



SAE

Society of Afghan Engineers

P.O. Box 11520, Burke, Virginia 22009-1520 * Telephone: 703-593-4878 (US) and +93 (0) 787-553-755 (Kabul)

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
235 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20510

January 25, 2010

Dear Representative Pelosi:

As concerned citizens of the United States and Afghanistan and as professional members of society, the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE) is writing in regards of our interests in assisting with the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Unfortunately the majority of the funds awarded to foreign-based companies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) located in Afghanistan have been criticized as ineffective and have not produced the expected results in capacity building, job creation and economic growth. By utilizing our professional and social background, the international reconstruction initiatives lead by the US in Afghanistan can effectively be enhanced.

The active participation of professional Afghans in reconstruction programs will have far-reaching consequences on improving security, stability, peace, quality of life, and prosperity in Afghanistan. We believe better results can be achieved in a more cost effective manner through utilizing the professional expertise of **sincere** Afghan-Americans interested in the development and reconstruction of Afghanistan. As members of the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE), living in the United States, we submit the following recommendations, which may improve the current environment.

1. Stimulate economic growth by supporting local Afghan businesses:

- Establish a program similar to the Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) in the United States for empowerment of the local professionals to participate in the American funded programs. This approach will complement the “Afghan First” program’s goal of, “increasingly use Afghan national implementation partners and equally qualified local and expatriate Afghans.”
- Facilitate the transformation of local NGOs into private businesses.
- Stipulate mandatory joint ventures and partnership of American businesses with locally owned Afghan businesses.

2. Require US government contractors to develop Afghan professionals and skilled workers:

- Skill development and on-the-job training of Afghans must be a requirement and an integral part of scope of services of all projects.
- Each contractor working in Afghanistan must provide performance incentive packages that may include enhanced salaries, spot bonuses, pay raises, scholarships, and training including training through exchange programs for high performing Afghan employees.

3. Empower Afghans through assistance from qualified Afghan professionals from the Diaspora:

- Develop a workforce coalition between the diasporas and qualified Afghan professionals living in Afghanistan.

- Develop educational (professional and vocational) programs in conjunction with Afghan Institutions of Higher Education with hands on training on active projects by utilizing the professional capabilities of **sincere** Afghan Americans.

4. Create educational programs to build and improve professional and skilled workforce:

- Promote continuous education programs including evening classes, short term refresher courses, seminars and conferences with a long term objective of providing education accreditation and licensing opportunities. This training can be offered on campus or through long distance learning programs.
- Support vocational training and skilled development offered at strategic locations around the country.

5. Design developmental projects in accordance to available local capacity in order to channel local talents and resources towards sustainable development of Afghanistan.

- Increase investment in agricultural and irrigation projects and provide technical assistance to formers in order to create jobs, improve productivity and sustain development. The majority of adults in Afghanistan have some kind of capability in forming and agricultural work. However, only three percent of the 12% arable land in Afghanistan is under cultivation.
- Make alliances with and provide technical assistance to interested local businessmen and influential local individuals including former commanders who laid their arms and are willing to become lawful entrepreneurs and productive members of the society.
- Encourage competition among communities in bringing and maintaining peace and security by investing in and providing technical assistance to regions where the people of the community establishes and maintains security.

The Society of Afghan Engineers in the United States can prove to be a valuable resource in providing experienced and **sincere** professionals to lead the reconstruction and rebuilding efforts in Afghanistan. These professionals are active members of the workforce in the United States and have the education, knowledge, background and experience in the field of engineering and other professions as well as an intimate knowledge of the Afghan languages, culture, and traditions.

We are eager to step forward and help. To initiate, we would welcome an opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to engage in an in-depth discussion on a comprehensive plan for SAE's involvement in getting on the right path toward the reconstruction and further development of Afghanistan.

Respectfully,

A. Hadi Rakin, P.E.
President, Society of Afghan Engineers