



**Independent Joint Anti-Corruption
Monitoring & Evaluation Committee**

NEWS RELEASE AND BACKGROUNDER

**MEC Releases its Seventh Six-Month Report and Status Reports on
the Implementation of Every MEC Recommendation Ever Issued**

KABUL, Afghanistan, April 26, 2015 – Today, MEC released its seventh Six-Month Report, including the latest version of our Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Tool (M&E Tool) that updates all of the recommendations MEC has issued since its inception. The Report also provides a summary of MEC’s activities during the second-half of 2014, which saw MEC’s governing Committee of three international and three Afghan senior anti-corruption experts conduct two Missions to Kabul and hold productive meetings with the new President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), as well as a number of other senior officials in the new government. With summaries of all major MEC products issued between July 1 and December 31, 2014, the seventh Six-Month Report stands as a comprehensive guide to the organization’s most recent anti-corruption and monitoring and evaluation work.

Building Relationships

During, and immediately prior to, the Committee’s 14th Mission in November 2014, MEC representatives held their first meetings with President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah. After preliminary discussions about the state of anti-corruption efforts in Afghanistan, the President and CEO turned their attention to MEC’s M&E Tool. The M&E Tool lists every one of MEC’s more than 180 recommendations and suggests concrete measures that the government and international organizations can take to implement them. Noting that nothing of its kind exists in Afghanistan, the President stated he would inform his subordinates forthwith that implementing MEC’s recommendations should be one of their uppermost priorities. Tangible evidence of this renewed emphasis on MEC’s work by the highest levels of the government emerged after the conclusion of the Mission, as ministries that were once reluctant to provide MEC with information suddenly became very forthcoming with all manner of data and substantive activity reports. Following up on these positive developments, MEC’s Chair and Executive Director attended the London Conference on Afghanistan in December to discuss these and other developments in the ongoing fight against corruption. The Conference’s final Communiqué emphasized the centrality of an integrated anti-corruption plan to Afghanistan’s economic growth and peaceful development.



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Updating the Status of Previous Recommendations

MEC last updated the status of its recommendations in its Fifth Six-Month Report, which was released in January 2014. In the interim, MEC has revised and updated the substance and form of many of these recommendations, as well as added several dozen new ones. Thus, this Report employs our revised M&E Tool to chart the progress that various stakeholders have made in implementing our recommendations.

For example, MEC found that the Supreme Court has not implemented MEC's recommendation to "hear and decide all cases in a timely manner as required by the law." (M&E Tool 4.4.4) Instead, MEC's M&E team found that "in practice, [many] cases are pending in the courts for several years." Furthermore, the M&E team determined that the Ministry of Interior has been delinquent in reporting on the steps it has taken—if any—to "protect government land, assist in investigations, assure that defendants appear in court, and to enforce [court] orders[,] regardless of the identity of the parties to the disputes." (M&E Tool 4.4.7) The M&E team also concluded that while the High Office of Oversight has registered the assets of approximately 7,000 government officials, it has not taken steps to verify said assets, nor has it referred any illicit-enrichment cases to the Attorney General's Office. (M&E Tool 11.1.1) For more information on the status of MEC's recommendations, please refer to the appendices of the seventh Six-Month Report, which contain the M&E Tool in its entirety.

New Recommendations Issued

This Report presents for the first time the new recommendations that the Committee approved in its September and November Missions. These include recommendations concerning how the Afghan government could more effectively fulfill its legal requirements under the UN Convention Against Corruption; reforms to simplify and make more transparent the civil-service hiring process and the issuance of certificates by the Ministry of Higher Education; measures that would establish a more equitable system of land distribution; and process improvements that would mitigate vulnerabilities to corruption inherent in the current system of importing pharmaceuticals. Many of these recommendations were based on the findings of two major reports MEC published in November on land usurpation and the pharmaceutical-importation process, both of which are summarized in this Report with the complete text of each available in English, Dari, and Pashto on our website: www.mec.af.



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Kabul Bank Update

On October 2, 2014, MEC published *Unfinished Business: The Follow-Up Report on Kabul Bank*. This Report provides a brief summary of MEC's comprehensive inquiry into this matter and also updates developments that have occurred in the case following President Ghani's issuance of Presidential Decree No. 3 on October 1. As the update demonstrates, a significant amount of work remains to be done if the perpetrators of the Kabul Bank fraud are to be brought to justice and forced to disgorge their unlawful financial gains.

Aid Effectiveness and Legal Reform

In the coming weeks, MEC will be releasing its report examining the efficacy of certain aspects of international foreign-assistance programs, and suggesting a series of targeted policy reforms that could improve the coordination and delivery of aid to Afghanistan in the future. To arrive at these "lessons learned," MEC examined 15 projects from a variety of sectors. Thanks to the extensive cooperation we received from most of the major aid agencies active in Afghanistan, MEC has attempted to accurately portray the successes and shortcomings of the assistance programs, while demonstrating the myriad challenges faced by any organization attempting to operate in such an inherently unstable environment.

As part of our mandate to provide anti-corruption recommendations to the Afghan government, MEC has also been active in the area of legal reform. This Report describes our recent progress in this crucial sector, summarizing work completed by our team of Afghan and international legal experts on legislative proposals for protecting whistleblowers and regulating the means by which outside actors may seek to influence government officials (*i.e.*, lobbying).

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