

AFGHANISTAN

SUMMARY STATISTICS

Region	South-central Asia
Currency	Afghani (AFN)
Surface area (square kilometres)	652864
Population in 2011 (estimated, 000)	32358
Population density in 2011 (per square kilometre)	49.6
Capital city and population in 2011 (000)	Kabul (3097)

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Indicators	Year	
GDP: Gross domestic product (million current US\$)	2011	18949
GDP: Growth rate at constant 2005 prices (annual %)	2011	5.7
GDP per capita (current US\$)	2011	586.0
GNI: Gross national income per capita (current US\$)	2011	560.0
Gross fixed capital formation (% of GDP)	2011	15.1
Exchange rates (national currency per US\$)	2011	49.04
Agricultural production index (2004-2006=100)	2011	109
Food production index (2004-2006=100)	2011	109
Labour force participation, adult female pop. (%)	2011	15.7
Labour force participation, adult male pop. (%)	2011	80.3
Energy production, primary (000 mt oil equivalent)	2010	420
Telephone subscribers, total (per 100 inhabitants)	2011	54.3
Internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	2011	5.0
Exports (million US\$)	2011	375.9
Imports (million US\$)	2011	6390.3
Balance (million US\$)	2011	-6014.4
Major trading partners (% of exports)	2011	Pakistan (48.0), India (18.7), Russian Federation

		(8.8)
Major trading partners (% of imports)	2011	Pakistan (13.7), Russian Federation (12.6), Uzbekistan (11.5)

SOCIAL INDICATORS

Indicators	Year	
Population growth rate (average annual %)	2010-2015	3.1
Urban population growth rate (average annual %)	2010-2015	4.4
Rural population growth rate (average annual %)	2010-2015	2.7
Urban population (%)	2012	23.8
Population aged 0-14 years (%)	2012	45.8
Population aged 60+ years (females and males, % of total)	2012	3.9/3.6
Sex ratio (males per 100 females)	2012	107.2
Life expectancy at birth (females and males, years)	2010-2015	49.5/49.2
Infant mortality rate (per 1 000 live births)	2010-2015	124.5
Fertility rate, total (live births per woman)	2010-2015	6.0
Contraceptive prevalence (ages 15-49, %)	2006-2010	22.8
International migrant stock (000 and % of total population)	mid-2010	90.9/0.3
Refugees and others of concern to UNHCR	end-2011	1548374
Education: Primary-secondary gross enrolment ratio (f/m per 100)	2006-2012	57.0/89.4
Education: Female third-level students (% of total)	2006-2012	18.0
Intentional homicides (females and males, per 100 000)	2008-2010	0.9/3.7
Seats held by women in national parliaments (%)	2012	27.7

(Source: World Statistics Pocketbook | United Nations Statistics Division)

Trade and Investment profile

- After recording strong exports (12.2 percent) and imports (22 percent) growth in 2012 over 2011, Afghanistan registered lower growth rate in both exports (3.6 percent) and imports (1.6 percent) in 2013.
- Total value of exports increased from \$1.1 billion in 2012 to \$1.27 billion 2013 while imports increased from \$8 billion to 9.8 billion during the same period. Current account deficit as ratio of GDP for Afghanistan remained one of the highest (35 percent of GDP) in the world.
- Primary commodities constitute major percentage of exports and fuel constitutes major portion of import basket while that of manufacturing share remained minimal in both exports and imports.
- Pakistan, China and Japan are major export destination of Afghanistan and Pakistan, India and Iran are the major import destination of Afghanistan and Narrow export basket, lack of infrastructure facilities and continuous domestic violation remained major hindrance for trade development in Afghanistan.
- The World Bank's 2013 Doing Business Report ranks Afghanistan at 168th out of 189 economies for the ease of doing business overall, indicating business climate remained poor. Afghanistan has signed five bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements. Afghanistan has not been granted WTO membership yet and remained observer country.

Foreign Direct Investment

- Afghanistan attracted \$69 million FDI in 2013 which is 27 percent lower than 2012 figure.
- Most of the sectors Afghanistan are open for 100 private investments and full profit repartition is allowed for foreign companies. However, FDI in certain sectors, such as non-banking financial activities, insurance, natural resources, and infrastructure is subject to special consideration by the High Commission on Investment (HCI).

- Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) established in 2003 acts as a sole authority for approval of FDI projects.
- South Africa, Turkey, UAE and Canada are the major sources of FDI inflows to Afghanistan. Construction, telecommunication and banking sector attracted highest amount of private investment during 2010-2013.
- Despite significant FDI inflows to Afghanistan, business climate remained poor as indicated by World Bank's doing business ranking. Among others, the political violence, weak regulations regarding property protection, lack of skilled human capital, under-developed financial markets, insufficient infrastructures facilities, and higher level of corruption limit the potential attractiveness of the country for private investment.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT SCENARIO

- Women's rights, development, and participation in society have been at the forefront of international involvement in Afghanistan since 2001. The Government of Afghanistan has made a series of critical commitments to women, and many international actors have made women's issues central to the objectives of their aid commitments to Afghanistan.
- Gender discrimination in Afghanistan is a universal phenomenon and gender gaps are widespread in health, education, access to and control over resources, economic opportunities and power and political voice.
- The Afghan constitution, established in 2004, states gender equality in Article 22, wherein any sort of discrimination and privilege between the citizens of Afghanistan has been prohibited, assuring equal rights to both men and women. In addition, Articles 43 and 44 of the constitution guarantee women's right to education, and article 48 codifies their right to work.
- Afghanistan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2003.

- The Government of Afghanistan launched a 10-year National Action Plan for Women (NAPWA), which took effect in 2008.
- In terms of education, the government figures suggest, only 26 per cent of Afghanistan's population is literate, and among women the rate is only 12 per cent.¹
- The traditional practices in the country have restricted women from benefiting their legitimate rights and access to the courts. Women's leaving their houses without the permission of their husbands is implied as recklessness. Male dominant traditions and customs are also among other elements that violate women's right to freely go out. According to UNIFEM, 87% of women face abuse and violence in Afghanistan. In areas under Taliban control, women are facing constant threats, intimidation and violence as per the Human Rights Watch (HRW).

HEALTH SCENARIO

- In 2003, MoPH developed a set of cost-effective and high impact interventions called the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) that would be available to all Afghans with special focus on those living in remote and underserved areas. Later on, in 2005, the MoPH developed the Essential Package of Hospital Services (EPHS), which defined the role and services of the hospital sector, specifically for the district, provincial and regional hospitals and aims to reduce high maternal and childhood mortality rates.²
- The under-five mortality rate in Afghanistan has been reduced from 176 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 99 in 2012, a 44% decrease. The infant mortality rate was also significantly reduced, from 120 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 71 in 2012.
- The out of pocket expenditure accounts for nearly three-quarters of all health spending (73.6%) whereas the central government financed around 5.6 percent (USD 84,148,093) of health expenditures in 2011-12. International donor funding accounted for the remaining 20.8 percent (USD 312,468,367) of total health

¹ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/7/afghani-women-strive-to-get-an-education/>

² <http://moph.gov.af/en/tender/reoi-for-consultancy-services-for-third-party-monitoring-and-evaluation-of-the-bphs-and-ephs-under-sehat-project>

expenditure. These direct out-of-pocket (OOP) payments made by households are extremely inequitable for the poorest households.

- In Afghanistan, there are legal provisions establishing the powers and responsibilities of the Medicines Regulatory Authority (MRA). The MRA is responsible to regulate the medicines system both in public and in private sector and as well as in the medicine system of NGOs and other government departments, but the enforcement of the regulations is very poor in the country. In Afghanistan only pharmaceutical companies are registered, medicines are not registered.
- The situation of healthcare in Afghanistan needs updated scoping and assessment for Private Sector involvement, capacity building and training of human resource for health, health information technology, health insurance and access to medicines & contraception. There is increasing recognition of need for MoPH stewardship and regulatory mechanisms for private health care sector.
- Access to family planning services is still a challenge and this could reduce maternal deaths if contraception use reaches around 60%. Also factors like numbers of skilled birth attendants, reliable transport and availability/quality of emergency obstetrical care facilities vary greatly within Afghanistan, so there is a need to study and prioritize contextual interventions that will bring forth the evidenced impacts in attaining health.³
- Improving healthcare will require continued investments in developing technical capacity in health technology and access to medicines arenas; fostering cross learning of best practices with other developing countries; health infrastructure; a focus on improving health-worker performance through training, material support.

³ Carvalho N, Salehi SA, and Goldie JS. National and sub-national analysis of the health benefits and cost-effectiveness of strategies to reduce maternal mortality in Afghanistan. Health Policy Plan. (2012)doi: 10.1093/heapol/czs026

- Human Resources for Health is one major health systems component needs strengthening in a major way. Country needs to invest in setting up more medical schools and nursing/paramedical training centre, regulatory structures such as Afghan Medical and Nursing Councils as well as offering structured in service training programmes. Use of e learning plate forms for capacity building needs to be further explored.
- Afghanistan is one of the three polio endemic countries left. Though WHO has invested in establishing surveillance systems and mass vaccination drives, much more needs to be done in mobilizing support from community especially Taliban. Indian experiences in reaching out to resistance communities can be considered leading to fine tuning of outreach BCC strategies.

RESOURCE SCARCITY, FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIO

War for three decades have left Afghanistan's Socio - economic development, Infrastructure, irrigation canals, energy sector and water management system in a state of disrepair, and hold the growth of the agriculturally-reliant nation. However, the war is not the only cause of the crisis, geographical constrains, climate change, and the lack of education also adds to the problem.

RESOURCE SCARCITY

- Afghanistan is a land locked country and receive its fresh water from mountains. Over 80% of Afghanistan's water is sourced from the Hindu Kush Mountains. Because of poor storage capacity and lack of canals, and infrastructure, only 30-35% of the water coming out of the mountains is utilised.
- The CIA World Factbook indicates that 98% of water usage in Afghanistan is for Agriculture; 2% of water usage for Households.
- Only 27% of its population has access to improved water sources, and it goes down to 20% in rural areas, the lowest percentage in the world.

- Only 5% of people in nationwide can access improved sanitation and in rural it is 1%. 10 out of 100 children die from preventable waterborne diseases before reaching to the age of 5 years.
- Year of war and neglect have left Afghanistan's electrical sector in poor state. Afghanistan relies primarily on electricity produce by costly diesel generator other than cheap option like solar, hydro, wind and natural gas etc.
- Electricity production from diesel power plants has almost tripled from 48 million kWh in 2009-2010 to 128 million kWh in 2011-2012, with Kandahar and Kabul provinces accounting for the vast majority of this consumption⁴.
- Land is a very important natural resource for Afghanistan, where 70% of their population is dependent on Agriculture for their livelihood.
- In many parts of Afghanistan, powerful individuals have seized public and private land – particularly from refugees/Internal Displaced Persons (IDS). Of an estimated 396,808 IDPs, 12% have been displaced as a result of land disputes and illegal taxation.

FOOD SECURITY

- Food security is a major issue in Afghanistan, where war, drought and unstable climate have strongly deteriorated rural and urban livelihood.
- Afghanistan experienced a severe drought which contributed to food insecurity, particularly in isolated communities in the mountains of northern Afghanistan
- According to the November 2013 IPCC round in Afghanistan, two provinces, Badakhshan and Ghor, are classified as facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) condition.
- Approximately, 28% of Afghanistan's Population understood under the experience of crises or emergency levels of food insecurity.

⁴ Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2011-2012

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Afghanistan is mountainous and very dry country; therefore the most likely adverse impacts of Climate Change are drought related, including associated dynamics of desertification and land degradation.
- The worsening climatic conditions in Afghanistan will continue to impact socio – economic development, creating stress for specific vulnerable groups.
- Likely Change in temperature, rainfall pattern and snow melt in high will make the Agriculture sector more vulnerable.
- Climate change is likely to compound existing food security issues and impact heavily upon those dependent on the agricultural economy. Climate shocks can tip a large population under the poverty and the impacts are more likely to fall upon women and children.
- Climatic impacts are most likely to be felt in hydro-electricity production, although large thermal power plant and transmission infrastructure are also susceptible to flash flooding and heat stress. Smaller hydropower plants (SHP) are particularly vulnerable
- Expected impacts of climate change are likely to result in stronger flow peaks in winter (due to higher precipitation and earlier snow melt/deglaciation), and less flow in summer, due to lower precipitation, higher evaporation rates and irrigation draw off.

More to read

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Land disputes and governance in Afghanistan

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