



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs Martyr and Disable

National Strategy for Children 'at- risk'



A better Future for Afghanistan's vulnerable children & their families

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Kabul, Afghanistan

November 2004

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National Plan of Action for Children ‘at-risk’

1 Introduction

No child or family in Afghanistan has escaped the social, economic and emotional turmoil brought about by more than two decades of widespread conflict and displacement. With more than half the population of Afghanistan under the age of 19, more Afghan lives have been shaped by war than by stability and peace. More than one half of the country's citizens have experienced few of the joys of youth. They have lost much-loved ones, homes, playmates, schools; they are the generation that has lost its childhood.

Despite the peace and relative stability, many children still have their rights violated and remain vulnerable and ‘at-risk’ of exploitation, violence and abuse. Many children deprived of parental care remain in large residential children’s institutions or orphanages separated from the family, kin and country with little hope of returning to their communities.

23 years of war, civil unrest and dislocation together with drought have exacerbated poverty which is now endemic throughout the country. Traditional family and community support networks are stressed or disrupted. Many destitute families have been forced to send their children into the streets to work or beg, to workshops where labour is forced and heavy, to the fighting forces in search of income and their girls into early or forced marriage. Others have placed their children in institutions.

Collapse and fragmentation of infrastructure, particularly social protection, is a feature of this country. Community networks were seriously affected by the first decade of war. The second decade of war saw the severe erosion of traditional coping mechanisms- the extended family networks.

Even before the 1979 war, Afghanistan’s developmental indicators were low. Extended families and community were the primary sources of protection and support for children. Systems for the protection of children and the support of families were weak and underdeveloped. With an over-reliance on large, residential institutional care where family or other community solutions were unavailable, little has been done to establish community-based child and family support programs or more appropriate small family-style alternative care.

There is growing evidence that institutional care of children is now being used as a coping mechanism to replace the kinship and social networks that were traditionally resorted to in Afghanistan, to combat poverty, unemployment and homelessness.

These children’s institutions provide a degree of support to a small number of vulnerable and ‘at-risk’ children

It is now becoming clear that a new, comprehensive network of community-based services and programs are needed to provide the system of child protection and family support needed to ensure that all children can reach their full potential free from abuse, exploitation and violence.

The Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs with support of UNICEF and in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, Ministries of Education, Health, Justice, Interior and Religious Affairs together with national and international child-focused NGOs, and children themselves

has developed a National Plan of Action for Children ‘at-risk’ to guide the development of a sustainable, affordable system of child protection and family support.

2 The Challenge

The Challenge facing Afghanistan is not the *re-building* of a Child Protection and Family Support system destroyed by decades of war, civil unrest and dislocation; but rather, the *building* of an affordable and sustainable community-based Child Protection and Family Support system where none previously existed.

3 Goal

The primary goal of the National Plan of Action for Children ‘at-risk’ is the creation of a Nation where Children can reach their full potential free from abuse, exploitation or violence enabling their full participation as citizens of Afghanistan.

4 Aims

The protection, safety and well-being of children and the support of families are everyone’s responsibility. The Government has a special responsibility to develop the conditions conducive to the healthy development of children, to support families to care for their children and to protect and support ‘at-risk’ and vulnerable children by the use of its resources and powers.

The National Plan of Action seeks to provide:-

- A Framework for the development of a network of services, programs which protect children and support their families based on
 - Partnership between government, International and local NGOs, Communities and the Donor community under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, together with the Child Protection Department of the Ministry of Interior.
 - Co-ordination of existing and new services and programs (Governmental, international and local NGOs and local community initiatives)
 - Equitable distribution and provision of services recognising provincial differences and needs
 - An enhanced capacity of families and communities to support vulnerable and ‘at-risk’ children and strengthen families
- Strategic plan for the transformation of children’s institutions into broad-based community Child and Family Resources Centres
- A Development Plan for the establishment of new Programs & Services
- Guide donor participation in and contribution towards the building of a comprehensive rights-based child protection system.

Furthermore the National Plan of Action proposes a comprehensive Child Protection and Family Support system based on the existing network of facilities and services which is affordable and sustainable.

5 Scope

The National Plan of Action for Children ‘at-risk’ addresses the rights of vulnerable children to achieve their full potential free from abuse, exploitation and violence. More than half the

population of Afghanistan is under the age of nineteen. A large proportion of this group can be considered to be vulnerable and ‘at-risk’ of failing to reach their full potential. Specific groups of children have been identified as being at particular risk. They are:-

- Children with disabilities (mental and physical)
- Street Children, working and street working children
- Children in conflict with the law
- Kidnapped children
- Trafficked children
- Child Soldiers and other war-affected children
- Children deprived of parental care
- Girls forced into marriage or early marriage
- Internally-displaced and Returnee children
- Children from ethnic minority groups
- Children using drugs, and/or selling drugs
- Children experiencing abuse (sexual, physical, emotional, neglect)

Action has been initiated through a number of programs to reduce poverty-related vulnerability. Programs such as Micro-finance for income-generating enterprises and National Emergency Employment Program are making an important contribution to alleviating poverty throughout the country. The Government has also committed itself to preparing a national Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The Government has adopted a National Plan to Combat Child Trafficking in Afghanistan to respond to the issues of child kidnapping and trafficking.

Owing to the special considerations arising from these issues, separate Plans of Action will need to be developed for children in conflict with the Law and for Children with disabilities.

Although the National Plan of Action for ‘Children ‘at-risk’ addresses the rights and needs of children ‘at-risk’ generally, it particularly focuses on groups such as war-affected children, street-working and working children, children deprived of parental care and girls forced into marriage or early marriage.

6 The Context

Afghanistan is an ethnically diverse and divided country. It is now experiencing the post-conflict difficulties of severe transition with widespread poverty together with weak central government and inadequate state social protection and services infrastructure.

Critical features of the situation in Afghanistan include:-

- Endemic family poverty resulting in mal-nourishment and micro-nutrient deficiencies
- High levels of inter and intra family stress, frequently accompanied with violence
- Erosion of family support and social safety nets due to dire economic situation
- Limited social protection legislation and policies, together with limited Government capacity to provide social protection services
- The level and effectiveness of joint planning, co-ordination and co-operation between Ministries and with the NGO sector has been insufficient to address the range of rights and needs of vulnerable children.

- More than half the population is under the age of 19 years of age with little experience of peace and stability
- Of about 10 million school-age children, 4.2 million children attended school this year.
- A large number of children have limited or no access to schooling
- High levels of infant, child and maternal mortality
- Definition of “orphan” in the Afghan context, the majority of children have a living parent
- Alarming increase in the number of children placed in large orphanages
- Few large residential children’s institutions or orphanages servicing a small percentage of ‘at-risk’ and vulnerable children rather than the a wide range of community-based child and family support services and a ‘mixed economy of care’
- Placement of children in orphanages increasingly used as a coping mechanism rather than as a child protection measure
- Increasing number of street & street working children, particularly in the capital and large provincial centres
- More than half the number of girls under 16 years of age are married
- Discrimination against children with disabilities, coupled with a lack of inclusive social services for them

7 Underlying Principles

The National Plan of Action for Children ‘at-risk’ is underpinned by principles enshrined in the:-

- Teachings of the Holy Quran
- Constitution
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Other international instruments and treaties to which the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan is a signatory (refer Annex A)

inter alia

- The best interests of the child being the paramount consideration
- The primacy of the role of the family for caring for children
- Protection of children from harm, abuse and exploitation
- Participation in decision-making
- Non-discrimination
- Use of institutional residential care as a last resort
- The responsibility of the State to support families to care for their children, and to provide proper protection for vulnerable children

8 Other Guiding Principles

Other Guiding Principles of the National Plan of Action for Children ‘at- risk’ are:-

- Affordability and sustainability
- Most effective use of scarce resources
- Use and Transformation of existing services and facilities according to the needs of the beneficiaries and community
- Preference for the use of the least intrusive option to achieve care and protection of the child
- Orientation towards Prevention and support, rather than remediation
- Preservation of family, extended family and community social networks as a priority

- Use of residential institutional care as an option of last resort

All children have the right to a family. Growing up in a family environment is vital for all children at-risk, particularly those children with disabilities, child soldiers and other war-affected children, and street and street-working children.

Many children are exploited in the streets and workshops, are sent to work in other countries or to fighting forces. Girls are forced into marriage or early marriage.

Much harm is done to children by these actions- their physical, social, emotional and psychological development is compromised and their ability to reach their full potential is severely constrained.

In many cases, family poverty is the major underlying cause of such exploitation. Many families' rely on children's earnings to supplement family income. Poverty reduction strategies should pay special attention to these children and their families. A national poverty reduction strategy is urgently needed to begin to address the endemic levels of poverty and consequent harm to children.

Although well proved, however under-recognised in Afghanistan, is that long term institutional care is detrimental to the healthy development of the child. Institutional life creates additional risks for children, both during their stay in the institution and after their discharge. Institutional care can be very severe where physical, sexual and psychological abuse by staff, older children and others is not uncommon. Along with poor preparation for life after the institution, these children run additional risks as adults. Institutions cannot prepare children to live a life, they can only teach children how to live in institutions.

The best environment for a child to grow up is their family. The family and extended family should be the basis for care, protection and support of all children, particularly, socially vulnerable children. Therefore, prevention of family breakdown and the support of vulnerable children and their families is an important guiding principle and a central component of protective measures.

As noted in 'Securing Afghanistan's Future' Afghan ownership' is a critical success factor for any plan. The National Plan of Action for Children 'at-risk' has sought to develop strong Afghan ownership through respect for existing achievements, valuing of Afghan knowledge, experience and skills, respectful consideration of socio-cultural traditions, extensive consultation and meaningful participation of key stakeholders.

The National Plan of Action for Children 'at-risk' seeks to make the best and most efficient use of the scarce resources available, seeking transformation of existing services and facilities, engagement of other government Ministries and programs, the local and international NGO sector and wider community to provide the development of appropriate community-based services and programs to protect and support vulnerable children and their families.

The National Plan of Action for Children 'at-risk' further seeks to increase the awareness and education in Afghanistan in building a strong future from the child's earliest years, recognizing the importance and critical need for family support.

9 Developing a National Plan of Action for Protection of Children

A National Plan of Action is most effective when it:

- Is underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Addresses the rights and not just the needs of all children
- Recognises the unique context of Afghanistan, its ambitions, history, socio-cultural traditions and practices, and resources
- Based on international best practice together with local knowledge and experience
- Includes specific realistic priorities and goals together with achievable time frames
- Is adequately resourced together with an appropriate budget
- Involves widespread consultation and debate and includes non-governmental organizations and children in such debates
- Complements other national development strategies, priorities and programs
- Is based on effective partnerships between, government, NGOs and community
- Has strong sense of Afghan ‘ownership’
- Has deep commitment and strong political backing within the central government
- Is widely disseminated both within government and civil society
- Has its objectives integrated into the Ministry Annual Workplans
- Its implementation is monitored and regularly evaluated
- Is regularly reviewed and modified in response to changed circumstances.

The National Plan of Action for Children ‘at- risk’ has been developed over a period of time and represents the culmination of research, consultations with government, key stakeholders and participation of children, and wide-ranging discussions with key stake-holders.

The National Plan of Action is based on:-

- A series of consultations with
 - government and NGOs (local and international) direct service providers
 - government and NGOs (local and international) Policy-makers and Service Managers
 - Child representatives of ‘at-risk’ children
- Discussions, both formal and informal, with key informants from
 - Government
 - NGOs (local and international)
 - ‘at-risk’ children

Additionally, the National Plan of Action has been informed by:-

- Securing Afghanistan’s Future: Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward, Livelihoods and Social Protection, Technical Annex 13 Child Protection
- National Plan to Combat Child Trafficking in Afghanistan
- Report on the National Assessment of The Situation of Children Deprived of Parental Care in Institutions in Afghanistan
- "The Children of Kabul", Save the Children/US
- Need Assessment of Children Working in The streets of Kabul July ,2002, Swiss Foundation of Terre des Homes, ASCHIANA, Central Statistics Office of Afghanistan

- Summary Report of Child Rights Participatory Assessment with Working Street Children in 6 project locations in Kabul by 3 NGOs (AWEC, AGHCO, ECW), MOLSA, and Save the Children UK
- Aschiana Street working children, A New Approach, Psychosocial Screening Treatment Report, Dr. Sam Ginsberg, 14 November 2002
- Report of the Northern Gathering of Children's Group Representatives- Balkh, Badakshan, Jowzjan, Kunduz, Saripul, Takhar
- UN Common Country Assessment process, particularly the work of the Thematic Group- Social Policy and Safety Nets
- Discussions within the Joint Planning Committee of the National Priority Program- Vulnerability

10 Universal Support Services- Primary Prevention

Universal Support Services address the rights and needs of all children. Primary prevention services and programs aim to generally reduce the risk of harm to children. They provide for the prevention of abuse, exploitation and violence of children by laying a common foundation of services which facilitate the healthy development of children and support their families in their role as primary caregivers. They also seek to prevent the abuse of children by the elimination of the conditions conducive to abuse, exploitation and violence.

Strengthening of community relationships, promotion of inclusion of and the encouragement of full participation of decision-making in the life of the community are important objectives.

In some areas the reduction of inter and intra- family violence and intimidation is a key component.

Consultations and discussions have identified a wide range of conditions as important to create an environment which is protective of children and supportive of their development.

The conditions identified as having a high priority are:-

- Adequate income and livelihoods
- Suitable, affordable shelter
- Accessible primary health care, particularly
 - Prenatal care
 - Antenatal care
 - Infant care
 - Vaccinations

And also treatment for common conditions, such as diarrhoea, parasitic worms, acute respiratory infection, conjunctivitis, tuberculosis.
- Nutrition awareness emphasising the importance of dietary diversity and importance of micro-nutrients
- Accessible schools with sound educational programs which promote on-going quality improvement, and encourage and support the continuation of schooling until the completion of a full secondary education.
- Security and fair policing
- Enforcement of social protection legislation, particularly relating to early and forced marriage of girls, assault and violence towards children and women and labour and working conditions.

- Community awareness of and respect for Child Rights
- Adequate, safe drinking water and proper sanitation
- Community-based facilities suitable for active and passive recreation and suitable leisure activities for boys and girls of all ages
- Strengthening of community relationships, promotion of inclusion of and the encouragement of full participation of decision-making in the life of the community

To adequately address these issues will require a ‘whole of government’ response in partnership with NGOs (local and international) and local communities together with donor support.

To its credit, the Government has already established a number of initiatives, particularly the Consultative Groups, the National Development Budget, and the National Priority Programs as its main vehicles for the development of programs and services for children and their families.

It will be critical for the Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs to be fully engaged in all the inter-sectorial working and advisory groups to ensure consideration of ‘at-risk’ children and families so that policies, programs and services contribute to their protection, care and support; and to advocate the rights and needs of vulnerable children and their families when necessary. MoLSA will need to actively monitor the progress of all inter-sectorial working and advisory groups concerned about children’s well-being.

#	Condition	Responsible Agency
1	Adequate income and livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoC • MoA • MRRD • MM&D • MoLSA • Consultative Group- Livelihoods & Social Protection • NEEP • NPP-Skills Development • NPP-Vulnerability • NPP- Private Sector • Micro-enterprise development NGOs • Micro-credit NGOs •
2	Suitable, affordable shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoUD • MRRD • Habitat • Local Municipalities • Micro-finance Organisations

		& Banks
3	<p>Accessible primary health care, particularly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prenatal care - Antenatal care - Infant care - Vaccinations <p>And also treatment for common conditions such as diarrhoea, parasitic worms, acute respiratory infection, conjunctivitis, tuberculosis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoH • MoWA • Unicef • UN Agencies ¹ • Health-oriented NGOs² • NGOs
4	Nutrition awareness emphasising the importance of dietary diversity and importance of micro-nutrients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoH • Unicef • WFP • WHO • Health-oriented NGOs³ • NGOs • Private Sector Food processors
5	Accessible schools with sound educational programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoE • MoHE • MoWA • MoRA • Unicef • Education NGOs⁴ • NGOs
6	Security and fair policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afghanistan National Army • MoI • MoJ • ISAF • AIHRC • ASP • Human Rights Organisations • Civic Leaders • Religious Leaders • NGOs •
7	Enforcement of social protection legislation, particularly relating to recruitment of child soldiers, children in conflict with the law, early and forced marriage of young girls, assault and violence towards children and women, and labour and working conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoI • MoJ • MoLSA • MoWA • MoRA • AIHRC • MoM&D • Human Rights Organisations • Civic Leaders • Religious Leaders • NGOs •
8	Community awareness of and respect for Child Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • MoWA • AIHRC

¹ UN Agencies including UNFPA & WHO

² Health-oriented NGOs such as TDH, ACF, ADB, ADRA, AHDS, AKDN, AMI, BDF, BRAC, CAF, CHA, COOPI, HNI, IbnSina, IMA, Malteser, Merlin, NPO, RCA, SCA, SDF, SC/US/UK, WV

³ Health-oriented NGOs such as TDH, ACF, AMI, SCUUK and HNI

⁴ Education NGOs such as USAID, UNICEF, CARE, IRC, BRAC, Norwegian Committee for Afghanistan, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, etc

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights Organisations • Unicef • UNHCR • Save the Children Alliance • CRC • Aschiana • EMDH • Civic Leaders • Religious Leaders • NGOs •
9	Adequate, safe drinking water and proper sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoW&I • MoRRD • MoPW • MoH • Unicef • Local Municipalities • NGOs
10	Community-based facilities suitable for active and passive recreation and suitable leisure activities for boys and girls of all ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoUD • MRRD • Local Municipalities • Civic Leaders • Religious Leaders • NGOs •
11	Strengthening of community relationships, promotion of inclusion of children and the encouragement of their full participation in the decision-making in the life of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIHRC • Civic Leaders • Religious Leaders • NGOs •

11 Targeted Services- Secondary Prevention

The specific vulnerabilities and circumstances experienced by identified ‘at-risk’ groups increase the potential risk of abuse and harm. Targeted services or secondary prevention programs aim to strengthen the capacity of members of identified ‘at-risk’ groups and to reduce their specific vulnerabilities, or reduce their impact.

These services are needed where universal or primary prevention services have been inadequate or have failed to reach members of ‘at- risk’ groups. Secondary prevention services and programs are specially designed to be appropriate to the circumstances of ‘at- risk’ groups and targeted to reach them. These services may be complementary or additional to the universal services for the general population. Other services or programs may be offered exclusively to particular groups of children ‘at- risk’ and where strict eligibility criteria are applied.

Consultations and discussions have identified a wide range of services and programs as important to reducing the general vulnerability and risk of harms of children ‘at- risk’ and enhancing the opportunities for their protection and support of their healthy development.

These services and programs are:

- Targeted, special income-generating programs, including especially supporting and strengthening of hand crafts, together with sound product promotion and marketing
- Tailored basic education
- Employable skills development
- Specific vocational training
- Financial and material aid schemes
- Mutual Aid and support groups
- Parenting Education programs
- Family Support programs
- Home visiting services
- Outreach services
- Good quality child-care centres
- Peer support and education
- Community Information Centres and dissemination
- Rights awareness education and conscience-raising activities
- Community mobilisation
- Advocacy for rights defense and improved service provision

In Afghanistan, most families and children have experienced hardship arising from the decades of war and disruption. Particular groups have been identified as having specific vulnerabilities. These include:-

- Families living in poverty
- Families living with disabilities
- Single-headed households
- Children deprived of parental care
- Child soldiers and war-affected children
- Trafficked children
- Girls forced into marriage, or early marriage
- Young and unsupported mothers
- Street and working children
- Internally displaced persons
- Returning refugees
- Kuchi and other disadvantaged ethnic minorities
- Children currently or previously in conflict with the law
- Children working unsupervised or supported in domestic service
- Children working in workshops

#	Condition	Responsible Agency
1	Targeted, Special income-generating programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoC • MRRD • MM&D • MoLSA • Consultative Group- Livelihoods & Social Protection • NEEP • NPP-Skills Development • NPP-Vulnerability

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPP- Private Sector • Micro-enterprise development NGOs • Micro-credit NGOs • National Businessmen • Private sector
2	Tailored basic education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoE • MoTA • MoLSA • CG- Education •
3	Employable skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • NPP- Skills Development & Market Linkages
4	Specific vocational training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoE
5	Financial and material aid schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoM&D • WFP • Humanitarian NGOs • Religious organisations • Members of the community • Private sector
6	Mutual aid and support groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • MoWA • NGOs •
7	Parenting Education programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoE • MoLSA • NGOs •
8	Family strengthening services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • NGOs
9	Home visiting services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoWA • MoLSA • NGOs •
10	Outreach services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • NGOs •
11	Good quality Child-care centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • NGOs •
12	Peer support and education programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • Save the Children Alliance • NGOs •
13	Community Information Centres and dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • Civic Leaders • Religious Leaders • NGOs •
14	Rights awareness education and conscience-raising activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • MoWA • AIHRC • Human Rights Organisations • Unicef

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save the Children Alliance • Civic Leaders • Religious Leaders • NGOs •
15	Community mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Leaders • Community Leaders
16	Advocacy for rights defense and improved service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • MoWA • AIHRC • Human Rights Organisations • Unicef • Save the Children Alliance • Civic Leaders • Religious Leaders • NGOs •

12 Remedial Services- Tertiary Prevention

Respond to actual abuses to limit the impact of the abuse, promote recovery, and reduce the risk of re-victimisation. Work is undertaken with both survivors and perpetrators of abuse. Violators of rights are worked with to develop respectful actions, and to prevent or reduce the risk of future violations.

Remedial services are usually directed at individuals, intensive, goal-oriented with clear time-frames for involvement.

Consultations and discussions have identified a wide range of services and programs needed for children who have experienced abuse and require direct intervention to assist their recovery or prevent their re-victimisation.

These services and programs are:-

- Community-based Day Centres providing a variety of services and programs for a range of children ‘at- risk’ and parents experiencing difficulties caring for their children including:
 - Support and assistance
 - Counselling
 - Meals
 - Basic health care
 - Developmental programs including psycho-social, socio-educational, employable skills development, vocational training, recreation and leisure activities
 - Information about rights and services, programs and community resources available
 - Advocacy for children ‘at- risk’, rights defense and improved service provision
 - Promotion of social inclusion and civic participation
- Counseling, crisis, family and individual
- Family Group Conferencing for problem-solving and conflict reduction and resolution
- Psycho-social Trauma Recovery particularly for children affected by war, separation from their family, and severe abuses such as rape & sexual exploitation
- Placement prevention programs and Family Preservation services providing

- Counseling
- Intensive family support
- Psycho-social and socio-educational programs
- Practical assistance and material aid
- Parental or extended family care with support and supervision
- Alternative care
 - kinship care
 - social network care
 - community-based small family-style group homes
 - community-based transitional and preparation for independent living units for over 17 year olds
- Re-integration and support programs for children in conflict with the law or who have been in prison
- Information about rights and services
- Advocacy for rights defense and improved service provision

#	Condition	Responsible Agency
1	Day Centres providing a range of services and programs for both children and their parents including: - Support and assistance - Counselling - Meals - Health Care - Developmental programs including psycho-social, socio-educational, employable skills development, vocational training, recreation and leisure activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • MoH • Civic Leaders • NGOs •
2	Counseling, crisis, family and individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • NGOs •
3	Family Group Conferencing for problem-solving and conflict reduction and resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • NGOs •
4	Psycho-Social Trauma Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • MoH • Mental Health NGOs • Child-focused NGOs
5	Placement prevention programs and Family Preservation services providing - Counseling - Intensive family support - Family strengthening - Psycho-social and socio-educational programs - Practical assistance and material aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • Humanitarian NGOs • Child-focused NGOs • NGOs
6	Parental or extended family care with support and supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • Child-focused NGOs s •
7	Alternative care - kinship care - social network care - community-based small family-style group homes - community-based transitional and preparation for independent living units for over 17 year olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • Child-focused NGOs

8	Information about rights and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIHRC • MoLSA • Save the Children Alliance • Child-focused NGOs • NGOs •
9	Advocacy for rights defense and improved service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIHRC • MoLSA • Save the Children Alliance • Civic Leaders • Religious Leaders • Child-focused NGOs • NGOs •

13 Transforming Children’s Institutions.

The current system provides only a small percentage of the children in need of protection, care or support in the form of long-term residential institutional care. The majority of ‘at-risk’ or vulnerable children and their families receive no support. Long-term residential institutional care is expensive and the least appropriate form of protection, care or support. International research consistently shows that long-term residential institutional care is less effective than community-based child protection and family support programs. It is also between 7 and 12 times more expensive.

The report on a National Assessment of the Situation of Children deprived of parental care in institutions in Afghanistan documenting research undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs with support of Unicef shows that of the approximately 8,000 children living in residential children’s institutions throughout the country.

- about 1/3 (around 2,300 children nation-wide) do not need the long term care provided by residential children’s institutions; and could be returned to the full-time care of their family or extended family with minimal support
- about 1/3 (around 2,300 children nation-wide) do not need the long term care provided by residential children’s institutions; and could be returned to the care of their family, extended family or social network with significant support and access to a range of community-based services and programs
- about 1/3 (around 2,300 children nation-wide) are not able to be cared for by their family, extended family or within their social network at this time; and will require alternative care.

The current network of private and state-run children’s institutions represent a significant investment and resource of

- Facilities
- Staff
- Expertise
- Community esteem
- Donor interest and involvement

These resources offer the basis for the transformation of the existing network of large residential children’s institutions and orphanages into an affordable and sustainable, comprehensive Child Protection and Family Support system. The transformation of

orphanages into the Child and Family Resource Centres will permit the provision of a range of community based child protection and family support reaching

The establishment of a comprehensive Child Protection and Family Support system requires:-

- Establishment of a Child Protection Secretariat within the Ministry
- Appropriate legislation, policies, procedures and regulations including
 - Adoption of the National Plan of Action for Children 'at- risk'
 - Placement Priority Principles
 - Standards of Care for all forms of alternative care including residential children's institutions
 - Regulation, registration, accreditation and licensing of NGO service providers
 - The establishment of new services such as non-residential Day Centres for children 'at-risk', placement Prevention and Family support and alternative care including kinship and social network care, small family-style group homes and transitional and preparation for independent living units.
- Staff training in social work and child welfare and protection
- Clear Gate-keeping mechanisms based on:-
 - Accurate Assessment
 - Sound Case planning
 - Clear, appropriate and enforceable alternative care admission criteria
 - Effective Referral to appropriate services
- Sound Case Planning and management, Regular Reviews together with Discharge planning
- Provision of new services (either by government or local and international NGOs)
 - Community-based Child Protection and Family Support Services
 - Placement Prevention programs and Family Preservation Services
 - Non-residential Day Centres
 - Family or community Re-unification and re-integration
 - Community-based small family-style group homes
 - Community-based Transitional and preparation for Independent living Units for over 17 year olds
- Research, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Access to Technical Advice and assistance

Child Protection Secretariat

The establishment of a Child Protection Secretariat within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will enhance the capacity of the Ministry to fulfill its mandate to protect children. The Child Protection Secretariat staffed by suitably qualified and experienced personnel supported by a Technical Advisor would be responsible to:-

- Ensure implementation of the National Plan of Action for Children 'at- risk'
- Guiding the processes of Institutional transformation & Reform management
- Establish a Child Protection Information Clearing House
- Conduct Research & Policy Development including Policy development, Monitoring Evaluation of programs' effectiveness; and Research into child protection and welfare related issues
- Propose Child Protection and Welfare Reform

- Quality Assurance including Care Standards for alternative care services , review progress and care plans for children living in children’s institutions, Regulation, Registration, Accreditation & Licensing of service providers
- Grants management, international relations and NGO liaison including the encouragement and support of NGOs and government to establish new services, preparation of proposals for new services and solicitation of funds and liaison with donors
- Staff Development & Training including Management training, Child & Family Worker training, Alternative Care training, Organisational Development and Computer training
- Provide leadership for Committee to Combat Child Trafficking (CCCT)
- Provision of forums for inter-sectorial co-operation and networking, and
- Co-ordinate services and programs for vulnerable children and their families

Appropriate legislation, policies, procedures and regulations

Adoption of a National Plan of Action for Children ‘at- risk’ will represent a clear commitment by Government to the protection of children and the support of their families. It will also guide and facilitate the development and establishment of a nation-wide network of services and programs. It clearly states the Government’s desire and intention to work in partnership with the NGO sector and the community.

The importance of a sound legal base and appropriate policies, together with an effective procedural and strong, enforceable regulatory framework cannot be underestimated. Good legislation, embodying the Rights of the Child, provides the legal basis for the protection of children. Legally defensible rights are fundamental to the effective protection of children generally, and particularly critical for the protection of children ‘at- risk’.

Appropriate legislation, policies, procedures and regulations also legitimises new priorities, promotes new approaches and methods thereby guiding good practice.

Reform of the current laws related to the care and protection of children will be necessary to provide children with legally enforceable rights and protection.

Law reform should facilitate the participation of the local and international NGO sector in the child protection and welfare service delivery system. New Child Protection and Welfare Law need to be made for protection of children in need of special protection as well as the:-

- Participation
- Regulation
- Registration
- Accreditation
- Licensing

of local and international NGO providing services for children ‘at- risk’ and vulnerable families.

However, transformation and the establishment of new services should not be delayed awaiting the preparation and adoption of new legislation, policies, procedures and regulations; service development and implementation can proceed in parallel with practice informing regulation.

Most of the actions proposed in the Plan of Action can proceed with Ministerial approval.

Progressively work will need to be undertaken to establish:-

- Placement Priority Principles, for example placement order of priority
 1. Remain in care of Family of origin with support to strengthen their capacity to care for their children
 2. Remain in care of Family of origin together with participation in Day Centre care
 3. Placement with extended family members
 4. Placement within social or community network
 5. Placement in small family-style group home or unit preparing for independent living
 6. Placement in large residential institution
- Standards of Care, for example determining
 - Number and type of staff and their qualifications
 - Quality and range of facilities
 - Assessment
 - Case planning
 - Case reviews
 - Discharge planning
 - Appeals and decision reviews
 - Family contact and community links
 - Range of programs available
 - Discipline and punishment
- Regulation, registration, accreditation and licensing of NGO service providers

To ensure quality standards of protection and care it will be necessary to regulate, register, accredit and license NGO Service providers. The requirements must be clearly articulated, together with transparent decision-making and options for review and appeal. Approvals must be periodically reviewed.
- Provision of new services

Some new services, such as non-residential Day Centres, small community-based alternatives to large Orphanages, and services for placement prevention and family support will benefit from the increased legitimacy and authority bestowed through legislation, decree or regulation.
- New Child Protection and Welfare legislation

Current legislation regarding the protection and welfare of children is inadequate for changing circumstances of children's lives in Afghanistan. The current legislation does not have sufficient provisions for all of the rights defined by the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. Afghanistan became a signatory to this Convention in 1994. It has still to make a number of changes to the Law to include all of the provisions guaranteed by its ratification of the Convention.

Staff Training

Staff represent the key resource in providing services and programs to vulnerable children and their families. As result of the disrupted education system, the war and civil unrest few staff have the training or skills necessary to support children and their families in the community, to prevent family breakdown and respond to the trauma of abuse.

The experience of working within a child welfare system which is primarily based on providing long-term residential institutional care, as the major response to providing protection to vulnerable and 'at-risk' children, develops an insufficient skill base to meet the new challenges of providing community-based child protection.

In order to provide the range of services and programs of a comprehensive community-based child-focused child protection system, staff will need to undertake significant training and re-training. Many staff will need re-training to enable them to work effectively in new work roles. Initial training will need to be complemented with a program of on-going in-service staff training and development.

Training will need to address the attitudes and values, knowledge base and skills of staff. Staff training and retraining programs need to include,

- Child Rights Awareness Raising,
- Basic Social Work Skills,
- Alternatives to Institutional Care,
- Family Support Work,
- Family Preservation & Placement Prevention Work,
- Program and staff management

Different staff will require different mix of training.

An effective training plan addresses issues of:-

- curriculum development including an appropriate theory of learning, suitable content and teaching methods;
- design and production of a range of training materials and learning resources, and
- training delivery

A separate plan will specifically address the issue of training and re-training, including the establishment of minimum national standards of work and training across the range of occupations working with children. Close observation and monitoring of all training will be recommended.

Clear Gate-keeping

Gate-keeping is the process to ensure that children are protected and cared for in the most appropriate ways and access the proper services. It ensures that children are not unnecessarily separated from the families.

Good Gate-keeping based on:-

- Accurate Assessment
- Sound Case planning
- Clear, appropriate and enforceable alternative care admission criteria
- Effective Referral to appropriate services

Case Planning, Management, Reviews and Discharge planning

Effective case planning and management, together with regular reviews are essential to ensure that all children are properly protected, taking into account their unique characteristics, needs and life circumstances. Without proper case planning and management it is very easy for children to be overlooked or forgotten within the system. It also ensures that actions are well considered and implemented. It offers the opportunity for children to participate in the decision making processes and have their views heard.

Discharge planning is critical to ensure that children are not separated from the families for any more time than is necessary. It should be commenced as soon as possible to ensure that the children are prepared for the next step in their lives. For most children this will be a return to the care of their families. Older children with little likelihood of returning to the families need to be prepared for independence. Discharge planning will address life, social and survival skills, vocational training and employment, and accommodation.

Provision of new services

New community-based services provided either by government or local and international NGOs build the range of services and programs needed to respond appropriately to the particular circumstances of individual children 'at-risk'. These services and programs would be targeted to reach previously under-served groups of children such as street, street working and working children. The new community-based services would include:-

- Community-based Child and Family Support Services
- Placement Prevention programs and Family Preservation Services
- Family or community Re-unification and re-integration
- Community-based small family-style group homes
- Community-based Transitional and preparation for Independent living Units for over 17 year olds
- Non-residential Day Centres providing a range of services and programs for both children and their parents including Support and assistance, Counselling, Meals, Basic Health Care and Developmental programs including psycho-social, socio-educational, vocational training, recreation and leisure activities

Research, Monitoring & Evaluation

Capacity will need to be developed to undertake research and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and services offered. Research will also inform the development of new services. Tracer studies, for example can help to determine the outcomes of interventions.

Technical advice and assistance

With a long history of residential institutional care, few Afghan staff have the knowledge, skills or experience in providing community-based, child protection and family support services. Technical advice and assistance will develop the capacity of the Ministry and its staff to work in new ways. Some technical advice will be needed on a long term basis to support the Child Protection Secretariat and guide the process of institutional transformation, reform management and new community-based services development. For other tasks, short-term technical assistance for very focussed inputs will be required. Ideally, the Ministry will be able to obtain Technical Advisors of both genders.

Technical Advice and assistance will be required for:-

- General capacity development within the Ministry
- Program design, implementation and management
- Research, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Social Work and Management Training including curriculum design and teaching and learning resource development
- Social Work practice and professional development

- Child Protection and Welfare Law reform and policy development
- Proposal writing and fundraising
- Technical support and guidance to Child Protection secretariat

14 Implementation

The basic strategy of the National Plan of Action can be summarised by:-

- Protecting and supporting a wide range of children ‘at- risk’ in the community by the establishment of new community-based services and programs including:-
 - Child protection and family support services
 - Day Centre programs offering prevention, development and remedial programs
- Reducing existing numbers of children living in institutions by:-
 - Family re-unification and re-integration programs
 - Sound, discharge planning practices
 - Transfer of children to more appropriate community-based small family-style group homes
 - Transfer of older youths to transitional and preparation for independent living units
- Reducing new admissions by
 - Careful assessment of children and their families circumstances and needs,
 - Sound gate-keeping practices ensuring appropriate placement
 - Appropriate referral to community-based services such as Family Strengthening & Support programs, Placement Prevention, or Day Centre Support
 - Placement with extended family members or within their social network

Where no other options are suitable, the child will be placed into a community-based small family-type group homes

The National Plan of Action for Children ‘at- risk’ will be implemented progressively and by a number of concurrent actions:-

- The establishment of new community-based services responding to the rights and needs of children ‘at- risk’ through:-
 - Facilitation of local and international NGOs to establish pilot, demonstration and long-term projects
 - Co-ordination of the work of all child- focused agencies
 - Transformation of the existing residential children’s institutions and re orientating other services.
- Development of the MoLSA’s capacity to manage and develop a comprehensive community-based Child Protection and Family support system through:-
 - Training and skilling of Ministry staff
 - Improved organisational structure and management of the MoLSA
 - The development of an appropriate policy and legal framework consistent with Afghan socio-cultural traditions and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Promotion of greater awareness of the rights and needs of children ‘at- risk’ and of rights violations within government, community leadership and the wider community.
- Encouragement of all Ministries to include consideration of the rights and needs of children ‘at- risk’ within their programs.

Integral to the National Plan is on-going monitoring and evaluation to ensure that ‘lessons learnt’ are incorporated into the development process.

In the first year

Practical considerations, including access and security, determine the priority of implementation. Although the first year of implementation of the National Plan of Action for Children ‘at- risk’ will be focused on Kabul capital and province, many of the initiatives, particularly related to system’s development, will have national impact.

The major tasks in the first year of implementation will be:-

#	Task	Resources	Implementation by	Timeframe
1	Adoption of National Plan of Action for Children ‘at- risk’ by Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalised NPA for Children & Families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister of Labour & Social Affairs 	Immediate
2	Participate in and advocate for governmental programs which develop the protective conditions for children and their families, such as National Poverty Reduction strategy, Consultative Groups and National Priority Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA Policy & Planning staff Technical Advisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA 	Immediate & On-going
3	Ensure employable skills & skill development programs address the vocational training needs of children ‘at- risk’ and members of other vulnerable groups through the NPP-Skills development & Market Linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA Policy & Planning staff Technical Advisor Child Protection Secretariat (when established) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA JPT/PIU of NPP-Skills Development & Market Linkages 	Immediate & On-going
4	Prepare a National Plan of Action for Children with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoM&D Policy Officer Technical Advisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoM&D AIHRC NVP CG-LSP Handicap International Disability-oriented NGOs 	By end 3 rd quarter
5	Prepare a National Plan of Action for Children in Conflict with the Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoJ Policy Officer Technical Advisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoJ MoI AIHRC NGOs UNAMA, UNODC 	By end 3 rd quarter
6	Develop, negotiate and adopt an Organisational Development Plan for the re-structuring of the Social Affairs Division of MoLSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational Management Plan MoLSA Planning Dept Technical Advisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA 	By end of 4 th quarter
7	Promote Child Rights awareness amongst Government, Community & Religious Leaders and wider community including children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Rights Awareness materials appropriate for different audiences Funding Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIHRC MoWA MoRA Unicef Save Alliance 	Immediate & On-going

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child-focused NGOs • Media 	
8	Awareness- raising of rights violations and harms including health consequences arising from forced and early marriage of young girls amongst Government, Community & Religious Leaders and wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness-raising materials appropriate to different audiences • Funding • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIHRC • MoWA • MoRA • Unicef • UNIFEM • Save Alliance • Child-focused NGOs • Media 	Immediate & On-going
9	Improved enforcement of Social Protection legislation, particularly relating to child soldiers, early and forced marriage of young girls, assault and violence towards children and women, and labour and working conditions particularly in the informal sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training materials suitable for Police and Judiciary • Funding • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIHRC • MoLSA • MoWA • MoRA • MoI • Judiciary 	Immediate & On-going
10	Establish Child Protection Secretariat to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop and recommend policy, procedures - develop policies for the registration and licencing of NGOs providing alternative care for children - develop and monitor standards of care - Review progress and care plans for children living in children's institutions - register and licencing of NGOs providing alternative care for children - encourage and support NGOs and government to establish new services - prepare proposals for new services - solicit funding and liaise with donors - co-ordinate services and programs for vulnerable children and their families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Technical Advisor • Office space • Operational budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • Unicef • Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 1 st quarter
11	Establish a community-based Child & Family Support Services to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gate-keep admissions to alternative care - undertake discharge planning - promote family contact and develop community links - reunify and re-integrate children living in children's institution - to support children 'at-risk' of placement within their family and community in Kabul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development • Technical Advisor • Office space • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • Unicef • Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 1 st quarter
12	Establish a community-based Day Centre providing developmental programs for 'at-risk' and vulnerable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • Unicef • Child-focused 	By end of 1 st quarter

	children and families in Kabul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Advisor • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	NGOs	
13	Establish community-based small family-style group homes in Kabul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development • Technical Advisor • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • Unicef • Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 2 nd quarter
14	Establish community-based transitional and preparation for independent living units for over 17 year olds in Kabul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development • Technical Advisor • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA • Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 3 rd quarter
15	Monitor & Evaluate implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Advice & Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA • Unicef • Child-focused NGOs 	By the end of the 4 th quarter
16	Revise NPA, if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Advice & Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister & Deputy Minister • Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA • Unicef 	By the end of the 4 th quarter

In the second year

Based on the experience gained from implementing the NPA in Kabul capital and province during its first year, the focus of the NPA for its second year will be consolidation of the achievements made and the progressive implementation of the NPA in the provinces of Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar.

The major tasks for the second year of the NPA will be:-

#	Task	Resources	Implementation by	Timeframe
1	Continue to participate in and advocate for governmental programs which develop the protective conditions for children and their families, such as CGs and NPPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA Policy & Planning staff • Child Protection Secretariat • Technical Advisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA 	On-going
2	Promote Child Rights awareness amongst Government, Community & Religious Leaders and wider community including children in the provinces of Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Rights Awareness materials appropriate for different audiences • Funding • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIHRC • MoWA • MoRA • Unicef • Save Alliance • Child-focused 	By end of 4 th quarter

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs Media 	
3	Awareness- raising of rights violations and harms including health consequences arising from forced and early marriage of young girls amongst Government, Community & Religious Leaders and wider community in the provinces of Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness-raising materials appropriate to different audiences Funding Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIHRC MoWA MoRA Unicef UNIFEM Save Alliance Child-focused NGOs Media 	By end of 4 th quarter
4	Improved enforcement of Social Protection legislation, particularly relating to early and forced marriage of young girls, assault and violence towards children and women, and labour and working conditions particularly in the informal sector in the provinces of Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training materials suitable for Police and Judiciary Funding Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIHRC MoLSA MoWA MoRA MoI Judiciary 	By end of 4 th quarter
5	Consolidate and Extend range of Child & Family support and Day Centre programs, Small Family-stlye Group Homes and Independent Living Units in Kabul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Operational budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA 	On-going
6	Re-structure Social Affairs Division of the Ministry including provincial offices according to the approved Organisational Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat Technical Advisor Proposal and Plan for Ministerial Re-structuring Staff information sharing workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA Minister Deputy Minister, Social Affairs Department Heads 	By end of 1 st quarter
7	Establish a research capacity within the Child Protection Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-assigned MoLSA staff Training & skill development Technical Advisor Suitable facilities Establishment budget Operational budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA Unicef Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 3 rd quarter
8	Establish community-based Child & Family Support Services in Herat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-assigned MoLSA staff Training & skill development Technical Advisor Suitable facilities Establishment budget Operational budget Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat MoLSA Herat Staff Unicef Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 2 nd quarter
9	Establish community-based Child & Family Support Services in Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-assigned MoLSA staff Training & skill development Technical Advisor Suitable facilities Establishment budget Operational budget Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat MoLSA Mazar-e-Sharif & Kandahar Unicef Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 3 rd quarter
10	Establish a community-based Day Centre providing developmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-assigned MoLSA staff Training & skill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat 	By end of 3 rd quarter

	programs for 'at-risk' and vulnerable children and families in Herat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development • Technical Advisor • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA Heart staff • Unicef • Child-focused NGOs 	
11	Establish a community-based Day Centre providing developmental programs for 'at-risk' and vulnerable children and families in Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development • Technical Advisor • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat • MoLSA in Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar • Unicef • Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 4 th quarter
12	Establish community-based small family-style group homes in Herat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development • Technical Advisor • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat • MoLSA Herat staff • Unicef • Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 4 th quarter
13	Monitor & Evaluate implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Advice & Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA • Unicef • Child-focused NGOs 	By the end of the 4 th quarter
14	Revise NPA, if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Advice & Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister & Deputy Minister • Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA • Unicef 	By the end of the 4 th quarter

In the third year

Using the experience and knowledge gained from the process of institutional transformation and establishment of new services in Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar during the first two years of the NPA, the focus for its third year will be consolidation of the achievements made and further implementation of the NPA in Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar. Implementation of institutional transformation and establishment of new services will commence 14 other provinces.

The major tasks for the third year of the NPA will be:-

#	Task	Resources	Implementation by	Timeframe
1	Continue to participate in and advocate for governmental programs which develop the protective conditions for children and their families, such as CGs and NPPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA Policy & Planning staff • Child Protection Secretariat • Technical Advisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA staff 	On-going
2	Consolidate the Ministerial Re-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA staff 	On-going

	structure, particularly in the Provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational budget 		
3	Consolidate and extend the Research Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Operational budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA staff 	On-going
4	Consolidate and Extend range of Child and Family support programs in Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Operational budget Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA staff 	On-going
5	Consolidate and Extend community-based Day Centre providing developmental programs for 'at-risk' and vulnerable children and families in Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Operational budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA staff 	On-going
6	Consolidate and Extend community-based small family-style group homes in Kabul & Herat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Operational budget Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA staff 	On-going
7	Promote Child Rights awareness amongst Government, Community & Religious Leaders and wider community including children in the remaining province.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Rights Awareness materials appropriate for different audiences Funding Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIHRC MoWA MoRA Unicef Save Alliance Child-focused NGOs Media 	By end of 4 th quarter
8	Awareness- raising of rights violations and harms including health consequences arising from forced and early marriage of young girls amongst Government, Community & Religious Leaders and wider community in the remaining provinces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness-raising materials appropriate to different audiences Funding Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIHRC MoWA MoRA Unicef Save Alliance Child-focused NGOs Media 	By end of 4 th quarter
9	Improved enforcement of Social Protection legislation, particularly relating to early and forced marriage of young girls, assault and violence towards children and women, and labour and working conditions particularly in the informal sector in the remaining provinces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training materials suitable for Police and Judiciary Funding Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIHRC MoLSA MoWA MoRA MoI Judiciary 	By end of 4 th quarter
10	Establish community-based small Family-style Group Homes in Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-assigned MoLSA staff Training & skill development Technical Advisor Suitable facilities Establishment budget Operational budget Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat MoLSA Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar staff Unicef Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 4 th quarter
11	Establish community-based transitional and preparation for independent living units for over 17 year olds in Herat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-assigned MoLSA staff Training & skill development Technical Advisor Suitable facilities Establishment budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat MoLSA Herat staff Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 2 nd quarter

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational budget Partner NGOs 		
12	Establish Child and Family support programs in 14 other Provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-assigned MoLSA staff Training & skill development Suitable facilities Establishment budget Operational budget Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat MoLSA Provincial staff Unicef Child-focussed NGOs 	By end of 2 nd quarter
13	Establish community-based Day Centre providing developmental programs for 'at-risk' and vulnerable children and families in 14 other Provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-assigned MoLSA staff Training & skill development Suitable facilities Establishment budget Operational budget Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat MoLSA Provincial staff Unicef Child-focussed NGOs 	By end of 3 rd quarter
14	Establish specialist Child Protection Services in Kabul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA Re-assigned MoLSA staff Training & skill development Suitable facilities Establishment budget Operational budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat MoLSA Provincial staff Unicef Child-focussed NGOs 	On-going
15	Monitor & Evaluate implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA Unicef Child-focussed NGOs 	By end of 4 th quarter
16	Revise NPA, if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister & Deputy Minister Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA Unicef 	By end of 4 th quarter

In the fourth year

Using the experience and knowledge gained from the process of institutional transformation and establishment of new services in Kabul, Herat, Mazhar-e-Sharif and Kandahar during the first three years of the NPA, the focus for its fourth year will be consolidation of the achievements made and the implementation of the NPA in 14 other provinces.

The major tasks for the fourth year of the NPA will be:-

#	Task	Resources	Implementation by	Timeframe
1	Continue to participate in and advocate for governmental programs which develop the protective conditions for children and their families, such as CGs and NPPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLSA Policy & Planning staff Child Protection Secretariat Technical Advisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat 	On-going
2	Extend range of Child and Family support programs in Kabul, Herat,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Operational budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Secretariat 	On-going

	Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA Provincial staff • Unicef • Child-focussed NGOs 	
3	Consolidate community-based Day Centre providing developmental programs for 'at-risk' and vulnerable children and families in the 14 provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoLSA staff 	On-going
4	Further develop community-based Day Centre programs in Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat • MoLSA Provincial staff • Unicef • Child-focussed NGOs 	On-going
5	Consolidate and Extend community-based small family-style group homes in Kabul, Herat Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat • MoLSA Provincial staff • Unicef • Child-focussed NGOs 	On-going
6	Consolidate community-based transitional and preparation for independent living units for over 17 year olds in Herat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development • Technical Advisor • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat • MoLSA Herat staff • Unicef • Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 2 nd quarter
7	Establish community-based transitional and preparation for independent living units for over 17 year olds in Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development • Technical Advisor • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat • MoLSA Herat staff • Unicef • Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 2 nd quarter
8	Establish community-based small Family-style Group Homes in 14 provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development • Technical Advisor • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat • MoLSA Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar staff • Unicef • Child-focused NGOs 	By end of 4th quarter
9	Consolidate Child and Family support programs in 14 other Provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat • MoLSA Provincial staff • Unicef • Child-focussed NGOs 	By end of 2 nd quarter
10	Establish Child and Family support programs in remaining Provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat • MoLSA 	By end of 2 nd quarter

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial staff • Unicef • Child-focussed NGOs 	
11	Establish community-based Day Centre providing developmental programs for 'at-risk' and vulnerable children and families in remaining Provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat • MoLSA Provincial staff • Unicef • Child-focussed NGOs 	By end of 3 rd quarter
12	Establish specialist Child Protection Services in Herat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA • Re-assigned MoLSA staff • Training & skill development • Suitable facilities • Establishment budget • Operational budget • Partner NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat • MoLSA Provincial staff • Unicef • Child-focussed NGOs 	On- going
13	Monitor & Evaluate implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA • Unicef • Child-focussed NGOs 	By end of 4 th quarter
14	Revise NPA, if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister & Deputy Minister • Child Protection Secretariat-MoLSA • Unicef 	By end of 4 th quarter

In subsequent years

In subsequent years, the major tasks will be the consolidation of the existing new programs and the development of new regionally-relevant services and programs. Community-based small Family-style Group Homes and Transitional and Independent Living Units will be established in the remaining provinces. Further implementation of more specialised programs may be considered particularly for Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar.

A system-wide review of progress and evaluation of services and programs should be undertaken. It will consider the preparation of a new National Plan of Action to take into account changed circumstances and the impact of institutional transformation, system reform and new services.

15 Summary of New Services Implementation

Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Subsequent years
Child & Family Support Services	Kabul	Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar	14 Provinces	Remaining Provinces	
Day Centres	Kabul	Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar	14 Provinces	Remaining Provinces	
Small Family-style Group Homes	Kabul	Herat	Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar	14 Provinces	Remaining Provinces
Transitional & Independent Living Units	Kabul		Herat	Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar	Remaining Provinces
Specialised Services			Kabul	Herat	Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar

16 Conclusions

The National Plan of Action for Children 'at-risk' maps a pathway for Afghan children to achieve their full potential free from abuse, exploitation and harm. The National Plan establishes a framework for the establishment on a three level protection system based on 'whole of government' action, together with transformation of the existing orphanages into a community-based Child and Family Support Centre providing an affordable and sustainable comprehensive community-based system of protection, care and support to 'at-risk' and vulnerable children and their families.

The National Plan provides the framework for effective partnerships between government, local and international NGOs and the community.

A nation's worth is judged by the way it cares for its most vulnerable members- its children. The National Plan of Action for Children 'at-risk' works towards a better future for Afghanistan's vulnerable children & their families

17 Annexes

17.1 Annex A:

International Agreements Concluded Between Afghanistan and the United Nations

Status of Major International Human Rights Instruments for Afghanistan

Title	Date of Accession or Ratification
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	1983
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	1983
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	1983
Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	N/A
Second Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil Political Rights Aiming at the Abolition of the Death Penalty, 1989	N/A
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	2003
Optional Protocol to the CEDAW	N/A
Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	1987
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1994
Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	2003
Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	2002
International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, 1973	07/1983
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	03/1956
Slavery Convention, 1926, and Protocol Amending the Slavery Convention, 1953	08/1954
Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956	11/1966
Convention on the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 1950	05/1985
Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field, 1949	09/1956
Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea, 1949	09/1956

Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, 1949	09/1956
Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 1949	09/1956

Status of International Labour Instruments for Afghanistan

Convention	Date of Accession or Ratification
Fundamental Conventions	
C.98 Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949	N/A
C.105 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957	05/1963
C.29 Forced Labour Convention, 1930	N/A
C.111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	10/1969
C.87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948	N/A
C.138 Minimum Age Convention, 1973	N/A
C.100 Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	08/1969
C.182 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention	N/A
Other Conventions	
C.4 Night Work (Women) Convention, 1919	06/1939
C.13 White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921	06/1939
C.14 Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921	06/1939
C.41 Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1934	06/1939
C.45 Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935	05/1937
C.95 Protection of Wages Convention, 1949	01/1957
C.106 Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957	05/1963
C.137 Dock Work Convention, 1973	05/1979
C.139 Occupational Cancer Convention, 1974	05/1979
C.140 Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974	05/1979
C.141 Rural Workers' Organisations Convention, 1975	05/1979
C.142 Human Resources Development Convention, 1975	05/1979

17.2 Annex B:

List of Abbreviations

AIHRC:	Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission
CG:	Consultative Group
CRC:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
NGO:	Non governmental organisations
INGO:	International non governmental organisations
ISAF:	International Security Assistance Force
MoE:	Ministry of Education
MoFA:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoHE:	Ministry of Higher Education
MoI:	Ministry of Interior
MoJ:	Ministry of Justice
MoLSA:	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MoRR:	Ministry of Returnees and Refugees
MoRA:	Ministry of Religious Affairs
MoWA:	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MoRRD:	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MoUD:	Ministry of Urban Development
NPA:	National Plan of Action
NPP:	National Priority Program
NPP-LSP:	National Priority Program- Livelihoods and Social Protection
NVP:	National Vulnerability Program
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM:	
UNAMA:	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
WFP:	World Food Program