Candidate Nominations for the 2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections have concluded with more than 6,000 Afghan men and women coming forward to run for office.

"The first and most important phase of Afghanistan’s 2005 electoral process met enormous enthusiasm from Afghans interested in representing their people and building democratic law-making institutions," said Joint Electoral Management Body Commissioner Najla Ayubi, one of 13 Commissioners on the JEMB.

Between April 30 and May 26, around 6,085 Afghan citizens nominated themselves as Candidates for the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of the National Assembly) and Provincial Councils. Elections for these bodies will be held concurrently on September 18.

Around 2,915 Afghans stepped forward as Candidates for the Wolesi Jirga, including 347 women. Seventy of the Wolesi Jirga candidates are from the Kuchi (nomad) community, including seven women.

Around 3,170 nominations were received for the Provincial Council elections, including 279 nominations from women.

These figures are preliminary. Final figures may vary after central cross checking and reduction due to withdrawals.

"This is a very positive outcome, achieved in a short time frame and under challenging security conditions," said Commissioner Ayubi.

"The turnout of women, who make up slightly more than 10 percent of candidates, is extremely favourable. The JEMB welcomes our sisters who have taken up the challenge to make sure the voices of Afghan women are heard."

In eight provinces more than 100 people are running for Wolesi Jirga seats, including Kabul where more than 400 candidates have come forward. In 11 provinces more than 100 people are running for Provincial Council seats.

Preliminary candidate lists and final nomination statistics will be released on June 4 for the six-day display period. During these six days anyone with a legitimate interest in the electoral process may challenge candidates on the preliminary list if they believe a candidate does not meet the eligibility criteria.

Exclusions will be made public between July 2 and 7. Excluded candidates have until July 7 to respond. The final candidate list will be published on July 12.

For more information please contact:
JEMB National Spokesperson: Sultan Ahmed Baheen
+ 93 (0) 70 29 89 92 baheensultana@unops.org.af

JEMB International Spokesperson: Bronwyn Curran
+ 93 (0) 70 16 44 94 bronwync@unops.org.af