



PRELIMINARY STATEMENT II
September 21st, 2010

More Efforts Needed for Change and Long Term Commitment for Democracy

The Asian Network for Free Elections comprising of 30 citizen observers from 11 countries across Asia, congratulate the people of Afghanistan for their participation in the Wolesi Jirga Election. The September 18th election is another milestone towards strengthening democracy and respect the rule of law. The statement covers the pre-election phase and voting day assessment by ANFREL observers.

Although the election was marred by a series of security threats and misconduct, the overall Election-Day environment was relatively encouraging for the future of electoral democracy in Afghanistan. Credit goes to the Independent Election Commission (IEC), polling staff and the authorities for safeguarding the sanctity of the election. The functions and roles of the Election Complaints Commission (ECC), the Election Media Commission (EMC) and the Election Vetting Commission (EVC) have been instrumental in the improvement of the electoral processes.

However, a few important aspects need mention. These are lack of a level playing field which is evident since there was no limitation on campaign funding, an effective mechanism to control intervention of government authorities and “strong-men” favoring rich candidates or those that have ties with them. Obviously women and other minority groups are affected by social injustices and unequal competitions.

ANFREL expresses concerns over the disenfranchisement of voters caused by closing-down of polling centers due to security concerns. The other issue that was a cause of concern was the shortage of ballot papers owing to improper distribution of polling centres in a number of provinces. This led to hundreds of voters losing their voting rights.

However, the strong initiative from the Government of Afghanistan to successfully open 90 percents of the polling centers is highly commendable. Furthermore, the IEC should have measures to prevent people losing their right to suffrage from the disenfranchisement.

Another important factor to note is that despite the assurances by the IEC that the indelible ink was of the highest quality, observers witnessed voters, easily washing off the ink mark on their fingers and using the opportunity to indulge in multiple voting. The alleged large-scale production of fake voter cards found to be used on the polling day would have provided a safe haven for frauds to take place during the polls. Massive proxy voting also occurred as many women were represented by male, most commonly by their husband.

Finally, we call upon the ECC and PECC to enforce electoral justice by investigating all complaints and concerns of the election stakeholders through proper adjudication channel; fair and transparent process, we also call a full support from the government and the IEC to prove themselves by setting up highest standards in handling allegation of frauds as reflections of its interest to bring justice to the country.

For more clarification please contact ANFREL Foundation officials:

Ms. Somsri Hananuntasuk (Executive Director) at +93-(0) 706741869, or anfrel@anfrel.org

Mr. Ichal Supriadi (EOM Director) at +93 (0) 706741850, +93- (0) 793606013 or ichal@anfrel.org