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TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Project Number:

AFG/S47

Project Title:

Developing Post-Release Opportunities
for Women and Girls Prisoners

Thematic Area:

Criminal Justice Reform

Country:

Afghanistan

Report of the Independent Evaluation Team

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS	5
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	7
GENERAL REMARKS ON THE SITUATION OF FEMALE DETAINEES IN AFGHANISTAN	9
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	11
MAIN REPORT	15
1. INTRODUCTION	15
1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	15
1.2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION	18
1.3 EXECUTING MODALITY	19
1.4 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION	20
1.5 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	20
2. MAJOR FINDINGS	21
2.1 OVERALL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (APPROPRIATENESS, RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY)	21
2.2 ATTAINMENT OF OBJECTIVES	24
2.3 ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT RESULTS	27
2.4 GENERAL REMARKS	29
2.5 IMPLEMENTATION	30
2.6 INSTITUTIONAL AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS	30
3. OUTCOMES, IMPACTS AND SUSTAINABILITY	31
3.1 OUTCOMES	31
3.2 IMPACTS	32
3.3 SUSTAINABILITY	33
4. LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES	35
4.1 LESSONS LEARNED	35
4.2 GOOD PRACTICES	37

4.3 CONSTRAINTS.....	38
5. RECOMMENDATIONS	39
5.1 ISSUES RESOLVED DURING THE EVALUATION.....	39
5.2 ACTIONS/DECISIONS RECOMMENDED	39
6. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS	43
ANNEX I: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR FINAL EVALUATION (TOR).....	45
ANNEX II: LIST OF MEETINGS HELD IN KABUL AND SITES VISITED.....	55
ANNEX III: TABLE OF OBJECTIVES, OUPUTS AND ACTIVITIES	57

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
AGO	Attorney's General Office
AIHRC	Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission
AWEC	Afghan Women Education Centre
CJTF	Criminal Justice Task Force
CPD	Central Prison Department, Ministry of Justice
CSSP	Correction System Support Programmer
HDI	Human Development Index
I-ANDS	Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ISISC	International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Science
MCN	Ministry of Counter-Narcotics
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoI	Ministry of Interior
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SCP	Supreme Council of Prison
SMR	Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

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GENERAL REMARKS ON THE SITUATION OF FEMALE DETAINEES IN AFGHANISTAN

In a state of effective war for most of the last quarter-century, Afghanistan's institutional structure is far from being established and the ultimate goal of a stable and sustainable State, as included in the roadmap laid down in Bonn, seems increasingly elusive. Although in the last five years the country has tremendously advanced in human development, Afghanistan's human development index (HDI) ranks it 174 out of 178 Countries on the global HDI (a composite indicator that measures education, longevity, and economic performance). Afghanistan has committed itself to the achievement of the UN MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) and two major vehicles have been devised for championing and monitoring the relevant progresses: these are the Afghan Compact (the Compact) and the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS). Both documents were presented at the January 2006 London Conference. The Compact is a political agreement between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to jointly achieve specific five year benchmarks of progress across the three pillars of the I-ANDS, namely security, governance, rule of law and human rights, and economic and social development. Objective no. 4 of the Compact is relevant to project AFG/S47. It stipulates that by end of 2010, justice infrastructure will be rehabilitated; and prisons will have separate facilities for women and juveniles. The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), whose finalization is expected to be completed by mid-2008, will be a comprehensive national action plan to promote progress towards achieving the Afghan MDGs and all dimensions of human development. Goal three of the ANDS (Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women) is the one relevant to this project, as in spite of the tremendous efforts undertaken by national and international actors since the toppling of the Taliban regime in 2001, the situation of Afghan women remains dramatic. With a female adult literacy rate of 12.6%, women enjoy very limited (if any, especially in the provinces) economic opportunities and remain victims of discrimination and violence, both inside their homes and at institutional level. This is also true with regard to the situation of women prisoners. In Afghanistan they account for around 4% of the total prison population. Most of the offences they are charged with are non-violent and, generally speaking, very few women pose a threat to public safety. According to statistics, in Afghanistan over 50% of women are imprisoned for non-violent, moral crimes such as adultery and elopement. Women prisoners and detainees are inserted in a system which is built around the needs and requirements of male inmates. This applies, just to mention a few, to the architectural structures of facilities, security, prison activities and medical services. Provisions specifically targeting or related to women, including special training for women staff and gender-specific social reintegration needs, are usually seen as an addendum to the regular provisions and there is no such thing as an independent, complete and comprehensive institutional practice targeting female prisoners who, as anywhere else in the world, constitute a vulnerable group.

Having in mind the causes of their vulnerability while in prison (i. e. disproportionate victimization from sexual or physical abuse prior to imprisonment, mental problems or existing mental conditions exacerbated by imprisonment, distress, high risk of sexual abuse and violence during detention, children living with their mothers in prison, limited opportunities for family visits, gender specific healthcare needs, post-release

stigmatization, victimization and abandonment by families), it is rather clear even to non-experts that in the absence of special consideration and target programmes, imprisonment will constitute a disproportionately harsh punishment for most women, while their social reintegration requirements will not be met.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary table of findings, supporting evidence and recommendations

FINDINGS: IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS/ISSUES	SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/EXAMPLES	RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Outstanding Personal Dedication	All of UNODC's counterparts interviewed during the mission expressed their strong satisfaction in their relationships with the Organization's Country Office staff in general, and NPCs in particular. The final success of Project AFG/S47 is also to be attributed to the high level of confidence with the counterparts that UNODC staff was able to establish.	UNODC should ensure that appropriate staffing levels are consistently maintained and post are quickly filled. As it appears that NPCs play a fundamental role in ensuring the success of a project, both because of their cultural and operational proximity to the counterparts/beneficiaries, particular attention should be paid to their prompt and correct identification. Having in mind the difficulties in recruiting that UNODC Country Office has experienced in the past, ToRs for NPC should continue to be drafted in rather flexible terms and emphasize not only technical requirements but also humane qualities, especially when it comes to projects targeting vulnerable groups such as women and juveniles.
2. Synergies established	AFG/S47 recorded unexpected and unforeseen outputs (at zero cost for the Project) as a result of synergies that UNODC staff was able to create with other Agencies working on similar topics (booklets on rights of detainees with UNIFEM; video on the project, as well as increased coordination at policy level, with UNAMA).	Overlapping and duplication of efforts and activities are common scenarios in all countries where the international community is engaged in post-war reconstruction. AFG/S47 represents an enlightening example of how sharing of information and willingness of actors to reach tangible results rather than just meet internal objectives can lead to positive results at virtually no costs. UNODC, despite staff shortage, should try and continue to promote such good practices, making sure to take/keep the leading role.
3. Excessive recourse to "top-down" approach in the implementation of project activities	Reports produced under Immediate Objectives 1 and 3 (Report on the condition of female prisoners and Training Handbook for prison and juvenile rehabilitation centre administration) were commissioned to international experts, thus preventing the process of ownership of the outputs, as well as not facilitating the transfer of know-how to national professionals.	Lack of highly qualified professionals remains problematic in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, UNODC should always try to adopt a "bottom-up" approach while implementing its projects. If national experts for a given activity are not available, all efforts should be made in order to commission the task to a team composed by both international and national experts, as to facilitate acceptance and ownership of results, as well as to establish a system by which projects also produce, as "side effects", the professional growth of national human resources.
4. Adequacy of outputs to level of comprehension/literacy of	Information gathered during the interview with direct beneficiaries	Low literacy level of most prison staff (not to mention that of

FINDINGS: IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS/ISSUES	SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/EXAMPLES	RECOMMENDATIONS
beneficiaries	showed that basic (by western standards) training and information material was particularly appreciated as people felt comfortable approaching it and, eventually, were able to understand the message that was being conveyed.	inmates) requires that the forms by which knowledge is transmitted/information is passed remain basic. Without intervening on the substance of concepts, visual communication (i.e. drawings) is to be preferred to more sophisticated works requiring well-trained intellects. Not to mention the positive effect that understandable material can have on the self-esteem of targeted beneficiaries.
5. Consistency among projects implemented by UNODC not always optimal	Not all projects involving (re)construction and rehabilitation of prisons implemented by UNODC seem to pay same attention to the presence of premises solely dedicated to training and education.	Adequate facilities, exclusively dedicated to education and training to be included as non-negotiable aspects when designing new prisons or refurbishing existing buildings. Adequate staffing of the Country Office, including technical support to the International Programme Coordinator, so that all aspects of projects can be the object of a thorough examination and negotiation.
6. Questionable development of a pilot project strategy on educational and vocational skills of detained women and girls	UNODC's efforts in establishing vocational and educational trainings within prisons did not appear to amount to the development of a strategy. This has, in the first place, been due to lack of commitment from the side of the state on the projects. Secondly, the latter replicated activities that the subcontracted NGOs had already been carrying out in the past, the only difference being the identity of the donor.	Despite some criticism, AFG/S47 must be regarded as a very important project, as it proved to be able to impact strongly and positively on the direct beneficiaries, increasing their self-esteem and contributing to laying the foundation of cultural (and political) changes. Assuming the continuous lack of commitment by the Government, activities such as the ones being evaluated can aspire to become a strategy provided that: a) they are truly linked to the market and its needs (as originally stipulated by the project document); b) they start to target future generations of social-workers and prison officials, by establishing links with the University and/or other relevant education institutions; c) adequate facilities, exclusively dedicated to education and training are included as non-negotiable aspects when designing new prisons or refurbishing existing buildings.

FINDINGS: IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS/ISSUES	SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/EXAMPLES	RECOMMENDATIONS
7. Reintegration after release hindered by cultural resistance and lack of structures	As the UNODC Report on the condition on female prisoners highlights, Afghan society is reluctant to reintegrate women in conflict with the law. No safe-houses for former female detainees exist in Afghanistan.	Awareness-raising activities among the general public, such as the ones initiated within AFG/S47, about women in conflict with the law should become a routine effort for UNODC. The organization should continue to put pressure, together with other international actors, on the relevant governmental authorities, (MoJ, MSA, and MWA in the first place) so that adequate and affordable facilities or shelters are available to women and girls during the transitional period elapsing from release to the complete reintegration within society.
8. Fragmented approach to training of female prison staff	Plethora of actors providing training to female prison staff, very little of which being the result of concerted actions and coordination efforts.	UNODC to ensure that the training strategy for female prison staff, which also addressed the issue of socio-economic reintegration of women in conflict with the law, developed under AFG/S47 be integrated into the institutional training provided to prison officers, so to avoid the need to administer it separately.

MAIN REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

Within the framework of UNODC's Afghanistan's Criminal Justice Reform, a joint UNODC and UNIFEM assessment mission was conducted in October 2005 to Kabul and the provinces with a view to determine the most effective and appropriate way to provide technical assistance on post-release opportunities for women prisoners. The mission was also conceived to touch, more broadly, on gender issues associated with imprisonment. That of women in conflict with the law was identified as being a critical and sensitive area, as no national strategy included among its objectives the facilitation of the socio-economic reintegration of women and girls prisoners. In addition, the current correctional institutions seem to lack cultural and operational equipment to facilitate post-release opportunities of whatever nature. For the sake of completeness, one has to highlight that numerous pieces of legislation, either directly or indirectly targeting and/or benefiting female prisoners have been adopted in recent years: for instance, a new Law on Prisons and Detention Centres, dated May 2005, introduced some principles to ensure improved treatment of women and better conditions; article 13 of that Law provides for the establishment of a Supreme Council of Prisons and Detention Centres tasked with the ambitious function to effectively organize the activities of detention centres and prisons, lead their related affairs and coordinate the activities of the concerned ministries and agencies, overall promoting and enhancing human rights, with a special attention to the conditions of vulnerable groups, among which juvenile and women; on March 23rd, 2005 a new Afghan Juvenile Code was adopted, raising the age of criminal responsibility to 12 years.

The issue of gender is critical to Afghanistan as stated, inter alia, in the National Development Framework. This document makes specific reference to the need of having special programmes directed at promoting the capabilities of girls and women. Underscoring the importance of engaging in societal dialogue to enhance the opportunities of women and improve cooperation between men and women on the basis of global human rights standards and norms, the Framework aims at providing effectiveness to one of the principles embodied in the Constitution of Afghanistan, according to which all citizens, with no distinction based on gender, shall have equal rights and duties before the law. However, due to cultural and material impediments, much of the foreseen reforms have been successful only on paper: detention conditions of female inmates and their chances to reintegrate after release in a society where women are still considered “second class” citizens are far from reaching minimum acceptable standards, and the rehabilitative concept of penalties still does not form part of the judicial culture.

In the light of the data provided by the Central Prison Department in 2006, there are some 300 to 400 women in prisons across the country. The largest concentration is in Kabul and accommodated in Pol-e Charki Central Prison, together with their children. Although most of them are aged between 18 and 25, records show the

presence of underage girls (as young as 13) in adult prisons. Most of the women prisoners are expiating violations of social, behavioral and religious norms and codes, often rooted in wider family disputes, where the position of the women is generally undermined due to the strict and often misinterpreted Sharia principles. Under Afghan religious rules, women are imprisoned for moral reasons (e.g. running away from home, adultery) and no legal assistance is provided to them. Women in jail are in many cases victims of their own personal circumstances and the broader socio-legal context relating to gender in the country, rather than being hardened perpetrators of crime. According to the information gathered on the occasion of the earlier mentioned study commissioned by UNODC in 2005 on detained women and their relationship with their family, among the reasons for which women end up in conflict with the law are illiteracy, economic and social problems, cruelty, conflicts between families, intervention of other relatives in relations between husband and wife, forced marriages or divorces, violence or inappropriate claims from the husband, family pressure. As a corollary, females charged with crimes often do not obtain any support from their families during and/or after imprisonment.

Project AFG/S47 was conceived and developed against the above mentioned legal and socio-economic background, with a view to:

- a) contribute to the wider efforts paid by the international community to gender equality by targeting women in conflict with the law;
- b) strengthen the national endeavours for the reform of the penitentiary administration and detention conditions, especially for women and children;
- c) raise awareness and improve national technical capacities.

This project is directly linked and designed to address the prison reform and its related problems. The main aim of AFG/S47, as stated in the final project document dated May 31st, 2006, are as follows:

- a) conduct an overall assessment on types of offences, grounds of conviction and causes of imprisonment of women and girls, and a study on social and economic problems that may prevent the reintegration of female prisoners back into society;
- b) increase the educational and vocational skills of detained women and girls in order to facilitate their social reintegration upon release;
- c) increase the capacity of criminal justice officials to respond to the needs of detained women and girls in preparation for their release back into society; and
- d) enhance follow up activities and develop community-based awareness campaigns to be launched throughout the country to support social reintegration of detained women and girls.

During its implementation Project AFG/S47 was the object of a non-substantive revision aimed at extending of 4 months, until December 2007, the length of the project, so as to allow for the completion of the activities and of the project evaluation. The main components of the projects, built around the pressing need to focus in the prison sector in order to sustain long-term changes in Afghanistan's gender policy development, and the conviction that an efficient and rehabilitative penitentiary system is a vital part of the peace-building process, have thus remained unchanged. AFG/S47 logically fits into the UNODC's ongoing programme in

Afghanistan, which consists of three main components, each addressing long term normative and key operational aspects of criminal justice:

- (i) capacity building of principal national institutions including training;
- (ii) penitentiary reform and
- (iii) juvenile justice reform.

In this respect AFG/S47 is complementary, for example, to project AFG/41 previously implemented in the area of penitentiary reform with the building of new female prison/detention centres in Kabul. The decision to hold the pilot-project for developing post release opportunities for women and girls prisoners in Pol-e Charki Prison was driven by the decision of the CPD to transfer all women prisoners in the Kabul region to the female wing in Pol-e Charki. There, the implementation of the project was affected by circumstance which are endemic in the country and that are the result of the collapse of justice sector institutions after more than three decades of civil war, which left in its wake severely dilapidated infrastructures. Facilities (when existing) lack water, heating, sanitation, and other basic amenities. Not to mention the adverse effect that the war had on human resources, which, when available, lack equipment, training and the know-how necessary to perform their function properly.

The strategy adopted by AFG/S47 targets not only female prisoners but also female correctional staff. The project combines refurbishment of training facilities at central (Pol-e Charki) and provincial level, with the provision of tailor-made vocational training benefiting female inmates, as well as the development of specific training tools to be used by female correctional staff on a daily basis. The project also meant to devote special attention to strengthening the role of women and girls within and outside the criminal justice system, improving detention and living conditions, promoting the respect of human rights, preventing gender related violence and discrimination, as well as facilitating female empowerment. The approach fully fits UNODC's draft Strategic Program Framework for Afghanistan, in that it addresses the area of prison reform and its related problems.

In total, project AFG/S47 identifies 4 Immediate Objectives, touching on both capacity building and the rehabilitation of physical infrastructure. The first Immediate Objective envisages the production of two studies, functional to the further development of the project activities: an overall assessment on types of offences, grounds of conviction and causes of imprisonment of women and girls, highlighting existing laws, common practices applied towards accused or convicted women and girls related to gender issues vis-à-vis the criminal justice and prison sector; and a study on social and economic problems that may prevent reintegration of female prisoners back into society. The second Immediate Objective aims at increasing, by means of practical training, the educational and vocational skills of detained women and girls, with a view to facilitate their social reintegration upon release. By developing a tailor-made Training Handbook for the prison and juvenile rehabilitation centre administration staff, Immediate Objective number three intends to improve post-release opportunities for female prisoners and sustainability of project activities. These results, according to the project, will be achieved by developing the capacity of selected criminal justice officials, both at central and provincial level. The fourth and final Immediate Objective is aimed at supporting social reintegration of detained women and girls at community level, with awareness-raising campaigns and activities.

Each of the four Immediate Objectives lists the planned outputs, activities and inputs to be provided by the UNODC and the Afghan institutional counterpart, represented for all objectives by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior, and for objective number four also by the Ministries of Women Affairs, Health and Social Affairs. Each set of activities is broken up into various components, according to a logical and clear division of responsibilities and activities. The project strategy and design are coherent and logical. The project document also correctly identifies, under risks and assumptions, the external conditions that will need to be fulfilled for the success of the projects to be ensured. Such assumptions relate to the commitment of all the partners (in addition to institutional counterparts, UNIFEM and the NGOs involved), commitment of all Governmental departments to co-ordinate efforts to ensure an efficient and fair administration of the correction system, prisons for women and juvenile rehabilitation centres at all levels, as well as efficient coordination among all agencies and donors involved in the rehabilitation of the justice sector in Afghanistan.

All in all, project AFG/S47 is an attempt to contribute, directly and indirectly, to the improvement of the conditions of women, female detainees and their children. It also aims at introducing cultural changes when it comes to gender. Its small-scale budget, coupled with a limited geographic and temporal reach and a pragmatic approach, proved to be very successful. If duplicated and logically linked with the other projects targeting the refurbishment of Afghanistan's criminal justice and correction systems, AFG/S47 has indeed a huge potential in terms of impact on people's lives and contributing to the development of the country.

The formulation of the overall project strategy is coherent and logically structured, giving a precise statement of the intended outputs and activities. The strategy elaborates not only the activities of UNODC, but also those required from the relevant Afghan stakeholders and counterparts. The project document includes a detailed budget, a precise statement of the required specific inputs by UNODC for the implementation of the project activities, as well as risk assessment pertaining to the project. In the course of its implementation, this project was revised twice. Apart from extending its timeframe of 4 months, the revision, as already mentioned, did not substantially affect the project.

1.2 Purpose and objective of the evaluation

Project AFG/S47 forms part of a larger package of projects (three of which represent the object of the current evaluation, namely AFG/S47, AFG/R87 (Prison System Reform in Afghanistan - Extension to the provinces), and AFG/U10 (Fast-track capacity building for a functioning counter narcotics criminal justice system)) that were implemented by UNODC almost simultaneously up to December 2007. They all form part of the Criminal Justice Reform Programme. AFG/S47, whose aim was to assist the Afghan Government in its commitment to the reform of the penitentiary administration and detention conditions, specifically to incorporate and target gender mainstreaming, focusing on women and girl detainees, shares with projects AFG/R87 and AFG/U10 the general objectives and rationale. Unlike the other two projects evaluated by this team, AFG/S47 reached its final completion in December 2007. The extension of its duration of 4 months, agreed in September 2007, allowed for the

project activities (namely the vocational training course) to reach their natural end and the evaluation to take place in a timely fashion, with the stakeholders and the beneficiaries still having vivid feedback to offer to the evaluation team.

This evaluation addresses the general objectives of an independent UNODC valuation, namely to examine the mandate, strategies, objectives, relevance, effectiveness, results, impact, sustainability and added value of AFG/S47. In particular, this evaluation examines the progress achieved against the above-stated objectives, but also in relation to the wider impact of the project on the justice reform process in the country, taking into account the conditions under which implementation has occurred.

1.3 Executing modality

Project AFG/S47 was executed by UNODC in partnership with UNDP as an associated agency, in respect of the financial and administrative component of the project, such as issuance of contracts to consultants and other subcontractors. The launch of the project was postponed by about 3 months (from July to October 2006) due to the delay in the identification and recruitment of a suitable female National Project Coordinator (NPC): the vacancy announcement was re-advertised once and only after two rounds of interviews was it possible to find a suitable candidate, albeit with no legal background. Despite not being directly affected by it, the project indirectly suffered from the departure from the Kabul UNODC Country Office, in September 2007, of the International Justice Programmer Coordinator. The supervision of the activities fell, therefore, under the tasks of the International Project Expert.

Although the latter was able to successfully perform the functions of Programme Coordinator, in the light of the complexity of the projects under his supervision and the many obstacles that, more or less unexpectedly, arose, additional technical support should have been provided (this aspect of management is further elaborated under point 5.2 a of this Report and, more comprehensively in the reports related to the Projects AFG/R87 and AFG/U10). Also having in mind that Afghanistan is a place that, for many reasons (restriction of movements, low level of security, etc.) rapidly wears out (international) staff, the Evaluators believe that a more efficient management of human resources is a key priority to ensure future success of the activities that UNODC intends to undertake in the Country.

The Afghan partner institutions involved in AFG/S47 (Ministries of Justice, Women Affairs and Social Affairs) remained stable and so did the implementation partners, represented by the local NGOs AWEC and MAHARAT. On a very positive note, it is worth mentioning that the project was able to realize synergies with the work conducted in the same areas by other international partners, namely UNIFEM and UNAMA. The cooperation with both organizations led to the realization of new and unforeseen, yet very pertinent, outputs (booklet on the rights of detainees with UNIFEM; a video on the project and increased coordination at policy level, including human rights with UNAMA), which will be examined later on in this Report.

1.4 Scope of the evaluation

This evaluation of AFG/S47 focuses on the project's concept and design, the implementation, results, outputs and outcomes. In respect of project concept and design, this evaluation analyses whether and how the project has contributed to a priority area for UNODC. The evaluation reviews the problems identified by the project and the corresponding strategies chosen by UNODC to address these. In particular, the evaluation assesses the relevance and the attainability of the objectives and planned outputs, activities and inputs, as compared to other cost-effective alternatives. On a more fundamental level, the evaluation analyses the clarity, logic and coherence of AFG/S47. In respect of objectives, outputs, impact and sustainability, the evaluation seeks to determine whether results have been achieved or, alternatively, whether there has been progress towards their achievement. In this regard, the likely sustainability of results and benefits, as well as this project's contribution to human and institutional capacity building, will be addressed. Furthermore, the evaluation will assess how effectively and efficiently programme planning and implementation have been carried out. In this regard, the evaluation assesses the appropriateness of the organizational structure, managerial support and coordination mechanism put in place by UNODC with a view to implement AFG/S47. Finally, the evaluation will identify the lessons learned from the concept, design, and implementation of the project.

1.5 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation methodology, as specified in the annexed Terms of Reference, consisted of three components, namely:

- a) document review;
- b) visits to and interviews of relevant stakeholders, counterparts and key UNODC staff;
- c) field assessment missions.

Documents reviewed included the Project Document (original and revised), Intermediate and Progress Reports, drafts of modules for training, financial reports, designs and plans of prisons. Interviews with relevant stakeholders and counterparts, whose list is annexed to this Report, also formed part of the evaluation methodology. Meetings were conducted by the Evaluators on the basis of previously agreed guidelines. National Project Coordinators and the International Project Expert also briefed the Evaluators. Due to the scope and geographic implementation of project AFG/S47, all meetings took place in Kabul. Despite the fragile security situation UNODC was able to arrange a road mission, for the evaluation team to visit the provincial prison of Gardez. The mission was organised with the support of UNOPS. Site visits also extended to correction institutes indirectly relevant to the project, namely the new female and juvenile centres in Kabul built by UNODC under previous project AFG/R41.

2. MAJOR FINDINGS

2.1 Overall performance assessment (appropriateness, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency)

AFG/S47 is a relatively simple and straightforward project, with a limited budget as well as few, clear objectives and targets. Yet, it has a great potential as this is the kind of project that, especially in very complex and problematic environments such as Afghanistan's, are likely to be less controversial at an institutional level. As a corollary, AFG/S47 was able to reach tangible results and really impact on the beneficiaries, also provoking a number of side and/or non-foreseen effects that can significantly contribute to the growth and development of the country in the sense indicated by the roadmap mentioned in the earlier pages of this Report. Overall, project AFG/S47 very well fits into UNODC's penitentiary reform strategy, constructed around the concept of a "hardware" and "software" approach, representing the ideal continuation of earlier projects tackling the physical infrastructures of the correctional system, namely AFG/R41 on "Reform of the Penitentiary System".

In order to achieve clarity in project design and implementation, AFG/S47 was structured into four distinct but intertwined Immediate Objectives. Each of these Objectives precisely lists the planned and intended outputs, together with the activities and resources required to achieve them (an integrated table is annexed to this Report). None of the foreseen activities had to be revised during the life of the projects, although their implementation and timing occasionally suffered from the general fragile security situation. Some changes in the outputs were determined by the positive cooperation between UNODC and other members of the international community, namely UNIFEM and UNAMA, which led to the production of additional material and increased cooperation at policy level. This is a very positive, although not so common, occurrence. In this specific case, these results were made possible by the sensitivity and high commitment of the UNODC project staff and their international interlocutors.

The four Immediate Objectives expand in different areas. All, however, share a common aim, represented by the improvement of the detention and living condition of female prisoners. All of them emphasise the rehabilitative function of penalties and favour the socio-economic reintegration of former prisoners into a society where stigmatization of women released from jail is so profoundly part of the culture that sometimes they prefer to remain in prison in order not to face impossible lives. The division of the project into four components represented the ideal approach to the above problem, as the first two objectives scientifically set the framework and working environment within which activities under objectives three and four were to be developed.

The first component of AFG/S47, bearing only one activity, was conceived to be developed quasi totally in-house, as the interaction with the Governmental counterpart, represented by the Ministry of Justice, was only instrumental to the completion of the planned assessment. The intended output was a comprehensive report mapping not only existing laws but also common practices applied towards

accused or convicted women and girls related to gender issues vis-à-vis the criminal justice and prison sector. The work also explored, by means of interviews with more than 56 female inmates, as well as contribution coming from other international and national actors, namely UNIFEM and the international NGO Medica Mondiale on the one hand, and the national NGOs AWEC and MAHARAT on the other hand, the social and economic issues arising after release hindering reintegration of female prisoners.

Given the lack of adequate, complete and detailed information on the jailed women, it was appropriate to conduct an initial overview of the situation of female prisoners, in order to prepare the ground for the development of a tailor-made programme targeting female inmates (foreseen under Immediate Objective 2), of capacity-building activities for prison staff (Immediate Objective 3) and of community-based awareness-raising campaigns (Immediate Objective 4) truly able to improve opportunities of former female in conflict with the law. The output was meant to fill the existing gap in an area where very little research had been conducted to date. In the course of the project, as will be outlined below, a minor change (but, according to the evaluation team, of major impact, touching upon a very sensitive issue) was introduced with regard to the features of the activity, namely the recourse to an international, rather than to a national, expert. During and following the conference and panel discussion organized for the launch of the report, UNODC was praised for “this unique document which analyses with courage one of the most sensitive aspects of the justice system in Afghanistan”. The conference eventually saw the participants, with the absence of important stakeholders such the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, agree in taking action through a series of consultations to be started shortly after.

Under Immediate Objective 2 project AFG/S47 aimed at developing a pilot project strategy on education and vocational training skills of detained women and girls, with a view to enhance and facilitate their social reintegration. Based on the results of the research conducted under Immediate Objective 1, it goes without saying that the (only) output foreseen under this objective was conceived to represent, in a way, the most topical moment of the project. The output entailed, as sole activity, the direct provision by a subcontracted NGO to a limited number of female inmates in selected correctional institutions of the professional knowledge that, hopefully, could help their post-release social reintegration. The importance of this stage within the whole project was also underlined by the scheduled participation by the evaluation team to the ceremony during which vocational training certificates were distributed. The solemnity of the event, also testified by the participants' commotion and the clearly very elegant outfits that they had chosen for the occasion, clashed with the poverty and hopeless-looking environment in which it took place: the humid and obviously insane workshop room, located at one end of the female wing, where inmates had learned about tailoring and dress-making.

Immediate Objective 3 aimed to “increase the capacity of criminal justice officials to identify and respond to the needs of detained women in preparation for their release back into society”. Two activities were scheduled to take place under this Immediate Objective, whose only output was a Handbook for training female prison staff. The activities were: a) the development of a handbook for the prison and juvenile rehabilitation administration for training selected officials on the special needs of

detained women and girls in order to improve their post-release opportunities; b) trained prison and juvenile centre administration to explore the situation in the provinces and provide training, on the basis of the handbook, to provincial prison and juvenile rehabilitation centre administration. This output is highly relevant not only for the success of project AFG/S47 but, more generally, for the gender-oriented cultural restructuring and capacity building of the penitentiary system. Correctional staff may undergo very general professional training prior to or during service, but very little, if any attention is given to gender issues (both from the perspective of female officers and of female prisoners). Likewise, not enough attention is given to the rehabilitative function of sentencing where time in incarceration is used productively.

As already happened for Immediate Objective 1, this objective too saw a minor but, again, fundamental change in the identification of the author of the handbook. Whilst the project document clearly identifies the international consultant in Medica Mondiale, the output was actually developed through the recourse to the same international consultant to which the survey under Immediate Objective 1 was commissioned. Yet, the project revision documents never mention this and during the meetings with representatives of Medica Mondiale, whose staff include highly professional female lawyers, it appeared that the latter had never been aware of a possible involvement in this respect within project AFG/S47. The project document, in this respect, is misleading and although the Evaluators are conscious that at the time it was drafted not all partners and experts had been finally designated, they believe that the point should have been the object of subsequent clarification. As for the recourse to an international consultant rather than a national one, whose presence was foreseen under Immediate Objective 1, although the evaluation team is aware of the difficulties related to the identification of a suitable local expert, it also thinks that UNODC devoted too little attention to it.

As the final step, the project is concerned with the enhancement of follow-up activities and the development of country-wide, community-based campaigns to support social reintegration of former female prisoners. Two activities were conceived as instrumental to the attainment of Output 1 worded “Follow-up activities and community-based awareness campaigns and programmes developed to support social reintegration of detained women and girls throughout the country”. Under Activity 1 the project was expected to develop workshops and meetings to facilitate the adoption of general policies related to socio-economic opportunities for former female prisoners. Under this umbrella, special attention was to be devoted to the sustainability of the reintegration, particularly from an economic standpoint. Follow-up activities were also envisaged to target institutional actors, namely the MoJ, MSA, and MWA. The ultimate and well-defined objective of Activity 2 was the establishment of adequate and affordable facilities and/or shelters for released women during what was identified as being the “transitional period”, elapsing from formal release until actual reintegration into society.

In the view of the evaluation team, all four Immediate Objectives are appropriate measures to further the goal of improving post-release opportunity for female prisoners. As project AFG/S47 also aims at contributing to capacity building (with a focus on gender) in the penitentiary sector, it is evident that it was meant to be implemented in strict synergy with most of the previous (i.e. AFG/R41), current (i.e. AFG/R87) and possibly future UNODC projects in the country. Indeed, recalling the

by now famous “hardware and software approach”, a blueprint of all recent UNODC projects, AFG/S47 seems to concentrate more on the software component. However, as this is an area requiring, in addition to material improvements, cultural changes in the mind-set of the community as a whole (from humble villagers to the highest institutional positions), it becomes difficult to assess with precision if and how much the Immediate Objectives were achieved and whether this and similar projects will be able to effect the requisite cultural changes.

In terms of efficiency, project AFG/S47 must be evaluated having in mind the current situation of the correctional system (falling, in principle, under the authority of a MoJ which in fact is constituted by a number of separate departments). The donors’ choice of channelling funds through UNODC as an implementing agency instead of providing them directly to Afghan institutions or local NGOs (which were eventually subcontracted) might be questioned and was indeed challenged by the evaluation team. However once it becomes clear, as it did to the Evaluators as the mission progressed, the endemic lack of capacity pervading, though at different degrees, the project's national counterparts, the option of not providing direct funds cannot be judged but cost-efficient. Not to mention, furthermore, that direct financing would have prevented the project to fit into the ampler strategic vision of the reform of the penitentiary and criminal justice system set up by UNODC, thus contributing even more to the widespread confusion that characterizes the intervention of the International Community in Afghanistan.

2.2 Attainment of objectives

For the purpose of the evaluation, it seems sensible to assess the attainment of each Immediate Objective individually, prior to proceeding to the assessment of the project as a whole.

Immediate Objective 1

Immediate Objective 1 was achieved timely and comprehensively. It could be even said that the objective was over-achieved, as the report published in March 2007 went well beyond the originally envisaged content. In addition to outlining existing legislation and regulations, judiciary policies and common/traditional practices applied towards accused/convicted women and girls (from pre-trial to post-release), the report succeeded in providing current information and trends in relation to gender violence and crime, background information and data on female prisoners (i.e. age, education, family conditions, marital status, type and circumstances of offence), as well as socio-criminological profile of potential project beneficiaries. Government/criminal justice capacity and response, including the role of NGOs, were also examined with a view to conclude on the most effective strategy to favour post-release opportunities for women prisoners. Between Nov. 2006 and Jan. 2007 a total of 56 female inmates in Kabul (amounting to 22% of the total female prison population) were interviewed by the international consultant tasked with the Report. Such a large sample allows considering the findings truly paradigmatic of the situation, with a limited margin of error.

To promote the endorsement of the recommendation formulated in the report, a number of meetings were held between July and August 2007 with the various members of the SCP.

Immediate Objective 2

During the mission, the evaluation team participated in the ceremony of distribution of certificates to the female inmate that had been enrolled in the tailoring course. The event took place in the female wing of Pol-e Charki. The training was made possible on the basis of an official MoA specifically concerning the practical implementation of AFG/S47 that UNODC and MoJ signed in March 2007. In accordance with the “hardware and software” approach already mentioned, Pol-e Charki's female wing was the object of a minor refurbishment, aimed at creating a suitable environment for the vocational and educational training courses to be held. The training activities had been sub-contracted to two local NGOs, identified through an open selection procedure. A more detailed list of achieved project results is contained in the next section of this Report, where activities and outputs are examined more into depth.

Having said that Immediate Objective 2 was achieved, though, does not mean that one can be completely satisfied by the way the goal was reached. In the course of interviews conducted with representatives and staff of the NGO AWEC, charged with basic education, health education, and day care activities, the Evaluators learned that AWEC has been actually involved in such kind of activities in Pol-e Charki since 2004. Should the funding for the second half of year 2007 not come from UNODC, they would have tried to find some other donor to give continuity to the excellent work that they had been carrying out in the last 3 years, which also recorded “success stories” such as that of the former female inmate that, having attended day care training while in prison, was hired upon release by AWEC and now works where she once used to be detained. Although the evaluation team is perfectly aware that one single case, such as the one mentioned above, cannot be regarded as a numerically convincing indicator of success, nonetheless it is also conscious of the importance that such positive examples bear for the detainees: women in conflict with the law, eventually, have the possibility to see with their own eyes that changes and improvements are possible, even for them. As no interview took place with representatives of MAHARAT, the evaluation team is not in a position to ascertain whether the same circumstances described above for AWEC also applied to MAHARAT. However, as the latter NGO too had been involved in similar activities in the past, it is very likely that indeed the subcontract offered by UNODC was to be considered simply as a “funding opportunity”. All this suggests that it is possible that (smaller scale) results similar to the ones attained under Objective 2 would have been achieved also in the absence of project AFG/S47, as this kind of training activity seemed to be an established practice even before the technical assistance provided by UNODC. However, as no objective indicators are available, it would be

unfair to quickly draw such conclusion. In the light of the above, the evaluation team would like to adopt a cautious attitude while assessing the success of this Immediate Objective: although it is true that UNODC's intervention led to setting an official framework within which the activities could take place, and that the technical help provided under AFG/S47 went beyond the borders of Kabul, extending also to the provinces where there is higher need for such kind of activities, it would be premature to conclude that a "strategy" on educational and vocational skills was developed. The picture, however, would not be complete without mentioning the role of the Afghan authorities. The impression that the Evaluators gained in this respect is that, despite the considerable progress that has been made, the involvement and commitment registered from the public authorities was not sufficient and is not enough for the project to be sustainable. In addition to economic constraints, there is a cultural attitude toward women and prisoners in general, and women prisoners in particular, that needs to be changed. And there is no doubt that, if not assisted by the international community, this process will likely not take place.

Immediate Objective 3

Considerable progress has been made towards the attainment of the Immediate Objective 3, namely increasing the capacity of the criminal justice system to identify and respond to the needs of detained women with a view to facilitate their post-release socio-economic reintegration. Unfortunately, the Evaluators were only able to interview one of the 40 female Pol-e Charki staff members that had been benefiting from the pilot training organised by UNODC under project AFG/S47, whose results (together with an assessment conducted in 9 selected provinces) formed the basis for the development of a tailor-made, gender-oriented handbook and training curricula for penitentiary staff. As mentioned in the previous pages, the project document identified in Medica Mondiale the subject responsible for the development of the handbook, whereas at the end, with no mention in the project revision document or in mid-term reports, the work was drafted by the same international consultant tasked with the Report issued under immediate objective 1.

Immediate Objective 4

Once again, project AFG/S47 was successful in reaching one of its Immediate Objectives, namely follow-up activities and countrywide community-based awareness campaigns and programmes to support former female prisoners' reintegration. A one -day conference was organised for the launch of the report on female prisoners, following which an international monthly working group was established. Unfortunately, mainly due to turnover of staff, this body was not able to keep up regular meetings. On a very positive note, the Evaluators were very happy to learn that as a result of the synergies that UNODC was

able to create with its counterparts, the project saw the production of two additional outputs: a documentary movie (in cooperation with UNAMA) on the report on female prisoners, showed during the one-day conference mentioned above and broadcast by national and international media; and cartoons concerning female prisoners' rights (in cooperation with UNIFEM), to be distributed in the form of a booklet to female inmates and correctional staff. Considering the generally low level of literacy, also of penitentiary staff, the recourse to very simple, visual, self-explanatory tools must be regarded as the ideal strategy for wide dissemination of information, which is thus able to reach all members of society. Increased cooperation and coordination with UNAMA at policy level, including human rights, was also a very positive side-effect of the project which deserves mention.

2.3 Achievement of project results

- ◆ **Immediate Objective 1** - Assessment of laws and practice applied to female prisoners and of post-release socio-economic obstacles to reintegration
- **Output 1.1** - Assessment report on female prisoners and their social reintegration available

The report, as already mentioned in the previous pages, was a major success, not only for its intrinsic value, but also as it represented the first evidence-based study of this kind ever produced. The report was developed on the basis of the data collected during the regular visits conducted by UNODC at Pol-e Charki Prison and Detention Centre since September 2006. A specific questionnaire developed by the selected international consultant was distributed to the female inmates in November 2006 in order to assess their psychological profiles, social and economical status prior to imprisonment. A total of 56 out of 87 inmates were interviewed and responded to the questionnaire. From May to June 2007 the assessment was extended to nine selected provinces (Herat, Kandahar, Balkh, Jawzjan, Kunduz, Takhar, Baghlan, Ningarhar and Laghman), and data was collected from an additional 245 interviewees.

The field research leading to the Report was conducted from November 2006 to January 2007 and published in March 2007. The Report contains a number of recommendations, that the evaluation team shares in toto and that in part coincide with the ones concluding this exercise. As already anticipated in the previous pages, according to the original project document (cfr. inputs from UNODC under Immediate Objective 1), the assessment should have been conducted by a national expert. The project revision makes no mention of nor explains the reasons of this significant change. Neither do the various mid-term reports produced under the project. Some members of the evaluation team, even considering the major difficulties related to the identification of a national expert, still believe that this is a major weakness of the project, as it reflects a “top-down” approach which is normally detrimental to capacity building. The risk, in other words, is that the book is perceived by the national counterpart as the umpteenth piece of work (in this case, of excellent value) through which the international community “preaches” nationals. Suitable alternatives, such

as the development of a “four-hand” research, carried out by national and international consultants, do not appear to have been taken into consideration, even though they could have facilitated the development of a sense of appropriation of the projects’ results by Afghans. Not to mention that the recourse to a national expert could have impacted on the capacity building of the chosen professional, as well as possibly facilitate the international expert in terms of access to information, places, and data.

- ◆ **Immediate objective 2** - Development of a pilot project strategy on educational and vocational skills of female prisoners, with a view to facilitate post-release reintegration
- **Output 2.1** - Detained women and girls complete vocational skills training and basic education

This result was fully achieved during the life of the project, whose length was extended by 4 additional months to allow for the training to be completed. A total of 133 female prisoners received vocational training (advanced tailoring). Another 153 were enrolled in basic literacy and health education in 4 provinces (Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Balkh). Courses were run over a period of 6 months by the subcontracted Afghan Women Vocational Skill Learning Centre (MAHARAT) and the NGO AWEC respectively. The training was preceded by the conclusion of a MoA between UNODC and MoJ to facilitate the implementation of the project through the refurbishment of the workshop room in Pol-e Charki where training activities would take place, as well as by an assessment of the potential interest of female prisoners in such activities. Although it is obvious, given the dilapidated conditions of the penitentiary system, where no activities for prisoners are institutionalised, that this opportunity would be very well received by inmates, it is somewhat surprising that the assessment of the target audience was carried out during the project and not prior to it, a choice that would have allowed the design of a more informed strategy.

- ◆ **Immediate objective 3** - Increase capacity of criminal justice officials to identify and respond to needs of female inmates, with particular regard to post-release reintegration
- **Output 3.1** - Production of a training handbook for prison and juvenile rehabilitation centre administration to use for training of selected officials

This result was achieved in July 2007, when the guideline handbook and training curricula for penitentiary staff on the special needs of detained women and girls was released. The volume was drafted by the international consultant tasked with the report produced under Immediate Objective 1. The information contained in the original project document suggested that the work be carried out by Medica Mondiale. Yet, no mention of the motives behind the change are included in the project revision document nor in any other mid-term Report. The criticism already expressed earlier in these pages, in relation to the report on female prisoners, concerning the choice of an international consultant instead of a local expert, also applies to this output. Drafting the textbook, the consultant took also into consideration the results of two one-week pilot training courses for female prison staff (from Pol-e Charki and Kabul Detention Centre) organized by UNODC in Kabul in

May and June 2007, targeting around 40 officers. Results of the interviews with local stakeholders conducted by the international consultant were also incorporated in the handbook.

- ◆ **Immediate objective 4** - Follow-up activities and countrywide community-based awareness campaigns and programmes developed to support social reintegration of detained female
- **Output 4.1** Enhanced follow-up activities and countrywide community-based awareness raised campaigns to be launched to support post-release reintegration of women

The cultural change in attitude towards former female prisoners is a major undertaking requiring resources, institutional support and, most of all, time. UNODC is no doubts strongly committed in this respect and the many activities carried out under immediate objective 4 clearly demonstrate it. In this respect under project AFG/S47 UNODC: a) organized a big one-day conference for the launch of the report on female prisoners, gathering all key actors, during which a specific plan of action was agreed; b) initiated a monthly working group gathering all international actors working with and for female prisoners; b) has been advocating, together with other international counterparts, UNIFEM in particular, for transitional houses for former female prisoners to be created. The four shelters currently available in Kabul are not open to former inmates, who therefore can count on no structure nor support programme following release; c) produced, in cooperation with UNAMA, a documentary movie on female prisoners widely broadcast at national and international level; d) cooperated with UNIFEM for the preparation of a cartoon handbook on the rights of (female) prisoners.

2.4 General remarks

Under project AFG/S47 UNODC has undertaken a number of different activities in order to achieve the four stated Immediate Objectives: some of them involved the recourse to an international consultant (reports), others were subcontracted to local actors and NGOs (advanced tailoring vocational course, literacy and family health classes). In addition to the managerial, operational, and institutional role played by UNODC throughout the set timeframe, which was extended from the original 12 to the final 16 months. Considering that both the other two projects evaluated during this exercise, AFG/R87 and AFG/U10 have experienced significant delays in their implementation, and even taking into account that the issue of females in general, and of female prisoners in particular, is considered to be a less politically relevant and therefore less controversial theme, the timely implementation of AFG/S47 must be regarded as a positive result. Careful planning, together with a collaborative relationship with the donor, and true commitment to the cause of women by all relevant counterparts, are probably the additional reasons behind this achievement.

2.5 Implementation

The UNODC Kabul office is well organized and managed, thus offering the needed foundation for the implementation of AFG/S47. The criticism that has been highlighted in the previous pages and will constitute the object of some of the recommendations are mostly attributable to factors beyond the control of UNODC.

Back-stopping and overall management were good. The only area of concern, as already highlighted by previous evaluation reports (i.e. AFG/R40, AFG/R41, and AFG/R42) relates to the overall staffing level. In the absence of the International Project Coordinator, the International Project Expert is asked to perform a large number of additional functions and is expected to possess expertise in so many areas (from construction work to administration, from legal to gender issues, from vocational training to judicial mentoring) that it becomes humanly impossible for one single person to be able to keep up with all aspects of the various projects. Increasing human resources of the Country Office is therefore vital, also in light of guaranteeing the well-being of staff: Afghanistan is an extremely difficult working and living environment, which wears out international staff rather quickly, at least compared to other post-conflict missions.

The almost total restriction of movement, the difficulties in establishing effective working relationships with the authorities, the constantly worsening security situation (during the two-week evaluation mission one suicide bombing with various casualties was recorded downtown, while at least two more attacks were prevented from taking place), the high turnover among the international community, which obliges to start almost every time from scratch, are among some of the reasons that makes working in Afghanistan extremely difficult and frustrating. All these elements, in addition to objective project difficulties (for example those related to the lack of proper construction material or human resources on the national market), must be carefully taken into account especially at the planning stage, when defining objectives, timeframes, activities.

2.6 Institutional and management arrangements

Despite the many difficulties highlighted above, UNODC Country Office was able to bring AFG/S47 to a successful end. In the view of the evaluation team the institutional and management arrangements of the project, were appropriate and efficient, even though a higher overall staffing level of the office would have avoided that important activities, such as the monthly coordination group on female prisoners (which had been initiated by UNODC), be dropped with no apparent explanation. This comment, as well as others made earlier in this report, should not, however, distract from the many achievements that UNODC attained under AFG/S47.

3. OUTCOMES, IMPACTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 Outcomes

The outcomes of AFG/S47 will be examined in the order in which they appear in the project document.

- ◆ **Immediate Objective 1** - Assessment of laws and practice applied to female prisoners and of post-release socio-economic obstacles to reintegration

The positive effects and outcomes of this part of AFG/S47 are immediately perceivable and visible, both at national and international level. The report “Afghanistan: Female Prisoners and their Social Reintegration” was published in English in March 2007 and in Dari at the end of the same year, and was widely disseminated. The Report, also available for download from the UNODC's website (English only), represents a tangible and important contribution to the cause of women in Afghanistan. The information and analysis it contains, the first of its kind ever, represent the background information and foundation needed for any action in this field. The public availability of the Report, moreover, makes it a useful opportunity to facilitate synergies among the actors involved in prison reform and gender issues, either alternatively or cumulatively.

- ◆ **Immediate Objective 2** - Development of a pilot project strategy on educational and vocational skills of female prisoners, with a view to facilitate post-release reintegration

The completion of the vocational training courses by female inmates, marked by a touching and solemn ceremony in Pol-e Charki, was another very visible achievement attained under AFG/S47. Yet, earlier in these pages the Evaluators have expressed their doubts whether it could be said that a real pilot strategy was developed, and if the training courses were a direct effect of AFG/S47. The impression is that the implementation of the project mainly facilitated results that would have been achieved anyway, considering that the two subcontracted NGOs have been conducting tailoring, literacy, day care and family health activities with female inmates. This, at least, at the level of perception of the NGO staff. What is obvious, on a very positive note, is that the training course's impact, as will be explained in the next chapter, went well beyond what was expected and foreseen and will definitely represent a very important contribution along the still long path towards recognition of equal rights to all members of the society, regardless of their gender.

- ◆ **Immediate Objective 3** - Increase capacity of criminal justice officials to identify and respond to needs of female inmates, with particular regard to post-release reintegration

It is indubitable that the Training Handbook, translated into Dari at the end of 2007, developed under this objective will bring major benefits for both penitentiary staff and inmates (regardless of gender): on the one hand prison officers will have the possibility to perform their functions more professionally; on the other hand, inmates' detention conditions, also from a psychological perspective, will improve. One must be aware, though, that still much work lies ahead in this respect and that results will not be visible for one or more generations.

- ◆ **Immediate Objective 4** - Follow-up activities and countrywide community-based awareness campaigns and programmes developed to support social reintegration of detained female

As mentioned further above, this objective is very much a work in progress, under the leadership of both UNODC and UNIFEM. Given Afghanistan's solid social and cultural attitude in (not) recognising women's rights, the activities envisaged under this immediate objective will definitely contribute to an improvement of the situation, but obviously not solve the issue. More action in this direction is, therefore, needed and sought.

3.2 Impacts

There is no doubt in the minds of the Evaluators that AFG/S47 has made a positive impact on the situation of detained women, also by working on the professionalism of the penitentiary staff. The impact, however, is not measurable as no objective indicators are currently available. The project has targeted a very critical area of the penitentiary reform system, which is often overlooked by the authorities and to which the little funds available for the correction system are rarely diverted. Women in prison or released from jail do not grab headlines, but helping Afghanistan reach decent development standards also passes through a more gender-balanced and oriented approach in all areas of society and in all institutions, even closed ones. Such changes can be achieved, as project AFG/S47 has attempted to do, in a number of different ways, ideally combined: through provision of real opportunities to women released from prison, through improved professionalism and awareness on the side of the authorities, from the highest positions to the more operational ones, by offering inmates the possibility to learn something while in prison, working not only at skill/operational level, but also on their self-esteem, hoping that the change that they experience will be passed onto their children and other women, so that generational change progresses.

In this respect, the evaluation team believes that one of the most important aspect of AFG/S47 consisted of it giving hope to otherwise hopeless women. Learning how to properly care for children, how to detect, prevent, and possibly cure diseases, learning how to read, write and count, being able to sustain oneself through tailoring were mentioned by the women interviewed by the Evaluators as, sometimes, the first

occasions in which they felt they were worth something, they had dignity. These activities had the effect of instilling stronger confidence in women with regard to their rights as human beings. The reach of this project into the provinces, which are generally speaking more problematic than Kabul (in terms of lack of equipment and structures, cultural narrow-mindedness, economic opportunities, social structure less prone to changes...) remains to be reinforced. Project AFG/S47 set out to rectify the deplorable situation in which female prisoners find themselves, but evidently this is work in progress, for which it is important that continuity is ensured.

3.3 Sustainability

The sustainability of the results achieved under AFG/S47 varies among outputs. In general, it can be said that Afghanistan will continue to require major assistance in the area of capacity building of penitentiary staff, as the training delivered so far to female prison officers is far from being enough. Furthermore, there is a need to update prison staff on the new Prison Law whose final approval is expected by mid-2008. The capacity of the relevant Ministries (MoJ, MWA, MSA) to deal with women both during detention and after release (i.e. the availability and capacity to run transitional houses for former prisoners) is still insufficiently developed and more technical assistance and economic support will be required. The various training organized under project AFG/S47, as shown above, are likely to have a positive impact. The particular sustainability of the training targeting prison staff, however, remains an open question, as the envisaged (though not clear) extension to the provinces through trained prison and juvenile centre administration (immediate objective 3, output 3.1, activity 3.1.2), has so far remained a dead letter.

The sustainability of vocational and educational training for female inmates will likely be also affected by the architectural choices made under other projects being implemented under the umbrella of the UNODC Criminal Justice Programme, when, due to a number of reasons often beyond the organization's control (i.e. land allocation and availability) the "hardware" outputs not always included dedicated space for training. Although in all new prisons there are "social rooms" that, when needed, can be converted into training rooms, the Evaluators are not totally happy with the adoption of such hybrid solutions, which are likely to negatively affect both their social and training vocation, not being able to fully fulfil either one. This is particularly true keeping in mind the second phase foreseen for Project AFG/S47, whose features were anticipated to the evaluation team by UNODC National Project Coordinator. According to the latter, educational and vocational training for female inmates in Kabul and three selected prison provincial premises will be consolidated. Lack of specifically dedicated space, therefore, is going to become evident soon, even though in a more conducive environments (i.e. the new female and juvenile compound in Kabul, built by UNODC), especially if compared to the current female wing in Pol-e Charki. It seems to the Evaluators, that UNODC partly missed, in this respect, the chance to prepare the foundation for an institutionalised training programme. Obviously, people will adapt to the resources available and conduct the activities: however, this is far from the standards that one would expect to be achieved in such area.

Another point needs to be discussed when talking about sustainability: as the report on female prisoners (produced under Immediate Objective 1) highlights, avoiding (re)victimization must be a major concern for all those working for and with prisoners. This is particularly true with regard to women and especially in countries, such as Afghanistan, where women do not enjoy equal rights at the social level. All those working in such environments, therefore, must be equipped with special skills in order to be able to deal with inmates appropriately. AFG/S47 did not foresee any particular training for the social workers and educators, whereas such activity is foreseen under phase 2. Within the framework of a long term vision, and in terms of sustainability of the project, ad hoc training are not enough. The project, directly or through synergies, should need to expand and work at the level of secondary and university education to make sure that future generations of specifically trained personnel are available to participate in such programmes, not only with commitment and enthusiasm, but also with a scientific background. The idea is to invest in future generations, so that change is wrought by the inside. This is of particular importance for this project, considering that it envisages the extension of the rehabilitative concept to the provinces, where adequately trained human resources are particularly lacking.

4. LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

4.1 Lessons learned

a) Adequacy

One of AFG/S47's target was female correctional officers, benefiting from special training. Contrary to what one would expect in western contexts, most of the penitentiary staff has very low literacy skills. Particular attention, therefore, needs to be paid to the capacity of trainers (and, obviously, to training material) to be able to communicate in a very elementary way, with the support of basic audio-visual tools, ensuring that the audience is able to fully understand the concepts discussed.

b) Counterparts

While the main counterpart identified by project document AFG/S47 was the MoJ, the reality showed that there were more line ministries whose involvement should have been considered and/or deepened. This was also acknowledged in the Project's Final Report, according to which the development a comprehensive and integrated strategy for effectively supporting the social reintegration of former women prisoners would require the expansion of the activities to a larger number of counterparts, both at institutional level and from the international community.

c) Reporting

Project AFG/S47 was revised once. The revision did not touch the substance of the project, the general design and framework remaining unchanged. It only affected on the timeframe, which was extended from the originally planned 12 to 16 months. However, as highlighted in the previous pages, the actual practice registered major de facto revisions. These diversions affected, on paper, neither the Immediate Objectives nor the activities and outputs. In the minds of the Evaluators, however, they impacted on the project mainly in terms of ownership of the results and of the process. Choosing to revert to an international expert instead of to a national one (as originally stipulated in the project document), for example, meant adopting a “top-down” approach which, according to scholars' commonly shared positions, is hardly ever advisable within a development project. The risk, in other words, is that Afghans will be (even more) reluctant to adopt the results and recommendations incorporated in the very valuable pieces of work that have been produced under project AFG/S47, as they will be perceived, once again, as being superimposed by the international community thus missing an opportunity to show that professional expertise does exist in Afghanistan. The implementation of AFG/S47 is documented in a total of three reports (semi-annual, annual and final) which are rather brief and in general draw a positive picture. They contain no or very little mention, however, of the reasons why certain changes were necessary. They tend to list activities and outputs rather than addressing issues (i.e. training of officials) from a substantive point of view. Other more problematic activities have remained with no official mention or explanation;

this is the case, for instance, of the monthly coordination meetings established by UNODC to gather international partners working with female in conflict with the law which were suddenly dropped with apparently no reason. Feedback coming from Afghan counterparts (excluding beneficiaries), moreover, were not included in the reports. Neither were the circumstances, reported by the subcontracted NGO AWEC and MAHARAT, that without UNODC's funding, similar activities would have been carried out anyway, as it happen in the past and as it will happen in the year 2008, before the phase II of project AFG/S47 is implemented.

d) Internal coherence of UNODC's Criminal Justice Programme

Although all projects (AFG/S47, AFG/R87, AFG/U10) currently under evaluation by this team fall under the umbrella of UNODC's Criminal Justice Reform Programme and are interconnected, at times the Evaluators had the impression that consistency of activities under the Programme was not always optimal. It is paradigmatic, for instance, that although the vocational training of inmates in general (regardless of gender) is considered to be an essential part of any penitentiary reform programme undertaken by UNODC, not all "hardware" parts of UNODC projects in this area seem to pay the same attention to the need for dedicated indoor and outdoor space and facilities for education and vocational training (including gardening, grazing..). Although the Evaluators are aware of the problem of land allocation that UNODC experienced during the implementation of (previous and current) projects involving physical (re)construction of prison facilities, there is not always evidence that alternative architectural solutions were explored in order to ensure that the premises included adequate space to be used solely for training activities. The Evaluators believe that such lack of consistency is partly attributable, as far as Project AFG/S47 is concerned, to insufficient staffing of the Country Office and to much lesser extent to the vacuum created by the departure of the International Project Coordinator, who left when AFG/S47 had almost reached its final conclusion. As it clearly pointed out in the evaluations of Projects AFG/U10 and AFG/R87, it should be avoided to consider the Programme Coordinator a *deus ex machina*, and therefore to pull him/her into too many directions, as s/he clearly cannot be an expert in all the areas where UNODC is active under the umbrella of the "Criminal Justice Programme", such as legal, judicial, construction, gender, IT, management, just to mention a few. In this respect it would be advisable that external experts on specific fields are consulted prior to the commencement of new projects, in order to identify not-negotiable elements.

e) Communication and synergies

Coordination is at the heart of project management. Even when coordination is not fully achieved, as it happened under AFG/S47, synergies are still possible if communication lines are established among counterparts, and not limited to each organization's Head Office, and information about projects and plans being circulated. Thanks to the sharing of information, consultation with UNIFEM led to the production of a cartoon handbook on the rights of women prisoners to be widely disseminated among inmates and penitentiary staff whose potential impact is rather high due to the way it was conceived (recourse to visual tools). In co-operation with

UNAMA, UNODC also produced a short documentary movie in Dari on detained females which is likely to become a popular tool for national actors involved in this field.

e) Real opportunities

As already mentioned earlier in these pages, project AFG/S47 recorded a true success story, involving an inmate receiving day care training during imprisonment, who, upon release, was eventually hired by the NGO which had been delivered the training. An interview with this lady highlighted how important it was for inmates to see that the activities that are being organized for and with them whilst in prison are not conceived “just to kill the time”, but can actually lead to a real change in their lives. This also happened with the participants to the advanced tailoring courses, that admitted that learning how to make clothes allowed them not only to provide suitable garments for themselves and their children, but also to gain some money from selling such items to other inmates.

4.2 Good Practices

There are several aspects of AFG/S47 which can be named as good practices and which could be adopted by UNODC in other projects. In addition to the train-the-trainer, “software and hardware” approach and to recourse to pilot-projects, which are well incorporated into UNODC's strategies, three aspects of the latter's technical assistance intervention under AFG/S47 are worth mentioning. These are:

- a) assessment and clear identification of the social, legal, judicial, economic, cultural environment, as well as of training needs of the beneficiaries of the project. The AFG/S47 project document was drafted in a flexible way, so that the nature of vocational/training courses could be decided in progress, according to the information obtained at the start of the project;
- b) development of tailor-made training handbooks, based on the observation, results and feedback of pilot training. Tools such as the one developed under Immediate Objective 3, which incorporate at once training methodology as well as substance, are particularly appreciated in environments, such as Afghanistan, where training capacity is not very much developed and where trainers are normally not professional ones;
- c) orienting the kind of training to be delivered to inmates to the specific needs of the market, as indicated in the original project document (cfr. Immediate Objective 2, last sentence related to Activity 2.1.1 where the document reads “It is mandatory that training programmes have to be developed in accordance with the needs of the market”), is a very useful idea. Unfortunately, during the implementation of the Project, this aspect was partly lost: in this respect, although it is true that MAHARAT is very similar to a commercial company (being active in producing garments under USAID contract for the Afghan army and designer clothing for sale in the US and the Expat community in

Kabul), there was no evidence of a further link between the activities carried out in prison by female inmates and the market.

4.3 Constraints

A major constraint in the project's implementation has been the confusing, often uncoordinated array of international agencies all working in the penitentiary field. Other factors affecting the implementation of the project include the following:

a) the fast changing landscape of Afghan institutions and personnel and the difficult dialogue (not to mention cooperation) between ministries relevant to the project, namely the MoJ, MWA and MSA. Each of them working as independent institutions rather than being part of a single government with shared goals and objectives, it makes it difficult to identify the right interlocutor for a given action;

b) the deteriorating security situation in the country. Jalalabad Road, which links the airport to the city centre and which is the only way to reach Pol-e Charki, has been the scene of a number of bomb attacks in the last months. Travel restrictions affecting that area, therefore, sometimes delayed implementation and delivery of project activities. The latter were also caused by the security situation inside the closed institutions, whose fragility occasionally prevented activities from taking place as envisaged;

c) Afghan institutions themselves represent a real concern. Project AFG/S47 imposed very little demands on the Afghan counterpart, with the sole exception of Immediate Objective 4, which was interpreted, though, as involving advocacy on the part of the UNODC rather than requesting the actual establishment of safe houses from the Government. Even so, however, it is not really clear how much of the work done and progress achieved under AFG/S47 has been perceived as such at institutional level. Apart from very general positive comments, during interviews with Afghan authorities, very little emerged in the sense of appropriation of the project's result;

d) mention must also be made of the constraints imposed by working in an environment where most people do not speak English. Such occurrence limits the possibility to establish genuine communications and is not conducive to the sense of ownership of the project's results.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Issues Resolved During the Evaluation

There were no major issues which had to be resolved in the course of the evaluation. Upon request, UNODC staff were able to provide all information on the project. The agenda was appropriately arranged. The Evaluators, however, believe that it would be sensible to foresee a meeting with UNODC Vienna after the completion of the exercise. Such a meeting, initially foreseen in the Evaluation ToR to take place prior to the field mission, was eventually cancelled by the Organization as deemed not necessary.

5.2 Actions/Decisions Recommended

Recommendations are focused on two aspects of AFG/S47: impact and sustainability of the technical assistance intervention, and project management.

a) External coherence and coordination

Given the leading role that UNODC plays in the field of justice and penitentiary reform, and in the light of the many actors involved in these fields, the evaluation team believes it is essential that a properly functioning coordination mechanism is established and effectively managed. As far as project AFG/S47 is concerned, only a few gatherings of the UNODC-initiated monthly coordination meeting convening all international actors involved in projects related to women and/or prisoners took place. The reasons behind the dropping of the meetings are not yet clear to the Evaluators as some of the justifications put forward (“people went on leave”, “there is a high turnover”) cannot be regarded as satisfactory. Yet, the utmost importance of such gatherings is self-evident and would be instrumental not only in the identification of relevant activities to be conducted/planned, but also in order to avoid waste of time, money and human resources. This is particularly true when it comes to training, a truly disorienting area, at least in the eyes of the evaluation team as per the information gathered during the mission.

Apparently, Afghanistan sees a variety of actors either currently involved or planning to be involved in the design and implementation of training courses specifically conceived for female prison staff. This is particularly true with regard to CSSP, whose training plans were temporarily halted by the premature death of the responsible person. The reasoning, however, also applies to other agencies (such as Medica Mondiale, ICRC, UNIFEM) that conduct specific training on selected issues (legal, social). It is clear that the credibility of the international community also passes through an integrated approach and although donors do not necessarily talk to one another, coordination and avoidance of overlaps should be ensured at field level by the implementing agencies. Having developed, under Immediate Objective 3, a very valuable training manual for female prison officers, it would be a real loss for UNODC and the whole intervention if training would continue to be conducted in piecemeal

fashion. Instead, pressure should be jointly put on the relevant national authorities by all international and national actors, in order to make sure that the training manual forms the basis of the fundamental training delivered to all correction officers.

b) Link with higher education (secondary education and university)

The evaluation team believes that one of the obstacles in ensuring the sustainability of the projects is the lack of links with institutions capable of providing suitable and properly trained human resources for the projects to have a future. As mentioned in the previous pages, “training-of-trainers” (ToT) activities are valuable instruments for capacity building. However, such a methodology cannot be regarded as the best (or only) way to create an internal mechanism able to ensure a multiplier effect. This is due mainly to the circumstance that ToT activities intervene on subjects who have been professionally formed on the basis of different principles and approaches. It would therefore be unrealistic to believe that a one-time course can radically and/or significantly change what they have been up to that date. This is likely to happen even if the trainers-to-be are carefully chosen among the most receptive professionals in a certain area. The solution, therefore, needs to be inspired with a much longer-term vision. In line with Lorenz's imprinting theory, the idea is to influence the primary formation of legal/penitentiary/social professionals instead of intervening only at a later stage.

If an early formation is to be favoured, then, new targets have to be identified, namely institutions devoted to the secondary education and to vocational training as well as Universities. Instead of only targeting previous generations, new actions must be foreseen to allow youngsters to acquire new/different skills and approaches before they start a career. The capacity building impact of UNODC's activities, in other words, would be enhanced if it decides to work for and with future members of the penitentiary, social, and judicial structure, providing new generations of Afghans with the tools to introduce changes in the socio-economic-political structure from the inside.

c) Recourse to international consultants

As already indicated in the previous pages, the Evaluation team believes that UNODC should prefer a “bottom-up” rather than a “top-down” approach whilst implementing technical assistance projects. This is particularly evident with regard to recourse to international consultants for the activities foreseen under Immediate Objectives 1 and 3. Although the evaluation team genuinely believes that the consultant appointed for the above mentioned tasks produced two extremely valuable pieces of work, the risk of lack of ownership of the latter is real. This risk could have been at least reduced with the engagement of a national consultant. Should national experts not be available or not have the sufficiently deep expertise required to perform the task, they should be teamed with an international expert, with a complementary and/or mentoring role, thus offering a real opportunity for internal capacity building. This recommendation is clearly linked to the previous one.

d) Reporting

The reporting system and skills of staff responsible for the implementation of the projects should be reinforced, so that periodic reports are able to illustrate and highlight, in a pragmatic, transparent, and constructive manner the substantive issues encountered during the implementation of the project. Reporting should not only be strengthened at internal level but also externally, ensuring that minutes of coordination meetings, project ideas, and any other planned or foreseen intervention are timely and adequately shared, also in written form, to the relevant counterparts or peer bodies.

e) Links with the market

Although the original AFG/S47's project document Objective 2 was meant to be developed along the lines dictated by the market, in practice no market survey was ever carried out, nor clear links with local economic partners established. For the vocational training not to be an empty exercise, it would be fundamental to ensure that the acquisition of skills becomes part of a process that starts in the prison and continues outside. This objective is twofold: in the first place, the training should not be confined to giving imprisoned women the possibility to earn (or save) some money by sewing and selling clothes, but also to establish the foundation of their future socio-economic reintegration. The prison, in other words, would ideally become a pool from which skilled workers can be employed by already-existing businesses (the example of Prison Blues, the American prison-made blue jeans brand, made by inmates at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton, Oregon USA, fruit of a cooperation between the Correction Dept. and a local company is maybe unrealistic, but still gives the idea of how many paths are available, especially if the involvement of private business is sought). In this respect, UNODC could decide to explore the possibility to collaborate with a private, profit-oriented firm in this kind of training exercise, not only for commercialization purposes, but also to ensure employment opportunities for some of the trained inmates after their release.

Secondly, the work performed by women in the prisons should not only be directed outside the institution, but could represent the tool to improve living conditions inside prisons. Under project AFG/R41, for example, pieces of furniture of the MoJ which needed restoration were sent to Pol-e Charki and given to selected inmates for refurbishment. Without entering the minefield of forced labour and prison labour being misused for private gain, the Evaluators believe that there should be a possibility for women prisoners to contribute to the management of the correction centre, for example by mending or dyeing textiles.

f) New areas to be explored

The Evaluators believe that areas in which UNODC could expand its technical assistance activities could be the following:

1. Development of tailor-made commentaries of relevant national law and international standards for prison officers. Given the generally low literacy level of penitentiary staff, such commentaries should be drafted in a simple language, and include practical example of application of the norms. Ample recourse to visual tools (drawings, pictures, cartoons, charts) should facilitate their understanding and reinforce key concepts.
2. Conduct an assessment of all training material currently available in Afghanistan specifically targeting female correction officers and/or related to treatment and/or special needs of female prisoners with a view to strengthen coordination and cooperation by different actors and to produce, in cooperation with national authorities, a consolidated manual to be used across the country.
3. Development of basic printed material to be distributed to inmates concerning health and hygiene, inside and outside the prison. The material, which could cover a wide range of topics, from drug use to family health, STD and basic hygienic rules, could ideally complement the health classes currently being held in the female wing of Pol-e Charki. Indeed, the booklet could ideally reach a larger audience than the one attending such classes, being readable and understandable also by children and becoming available, upon release, also to the inmates' family members.
4. In line with the need of the market, facilitate the initiation of training courses in other areas, among which carpet weaving, agriculture, small homesteads, including hens, goats and sheep, also as recyclers of kitchen waste. This would be particular important for those prisoners in rural areas, as learning animal raising techniques might be instrumental to a quicker socio-economic reintegration upon release.

6. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

All in all project AFG/S47 can be considered a successful contribution to the cause of Afghan women. Despite its small scale, the evaluation team has tried to highlight in the previous pages the tremendous impact that the project has had on the direct beneficiaries (jailed women/girls and their children), as well as its very significant potential as an instrument to facilitate the creation of a stable democracy. Although the declared aim of the project was to develop post-release opportunities for women and girls prisoners, AFG/S47 went well beyond and established the foundation for a durable change in the penitentiary field (with the creation of tailor-made training tools for female officers), at personal level (by working not only on acquisition of skills but also building/strengthening the prisoners' self-esteem), at social level (by spreading information, among the most vulnerable groups, on basic health, hygiene, and drug-related issues, thus also working towards the attainment of the MDG set in this direction).

AFG/S47 has proven to be a transversal, manageable project which deserves to be further developed. The criticism that the evaluation team has expressed at times should only be read as attempts to fine-tune what is to be regarded as a well-thought out technical cooperation intervention, whose outputs deserve to be become operational. Project AFG/S47 also produced various examples of good practices, success stories and synergies that should, in the view of the evaluation team, inspire future actions. The expected end-of-project situation anticipated major improvements in a number of areas, in particular an impact on the post-release socio-economic reintegration of female prisoners. Stating that the expectations have not been fully met, however, could be misleading and would not render justice to the project. AFG/S47 intervened in areas where changes will be only be visible if capacity building activities are run over a period of time sufficient to allow for, at least, a change in generation to take place. At this point, therefore, it would be premature to conclude definitely about the success of the project. What it is clear, however, is that AFG/S47 represents fertile ground upon which to continue not only the gender-oriented reform of the penitentiary/criminal justice system, but also ensure progress of women in society.

Annex I: Terms of Reference for Final Evaluation (ToR)

Project AFG/S47 - Developing post-release opportunities for women and girl prisoners

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The formal criminal justice system of Afghanistan is currently undergoing extensive reforms. With the support of UN, other international agencies and donor nations, penal legislation is being reviewed and revised, judges and prosecutors are receiving training, detainees' access to legal counsel is improving, courthouses and prisons are being constructed and the capacity of justice institutions are being developed. Varying degrees of progress has been made in all these areas, though much remains to be done.

With the establishment of rule of law and criminal justice institutions in Afghanistan the prison population is increasing. There are approximately 10,500 detainees across the country, 400 of which are women. The number of female prisoners remains relatively small, representing 4 per cent of the total prison population. But the number of women in prison has also increased over the past years, from 86 in December 2004 to the current figure, which constitutes a more than four-fold rise. The numbers are expected to grow further, as the capacity of the formal justice system is developed and the rule of law prevails over traditional justice mechanisms.

Currently the majority of female prisoners are being held for violating social, behavioral and religious norms. Women in Afghanistan face enormous barriers, social and economical, to leading independent and self supporting lives. Some women prisoners are not able to return to their homes, as they are rejected due to the shame they have brought on their family members according to the social and cultural norms in Afghan society. Prison based and post-release support activities need to be regarded as part of a comprehensive package of measures to address the issue of social reintegration in a holistic and sustainable manner.

UNODC's operational work on penitentiary reform is based on various resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council , in which UNODC has been invited to provide assistance in the form of advisory services, needs assessments, capacity-building, training or other assistance to States, upon request, in order to enable them to improve prison conditions, reduce prison overcrowding and increase reliance on alternatives to imprisonment. UNODC has developed Project AFG/S47 to support the Afghan Government in its comprehensive corrections' reform programme giving particular attention to the needs of detained women and children. Technical assistance for this reform is being provided in line with international recommendations and documents concerning treatment of offenders included in the Compendium of United Nations Standards and Norms in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice . UNODC assistance has been requested by the Minister of Justice of Afghanistan. The current project was developed consequently, and is part of the overall UNODC Criminal Justice Reform Program in Afghanistan.

Against this background, project AFG/S47 was elaborated in order to assist the Afghan Government in its commitment for the reform of the penitentiary administration and detention conditions, specifically to incorporate and target gender mainstreaming, focusing on women and girl detainees. With a total budget of US\$ 372,200 and an initial duration of 12 months, the project's main aims were: (i) conduct an overall assessment on types of offences, grounds of conviction and causes of imprisonment of women and girls, and a study on social and economic problems that may prevent reintegration of female prisoners back into society; (ii) increase the educational and vocational skills of detained women and girls in order to facilitate their social reintegration upon release; (iii) increase the capacity of criminal justice officials to respond to the needs of detained women and girls in preparation for their release back into society; and (iv) enhance follow up activities and develop community-based awareness campaigns be launched throughout the country to support social reintegration of detained women and girls. Project execution started in September of 2006.

The evaluation should examine progress achieved in light of these objectives but also taking into account the conditions under which the implementation has occurred.

2. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The overall purpose of this evaluation is to determine what the project has achieved and if it has attained its objectives successfully and efficiently, taking into account the often difficult conditions on the ground in Afghanistan. In this regard, the extent to which the needs of the beneficiaries are being met as well as what has been achieved in terms of impact and sustainability should also be assessed.

The evaluation will seek to draw lessons and good practices from the project implementation which will be used to improve future project planning, design and management. Furthermore, the evaluation must seek to measure the project's achievements, outcomes and impacts, both positive and negative.

The main stakeholders of this project are: (i) the Ministry of Justice, Central Prison Department, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs, (ii) staff in the prison system (correction officers), and (iii) international organizations such as United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)-Rule of Law Unit, UNAMA-Human Rights Unit, UNICEF; (iv) national and international NGOs, Afghan Women Educational Centre NGO, International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences (ISISC), Medica Mondiale, and Afghan Women Vocational Skill Learning Centre (MAHARAT); and (v) donors and other partners.

3. EVALUATION SCOPE

The evaluation shall focus mainly on the project's concept, design, implementation, results, outputs and outcomes. The evaluation should appraise:

(a) Project concept and design:

The evaluation should analyse whether and how the project contributed to a priority area or comparative advantage for UNODC. It should review the problems identified by the project and the corresponding strategy chosen in order to address these. The evaluation should also encompass an assessment of the relevance and attainability of the objectives and of planned outputs, activities and inputs, as compared to other cost-effective alternatives. An analysis of the clarity, logic and coherence of the project should also be conducted. Some of the questions that this evaluation should address are:

- Are the objectives of the project aligned with the current policy priorities and action plans of Government of Afghanistan, Compact, Afghanistan Development Strategy, and UNODC mandates?
- Is the design of the project technically sound? Are the project objectives clear, realistic and coherent in terms of collectively contributing to the achievements of the Strategic Programme Framework and Afghanistan Development Strategy, and other strategic instruments?
- Are response activities and implementation strategy appropriate for meeting stated objectives, with a focus on assessing project elements directly related to capacity building, coordination and sub-contract performance?
- How well do the project objectives reflect the specific nature of the problem and needs of counter-narcotics capacity and policies in Afghanistan?
- To what extent complementarities and synergies of the project with other projects implemented by UNODC in the country created?

(b) Objectives, outputs, impact and sustainability:

The evaluation should seek to determine whether results have been achieved, and if not fully, whether there has been some progress made towards their achievement. Taking into account these factors, the overall impact of the project should be assessed. This should also encompass the likely sustainability of results and benefits as well as the project's contribution to human and institutional capacity building. The beneficiaries' perception towards the achievements should be taken into consideration, as appropriation is an important factor in determining sustainability. Another fundamental aspect in result sustainability is beneficiary capacity building (have the beneficiaries gained the necessary tools and skills?). Furthermore, financial sustainability should also be assessed (for instance, once the project is terminated, will the benefits be self-sustainable?). Some of the questions that this evaluation should address are:

- Has the project achieved its objectives?
- Was a situation analysis of women prisoners in Afghanistan, to determine their social reintegration needs and challenges faced in addressing them, produced? Were recommendations made to outline programmes to improve post release opportunities for detained women and girls? Was an assessment report produced and is the report available to the Afghan authorities?

- Was training material for penitentiary staff produced on the special needs of detained women and girls in order to improve their post-release opportunities? Is the training material produced under this project technically appropriate? Is the training material available for further future use by the Government and concerned authorities to use for training of selected officials?
- Was the capacity of female prison staff to identify and respond to the needs of detained women in preparation for their release back into society increased through training?
- Were training needs on para-legal advice and counselling identified? Did the penitentiary staff trained utilize their learned skills on their day to day assignments? Were the working conditions improvement?
- Are response activities compliant with relevant UN principals and standards for the treatment of prisons?
- Have skill training needs on educational and vocational skills training of detained women and girls in order to facilitate their social reintegration upon release been identified? Was a pilot project strategy and training programmes developed? Are such training programmes in accordance with needs of the market?
- Were educational and vocational facilities established and available in selected prisons? Were educational and rehabilitative programs and activities with specific focus on needs of women established in selected penitentiary facilities? Did women gain skills through the training? Was the education provided effective?
- Was the communication between governmental authorities, particularly the Minister of Justice, Minister of Social Affairs, Minister of Women Affairs, and members of the international community to establish adequate and affordable facilities or shelters for women and girls during their transitional period facilitated?
- Is there any improvement in programming and acting in terms of addressing, country problems related to rehabilitation of women prisoners?
- What are the positive and negative, intended and unintended, effects/outcome of interventions on people, institutions and the physical environment?
- What are the perceptions of the different stakeholders, especially government of Afghanistan, implementing partners, other UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, about the overall impact of UNODC's project activities?
- How were project internal UNODC factors affecting effectiveness, including human resources logistic support, and the predictability and regularity of resources and flexibility of the budget (UNODC constrains)?
- How are project external factors like limits on access to interventions sites, human resource constraints etc. impacted on effectiveness (security situation)?
- To what extent the project contributed to the achievement of Afghanistan Compact and or Strategic Programme Framework and Afghanistan Development Strategy? What are the reasons for the achievements and non-achievement of objectives?

(c) Overall implementation process:

The evaluation should assess how effectively/efficiently project planning and implementation have been carried out. This includes assessing the extent to which organizational structure, managerial support and coordination mechanisms used by UNODC effectively support the project. Efficiency should be analyzed namely as the project's capacity to achieve the desired effects at an acceptable cost when compared to alternative approaches reaching the same effects. The role played by the field office in the development and implementation of the project or programme should also be assessed. The evaluation will analyze problems and constraints encountered during implementation as well as the quality and timeliness of inputs and the efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out. Some of the questions that this evaluation should address are:

- Were alternative less costly interventions modalities considered in designing this project? Do they exist?
- Are there less costly methods which could achieve the same outcome/impact at the beneficiary level?
- To what extent have partnership been sought with other relevant actors (including UN-agencies) and synergies been created in the delivery of assistance?
- Was there effective coordination among government, UNODC and other implementing partners?
- Has adequate and appropriate backstopping support been provided by field and HQ staff (administrative / managerial support and coordination)? Have partner institutions fully and effectively discharged their responsibilities?
- What are the anticipated positive and negative, intended and unintended, effects of interventions on people, institutions and the physical environment after implementation of project?
- What are the perceptions of the different stakeholders, especially government of Afghanistan, implementing partners, other UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, about the overall impact of UNODC's project activities?
- How were project internal UNODC factors affecting effectiveness, including human resources logistic support, and the predictability and regularity of resources and flexibility of the budget (UNODC constrains)?
- How are project external factors like limits on access to interventions sites, human resource constraints etc. impacted on effectiveness (security situation)?
- Is there an appropriate mechanism in place to monitor and assess the overall progress of the project? How have project achievements and lesson learned been disseminated to the stakeholders?
- To what extent project interventions sustainable?

- What concrete actions or measures have been taken, or are required, to ensure the sustainability of national agencies established/strengthened by the project (e.g. structural, managerial and behaviour change)?

(d) Lessons learned from the concept, design and implementation of the project, as well as good practices:

Recommendations may also be made in respect of issues relating to the implementation and management of the project as well as follow up projects dealing with the same issues. The evaluation shall assess in what ways the project design and/or delivery can be improved to enhance its effectiveness. The evaluation should identify the key elements, assumptions and risks for the development of similar initiatives in other regions. Some of the questions that this evaluation should address are:

- Do the project interventions have a potential for scaling up or replication?
- What are the outstanding needs of the prison system and concerned institutions?
- What are the good practices, and blueprint for the further expansion of the prison system reform?

4. EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation team should present a detailed statement of evaluation methods or the approach used to identify information sources and collect information during an evaluation, and to analyse the data. The evaluation methods will include:

- a) Document review: this will include all major documents, such as the project documents, progress and monitoring reports, terminal narrative reports etc
- b) Assessment (appropriateness, quality and use) of manuals developed under the project etc. (desk study)
- c) Structured/semi-structured interview and/or focus group discussion to Ministry of Justice, Central Prison Department, Ministry of Women Affairs, Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNAMA-Human Rights Unit, International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences (ISISC), Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), the beneficiaries of the trainings provided, Afghan Women Vocational Skill Learning Centre (MAHARAT), Afghan Women Education Centre (AWEC), Medica Mondiale, and other relevant stakeholders;
- d) Structured/semi-structured interview of relevant UNODC staff;
- e) Field assessment mission to Kabul, to visit among others, Pol-e-Charki (Women Prison) and female detention centre in Tah-e-Maskan (Badam Bagh area) under construction.

Before the field mission, the Evaluators are to prepare an evaluation methodology, including data gathering tools (e.g. questionnaire, checklists etc.) and submit to UNODC for review and feedback.

Following the completion of field mission, the Evaluators are expected to present the initial findings and possible recommendations to the UNODC Afghanistan office for validation of findings and appropriateness of recommendations.

5. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

This project evaluation takes place simultaneously with another two criminal justice projects (AFG/R87 and AFG/U10). Therefore it will be conducted by a team of international Experts (Evaluators) who have relevant and complementary skills for those tasks. In particular, the Evaluators should have excellent knowledge in the criminal justice and above all possess extensive knowledge on reform of penitentiary systems with the focus on gender issues.

The Evaluators should hold an advanced degree in law, social sciences or relevant field and have proven experience on penal reform/rule of law issues, preferably in West Asia. In addition, the Evaluators should also meet the following criteria:

- 1) Be familiar with the project implementation in international organizations.
- 2) Have experience in conducting independent evaluations.
- 3) Have at least 10 years relevant professional experience in:
 - a) criminal justice/rule of law and capacity building of judiciary institutions in developing countries;
 - b) reform of penitentiary systems, with particular focus on rehabilitation and reintegration of female prisoners.
- 4) Have obtained a post-graduate degree in a relevant area.
- 5) Possess excellent analytical, drafting and communication/writing skills in English.

The Evaluators are selected by the UNODC Afghanistan Country Office in consultation with Independent Evaluation Unit, UNODC Vienna, the Europe, West and Central Asia Section, PDB/DO, and the Criminal Justice Reform Unit, HSB/DO, in UNODC Vienna, using the agreed criteria and drawing expertise from the roster of experts.

6. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

This evaluation will be a joint effort between the Evaluators and UNODC. As for substance, it is critical that the evaluation should be carried out independently by the Evaluators and conduct a thorough evaluation covering all aspects of the project objectives, achievements, implementation and management. The Evaluators will have access to all relevant documents and the UNODC Country Office for Afghanistan will provide the required support for the Evaluators during the evaluation. The UNODC officials responsible for briefing of the Evaluators are:

UNODC Country Office for Afghanistan:

- Representative
- Deputy Representative

- Justice Program Coordinator
- National Project Coordinator

UNODC Head Quarters in Vienna (Austria):

- Programme Manager, Europe, West and Central Asia Section
- Senior Interregional Advisor, Human Security Branch
- Chief, Criminal Justice Reform Unit
- Chief, Europe, West and Central Asia Section
- Project Coordinator, Europe, West and Central Asia Section
- Chief, Independent Evaluation Unit
- Chief, Partnership in Development Branch
- Chief, Human Security Branch

UNODC Country Office will secure office space, administrative basic support, and travel arrangements for the Evaluators during his/her stay in Kabul. UNODC will also assist with accommodation bookings, visa facilitation etc....

Time Frame & Tentative programme for the Evaluators:

Evaluators will be recruited for 5 weeks spread over a period of 7/8 weeks.

Programme & Activity	Days Required	Tentative dates
Preparation and Desk-review	4	
Briefing by HQs staff	1	
Travelling to Afghanistan	1	
Briefing by Country office staff	1	
Desk-review of documentations at COAFG	2	
Meetings/interviews with Ministries, Departments, UN Agencies and relevant stakeholders., visit to project intervention sites	7	
Returning home	1	
Preparation of the draft report	7	
Break	two weeks	
Incorporating the UNODC comments in the report and preparing the final draft	2	
Total Working & Travel Days	26	

Note: Detailed itinerary and programme will be prepared upon arrival and in consultation with the Evaluators.

Deliverables of the evaluation:

Following the completion of the fact-finding and analysis phase, a draft evaluation report will be prepared by the Evaluators and presented to UNODC within the stipulated timeframe and in accordance with UNODC standard evaluation report outline (please refer to item 6). The draft report should include, inter alia, a detailed statement of the evaluation methods used during the appraisal. Inputs from UNODC should be recorded and taken into account by the Evaluators, as relevant and appropriate. The Evaluators are expected to submit the following deliverables:

- 1) Detail evaluation methodology including data collection instruments and Evaluation plan
- 2) Evaluation draft report with findings, recommendations, lesson learned and best practices ;
- 3) Final evaluation report.

Payment:

The Evaluators will be issued a consultancy contract and paid as per the common UN rules and procedures. The final payment will be made only after the acceptance of the final draft of the evaluation report by UNODC HQs and the Country Office for Afghanistan.

Evaluation report:

The evaluation report should follow the standard UNODC report outline that is listed below:

- 1) Evaluation summary (maximum 4 pages)
- 2) Introduction
- 3) Background (Project description)
- 4) Evaluation purpose and objective
- 5) Evaluation methodology
- 6) Major findings
- 7) Lessons learned (from both positive and negative experiences)
- 8) Constraints that impacted project delivery
- 9) Recommendations and conclusions

Annex II: List of meetings held in Kabul and sites visited

Meeting with Ms. Elizabeth Bayer, UNODC Deputy Representative Meeting with Ms. Shukria Noori, National Project Coordinator (AFG/S47) Meetings with Mr. Hamid Radifullah, National Project Coordinator (AFG/U10) Meetings with Mr. Sayed Afzal, National Project Coordinator (AFG/R87) Meeting with Mr. Jehanzeb Khan, UNODC International Project Coordinator, Demand Reduction Unit Meeting with Mr. Matteo Pasquali, UNODC International Justice Programme Coordinator Meeting with H.E. Sarwar Danish, Minister of Justice Meeting with Ms. Hangama Anwari, Human Rights Commissioner, Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) Meeting with Ms. Helle Kristin Gulseth, Norwegian International Mentor, CJTF (Defence lawyers) Meeting with Ms. Massouda Nawabi, Project Coordinator, Legal Aid Fund, Medica Mondiale Meeting with Ms. Meryem Aslan, UNIFEM Representative Meeting with Ms. Sara Rezoagli, 1st Secretary, Italian Embassy Meeting with Ms. Shinkey, Head of Afghan Women Education Centre (AWEC) Meeting with Ms. Suzana Paklar, Representative of Medica Mondiale Meeting with Ms. Anou Borrey, Gender and Justice Specialist, UNIFEM Meetings with Ms. Soraya "Sobhrang", Human Rights Commissioner, Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) Meeting with Ms Whitney A. Sims, Programme Monitoring and Development Officer, UNOPS Meeting with Mr. Abdul Salam Assmat, DG Central Prison Department (CPD), Ministry of Justice Meeting with Mr. Bill Murray, Prison Advisor, British Embassy Meeting with Mr. Bob Gibson, Director, Correction System Support Program (CSSP) Meeting with Mr. Christopher Serjak, Programme Manager, UNOPS Meeting with Mr. Ian Turner, Senior Prison Advisor, British Embassy Meeting with Mr. Jean-Louis Van Belle, Head of Mission, Belgian Embassy Meeting with Mr. John Moarse, Programme Manager, UNOPS Meeting with Mr. Michael E. Hartmann, Senior Rule of Law Officer, UNAMA Meeting with Mr. Michael R. Runnels, Deputy Director, CSSP Meeting with Mr. Sayed Yousaf Haleem, DG of Legislative Department, Ministry of Justice Meeting with Mr. Abdul-Basit Hotak, National Project Coordinator, ISISC Meeting with Mr. Terje Nyboe, Norwegian International Mentor, CJTF (Prosecution) Meeting with Project Site Engineer, UNOPS Meeting with Mr. Zaid Hadir Nasrat Al-Farisi, Resident Representative, ISISC

Site visits:

Pol-e-Charki Prison (female block, Drug-reduction clinic, male block)
Tahia Maskan Complex – Detention Centre/prison for female detainees/prisoners
Gardez Prison

Annex III: Table of objectives, outputs and activities

Objectives	Output	Activities
1. Fully assess and map existing laws, common practices applied towards accused or convicted women and girls, as well as social and economic problems, in order to effectively outline a programme of improvements for post release opportunities for detained women and girls.	1.1 Existing legislative framework and judicial practices assessed and study on detained women and their relationships with their families and the reality for their return home completed.	1.1 Conduct an assessment of existing rules, regulations, and judiciary policies generally applied between pre-trial and post-release phases to women and girls, as well as social and economic problems that may prevent their reintegration back into society.
2. Develop a pilot project strategy on educational and vocational skills of detained women and girls in order to facilitate their social reintegration upon release.	2.1 Sub-contracted NGO identifies skill training needs, including equipment requirements and runs vocational training programmes and basic educational programmes (i.e., literacy courses) within the prison and juvenile rehabilitation centres	2.1.1 Sub-contracted NGO (AWEC AFGHAN Women Educational Centre for vocational training as well as family, psychological and reintegration support) identifies skill training needs, including equipment requirements and runs vocational training programmes and basic educational programmes (i.e., literacy courses) within the prison and juvenile rehabilitation centres. It is mandatory that training programmes has to be developed in accordance with needs of the market.
3. Increase the capacity of criminal justice officials to respond to the needs of detained women and girls in preparation for their release back into society.	3.1 Development of a handbook for the prison and juvenile rehabilitation administration to use for training of selected officials on the special needs of detained women and girls in order to improve their post-release opportunities.	3.1.1 Development of a handbook for the prison and juvenile rehabilitation administration to use for training of selected officials on the special needs of detained women and girls in order to improve their post-release opportunities.
	3.2 Trained prison and juvenile centre administration explore situation in the provinces and provide training using manual to provincial prison and juvenile rehabilitation centre administrations.	3.1.2 Trained prison and juvenile centre administration explore situation in the provinces and provide training using manual to provincial prison and juvenile rehabilitation centre administrations.

Objectives	Output	Activities
<p>4. Enhance follow up activities and develop community-based awareness campaigns to be launched throughout the country to support social reintegration of detained women and girls.</p>	<p>4.1 Development of workshops and meetings to adopt general policies for community based programmes developed to allow women and girls inmates to be released from custody in order to work and conduct an independent and sustainable existence in a secure, stable, and prejudices less environment.</p>	<p>4.1.1 Development of workshops and meetings to adopt general policies for community based programmes developed to allow women and girls inmates to be released from custody in order to work and conduct an independent and sustainable existence in a secure, stable, and prejudices less environment.</p>
	<p>4.2 Facilitate communication between governmental authorities, and members of the international community in establishing adequate and affordable facilities or shelters for women and girls during their transitional period</p>	<p>4.1.2 Facilitate communication between governmental authorities, particularly the Minister of Justice, Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of Women Affairs, and members of the international community in establishing adequate and affordable facilities or shelters for women and girls during their transitional period, which elapses from the moment of release until complete reintegration within the society.</p>