JEMB CHAIRMAN Bissmillah Bissmil:

Dear Journalist Brothers and Sisters: You are all welcome here today. I am happy today to announce a new phase of Afghan Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections. On 4th of Saratan (25 June) the voter registry update will start throughout the country and will end at the end of Saratan. This is a very good opportunity for our Afghan brothers and sisters who were not able to get voter registration card during the last year registration for presidential elections and our Afghan fellows who would like to correct their voter registration card can use this opportunity. During the 27 Sunbola (September 18) elections for Wolesi Jirga and Provincial elections those who have registration card will only be able to vote in the province mentioned in their card. Therefore this opportunity has given to those who would like to correct their provinces name. For the voter registration purpose 490 registration centers throughout the country will be established. In each voter registration center there will be separate teams for male and female. Registration centers will be established in the center of each district, at least one voter registration center in each province. In some of the districts where is long distance between the village and district center and also in those areas there were less registration last year extra voter registration centers will be established. We would like to request from all Afghans to use this opportunity, thus for they will be able to carry out their national responsibility for a successful Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections. The contribution so far from the people in our process is of great value. I would like to add that the voter registration card that was used last year during the presidential elections will also be used during the parliamentary elections. JEMB is thankful for the enthusiastic participations of our country mate in this electoral process. I appreciate the elections officials for their round the clock hardworking and thank generous contributions and assistance from the International Society and United Nations.

JEMBS CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER Peter Erben:

Ladies and Gentlemen: Thank you for taking the time to hear my remark today. We have worked very hard to get this voter registration update ready for Afghanistan. Thousands of staff member of the secretariat are active all over the Afghanistan in every district to setup registration centers as we are here and we believe that we will be ready to have an effective four week voter registration update. It is very important for us to stress that it is not every Afghan that has to come, those Afghans registered last year and have the correct province on their voter registration card do not need to come. There are two kinds of new voters that need to come one is those who did not register last year and one to get a voter card now so that they can cast a vote in September the other that need to come are those that did register last year but on their registration card have a different province than where they now live and would like to vote. Many Afghans registered last year for example in Kabul but choose another province than Kabul. We estimate that a little bit more than 10 percent of Kabul population has a different province name in their cards than Kabul. If these voters intend to vote in Kabul for the Kabul constituency they must come and change their voters card so that it says Kabul as the province. This obviously goes for all provinces of Afghanistan that those who have the wrong province on their voter’s card must correct it. Lastly we would like to stress that it is illegal to vote more than one voter registration card. It is extremely important that all Afghans come together and make this an honest election. Therefore if voters already have a voter’s card with the correct province there is no need to get more cards. Thank you very much.

STATEMENTS END
**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:**

**Question:** Some days ago the Taliban claimed that they have murdered the Wolesi Jirga candidates what is your update on this issue?

**JEMB CHAIRMAN Bissmillah Bissmil:** I think about the murder of a candidate in Ghazni province you all know and JEMB already reported on this issue. During the candidate nomination period according to the report from Logar province one of the candidate house was robbed. We also have an un confirmed report from Kandahar. The Government, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense and other security organs, and International security forces all have assured that they will take necessary measures in order to secure this process. The lessons from presidential election and candidate nomination process have shown that the people are contributing to this process and we are much more depending on people.

**Question:** What are your measures for the Kuchis and refugees who all would like to be registered?

**JEMB CHAIRMAN Bissmillah Bissmil:** All the Kuchis through out the country can register and the refugees also can come during this one month registration period and register.

**Question:** What are your future main challenges?

**JEMB CHAIRMAN Bissmillah Bissmil:** I would like to ask Mr. Peter Erben to answer this question but as far as I know the Joint Electoral Management Body and its secretariat are prepared in order to solve and fulfill the future challenges.

**JEMBS CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER Peter Erben:** Our most significant challenge at this time is indeed to get ready for the 18th of September. The tightest timeline we have is to get the final list of candidates in place print the ballot which are nearly 40 million ballots, 69 different types of ballots and get them distributed by the 18th of September that probably constitutes our largest challenge at this moment. No doubt the security situation is also something that we are monitoring very carefully. We will have more and more staff members almost 200 thousand on the Election Day and obviously we need to make sure that these staff members and all voters are safe as possible when they participate in this election.

**Question:** How can you assure that there will not be multiple polling for example someone registers two or three time and then vote separately from each card, what are your measures in this regard?

**JEMB CHAIRMAN Bissmillah Bissmil:** We would like to kindly request from our Afghan brothers and sisters if they already have a voter registration card do not register again for the second time, and we would like to grab their serious attention to vote only once.

**Question:** Kuchis have got some problems they have already starting shifting from warm Climate places to cold climate places, so how they can vote from another place when they are registered of some another place?

**JEMB CHAIRMAN Bissmillah Bissmil:** As we have already announced the voter registration update will be for about one month. We have also announced the Election Day September 18. We hope that Kuchis register themselves during this process and vote on the September 18 election.

**Question:** As you have stated on your document that the campaign period starts on 26 Asad, but already some candidates has started their electoral political campaign in some areas, from legal point of view what is your approach to this issue.
JEMB CHAIRMAN Bismillah Bissmil: The official campaign period is from 26 Asad to 24 Sunbola, the Joint Electoral Management Body requests from candidates to regard this issue in their electoral campaigns. JEMB has not received any complaint regarding this issue. The Final list of Candidates will be announced on 24 Saratan.

Question: Regarding the elections the Public Information has done nothing in this respect for the people to make them aware of this process. What will you say in this regard?

JEMBS CHIEF OF OPERATIONS Richard Atwood: We are producing we do have an extensive public outreach across the Afghanistan, I think you can see some of our public outreach posters just behind and in addition to the public service announcements to the TV slots and the posters we have just over one and a half thousand civic educators that travel around to different communities and conduct face to face activities to explain people about the elections and at the moment about the registration.

Question: During the presidential election we experienced that there were so many frauds worked at the registration cards so what are you measures regarding this issue?

JEMBS CHIEF OF OPERATIONS Richard Atwood: We will have a number of protections, first of all when a voter is issued ballots their voter registration card will be punched in a different place than last year. I would also stress again what Peter Erben said earlier it is an offense and illegal to have more than one card. Secondly the finger of each voter will be inked it will be dyed with the stain and the finger will be physically dipped in.

Question: How many complaints and challenges so far have been delivered to JEMB?

JEMB CHAIRMAN Bismillah Bissmil: Most of our journalists are in the picture that this year there will be an independent Elections Complaint Commission and this belongs to the Election Complaint Commission. This commission has three international commissioners appointed by special representative of General Secretary and two national commissioners appointed by High Court and Human Rights Commission. As far as I know more than 200 challenges and complaints have been delivered to Elections Complaint Commission (ECC). The challenges will be reviewed between 20 Jawza to 10 Saratan. During the 12 Saratan to 17 the candidates will have the right to response.

Question: Have there been any discussion on the issue of observation from this process or have you come out with any idea because as we heard some of the organization are relaxed and not thinking about the observation of the parliamentary elections what are your measures in this regard?

JEMB CHAIRMAN Bismillah Bissmil: We have the necessary preparedness for those who would like to observe this process; we have prepared invitations to invite them. I disagree with your last sentence that they are relaxed and not thinking of observing the parliamentary election. Comparing to the presidential election this year they are more eager to observe even the whole process not just the polling day. We are already receiving requests from different countries for observation.