade imbalance from 21 times imports to exports in 2014 to 8.4 times in 2020<sup>57</sup>.



SOURCE: STATISTICAL YEARBOOK 2020

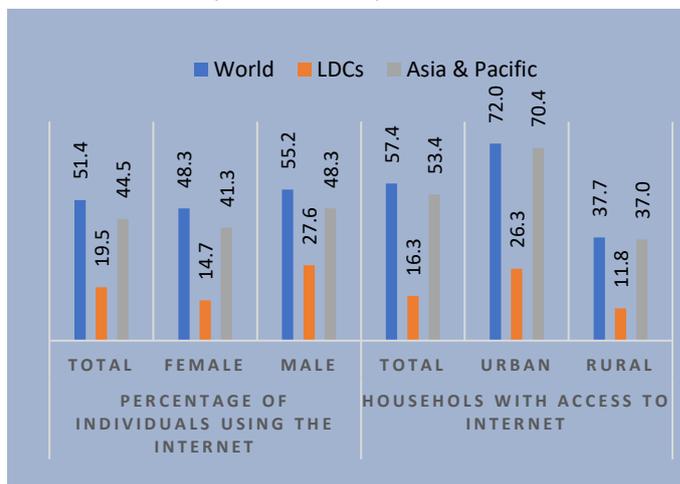
**DIGITIZATION AND TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT:**

Digitalization is ushering in a global transition from an internet of information to an "internet of value", where individuals and businesses which have no reason to trust each other can reach consensus through direct peer-to-peer collaboration, cryptography, and smart codes. In 2002, Afghanistan bypassed the fixed line phone and launched the mobile system / cellular technology through an enabling policy framework which resulted in \$2.8 billion of private sector investment in telecommunications and 22 million mobile phone subscribers. In addition to improved connectivity, it has generated steady revenue for the government.



SOURCE: STATISTICAL YEARBOOK2020

Internet use as a percentage of the population (age 15 and above) is low compared to the average Asia and Pacific region countries, as 53.4 percent of households have access to the internet. Similarly, household access to the internet for least developed countries (LDCs) is 16.3 percent as opposed to 57.4 percent globally. The percentage of the population age 15 and above who have access to active SIM cards is 49.6 percent, with a huge female to male difference. Based on the ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database for 2019<sup>58</sup>, the world's population covered by mobile cellular networks is 96.7 percent and this percentage is 98.6 percent for Asia and the Pacific region and 88.9 percent for LDC countries.



Source: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database

57 Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework-II

58 ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database 2019

# NEW AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

The **COVID-19 pandemic outbreak** affected all segments of the population, all sectors of the economy, and all regions of the country – both urban and rural. Based on global reports and analyses, the world before the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs (2020-2030) was already off-track, the pandemic not only disrupted the pace of implementation but has also reversed progress on many SDGs.

Afghanistan, alongside the rest of the world, was severely impacted by the coronavirus. It not only added to existing socio-economic challenges but increased their severity and particularly affected the poorest and most vulnerable people.

The country suffers from chronic, systemic, and situational **poverty and vulnerability**. Half of the population are living below the national poverty line, while one in every two Afghans is poor, 39.9 percent of the population (11.7 million) are food insecure. Poverty and food insecurity are highest in the rural areas, with women, children, the elderly, female-headed families, and persons with disabilities are vulnerable at the most. COVID-19 exacerbated these vulnerabilities.

Afghanistan is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to **climate change**, conflict and forced displacement, and natural hazards. More than half of the population has been forcibly displaced in their lifetime. Only 25 percent of internally **displaced persons (IDPs)** have been displaced due to natural disasters, the remaining 75 percent were displaced due to conflict. Around 4 million Afghans remain in neighboring countries, with return of 5 million returnees so far. In 2020, around 859,092 undocumented returnees came back from Iran, forced to return to Afghanistan due to COVID-19 and related restrictions. All these returnees and IDPs, as well as the host communities, are in dire need of immediate and long-term development assistance.

**Rising inequality** is widening the gap between the rich and the poor. **Low women participation** (16.5 percent) in the labor force is further excluding women from the benefits of economic growth. 58.4 percent (9.67 million) of the working population are outside of the labor forces which is not only preventing the economy to realize its full potential but is also contributing to widespread unemployment and poverty.

The **total fertility** rate is 5.3 children per woman, which is among the top ten in the world. As a result of relatively higher population growth and fertility rates, people below 20 years of age, make up 60 percent of the population and on average, 600,000 people enter the workforce each year searching for jobs.

Despite important gains that have been made in the **fight against corruption**, it remains a pervasive challenge. The **illicit economy** threatens security and stability by funding organized criminals and anti-government elements. It is estimated that narcotics account for 6 to 11 percent of GDP. Widespread corruption and the illicit economy impede the processes of peace-building, state-building, and market building.

**Peace is the foremost demand of all Afghans.** Nineteen years of conflict have imposed a huge toll on Afghan lives and livelihoods. The peace process that recently commenced is welcome, yet it seems to be hard to achieve the aspirations of the Afghan people for lasting peace and stability.

**National revenues** have increased and reached 11.3 percent of GDP in 2020, and with this now the government can finance more than 50 percent of its national budget. Yet, the government is **heavily reliant on the financial support of development partners**. COVID-19 further increased the stress on development budget and financial needs to respond to immediate relief assistance for recovery and resilience building in the medium-term.

Despite lots of investment in data, Afghanistan is facing a **lack of data on the SDGs**. For a better-informed policy response, there is a need to harmonize all available national data sources and create a national coordinated data and information platform for real-time access to data and information for informed policymaking.

Despite the above-mentioned new and emerging challenges, Afghanistan is committed to the 2030 Development Agenda. In fact, in a such challenging environment, with serious strain of resources, the government will use the SDGs as an integrated approach to configure its policies and programs towards the realization of a peaceful and prosper Afghanistan.

# MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Afghanistan's Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF-II, 2021-2025), which aims at transforming a country with a history of war and poverty into one which is self-reliant and peaceful, can serve the means of implementation for SDGs. The framework presents a national narrative and roadmap for long-term development and builds on lessons learned from the ANPDF. The framework provides a platform for coordination and collaboration across diverse stakeholders.

ANPDF-II presents immediate and long-term development priorities, highlights key reforms, and outlines priority investments needed to achieve the priority development goals. It sets the economic, political, and security context for development, which is built around galvanizing capital and capabilities to turn comparative advantage into a competitive advantage. The framework will inform national fiscal strategy and will guide budget allocations and sustainable management of development investments to achieve national goals.

The ANPDF-II provides a framework for international partners to assess the effectiveness and impact of their financial contributions. The framework calls upon the development partners to expand the tools of their partnership from aid to trade, transit and investment. At the core of this framework lies the principle that the state responds to citizen demands – especially women and the most vulnerable - in a direct, accountable, and transparent manner.

The ANPDF-II is premised on three pillars, namely peacebuilding, state-building, and market-building. In terms of peacebuilding, the government is moving, for the first time in decades, towards a real possibility of achieving peace. Peacebuilding is the foundational pillar for the other two pillars. It employs a whole of society approach to engage all segments of population, enhance social cohesion and address grievances.

The state-building pillar focuses on improving rule of law, combating corruption, criminality, and violence. It will support systematic reform of the state core functions for easy, transparent, and inclusive access of citizens to public services. State building endeavors to build and strengthen trust between the state institutions and the citizen of Afghanistan.

The market-building pillar aims at building a productive and inclusive economy that creates jobs for everyone. It intends to harness human, physical, and natural resources in order to enhance productivity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us of the importance of sustainable production and consumption practices.

## ALIGNMENT OF ANPDF-II WITH SDGs:

At the direction of His Excellency the President, the Ministry of Economy is leading the alignment of ANPDF-II with SDGs. A joint task force of technical representatives from Ministries of Economy, Finance, and UNDP is using a Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) for the alignment exercise. Once done, the ANPDF-II will serve as the perfect mean of implementation for the SDGs.

## PARTNERSHIPS, CAPACITY BUILDING AND MOVING BEYOND NPPs:

To further accelerate the implementation of SDGs, it is important to broaden the current level of partnership among all stakeholders including government institutions, civil society organizations, media, non-governmental organizations, academia, private sector, UN agencies, and international development partners and financial institutions both at the national and sub-national levels.

Stakeholders' participation and capacity development are crucial for advocacy and awareness on SDGs. Before COVID-19, more than numerous conferences, seminars, training workshops, and meetings were conducted at the national and sub-national levels. While the COVID-19 imposed challenges for face-to-face consultations and meetings, the government is increasingly deploying technology for online dialogues and engagement with key stakeholders.

As per lessons from the alignment process of ANPDF and SDGs, this time, the integration process will go beyond the National Priority Programs (NPPs) and SDGs will be integrated into the national budgeting and expenditure tracking systems.

## COSTING AND FINANCING:

Based on the Ministry of Economy's proposal, the process of SDG costing has been initiated. The iSDG-Afghanistan model is being developed with technical support from UNDP and the Millennium Institute (MI). The iSDG model will help the government better understand the social, economic, and environmental context in Afghanistan and their impact on SDG achievement. This will form the basis for the costing and tracking the achievement of SDGs.

## TRADE AND REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY:

Afghanistan occupies a key strategic location linking Central Asia with South Asia, providing China and the Far East with direct trade routes to the Middle East and Europe. Making the most of this geostrategic location depends on deepening Afghanistan's participation and leadership in bilateral and regional initiatives. Therefore, regional trade and transit facilitation remain high priorities, not only because they will increase trade, but also because they will strengthen regional cooperation, contribute to regional stability and prosperity, and increase investment.

# CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) has remained committed to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda since adopting it in 2015. As an evidence of political ownership, Afghanistan has integrated the SDGs into its national development plans, has nationalized global SDGs into Afghanistan SDG and has created an institutional setup to guide and monitor SDGs implementation.

## BEFORE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, PROGRESS WAS PROMISING

This is the second VNR for Afghanistan; the first was presented in July 2017. Since then, the government has taken significant strides towards the achievement of the SDGs. Afghanistan has made significant achievements in the economic, social, and environmental spheres. However, Afghanistan still faces daunting challenges of persistent poverty and hunger, unemployment, slow economic growth, high population growth rate, and the challenges of conflict and insurgency, climate change, and COVID-19.

Despite the challenges, Afghanistan is committed to the 2030 Development Agenda and is honored to participate in the second round of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) and share its report to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) under ECOSOC in July 2021.

## COVID-19 CRISIS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The world experienced the tragedy of the COVID-19 pandemic, at the onset of the SDGs implementation decade. It moved beyond the boundaries of health and severely impacted all sectors of the economy. Afghanistan is also not being left out of the adverse impact of this crisis, - exacerbated the existing socio-economic challenges, and had been put at risk the achievements against the sustainable development. This tragedy increased vulnerability as it disproportionately affected the poorest and most vulnerable people, and those in the informal economy.

This crisis slowed down the SDGs implementation, adversely impacting the national economy and setting back the attainment of the 2030 agenda.

As part of emergency response, the government established an emergency relief fund and provided all citizens with in-kind support for the initial lockdown period and have been extended efforts towards recovery and in the longer term more efforts are planned to building resilience among the poorer households in the rural areas. These efforts are associate with increasing investment in public health services, in water management, seeds provision and expansion services, and improve livestock

practices to improve agriculture productivity and the small and medium enterprises.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided an unprecedented possibility of bringing all humanitarian and development partners including government institutions, development agencies, private sector, and communities and religious elders closer to better harmonize their efforts under government leadership.

### NEXT STEP:

*As COVID-19 forced all humanitarian and development partners to focus on measuring the impact of COVID-19 and how to address them, in fact create a unique opportunity to align and bring all interventions around the SDGs coordination and implementation platform, for not only responding to the COVID-19 crisis, but also gear them towards the acceleration of SDGs implementation under government leadership.*

## CREATION OF AN ENABLING POLICY AND TECHNICAL PLATFORM; SDGS INSTITUTIONAL SETUP

In July 2017, the Executive Committee on Sustainable Development Goals was established within the Office of the Chief Executive as a high-level coordination platform. The Executive Committee consists of 33 government institutions, private sector representatives, civil society organizations, and international development partners. This committee was co-chaired by the Office of the Chief Executive, Ministry of Economy, and UNDP on behalf of the UN institutions in Afghanistan.

### NEXT STEPS:

*Deeper humanitarian and development collaboration will be one of the few legacies of fighting COVID-19 in the country. This opportunity should be maintained and sustained under the institutional setup of SDGs.*

*The terms of reference of the SDGs Executive Committee and its sub-committees have to be quickly amended to properly continue their operations.*

## ANPDF-II AND SDGS INTEGRATION: ACCELERATION OF THE PROMISES

The Afghan Government demonstrated its political commitment and ownership through the integration and alignment of SDGs into its national development plan, the creation of an enabling environment through a sound institutional setup, and the successful development of national SDGs.

The first stride towards the implementation of SDGs was the nationalization of SDGs and customization of its goals and targets with the context and priorities of the country. This practice was conducted through a robust consultative process.

**NEXT STEPS:**

*Urgently complete the alignment of the ANPDF II with SDGs and the 8 associated national priority programs (NPPs) using the approach and lessons learned from the first round of alignment.*

*Moving beyond NPPs, the alignment process should drill down from ANPDF II to NPPs to development budgets to make sure the budget process benefits from the integrated approach of SDGs and those budgets are aligned to priority SDGs.*

*Arranging for conducting annual, or preferably semi-annual peer review of the ANPDF II, NPPs, and UN and development partners' interventions with SDGs to assure and accelerate the attainment of the SDGs. .*

**ACHIEVING SELF-RELIANCE THROUGH SDGS FINANCING AND PARTNERSHIP**

The second Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF II 2021-2025) showcases the importance of a meaningful and flexible framework for development partners to continue their financial contribution to the national budget, aligned with national priorities. This partnership framework also stresses increased accountability and improved performance and asks for the expansion of partnership tools from aid to trade, transit and investment. Forging mutually accountable partnerships requires long-term partnerships for sustainable peace and development. The ANPDF-II has a five-year duration and looks forward to developing and delivering on a single, country-led framework, together with all national, regional, and international partners.

The government finances more than 50 percent of its national budget through domestic revenue, but still depends on financial assistance from development partners. COVID-19 further increased the stress on the development budget and increased financial needs for immediate relief and recovery and resilience building in the medium-term. The iSDG-Afghanistan model is being developed for the projection of future costs.

**NEXT STEPS:**

*Encourage the Ministry of Finance to continue and strengthen donor coordination efforts and integrate the SDGs in the agenda of Heads of Agencies meetings and the review of ANPDF-II partnership agreement.*

*The Ministry of Economy, through the Executive Committee on SDGs, should work with all UN agencies to align their activities with the SDGs.*

*Develop incentive packages for private sector investment and financing of the SDGs through different instruments such as green Sukuk, public-private partnerships, and other potential initiatives.*

*The developed and developing countries have committed to least developed countries to waive and apply zero tariffs on*

*their imported goods and services. This untapped potential has to be strategized and operationalized to increase Afghan exports.*

**DATA GOVERNANCE AND SDGS M&E**

In today's world, data is considered as a new form of capital. It cannot be depleted, but it can be used and re-used for a theoretically unlimited range of purposes. Evidence shows that data access and sharing can generate positive social, economic, and environmental gains and benefits.

It has been acknowledged that effective governance relies on timely and quality data for a better understanding of existing challenges, weaknesses, and future opportunities. Providing timely, reliable, and quality data, information, and statistics will promote informed policymaking, evidence-based decision making, and transparent government, efficient delivery of services, and effective planning and development programming.

**NEXT STEPS:**

*Encourage NSIA to establish a national level task force consisting of line ministries, UN, WB, and the private sector to create a national coordination and data and information online platform, to provide integrated real-time data and information for informed policymaking.*

*Develop a joint action plan with NSIA to address the disaggregated data requirement for SDGs by end of the year.*

*Increase technical and analytical skills of government institutions to utilize available data and information to its full potential.*

*Followed by the alignment of SDGs with ANPDF-II and NPPs, complete the target projections for the next five years and by the end of 2030.*

*Expedite the process of creating the iSDG-Afghanistan model*

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**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**