PRESS RELEASE

VOTER REGISTRY UPDATE NEARS COMPLETION

July 19, 2005

The Update of Afghanistan’s Voter Registry will conclude across the country on Thursday, bringing Afghans one step closer to landmark legislative elections on September 18.

More than 1.2 million Afghans have flocked to Voter Registration sites nationwide in the past four weeks. Most registered for the first time as voters, adding their names to the 2004 list of 10.6 million voters. Others corrected the province listed on the Voter Registration card they received ahead of the October 2004 Presidential Elections.

“Up to 50,000 Afghan voters a day have visited our registration sites since they opened on June 25,” said Joint Electoral Management Body Chairman Bissmillah Bissmil.

“In these past four weeks, we have heard and seen the enthusiasm of Afghans to have their say in the forthcoming September 18 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections.”

The JEMB set up 1,052 Voter Registration facilities in 720 locations, covering every district of Afghanistan except one, and providing separate male and female registration sites. Remote communities which never had access to Voter Registration facilities last year were this year given the chance to register.

Each day we have been able to open all but 5 of our 1,052 sites, due to either security problems, staffing problems, or extreme weather problems such as floods.

Up to July 18, 1,230,816 Afghans had either added their names to the Voter Registry or corrected details on their card. Women accounted for almost 40 percent of registrants.

“One of the most heartening results so far is the massive increase in the number of women coming out to register as voters in more conservative areas such as Uruzgan, Helmand, Paktia, Khost and Kandahar,” Mr Bissmillah said.

“In Ajristan district of Ghazni province no women registered last year. This year over 13,000 women have registered in Ajristan. In Dasho district of Helmand province, one woman registered last year. This year 1,361 women have registered in Dasho.”

“In Mandol district of Nuristan there were no registration facilities last year. This year 7,657 residents of Mandol have registered for the first time to vote.”

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