



## Budget Recommendations | Fact Sheet 5

# Responding to Conflict

Australia plays a leadership role in peacekeeping and conflict response in Asia and the Pacific, as well as in a number of strategic areas including Afghanistan. These recommendations are aimed at improving Australia's whole-of-government response to civilian protection in conflict situations, and making our specific development efforts in Afghanistan more effective and transparent.

### Recommendation 5.1 – A Framework for Humanitarian Protection

**ACFID recommends that \$50 million be allocated over the 3 year period from 2011-12 to 2013-14 to provide a designated unit in AusAID on humanitarian protection, developing a protection framework and funding guidelines.**

It is important that the Australian Government has a consistent, whole-of-government approach to the protection of civilians. Australia needs a protection framework which underscores Australia's role in supporting peacekeeping operations, including reform processes and building understanding across government of community and humanitarian protection activities as well as the role of NGO facilitation in this area and increased civil-military coordination capacity.

### Recommendation 5.2 – A Long Term Development Commitment for Afghanistan<sup>1</sup>

**ACFID recommends that a 10 year funding commitment be announced, of at least \$100 million per year, in development assistance for Afghanistan, beginning in the 2011-12 aid budget.**

Australia is currently the largest non-NATO contributor of military support to Afghanistan and the 11th largest overall NATO-International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) contributor. The Australian Government has enlarged its diplomatic and development footprint. This is an important step in instituting new leadership structures that better represent a whole-of-government approach. However, a long-term commitment to development assistance is needed in order to consolidate achievements and assist the Central Government to gain the trust and confidence of the population.

Within Afghanistan there are significant issues surrounding aid saturation, corruption, institutional absorptive capacity and delivery of increased aid at current rates. For example, some have perceived Uruzgan Province as being aid saturated and now highly reliant on foreign aid and actors. In a context of high corruption and lack of support for the central Afghan Government, issues around absorptive capacity can directly impact on stability. This can be further compounded in the context of a young and fast growing population, low levels of education, high levels of unemployment and illiteracy, the low status of women and limited economic opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> Information relating to this recommendation has been taken from the ACFID Research Paper *In it for the long haul? Delivering Australian aid to Afghanistan*, Phil Sparrow (2010).



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If negative perceptions of the Central Government persist within the local population, stabilisation efforts aimed at strengthening its reach and legitimacy will continue to be difficult. Thus, investment in alternative and longer term efforts may prove fruitful.

This investment should include strengthening efficient, equitable and quality delivery of services via local level sources and mechanisms. Further, mechanisms to promote greater accountability and transparency at the grassroots level are urgently required.



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Free Aceh Movement (GAM) combatants hand over their weapons in 2005 following the signing of the MoU that ended 30 years of civil conflict.