

Issues Paper Series

Addressing Livelihoods in Afghanistan



Adam Pain
and Sue Lautze



Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

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About the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)

The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) is an independent research institution that conducts and facilitates quality, action-oriented research and analysis to inform policy, improve practice and increase the impact of humanitarian and development programmes in Afghanistan. It was established by the assistance community working in Afghanistan and has a management board with representation from donors, UN agencies and NGOs.

Fundamental to the AREU's purpose is the belief that its work should make a difference in the lives of Afghans. The AREU is the only humanitarian and development research centre headquartered in Afghanistan. This unique vantage point allows the unit to both produce valuable research, and ensure that its findings become integrated into the process of change taking place on the ground.

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Executive Summary

This paper has two core objectives. The first is to build a critical understanding of the concept of livelihoods in Afghanistan. The second is to investigate the way livelihood issues are being addressed in the policy and programming processes of Afghanistan's humanitarian and reconstruction agenda.

The paper is divided into three parts. The first part is theoretical: it introduces the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework model and discusses this model as applied to conditions of sustained conflict and vulnerability. The second part focuses on Afghanistan and analyses historical and current livelihoods trends and policy approaches to livelihoods issues. The third part is prescriptive, offering recommendations for strengthening the way the government and the assistance community incorporate livelihoods into policy and programming.

During the course of these discussions, nine key arguments are made:

1. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, as developed by the (UK) Department for International Development (DFID), is a useful analytical tool for building understanding of livelihoods. The common English definition for livelihoods is "a means for securing the necessities of life." The study of livelihoods finds its roots in the combined scholarship of political economy and anthropology, and refers to the sum of ways and means by which individuals, households and communities make and sustain a living over time, using a combination of social, economic, cultural and environmental resources.

Though there is no such thing as *the* livelihoods approach, the DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Framework is the most widely-used and conceptually sophisticated of the livelihoods models. According to the DFID Framework, the basic components of livelihoods can be summarised in terms of the livelihood resources that people have (tangible and intangible stocks and assets), the livelihood strategies that people pursue

(agriculture, wage labour, trade) and the livelihood outcomes (the living that results from their activities) that they achieve. Resources, strategies and outcomes operate within two interrelated contexts. The first is the institutional environment, or the set of the informal and formal practices, rules and norms (e.g. gender roles, the state) that shape, and in turn are shaped by, individuals. The second is known as "the vulnerability context," conventionally described as shocks, trends and seasonality. The vulnerability context is that part of the environment that is external to households and over which the household has no control (e.g. shocks to health, weather patterns, terms of trade).

2. Situations of Chronic Conflict and Political Instability (SCCPIs) have generic features that generate specific vulnerabilities. SCCPIs have a number of common characteristics. These include a state with weakened or absent institutions, strong parallel or non-formal economies, existence of, or high susceptibility to violence, forced displacement of people, the denial of basic human rights to sections of the community and high vulnerability of livelihoods to external shocks and existence of serious poverty.¹

In SCCPIs, individuals and households are vulnerable to a range of specific hazards ranging from food insecurity, diseases, conscription, asset stripping, physical assault, arbitrary detention and forced displacement. The rich and the powerful may be able to manipulate economies to their advantage but usually to the disadvantage of the poor and marginalised. All these dimensions are present in Afghanistan. Vulnerabilities in Afghanistan are consequently complex and multiple, and understanding and responding to them requires a careful analysis of context and scale.

However, the analysis and programmes of assistance agencies have traditionally focused on specific vulnerabilities and have proven less adept at taking a more holistic view of examining the processes that generate individual and communal suffering.

¹ J. Schafer, Overview of issues for a research programme on integrating livelihoods and political economy approaches, Overseas Development Institute, (London: 2001).

3. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework insufficiently addresses issues of vulnerability, particularly under conditions of chronic conflict. The DFID Framework, in its focus on sustainability, fails to address the issue of vulnerability under conditions of chronic conflict. Sustainability concerns emphasise the ability of a household or community to manage risks by building resilience. It assumes that risks are external to processes, institutions and policies.

This becomes problematic under conditions of chronic conflict where questions of power are paramount and building a sustainable livelihoods may actually invite violence. For example, farmers in fertile but conflict-ridden zones of Sudan produce only the bare minimum because they know that surplus production will be looted by various militias.

Agencies must appreciate that increasing resilience may also lead to increasing exposure to risk. Therefore, the causes of risk need to be understood and addressed.

4. There are practical limitations to the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. First, there is a weak linkage between the theoretical framework and the processes of decision-making that shape the response to a crisis. Mechanisms that trigger humanitarian responses often have little to do with actual vulnerabilities, but are instead driven by available donor resources, prevailing political considerations and the traditional organising principles of response agencies. Second, there is a near universal lack of coherence among approaches with respect to livelihood frameworks, and few organisations have considered the full adoption of a livelihoods approach to their programming. Third, humanitarian agencies have yet to reconcile the way they do business with the necessary investments of time, the compromises of visibility and the need for effective livelihoods programming. Finally, there is a dearth of quality, technical and practical guidance for livelihood interventions under chronic conflict, starting from the weaknesses of the livelihoods model itself, to the lack of practical training for staff, to few mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

5. Pre-1978 evidence supports a picture of diverse livelihoods in Afghanistan determined by climate and geography combined with historical trajectories of change.

Despite the widespread view that agriculture is the main source of livelihoods for Afghans, this represents only part of the story. Levels of agricultural production have fluctuated since 1978, falling dramatically during the Soviet era, rising substantially during the 1990s but falling from 1998 onwards as the result of the severe drought. Such rainfall fluctuation results in households adopting diverse and flexible strategies. These have included seasonal and long-term mobility. Moreover, the diversity of landscape underpins variation in food production environments and has created various patterns of access to food through production, market and exchange mechanisms. Seasonal labour movement, trade and remittances have played a crucial role in these.

6. Livelihoods post-1978 have been driven by key structural events that have induced household responses including movement, diversification, asset depletion and a declining role for agriculture in rural areas. However, much is still unknown. The phases of the conflict over the last 25 years combined with drought have been major structural determinants of livelihood changes.

One such phenomenon is the movement of people. Though migration has historical roots in Afghanistan, forced movements of whole or parts of households have set in place a longer-term dynamic that is leading to multi-locational households and mobile livelihoods. This has served to blur the distinction between rural and urban and promote financial flows across space, both urban to rural and rural to urban. Though these changes can be generalised, an analysis of household vulnerabilities and responses to such forced migration must be understood in context and examined with respect to socio-economic status, gender and ethnicity, the contingency of history, location and household assets.

Similarly, the response of households in a context of war and a black market economy confounded with drought have resulted in multi-layered livelihood changes that have not been well understood or described. Before the drought households diversified into low-risk activities in order to maintain asset bases and assure food security in what was a high-risk environment. Not all strategies were pursued within the context of

a formal economy. The drought deepened these strategies, pushing many households into depletion of essential assets - land, livestock - and of social and human capitals. Balanced against this was the survival of trading systems, a remittance economy and the benefits and profits accrued by those who have kept or accumulated resources.

Such responses should not come as a surprise. The long-term trends of diversification out of agriculture, the rise of non-farm income, the emergence of multi-locational houses and a merging of urban and rural spaces is a characteristic of many Asian rural economies.

7. The development and implementation of policy is a problematic process. An understanding of how policy is generated is essential to assessing the impacts that these policies have on livelihoods.

In Afghanistan, policy seems to be focused on classic, "authoritative" analysis rather than contextual, participant-based views. Policy is being established at a bewildering speed in Kabul with key influences probably related less to an understanding of the Afghanistan context, than to the events of September 11th, political priorities, a false sense of urgency and a "Washington consensus" with motifs of a light enabling state, lean efficient civil service and an active private sector. There is a need for systematic investigation of policy processes.

8. The Natural Resource and Agricultural Needs Assessment, taken as an example of how livelihoods are currently incorporated into policy and programming, fails to address its own goals. The draft Comprehensive Needs Assessment of the Natural Resources and Agriculture Sector (NRAS) is a key document with respect to responding to livelihood needs. In its own view some 85 percent of the population is engaged in the rural sector, and so it establishes a goal of seeking to improve livelihoods. However, the details of the assessment focus on classic sub-sectoral outputs. Livelihoods are not analysed and the connections between outputs, outcomes and impacts do not connect with the overall goal. One of the working assumptions of the document - that community-driven priorities can address

disparities in asset distribution - is highly questionable and denies the realities of power relations.

The underlying assumption behind the NRAS document is that agricultural growth in itself will address livelihood needs. Agricultural growth can lead to higher income and greater employment. However, such effects are not guaranteed. Issues of debt, inequities in land ownership, divisions of labour, access to water, mortgaging of assets and other vulnerabilities in Afghanistan are good grounds for challenging the growth model assumptions.

9. If improved livelihood outcomes are an objective, they must be specifically addressed by design, implementation and evaluation. Livelihoods are dynamic and complex realities; their composition cannot be assumed or taken for granted. Livelihood diversity has increased and the range of vulnerabilities is vast, deep and potentially expanding, even as Afghanistan enters a fragile "post-conflict" era. While it is encouraging that livelihood concerns are evident in current policy documentation, it is clear that these concerns are not being systematically addressed.

To provide a better understanding in the way livelihoods might be addressed, this paper makes recommendations designed to outline issues of principle in relation to what needs to be done to more systematically build livelihood (and poverty) objectives and outcomes into policy and programming. These include:

1. investing in building knowledge about livelihoods systems;
2. developing livelihoods approaches for relevant sectors and ministries;
3. ensuring complementarity of action in coordinating structures;
4. establishing monitoring systems for livelihoods surveillance;
5. sharing information and making transparent the workings of policy; and
6. investing in pro-livelihood processes.

1. Introduction



Photo courtesy of UNICEF

Through many years of conflict, natural disasters and political instability, the suffering in Afghanistan at times has been tremendous. Nonetheless, the people of Afghanistan have survived, and they have done so primarily through their own efforts, using their own resources, such as subsistence farming, wage labour migration, strategic family alliances and negotiation with armed forces. As in disasters, conflicts and crises in other eras and in other countries, people have relied on their livelihood systems to see them through challenging times.

Looking ahead, the strength and resilience of these livelihood systems will remain critical for Afghans and for the stability and growth of the nation. It is therefore important to examine the factors influencing Afghan livelihoods in order to ensure that current national and international efforts contribute positively to the protection, development and preservation of livelihoods in Afghanistan.

It is evident that livelihoods are a central concern for humanitarian and development policy and practice in Afghanistan, and this attention to livelihoods should bode well for the people of Afghanistan. Encouraging examples are found in a range of recent policy and programme documentation. For example, the Multi-Donor Phase II Mission of the Natural Resources & Agriculture Sector (NRAS) states that "the overall objective is to improve livelihoods for all sections of the rural community," while the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has invested in "profiling groups with vulnerable livelihood systems."² The National Development Framework (NDF) emphasises the need to support the building of human and social capital, aspects that are (along with physical, natural and financial capital) key assets that form the basis of support to livelihood systems. Reflecting a national vision in support of livelihoods, the NDF states:

"We are still in the midst of a humanitarian crisis. We are keenly aware of the needs and

² M. Kane, and R.E. Aziz, *Vulnerable Livelihood Systems in Afghanistan. FAO Study Part II. Herat and Badakhshan*. Food and Agriculture Organisation, (Kabul: 2002) p.1.

*conditions of our vulnerable people ... [for] refugees and returnees ... a systematic and integrated approach will be required if we are to help them to re-integrate safely to develop secure livelihoods... Afghans have shown a remarkable ability to survive ... but there is a need to invest in livelihoods.*³

The fields of humanitarianism and development have their own discourse and terminology. These languages are specific to practitioners and policy-makers and change over time as frameworks and theories evolve, become popular and are invariably superseded. Livelihoods concepts and approaches are where the debate is now. Though the terms coping strategies, vulnerability, insecurity and livelihoods pervade the strategy papers, these terms are often used loosely, in Afghanistan and throughout the development and humanitarian industries.⁴ This paper aims to clarify key concepts with respect to livelihood systems, analysis and action. For example, livelihood analysis encourages an understanding of vulnerability not as a steady, given state (e.g. "the vulnerable") but rather as "a process to be understood in terms of cumulative conditions."⁵

This paper has two core objectives. The first is to build a critical understanding of the theoretical concept of livelihoods and of the practice of livelihoods in Afghanistan. The second is to investigate the ways in which livelihoods are

addressed in the policy and programming processes of Afghanistan's humanitarian and reconstruction agendas. This includes, for example, examining how policies are set, and reviewing whether stated goals to "improve livelihoods" are matched (or not) with concrete actions. This paper considers whether these processes need strengthening and, if so, how this might be done.

The paper is divided into three parts:

Part I is theoretical in its approach. It introduces and analyses the DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, examines this model in the light of conditions of conflict and vulnerability.

Part II is contextual, designed for those who seek a more straightforward analysis of current approaches to livelihoods in Afghanistan. It discusses the extent to which programming and aid interventions have addressed livelihoods, both pre- and post- September 11th 2001, it investigates the policy-making processes at play in and it draws on the example of the draft Natural Resources and Agriculture needs assessment to discuss how livelihoods are currently being incorporated into policy.

Part III is prescriptive. It summarises the arguments of the paper and makes a number of recommendations for strengthening livelihood objectives and impact assessments in policy and programming.

³ Afghanistan Assistance Coordination Authority (AACA), *The National Development Framework – Draft for Comment*, (Kabul: April, 2002), p.6.

⁴ P. Webb and A. Harinarayan, "A measure of uncertainty: The Nature of Vulnerability and It's Relationship to Malnutrition," *Disasters* Vol. 23, (4) (1999).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

Part I

2. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

A livelihood in common English usage is "a means of securing the necessities of life."⁶ As an increasingly established orthodoxy within the development business vocabulary, "livelihood" has come to have a more comprehensive and elaborated meaning, as exemplified by the following definition:

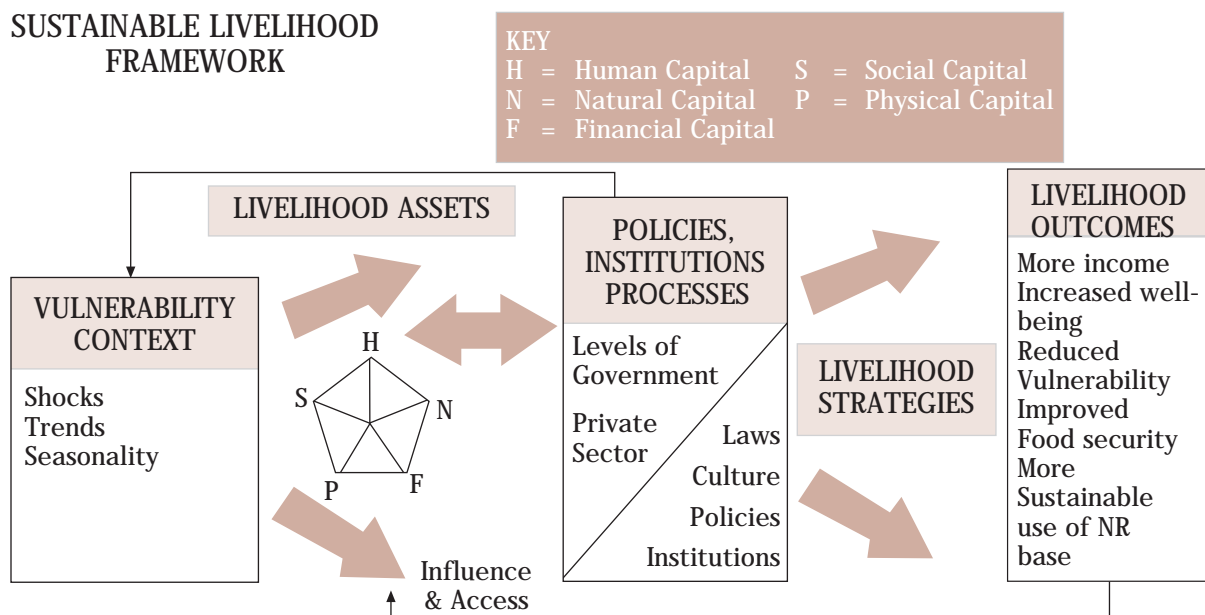
"A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base."⁷

Before discussing the details of what this means, it is worth examining select aspects of the intellectual and experienced-based origins of the livelihood concept. The use of the term "capability" draws attention to the role of Nobel Laureate economist Amartya Sen's seminal work on famines that laid the foundations for an "asset vulnerability"

analysis. Evolving rural development practice and experience, including a shift from output-driven models of small farm development to process approaches emphasising participatory methods and objectives and the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, have also played a key role in the development of the livelihoods framework.⁸ Field practice has provided further evidence that rural households in low-income countries are multi-occupational and diverse, and require a cross-sectoral perspective in relation to development interventions.

It should first be noted that there is no such thing as *the* livelihoods approach. A number of different models or frameworks that share basic components have been developed for the purpose of building understanding about livelihoods. For the purposes of this paper, however, reference is made to the UK Department for International Development (DFID) Sustainable Livelihoods Framework shown in Figure 1. The DFID model is widely applied

Figure 1. DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Model



⁶ Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "livelihood."

⁷ R. Chambers, and G. Conway, "Sustainable rural livelihoods: practical concepts for the 21st Century." IDS Discussion Paper 296, Institute of Development Studies (Brighton: 1992).

⁸ F. Ellis and S. Biggs. 2001. "Evolving Themes in Rural Development 1950s–2000s." In Ashley, C & S. Maxwell (eds). *Rethinking Rural Development*. Theme Issue. Development Policy Review, 19 (4).

and is relatively conceptually sophisticated.

Several points need to be made about the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework or "the Framework," as it is called for the purposes of this paper:

1. It is a conceptual tool. The framework does not purport to describe a reality or a truth, but is intended as an analytical tool or device designed to be useful in understanding livelihoods.
2. It focuses on people and what they do, rather than on what they produce (e.g. total agriculture production) as in classic sectoral programmes. In being non-sectoral the framework addresses a myriad of "real world" influences that affect household strategies and outcomes. An essential dimension is the emphasis on the inter-linkages between the micro (the household), the meso (the village, district) and the macro (the formal and informal institutional dimensions), and the effect that these have on livelihood strategies and outcomes.
3. The framework stresses the identification of opportunities and building of strengths rather than focusing on constraints.
4. There is no single logical point of entry. One can start from any point within the model. Working with the model does not require that every single aspect should be addressed, for example, one could focus equally on the institutional dimension or on the vulnerability context.

The idea of a livelihood project or a livelihood programme, per se, does not flow naturally from the framework; rather projects and programmes can and should use a livelihoods perspective to inform analysis, design, implementation and the monitoring and evaluation of efforts.

There is recent evidence from Afghanistan that this concept is understood. For example, livelihoods and food security has been recognised as a cross-cutting issue in the humanitarian and development programming and policy frameworks (e.g. the NDF and Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People (ITAP), coordinated by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)). Similarly, a Livelihoods and Food Security Unit has been created under the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD) to coordinate policy and actions with other relevant ministries.⁹

2.1 The Asset Framework

It is useful to examine the individual components of the livelihoods framework in turn to better understand the relations among the aspects of the model. The heart of the framework is essentially the house-hold and its portfolio of assets.¹⁰ Assets or types of capital are conceptualised in terms of natural (land, water), physical (equipment, irrigation canals), financial (money, credit, debt), human (health, education) and social (trust, norms and social networks), as per Figure 2.

A few general points need to be made about the assets framework:

1. The term "capital" has a precise meaning in economics as an asset that can increase (or decrease) in value and provide a stream of goods, services or income.¹¹ Within this precise definition only financial, physical and natural assets are the classic "capitals," metrically measured in financial terms. The addition of human and social capital to these classic three types of assets better reflects the livelihoods context.
2. All assets are interconnected. For example, financial capital can be drawn down in order to invest in human capital. Indeed one of the claims for social capital is the synergistic

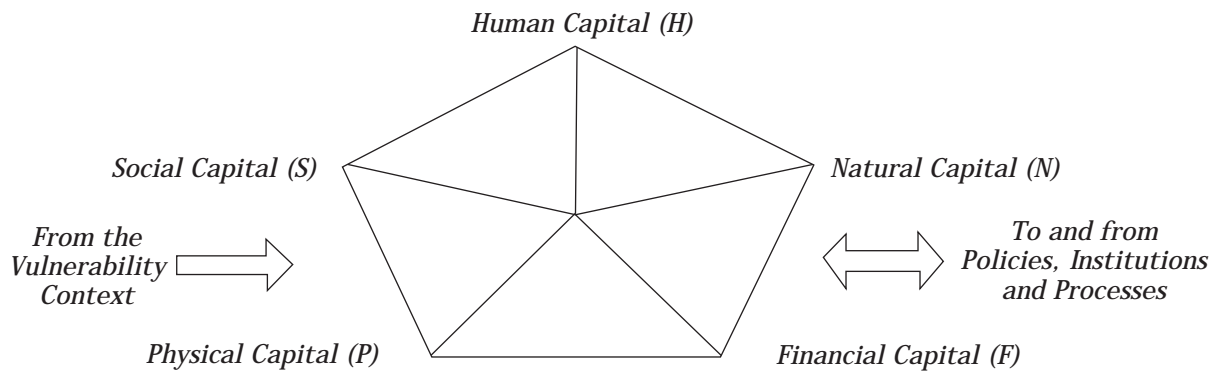
The idea of a livelihood project or a livelihood programme, per se, does not flow naturally from the framework; rather projects and programmes can and should use a livelihoods perspective to inform analysis, design, implementation and the monitoring and evaluation of efforts.

⁹ Maletta, FAO, personal communication, 2002.

¹⁰ Note should be made of the fact that the household is usually the primary unit of analysis.

¹¹ A more earthy description as "stuff used to produce things" is offered by The Economist Pocket Diary.

Figure 2. The Asset Framework



contribution that it can make to building education or physical assets.

- Households can be differentiated according to not only the assets they possess but also according to their ability to access and control them. Access and control are often determined by the "Policies, Institutions and Processes" element of the framework, as per Figure 2. For example, Afghan refugees in Pakistan may own land, houses and equipment in Afghanistan but, until recently, many did not have access to these assets. The contribution of these assets to their livelihoods was therefore negligible. In similar fashion, assets inside Afghanistan were often buried or hidden (e.g. radios, money) or were beyond the control of the household for social reasons, as in the case of female heads of household who owned but, for social reasons, could not exercise their water rights.¹²

2.1.1 Human Capital

Human capital was first included in the definitions of capital by Adam Smith in 1776, who described the capital stock of a nation as including the 'inhabitants' acquired and useful talents because human skills increase wealth for society as well as for the individual.¹³ The concept has a long and complex history, including a critique by Marx on the conceptualisations of capital.¹⁴ For the

purpose of this work, suffice it to note that human capital gives recognition to the importance of good health, life experience and education (as well as acquired or inborn strengths or capabilities) in allowing individuals and households to function and achieve their goals.

It is more problematic to measure human capital than financial, physical or natural assets. For this reason, human capital is often defined and measured by proxy indicators. For example, an emphasis on the role of education in contributing to economic growth has led to a focus on what can be measured (e.g. enrollment by class level) as proxy estimates of human capital.¹⁵ It has also led to a relative neglect of quality and values in education, and the importance of education outside the formal institutional context (e.g. "embodied" capital imparted by the home caring environment to young children and in which women play a key role).

Decades of conflict and subsequent limited investments in Afghanistan have shaped the present condition of the country's human capital resource base. For example, Afghanistan's disrupted and under-funded education system has yielded a poorly trained population with widespread illiteracy, especially among women. Many people are disabled from landmine explosions. High rates of morbidity and mortality, stemming

¹² Issues of control, ownership and access of assets are largely determined by the influence of the "Policies, Institutions and Processes" element of the livelihoods framework. This is further explored in 2.3.

¹³ M. Laroche, "On the Concept and Dimensions of Human Capital in a Knowledge-based Economy Context" (1998), found on www.fin.gc.ca/wp/98-01e.pdf.

¹⁴ K. Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, (Moscow: 1975).

¹⁵ This can be a contentious assertion. See A. Wolf, *Does Education Matter? Myths About Education and Economic Growth*. Penguin, (London: 2002).

from poor health care and chronic malnutrition, have further weakened the base of human capital. In addition, patterns of voluntary and forced migration have been sustained and socially uneven, draining some of the most skilled and educated sectors of the population (see Box 1).

Those who remained in Afghanistan were often compelled to join militias for survival, resulting in a highly militarised capacity within the country, i.e., elements of the population whose skills, education and experience are oriented more towards violence rather than productivity. Large numbers of refugees have returned to Afghanistan in recent months, a potential boon to the human capital resource base. However, these populations are heavily concentrated in urban areas, with the benefits brought by these returnees yet to be felt in the rural areas.

2.1.2 Social Capital

The notion of social capital is even more contentious and difficult to measure than human capital. Although the concept has a long intellectual pedigree, its emergence within the livelihoods framework is largely due to the work of American political scientist Robert Putnam. For Putnam and the World Bank, for which the idea of social capital has become the "missing link" to development, social capital has come to mean "membership in groups" or "voluntary associations," and is seen as a critical condition for "good government."¹⁶ According to the World Bank, social capital:

*"refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions...Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society - it is the glue that holds them together."*¹⁷

The key question is whether or not social capital is "constructible" in the obvious way that, for example, financial capital and physical capital are. How do you build social capital? What leads to its depletion? By contrast to the more easily quantified assets, social capital has some curious

Box 1. Human Capital Drains Due to War-Related Migration.

In Afghanistan, migration has been the preferred coping strategy for those with the means to fund flight, especially in the urban areas. For example, the purges of the government prompted out-migration of educated Kabulis from 1978 - 79, a trend that increased because of the war in the early 1980s. The flight of human capital from Kabul continued when the Mujahidin came to power in April, 1992, especially with the intense rocketing of the capital in August 1992 and January 1994. Another wave of migration accompanied the Taliban's rise to power in 1996. (Marsden 1997a)

Most recently, the coalition military campaign in late 2001-early 2002 prompted a new wave of migration, although (unlike earlier periods), this migration appears to have been temporary.

A general trend in migration strategies for Afghans has been for the wealthiest to go abroad for work in Europe and North America, for young men to seek work in the Middle East, and for others to seek refuge in Pakistan and Iran. Internal displacement from the cities in times of conflict has been as much urban-rural as rural-urban, depending upon the location and nature of conflict and, importantly, on family kinship ties with rural areas. The urban poor that lack rural connections or the resources to fund international journeys have had little choice but to endure rocketing, shelling and bombing.

features. For example, employing social capital would seem to increase its stock (rather than deplete its reserves as in the case of financial capital); the failure to use it leads to depletion.

The experience of Afghanistan illustrates the role of conflict and political instability with relation to social capital. For instance, while Taliban religious codes limited the role of women in the public sphere, their prohibitions also led to a covert but flourishing network of schools for girls and women. Existing social capital eroded, but new associations and organisations emerged. The sustained and careful development of Afghan indigenous organisations, such as Coordination for Humanitarian Assistance (CHA) and the Afghan Development Agency (ADA), is further evidence

¹⁶ J. Harriss, *Depoliticizing Development. The World Bank and Social Capital*. Anthem Press, (London: 2002). We return under 3.3 to discuss more critically the very apolitical way in which the social capital concept has been deployed (thus denying the reality of power and class relations).

¹⁷ www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/whatsc.htm

of the strength of Afghanistan's "stock" of social capital. The rapid influx of assistance resources into Afghanistan over the past several months, however, has not unequivocally led to the development of social capital. For example, these same fine indigenous organisations have struggled to not only absorb the resources, but also have witnessed the rapid loss of qualified programme staff to other, better endowed (and often international) organisations. Local organisations have also been subject to encroachment into carefully fostered community development programs by less strategic (and massive) humanitarian relief programmes.¹⁸

2.1.3 Financial Capital

While largely understood in its rigorous economic sense, conceptualisations of financial capital within the framework have been adapted to reflect the relationship between financial capital and livelihoods (see Box 2).

Informal institutions and a war economy characterise the stock of financial capital in Afghanistan. Much of the country's wealth derives from the narcotics trade and military sectors. Many Afghans who had assets or savings left the country over the last 20 years. Due to continuing uncertainty about the stability of the country, however, the financial capital of the wealthy members of the diaspora has been slow to return. Incoming international assistance, an important source of financial revenue in the reconstruction period, is conditioned and sector-specific. Formal financial institutions in Afghanistan remain fledgling at best, resulting in varying exchange rates and strictly informal systems of credit and savings. The management of the money supply during the conflict has been nothing short of disastrous with extended periods of spiralling inflation, especially in the 1990s.¹⁹ Poor transportation and limited technological infrastructure systems make the movement of assets difficult, while insecurity along roadways continues. Debt at the household level is high, with interest rates exceeding 100 percent through the non-formal money-lending system in many

Box 2: Financial Capital and Livelihoods (DFID) www.livelihoods.org

The DFID guidance sheets for the sustainable livelihoods framework define and describe financial capital as

"the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives. These resources include:

- Available stocks: Savings are the preferred type of financial capital because they do not have liabilities attached and usually do not entail reliance on others. They can be held in several forms: cash, bank deposits or liquid assets such as livestock and jewellery. Financial resources can also be obtained through credit-providing institutions in which case liabilities are attached.
- Regular inflows of money: Excluding earned income, the most common types of inflows are pensions, or other transfers from the state, and remittances. In order to make a positive contribution to financial capital these inflows must be reliable - while complete reliability can never be guaranteed there is a difference between a one-off payment and a regular transfer on the basis of which people can plan investments. It should be noted that this definition is different from a strict economic definition of financial capital as it includes flows as well as stocks."

areas for some sectors of Afghan society, e.g. internally displaced persons (IDPs), widows with limited family support, and ethnic minorities.²⁰

2.1.4 Natural Capital

Natural capital is described and defined by the International Institute for Sustainable Development as,

"an extension of the economic notion of capital (manufactured means of production) to environmental 'goods and services.' It refers to a stock (e.g., a forest) which produces a flow of goods (e.g., new trees) and services (e.g., carbon sequestration,

¹⁸ Waqfi, CHA, personal communication, 2002.

¹⁹ P. Marsden, "A Population on the Move: A study of the socio-economic manifestations of internal displacement in relation to Kabul, Afghanistan." British Agencies Afghanistan Group and The Refugee Council. Mimeo, (London: 1997).

²⁰ S. Lautze, E. Stites, N. Nojumi and F. Najimi, *Qaht-e-Pool A Cash Famine: Food Insecurity in Afghanistan 1999-2002*, Feinstein International Famine Centre, Tufts University, (Medford, Massachusetts: 2002).

*erosion control, habitat). Natural capital can be divided into renewable and non-renewable; the level of flow of non-renewable resources (e.g. fossil fuels) is determined politically.*²¹

Three to four years of drought have depleted the availability and quality of natural resources in Afghanistan. Water for human consumption, livestock, kitchen gardens and crops remains a critical but scarce resource in some regions, while control of access to water continues to be dictated by power relations, especially at the local level. Much of the countryside is polluted with landmines, and casualties from mines continue as people cover greater distances to gather food, water and fuel. Fuel-gathering strategies under drought conditions have resulted in severe denuding and increased susceptibility to flood and avalanche disasters, while conflict and migration have limited the available labour to maintain water systems, such as *karez*s and canals.²² Debt and migration have resulted in shifting patterns of land tenure and the expansion of a class of landless labourers and those with limited or insecure access to natural assets.

2.1.5 Physical Capital

Physical capital is generally considered to be the stock of structures and equipment used for production.²³ Years of war have also taken a severe toll on Afghanistan's stock of physical assets. Warring factions engaged in the deliberate destruction of roads, bridges, villages and grain silos and the attacks on the Salang Tunnel and the destruction of irrigation infrastructure in the Shomali Plains are but two of countless examples. While the industrial base was never strong (even with subsidies from the Soviets in the 1980s), factories today lie in states of disrepair and processing plants for farm outputs (such as cotton, oil and dried fruit) suffer from severe neglect and underinvestment. At the household level, drought-related livestock deaths have severely limited the draught power available for cultivation. Farmers have sold their productive assets, including water pumps, vehicles and tools, to cope with the drought and related debt burdens.

²¹ As defined on www.iisd.org.

²² P. Marsden, "Exile and Return: Report on a study on coping strategies among Afghan refugees in Iran and returnees to Afghanistan." British Agencies Afghanistan Group and The Refugee Council, Mimeo, (London: 1996).

²³ See www.worldbank.org.

2.2 The Vulnerability Context

The vulnerability context is that part of the environment external to the household and over which the household has little to no control. Vulnerability has potentially negative effects on household well-being, either through effects on the destruction of household assets or through removing or reducing returns to income-generating activities. These effects include shocks (to health, natural and/or economic conditions, crop/livestock health or of conflict), seasonality (of production, prices, health and employment opportunities) and long-term trends (changes in terms of trade, decline in prices, increasing population density, technology and "life-cycle developments," such as getting married, having children, growing older, etc.). The vulnerability context has been largely treated in the livelihoods framework as an exogenous factor, and practice has primarily focused on trying to build household resilience to vulnerability through asset-building strategies and diversification. Less attention has been paid to exploring the root causes of vulnerability and addressing why (and how) households (and individuals) are susceptible.

Within the Framework, the Vulnerability Context is shaped by "Policies, Institutions and Processes."

In turn, the Vulnerability Context affects the range of livelihood assets a household owns, controls and accesses (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: The Vulnerability Context

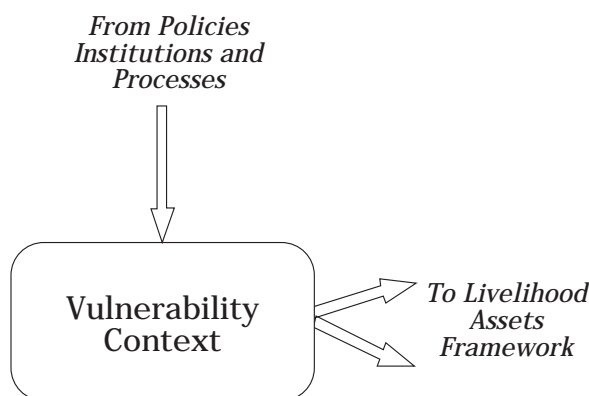
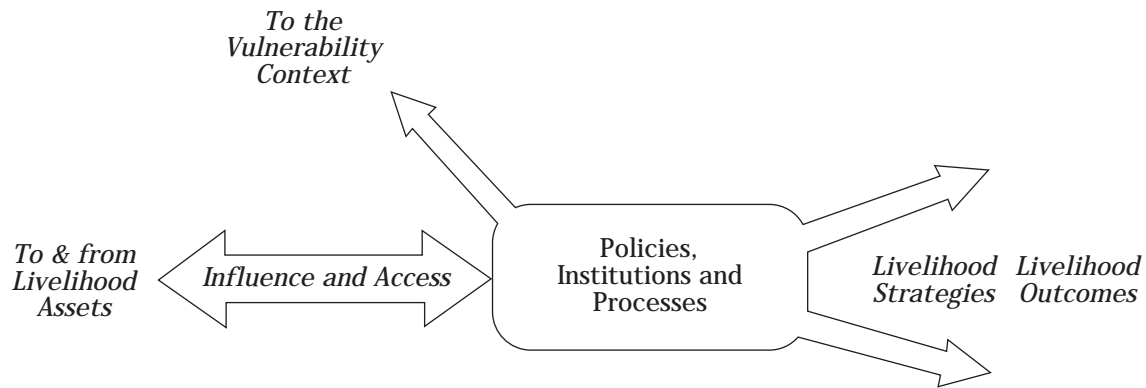


Figure 4. Policies, Institutions and Processes; Livelihood Strategies and Livelihood Outcomes



2.3 The Institutional Environment: Policies, Institutions and Processes.

All individuals and households live within, shape and are shaped by a set of informal and formal practices, norms and rules that constitute the institutional environment.²⁴ These influencing factors play a key role in mediating access to resources, shaping the context of vulnerability, and setting opportunities or constraints to pursuing various livelihood strategies. Customary practices related to marriage, gender roles, inheritance, ownership, management of and access to resources (land, water) and "real" markets all fall within the sphere of informal institutions. These are dynamic rather than fixed institutions, and are subject to continual re-negotiation and change according to context and power. Formal institutions relate to the role of the state, for instance in setting and enforcing laws, regulating markets or extracting taxes. There is a constant interplay between the informal and formal institutions.

In earlier conceptualisations of the DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Model, the Policies, Institutions and Processes element was referred to as "transforming structures and processes." This terminology reflected the important role these factors played in linking livelihood assets with livelihood strategies and outcomes, as well as the relationship between policies/institutions/processes and the vulnerability

context, as depicted in Figure 4.

2.4 Livelihood Strategies and Outcomes

Households and individuals pursue livelihood strategies based on the combination of assets they own and command and the opportunities and restrictions created by the institutional environment. Most households in low-income countries are primarily concerned with achieving food security and income in order to meet basic needs, but household—and individual—objectives go beyond physical needs. This might include the concept of "well-being," or absence of poverty, and embraces a much wider set of social values, including freedom, choice or self-esteem.

The issue of the meaning and measurement of poverty is highly contentious, hinging on the relative importance of objective versus subjective perceptions of poverty and quantitative or qualitative measurements.²⁵ Likewise, questions of sustainability (e.g., sustainable for whom, and at what cost to others?) are open to debate, particularly in contexts of grave deprivation. Households must also weigh satisfaction of basic needs in the present with the sustainability of capital and assets over time and for future generations. This balance results in a continuous trade-off between opportunities in the present and future, a process that might be viewed in times of extreme food insecurity as "lives versus livelihoods."²⁶

²⁴ D. North, *Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge University Press, (Cambridge: 1990), p.4. He makes the distinction between institutions and organisations, with institutions as "rules of the game" and organisations as groups of individuals.

²⁵ See S. Maxwell, "The Meaning and Measurement of Poverty. Poverty Briefing." Overseas Development Institute, (London: 1999).

²⁶ S. Lautze, "Saving Lives and Livelihoods: The fundamentals of a livelihoods strategy," Feinstein International Famine Centre, Tufts University, USA, (Medford, Massachusetts: 1997).

Household livelihood strategies can be broadly (and imperfectly) grouped as strategies of accumulation, adaptation, coping and survival. Households choose strategies based on the context-specific nature of risk and vulnerability as well as their own preferred livelihoods outcomes and coping capacities.

- Accumulation strategies seek to increase income flows and assets when it is advantageous to do so, i.e., when the household feels secure in its protection strategies.
- Adaptive strategies seek to spread risk by adjusting livelihoods or diversifying income. These occur as a response to adverse long-term trends or in reaction to sudden shocks that require the immediate abandonment of certain coping strategies (for example, when encroaching conflict or impending natural disaster forces people to flee their homes).
- Coping strategies aim to minimise the impacts of shocks, e.g. by seeking sources of food, income or protection, or by altering the balance of existing assets. For example, households will dispose of non-essential assets in order to better protect those that are essential.
- Survival strategies, in contrast to coping strategies, lead to a depletion of essential household assets and usually undermine the future viability of households. Such strategies are employed as a last resort to prevent destitution and death, or (in the context of violence) to deter attack.

However, the above distinctions are largely conceptual. In practice, households are likely to adopt a combination of strategies.²⁷

Most households in low-income countries are primarily concerned with achieving food security and income in order to meet basic needs, but household – and individual – objectives go beyond physical needs. This might include the concept of "well-being," or absence of poverty, and embraces a much wider set of social values, including freedom, choice or self-esteem.

Livelihood outcomes, as indicated in Figure 1 may be positive (reduced vulnerability, increased resilience) or negative (increased vulnerability, decreased resilience). Livelihood strategies and their outcomes are not static, but are constantly

evolving and changing over time. Households adopt new combinations of livelihoods strategies in response to changing institutions, policies and processes or to achieve new objectives or outcomes. Changes in the stock of livelihood assets also produce shifts in livelihood outcomes, for example, the deterioration of a natural resource base negatively affects livelihoods that are dependent on agricultural, forestry, fishery stocks, etc.

Livelihood outcomes in situations of uncertainty and protracted conflict frequently aim to build resilience and decrease vulnerability in the short and long term. Net positive strategies are those that build resistance or decrease vulnerability without creating additional risk or exposure to threats. In situations of uncertainty and protracted conflict, households and individuals adopt livelihoods strategies in the hopes of achieving desired outcomes, and to realise improved well-being and security in the process.

Recent evidence from Afghanistan sheds light on the type of livelihood outcomes that some Afghan households are presently seeking in a context of continued water stress, localised conflict and a highly dynamic political context.²⁸ Examples of these outcomes include financial stability, good health/nutritional adequacy and physical safety. Strategies to achieve financial stability and good health seek to build resilience, while measures to improve physical safety try to decrease vulnerability.

In seeking to achieve financial stability, households and individuals pursue livelihood strategies that

²⁷ S. Devereux, "Making Less Last Longer: Informal Safety Nets in Malawi." Discussion Paper 373, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, (Brighton: 1999).

²⁸ S. Lautze, et. al. 2002, op cit. In examining livelihood outcomes, it is important to note that strategies and desired objectives are dictated at the individual or household level, and are often remarkably different from what "we," as outsiders, may perceive them to be.

include holding multiple jobs, diversifying sources of income (e.g. through own production, the disposition of assets and wage labour) and maximising debt relations. Good health and nutritional adequacy require, among other aspects, food security (e.g., through own production, access to relief commodities, maximised exchange entitlements), safe water for human consumption and hygiene (e.g. through trying to attract NGOs to drill wells or using political connections to gain favourable distribution of limited water), and an

improved care environment (e.g., again through attracting assistance or pooling community resources). Physical safety strategies include the strategic reinvention of political alliances (e.g. former Taliban supporters changing the colour of their turbans); using the transitional period to demand greater accountability from authorities (e.g. through the Loya Jirga); and the continued organisation and arming of local militia to protect communities.

3. The Livelihoods Framework in SCCPIs

Despite the political transformations that have taken place in Afghanistan since the collapse of the Taliban government, it is reasonable to assert that the situation in Afghanistan will continue to be characterised as a Situation of Chronic Conflict and Political Instability (SCCPI) for the foreseeable future.

3.1 Characteristics of SCCPIs

Attempts to understand war in recent decades have led to the evolution of multiple analyses of protracted and seemingly intractable conflicts, and include terms that range from "civil wars," "complex emergencies" and "complex political emergencies" to more recent discussions of "emerging political complexes."²⁹ Still lacking an adequate definition, conflicts such as those that have beset Afghanistan share some common characteristics.

According to the Overseas Development Institute, these SCCPIs are characterised by:

- weakened or non-existent public institutions (executive, judicial, legislative);
- withheld or contested external legitimacy of the state;
- a strong parallel or extra-legal economy;
- existence of, or high susceptibility to, violence;
- forced displacement of refugees and internally displaced people;
- Sections of the population deliberately excluded from enjoying basic rights;

- livelihoods highly vulnerable to external shocks; and
- widespread, serious poverty.³⁰

These characteristics are underpinned by crises in governance, the centrality of violence, and shocks to civilian populations. They are closely linked to each other, and relate to the struggle for power, wealth and authority in an increasingly competitive world. This struggle coincides with

Contrary to popular thinking, states do not fail in times of chronic conflict and political instability; rather, they become conveniently diffuse, rich in complicated networks that extend from local strongmen/warlords to the boardrooms of international firms. The political economy of war engenders transitions from formal governments to processes of governance dominated by non-state actors including private security firms, multinational corporations, warlords and militias, international financial institutions and NGOs, for example. The resulting "governance gap" means that the powerful few operate with impunity over the voiceless governed.

larger processes such as globalisation and marginalisation that actively produce both "winners" and "losers."³¹

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engenders transitions from formal governments to processes of governance dominated by non-state actors including private security firms, multinational corporations, warlords and militias, international financial institutions and NGOs, for example. The resulting "governance gap" means that the powerful few operate with impunity over the voiceless governed.³² These trends have intensified since the end of the Cold War and associated acceleration of the processes of globalisation.

Wars under SCCPIs are highly dynamic. For instance, the nature of the conflict in Afghanistan has changed substantially over the last decades

²⁹ M. Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars. The Merging of Development with Security*. Zed Press, (London and New York: 2001).

³⁰ P. Le Billion. "The Political Economy of War: What Relief Agencies Need to Know." Humanitarian Practice Network Paper 33, Overseas Development Institute, (London: 2000).

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

- from proxy cold war conflict during the 1980s, to breakdown and warlordism during the early 1990s, to part civil, part regional conflict during the Taliban regime.³³ Each phase has had distinctive characteristics and effects.

Globalisation has fostered the state's metamorphosis from a central authority into networks of relationships that are not bound by social contracts with civil society but are rather oriented towards facilitating linkages among local, national, regional and international clientele networks. The regionalisation of Afghanistan's economy under the Taliban is a particular case in point.³⁴

Violent conflict can be both economically and politically functional for those who are able to retain power through violence.³⁵ Such violence is both functional, i.e., has utility for those controlling it, and specific, i.e., is deeply infused with meaning in support of economic, political and/or social causes. Violence in SCCPIs is overwhelmingly targeted at civilians, their livelihood systems and their social networks. The violence, however, is rarely sustained. It is instead sporadic, location specific and seasonal, designed less for winning army-to-army engagements and more for achieving maximum disruption of strategies of individual and communal self-sufficiency or to discourage organised opposition.

Attacks on civilians consistently lead to widespread impoverishment, but poverty, per se, is not necessarily a characteristic of SCCPIs.

Powerlessness is a more accurate concept than poverty.³⁶ The bulk of the wealth necessary for SCCPIs is often generated from domestic resources through the exploitation of disenfranchised civilians, fragile environments and contested natural resource bases. In the case of Afghanistan, cross-border trade, external financial support for the Taliban and internal production of poppy are thought to have been major sources of revenue.³⁷

Poppy crops also generate wage labour at attractive rates and credit opportunities, including for women and girls, in otherwise economically depressed zones. The resurgence in Afghanistan of poppy cultivation followed the ban on their cultivation by the Taliban in 2000. This has been seen by many to be a response to the profits that poppy generates, but this probably also reflects a breakdown in a regime of security that the Taliban had achieved, the increase in warlordism, and a degree of opportunism in relation to the known cash incentives on offer for not growing poppy.³⁸



Photo courtesy of UNICEF

³³ A. Pain and J. Goodhand, "Afghanistan Employment and Socio Economic Situation and Prospects," InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction, Working Paper 8, International Labour Organisation, (Geneva: 2002).

³⁴ B. Rubin, "The Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan." *World Development* 28, (10), pp. 1789 - 1803.

³⁵ D. Keen, "The Function of Famine in Southwestern Sudan: Implications for Relief, War and Hunger," *Rethinking International Responses to Complex Emergencies*. J. Macrae & A. Zwi. Zed Books with Save the Children, UK, (London: 1994), p 111 - 124.

³⁶ P. Le Billon, 2000 op. cit.

³⁷ Rubin, 2000, op. cit.

³⁸ Profitability of poppy cultivation can vary tremendously, depending on whether the producer is a sharecropper or landowner. See D. Mansfield, "The Economic Superiority of Illicit Drug Production: Myth and Reality. Opium Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan," Prepared for the International Conference on Alternative Development in Drug Control and Cooperation, (Feldafing: 2001).

3.2 Vulnerability and SCCPIs

Vulnerability is referred to by some as "defencelessness, insecurity and exposure to risks, shocks and stress...and difficulty in coping with them." Vulnerability is related to both hazards and risks and is an expression of the potential harm arising when a person, community, institution or system is exposed to a hazard. In times of conflict, vulnerability may best be thought of as:

Vulnerability is related to both hazards and risks and is an expression of the potential harm arising when a person, community, institution or system is exposed to a hazard.

*"the risk of harm to people's resources as a result of the inability to counter external threats arising from conflict, or as a result of inherited or ascribed traits such as gender, class, race/ethnicity, age, etc., made salient by the nature of the conflict."*³⁹

Whether the potential threat is realised is partially due to the effectiveness of coping strategies that are, inter alia, influenced by power, identity, connections and resources. The relationship between vulnerability and relative wealth, poverty, power and powerlessness, however, cannot be universally applied. While sustained poverty limits the amount of resources available for coping with crises, it is also true that wealth attracts assault in SCCPI. In such cases, poverty or marginality may entail relative safety. Similarly, the powerful are themselves open to violent rivalries and envious attack.

In addition, the following livelihood trends are evident during times of protracted conflict.

1. Most people cope with crises using their own physical, fiscal, material and social resources (rather than benefiting adequately from humanitarian assistance, for example). People will go to great lengths to protect their livelihood systems, including compromising nutritional status, social standing or household integrity, for example. Resilient and productive livelihood systems during times of war are critical for immediate survival and for post-crisis recovery. Failure

of livelihoods systems results in famine; preservation of livelihoods raises chances of both survival and recovery.

2. The powerful may be able to manipulate violence to their advantage, but the majority of the poor and marginalised are negatively affected early and often. At-risk boys, girls, men, women and the elderly each face particular

vulnerabilities arising from a myriad of hazards ranging from food insecurity, disease, conscription, asset-stripping, sexual and physical assault, arbitrary detention, forced displacement, slavery, prostitution/trafficking, etc. Those living in conflict zones find themselves with few livelihood options aside from working for warlords and criminal militias. Indentured servitude and other forms of forced labour often evolve along gender and generational lines. For instance, women, girls and boys often are used as sexual slaves for militia commanders and soldiers. Women are also forced to grow food, cook and clean for soldiers and daily labourers. Children are used to carry supplies, sort and pick through gems, launder clothes, carry messages between work gangs or among fighting forces, or perform other activities deemed suitable to their size, gender and age.

3. Aid assistance analysis and programmes focus on individual vulnerabilities and have proven less adept at examining the macro and meso processes that generate such individual and communal suffering. This focus on individual vulnerabilities is inadequate in SCCPIs because institutions and systems themselves are vulnerable to outright destruction or harmful co-option, including schools, hospitals, courts, religious establishments, market structures, transportation networks, etc. Other vulnerabilities result when institutions are starved of resources and investments, processes that are hastened, for example,

³⁹ Feinstein International Famine Centre. "Nutrition and Livelihoods in Situations of Crisis and Conflict: Reducing Vulnerability and Risk." Paper presented at the ACC/SCN 29th Session One-Day Symposium On Nutrition In The Context Of Crisis And Conflict, (Berlin: 2002).

by the imposition of international sanctions or the withdrawal of development resources.⁴⁰

- The economic systems upon which livelihoods rest become distorted because of violence, local or national inflation, stagflation, monopolisation and uncertainty, among other problems. Conflict introduces new risks into the communication and transportation sectors, disrupting services and isolating communities when roads are mined, convoys are ambushed and stores are looted. International development and international financial institutions are traditionally risk-averse, and capital flight aimed at preserving movable assets during dangerous times further exacerbates these problems. Economic pressures force the

middle classes to flee the country or face destitution. These trends further limit employment opportunities and drain resources available to assist the vulnerable through kinship ties, for example.

The effects of these stresses are gender and generation-sensitive. Credit for less secure populations, especially women, becomes not only expensive but also scarce. Political instability, physical insecurity and economic uncertainty combine to raise the availability and price since credit supply and interest rates reflect, in part, the cost of risk across time. Economic pressures coincide with increases in the size of the labour force and changes in its composition, with associated implications for the division of labour between men and women and across age groups. To cope with new burdens, girls and then boys

Table 1. An Illustrative Outline Vulnerability Matrix for Afghanistan.

Macro	Conflict	Civilian population	Those located on war front; males of conscription age
	War economy	Politically vulnerable	Unprotected (ethnic minority, orphans, widows, poor families)
	Sharp decline in carpet price	Carpet producers	Households that rely nearly exclusively on carpet income; households with limited reserves; child labourers
Meso	Conflict	Displaced, women	Political minorities; unprotected social groups
	Opium economy	Sharecroppers	Farmers who lack of access to other sources of credit
	Drought	Households that rely on of food from own production	Households with limited access to non-farm income; limited asset bases
	Labour market disruption	Households with high percentages of income from non-farm activities	Poor with few assets & limited income sources
	Grain market disruption	Households that rely on market exchange for food	Households with no grain or cash reserves

⁴⁰ C. Bruderlein, "Coping with the Humanitarian Impact of Sanctions: An OCHA Perspective," OCHA, Mimeo, (New York: 1998).

	Food aid	Shopkeepers and domestic grain producers	Merchants who trade goods on credit; those who deal in local currency
	Returnees	Landless on occupied land	Households that lack access to own land
	Tube-wells	Households that source water from hand pump/hand dug well	Insufficient resources to deepen wells
Micro	Landmines	Farmers, <i>kareze</i> cleaners, children, women gathering fuel, shepherds	Households that lack labour for production/wages, or resources for medical costs
	Disease	Female-headed households	Households that lack labour; lack savings; limited kinship ties

frequently are pulled out of school, the elderly out of retirement and women out of the houses to seek employment, to intensify agriculture production and to increase natural resource utilisation (e.g. water, fuel).

5. Livelihoods - and the people who depend on them - become vulnerable when options become limited and/or when resources to support livelihoods systems are compromised or lost altogether. Diversity in livelihoods options is reduced in SCCPIs when, for example, agriculture lands are mined, economies contract and generate widespread unemployment or labour is diverted due to forced migration or conscription. Resources to support livelihood systems are similarly limited by these and other threats, including the depletion of stocks and savings, the disposition of essential productive assets and loss from theft and looting.
6. Access to livelihood systems can be lost in both the short and the long run, e.g., when women are precluded from the workplace or when school systems fail for entire generations.

Understanding and responding to vulnerabilities requires a careful analysis of context and scale,

and recognition of both their direct and indirect effects. Table 1 provides a schematic summary with some examples of the range of vulnerabilities in Afghanistan.

Table 1 demonstrates how vulnerabilities arise at different but interconnected levels. Conflict and instability can have both direct and indirect effects on household vulnerability. The exposure to a threat does not necessarily mean that a household or individual will be susceptible to the potential consequences of that threat. Much will depend on the portfolio of assets, kinship networks or other sources of resilience that the individual or household can draw on and defines their ability to cope. The vulnerable are those that are both exposed to a threat and susceptible to its effects in the short, medium and long term.

3.3 The Theoretical Limitations of the Livelihoods Framework

Rather than being designed specifically to address livelihoods under conditions of violence and predation, the Livelihoods Framework was designed to improve the practice of development.

Inherent conceptual flaws⁴¹ become apparent in the framework when applied to SCCPIs, including:

1. The framework's focus on the *sustainability of livelihoods rather than on the vulner-*

⁴¹ While we challenge the livelihoods framework against the realities of SCCPIs, we believe that these arguments are equally applicable but in more subtle ways to developmental contexts.

ability of livelihoods. The livelihoods framework's central focus on sustainability in situations of chronic conflict and its failure to fully integrate and address the implications of operating in violent environments is inappropriate because conflict and violence directly target the very basis of sustainable livelihoods.⁴² Working towards the development of sustainable livelihoods in war can be to invite violence. For example, farmers in fertile but conflict-ridden zones of Sudan produce only the bare minimum for subsistence because they know that surplus production will be looted by various militias; similarly, the wealth of Sudanese pastoralist nomads can attract armed raids.⁴³ Hence, unless modified for the dynamics of violence that characterise SCCPIs, the explicit requirements for sustainability in the livelihoods framework may lead to increased vulnerability rather than increased resilience.

2. In situations of chronic conflict and political instability, new dimensions of risk are not only present but they are central; they are embedded in conflict's logic and strategy and are neither accidental nor incidental. The multiple risks posed by the natural environment combine with the risks engendered by conflict to create vulnerabilities that are specific to households and their livelihoods system. Importantly, these vulnerabilities result from the household's inability to counter external threats arising from conflict, or as a result of inherited or ascribed traits such as gender, class, race/ethnicity or age that are made prominent by the nature of the conflict.⁴⁴ In Afghanistan, for example, these "ascribed traits" created unique vulnerabilities for the livelihoods systems of the Hazaras under the Taliban or, today, for the Kuchi in post-Taliban Afghanistan. In a livelihoods framework that focuses on the vulnerability of livelihoods, vulnerability should therefore focus on the risk of harm to a) a household's bundle of assets (human, fiscal, physical, social, natural); b) the institutions, processes and

policies that shape the livelihood environment; and c) the livelihood strategies households pursue in order to attain livelihood outcomes.

3. The framework treats vulnerability as an externality rather than considering vulnerabilities as the central and deliberate outcome of violent and exploitative processes. The sustainable framework's inability to address adequately the tensions between sustainability and vulnerability in SCCPIs is further evidenced by the location of the "Vulnerability Context: shocks, trends, seasonality" within the framework, placed visually and conceptually at a distance from "Livelihoods Outcomes." Vulnerabilities are presented as seemingly random afflictions for which the only remedy is to build resistance to chance occurrence. In short, the sustainable livelihoods framework treats vulnerability-inducing violence as the equivalent of a natural disaster hazard, like a typhoon or an earthquake. It does not examine the (often intentionally) violent processes that infuse, shape and direct the more powerful institutions and organisations that influence the environment in which livelihoods are pursued and livelihoods outcomes are realised.

These conceptualisations have strong implications for policy design and programme intervention. With vulnerability presented as a fairly random variable, the only option for intervention is to build household resilience through fairly traditional methods (borrowed from development interventions in more stable settings) of asset accumulation and risk management through diversification. The political analyses of war economies, however, point clearly to the inherent risks (and thus, the increase in vulnerability) in unthinkingly pursuing such strategies. To accumulate assets and wealth without concomitant strategies for protection can be dangerous. In SCCPIs, processes of deliberate disempowerment and disenfranchisement are important weapons of war, as evidenced by the massive human

⁴² As clearly shown by the Soviet destruction of rural infrastructure in Afghanistan during the 1980s. See D. Carney, M. Drinkwater, T. Rusinow, K. Neefjes, S. Wanali, N. Singh, *Livelihoods Approaches Compared, A Brief comparison of livelihoods approaches of DFID, CARE, OXFAM, and UNDP*. DFID (London: 1999).

⁴³ Keen, 1994, op. cit., pp 111-124.

⁴⁴ FIFC, 2002 op. cit.; Blaikie, *et al.*, op. cit.

rights violations that often characterise such conflicts.

4. Issues of power and protection, including against the specific and functional forms of violence that characterise SCCPI, are not adequately addressed in the livelihoods framework. The Framework has been criticised for what is seen as an "apolitical" approach to institutions. These critiques include a failure to recognise that formal institutions (such as government and markets) are deliberately co-opted and manipulated in service of war economies, or are targeted outright because of their contributions in support of productive livelihoods, for example. In addition, the framework has been critiqued for inadequately considering the deeper social institutions of power relations, especially as they relate to gender- and generation-sensitive dynamics. The framework does not adequately explain how these institutions become vulnerable in times of conflict, e.g. pastoral production systems that are attacked for the wealth they generate, kinship networks that are destroyed in the name of politicised ethnicities, or divisions of labour that are skewed radically in service of religious agendas. It is important to adapt the sustainable livelihoods framework so that policies, institutions and processes, as well as livelihoods outcomes, be shown to generate either increased resilience or heightened vulnerability, depending upon the way the war economy is structured or the manner in which power is distributed and exploited, for example.
5. The problematic construction of social capital underlies the Framework, which fails to recognise the role of political and social institutions as key drivers under both "normal" and SCCPI conditions. The practical interpretation of social capital is based on the work of political economist Robert Putnam, who denies the importance of the state in supporting social capital.⁴⁵ Others

assert that the notion of social capital has been co-opted to support a "Washington consensus" of minimalist government, maximised market forces and depoliticised development.⁴⁶ The more robust arguments point to the importance of "coherent state institutions and of rule-based political competition, usually in the context of relatively egalitarian social structures" in contributing towards social capital.⁴⁷

6. Finally, the Livelihoods Framework lacks an adequate dimension of time, running the risk that analysis can be a-historical. The Framework fails to take into consideration the trends and accumulated impacts of shocks and hazards, a notion described as "emburdenment."⁴⁸ These accumulated shocks include repeated exposure to drought, political instability, war, snow disasters, etc., all of which take time and resources for recovery. The protracted and repeated exposure to such shocks and stresses can lead to a downward spiralling in the resilience of livelihoods systems, adding continual burdens to mechanisms for coping.

Further modifications to the Livelihoods Framework have suggested that an analysis of the political economy of war outside of the Framework can adequately offset these weaknesses. However, as this analysis suggests, the problem is not fixed within the margins of theory but is a problem fundamental to the structure of the livelihoods framework, in particular, the placement and conceptualisation of the role of vulnerability and its relationship to livelihoods outcomes.

3.4 Practical Limitations of the Livelihoods Framework

In addition to the theoretical critique of the Livelihoods Framework's application to SCCPIs, there are a number of practical limitations. These include:

1. the challenges of influencing the decision-making processes of powerful institutions;

⁴⁵ R. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press, (Princeton, NJ: 1993).

⁴⁶ The critiques address both the robustness of the historical evidence and the slipperiness of the social capital concept and how it is applied and the denial of the role of the state in building social capital.

⁴⁷ J. Harriss, *Depoliticizing Development*. The World Bank and Social Capital. Anthem Press, (London: 2002), p.117.

⁴⁸ D. Rahmato, "Famine and Survival Strategies: A Case Study from Northeast Ethiopia, Uppsala," *The Scandinavian Institute for African Studies*, 1991.

2. a near universal lack of coherence in livelihoods approaches advocated by different actors;
3. the persistent influence of the "relief to development continuum;" and
4. a lack of useful and practical guidance in how to implement livelihoods approaches.

The first practical limitation of the framework is the weak linkages between theoretical frameworks and the processes of decision-making within the powerful institutional actors that eventually shape the nature of response to a crisis. Mechanisms that trigger humanitarian responses can be notably de-linked from actual vulnerabilities. The most obvious case in point is the late response to the crisis in Afghanistan. This response was triggered not by the many years of deep suffering endured by the people of Afghanistan, but rather by political motivations linked to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.⁴⁹

Second, there is a near universal lack of coherence among approaches. Assistance interventions are often not grounded in adequate contextual assessments of livelihood vulnerabilities. Rather, responses remain strongly influenced by:

- available donor resources (e.g. food aid supplies fed by American and European farm subsidy-related surpluses);⁵⁰
- prevailing political considerations (e.g. the favour/disfavour of disaster-affected governments in the world order; foreign donor prevailing national security interests); and
- the traditional organising principles of humanitarian response agencies (e.g. organisations that specialise only in health, nutrition, food aid, etc.).

This is not to say that agencies, including implementing agencies and donors, are not

investing in improved technologies for livelihood interventions. Among all donors, DFID has the most sophisticated requirements for livelihoods programming but, as documented above, the Framework is not adequately suited for conditions of conflict and political instability. However, donors and NGOs have a tendency to rely on a limited number of influences in the development of their livelihoods frameworks.

The third limitation is due, in part, to the pervasive influence of the much-debunked (but not dead yet) "relief to development continuum," whereby situations of conflict and instability are viewed as short-term interruptions to otherwise "normal" trajectories of peace and development. The humanitarian industry has yet to reconcile the way it does business with the necessary investments of time, the compromises of visibility and the inherent solidarity that is required for effective livelihoods interventions.

Overly simplistic views of the processes that create vulnerabilities among disaster-affected populations continue to induce widespread, short-term influxes of humanitarian relief supplies, especially food aid, rather than engender more systems-oriented interventions to fundamentally alter the processes, institutions and organisations that create vulnerability in the first place. At best, livelihoods interventions that are funded by emergency resources are aimed at maintaining asset bases, particularly productive assets (e.g. cattle, seeds and tools), or used to support short-term infusions of micro-credit loans, especially for women. While often useful, these interventions do little to address the processes that create the vulnerabilities of disaster-affected populations such as pastoralists, women, or ethnic minorities.⁵¹ Efforts to address the policies, institutions and processes that are either vulnerable themselves or that create harmful vulnerabilities are routinely dismissed by donors as "developmental" (and therefore inappropriate in "emergency" contexts) or by humanitarian organisations as "political" (and therefore a violation of humanitarian principles, such as

⁴⁹ Agencies working within Afghanistan were moving into a drought response before September 11th. The immediate international response post-September 11th related initially to a potential mass movement of refugees that did not materialise.

⁵⁰ A concept J. Prendergast calls "The Law of Tool" in *Frontline Diplomacy: Humanitarian Aid and Conflict in Conflict in Africa*. Lynne Reiner, (London: 1996).

⁵¹ An example of how risk to livelihoods can be addressed comes from Young et.al. (2002) in relation to destocking and restocking of livestock systems in east Africa.

neutrality). That neither position reduces vulnerability or increases resilience (an important consideration under conditions of protracted conflict) has little influence on the actual practice of livelihood interventions in SCCPIs.

A fourth practical limitation relates to a dearth of quality technical and practical guidance for livelihoods interventions in SCCPIs. This begins with useful means of dealing with the weaknesses of the livelihoods model itself and extends to a lack of practitioner-oriented training and mechanisms for designing, monitoring and evaluating livelihoods interventions in SCCPIs. Redressing this shortfall to implement livelihoods approaches will entail challenging the very ways that humanitarian organisations do business, by necessitating a shift in focus away from "stove-pipe," sectoral interventions (nutrition, food aid,

water/sanitation, health) and a re-orientation to systems-based approaches (production, governance, ecology, etc.) Such a holistic approach requires humanitarian organisations to conduct systems analyses of communities with whom they engage, including utilising anthropological tools to understand livelihoods systems. Time and again, however, disaster relief workers reject this type of analysis as "too time consuming." Despite the fact that conflicts in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Angola and elsewhere have extended for decades, this "tyranny of urgency," (i.e., compromising good practice in the name of rapid response) remains an important barrier to the practical adoption of livelihood approaches by practitioners. However, this is not merely an issue of time, but also one of organisational constraints, willingness and capacities to build understanding.

Part II

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4. The Dynamics of Afghan Livelihoods

This paper has so far discussed the more conceptual issues in relation to livelihood frameworks and their application to situations of chronic conflict. We turn now to review the evidence on what has happened to Afghan livelihoods during the last twenty five years.

The following section explores a key set of issues in relation to the dynamics of Afghan livelihoods. This is a tentative story, given the paucity of documentation and data, and is designed to challenge prevailing assumptions regarding the link between increased agricultural production and sustainable livelihoods.

4.1 The Role of Agriculture

There is a generally accepted narrative about Afghanistan's rural economy, framed by contrasts between pre-1978 and the present. The following quotations represent this.

*"In 1978 Afghanistan with a population of 14 million was self-sufficient in cereals and had a flourishing export market in horticultural products."*⁵²

"Rebuilding the natural resources and agricultural economy upon which up to 85 percent of the population depend on their livelihood will require a fundamental change in the manner in which development priorities are determined and implemented ... Logically, this should produce a dual approach to community-based interventions which include both productivity-enhancing interventions for those with land (and employment opportunities for the landless) and targeted off-farm

Agriculture production is not necessarily a good proxy for the health of rural livelihoods. Statistics regarding the macro performance of the agriculture sector tell us very little about the everyday livelihoods for a range of Afghan populations.

interventions for the landless or families with small amounts of land."⁵³

*"Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the majority of Afghans."*⁵⁴

Explicit in the above statements is a widespread view about the role of agriculture in the livelihoods of rural people in Afghanistan. Between 1978 and 2002, the motif has been that of destruction, collapse and major outflows of refugees. Certainly for the period 1978 to 1992 there is no doubt that agricultural production dramatically declined, driven by failing markets and destruction of infrastructure and villages by Soviet bombing.⁵⁵ The picture of the complete collapse of agricultural output, however, is tempered by the following report from UNDP in 1993:

*"The agricultural production systems of Afghanistan can only be described as robust and resilient. For fourteen years, from 1978 to 1992, rural production systems in Afghanistan continued to support the remaining rural population under conditions of extreme difficulty. Although malnutrition and hunger were reported, this did not degenerate into...catastrophic situations...for although the infrastructure developed by agricultural production systems in many areas has been degraded or destroyed, the basic elements of land and water remain."*⁵⁶

It should also be stressed that the agricultural recovery that took place from the early 1990s, stimulated by a large return of refugees and investment in rebuilding the damaged rural infrastructure, led to a revival of production. This trend was reversed during the

⁵² Multi-Donor Mission. Afghanistan. Natural Resources and Agriculture Sector. Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Draft Report, (Kabul:June 2002), p. 10.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 3.

⁵⁴ AACA, op. cit. p. 33.

⁵⁵ See the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (1988) agricultural survey of 5000 farmers and their reports on destroyed irrigation systems, bombing of villages, destruction of livestock and of grain stores.

⁵⁶ United Nations Development Programme, Kabul, Afghanistan: "Afghanistan rehabilitation strategy - Action plan for immediate rehabilitation," in *Agriculture and Irrigation* Vol. IV, UNDP, (Kabul: 1993).

recent drought, but there are still signs of recovery evident this year and likely to continue if adequate water is available.

The story of agricultural production is one matter. The role of agriculture in people's livelihoods is another. Agriculture production is not necessarily a good proxy for the health of rural livelihoods. Statistics regarding the macro performance of the agriculture sector tell us very little about the everyday livelihoods for a range of Afghan populations. For example, aggregate statistics do not reveal the changing pattern of land tenure or labour relations. It is known that the recent drought brought changes - in some cases radical changes - in these patterns that will continue to have profound impacts on livelihoods in the coming seasons.

4.2 The Environmental Context

Drought or erratic rainfall characterises Afghanistan's biophysical environment. According to an analysis of climate and drought records by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), dry periods in Afghanistan occur along the following timelines:

- *Localised droughts in parts of the country have a return period of three to five years.*
- *Drought covering large areas of zones recurs every 9 - 11 years. Drought with national scope has a return period of about 20 - 30 years.*⁵⁷

The ADB paper further noted that the recent drought is unusual because of the combined affects of its duration, geographical coverage, and destructive effects.

Throughout the world, households involved in agricultural production under conditions of climatic uncertainty develop diverse and flexible strategies in response to the intrinsically risky environment.⁵⁸ These include increased mobility (both seasonal and longer-term) and undertaking activities (including non-agricultural) that carry low



Photo courtesy of UNICEF

covariate risk.⁵⁹ The present drought in Afghanistan, however, has clearly stretched households well beyond their normal coping capacity.⁶⁰

4.3 The Rural Economy

Afghanistan's diverse geographical landscape and accompanying range of climatic zones give rise to distinctive patterns of agricultural production. These zones can be organised into farming systems, but these discrepancies only serve to illustrate the production component of a household's access to food. Food economy zones, on the other hand, incorporate generalised patterns of access through markets and exchange as well as production and farming systems. They are therefore a more analytically useful tool for assessing food security.

⁵⁷ Asian Development Bank. 2002. Afghanistan Recovery and Reconstruction: Preliminary Needs Assessment. Agriculture and Water Sub-Sectors. Mimeo.

⁵⁸ J. Swift and D. Hamilton. "Household Food and Livelihood Security" in: S. Devereux and S. Maxwell (eds.), *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ITDG, (London:2001).

⁵⁹ Covariate risk refers to correlated strategies such as cash cropping, livestock rearing and agricultural labouring which are similarly susceptible to rainfall failure.

⁶⁰ Lautze, *et al*, 2002, *op. cit.*

A zonal survey developed for WFP makes a preliminary differentiation of some 34 regional food economy zones within Afghanistan. The study indicates the varying roles that farm production, seasonal labour, remittances and trade play in influencing the availability and access to food in different parts of the country. They noted how factors other than failures in food production (such as disruption in labour markets, market failure, market distortion, blockage of cross-border trade and changes in terms of trade) could produce food insecurity.⁶¹

There is very little robust statistical evidence available on the rural economy at the household level.⁶² The household food economy zones reveal few insights regarding differences in food security between or within households or the degree of social differentiation on the basis of ownership assets, particularly land and water.

Although the data is limited, it does support a picture of diverse livelihoods determined by location or geographical features and shaped by historical trajectories of change.

Beginning in the 1930s, production of agricultural commodities for export in northern Afghanistan significantly increased on the back of state support and interventions.⁶³ It is unknown, however, what this meant for household livelihoods. A rare example of information on early livelihoods comes from Danish anthropological studies of nomads that show a long-term trajectory of change up until the late 1970s.⁶⁴ In the late 19th century the nomads worked as transporters for merchants and traders travelling into India. They then developed into traders in their own right and established trading systems into the north after the partition between India and Pakistan restricted

the eastwardly routes. As they accumulated wealth some groups began a gradual process of settlement, becoming landowners, traders and merchants. Illustrating a reverse dynamic, Glatzer draws attention to a reverse process of sedentarisation in Afghanistan, citing nomadisation as a strategy to handle demographic changes, climatic dynamics and individual household life cycles.⁶⁵

Studies for the pre-1978 period include a 1963 population and agricultural survey (a 500 village, or 3.5 percent, sample) and labour force data from 1966-67. Louis Dupree's *Afghanistan* includes a summary and analysis of these studies. Two points from Dupree's analysis of the 1963 survey should be emphasised here: a) the percentage of missing responses, and b) the range of "other" occupations. As an explanation, Dupree offers the hypothesis that the studies did not consider any economic role for women and that information on carpet production was not collected. Dupree also suspected that many of the men who listed a non-agricultural occupation were in fact primarily farmers. Similarly, those calling themselves farmers may also have been engaged in non-farm activities. The survey clearly made no allowance for multiple occupations: you were either a farmer or a carpenter - but you could not be both.

The same problem of categories arises with the labour force data of 1966 - no allowance is made for the fact that households could be engaged in handicrafts and trade as well as agriculture. Even within these restrictions it is clear that in 1966 there was a sizeable minority of village men who did not consider agriculture to be their major occupation. The limited statistical base - both pre- and post-1978 - allows no formal macro analysis of the changes in household occupations.⁶⁶

⁶¹ WFP VAM used the Clarke and Seaman zonal survey to conduct food security studies between 1999 and 2002. The empirical basis of the regional food economies, however, was never systematically developed or refined. The WFP studies did consolidate information related to areas of grain deficit and surplus. Thus, certain areas - for example, Badakshan and Hazarajat - were grain deficit areas, and migratory labour practices were common in order for households to achieve sufficient access to food. Other areas under irrigation, such as parts of the northern Turkmen plains, enjoyed surplus production and exported grain.

⁶² The absence of cadastral surveys, systematic land taxation systems etc is reflective of the absence of a strong intrusive modernising state prior to 1978; see Scott, 1998. and Glatzer, 1981 'In many parts of Afghanistan, including the West and Northwest, the influence of state administration and development aid before 1978 was minimal and in most parts virtually non-existent' p.61.

⁶³ A. Pain, 2001, "Livelihoods Under Stress in Faryab Province, Northern Afghanistan, Opportunities for Support," a report for Save the Children, US, Afghanistan/Pakistan field office, (Islamabad: 2001).

⁶⁴ See Frederiksen, *Caravans and Trade in Afghanistan*, Thames and Hudson, (London:1996) and G. Pedersen, *Afghan Nomads in Transition*, Thames and Hudson, (London: 1994).

⁶⁵ B. Glatzer, "Processes of Nomadisation in West Afghanistan," In: Philip Carl Salzman (Ed), *Contemporary Nomadic and Pastoral Peoples: Asia and the North*, Studies in Third World Societies. Department of Anthropology, Publication No 18. College of William & Mary (Williamsburgh, VA:1981), pp.61-86.

⁶⁶ L. Dupree. *Afghanistan*. Princeton University Press, (Princeton, NJ: 1980).

4.4 Destruction and Reconstruction

One of the major structural determinants driving changes in Afghan livelihoods since 1978 is the cyclical destruction/reconstruction of many parts of the rural economy. First the destruction by the Soviets and then the reconstruction in the post-Soviet era. However, the expansion of local warlordism and instability after 1992 limited the recovery of the rural economy. From 1996 the Taliban regime established an environment that was highly liberal in terms of trading regimes, although underpinned by an economy based on cross border trade, arms and drugs. Insecurity prevailed in many frontline communities, limiting agricultural production and increasing the susceptibility of civilians to attack. From 1998, a major drought caused a severe fall in grain production and a collapse in the livestock population.

4.5 Migration

A key element of household responses to events since 1978 has been movement. Afghans have long engaged in seasonal movements for employment, and reports exist of Afghans working in both Iran and Pakistan prior to 1978. Out-migration became widespread in the Soviet era, and led to the creation of a sizeable diaspora community in Central Asia and the West. Refugees in neighbouring states began to return to Afghanistan in significant numbers in the early 1990s, but sizeable refugee populations remained elsewhere in the region, partially to take advantage of available economic and educational opportunities.

From the early 1990s the regional refugee population has been in a state of dynamic flux. Migration strategies very likely have an opportunistic element. The anecdotal evidence and "grey" literature point to movement of household members in and out of Afghanistan, and extended regional networks of families and relations are likely to have been established. Movement of IDPs has also been dynamic, particularly since the drought reduced household food consumption and compelled households to

seek access to additional sources of food.

The urban population in Afghanistan expanded substantially during the Soviet era as rural dwellers moved to the city for safety and access to resources. The return of long-term refugees since 2002 (many of whom have had access to education) has further swelled the urban population. Of the refugee returns documented since March 1st 2002, nearly 40% have returned to Kabul. The recent reconstruction activities in Kabul and other Afghan cities have created an enormous employment boom, driving up wage rates and creating a magnet for skilled labour.

4.6 Remittances

There have been significant financial flows into Afghanistan from the regional refugee population as well as from the Afghan diaspora community living in the west. The emergence of a remittance economy is not doubted, but its scale is open to some debate. The role of remittances supporting schools and paying teachers has been recorded.⁶⁷ It is also likely that remittances have played an important but variable role in helping households through the drought period. However, as a study on Farah Province found,

*"[I]t is likely, given the low wage levels in Iran, the need to make payments to ensure access to Iran, the lack of security within and the risk of theft by agents, that the amounts reaching Farah are not enormous. . . . [T]he benefit of sending young people to work in Iran is as much that there would, thereby, be fewer mouths to feed as that their remittances would make an important contribution to the household economy."*⁶⁸

Some households returning to Afghanistan have brought back financial reserves, which have allowed them to buy land and build houses that they did not have.⁶⁹

4.7 Power Dynamics

Account has to be taken within these general patterns of livelihood strategies of the differential

⁶⁷ A. Pain, unpublished field notes from Khwaja Omari, Ghazni.

⁶⁸ P. Marsden, 1997b. op. cit.

⁶⁹ F. Klijn, Water Supply and Water Collection Patterns in Rural Afghanistan - An Anthropological Study. DACCAR, (Peshawar: May 2002).



Photo courtesy of UNICEF

effects based on socio-economic, gender and ethnic lines. The communist revolution of 1978, for instance, particularly targeted landowners and the wealthier sections of the community, many of whom left the country and have not necessarily returned. With the increasing co-option of ethnic identities for political purposes from the 1990s onwards, different ethnic groups have been exposed to threats (economic, political and military) according to time and place. For example, many households of Pashtun origin left northern Afghanistan during the period 1992 - 1996, returned under Taliban rule, and have again been forced to move since the end of 2001. The Hazaras experienced severe economic blockades by the Taliban during the late 1990s.⁷⁰ The rise of the Taliban enabled the nomadic Kuchis to regain control of their traditional pastures in Hazarajat (lost after 1978), but the Kuchis may have once again lost access to these lands since the political shift in late 2001.

Shifts in access to water have played an important role in determining power relations at the local

and regional level. In the area around Andkhoy and elsewhere in northern Afghanistan, the settlement of Pashtun communities and the use of lift pumps led to breaches of traditional water-sharing agreements between up- and downstream communities. The expansion in the use of tube-wells (in which NGOs are implicated) has led to the encroachment of irrigated land onto what was previously pasture, thereby cutting off access by the Kuchis. This trend is very visible on the Kabul side of Ghazni. The effects of differential access to tube-wells on overall access to groundwater are becoming a major concern.⁷¹

4.8 Household Responses

The responses of households to war, the black market economy, and drought have not been well understood or investigated. Summarised briefly here are three studies that provide some indication of the dimensions of household responses under specific rather than general circumstances, and hint at how lack of understanding by external agencies has limited the effectiveness of interventions.

⁷⁰ M. Semple, Strategies for support of sustainable rural livelihoods for the central highlands of Afghanistan: a study to identify opportunities for effective assistance to reinforce people's livelihood strategies. Draft. Pattan Development Organisation, (Islamabad 1998).

⁷¹ AACA, op. cit. p. 29.

Study 1. Since the early 1990s there have been a series of attempts to control opium cultivation. These efforts have been based on assumptions regarding the income generation potential of opium and alternative development interventions in return for promises to desist from opium cultivation. These basic ingredients of intervention appear to have carried through into post September 11th programming. Yet, as David Mansfield shows in two 2001 papers analysing the role of opium poppy cultivation on households, the quid pro quo (i.e., the provision of support if opium is not cultivated) failed to reduce the poppy growing areas (at least before September 11, 2001). Where there were effects, the benefits accrued mainly to the wealthier sections of the communities.⁷²

Mansfield argues that the failure of the programme was largely due to a lack of understanding as to who cultivated opium and why. He found that poppy cultivation was largely concentrated in easily accessible areas and in districts where land holdings were small and access to irrigation water and markets difficult. Mansfield concluded that for the opium growers who were sharecroppers, cultivation was undertaken primarily to gain access to land and credit to ensure basic food security with relatively low opportunity costs for labour. The majority of windfall profits went to the landowners, with minimal returns to the cultivator on account of high interest rates, heavy employment of family labour, and forced sales at low prices at harvest to meet credit repayments.⁷³

Study 2. In his 1998 study of six villages in Hazarajat, Michael Semple analysed the economic crisis as a result of a blockade by the Taliban (1997/98) combined with a severe winter that led to spring flooding and a reduced harvest. These shocks led to a dramatic shift in terms of trade in an area historically dependent on imported grain. Semple documents how the effects of reduced assets (livestock holdings and livestock products), increased labour migration, and growing indebtedness varied according to socio-economic

class. His key finding is that although economic conditions were difficult, a famine did not emerge. Households averted famine by employing a range of complex livelihood strategies, including turning to social support mechanisms and accessing distress (famine) foods. The net effect was overall impoverishment. It is not clear whether this study led to any programming response (as it was designed to). The key lesson is that it was an attempt to build understanding prior to prescription and implementation.⁷⁴

Study 3. A study by Adam Pain in July 2001 in northern Faryab attempted to develop an understanding of livelihoods for future programming responses based on household studies in six villages. One of the key findings elucidated the differential role of land-based assets in building livelihoods, as determined by settlement history and socio-economic status. Poorer households tended to have few land assets and to derive more of their income from non-farm activities (especially carpet weaving). Lower income households also had smaller but more diversified income sources that were largely market based. Details on household coping and survival strategies revealed a complex interplay of interrelated strategies. These included sequencing of asset disposal and engaging in relationships of exchange among different socio-economic classes. Of note, these exchange relations were not necessarily exploitative.⁷⁵

The household studies were complemented by an historical study of the carpet market, based on key informants. It revealed a long-term trajectory of change in which key events included the 1970 severe winter and the subsequent drought, the decimation of the sheep population in the north, and the penetration of foreign wools and dyes.⁷⁶ Since the 1990s, instability in the north brought major currency fluctuations and an increasing shift of control of the carpet market from Faryab to Pakistan. This led to a sharp decline in terms of trade for the carpet weavers that was, in turn, further compounded as increasing numbers of households took up carpet weaving in response to the drought conditions.

⁷² Mansfield, 2001a, 2001b, op. cit.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Semple, op. cit.

⁷⁵ Pain, 2001, op. cit.

⁷⁶ See Bradford, Annex 9, World Bank 2000.

These studies illustrate that household responses are contingent on history, location and stock of assets and must be examined in their specific contexts

For example many of the specific points regarding household livelihood strategies are made in a 2002 food insecurity study published by Tufts University's Feinstein International Famine Centre.

The paper's strength is that it draws attention to the complex vulnerabilities and illustrates that not all vulnerabilities relate to food security. Some specific field-based observations challenge the generalised stories of "crisis" regarding the severity of food insecurity.⁷⁷ However, the extent of recovery of agricultural production this year raises interesting questions as to how some farmers accessed seed, draught power and other agricultural inputs. It is therefore important to keep in mind that neither the generalised reports nor the localised surveys have contributed adequately to an understanding of livelihood systems - and their responses to current and historical stresses - in Afghanistan. Much more is work is needed.

Uncertainty remains regarding the present condition of rural livelihoods in Afghanistan. Examinations of these trends will be helpful in gaining further insight into the nature and resilience of rural livelihoods. Caution is necessary in order not to conflate the apparent recovery in select agricultural sectors with the health of all rural livelihood systems. The changes that engendered recovery within specific livelihood systems are not yet obvious, and these improvements (or increases in wealth) for some may have deepened the vulnerability of other livelihood systems, e.g. the drilling of boreholes that may threaten the water sources of more vulnerable farmers.

4.9 Drought-Induced Trends in Household Strategies

The following trends in household strategies over the last three years of the drought outline a series of generalisations that form a set of working arguments.⁷⁸ Further evidence and field studies must test and refine these arguments.

- Before the drought, rural households sought to maintain asset bases and assure food security in a high-risk environment characterised predominantly by politico-military threats. With the onset of the drought, households diversified into low-risk activities and depleted non-essential assets. Low-risk activities (defined as those that have the greatest potential for low return) include:
 - o depleting household savings;
 - o retreating from surplus agricultural production;
 - o engaging in petty trade and small business ventures;
 - o balancing on-farm and off-farm wage labouring;
 - o migrating for labour opportunities both within and outside Afghanistan (thereby providing remittance returns to households or, at the very least, reducing household consumption requirements);
 - o accessing humanitarian assistance;
 - o increasing the mobility of household livelihoods (effectively breaking down discrete rural/urban distinctions and leading to multi-location residences); and
 - o expanding rural dependence on income streams from urban areas and urban dependence on rural employment opportunities.⁷⁹
- Some livelihoods strategies are pursued outside of the formal economy. These might include exploitative sharecropping arrangements (some of which secured access to land on the basis of credit for opium cultivation), trafficking of drugs or humans, participation in armed militia groups, or banditry.
- The drought compelled many households to shift to survival strategies. These entailed the sale of essential assets with negative consequences for not only financial and physical capitals but also for human and social relations. Levels of food consumption have declined and household debt has increased. High debt burdens have led to the loss of land through mortgage and sale. As critical as land

⁷⁷ Fitzherbert, personal communication, 2002.

⁷⁸ Pain and Goodhand, 2002, op. cit.

⁷⁹ See evidence from C. Hell, Household Food Security in Hazarajat and Kabul, Annex 5, World Bank, (Islamabad: 2001).

tenure are questions of access to water for human consumption and hygiene as well as agricultural use. Strategies for reducing household consumption have involved the splitting of households into constituent families (where households are multi-family units), lowering the age of marriage, relocating into displacement camps for accessing food relief, and collecting famine foods.

- Grain markets have not failed but have rather adapted to the lack of domestic supply by supplanting domestic production with imports. Terms of trade for agricultural commodities have fluctuated, with declining livestock prices at the outset, but increased returns as the drought progressed (due to the overall limited supplies and a strong export market for draught oxen in northern Afghanistan). The terms of trade for non-agricultural commodities in the rural economy (e.g., carpets) were declining prior to September 11th, but appear to have recovered to some extent since then.

It must be recognised that these trends are only one part of the picture, and that many households and livelihood systems in Afghanistan display extreme resilience and responsiveness to change. Trading systems flourished prior to the drought, enabling households and communities to build reserves. These savings proved critical to the survival of some families over the extended course of the drought. Refugee and migratory movements provided access to new experience, skills and (potentially) financial capital, and the remittance economy helped to sustain some households. The role of sharing mechanisms within kinship networks should not be underestimated, and there are examples of villages where stress has strengthened - rather than eroded - these bonds and relationships.⁸⁰

4.10 Remaining Areas for Consideration in Livelihoods Programming

Substantial areas of ignorance still exist with respect to livelihoods in Afghanistan. Examination of these topics will be essential if donors and organisations are to adopt sustainable livelihoods

policies and implement effective programmes to support Afghan livelihoods. Questions requiring further considerations include, inter alia:

- What is the condition of the bundle of assets (human, fiscal, physical, natural, social) for a range of livelihoods systems in Afghanistan?
- How and why has ownership and access to land change?
- How does control of land relate to access and distribution of water?
- To what extent do patterns of land ownership link into patterns of debt and how has this changed during the drought?
- How deep are patterns of debt and what implications are these likely to have for recovery?
- How should investment in industry (resource extraction, agriculture, timber, etc.) be directed in order to generate sustained employment opportunities?
- What is the relationship between fiscal/monetary policy, e.g. taxes and money supply, and urban employment?
- Who holds debt and how is this gendered?
- To what extent have livelihood options and expectations for children and youth evolved, and what role do adolescent girls and boys play in rural livelihoods?
- What priorities and investments in the nation's transportation and communication infrastructures will have the maximum beneficial impact on a range of livelihoods systems?
- How do rural markets work?
- What are the portfolios of assets that households hold, and what are the processes by which these might be rebuilt?

4.11 Universal Trends

The trends that have been tentatively identified in Afghanistan are not unique. Recent surveys suggest that non-farm sources of income account for 30-40 percent of average rural household income in South Asia with the majority coming from local rural sources rather than urban migration. Much of this income is independent of agriculture. The emergence of multi-location households is a widespread phenomenon.⁸¹ As a

⁸⁰ A. Pain 2001, op. cit.

⁸¹ C. McDowell and A. de Haan, "Migration and Sustainable Livelihoods," Working Paper No 65. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. 1997.

result, the conventional categories that separate rural and urban spaces have become increasingly ambiguous, particularly in the peri-urban areas.⁸² There are important economic and livelihood linkages between urban and peri-urban areas, with small-scale agriculture playing a critical role in the livelihoods of poor, urban populations.

Finally, account has to be taken of the long-term global fall in agricultural commodity prices and terms of trade. All these raise critical considerations with respect to the general thesis of growth in agriculture as the key driving force to the transformation of rural livelihoods in Afghanistan.

⁸² S. Wiggins and S. Proctor, "How Special are Rural Areas? The Economic Implications of Location for Rural Development." *Development Policy Review*, 19, (4), 2001, pp. 427 - 436.

5. Livelihoods, Policy and Programming in Afghanistan

5.1 Aid practice pre-September 11, 2001

This section briefly considers the extent to which aid practice pre-September 11, 2001 was informed by and responded to rural livelihood issues. Prior to the radical shifts in the international community's engagement with Afghanistan in the Fall 2001, field observations indicated that intervention practice had a striking uniformity across a wide range of agencies. The interveners consistently emphasised technical delivery (seeds, fruit trees, etc.), infrastructure development or rehabilitation (e.g. in irrigation) on an assumption that "modernising" agriculture through productivity enhancement was the route to follow in support of rural livelihoods.⁸³ The role of non-farm income was effectively ignored by agencies and donors in part because crop production increases were sufficient to be characterised as impacts. Monitoring practices were almost exclusively focused on the delivery of interventions and not on the consequences. If there has been learning, it appears to have had little formal role in driving programming.

This approach to programme and project design and implementation reflected the fact that needs assessments have been both limited and partial. There were scant descriptions and explorations of context (e.g. the understanding of locality with respect to villages and valleys, and characteristics of different households) or analysis of livelihood strategies (what they were, how they varied between different households and social actors). There also was a reluctance to recognise and address degrees of social differentiation; instead all rural Afghans were categorised as (poor) farmers. There was therefore a paucity of information to use to plan strategically (e.g., to explore diversified initiatives, interventions and institutional approaches) and there were few attempts to develop programming approaches that systematically built on analysis and feedback.⁸⁴ In baseline studies, data collection methods and analysis restricted the use of such studies either for comparative purposes or within site comparisons over time.⁸⁵

In part this was because (at least for interventions in agriculture and food security) of the nature of assumptions concerning the role of agriculture in rural livelihoods and the relation between food production and food security (See Box 3).⁸⁶

An explanation is provided by Duffield et al. in their analysis of the formative role that the idea of "the failed state" has played in driving aid practice, and on the relations between the assistance programme and the Strategic Framework for Afghanistan leading to the "triumph of the project."

"In this context this lack of consensus on how to deal with the Taliban, the project level becomes the lowest common denominator of agreement ... there is a striking continuity in many project interventions funded often by the same donor."⁸⁷

To Duffield's "triumph of the project" should be added the fact that projects were essentially short term and funded out of humanitarian resources, with a focus on delivery and little concern for understanding, learning or assessment of impact. The motif of the failed state allowed implementation agencies - primarily NGOs - to

Box 3. Stated Assumptions About Rural Livelihoods

Commentators and aid agencies have consistently treated rural livelihoods as simply agricultural and subsistence. For example, Rubin (2002) states that, "in the 1970s, Afghan society was split between a rural, largely subsistence economy and an urban economy." The draft Food Security Strategy (Sloane, 2001) was quite explicit in treating food security as equal to food self-sufficiency, stating:

To target possible food security assistance interventions, the population can be divided into three broad categories representing their general level of food security .. (the) self-sufficient, .. (the) marginally self-sufficient (and) those who have limited or no opportunities to provide for their needs(p13).

⁸³ Pain 2002, op. cit.

⁸⁴ There has been little recognition that even for those rural households for whom agriculture is a component of their livelihood there might be different needs with respect to the resources and priorities households bring to agricultural activities.

⁸⁵ Pain 2002, op. cit.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Duffield, et. al., op. cit. p. 28.

create imaginary islands of safety within which to operate “normal” development business, with the context largely being seen as a politico-military security issue, ignoring the reality of economic systems under conditions of chronic political instability.

This bleak summary of the past has a bearing on the present. First, the underlying element of conflict and the existence of multiple sources of vulnerability remain. Second, as is now widely recognised, there is little detailed understanding of the realities of how livelihoods have been built and have evolved over the last 10 years. Third, there are strong tendencies to construct “stories” about Afghanistan, e.g., as it was in the past, as it is now and what it could be in the future which have little basis in fact, but which may serve other agendas.

5.2 Policy, Programming and Livelihoods

Concepts and frameworks are one thing; practice is an entirely different matter. Two key issues arise. The first is the design of policies, programmes and projects that have pro-livelihood consequences. The second is assessing whether or not these have the intended livelihood impacts and using this information to inform policy processes. There is little doubt that good programme and project design can provide pro-livelihood outcomes at the micro level (see www.livelihoods.org), although there is little documented evidence of this from Afghanistan prior to September 11, 2001.⁸⁸ What is much less clear is how or if an understanding of livelihoods at the micro, meso and macro levels translates into policy and how these policies in turn affect livelihood opportunities on the ground.

How then are livelihoods to be addressed now in policy and practice? What are the relevant policies, given the cross-sectoral nature and thematic dimensions of livelihoods? How does one address the complex interplay of interventions and livelihood impacts on the economy, health, education and natural resources, for example? Will it be clear which policies and programmes do lead to an overall reduction in vulnerabilities?

The development and implementation of policy is a problematic process. It is necessary to understand how policy is generated in order to assess the impacts that policies have on livelihoods.

Policy analysis is a busy industry, with a plurality of approaches that have focused on ex-post (understanding how policy has been made) rather than ex-ante (seeking to engage in policy making and improve it) analyses. At a time when policy creation is the dominant activity in Afghanistan, there is an opportunity and necessity to engage in this process in a robust manner. How one chooses to do this depends largely on how policy processes are seen to be initiated and implemented.

The conventional focus essentially describes a linear process of policy implementation that is driven by rational argument with little engagement by those whom the policy will affect. When these policies fail, problems of implementation or the omnipresent “lack of political will” are blamed rather than flaws in the policy process itself. The dominance of a narrow/technical/scientific approach is a particular feature of the conventional focus. For example, much of the debate about environmental issues pits scientific “knowledge” and expertise against more contextual and



Photo courtesy of UNICEF

⁸⁸ Pain 2002, op. cit.

participant based views that are integral to "new" analysis. As explored below, policy-making in Afghanistan, as exemplified by the needs assessment for the Natural Resource and Agricultural sector tends more towards the "rational" and "authoritative" than the "process" and "negotiated" position.⁸⁹

From where have the policy positions that are being established at bewildering speed in Kabul come? What are the processes that have been involved in their creation? These issues are research studies in themselves (and probably a necessity if policy processes are to be understood and enhanced). For the purposes of this paper a tentative set of arguments is advanced.

A key underlying influence is undoubtedly the specific events surrounding September 11, 2001, and the ensuing political decisions by the western international community (especially the US) to re-engage in Afghanistan as a matter of priority. This has created strong pressure to do things quickly to satisfy the pressing domestic concerns of western nations.

In part, this is also the product of international experience in other "post-conflict" situations, e.g. Mozambique, Cambodia, Kosovo and Angola, where the failure to "act quickly" was seen to be a threat to the stability of fragile, post-conflict peace. Whether or not such urgency is necessary and justified arguably has not been adequately researched in these specific situations and certainly not in the Afghanistan context.

Against this understanding and the extent of external engagement, the influences of external agencies, institutions and donors have been dominant. Particular among these is what has been termed the "Washington consensus" that favours the motifs of a light enabling state, lean efficient civil service and active private sector.⁹⁰

The processes by which policy is being communicated are less than transparent. This leads to suspicion that there is, at best, an absence of a conscious strategy for engagement, dissemination and awareness-raising about policy making processes, and, at worst, a fear that such engagement would lead to a loss of control over policy outcomes. How policies will be interpreted

and implemented remains to be seen. What is clear is that there is a confusion of interests - lead agencies of government, other state agencies, NGOs, donors, international organisations, UN agencies and other actors. Conspicuous in their absence are the voices of the general population in Afghanistan.

5.2.1 Livelihoods and Policy in the Natural Resources and Agricultural Sector

To address how livelihood understandings and assessment might "inform" policy, the specific example of the needs assessment of the Natural Resources and Agriculture Sector is explored here.

As noted in the introduction, there are numerous statements in support of the protection and development of livelihoods in the current policy documentation intended to guide Afghanistan's recovery. Significantly, however, there is limited articulation of specific livelihood objectives in these policy documents. This is indicative of some of the conceptual challenges of translating "improved livelihoods" into concrete, sector-specific objectives.

The programme and sectoral arrangements of both the NDF and ITAP frame programming structures around professional and disciplinary boundaries, reflecting content but not the context in which the people of Afghanistan pursue their livelihoods. Improved livelihoods (and poverty reduction) is a classic cross-sectoral objective. If there is a concern to measure livelihood impacts and track reductions in vulnerability and insecurity as an overall assessment of overall programme impacts, then we must be clear as to what can be measured and how - and who will do it. It appears that these important tasks have not been assigned or attempted yet.

The way in which the NRAS has addressed livelihoods serves as both a typical and powerful example of the weaknesses of the current policy making processes. The comments made below are largely based on a textual analysis of the argument in the sector proposals and do not address (because we do not know) the process by which this document was prepared. The draft Comprehensive Needs Assessment document was based on the mission's initial one week visit in

⁸⁹ P.M. Blaikie and Z. Sadeque. 2000. Policy in High Places: Environment and Development in the Himalayas. ICIMOD Special Publication, Kathmandu.

⁹⁰ Maxwell, 2001, op. cit.

February 2002 to set up the needs assessment and a second visit from 7 April to 7 May 2002.⁹¹

A focus on the NRAS document is not unreasonable given the widely repeated mantra that around 80 percent of Afghanistan's population is based in rural areas and is largely agrarian. The stated overall objective was described in the introduction to this paper as "the overall objective is to improve livelihoods." The document breaks the sector down into the following sub-sectors: natural resources management, water resources management, community development, agriculture (rainfed, irrigated), livestock development, agricultural research, off-farm employment and institutional development. For each of these sub-sectors, key issues and strategic objectives/indicators have been identified (see Annex 1).

The reading offered here of the NRAS document focuses selectively on three aspects of the text: first, the understanding or analyses underpinning

the policy and programme prescriptions; second, the analysis of livelihoods; and, third the proposed connections between outputs, outcomes and impacts. Although this document fails to adequately consider livelihoods as a basis for policy-making, its weakness is perhaps due to a lack of detailed understanding of livelihoods, and livelihoods concepts and approaches.

(a) *Understandings*

The first question is what understanding and analysis informed the needs assessment. The sector background is stated in three short paragraphs, the first of which follows:

"The natural resources sector (including agriculture) has suffered from varying degrees of depredation for almost 25 years. A combination of war, civil conflict, exploitation and enforced neglect has combined to leave a legacy of degraded resources, especially forests and rangelands, damaged infrastructure and fragmented rural institutions. While NGOs

Table 2: Quoted Summary of Key "Understandings"

Para	Sub-sector	Statement
11	NRM	<i>Traditional natural resource management, coping and mitigation strategies have broken down under growing population pressures, the collapse of the rural economy and control by elites.</i>
13	Water	<i>Although Afghanistan has limited water resources, it does not make effective use of what is available.</i>
75		<i>The increase in vulnerability to low rainfall can be traced to unsuitable land use practices.</i>
14	Community	<i>The vast majority of rural communities lack basic services, especially communications, clean drinking water and health facilities.</i>
16	Agriculture	<i>Productivity levels of rainfed and irrigated farming are low (with) a very low efficiency rating of about 25 percent.</i>
17	Livestock	<i>Livestock are beset with serious problems including loss of livestock and decreased productivity due to declining feed and overgrazing .</i>
38	General	<i>The emphasis will be on achieving a large measure of self -sufficiency - this is a household priority given the legacy of the past 25 years.</i>

⁹¹ In the words of the mission, "The mission consulted extensively with the concerned line ministries namely the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources (MIWR) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (MAAH). In addition, a close working relationship was maintained with the Afghan Assistance Coordination Agency (AACA) which maintains an overview of the sector. Discussions took place with all major international agencies and donors, and with key NGOs working in the sector. Field visits were undertaken to Bamiyan province, the Panchir valley and the Shomali plains adjacent to Kabul. In addition, the mission participated in a Water Resources Management and Development Conference sponsored by the MIWR and UNICEF, which was held in Kabul between 29 April and 1 May." p 2.

Table 3: Key Statements with Respect to Livelihoods

Para	Sub-sector	Statement
21	Off-farm	<i>Off-farm income generation activities are an integral part of rural production systems. 65% of farming families rely upon off-farm income.</i>
44	Strategy	<i>The economy remains overwhelmingly rural and agricultural with 80-85 percent of the population dependent upon natural resources for their livelihood.</i>
45		<i>There is a similar cross section to village society irrespective of location or agro-ecological zone. This cross section covers landowners, small landowners, sharecroppers, landless, and female headed households. This geographic dispersal and disparities in asset distribution within rural communities require a development agenda which is driven by community-determining priorities.</i>
89	Community	<i>Different communities have different social characteristics.</i>
114	Livestock	<i>Traditionally livestock activities have been an integral part of most farming systems.</i>
135	Off-farm	<i>Off-farm income generation activities are an integral part of rural production systems.</i>

*and UN agencies have worked effectively in rural communities throughout this period and have had positive impacts at the local level, overall the sector remains poorly performing, with the country highly dependent upon food aid. The recent severe drought worsened the degradation, but it is not the key underlying factor for the non-sustainable resource use, poor management and production systems.*⁹²

The second paragraph explores issues concerned with improving performance and the third paragraph establishes a time frame. For a document that sets a goal of achieving "improved livelihoods," the above quotation fails to address the concept of rural livelihoods. The paper does not attempt to understand the context and an analysis of the constraints. Rather, the level of problem analysis starts with essentially technical, sub-sectoral issues. Table 4 summarises key statements to demonstrate these points.

The analysis of the sub-sectors is similarly problematic. Statements are descriptive rather than analytical and are presented as self-evident

truths, rather than being hedged with qualifications or supported by adequate analysis. Only in one case is there an acknowledgement of the limited information with respect to water resources in Afghanistan. The paper states simply that "the effects of war and neglect on these systems have not been systematically assessed."⁹³ In summary, the analysis of context informing the policy document is limited.

(b) The analysis of livelihoods

Likewise, little attention is given to the question of livelihoods. Table 5 summarises the key statements in the document with respect to livelihoods. There appears to be little incorporation of potential legacies from the last 20 years in terms of access to or ownership of assets and what implications these might have for household strategies. The only unit of analysis is "the community" and the expectations of the community display, at best, an unsettling innocence. The working assumption of the authors is that community-driven priorities can address disparities in asset distribution (see para 45 in Table 5) or handle differential needs.

⁹² Multi-Donor Mission, Natural Resources and Agricultural Sector, Comprehensive Needs Assessment - Draft Report (Kabul: 2002), para 30, p.9.

⁹³ Multi-Donor Mission, op. cit., para. 73.

(c) Programme Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts

Finally, the whole question of the extent to which relations among programme outputs, outcomes and impacts are addressed needs to be considered. Each has a distinct definition. Outputs are essentially a measure of effort indicated by the implementation of policy. Outcomes measure effectiveness and are indicated by the use of outputs and the sustained production of benefits. Impacts (the results of outcomes on the livelihoods of intended beneficiaries) are indicated by differences that arise from the original problem situation as a result of implementation.⁹⁴ There are statements in the document that pertain to outcomes and impacts, for example:

- "vulnerability to drought must be significantly reduced" (para 11);
- "this initiative would have a strong gender and poverty alleviation impact" (para 22);
- (this initiative would) "rebuild resilience through the adoption of technologies to reduce vulnerability to drought" (para 37); and,
- "the planned outcome is that self-reliant communities are able to meet their needs through a combination of food production, off-farm employment and trade" (para 54);

Even within this restricted set of socially-based anticipated outcomes and impacts, none of the strategic objectives or indicators is designed to specifically address these aims (see Annex 1). For example, no indicators or sub-sector objectives specifically address the overall goal of "improving livelihoods". There appears to be no connections made among the sub-sectors while the question of how the strategic objectives individually or in combination will contribute towards the overall objective is not described. There is no discussion about how progress in each specific sub-sector will translate directly into strong and productive livelihood systems for a range of populations in Afghanistan.

This raises the question of whether or not the sub-sector strategic objectives will be able to contribute or not to improved livelihoods. Moreover, as was discussed in Part I, a full understanding of livelihoods requires an

appreciation of not only how households gain access to food and income through agriculture and non-farm activities, but also how investments in and deployment of social and human assets contribute to overall household well-being. An assessment of livelihood outcomes cannot therefore be determined exclusively by reference to outcomes from the natural resource sector.

One must conclude that despite the statement of the overall objective to improve livelihoods, the policy is not grounded in a systematic analysis of livelihoods, an understanding of vulnerability, or an investigation into of the processes of poverty that informed the needs assessment of this key sector. Nor does it seem to have attempted to assess livelihood impacts. To what extent the weaknesses of this document can be ascribed to the pressures of time are unknown. But it fails to directly address its own livelihood goals or those identified in the NDF.

5.2.2 The Draft Needs Assessment (NRAS): Going For Agricultural Growth

What then are the concerns of the NRAS? Underlying the whole document is the assumption that agricultural growth in itself will address livelihood needs. This belies a typical assumption that project-specific outputs can be equated with positive changes in processes of livelihood systems. For example, the document states:

*"This sector... envisages a gradual decline in the current high levels of food dependency... within five years the sector should be largely self-reliant, with most communities relying upon a combination of food production, off-farm employment and trade to meet their needs."*⁹⁵

In many ways this assumption is well supported by comparative evidence. Agricultural growth can lead to higher incomes and more employment on-farm, as well as providing key resources to strengthen the linkages in informal social institutions upon which the poor rely, e.g. through extended families and other kinship ties. As labour demand increases, these outcomes have pro-growth benefits for the rural and national

⁹⁴ P. Oakley, B. Prattan and A. Clayton, *Outcomes and Impact, Evaluating Change in Social Development*. INTRAC (Oxford: 1998), op. cit.

⁹⁵ Multi-Donor Mission, para. 10.

economies. However such effects are not guaranteed. The issues of debt, inequities in land ownership, divisions of labour, access to water, mortgaging of assets and other vulnerabilities in Afghanistan that have been identified earlier in this paper indicate there are good grounds for challenging the assumptions behind the agricultural growth model.

There are additional reasons for concern. The beneficial local, regional and national growth effects from agricultural outputs depend on a leading role from small farms; such evidence as

there is from indicates considerable inequalities in land ownership.⁹⁶ The long-term fall in agricultural prices has already been noted. And, as identified under Section 4, there has probably been a significant diversification in rural livelihoods out of agriculture. In short, the benefits of agricultural growth implicit within the draft sector needs assessment (NRAS) cannot be assumed; rather there are strong grounds for challenging them. Table 6 is an example of the qualifications and necessary and sufficient conditions for such benefits to come about just at the farm level.

Table 4: The Consequences of Agricultural Growth within the Farm Economy

Pro-Livelihoods Effect of Growth: Higher incomes for farmers, including smallholders	
Qualifications & necessary conditions, for example:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smallholders have access to farm land and are able to retain production; • Output prices are sustained and do not fall as output increases (relative to input costs); • Smallholders have access to adequate and affordable on-farm labour; • Land rents do not offset higher gross earnings for tenant/ sharecropping farmers; • Distribution of land ownership & abundance of land limit ability of wealthy to capture rents; • Distribution of access to water does not adversely affect smallholder production; and • Smallholders able to adopt improved technology, e.g. not adversely affected by scale biases in techniques, increased exposure to risks, access to inputs, complementary services and credit.

Adapted from Irz, et al., 2001.

⁹⁶ Nathan Associates Inc. and Berger International Inc., Afghanistan Land Ownership. Final report submitted to the office of the AID representative for Afghan affairs, 1991.

Part III

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6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Livelihoods are dynamic and complex realities and their composition cannot be assumed. Rather, livelihoods must be deliberately studied first to be understood, second to be addressed and, third to be enhanced and supported.

It is clear that the people of Afghanistan have adapted their livelihoods to the changing conditions of the past 25 years. The recent (and, in places, ongoing) severe drought has introduced additional dynamics and stresses into livelihood systems, although little is known of the details of these adaptations. It can be safely assumed that livelihood diversity has increased in response to the nature of both man-made and natural risks, and that the range of vulnerabilities is vast, deep and continually changing, even as Afghanistan enters a fragile "post-conflict" era. For example, rural and urban distinctions are likely to become more blurred, while both livelihood opportunities and constraints for migrant labourers are evolving in response to the influx of foreign assistance and refugee returns.

A livelihoods approach can be useful for the Afghan government as it seeks to address the legacy of violent conflict, continuing socio-economic and environmental repercussions of the severe drought, and a host of inherent risks of other natural disasters (snows, earthquakes, floods, disease). The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, although not without its flaws, is an essential tool for understanding and action, if it is used critically. For example, it can provide a mechanism by which inter-linkages among nutrition, food security, health, education and household objectives and achievements can be analysed and addressed.

This paper concludes with a number of recommendations. The following recommendations call for the incremental adoption of key elements of the livelihoods approach (bearing in mind the above analysis of the Framework and its adaptability to the conditions in Afghanistan). By adjusting the Framework to focus on vulnerable - as opposed to sustainable - livelihoods, policy-

makers in Afghanistan will be able to use a livelihoods approach to address vulnerabilities facing Afghan households both by intervening to support livelihood strategies and outcomes and by creating a pro-livelihoods enabling environment through the design of policies.

A clear cautionary note should be made. The Livelihoods Framework is complicated conceptually and this will make it extremely difficult to translate into bureaucratic structures that are struggling to establish themselves now. The Framework does not translate directly into a clear plan of action, and as has been discussed, there is much within it that is problematic, uncertain and untested. While livelihood ideas and concepts can feed into and inform individual sector and ministry plans and action, no attempt should be made to apply a "livelihood straitjacket" to sectoral programmes.

It is recognised that change will not occur rapidly; time must be given to building understanding, learning and institutional capacities. This is not an argument for doing nothing. On the contrary, interventions are needed now to address and respond to acute vulnerabilities. Care must be taken to ensure that "authoritative" and prescriptive interventions are supplanted by deliberate, systems-based, pro-livelihood programmes, monitoring systems and impact assessments.

Recommendation 1: Invest in building knowledge about livelihood systems.

Policy interventions in Afghanistan need to be supported by approaches that reflect, with adequate caution and humility, the limits of knowledge. Decades of neglect in investments in research, analysis and understanding are not overcome in a few months of post-conflict euphoria. It must be a priority to redress the legacy of the 20-year failure to invest in the building of knowledge about livelihood systems in Afghanistan. Select sources provide information on livelihoods, but these do not include a

While livelihood ideas and concepts can feed into and inform individual sector and ministry plans and action, no attempt should be made to apply a "livelihood straitjacket" to sectoral programmes.

systematic or thorough analysis of livelihoods over time, across regions, or along gender, ethnic, religious and socio-economic lines. As part of the adoption of a livelihoods approach, substantial efforts must be made to identify and understand livelihood strategies and outcomes at the level of the Afghan household. As great an emphasis will have to be given to learning and understanding livelihood systems as to delivering tangible assistance (see Section 4.10 for a list of livelihoods topics that should be studied). This will entail the routine use of anthropologists and anthropological methods in all sectors.

Based on this analysis, livelihood goals must be specifically identified within programmes and projects based on argument, analysis and evidence, rather than supposition. It will take concerted efforts to overcome the tendency to unquestionably adopt assumptions about Afghan livelihood systems in the management of interventions and policies across a range of sectors. Causal and logical linkages between assessed vulnerabilities in livelihood systems and proposed activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts must be clearly identified and tagged with appropriate and measurable indicators. For example, investments are needed to build understandings about relationships among different livelihood systems and the dynamic nature of their vulnerabilities and strengths (e.g., nomadic Kuchi and settled farmers, urban - rural and rural - urban migration relations, etc.).

Recommendation 2: Develop livelihood approaches for relevant sectors and ministries

One of the strengths of the livelihoods framework is that it is not sector-specific and can thereby serve as a powerful tool for analysis, programming and evaluation. The livelihoods framework has the potential to act as a common thread binding together the range of efforts currently being undertaken by government ministries, donor organisations, international organisations and NGOs. The fundamental institutional analysis, consideration of the range of livelihood assets, and examinations of the livelihood strategies and outcomes that the framework entails should provide a conceptual and practical basis for all entities working to improve the lives and livelihoods of the people of Afghanistan.

Effort must be made to build dimensions of

livelihood understanding and programming into key ministries. By using a common framework for programming, analysis, and evaluation, these ministries will be better able to coordinate efforts within the current atmosphere of rapid policy making presently taking place. The framework will not, however, lead to improved policies and programs unless training is provided to the appropriate ministry staff. Donors, advisers, and ministry employees must be motivated and committed to a livelihoods framework if it is to be implemented successfully. This will require extensive dissemination of information on livelihoods through training courses in a range of languages and the distribution of livelihoods papers translated into Dari and Pashto. Capacity-building will be an essential part of this process, and all international agencies should renew their commitment to building the technical, analytical and monitoring capacity of Afghan institutions.

A modified form of such an approach might be to develop a national capacity for disaster management built upon a model of emergency livelihood interventions, e.g., assessments that are developed using a modified livelihoods frameworks and a clear and strong government capacity to ensure that emergency interventions are designed to both enhance resilience and minimise vulnerabilities. A deliberate programme should strengthen the government's capacity to strategically manage the rapid influx of resources and actors that characterise disaster response, and to organise responses in a way that provides key support to livelihoods in times of crises (e.g. interventions in markets to support livestock prices in times of drought, anti-destitution cash-for-work schemes).

Recommendation 3: Ensure complementarity of action in coordination structures

The adoption of a livelihoods framework across sectors and ministries will have only limited, positive repercussions in the absence of effective coordination mechanisms. Implementing a livelihoods framework in each ministry will require an increase in immediate coordination efforts. At present, select steps have been taken to improve coordination in regard to livelihoods. For example, a steering committee has been established to link nutritional surveillance with food security monitoring, bringing together actors from government, agencies and field practitioners.

A vulnerability unit has been established within the Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). This unit stands to play an essential role in coordinating and building understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of vulnerabilities. The effectiveness of these coordinating bodies may be limited in promoting livelihoods strategies unless they first adopt a common livelihoods framework. Efforts will also fall short of expectations if strategies and objectives remain compartmentalised within specific units or ministry objectives. The coordinating bodies must rather be able to communicate and cooperate with each other in pursuit of multi-sector, systems-based goals.

Recommendation 4: Establish empowered monitoring systems for livelihoods surveillance

A livelihoods monitoring system must be established to inform understanding, action and policy. Each sectoral strategy must incorporate aspects of livelihood enhancement in a manner that logically links the overall objective of "improving livelihoods" with identifiable strategies and measurable (i.e., traceable) indicators for reaching this objective. Interventions create new "winners" and new "losers" (think of the effects of escalating house rents in Kabul) and cannot be automatically assumed to build resilience. Therefore, mechanisms must be established to monitor the dynamic interplay between interventions and the generation of either deeper vulnerability or enhanced resilience at the individual, household, community, national and institutional levels, i.e., from the micro to the meso and macro levels. Ministries and aid organisations must be committed to monitoring the effects (both direct and unintended) of interventions to ensure that the desired result (increased resilience) is attained.

The monitoring should not be based on a national, one-off survey but should be built out of a household cohort tracking system whereby identified households, structured by socio-economic status within an appropriate geographic coverage, are systematically tracked for key indicators over time. In addition, livelihood systems need to be monitored for their relations to institutions and trends, e.g., developments with the Afghan diaspora, developments in the opium networks, the dynamics of regional markets, etc. This will provide contextual information for

understanding poverty, monitoring recovery and informing policy and practice. It will need careful design, investment in capacity, and sustained and informed implementation.

Mechanisms need to be established to ensure that the overarching goal of reducing poverty and building livelihoods are systematically and consistently addressed across sectors. This could be handled through a cross-ministerial monitoring committee of advisers. In addition, incentives need to be incorporated into processes of personnel, project and organisational evaluation that reflect these overarching goals.

Recommendation 5: Share information and make transparent the workings of policy

Greater understanding among ministries and organisations is needed to clarify key sectoral and cross-sectoral policy-making processes. This links closely to improved coordination, and will require participation in joint assessments and ongoing dialogue regarding livelihoods policies, programming, and goals. A greater understanding and sharing regarding the processes by which policy is generated will ultimately lead to more coherent and coordinated policies to address and respond to livelihood needs.

Transparency in policy-making and programming is also essential as the government seeks to build accountability and legitimacy in the fragile post-conflict period. Policies and processes must be transparent in order for Afghan constituents, national agencies, and international donors to remain consulted, engaged, and invested. The dearth of knowledge on livelihoods in Afghanistan means that transparency in policy-making regarding livelihood interventions is particularly important. The process must remain open for debate and critical review to ensure that the policies "get it right."

Recommendation 6: Invest in pro-livelihood processes.

There are vested interests in maintaining "projects." Donors favour project-oriented outputs and NGOs rely on project overheads in order to stay in business. Nevertheless, there needs to be a move from project- to process- based investments addressing livelihoods. If this is to happen, support and resources for refocusing

organisational capacities and structures to make them more "process" oriented will also be required. Central to this is addressing ministry structures and arrangements. If the key functions of ministries are to be pro-livelihood, then the support for markets, transportation, communication and banking should not simply follow the neo-liberal models of development and presumed "free" market forces. Rather, government and donor programmes should be specifically designed to support livelihoods: markets that enable good returns to smallholder farmers, transportation that facilitates the movement of people, goods and information, communication that keeps kinship

ties close, banking that facilitates the easy movements of remittances, etc.

It is encouraging that livelihood concerns are evident in the current policy documentation of Afghanistan, but it is also clear that livelihoods are not being systematically addressed. They need to be. As the American philosopher Will Rogers said, "If you don't know where you are going, you're apt to end up someplace else." The lesson here is obvious; if livelihoods outcomes are desired, they must be included specifically by design.

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Annex 1

Summary of Key Issues and Strategic Objectives / Indicators for Major Sub-Sectors from Joint- Donor Natural Resources and Agriculture Sector Comprehensive Needs Assessment, Draft Report June 2002.

Key Issues	Strategic Objectives / Indicators
Natural Resource Sector	
Severe depletion of natural forest & biodiversity reserves	Restores & enhances the quality of natural forests. A long term target of 5 percent of forest cover should be adopted
Conversion of pasture land to crop land	Improves the productivity and sustainable use of rangeland
Timber demand rapidly increasing	Curbs illegal monitoring
Urban greening	Reduces air pollution & create attractive urban environment
Demand for fuelwood for household energy exceeds supply	An integrated household energy programme
Lack of accountability for natural resource management	Community-based micro-watershed plans and management
Unclear tenure/ leasehold rights	Land registry linked to cadastral survey
Inadequate institutional structures	A reformed Dept. of Forestry
Need for capacity building	Fully trained staff focused on the new mandate of DoF
Water Resources Management	
Demolished infrastructure	Effective working environment
Large number of inoperable, damaged small-scale irrigation schemes	Maximise the scale and efficiency of small-scale irrigation
Poorly or non-functioning major informal and formal irrigation schemes	Fully functioning major irrigation schemes
Inadequate water resource knowledge base	Rebuild the knowledge base
Lack of holistic micro-watershed management	Sustainable use of groundwater
Groundwater depletion	Community based micro-watershed management
Lack of appropriate water resources management/ coordination mechanism	A coordination agency with an overall view of the many demands on water resources
Most major rivers are international requiring riparian agreements	An internationally binding set of riparian agreements
Outdated ministry role and organisation structures	Reform of the roles and functions of core ministries
Damaged physical infrastructure of line ministries at the national and provincial levels	Adequate working environment for reformed lin ministry staff
Shortage of skilled technicians	Full complement of skilled staff

Key Issues	Strategic Objectives / Indicators
Community Development Matrix	
Degraded community infrastructure and essential services	Self-reliant village and district communities
Rehabilitation of water delivery infrastructure for drinking and irrigation	All villages to have a reliable source of water
Strengthening community skills in the planning and implementation of projects	Communities capable of full participation in local natural resource management decisions
Redefined line ministry (MRRD) role	A clear statement of the role and functions of reformed MRRD
Damaged physical infrastructure of MRRD	An appropriate working environment
Weak institutional capacity	A strong MRRD capable of supporting and monitoring community-based programmes
Redefined role of provincial level office of MRRD	A clear understanding of the role of MRRD staff in the reformed ministry in relation to participatory planning
Inadequate village level data to apply selection criteria	Village level databases
Agricultural Matrix	
Inadequate and outdated dryland farming technology	Maximise rainfed area output
Availability of drought-resistant varieties of cereals, legumes and fodder	Uptake of approved varieties
Fertiliser distribution	Adequate supplies available at world prices
Inadequate farm power	Appropriate technology available as needed
Plant protection against selected major pests	Minimise risk of crop losses from major pests
Poor on-farm water management	Improve on-farm water management efficiencies by 20 percent
Badly damaged horticulture industry	A rejuvenated competitive industry
Inadequate market knowledge	Private sector trade association
Moribund industrial crops	Competitive private sector industries
Inappropriate institutions with large staff numbers	A reformed MAAH
Capacity-building	Well trained MAAH staff
Lack of agricultural credit	Commercial and non-bank financial institutions
Livestock Development Matrix	
Lack of reliable sub-sector database, therefore no basis for planning livestock programmes	Up to date data base on livestock numbers, distribution, systems, performance and resources use

Key Issues	Strategic Objectives / Indicators
Investment in dairy industry	Commercial dairy industry supported by breed development, processing facilities and milk collection services
Livestock raisers with too few resources to recover animal and poultry numbers without assistance	Re-establishment of individual livestock holdings
Unclear policy with respect to roles of private and public sectors in delivery of services	Roles of government and private sectors clearly defined. Private provision of services
Lack of government field service, status and function of veterinary field units (VFU) unclear	Clearly defined VFY role as providers of user-pays veterinary services. Promote private sector ownership and delivery of services
Ineffective and inappropriate structure of Animal Production and Veterinary Directorates	Both directorates soundly structured, resourced and administered with regard to new roles supporting the sector
Rangeland overgrazing	Livestock numbers in balance with seasonal availability on rangeland. Destocking mechanisms introduced through development of offtake strategies
Investment in commercial poultry production. Lack of supplies of breeding stock	Soundly based self-financing poultry industry
Significant weaknesses in technical skills of private and public sector staff regarding poultry and dairy production	Useful cadre of trained private technical staff capable of usefully managing and advising in these industries
Weak livestock disease prevention capability in face of transboundary disease risk and high endemic disease prevalence	Sound local disease prevention and control capability on part of government
Public health and environmental hazards associated with locally produced meat, milk and poultry	Hygienic and environmentally sound processing and marketing facilities for livestock products
Lack of properly trained technical personnel in livestock sub-directorates	Both directorates soundly structured trained and resourced for new roles
Agricultural Research Matrix	
The scope of the future agriculture research and technology transfer (ARATTS) network	A relevant fully supportive ARATTS network using on-farm participatory research
Damaged and looted facilities	Restored research facilities in line with reformed role
Potential loss of genetic base	A gene bank in Kabul
Inappropriate extension service	Effective research and extension service delivery systems meeting community needs
Off-farm employment matrix	A community/ NGO-led small enterprise support service
Lack of support services	Supplied by above
Training programs	As above
Supply of raw materials	An apex marketing organisation
Marketing outlets	Rural bank
Start-up finance	

Annex 2

Dupree (1980) had the following comments (pp. 142)

"We do have several general censuses which help clarify the sedentary vs non-sedentary picture, at least in the gross quantitative sense. Charts 8*, 9, and 11* are taken from Population and Agricultural Survey of 1963, undertaken by the Ministry of Planning. The Department of Statistics and Research admits wide margins for error in several of the interpolations, primarily because of the reluctance of villagers to answer questions concerning ownership of property and livestock (they feared increased taxes) and the number of sons (they feared conscription), in spite of

assurances of anonymity given by the poll takers. However the number of villages (Chart 8) tends to coincide with the rough field counts I have made in several provinces on the ground and with the use of aerial photos. This is also true of the ... lack of non-agricultural occupational specialisation in villages (Chart 9). I suspect that any villager listing an occupation other than farmer-herder still functions primarily as a farmer, which is certainly true in the villages I have studied. Therefore with these warnings I present several tables from the survey. Chart 10 must be also considered with the same precautions in mind"

* Charts 8 and 11 are not shown

Dupree's Chart 9 Reported Occupations of Village Population: 1963

Occupation	Provincial Weighted Average	Range
Religious teacher	8.5	2.0 - 12.8
Farmer	80.3	65.7 - 94.2
Shepherd	5.4	1.9 - 12.
Blacksmith	1.1	0.1 - 4.1
Carpenter	1.0	0 - 3.7
Barber	1.0	0 - 4.4
Other	3.4	0 - 24.8
Percent of males listing an occupation	35.5	17.4 - 59.5

Dupree's Chart 10 Distribution of Labour Force in Afghanistan: 1966-67

Sector	Numbers	Percent
Agriculture	2942000	77.0
Industry, handcrafts	231000	6.0
Construction & mines	83000	2.2
Transport & communication	30,000	0.8
Education	12,000	0.3
Health	6,000	0.2
Trade	106,000	2.8
Civil service	60,000	1.6
Miscellaneous activities in rural areas (undefined)	350,000	9.1
Total	3820000	100

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADA Afghanistan Development Agency

CHA Coordination for Humanitarian Assistance

DFID Department for International Development (UK)

FAO Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN)

ITAP Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People

MRRD Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development

NDF National Development Framework

NRAS Natural Resources and Agriculture Sector

SCCPI Situations of Chronic Conflict and Political Instability

UNAMA United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

USAID United States Agency for International Development

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