



Inter-Parliamentary Union

Technical Cooperation Programme

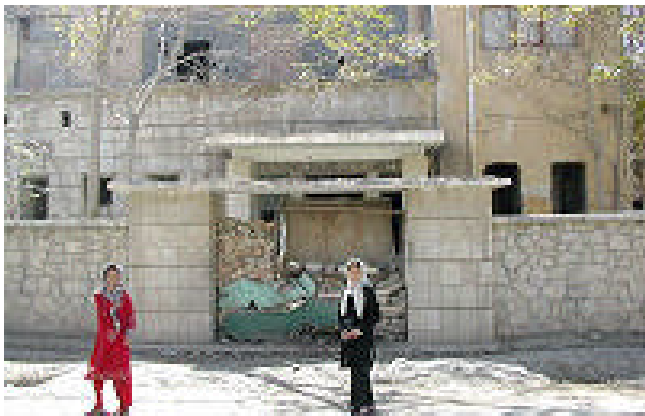
EXPLORATORY MISSIONS: AFGHANISTAN



Created 08/06/2005 Updated 13/06/2005

An IPU exploratory mission took place in Kabul from 20 October to 14 November 2004. The following is a summary report based on that mission.

Because of the country's lack of recent parliamentary experience, the Afghan authorities face a daunting challenge. Many legislative texts, including the rules of procedure of both chambers, must be drawn up even before legislative elections take place in order to ensure that the Assembly can convene. If the new parliament is to be able to carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Constitution, it is already necessary to train the future parliamentary staff so that they have a rudimentary knowledge of their work. Such training must also be extended to the members of the Assembly once they are elected.



The former Afghan Parliament Building

Apart from such training, special efforts must be made to address such fundamental issues as the institution's bilingualism (it will operate in Dari and Pashto), the full participation of women in parliament after nearly 10 years of Taliban rule, relations between the Assembly and the public, including vulnerable groups such as the Kutchi nomads, and the roles of political groups and parties in the Assembly. The numerous meetings that the mission held with civil society representatives and political figures made it clear that everyone expects the new National Assembly to be open, transparent and representative of all Afghan citizens, whatever their ethnicity. It must act as the interface between the State and the people, at the same time playing a key role in an extensive civic education programme to enhance public outreach.



Kutchi tribal leaders

The mission concentrated on all these issues, and proposed measures to tackle them. It also provided support to the Afghan authorities to help them accurately define the needs of the future National Assembly in terms of infrastructure and information and communication technologies. The mission's recommendations are intended to contribute to the establishment of a strong legislative institution, the first task of which will be to set up an appropriate legal framework for the governance, after so many years of instability, of a new Afghanistan. The new parliament will also have to ensure conditions conducive to development and peace so that the Afghan people will no longer suffer from political instability and conflict.

A programme of action was drawn up on the basis of the mission's recommendations, to address the main concerns listed above. Its implementation will be funded by a donors' consortium under UNDP auspices, with major support from the French Government, which is already financing some of the training activities for the parliament's supervisory staff. The Indian Government has offered to cover the construction of a building worthy of the new Assembly, which will have to be equipped with the latest multimedia technologies. This common funding approach should help to ensure that the international community's actions to foster democratic institutions in Afghanistan in the coming months will be coherent. The IPU, working with UNDP, will participate actively in the implementation of the programme of action.