

**SEMINAR REPORT**

**CHALLENGES OF  
MAINSTREAMING GENDER  
IN AFGHANISTAN**  
Brussels Summit Follow-up Seminar  
Ottawa, Canada

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**MAY 31, 2002**

**Organized By** **SOUTH ASIA PARTNERSHIP CANADA**  
[www.sapcanada.org](http://www.sapcanada.org)

# **Challenges of Mainstreaming Gender in Afghanistan**

## **Brussels Summit Follow-Up Seminar**

Ottawa, Canada

May 31, 2002

### **Report on the Seminar Discussion**



SOUTH  
ASIA  
PARTNERSHIP

**South Asia Partnership Canada**  
**[www.sapcanada.org](http://www.sapcanada.org)**

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## **CHALLENGES OF MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN AFGHANISTAN Brussels Summit Follow-up**

### **INTRODUCTION**

South Asia Partnership Canada is a knowledge organization on South Asian human development. SAP Canada has organized four consultations, conferences and roundtables on issues related to Afghanistan since 1999. Of these events, the November 22-23, 2001 conference, *Afghanistan of Tomorrow: Realistic Prospects for a Lasting Peace*, was a milestone for SAP Canada, drawing 200 Afghan expatriates from North America and Europe, as well as government and civil society representatives in Ottawa.

To continue this work, SAP Canada organized the *Challenges of Mainstreaming Gender in Afghanistan* seminar on May 31, 2002 to follow-up the recommendations of the *Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy* organized by UNIFEM in Brussels, Belgium on December 4-5, 2001. That Summit issued the Brussels Proclamation, recommending action on Education, Media and Culture; Health; Human Rights and the Constitution; and, Refugees and Internally Displaced Women (See Annex 1 for the full text). The Ottawa seminar brought together resource persons, Canadian civil society, non-government organizations and government officials to review the recommendations of the Brussels Proclamation as well as brainstorm and formulate a Canadian Plan of Action for its implementation in Afghanistan.

Two of the seminar panelists shared their experience as participants in the Brussels summit, **Ms. Adeena Niazi (Afghan Women's Organization, Toronto)** and **Ms. Marzia Ali (Action Refuges Montreal)**. Other panelists included Afghan women's rights advocates, **Ms. Leah Nord** and **Ms. Noorin Nazari** from **W4WAfghanistan**; **Ms. Susan Wardak** of **AfCan Development Corporation** and a taped interview with **Ms. Athena Faryal** of **Revolutionary Afghan Women's Association (RAWA)**, based in Pakistan. **Hon. Flora MacDonald**, Vice Chairperson of **Partnership Africa Canada**, chaired the seminar. Having recently returned from Afghanistan, **Hon. MacDonald** provided timely, first-hand observations about the current situation of women in Afghanistan.

To date, there has been no assessment of initiatives on gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan since the *Brussels Proclamation*. Current shortfalls in the level of equality for women and children include:

- Two-thirds of girls receive no education
- 4% literacy rate among women
- 100,000 teacher deficit
- 12% of women have access to basic health care centers
- 65% of refugees and internally displaced persons are women and children

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Seminar participants made the following immediate, short-term and long-term recommendations:

### **Immediate Action**

- To advocate for improved security prior to the Loya Jirga on June 10-16, 2002 by pressuring local and national media networks and government bodies.
- To advocate for the establishment of safeguards prior to elections, should the Loya Jirga fail.

### **Short-term Action**

- To advocate for the implementation of a 'needs assessment' for current programming in all sectors identified in the *Brussels Proclamation*: health, education, human rights, and refugees/internally displaced women.
- To coordinate the creation of a Canadian focal point for NGO and Civil Society communication and information sharing as it pertains to the critical concerns of Afghan Women as identified in the *Brussels Proclamation*.
- To map local NGOs in Afghanistan and Afghan organizations in Canada to facilitate appropriate partnerships. The Canadian focal point would become a clearinghouse to share this information.
- The Canadian focal point should continue to support dialogue and discussion through special forums, conferences, and workshops with regard to Gender Mainstreaming in Afghanistan.
- In organizing future events, the Canadian focal point would consider the participation of individuals with experience in Mainstreaming Gender in Muslim societies.

### **Long-term Action**

- To advocate for long-term sustainable rural development outside urban areas with a commitment from the donor community to identify specific local needs and cultural sensitivities.
- To promote the inclusion of men and boys in the gender mainstreaming process.
- To emphasize grassroots programming that includes skill development and leadership training to contribute to building the confidence of Afghan women and ensuring their healthy participation in society.

## Seminar Proceedings

### *Women's Voices Are Defining The Real Issues of Equality*

**Hon. Flora MacDonald** said that while the news tends to be bleak, changes are slowly emerging for women in Afghanistan. From women within Afghanistan, from women outside the country, and from their supporters, the messages and concerns of Afghan women are beginning to be heard. The occurrence of the Brussels Summit itself is a positive signal.

### *The Brussels Summit Experience*

**Ms. Adeena Niazi** (Afghan Women's Organization) detailed how Afghan women and their supporters from the global community participated and devised strategies for discussion at the Brussels Summit. Delegates identified security within Afghanistan as the key issue at the summit.

At the seminar, **Ms. Niazi** said that the question of women's access to the areas addressed by the Summit (Education, Media and Culture; Health; Human Rights and the Constitution; and, repatriation and return) is the fundamental question. To ensure women gain access, conditionality should be built into donor assistance demanding the inclusion of women and girls. She also emphasized that the definition of human rights for the Afghan woman is different from Western constructions of human rights.

**Ms. Marzia Ali** (Action Refugies Montreal) discussed some of the implications of the *Brussels Proclamation*. She stressed that although culture was identified as important for gender equality, culture does not exist in isolation. The process of Gender Mainstreaming is called into question when the most immediate necessities are about equal access to health care, security and education. **Ms. Ali** said "feeling secure is very subjective"; consideration must be given to which women feel insecure: the women of Afghanistan, women in the country of violation, and women in the countries of asylum. She focused on the current situation of refugees and internally displaced women, saying greater emphasis needs to be given to the conditions of the refugee camps, the amount of trauma experienced upon return to Afghanistan, and the stipulation that return must be on a voluntary basis.

### *Presentations from Women's Groups*

In a taped interview, **Ms. Tahmeena Faryal**, described the concerns and actions of Revolutionary Afghan Women's Association (RAWA) in relation to Gender Mainstreaming. Ms. Faryal identified security as a key factor that can only be accomplished through the prevention of the spread of fundamentalist forces. To remove Afghanistan from 'the deadlock', she believes the pursuit of a future stable democracy is critical. RAWA addresses issues of women's access to services through its assistance program to refugee women. This program integrates literacy and education into its

programming as well as provides access to health care clinics. RAWA lobbies and advocates for free education and independent control of the delivery of vital social services. **Ms. Faryal** also stressed that the mandate of RAWA ‘is first and foremost to have women recognized as humans.’

**Ms. Leah Nord** and **Ms. Noorin Nazari** of the Ottawa Chapter of Women for Women of Afghanistan (W4Wafghan) discussed how W4Wafghan raises awareness about the issues and situation of women in Afghanistan to the Canadian public. High profile members have helped advance this awareness by lobbying and publishing articles in mainstream publications. **Ms. Nord** described the research work W4Wafghan recently undertook with the support of CIDA and Rights & Democracy, which resulted in the publication “Beyond Poverty and Oppression – Afghanistan”, an information bulletin aimed at helping Canadians learn more about human rights issues in Afghanistan. **Ms. Nazari**, an active member of the Ottawa Chapter, presented a personal account of her experience as a woman studying at Kabul University and her involvement with the Ottawa chapter.

### ***Video Presentation***

**Ms. Susan Wardak** (Vice Chairperson for Women Issues of AfCan Development Corporation) presented the video, “The Real Victim of War: Afghan Widow’s Reality”, produced by the Afghan Women Council. In her introduction, **Ms. Wardak** recalled that Afghanistan has been at war for 20 years and basic economic needs superseded gender mainstreaming. She provided an overview of women’s political participation in Afghanistan through the monarchy, communist regime and the Taliban. The video documented personal, first-hand testimonies of widows living in a refugee camp near Peshawar, Pakistan.

## **KEY THEMES OF DISCUSSION**

### **Beyond Survival**

The participants reported "chawdri and burqa are not the key issue of women themselves." Contrary to Western perceptions, the burqa is not popularly worn outside of the capital, Kabul. So when attention is drawn to this dress as a form of oppression, there is a caveat. Regardless whether the burqa is a symbol of oppression or not, it is also a choice. Women unanimously agree that "wearing chawdri or not," their definition of equality is about access to fundamental human rights such as health care and education.

The speakers said that not all Afghan women are or see themselves as victims. Even with limited resources and threats to their security, many demonstrate their leadership potential by running NGOs, teaching, and participating in the district elections of Loya Jirga delegates. One achievement that demonstrates this burgeoning leadership was the nomination of an Afghan woman from Toronto to sit in one of the reserved seats for exiled Afghan nationals at the Loya Jirga scheduled for June 10-16, 2002.

### **NGOs Integrating Women into Programs**

Since the fall of the Taliban government, some local NGOs have responded immediately to change their development programming. The re-integration of girls into school classes has one improvement toward providing women with education. Programs highlighted by the presenters included one program where girls between the ages of nine and 14 were placed in an accelerated curriculum, which combines three years of learning into one. In a taped interview with SAP Canada earlier in the day, RAWA activist Athena Faryal in Pakistan, described the integration of literacy into their programs for Afghan widows in refugee camps.

### **Security**

The overriding lack of personal and societal security within Afghanistan emerged as a major theme during the discussion. All of the participants and resource persons identified security as a critical factor. There are a number of consequences due to this condition:

- Participants said the actions of local warlords in intimidating, bribing and even murdering competing candidates at the Loya Jirga delegate elections threatens the fragile sense of security and fledgling attempts toward democratization in advance of the Loya Jirga.
- Participants expressed concern over the lack of safeguards and/or viable alternatives to a possible failure of the Loya Jirga. Those involved in the process have taken little action in communicating what may happen if the emergency assembly fails due to the threat of violence.
- The mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is restricted to maintaining security in Kabul. The security of rural areas remains neglected, creating a potentially explosive security threat in the area where most Afghans

live and where the agricultural economy must be restored for a sustainable peace to take hold.

- As “security is often subjective,” consideration needs to be given not only to Afghans within the country but those who have sought asylum outside the country’s borders, particularly the refugees in the camps in Pakistan and Iran.

The critical nature of this concern is that gender issues and demands will probably be overlooked during the Loya Jirga as it becomes a leadership race. The Canadian focal point needs to maintain pressure on the media and officials to communicate the need for gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan.

### **More than Words for Women**

Leaders of Afghanistan need to address women’s participation in every aspect of life. Women’s participation was raised at many of the recent conferences and meetings relating to the upcoming Loya Jirga as well as the long-term development of the country. However, there is growing concern that simply raising the issue of women’s participation may become a “tokenization” strategy to placate donors rather than a genuine intent to act. Many of the funds earmarked for Afghanistan’s development are conditional on the involvement of women and girls.

### **Creating Partnerships**

There is a challenge to creating new partnerships between the international donor community and Afghanistan’s civil society. The donor community is wary of political factions manifesting themselves in NGOs and civil society organizations and it needs to find reliable and appropriate partners. Part of the program delivery will involve training local organizations. The Afghan ministry of women’s affairs can play a role by forge links with appropriate women-led NGOs in order to assist donors looking for partners.

### **Delivering Aid Beyond Kabul**

An estimated 500,000 Afghans have returned from refugee camps in Pakistan and Iran. However, most new development initiatives by international donors are concentrated in Kabul with little assessment and effort in the rural areas. As a result, the returning Afghans are arriving into desperate rural conditions of drought, extensive war damage to housing, and the lurking presence of land mines. This situation has the potential to create greater problems. To slow the return of refugees, UNHCR has demanded that Pakistan and Iran do not force refugee repatriation. However, the difficult conditions of the refugee camps and the possibility of returning home is a powerful incentive.

## CONCLUSION

Participants and presenters highlighted many key issues and challenges for mainstreaming gender in Afghan society and rebuilding Afghanistan. Afghan women are active actors in this process, defining their priorities, taking on leadership roles and running for public office. NGOs are also responding to a less restrictive public environment by integrating women openly into their programming.

However, significant challenges remain. The insecurity of the countryside, the disruptive actions and influence of warlords, the limited role of the international security force to Kabul, and the fragility of Afghanistan's democratization process leading to the Loya Jirga continue to put in doubt the possibility of a lasting peace. Participants expressed concern about the difficulty of donors finding credible organizations to work with in the reconstruction efforts, which are serious about implementing gender mainstreaming in their programs. Another challenge is the delivery of foreign aid to the insecure, devastated and drought-plagued Afghan countryside, which is the destination of hundreds of thousands of returning Afghan refugees.

The Recommendations detail some strategies for ensuring the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The Canadian focal point will continue to work on these issues with the involvement of Canadian civil society, Afghans in Canada and government officials.

## **PROGRAM**

### **CHALLENGES OF MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN AFGHANISTAN Brussels Summit Follow-up May 31, 2002**

- Chair:** Hon. Flora MacDonald, Vice Chairperson, Partnership Africa Canada
- 10:00 AM Welcome Notes: Mr. Richard Harmston, Executive Director, SAP Canada
- 10:15 AM **The Brussels Experience**  
Ms. Adeena Niazi, Afghan Women's Organization, Toronto  
Ms. Marzia Ali, Action Refugies Montreal, Montreal
- 11:05 AM **Presentations from Women Groups**  
Ms. Athena Faryal (audio recording)  
Revolutionary Afghan Women's Association (RAWA)  
Ms. Leah Nord and Ms. Noorin Nazari  
The Ottawa Chapter of Women for Women of Afghanistan (W4Wafghan)
- 11:40 AM Q&A/Discussion
- 12:30 PM Lunch
- 1:30 PM **Video Presentation**  
"The Real Victim of War: Afghan Widow's Reality"  
produced by the Afghan Women Council (AWC)  
Introduction by Ms. Susan Wardak, Vice Chairperson for Women Issues  
of AfCan Development Corporation
- 1:45 PM **Open Seminar**  
Canadian Plan of Action to Support Brussels Process  
Facilitation by: Mr. Faruq Faisel, Canadian Program Manager,  
SAP Canada
- 3:50 PM **Concluding Remarks**  
Mr. Richard Harmston, Executive Director, SAP Canada

# ANNEX 1: The Brussels Proclamation

## Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy December 2001 The Brussels Proclamation<sup>1</sup>

The meeting of the Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy came up with the following demands with respect to the reconstruction of Afghanistan:

### EDUCATION, MEDIA AND CULTURE

Infrastructures in Afghanistan for the past 23 years have been destroyed. People of Afghanistan lost their basic human rights including the right to live, to be educated and to work, as well as their culture. Two generations of Afghans are illiterate and there was no adequate schooling available due to the war and the repressive regime, which banned girls from school and taught boys only about 'political' Islam so that these boys were brainwashed and became extremists. These ideas are contrary to Islamic values. Afghan women are in dire need of education and information through the media. Education, information and culture empower women. Women are the shapers of society; they have to be educated and have access to information in order to raise responsible children. Women should participate fully in the current and future development of Afghanistan.

We need to re-open the schools in major cities of Afghanistan, starting from Kabul the capital, and bring back to the people our cultural heritage. Particular attention should be given to orphans living in the streets, both in respect of shelter and education.

We need to bring hope and a bright future to our people. It is our duty as Afghan women to help and support our people in order to bring to the fore the important contribution of Afghan women as the torch-bearers of a culture in peril.

For the past 23 years, Afghan people have been living in the dark. We the Afghan women should join our efforts to establish a civil society in our country and bring back democratic values through education and culture. Education and culture transcend the reality of our lives. Their healing power and creative energy could act as a catalyst for peace and as an antidote to our national wounds by safeguarding our cultural heritage from disappearance. By reviving education and culture, we Afghans can all have something common to share and be united.

### Recommendations

- Sending a group of women to Afghanistan for assessing the schools' condition
- Developing an emergency plan for re-opening schools by March 2002 for both girls and boys and reconstruction of the schools that have been damaged or destroyed
- Reopening of institutes of higher education
- Provision of all the necessary means for schools so that they will be able to function properly
- Transfer of students taught at home to schools
- Provision of a comprehensive school curriculum based on international standards and the relevant supplies
- Provision of teachers' training including refresher courses for teachers
- Creation of structures for sheltering and educating orphans
- Ensuring fair salaries for all staff in education
- Inclusion of educational professionals in the Ministry of Education
- Ensuring inclusion of conflict resolution courses in education
- Afghan journalists living abroad to assess the situation in Afghanistan
- Reconstruction of TV satellites and radio stations, in particular in the major cities of Afghanistan that were already equipped
- Provision of cameras and necessary equipment
- Provision of training for personnel in the area of technical backing and production
- Recuperation and re-purchase of the ancient literary works which have been dispersed around the world, with the help of UNESCO and private donors

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<sup>1</sup> From <http://www.wapha.org/summit.html> (Women's Alliance for Peace and Human Rights in Afghanistan)

- Reprinting of rare books of literature, poetry, etc
- Translation of Afghan literature into English and other languages so that the Afghan children living abroad will be able to regain their cultural identity
- Establishment of a prize-award system in literature for young writers, poets and artists

## **HEALTH**

Women should participate fully in the current and future development of Afghanistan, particularly in the field of health. We volunteer to do a comprehensive survey in order to specifically identify and point out the needs if concrete support is provided. In order for the group members to conduct a comprehensive survey in the following areas, the group members request the European Commission and the donor agencies to provide the means for a team to conduct a survey of the medical needs of Afghans.

### **Recommendations**

- Provision of critical medical equipment, medicines and vitamins
- Rebuilding of water and sanitation systems
- Restarting of the food program
- Vaccination programs
- Medical teams be sent to Afghanistan to provide hands-on training and mentoring to Afghan doctors and other medical staff
- Afghan doctors and other medical staff be provided with the opportunities to get training abroad
- Scholarships be provided to medical students to study abroad
- Awareness raising through media, distribution of health related material, including but not limited to mother and child health, malnutrition, hygiene, contagious diseases, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases
- Re-establishment of health centers in urban and rural areas
- Re-establishment of training centers and training programs for the medical personnel
- Rebuilding of medical faculties in Kabul, Herat, Nengrahar and Mazar-e-Sharif
- Rehabilitation of psychological hospital in Kabul
- Expansion of orthopedic centers for handicapped people
- Expansion of clinics and treatment centers for Malaria and Leshmenia
- Establishment of counselling and health centers in schools
- Provision of family planning programs
- Establishment and rebuilding of medical laboratories
- Re-introduction of health insurance
- Provision of centers for HIV/AIDS patients and drug addicts
- Provision of blood banks

## **HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE CONSTITUTION**

Recalling the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), The Cairo Programme of Action, and the UN Convention Against Torture, we the participants of the Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy make the following recommendations:

### **Recommendations**

- Making all support, including monetary, from the international community conditional on the rights and treatment of women
- The cessation of using Pakistan as a proxy for Afghanistan and the subsequent recognition of Afghanistan as an independent state in reconstruction negotiations
- Guaranteed recognition of the returnees to Afghanistan as legitimate citizens of Afghanistan
- Central inclusion of women in the Loya Jirgah (Grand Assembly) and all peace processes and matters related to reconstruction
- Inclusion of Afghan women lawyers in the development of a new constitution based on the 1964 constitution and resulting legal frameworks

- Critical focus on disarmament in all areas of Afghanistan and a wide demining campaign
- Ensuring that the principles of non-discrimination according to gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion, and political affiliation in all aspects of political, social, cultural, civil and economic rights are central to the new legal system
- Ensuring the protection of women from forced/under-aged marriages, sexual harassment, trafficking in people and all other types of abuse
- Ensuring a safe and secure environment for women and girls
- Ensuring equal rights for women including the right to vote, equal pay and equal access to education, health care and employment
- Elimination of child labor and child soldiering
- Wide utilization of Afghan women experts, their knowledge and experiences
- Establishment of an umbrella/coalition under which a number of organizations will jointly work on projects or programs
- Donor funding to be channeled through local Afghan Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and a transparent system of accountabilities be established
- Ensuring examination of the economic involvement of regional actors in the context of promoting sustainable peace

## **REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN**

According to UNHCR in the past two decades Afghan refugees constitute the largest refugee population in the world. Due to the current war in Afghanistan, approximately 300,000 more refugees have been added to the refugee population. More than 65% of refugees are women and children. Afghan refugees in the first country of asylum, especially in neighbouring countries, including Central Asian countries, have very limited rights. The safety and security of most refugees, especially women, is extremely limited. Under the current circumstances, due to the presence of landmines and destruction of infrastructure in residential areas, Afghanistan does not have the capacity to provide sustainable living conditions. The political and security conditions in Afghanistan are not considered to be safe for some refugees. For those refugees who cannot return and are in need of international protection according to the 1951 Geneva Convention, resettlement should be provided as a tool of protection.

### **Recommendations**

- Avoidance of forced repatriation of refugees as it violates basic human rights according to UNHCR guidelines on repatriation
- Provision of a durable resettlement solution for those refugees who cannot return to Afghanistan for security reasons
- Increase of educational, training, capacity building and income generating programs to enhance the special needs of refugees and internally displaced women and children.
- Provision of basic needs of internally displaced and refugee women required for human existence. These needs include:
  - Security and protection
  - Health care services
  - Education on prevention of sexually transmitted diseases
  - Education on birth control and family planning

### **Afghan Participants:**

These extraordinary women, who hail from different ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds, have held Afghan civil society together against all odds. They include educators, health care providers, political activists, and others who have shown their commitment and leadership in grassroots organizing. Participating Afghan women will come from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, the Central Asian Republics, the United States, Canada and Europe. All affirm their commitment to democracy and women's rights. Supporting Speakers and Participants: Women leaders from around the world will also be present in solidarity. The supporting speakers, participants and convening groups will help carry the message of the Afghan women back to their own countries and help ensure that Afghan women are represented in conflict resolution efforts and the ongoing dialogue for peace. Confirmed speakers and participants include (in alphabetical order): Anna Diamantopoulou, European Commissioner, Employment and Social Affairs Eve Enslar, Artistic Director and Founder, V-Day; Playwright, "The Vagina Monologues" Denise Fuchs, President, European Women's Lobby Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

Asma Jahangir, Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Arbitrary and Summary Executions, United Nations Asma Khader, Board of Directors, Equality Now Angela King, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, United Nations Hibaaq Osman, Founding Director, Center for Strategic Initiatives of Women Mary Robinson, High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Joan Ruddock, British MP Maj Britt Theorin, Member, European Parliament

## **DECLARATION OF SOLIDARITY**

In solidarity with the Afghan women gathered in Brussels December 4-5th, women's rights activists from Belgium, Croatia, France, India, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Netherlands, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States met in parallel session in Brussels to formulate support strategies for the implementation of the Brussels Proclamation issued by the Afghan Women's Summit. A number of initiatives were devised by this group, which included activists from war-torn countries, artists, lawyers, funders and a parliamentarian. Also working with the group was the Gender Advisor to the UN Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UNIFEM. The group was deeply moved and inspired by the clarity and brilliance of the Brussels Proclamation and the vision of Afghan Women for the future of their country. In support of this vision, the group made the following commitments:

- To undertake an advocacy campaign to ensure that the funds allocated by the international community for the reconstruction of Afghanistan are conditional on (i) the participation by women in decision-making over the granting of the funds; (ii) the inclusion of women's non-governmental organizations among recipients of the funds; and (iii) the use of the funds for implementation of the priorities outlined in the Brussels Proclamation.
- To declare on International Women's Day 2002 that for women "Afghanistan is Everywhere", which means that we are joined in solidarity with the women of Afghanistan not only because we all identify with their suffering but also because we understand that the same conditions of violence, oppression, invisibility and other forms of inequality that plagued Afghanistan are universal. We will use March 8th to mobilize a worldwide demand for the implementation of the Brussels Proclamation issued by the Afghan Women's Summit.
- To create an international task force of women's rights lawyers with particular expertise in drafting legislation and constitutional law.
- To provide political support to the Ministry of Women created by the Bonn Agreement, and to undertake efforts to foster voter education and the participation by women in elections.
- To coordinate a funding effort to support grassroots community initiatives by and for women in Afghanistan and neighboring countries, which will make available at least \$1 million over the next three years.
- To promote United Nations recruitment of women for employment in the various agencies within the UN system operating in Afghanistan and neighboring countries.

## **ANNEX 2: Resource Persons**

**Marzia Ali** is currently the Program Coordinator for Action Refugies Montreal. She holds a Masters Degree in Social Work from McGill University. Her previous experience includes co-chairing a working group on Overseas Protection and Sponsorship at the Canadian Council for Delhi and Turkmenistan in the area of refugee resettlement. She was also involved in the Planning of the international Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees. In 2001, Marzia created a support group for Afghan Women.

**Hon. Flora Macdonald** recently returned from a trip to Afghanistan. She is the current Vice Chairperson of Partnership Africa Canada. She served as a Member of Parliament for Kingston and the Islands (1972-1988), holding three cabinet positions, External Affairs, Employment and Immigration, and Communications.

**Adeena Niazi** has been a supporter of Afghan Women's rights for over two decades. In 1990, she founded the Afghan Women's Organization, which supports and advocates for Women and Children in Afghanistan. She is presently serving the organization as Executive Director. Ms. Niazi has participated in several policy consultations with the Department of Foreign Affairs. She has received several awards in recognition of her work, including Person's Award, given by the Legal Education Action Fund and Women's Intercultural Network and the Vincent Kelly Award of the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University.

### ANNEX 3: Participant List

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Tariq Ahsan<br>Trent University                                     | Philippine Development<br>Assistance Programme          | Noorin Nazari                             |
| Mohammad Akbari   | Richard Harmston<br>South Asia Partnership<br>Canada    | Adeena Niazi                              |
| Kaleem Akhtar   |   | Leah Nord                                 |
| Zainab Akhter   | Don Hillman   | Pamela Golah<br>IDRC                      |
| Hamid Alakozai  | Elizabeth Hillman                                       | Kirsty Pazek<br>Rapporteur                |
| Marzia Ali  | Alexandra Humphrey<br>DFAIT                             | Lynne Racine<br>CIDA                      |
| Beverly Boutilier<br>Aga Khan Foundation<br>Canada                  | Luingamla Kashungnao<br>Amnesty International<br>Canada | Vajmeh Rezaie                             |
| Will Boyce<br>Queen's University                                    | Krishnahari Gautam                                      | Kirsten Ruecker<br>Status of Women Canada |
| Farah Chandani<br>CIDA  | Sonia Lebesgue<br>Development & Peace                   | Anurag Sinha                              |
| Ginette Dupaul  | Sevilla Leowinata                                       | Rita Soares Pinto<br>SUCO                 |
| Chris Eaton<br>Aga Khan Foundation<br>Canada                        | Corey Levine<br>IMPACS                                  | Carmen Sorger<br>DFAIT                    |
|   | Hon. Flora MacDonald                                    |   |
| Faruq Faisal<br>South Asia Partnership<br>Canada                    | Mona Marshy   | Shyama Vermani<br>CESO<br>Susan Wardak    |
|   | Renee Martyna   |   |
| Tahmeena Faryal<br>Carmen Fernandez del Rio,<br>Carleton University | Shamila Mhatra<br>CIET                                  | Warren Wong<br>Hickling                   |
|   |   | Anne Woodbridge                           |
| Peachy Forbes   | Katrina Murray<br>Partners in Training                  | Beth Woroniuk                             |

## **ANNEX 4: Participating Organizations**

### **Action Refugies Montreal**

Action Refugies Montreal is a non-profit organization founded in 1994 dedicated to providing services that empower refugees to claim their right to asylum when persecuted. The organization works in three areas: refugee sponsorship, twinning, and detention, as well as advocacy and analysis of the policies and practices of the Canadian Government with regard to refugees, including Afghans and particularly Afghan women.

### **Afghan Women Council (AWC)**

Founded in 1986, AWC works towards restoring women and girls' rights to employment and education, the rehabilitation of Afghan people through a peaceful political process, and the establishment of meaningful partnerships with similar organizations worldwide.

It also publishes the monthly *Zan-e-Afghan (Afghan Women)* to mobilize Afghan women to bring peace and stability to the country, runs a 20-bed hospital for women and children in Kabul City, and operates the *Ariana School* and *Mother and Child Health Clinic* in Peshawar, Pakistan.

### **Afghan's Women Organization, Toronto**

Ontario based organization established in 1990 to assist Afghan women in their integration and adaptation to Canadian life; to encourage and motivate Afghan women to participate and contribute to life in Canada; and to develop a community support network for Afghan women.

### **Revolutionary Afghan Women's Association (RAWA)**

Established in Kabul in 1977, RAWA is an independent, political organization of Afghan women fighting for human rights and social justice in Afghanistan. Not advocating violence, RAWA campaigns for women's rights and provides education and health facilities and programs. Most of its operations are based in refugee areas in Pakistan.

### **Women for Women of Afghanistan (W4Wafghan)**

A Canadian volunteer solidarity group committed to raising awareness in Canada and internationally, to the plight of women in Afghanistan. The overall goals of W4Wafghan projects are to support the empowerment efforts of women and children in Afghanistan and in the refugee camps in Pakistan; and to raise awareness to the human right's violations.

## **List of SAP Canada Afghanistan-related Reports**

Homebound: Protection and Politics of Afghan Refugees. April 11, 2002.

Afghanistan: The Ground Reality Seminar. March 20, 2002.

Militarized Violence and its Impact on Children: From Sri Lanka to Afghanistan seminar. March 2002.

Afghanistan of Tomorrow: Realistic Prospects for a Lasting Peace conference. November 22-23, 2001.

Who Will Pay for the New American Crusade? SAP Canada and Alternatives. Université du Québec à Montréal. November 3, 2001.

Repercussions for Pakistan of the United States War Against Afghanistan. SAP Canada and CERAS. McGill University. November 2, 2001.

Human Security in the Aftermath of September 11. Co-organized with CCIC and CPCC. October 26, 2001.

Strategic Issues for Democratic Development: Participation, Democratic Culture, the Post-September 11 Context. Co-organized with Rights & Democracy, Partnership Africa Canada, and FOCAL.