PRESS RELEASE

ELECTION CHIEF URGES AFGHANS TO RUN FOR PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

May 17, 2005

The Chairman of the Joint Electoral Management Body Bissmillah Bismil called on Afghans interested in contesting the upcoming Provincial Council elections to step forward and nominate themselves as candidates in the final days of the Candidate Nomination period.

Elections for the 34 Provincial Councils will be held concurrently with Wolesi Jirga elections on September 18, 2005.

“While the JEMB is very pleased to see that more than 2,000 Afghan men and women have stepped forward as candidates for the Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections since April 30, we would like to see more people come forward to run for a seat on one of the 34 Provincial Councils,” Mr Bismil said.

The majority of candidates who have submitted nomination papers so far are running for the Wolesi Jirga, the Lower House of the National Assembly.

The Chairman reminded voters that at least one quarter of Provincial Council seats are reserved for women.

“I personally call on Afghan women to take advantage of the chance to win a seat on a Provincial Council. Between three and eight seats on each Provincial Council are reserved for women,” Mr Bismil said.

“If the seats reserved for women are not filled, they will remain vacant until the next elections, as defined by law.”

Each Provincial Council will elect one of its members to sit on the Meshrano Jirga, the Upper House of the National Assembly. One-third of Meshrano Jirga members will be from Provincial Councils.

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