

## Nine years, nine confces

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

The Afghan government has a long list of demands for the international donors who will gather in Kabul today for the ninth such conference since the start of the Afghanistan war in 2001.

Kabul will ask donors to focus 80 percent of their aid budgets on a list of 23 "national priority programmes," which will be introduced at the conference. Afghan officials will also push for a more transparent, organised aid process; donors often fail to report how they are spending money, leading to redundancies and inefficiencies.

"It's not only about strengthening the legitimacy of the government," said Omar Zakhilwal, the Afghan finance minister, at a press conference last week. "We believe this alignment with the government's priorities, and therefore the people's priorities, leads to sustainable development."

Those goals, laudable as they may be, are hardly new. The London conference in 2006 produced a document, the Afghanistan Compact, which was to guide reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. It declared that the Afghan government would take the lead on setting priorities, as defined in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), which was also approved at the conference.

A subsequent donors conference, in Paris in 2008, concluded with a communique that promised, "increased, more predictable, transparent and accountable assistance".

### LITTLE COORDINATION

Yet those promises have gone mostly unmet. Seventy-seven percent of the \$29bn pledged by international donors has been spent without any input from the Afghan government, according to a review conducted last year by the finance ministry. That includes much of the money earmarked for the ANDS.

"The government has some valid points. Half of the money pledged for ANDS is out of line with priorities," said Ashley Jackson, the head of Afghanistan policy at Oxfam, in an interview from Kabul. "There are no records of what the [provincial reconstruction teams] are doing, and many of the donors are bad at reporting, too."

The Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of the US congress, issued a

report last week that found many Afghan development programmes do not have proper performance metrics. The US cannot track whether or not they are effective, in other words.

US and Nato officials have also encouraged Kabul to allow local governments more control over aid spending. The first "district community council" was stood up in Logar province earlier this year. The councils are supposed to better link aid distribution with the needs of the people, but their efforts are sometimes marred by corruption and nepotism.

"They've been aggressive in strengthening local governance," said Caroline Wadhams, a South Asia analyst at the US-based Center for American Progress. "But it's not a transparent process. People are being appointed by powerful politicians in Kabul. It's not representative."

### WEAK INSTITUTIONS

Nine years after the war began, a deep mistrust still characterises the relationship between the Afghan government and its international donors. The latter are often reluctant to funnel aid through the government in Kabul, fearing corruption or mismanagement.

"US agencies are making decisions about how these resources are to be used, and they're trying to go around the government," said John Brummet, the assistant inspector general for audits at the office of the US special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction. "That's largely to avoid corruption, but also because of the weakness [of state institutions]."

Corruption is undeniable, hundreds of millions (if not billions) of dollars have been stolen by government officials, and a recent report by Integrity Watch Afghanistan found that Afghans paid twice as much in bribes in 2009 as they did in 2006.

But a more fundamental problem is the persistent weakness of many ministries in Afghanistan. The Brookings Institution released a report in 2008, the Index of State Weakness, which ranked Afghanistan as having the second-weakest institutions in the world, behind only Somalia.

Little has changed since then. A US defence department report released in April found that the Afghan government has only a minimal presence in many areas of the country.

## UN chief urges Karzai to act on good governance

Donors conference today

AFP, United Nations

UN chief Ban Ki-moon urged Afghan President Hamid Karzai to unveil "concrete" steps at a donors conference today to improve governance and promote national reconciliation in his war-ravaged country.

"We expect President Karzai and his government would come up with a concrete action plan... about the way to enhance good governance, promote further reconciliation and also how he can improve the security situation in his country," he told AFP in an exclusive recent interview here ahead of the conference.

The UN secretary-general, who will co-chair the high-level meeting in Kabul along with Karzai, said the future of Afghanistan remained "a high priority agenda" for the international community and the world body.

Up to 70 international representatives and 40 foreign ministers, led by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, are expected to attend Tuesday's gathering, a follow-up to a donors' meeting held in London in January.

Afghan authorities plan to use the conference to present donors with proposals to improve governance, implement economic and social development, assert rule of law and justice, support human rights, use aid more effectively and map out peace efforts.



Pakistan's Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani, 2nd right, looks towards US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, 2nd left, as commerce ministers Makhdoom Amin Fahim, right, of Pakistan and Anwar Ul Haq Ahady of Afghanistan sign agreements in Islamabad on Sunday. Walking in the centre background is Special Representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke.

## PM for 15-year waiver of IP

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Ministry and WIPO.

The premier said Bangladesh has achieved phenomenal growth in the pharmaceuticals sector under the IP rights waiver.

These high quality pharmaceuticals are being exported to over 70 countries, including many LDCs, where they are guaranteeing primary healthcare needs, she said.

"I hope the waiver, which is expected to expire within a few years' time, would be extended by WIPO to another fifteen years for the interest of the LDCs," she said.

The PM mentioned that the LDCs are also being adversely affected by the climate change phenomenon. Bangladesh's case is universally recognised as a severe one. Like other LDCs, Bangladesh has adopted adaptation and mitigation action plans to cope with climate change. Their successful implementation depends much on their access to environment-friendly technologies.

"These technologies should, therefore, be kept outside the IP regime to make them affordable for LDCs."

She said that LDCs should also accelerate implementation of the WIPO Development Agenda as these countries gained most from the IP regime.

Hasina said IP goes beyond technical and legal issues to education, public health, to national innovation strategies and climate change mitigation and adaptation issues.

She stressed the need for effective utilisation of IP to overcome the challenges in these areas.

Like other LDCs, she said, Bangladesh needs IP information for small and medium enterprises and for those with potentials like pharmaceuticals, textiles and ICT.

"We, therefore, appreciate WIPO's initiative that closely involves the private sector in providing the LDCs with free access to technology information."

She noted that technology information on its own is of

little value unless there is a capacity to utilise them.

The PM said that WIPO needed to scale up its LDC related activities like capacity building, legal, institutional and policy frameworks, knowledge base, reversal of brain drain, development of sustainable research and development facilities.

"I would, in fact, urge WIPO to promote these and other practical measures for bringing concrete benefits to the LDCs."

She said that her government was planning to formulate an IP policy that would foster national innovation and creativity in an integrated manner. "We are also committed to public-private partnerships in realising our objectives."

Moreover, Hasina mentioned that her government was aiming for a 'Digital Bangladesh' and a middle income country by 2021 through widespread utilisation of ICT, and giving emphasis on IP issues.

"Unfortunately, the international environment presents to the LDCs more challenges than opportunities. We need to address this gap to achieve our MDGs and other development goals. We need WIPO to help us here in fostering development, fighting unemployment, alleviating poverty, attaining food security and facing the impacts of climate change", she said.

Hasina said the LDCs need to have a common voice on IP related issues in all concerned international forums.

"We need to emphasise that our demands are not only genuine but also priorities", she said.

Industries Minister Dilip Barua presided over the function while Information and Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad and Foreign Minister Dipu Moni also addressed the function as special guests and WIPO Director General Dr Francis Gurry spoke as the guest of honour.



Afghan policemen check vehicles at a checkpoint in Kabul yesterday. Afghanistan is to host a key international conference in Kabul today; aiming to chart a future of peace and development and show supporters the war-torn country is acting on past pledges.

## VACANCY NOTICE

United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces vacancy for following positions for "Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme Phase II" project.

1. Knowledge Management Specialist - SB4
2. Advocacy & Communication Analyst - SB4
3. Project Secretary - SB1

The duration of the Service Contract is twelve months initially, extendable upon satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

For details of the Job Description and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be submitted no later than 17:00 pm, Saturday, 31 July 2010. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

## Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Request for Proposal (RFP)

Issued on: 20 July, 2010  
Deadline for submission of Proposal: 16 August 2010

The FAO Representation in Bangladesh is inviting proposals from qualified national legal firms/consulting firms to complete the assignment in Dhaka (with provisions for field travel) under the Project GCP/BGD/038/EC "Improving Food Safety, Quality and Food Control in Bangladesh". A national consulting firm will be selected to provide the services as per the detailed TORs to be specified in the contract.

The purpose of this assignment is to review local legislation/legislative instruments related to food safety and food control management in Bangladesh and to compare them with selected international examples. It is also required to outline a plan for undertaking reform of the legislative instruments for food control.

Interested qualified firms are requested to collect detailed task descriptions, and the information on how to apply from the project office first floor, IPH building, Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212 (tel. 8818161). Hard copies of the completed RFP must reach to the FAO Representation in Bangladesh, House # 37, Road # 8, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205 in a sealed envelope by close of business on 16 August 2010.

## CAREER OPPORTUNITY

**Parkesine Products Limited**, a subsidiary of East Coast Group is going to recruit following suitable and experienced professionals for its plastic products manufacturing unit located at BSCIC Industrial Area, Tongi and its Head Office.

### Plant Manager

#### Responsibilities:

- Ensure Standard Operating Procedures are properly implemented & maintained;
- Ensuring maintenance of Safety Standards by regular interaction with team members at the time of job execution;
- Upkeep of equipments by effective co-ordination with the maintenance team;
- Achieve production targets by ensuring optimal use of various raw materials into the process;
- Maintain proper EOQ of raw materials as per schedule production;
- Analyze customer complaints if any and address the root causes to ensure zero complaint;
- Building team spirit by providing technical support and guidance to members on solution of recurring problems;

#### Requirements:

- B.Sc./M.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering with MBA from a reputed university;
- Minimum 3-5 years work experience in manufacturing company;
- Willing to take challenging assignment under the top management and ability to work independently;

### Executive (Commercial & Accounts)

#### Responsibilities:

- Handling LC related documents with banks;
- Maintain records of commercial & financial activities;
- Maintain regular communication with C&F, insurance & other stake holders;
- Preparation of various accounts using accounting software;
- Should have adequate knowledge in Tax & VAT;

#### Requirements:

- BBA/MBA in Finance or Accounting from a reputed university;
- Minimum 2-3 years practical experience in commercial department;

### Executive (Income Tax & VAT)

#### Responsibilities:

- Comply with Income Tax & VAT acts and regulations;
- Keep records of all Income Tax & VAT related documents;
- Preparation & submission of annual Income Tax returns and monthly VAT returns;
- Perform other financial activities as per the instruction of senior management;

#### Requirements:

- BBA/MBA in Finance or Accounting from a reputed university;
- Minimum 2-3 years practical experience in VAT preferably in manufacturing company;
- Experience in Income Tax related works will be considered as an added advantage;

### Executive (Logistics & Inventory Management)

#### Responsibilities:

- Maintain proper inventory records of raw materials & finished goods;
- Arrange loading & unloading of raw materials & finished goods;
- Hire transport and ensure delivery of finished goods;
- Generate various MIS report on inventory;

#### Requirements:

- Minimum graduate in any discipline from a reputed university;

Attractive compensation package will be offered to really deserving candidate.

Please apply with C.V. & photographs directly at Parkesine Products Limited, East Coast Centre, SW (G)-8 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212 or through e-mail: [parkesine@ecg.com.bd](mailto:parkesine@ecg.com.bd) by 30th July 2010.