



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 27, 2008

Public Information: +93 (0) 799 564 907

Email: kabulusaidinformation@usaid.gov

<http://afghanistan.usaid.gov>

PRESS RELEASE

Afghanistan's First Full-Service Law Library Opened

Kabul, Afghanistan | August 27, 2008 — On August 27, 2008, the doors of the new law library at the Independent National Legal Training Center (INLTC) opened. For the first time, Afghanistan's lawyers, judges, law students, and others have access to the country's most comprehensive collection of Afghan and international laws. This new resource increases the capacity of legal professionals to research and analyze both secular and Sharia law. The library also serves as the single most comprehensive resource for citizens to learn about their rights under the law and will help bring justice to the people of Afghanistan.

At the library's opening ceremony, Deputy Minister of Justice and Chairman of the INLTC Board Dr. Mohammad Qasim Hashemzai thanked USAID for its work on the library and the U.S. and Italian governments for their support of the INLTC. Now, with the library's vast collection of laws, Dr. Hashemzai said that law practitioners "can move from theoretical to practical study, with the library providing materials to help complete legal studies."

The library houses all of Afghanistan's laws in both the Dari and Pashto languages, as well as 3,100 legal texts and international legal materials from Egypt, France, Pakistan, the European Union, and the United States. The library's collection also includes magazines, journals, and newspapers published by the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice, and Parliament. Eventually, the library will house over 5,000 legal volumes and will become Afghanistan's first depository library where future laws and legal materials will be available and preserved in one place.

"Until today, Afghanistan's legal professionals had nowhere to go for their legal research needs," according to Jose Garzon, Director of USAID's Democracy and Governance office. "USAID, together with the Ministries of Justice and Higher Education, the Attorney General's Office, the Supreme Court, and the Italian government, recognized this need. The result is what we open today, the new INLTC Law Library."

The library is fitted with a reference desk, study tables, chairs, shelves, and a second-floor office that houses the library's archival and technical services units. The library's patrons also have access to eleven computer terminals with access to the library's catalogue, the Internet, and the Official Gazette, which contains all Afghan laws and regulations promulgated since 1964. Soon, the web-based INLTC Law Library catalogue will be online so other Afghan and international libraries can search the library's holdings and request materials, the first step toward a national inter-library loan system in Afghanistan.

The INLTC Law Library's staff has already begun reaching out to Afghanistan's legal community, offering classes in professional legal research methods to judges, students of law and Sharia, and other justice-sector professionals. The hands-on legal research program teaches trainees how to navigate the Official Gazette in electronic and hardcopy format and look up legal materials on government websites, such as the Ministry of Justice's full-text searchable online legal database, www.moj-research.gov.af, and the online collection of English translations of Afghan laws, developed with the support of USAID's rule of law program, at www.AfghanistanTranslation.com.