FIRST NATIONAL POLICE – E – MARDUME CONFERENCE

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS
25 June 2013

New Conference Hall

Ministry of Interior – Kabul, Afghanistan
Table of Contents:

Executive Summary ........................................... 2

Aim ................................................................. 5

Key Findings ..................................................... 5

Breakout Group 1: How do the police gain the trust of the community? 6

Breakout Group 2: What do the police need from the community? 8

Breakout Group: What do the public need from the police? 11

Conclusion and Resolutions .................................. 13
Executive Summary

The First National Police-e-Mardume Conference, which was Afghan led, took place on 25th June 2013 at the Ministry of Interior (MOI), New Conference Hall. The participants included H.E Minister of Interior, Deputy Ministers, Auditor General of the Ministry of Interior, Head of Police-e-Mardume Directorate, Chief of Staff and more than 100 police officers and civil society representative. Also in attendance were the Director of the Afghan Civil Society Forum, Deputy Directors of the Afghanistan Chambers of Commerce of and Industries, and representatives of the International Community including EUPOL, NTMA, GIZ, UNDP LOTFA and UNAMA. Overall, the event was attended by more than 150 officials and community representatives.

Despite an attack on the Presidential Palace on the morning of the conference, it proceeded as scheduled. There was extensive media coverage from some of the most popular media outlets which have country wide coverage such as Tolo TV, Radio Television Afghanistan, One TV, Ariana TV, Voice of America and other audio and video media outlets.
The conference started with a positive message from the Minister of Interior who stressed the importance of the Police-e-Mardume concept. Following recitation of the Holy Quran and introductory remarks by the Head of Police-e-Mardume Directorate, the Minister of Interior addressed the conference outlining the main tasks of the police and explaining their role in establishing order and enforcing the rule of law. The Minister’s remarks gave more weight to the concept of the Police-e-Mardume as he stressed that Police-e-Mardume is an essential part of the strategic vision for the development and professionalization of the Afghan National Police for the next decade. This strategic vision is mainly focused on promoting human rights, fighting corruption, increasing transparency and accountability of the police. It also includes an increased emphasis on counter narcotics and on fighting crime. All of these tasks can be seen as part of the role of community based policing. The Minister stressed that community policing and police professionalization are the main drivers of progress and are the key benchmarks of progressive change. He added that Ulema (religious scholars) can play a significant role in creating awareness among the citizens by shedding light on the importance of mutual cooperation between police and the people.

Col Shah Mahmood Abdulrahimzai, Head of Police-e-Mardume Directorate at the MOI, stated that Community Policing is not a specialist role, but is a style of policing which is to be adopted, integrated and mainstreamed throughout the Afghan police service.

The international speakers, representing EUPOL and UNDP LOTFA also stressed the importance of engaging with the community, getting information and establishing good relations with them in order to seek their cooperation. The International Community also reiterated its continued support for the development of Community Policing in Afghanistan.

UNDP LOTFA’s Program Manager, Norman Sanders, said that the road to Community Policing begins at the top of the Ministry of Interior and requires courage and vision from the Ministry’s leadership. He further emphasized that the acquisition of new professional skills and structures is required for Community Policing to become effective.

EUPOL Acting Head of Mission, Pieter Deelman called for an Afghan owned form of Community Policing that reduces the distance between the police and the people. This approach
will result in an increased police commitment to solving a broad range of problems in communities. It promotes a preventive approach to policing and encourages citizens’ to be actively involved in crime prevention.

Opening addresses

The conference incorporated a format for discussions within three breakout groups which addressed the following questions:

1) How do the police gain the trust of the community?

2) What do the public need from the police?

3) What do the police need from the community?

The Deputy Minister for Security concluded the conference by stating that Community Policing should play a role as the bridge between the community and the police.
Aim:

In order to render the Afghan National Police a professional civilian police service, the Ministry of Interior has drafted a Ten Year Vision and a Two Year Action Plan which prioritize Community Policing as a major development objective. The conference was organized in order to share knowledge on Police-e-Mardume, to discuss effective ways of building trust & confidence between the police and communities, as well as to enhance the professional development of the police.

Key Findings:

The conference provided a platform for different actors (police, civil society, academia, agents of influence and media) to express their views on Police-e-Mardume to:

- Ensure that police support their community and country as servants of society and not as rulers;
- Reduce gaps between police and citizens;
- Outline steps which can be taken regarding development of the Community Policing concept in Afghanistan;
- Find a unified approach to Community Policing.

Issues and challenges to the successful implementation of Community Policing as well as future activities were identified.
Breakout Group 1: How do the police gain the trust of the community?

Breakout group discussion

This group’s task was to discuss ways for the police to build trust among people. It identified the following points:

- Police should remain vigilant at all times so that the public feels safe in their communities;
- The Government of Afghanistan is responsible for maintaining public law and order through the Afghan National Police;
- Police should be there to serve the community;
- Police should be kind, competent, patriotic, impartial, educated, follow religious principles, abide by the law and respect people’s customs and traditions;
- Police should be independent and politically impartial;
- Police should not misuse their power or government resources;
- People expect their police to be smartly dressed and be free from corruption;
- Police should respect human rights and gender.
To achieve these objectives, the group suggested:

- Legal training for the police;
- Awareness campaigns for both the police and the public to inform them about their mutual responsibilities;
- Police should be committed to solve the problems of the community in order for the public to gain trust and confidence in the police.

The traffic police, who interact on a daily basis with the public, are often perceived as corrupt and inefficient. Therefore it was suggested to reform the traffic police so that people can build trust and confidence in them.
Breakout Group 2: What do the police need from the community?

The second group talked about trust between the police and the community which is vital for a modern democratic society. The group unanimously expressed the need for a peaceful society in Afghanistan. They referred to core responsibilities of the police service to implement law equally and impartially.

The discussion evolved around three areas:

1. Prevention;
2. Detection;
3. Reduction of crime.

Prevention is about educating people which can be achieved by active engagement within the community through mosques, schools and other places where the public gathers.
Detection is about collecting evidence that will build a strong case against criminals in order to successfully prosecute them in the courts.

Reduction in crime is achieved by implementing prevention and detection strategies which include education and public outreach.

By preventing, detecting and reducing crime, the public will feel secure and safe in their communities and will naturally build trust and confidence in the police.

Comprehensive professional training of the police could prevent them from misbehaving towards the public and enhancing trust and confidence in the police.

*Breakout group discussion*

The group stated that the police should be independent and free from any political interference.

The group identified a number of key community members who can help the police in gathering information such as Malaks (neighborhood representative), Mulas (religious clerk), barbers and other business people.
In order to establish a close and lasting relationship with the community, a mobilization strategy was suggested involving formal and informal links with:

- Volunteer committees;
- School and universities programs;
- Youth sports programs;
- Young parents programs;
- Entertainment and practical programs;
- Programs to contact community experts and civil society;
- People’s participation programs on police patrolling;
- Employer contact programs;
- Social support programs;
- Media relations programs;
- Traffic law guidance programs;
- Public outreach programs through media.
Breakout Group 3: What do the public need from the police?

Breakout group discussion

The third breakout group discussed the weaknesses of the police as well as the challenges of gaining public trust. The following are some of the issues that the police face:

- Low literacy;
- Low understanding of community and lack of knowledge of what constitutes professional behavior;
- Weak social relations;
- Reactive approaches (they only act after an incident has occurred);
- Misuse of power;
- Violent behavior (for example driving in reckless manner which frightens other road users);
- Discriminatory behavior (behaving well with senior officials or powerful persons while treating common people harshly).
The group stated that the police must consider the following points and address them so that positive change can take place. They suggested that communities can play a very important role and quoted the Minister’s opening remarks when he said “People are the best source of information”.

The challenges to be considered were:

- Revival of public trust;
- Development of friendly and strong relations with the community;
- A community Policing ethos which is an integral part of professional behavior and a code of conduct which applies to all members of the police service.

The group proposed the following recommendations in order to connect with the community. The police should:

- Act fast;
- Act in a proactive manner;
- Be provided with training on respectful social behavior;
- Be tasked to deliver social services (help children cross road, call other bodies on behalf of people and help solve public problems.);
- More women should be recruited in order to conduct female and home searches;
- Inform people about police achievements;
- Meet and communicate with community members at all levels including elders, influential people, religious clerks and women’s groups.
Conclusion and Resolutions:

The conference delivered a very strong message from the Minister of Interior who emphasized the need to bring people closer to and to cooperate with the Afghan National Police. Community policing is the way to achieve this goal. The conference achieved its goals by deliberations during the plenary and breakout group sessions. The participants shared their knowledge, expertise and experience of building trust and confidence between the police and the community. The outcomes of the conference were incorporated in the resolutions, unanimously agreed by delegates, as set out below.

“In the first conference on Community Policing conducted in consideration with the professional duties and obligations of the national police of the country and based on the priorities of his Excellency the Minister of Interior Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan under (Strengthening community police, trust building and professionalization of the national police of the country), reports and useful opinion from the participants were provided. It is therefore considered a positive step towards strengthening of the Afghan National Police and we, the participants of the conference provide the following declaration for the accomplishment of the following national objectives:

1. In order to strengthen, build trust and further professionalize the national police of the country, we shall not abstain from any attempts and efforts under the provisions of the applicable laws and regulations, guidance and direct orders of the Office of the Minister of the Interior Affairs.

2. In order to understand duties, responsibilities, authorities, and to better deliver services with the spirit of integrity, honesty and patriotism of the officials (offices of the chiefs of the police in the provinces, districts, military units, directors, managers, and officials of training), we seek your further attention in the training and capacity building of the Afghan National Police, including the officers, noncommissioned officers and patrolmen in legal and professional aspects of their duties.
3. In order to attain and build confidence between the people and the police and to prevent the occurrence of the crimes, discovery of the crimes, and securing public order in the society, we demand the responsible officials establish relationships with the legal, social, cultural, religious, educational, training and economic entities of the country such as institutes of higher education, judges and prosecutors, schools, social and cultural associations, the Department of Women’s and Youth Affairs, journalists associations and national business unions and traders, artists, and provincial, district and community athletics councils.

4. The Departments of Police-e Mardume in the provinces of the country shall function in accordance with official guidance to implement programs and plans of the Police-e-Mardume Directorate with honesty and make efforts to establish committees and councils throughout provinces, districts and villages.

5. All police personnel of the country are required to observe the fundamental rights and lawful freedoms of the people in performances of all their duties in accordance with the principle of legitimization, implying that the police should perform based on rule of law and their actions should be suitable, required and neutral and without prejudice and discrimination on the basis of language, ethnicity, region, section, religion and that it should not damage national unity. Therefore, police activities should gain the trust and satisfaction of the public.

6. The Department of the Community Policing is assigned to, with the support of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and technical assistance of the International community, conduct conferences, seminars, and effective workshops regarding Community Policing and establish mechanisms to gain the confidence and cooperation of the public in the capital and provinces of the country as required.

7. The Police-e-Mardume Directorate is assigned to, with the guidance and cooperation of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, prepare effective plans and programs in regards to gaining public cooperation which is considered an important mechanism for security of
the capital and provinces and to put them in place with the cooperation of religious scholars, influential tribal elders, community heads, civil society organizations and other informed individuals.

8. Police-e-Mardume units in the provinces are assigned to, with the support of the offices of the chiefs of police in the provinces, districts, military units to prepare and implement the plans and programs of the Police-e-Mardume Directorate of the Ministry of Interior Affairs.

9. We are asking the utmost attention of His Excellency the Minister of Interior Affairs, Ministry leadership, civil society organizations, the international community in supporting and strengthening of the Police-e-Mardume Directorate and its relevant structures.