

(1) CEO Orders USAID's...

representatives of Promote.

Abdullah's remarks come just days after the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) stated in a report that Promote had to date been a failure.

"Based on the experience, improvements should be brought in reporting to the Presidential and Sapedar Palaces," said Abdullah.

Abdullah meanwhile said quality education was critical in order for Afghanistan's economy to grow and for development in the country.

"The quality of our education is critical to national economic growth and the future of Afghanistan. It is the foundation on which all else is built," said Abdullah.

Promote staff said however that under this new program, 2,500 female teachers will be trained nationwide in order to increase the standard of lessons, improve classroom management, curriculum development, lesson planning and other skills needed for a sound learning environment.

According to officials, this three-month program will include teachers from primary and secondary schools and will follow a curriculum developed by the Ministry of Education.

"We have worked together with the ministry on a teacher's preparedness program which is really quite simple in its premise. It does not teach the subjects of instruction, but it teaches people how to prepare for classes, how to put together lesson plans, how to manage a classroom and more importantly structure curricula and activities so there is a more hands on practical learning process," said Michael Morgan from Promote.

Although SIGAR reported the Promote program a failure, Promote staff said on Saturday said the report only covered a section of the program and that a large part of their objectives are still to be implemented.

Promote is a five-year program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID.) The program started in 2015 and aims to train and help Afghan females to find jobs or get better jobs.

Susan DeCamp a director of USAID in Kabul said so far 64,000 Afghan women have benefited from Promote.

"The Promote investigation took place a couple of years ago; in the first two years of the program and it is a five-year program. So since then a lot of good results have been achieved," said DeCamp.

DeCamp said the new teacher program will also play a key role in enhancing teachers' skills.

"Receiving a good education is a fundamental right for society; we are committed to working with the education system in Afghanistan to assist teachers in uplifting their skills, building their confidence, and helping Afghan youth to receive quality schooling," said DeCamp.

SIGAR Report on Promote

The Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) said in a recent report that the program had helped somewhere between no women and roughly 60.

USAID's "Promote" program is the agency's "largest women's empowerment program in (USAID) history," according to the program's website.

It was supposed to train Afghan women to enter the private and public sectors, and then help them become eligible for promotions in their fields. And it was intended to extend those training and hiring benefits to 75,000 Afghan women.

But SIGAR stated that in the three years since 2015, the number of women who found "new or better" employment was closer to 55.

SIGAR said that it could not conclusively credit the women's successes to the program.

SIGAR also said that it was unclear whether or not the Afghan government would choose to support the program as the Afghan government might not be able to hire all of Promote's graduates. It is also unclear whether the graduates would obtain jobs in the private sector in large numbers due to the country's low projected economic growth rate, the SIGAR report said.

Quoted by The New York Times, John Sopko, head of SIGAR, said that women's groups found the program to be "poorly designed and oversold." The program is scheduled to end in 2020, giving it only two years to meet its goal. Despite the SIGAR report, USAID last week said the program "directly benefited 50,000 Afghan women with the training and support they need to engage in advocacy for women's issues, enter the work force and start their own businesses." (Tolo news)

(2) IEC Chief Demands...

Sayad said the security of the voters and candidates must be ensured as he emphasized that government should take strict actions against those who are attempting to disrupt the elections process.

The Office of the President, ARG Palace, in a statement said the final meeting of the defense and security sectors was organized on Saturday evening to discuss the security and safety of the parliamentary elections.

The statement further added that the senior deputy interior minister for security Gen. Akhtar Mohammad Ibrahim and the defense ministry's chief of staff Gen. Mohamad Sharif Yaftali spoke regarding the security arrangements for the upcoming elections.

The senior security and defense officials emphasized on full cooperation of the security and defense institutions during the elections day.

According to ARG Palace, the defense and security officials assured the people, government, and election commission that necessary precautions would be in place to ensure the security of the elections. (KP)

(3) NATO-Led Force...

security for candidates and voters. He warned the elements trying to sabotage the democratic exercise of serious action.

As the government respected people's votes, the Taliban depended on guns, the president was quoted as saying.

The use of biometric technology by the election commission during the polls would represent a major stride in the electoral process. The closure of election offices was unacceptable, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(4) Over 500 Militants...

The provincial police commandment also responded to 143 criminal related incidents during the same period which included 14 kidnapping cases, 68 murder cases, 27 robbery cases, and 48 other criminal related incidents, the statement added.

The provincial government also added that more than 30 militants have renounced violence during the same period and joined peace process. (KP)

(5) Afghan Economy's...

the stability of the economic growth," said Sohrab Bahman, Spokesman for the Ministry of Economy. "The economic growth was expected up to 3.0 percent this year but, will have 2.4 percent."

However, Azarakhsh Hafizi, president of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industries said that wrong policies of the government in last years have harmed the economy. He stressed that insecurity, weakness in the government, and lack of having effective economic strategies have caused the economic growth to be declined.

Some economic analysts believe that if the government does not increase the domestic products and does not find markets for the export of the products in the region, the economy will not grow. (ATN)

(6) EU Provide...

countries in the world together with Pakistan and Nigeria.

"We are extremely grateful to the European Union and its people for their commitment and support to children in Afghanistan," said Adele Khodr, UNICEF Afghanistan Representative. "This significant EU support will help bring hope and stability to the children and people of Afghanistan and will expedite polio eradication."

In Afghanistan, the complexity of the situation with increased violence, poverty and natural disasters, pushes children to migrate to Iran and other countries, and exposes them to abuse, neglect and exploitation during their migration journey. The unique feature of this grant is that it is an integrated two-country response that includes Iran and Afghanistan. It will strengthen cross-border information sharing, programme planning and response to safeguard the best interests of children. The grant will also contribute to the eradication of polio, where prioritization of children on the move between Pakistan and Afghanistan is a key strategy. Experience from other endemic countries shows the critical role of mobile populations in spreading polio transmission and delaying its eradication.

"Afghanistan has made significant progress towards polio eradication, where transmission is limited to specific geographical areas. However, access, population on the move and insecurity continue to pose a challenge," said Dr. Rik Peepkorn, Afghanistan WHO Representative. "This grant presents an excellent opportunity to stop polio transmission as it protects past investments and gains made, and most importantly, it ensures that children are protected from polio forever." (Pajhwok)

(7) Alarm Bells...

Defense Minister Gen. Tariq Shah Bahrami acknowledged the casualty toll problem among Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers and said in the past month 513 soldiers were killed.

Bahrami said this had been one of the worst months in terms of deaths among security forces. He also said at least 718 were wounded and 43 were captured by insurgents.

He however emphasized that the death toll among insurgents was three to four times higher.

"Unfortunately, in the last one month 513 ANA soldiers were killed, 718 wounded and 43 captured; it was the highest number of fatalities we have had in a single month. Compared to the fatalities among our security forces, the enemy suffered three to four times more than us," said Bahrami.

Senators however blasted security departments over their inability to prevent attacks in provinces as well as in Kabul city.

The senators said instead of preventing attacks, security forces were being used to retrieve bodies following such incidents.

"The insurgents carry out attacks and loot properties, but when we (security forces) get there, we only collect bodies and assess damage caused to the area," senate Mohammad Alam Ezediyar said.

"You take control of the city after it is attacked, and everything is destroyed. You become proud that you have taken the city back, what kind of pride is this? Why should a city collapse?" said senator Abdullah Qaraloq.

"What is the main problem? Afghanistan is in a very bad situation," said another senator Zalmai Zabuli.

The defense minister said currently the Afghan security forces are not being backed up by air support at night and that this is proving a big challenge.

Interior Minister Wais Ahmad Barmak meanwhile responded to senators questions on the calls for a review of the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) between Kabul and Washington.

Barmak said the BSA was an important instrument for stability in the region and Afghanistan and that it helps to maintain security in the country.

"I told you earlier that daily 30 ANA and police soldiers get killed," said Barmak.

"Those who oppose the BSA are working in the interests of neighboring countries," said Bahrami.

NDS chief Masoom Stanekzai failed to attend Sunday's session but sent his deputy instead.

A number of senators said the NDS is unable to prevent insurgent attacks in the country, especially in Kabul, and blasted the NDS chief for not attending the session.

"Defense and interior ministers have come, but NDS chief has not. Let's put our friendship aside, but we should implement the law and his absence is unacceptable," senate head Fazl Hadi Muslimyar said.

NDS deputy head Abdul Saboor Qane however said the NDS chief had been unable to attend due to urgent commitments and that he had sent him in his place.

"He was supposed to come, but believe me, another issue arose and he could not come here," said Qane.

Security officials said the US Strategy for South Asia and Afghanistan is an effective strategy but highlighted that the strategy has far not succeeding in getting Pakistan to end its support of insurgents. (Tolonews)

(8) In Helmand...

she alleged, seeking justice for all candidates.

"We face public criticism -- culturally motivated -- if we display our photographs as part of the campaign. This is a huge problem for us. In addition, such acts enhance security threats to us," argued Niazi.

Another election contender, Najeeba Faiz Helmandi, held a similar view. Due to security and social threats, she said, women often failed to succeed at Wolesi Jirga polls.

Unlike men, security for women was volatile, she claimed, saying men could hire bodyguards. Security institutions are also cooperating with male runners" she believed.

She opined people generally avoided voting for educated women because of primitive traditions. Instead they preferred promoting illiterate and conservative men, she insisted.

Husnia Ehas, a women rights activist, acknowledged the problems and difficulties being faced by women during the ongoing electioneering.

"There is limited space for women, who could not interact with the public as easily as men do. Women candidates also cannot openly share their photographs on social media," she reasoned.

Ehas asked the Independent Election Commission (IEC) to work on these issues and spread awareness among the masses regarding hurdles to women's

campaign.

Khuda-i-Noor Khanzada, a civil society activist, said some extremists viewed things in a negative way. But some hopefuls posted their banners and motto in a manner that is in clash with social norms and values.

Noted religious scholar Abdul Hameed Helmandi explained Islamic does not prohibit women from contesting elections.

"Just like Islam allows women to do business, it also permits them to have a role in the decision-making process," the scholar maintained, while supporting females' rights.

Police spokesman Abdul Salaam Afghan vowed security institutions would pay greater heed to the protection of female poll runners.

"Women are faced with cultural taboos on the one hand and grapple with security problems on the other. Police will pay more attention to resolving the issues," he promised.

Women candidates in other provinces are faced with similar security and social issues. As a result, they cannot effectively campaign for the elections, scheduled for October 20. (Pajhwok)

(9) Anti-Polio Drive...

Ferozuddin Feroz in a statement.

"If the community does not cooperate with us, we will not be able to reach every child with the lifesaving polio vaccine. Whenever a child misses the vaccine, they can be impacted by polio."

The minister requested parents, community leaders, imams, and tribal elders to cooperate with vaccinators to ensure that all children were vaccinated and protected from being paralyzed. "I would also like to remind everyone that the vaccine is safe," said Feroz.

The vaccination campaign will take place from 24 - 28 September 2018, said the minister, who asked parents to ensure their children were home and available to be vaccinated.

He said all children under five should receive the polio vaccine, including newborns, sleeping, sick, and visiting children. Children who miss the vaccination should visit their local health centre as soon as possible, where the vaccine is available free of charge.

"The polio vaccine is safe, even for sick and newborn children. It is very important these children get the vaccine because they have lower immunity which makes them more susceptible to the virus. Repeated vaccination is very important for children because it builds their immunity to the virus."

Meanwhile, religious scholar Mualvi Samiullah Raihan said vaccinating children against polio was every Muslim's responsibility and obligation.

Prominent Islamic scholars and reliable Islamic references from Afghanistan and globally have issued fatwas on the importance of vaccination against polio.

"If parents do not vaccinate their children as a result of negligence and undue propaganda, they are actually committing a great sin and injustice against their innocent children."

Polio is a crippling and potentially fatal infectious disease and the polio vaccine is the only safe and effective way to protect children.

Currently, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria are the only three remaining polio-endemic countries in the world. (Pajhwok)

(10) Afghan Forces...

to UNAMA, the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in attacks by Anti-Government Elements remained the leading cause of civilian casualties.

"The combined use of suicide and non-suicide IEDs caused nearly half of all civilian casualties. Continuing trends first documented last year by UNAMA, the majority of IED casualties were caused by suicide and complex attacks, which again were responsible for record high civilian casualties, resulting in 1,413 civilian casualties (427 deaths and 986 injured), a 22 per cent increase," UNAMA said. (KP)

(11) 2 Small Orphaned...

My father died of illness, but my mother was poisoned

Akbar, a resident of Gurtapa district of northern Kunduz province, in an interview with Pajhwok Afghan News said: "We had a lot of land when our father was alive, he would cultivate many crops and we had a good life."

He said his father died of a protracted illness and his mother was poisoned six months after the father's death. "Then our uncle took us to his home because we were alone."

While holding his younger brother's hand and looking all around, Akbar said his uncle also showed them no mercy.

"We had a hard life at our uncle, Ghulam (not real name) house. He would beat us using a metallic wire. He sometimes used to burn our hands with a scorching poker. HE denied us food and

we had to spend days in hunger. Later he expelled us and took all our belongings," he said.

In response to a question about her mother's poisoning, Akbar said: "I don't know who poisoned my mother. When we woke up that morning my mother's belly was swollen and she died soon."

He said they had no place to live in after they were driven out from their home by their uncle and they were crying when met a shepherd near their village. "The shepherd told us he can keep us and we can go with him to his home, we became happy and we went with him to his home, we would do all his household chores and would graze his animals for six months, but still he was not satisfied, he would tell us we are eating from their food," Akbar added.

About his journey from Kunduz to Kabul, he said: "One day the shepherd told us he is selling his sheep in Kabul and we are going with him, when arrived in Kabul, he bought us toy cars and then left us in front of a shop. He told us he will come back after selling the sheep, but he never returned."

Now the two children are living with another person after meeting him in Kabul.

Former policeman: I decided to hand these two children over to a government institution

Shamsuddin Salangi, a former policeman, said he found the two children near a police check post in Qowa-i-Markaz area.

"When I took them to my house they were in bad condition and their bodies produced bad smell due to the dirt on their skins and their psychological condition was also not good," he said.

Salangi added: "Saleem is with me and Akbar is with his aunt who has no child of her own. We are striving hard to bring them up, we don't ask them to work but Saleem is not happy after my sister slapped him while helping him in his studies and he brought police."

But Saleem did not respond to questions why he sought the help of police? Was he a victim of violence?

He just responded by saying that Fatema, the sister of Shamsuddin, thrashed him for not learning his lesson. Salangi said after the slapping incident, police asked him not to keep the two brothers and now he was undecided as to what to do with them.

High Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Commission: Akbar and Saleem are victims of human trafficking

Mohammad Hassan Saleemi, a member of the High Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Commission (HAHTMSC), told Pajhwok Afghan News he was unaware of the incident but he would investigate it.

"The rights of these children violated, they faced with violence and then the shepherd got benefit from them, they are forced to hard labor and then lured to Kabul," he said.

He said several incidents of the nature existed in the country and they should be investigated.

Pajhwok tried to talk to Ghulam, the uncle of Akbar and Saleem, but he lives in an area which is under the Taliban control and it is not possible to contact him.

Gul Tapa district chief Mohammad Nabi Kakar said most of the areas in his district were under the Taliban control and any cases happen in the area referred to the Taliban instead of the government.

Taliban: Saleem-Akbar case will be investigated

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said if Ghulam was found guilty of usurping the property of the two brothers, he should be held accountable.

He said that Taliban would decisively follow the issue and would take Ghulam to justice.

What the law says about such situation? According to the first Article of the law on combating human and migrant trafficking, dominating a child for misuse is a type of human trafficking.

The third article of the law says recruitment (brining under control) of someone, transferring, threatening or using force against someone for benefit, kidnapping and deceiving are types of human trafficking.

The 10th article of the law says if the victim of human trafficking is woman or a child, the perpetrator of the crime is sentenced to eight years in jail.

According to the 13th article of Afghanistan labor law, children under 18 years of age are prohibited from doing hard labor which may be harmful for a child's health or physical growth.

The article 49 of the Constitution says forcing children into hard labor is prohibited.

Economic problems, insecurity, unawareness from law, lack of support from the government and relevant organs, poverty and migration are said to be the main reasons of such cases. (Pajhwok)