

Afghanistan Update

A humanitarian initiatives and progress report

www.bayatfoundation.org

July/August 2009

Recent News:

Elections held to decide Afghanistan's president

On August 20, 2009 voters turned out on [election](#) day to decide Afghanistan's next president as well as the 420 provincial council seats. Results of the election will not be ready until September, officials said, although the race has been called close. [NATO](#) officials declared a success: "Ninety-five percent of the polling stations that were planned open, opened," James Appathurai, NATO spokesman said.

Appathurai continued, "In other words, 6,199 of the 6,500 - [or] 6,200 of the 6,500 - polling stations which were projected to open, did open. Only 2 percent of the total were attacked." Mr. Appathurai also said Afghan security forces working with NATO and International Security Assistance Force troops were a part of the security operations.

The [BBC](#) has provided a website with current news and information about the presidential candidates including incumbent Hamid Karzai and challenger Abdullah Abdulla and voting results.

The Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan released their [election findings](#) that said "Amidst many challenges, this phase of the electoral process was an important step in Afghanistan's progress towards building a civil and democratic government."

Women entrepreneurship program brings students to Texas

The [Associated Press](#) reported August 25, 2009 about a business program which brings Afghan and Rwandan women entrepreneurs to the United States. The women participating in the program this month received "[hands-on experience](#) with American mentors about everything from installing accounting software, creating a website and managing employees."

This year 30 women entrepreneurs graduated from the program, called [Peace Through Business](#) (PTB). Former First Lady Laura Bush spoke at the graduation ceremony, "Your entrepreneurial spirit ... can further the stability and economic growth of your country. ... This is your chance."

The PTB program was formed in 2006 and is coordinated by the Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women in partnership with Northwood University. "The program expanded in 2008 to include female business owners from

Rwanda, which had one of the fastest growing economies in East Africa last year," the AP reported.

Bayat Foundation Announcements:

Leaders gather in Washington, DC for Afghan Symposium

On June 30, 2009, [Bayat Foundation](#) Chairman Ehsan Bayat and Executive Director, Fatema Bayat, welcomed 125 leaders including corporate executives, humanitarians and government officials from the United States, Canada and Afghanistan for the first annual Afghan Symposium for Humanitarian and Leadership Engagement in Washington, DC. The symposium was held in view of the US Capitol building and convened to highlight best practices, engage leaders and foster ways to increase quality of life and opportunities for education and livelihoods in Afghanistan. HE Afghan Ambassador Said T. Jawad served as Honorary Chairman. Afghan-American Chamber of Commerce Chairman Ajmal Ghani served as Co-Chair and Hon. George Foresman, DHS Under Secretary (2005-2007), moderated.

The symposium also was the springboard for the announcement of the Afghan Trusted Network for the exchange of ideas and information between individuals and organizations to generate meaningful opportunities for Afghans including the youth, Afghanistan's next generation of leaders. The Afghan Trusted Network, a project of The Bayat Foundation, is permanently Chaired by Ehsan Bayat, and Heidi Kuhn, [Roots of Peace](#) Founder/CEO and John Gastright, [Dyn-Corp International](#) Government Affairs Vice President will serve as the Network's 2009-2010 Co-Chairs.

Ehsan Bayat, who is also Chairman of Ariana Television and Radio Network and the Afghan Wireless Communication Company said, "The youth are the future of Afghanistan, they are eager for education, jobs and training, hence the network's goal is to collectively do what we can - to engage and realize more training and mentoring opportunities if not eventual jobs for the young men and women."

H.E. Afghan Ambassador Said T. Jawad underscored the significance of this Afghan Symposium to develop the Afghan Trusted Network by stating, "Being in the forefront of philanthropic work in Afghanistan, the Bayat Foundation has helped convene this timely forum of NGOs and the civil society to share our experience and leverage our expertise and networks to enhance efficiency and cooperation between the public and private sectors in order to serve the people of Afghanistan, who are hopeful and in need of our support."

Other leaders who participated included USAID Director of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Task Force Jim Bever, HE Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, former Ambassador of the United Nations, Iraq and Afghanistan, Hon. Paula Dobriansky, Sr Fellow, Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center and Under Secretary of State (2001-2009), Ayenda Foundation Founder Mrs. Shamim Jawad, Actress Diane Baker, Dupree Foundation Board Director and U.S. Institute of Peace Senior Rule of Law Advisor Alex Thier, Afghan Sports Federation Executive Director Atiq Panjshiri, Extreme Security General Manager Francis

Schroeder, Gordon Feinblatt's R. Michael Smith, Esq., Canada-Afghanistan Business Council President Aziz Amiri, Thunderbird VP Communications Frank Neville, Afghan Business Network Founder Qasim Tarin and Arzu CEO Connie Duckworth. Additionally, a group of women representing Afghan Ministries who were in Washington, DC for a program hosted by the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council also participated.

The 2009 Bayat Foundation Awards for Humanitarian and Leadership Engagement were presented at the close of the symposium to Dr. Peter and Rebecca Grossman of the Grossman Burn Foundation (with Charlie Ponticelli accepting on their behalf) and Caroline Firestone of the New Hudson Foundation.

Brought to you in part by Afghanistan News Center. Copyright © 2009 Bayat Foundation. All rights reserved. Since 2005 the Bayat Foundation led by Ehsan & Fatema Bayat has contributed to over 140 projects to improve the quality of life in Afghanistan by providing for basic human needs, constructing new facilities and infrastructure, organizing sporting events, promoting health, education and economic programs and preserving Afghanistan's cultural heritage. In 2002, Chairman Bayat launched Afghan-Wireless Communication Company, www.afghanwireless.com, the first wireless service and Internet service provider in Afghanistan followed by the 2005 launch of ARIANA Television Network (ATN), www.arianatelevision.com, with international reach and ARIANA Radio (FM 93.5). The independent USA-based 501(c)3 Bayat Foundation, www.bayatfoundation.org, partners with the non-governmental Bayat Foundation in Kabul, Afghanistan, www.bayatfoundation.org.af, to provide advocacy, outreach, education and engagement to promote the well-being of the Afghan people through the support of its donors. The Bayat Foundation NGO partners with other NGOs to support Afghan humanitarian activities. Email info@bayatfoundation.org for information or to sponsor a program.