Preliminary findings of the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment – 1st release

PEOPLE IN NEED

1. Introduction:

These preliminary findings of the 2003 National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) are being released to meet the demand for updated information by various Government Ministries, UN agencies and NGOs as they prepare their work plans for the upcoming year. The NRVA data are still in the process of being cleaned, validated and analysed and a series of final reports, based on more detailed analyses of the NRVA data should be released by mid-February, 2004. At that time, data sets from the NRVA exercise will be available for public use.

The 2003 National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) methodology was developed by several key stakeholders, including the Ministries of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (MAAH), and Health (MoH) as well as WFP, FAO, UNICEF, the World Bank, GOAL and other NGOs involved in food security activities in Afghanistan. Coordination of this methodology development was implemented through AREU with support from DFID. The primary objective of the study is to collect information at community and household level to better understand livelihoods of rural settled populations and nomadic pastoralists (Kuchi) throughout the country and to determine the types of risks and vulnerabilities they face throughout the year. The findings of the study can then be used by the many stakeholders to develop strategies to address the short-, medium- and longer-term needs of these populations through appropriate and timely policy development and intervention strategies.

The MRRD has been the lead agency for the 2003 NRVA, with WFP being their main coordinating partner. Full details of the NRVA methodology, including questionnaires, can be found on the following website: www.af/nrva.

2. Methodology

The NRVA 2003 marks a significant development of Government participation in an annual Afghanistan poverty and vulnerability assessment. The Government provided half of the survey enumerators, representing MRRD, MAAH and MoH. The establishment of a Vulnerability Analysis Unit within MRRD ensures the co-ordination of government participation. This unit has taken the lead in coordinating the data management for the household questionnaire and will, in collaboration with major stakeholders, manage the data release and analysis.

The methodology used in the 2003 NRVA was designed to collect information at District, Community, Wealth group and Household levels. They are summarized below.

District level: Information was collected from Key Informants, including District Authorities, Kuchi leaders and Veterinary Field Units, in order to determine the different agro-ecological or livelihood zones within a district. This information was used to rank districts according to their vulnerability to food insecurity. The ranking exercise used information on access and availability to markets, health facilities, water, and education as well as the general physical environment, security, and presence and location of land mines. In addition, sub-district population estimates were collected to facilitate planning and targeting of potential interventions. It is understood that these are rough estimates that will need to be updated as more reliable estimates are made available from the pre-census survey currently being undertaken by the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

Community Shura: Through focus group discussions and key informant interviews, an overview of the community access to markets and health facilities was obtained (including costs), along with estimates of education levels and literacy, past and anticipated exposure to shocks, and priorities for community members. The shuras were also asked to stratify the community population into wealth groups: very poor, poor, medium, and better off families. This information was then used to estimate the population in each category.

Wealth groups: Focus group discussions were conducted for community members in the very poor, poor and medium wealth groups only. Male and female wealth groups were interviewed separately wherever it was possible to take women enumerators. The better-off groups were excluded in order to save time for household interviews and also because typically they are only a few families with larger land holdings, power or influence in the community and are not expected to be vulnerable. The focus group interviews collected information on: typical agricultural activities, livestock, labour and income (activities and amounts), and access to markets, health and education. In addition, focus groups also provided their inputs on priority interventions to improve the quality of life for members of their communities.

Households: Approximately 6-7 household interviews were conducted in each village. The questionnaires included modules on household demography, education, health, migration, income activities, household asset ownership and amenities, risk exposure and response, agricultural activities, livestock ownership, and food consumption (7-day food frequency and dietary diversity).

Data collection began in early July and was completed by mid-October 2003. There were 269 enumerators in total - 111 of whom were women. The sample covered 1,850 villages in all but those most insecure districts across Afghanistan. The districts not covered are located the provinces of Zabul, Pakitka and Uruzgan where security

conditions prevented any assessment (Map 1). In a large area of the southern Afghanistan, it was not safe or acceptable to use women enumerators (Map 1).

3. Analysis

There are two approaches used in the NRVA 2003 to estimated poverty and vulnerability, which are outlined below:

- **Wealth group vulnerability estimates**: This method attempts to predict levels and duration of food insecurity over a 12 month period based upon the inability to meet minimum kilocalorie requirements (2100/person/day). This is calculated through total food requirements that can be met through own produced food (agricultural, horticultural, and livestock production), and the ability to purchase foods through income – cash or in-kind - available (after non-food essential expenditures have been removed). Those households failing to meet 100% of the minimum annual kilocalorie requirements are considered to be vulnerable to food insecurity. This data was collected at wealth groups, by typifying a household's income from each wealth group, assuming members of each wealth group have similar assets and livelihoods strategies. Further dimensions of vulnerability will be analysed by considering the data on shocks and coping strategies.

- **Household poverty estimates**: This method uses caloric intake to estimate a food consumption poverty line. The data from the 7-day household consumption module was used to calculate kilocalorie consumption for aggregate analyses. This method is based upon the assumption that consumption data is a good proxy of household welfare since it measures specific food access. This estimate of consumption may also prove to be a more robust measure of poverty, particularly in areas of Afghanistan where opium production is a significant livelihood activity.

It is acknowledged that both of the above analytical approaches have limitations. However by comparing the findings from the two and through a more thorough analysis of the 2003 NRVA data, recommendations can be made on the methodology to be adopted for estimating poverty and vulnerability in future countrywide assessments.

4. Preliminary findings - caveats

The results of the preliminary analyses of data collected at district, shura and wealth group levels aim to provide a general overview of vulnerability and food insecurity throughout the country. Since most districts encompass several livelihood zones, the wealth group information was collected by livelihood zones to allow for this variation to be considered in the analysis. It is at the sub-district level that planning and intervention strategies should be focused, so as not to ignore the within-district variation of livelihoods, risks and vulnerabilities of the populations. Given the size of this data set, these findings will be made available in electronic form by the MRRD, once the database has been completed and made ready for circulation.

The following results were obtained by aggregating village and wealth group findings to District levels by calculating averages of quantitative data and modes of qualitative data. When interpreting these findings, one must consider the following caveats:

- Data screening is still ongoing, and these findings WILL CHANGE.
- These results are only preliminary and should be treated with extreme caution. The final analysis of the data will be completed once the household data is available, and comparisons can be made.
- The numbers of people in need are only estimates and should not be interpreted as absolute figures. Rather, they are best used as relative estimates for comparison across districts.
- These are SAMPLE estimates and in NO way represent national or rural representative statistics due lack of reliable sampling frame.
- The data presented is for vulnerability rate for rural Afghanistan ONLY.
- These preliminary poverty estimates are based only on wealth group estimates of income. Once the household data are analysed and interpreted, more confident policy and programme recommendations can be made, based upon a stronger understanding of the scale and distribution of poverty and vulnerability in rural Afghanistan.
- Population figures used are the CSO 2003/2004 estimates based upon a compound multiplier from the 1979 census. There is still a need to reconcile these figures which used the District boundaries from 1984, with the new Districts that have emerged in recent years, once official recognition and mapping of boundaries is completed by the Government. In the interim, an attempt at reconciling the CSO population figures with all District boundaries has been made, drawing on assistance from the CSO where possible, and on the 2002/2003 UNIDATA figures where no other sources were available. Therefore, the population estimates shown should be regarded as temporary, pending the final reconciliation of population figures and districts by the CSO. It is very likely that the CSO pre-census household listing will produce rural population estimates that are lower than those projected from the 1979 census. This is because the currently available estimates do not account for the rural-urban migration that is likely to have taken place since 1979.
- This report does not include data on the Kuchi. Although this population group has been assessed in the same way as the rural settled population, the presentation of the results for this group differs given the complexities of their migratory patterns. This analysis will be led by the MRRD.
- This report also does not include the areas that were not assessed due to insecurity, and findings for these areas will be extrapolated once data has been further analysed. One such area that has to be interpreted with caution is Uruzgan Province - although it does not appear that there are high levels of poverty in those villages surveyed,

there are indications that in the areas were enumerators did not visit, significantly higher levels of vulnerability and poverty exist.

- The maps presented here reflect the districts as per the 1984 gazette – 32 Province / 329 district model. Any new district or area that is a sub-division of the 1984 model will not be reflected on any map until it is officially recognized with boundaries mapped by the Government.
- The 2002 Countrywide WFP assessment relied on Shura income projections for the next 12 months for the entire community whereas the NRVA 2003 income assessment methodology was improved by also obtaining income estimates from a typical household at each wealth group within village. Thus, comparisons between the 2002 WFP Country-wide Assessment and the 2003 NRVA should be made with caution for two reasons:

    1. The methodologies used for data collection and analysis of vulnerability are different, with the 2003 NRVA having more complete coverage and more in-depth analysis.
    2. The rural population figures used to calculate the percentage of rural population in need are different.

4.1 Estimated vulnerable populations

Having warned against making comparisons between the estimates of the vulnerable rural from 2002 and 2003 because of differences in methodology and population estimates, it is worth noting that last year an estimated 4,300,000 rural Afghans were predicated to not be able to meet 80% of their daily food requirement. This year the figure has reduced to an estimated 3.2 million rural Afghans - an estimated 26% reduction in the number of rural Afghans in need. Table 1 presents the provincial breakdown of the CSO population estimates and the estimated percentage of people falling below the food vulnerability line.

Map 2 shows the estimated percentage of the district population that will not meet 100% of their projected minimum food requirements (vulnerability) between 2003 and 2004 summer harvests. Overall, the highest proportions of people falling below the projected 100% food needs requirement were found in the southern and eastern areas. These are typically those districts being faced with insecurity, reliance on underground water sources for agricultural irrigation, extreme cold spells early in the agricultural season resulting in reduced yields or crop losses, and few labour opportunities.

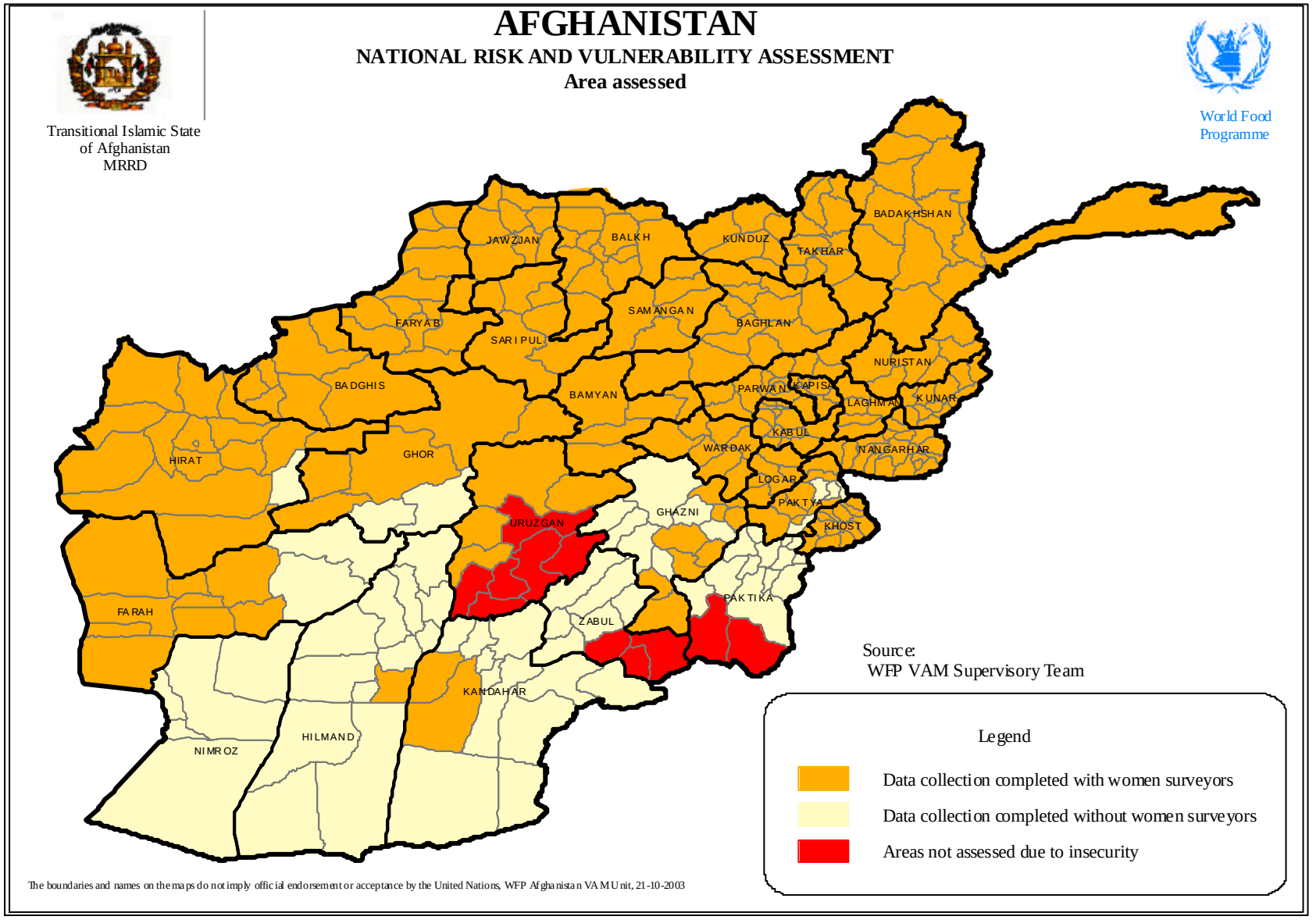
Map 3 shows the same data but with projected numbers of people per district not meeting their minimum requirements based on the current CSO population estimates.

Maps 4 and 5 show the most frequently stated development priority by the survey villages, by district, for men and women separately.

The accompanying spreadsheet, *NRVA 2003 preliminary findings 1st draft release Dec03.xls*, includes a further breakdown of these preliminary results by wealth group district and sub-district. This file is also available from the NRVA web site (www.af/nrva). There are three worksheets within this file:

- **Provincial summary** - numbers and percentage of people not meeting their needs, disaggregated by province and wealth group.
- **District summary** - numbers and percentage people not meeting their needs (no wealth group breakdown).
- **Sub district summary** - includes data at wealth group level by agro-ecological zones within districts for income-based vulnerability estimates. Also presented are the top three development preferences for both men and women, and the top three intervention preferences for both men and women.

Map 1


AFGHANISTAN
NATIONAL RISK AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT
Area assessed
Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan
MRRD
World Food Programme
JAWZJAN
BALKH
KUNDUZ
TAKHAR
BADAKHSHAN
FARYAB
SARIPUL
SAMANGAN
BAGHLAN
NURISTAN
BADGHIS
BAMYAN
PARWAN
KAPISA
LAGHMAN
KUNAR
KABUL
WARDAK
NANGARHAR
HIRAT
GHOR
LOGAR
PAKTYA
GHAZNI
URUZGAN
KHOST
PAKTIKA
FARAH
ZABUL
KANDAHAR
HILMAND
NIMROZ
Source:
WFP VAM Supervisory Team
Legend
Data collection completed with women surveyors
Data collection completed without women surveyors
Areas not assessed due to insecurity
The boundaries and names on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations, WFP Afghanistan VAM Unit, 21-10-2003

Map 2

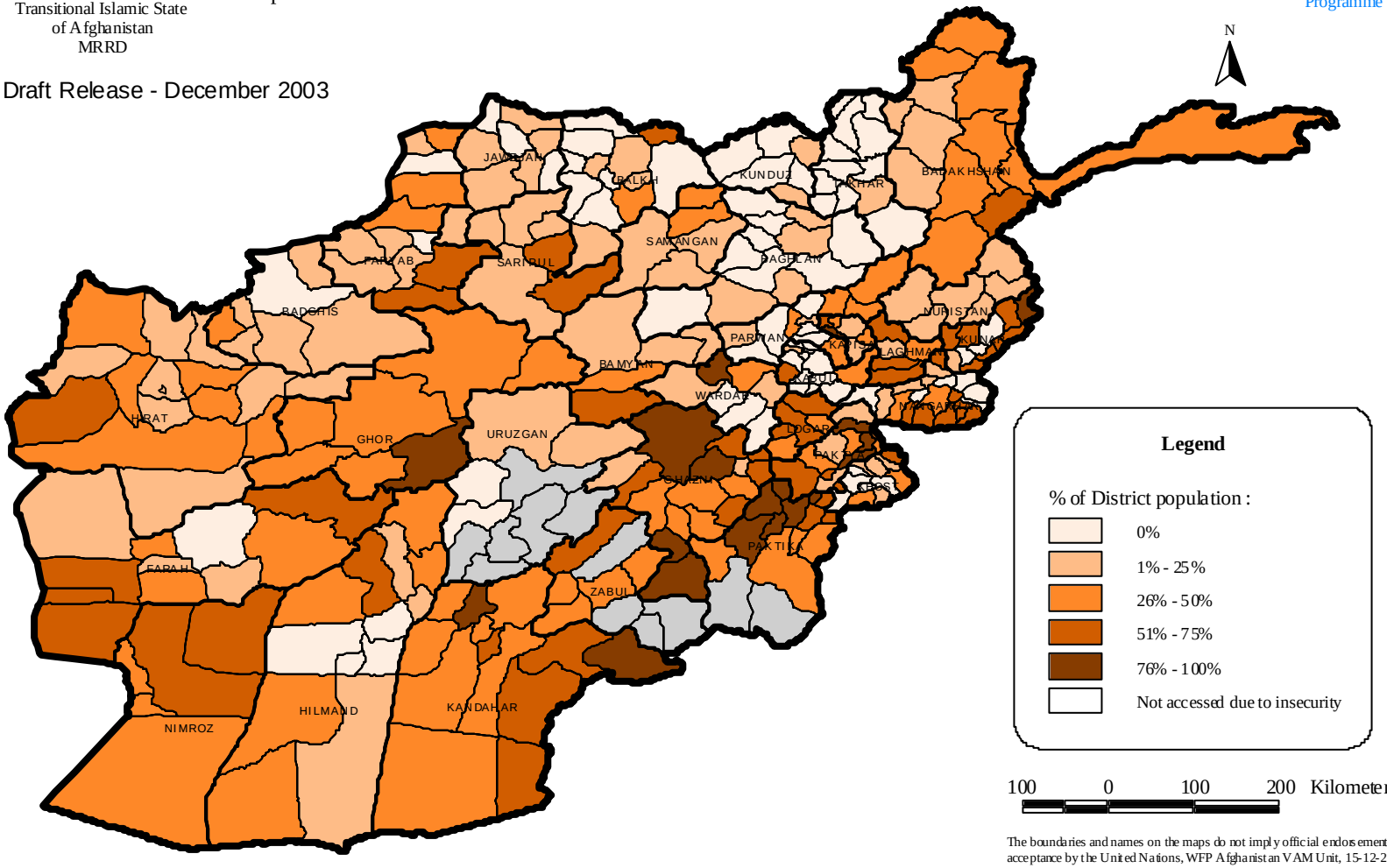
AFGHANISTAN

NATIONAL RISK AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT - PRELIMINARY FINDINGS:
Estimated % of the District population that will not meet 100% of their projected minimum food requirements between the 2003 and 2004 summer harvests based on income
Population Source: CSO estimates 2003/2004

Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan
MRRD

World Food Programme

Draft Release - December 2003



The boundaries and names on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations, WFP Afghanistan VAM Unit, 15-12-2003

Map 1

Map 3

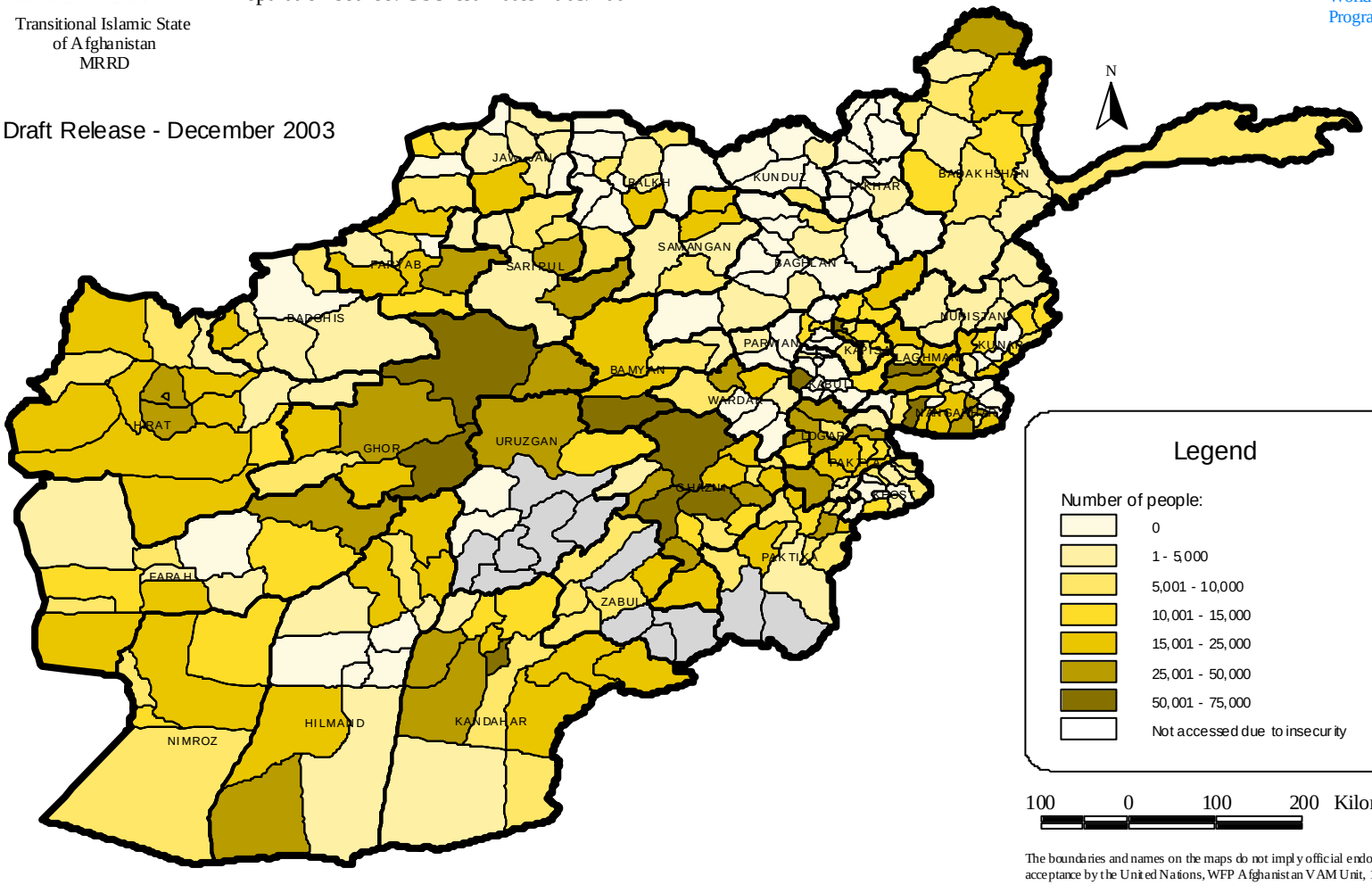
AFGHANISTAN

NATIONAL RISK AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT - PRELIMINARY FINDINGS:
Estimated number of people in the District that are projected to not meet 100% of their minimum food requirements between the 2003 and 2004 summer harvests based on income
Population source: CSO estimates 2003/2004

Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan
MRRD

World Food Programme

Draft Release - December 2003



The boundaries and names on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations, WFP Afghanistan VAM Unit, 17-12-2003

simply

Map 4

AFGHANISTAN

NATIONAL RISK AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT - PRELIMINARY FINDINGS:

Mens most frequently stated development priority in the villages surveyed

Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan
MRRD

World Food Programme

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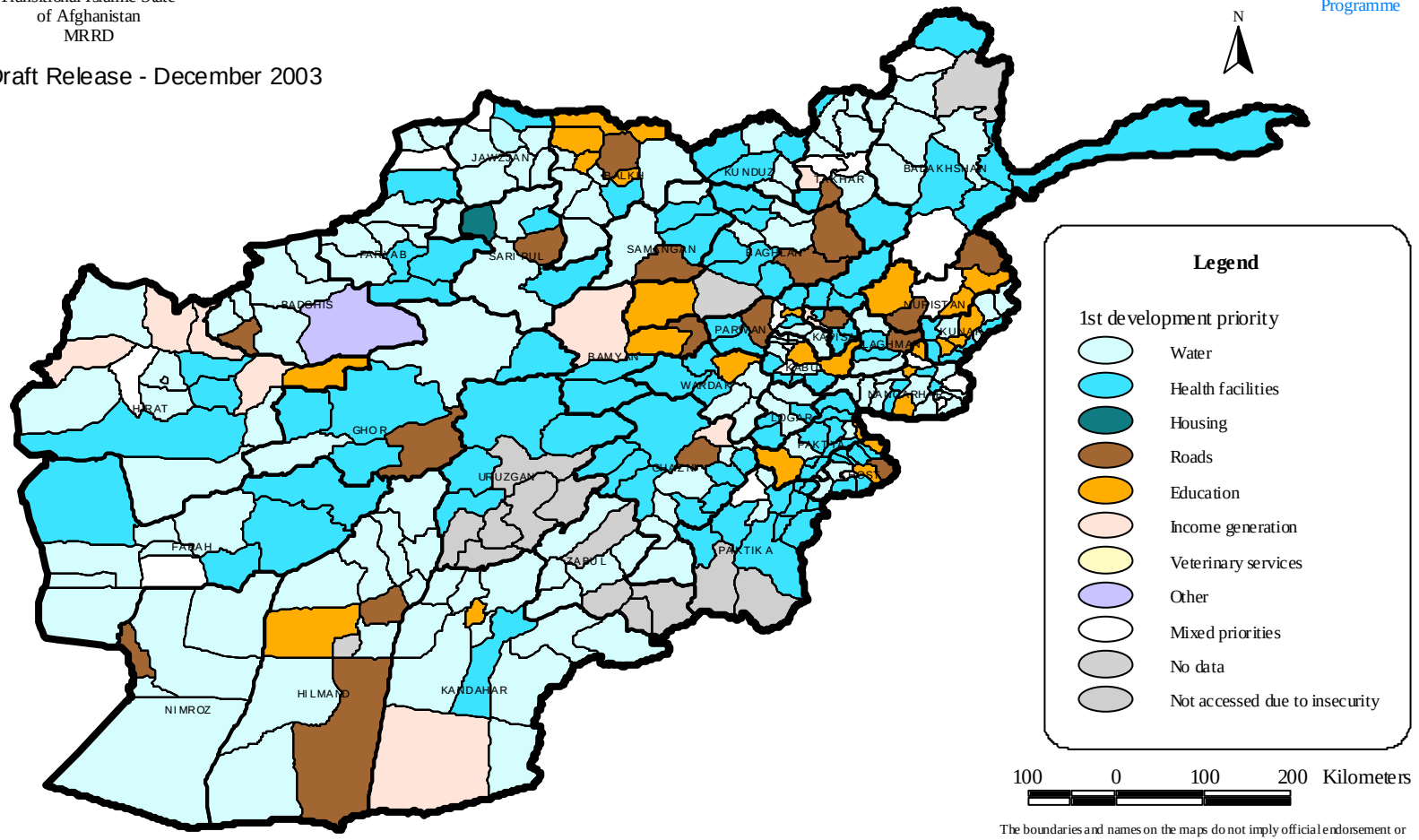


The boundaries and names on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations, WFP Afghanistan VAM Unit, 21-11-2003

shows

Map 5

AFGHANISTAN

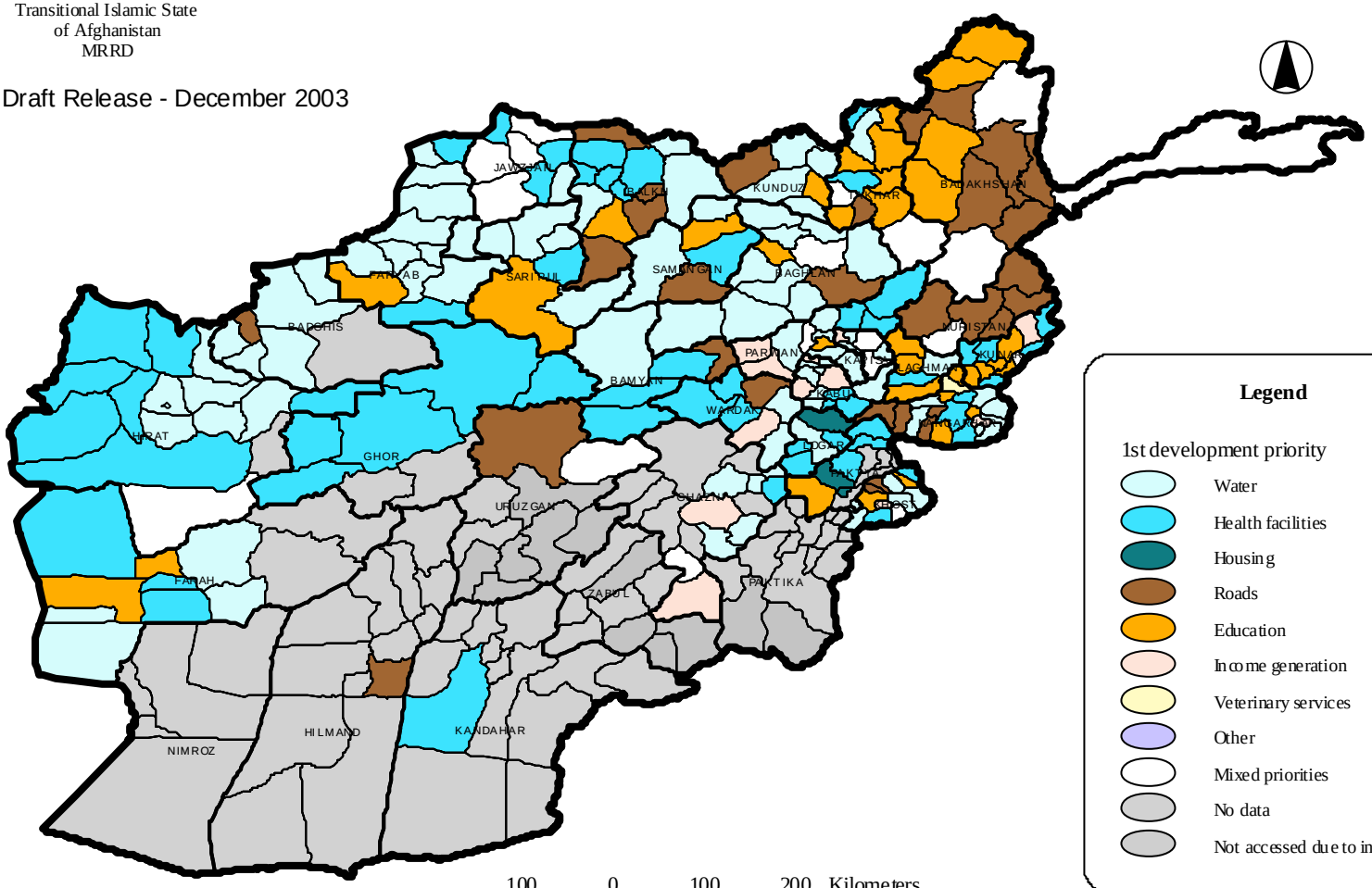
NATIONAL RISK AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT - PRELIMINARY FINDINGS:

Womens most frequently stated development priority in the villages surveyed

Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan
MRRD

World Food Programme

Draft Release - December 2003



Legend

1st development priority

- Water
- Health facilities
- Housing
- Roads
- Education
- Income generation
- Veterinary services
- Other
- Mixed priorities
- No data
- Not accessed due to insecurity

The boundaries and names on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations, WFP Afghanistan VAM Unit, 15-12-2003

those areas

Table 1: Estimated (income based) vulnerable population

Province	(CSO/UNIDATA estimates)	Estimated population falling under 100%of minimum food needs requirements	Estimated % of population falling under 100%of minimum food needs requirements
Takhar	689,400	1,629	0%
Baghlan	656,700	8,774	1%
Kunduz	652,600	8,621	1%
Uruzgan	625,400	30,163	5%
Jawzjan	396,800	37,336	9%
Balkh	698,600	71,469	10%
Nuristan	94,500	10,629	11%
Kabul	615,900	73,108	12%
Parwan	700,000	83,489	12%
Khost	301,700	36,515	12%
Samangan	300,500	38,767	13%
Badghis	297,300	47,367	16%
Wardak	415,800	70,186	17%
Hirat	910,700	164,748	18%
Hilmand	714,900	143,336	20%
Faryab	767,300	167,035	22%
Zabul	239,900	58,277	24%
Badakhshan	709,900	185,104	26%
Sari Pul	438,300	112,844	26%
Nangarhar	1,004,100	274,509	27%
Farah	314,200	89,783	29%
Bamyan	333,100	107,465	32%
Kapisa	395,600	145,674	37%
Nimroz	141,400	56,908	40%
Laghman	416,300	189,360	45%
Paktya	406,100	189,437	47%
Kunar	317,300	149,858	47%
Ghor	487,700	232,280	48%
Ghazni	914,200	460,366	50%
Paktika	355,000	181,315	51%
Logar	287,900	148,867	52%
Kandahar	516,600	290,225	56%
Total	**16,115,700**	**3,865,445**	**24%**

4.2 Utilization of preliminary results

Given the size of the District, Shura and Wealth Group datasets and the pending household data which will be required to complete the analysis of poverty levels, linking risks and vulnerabilities to these preliminary findings will be an on-going process. However, these preliminary findings can already be used to stimulate discussions on the joint directions and strategies that can be taken in partnership to begin to address some of the root causes of vulnerability, in an effort to promote improved livelihoods and living standards.

5. Framework for further analysis of the NRVA 2003

The NRVA 2003 data offer some of the best opportunities to analyse rural livelihoods from a range of different perspectives. It is anticipated that, if analysed with the coordinated structure outlined below, this dataset will provide a series of reports that will form a major baseline for understanding many themes of rural life in Afghanistan.

The responsibility for coordinating the analysis and collating various reports will be with MRRD/WFP/World Bank, with assistance from other stakeholders.

To facilitate this analysis a number of basic themes should be analysed and data summary files made available to facilitate further analysis and avoid duplication of analytical efforts. These will be relevant across many of the themes as analysis of a single theme may use data from all strata. These basic summaries at each stratum include:

Stratum	Basic summaries at each stratum
District Level	District prices dataset, with procedure for inputting prices where they do not exist in that particular district market, district characteristics summary data.
Community Level: Shura & Wealth Groups	Location factors, geo-references, demographics, agro-ecological zone definition, wealth group membership. Wealth group population literacy rates, market access, health access, income based estimates of vulnerability, programme preferences.
Household	Location factors, household demographics, wealth group membership, caloric consumption, poverty estimates, dietary diversity, ethnicity based on first language spoken, household assets, household amenities summary, land ownership.

Gender should be considered as an aspect of analysis across all themes. Initial thoughts also suggest that gender in Afghanistan is worthy of a separate report, as this is the first nationwide data on women's roles in rural livelihoods.

Theme	Analysis themes	Estimated completion date	Lead institutions Contact persons
Poverty/food security Household demographics	? Household demographics. ? Poverty rate/map with sensitivity analysis ? Determinant poverty	Middle of February	MRRD/World Bank/WFP Andrew Pinney Renos Vakis Annalisa Conte
Comparison of poverty statistics, vulnerability and food security indicators	? Food security rate/map ? Determinants of food security. ? Comparison of poverty and vulnerability estimates and their methodologies. Recommendations for methodology for all future poverty assessments.	End of February	WFP/World Bank /MRRD Scott Ronchini Annalisa Conte Renos Vakis Andrew Pinney
Nutrition and dietary diversity	? Household dietary diversity score and provincial food basket. ? Household caloric sufficiency. ? Household micro-nutrient risk.	End of February	MoH/UNICEF/WFP Annalies Borrel Eric Kenefick
Shocks Coping strategies	? Frequency of covariate and idiosyncratic shocks. ? Correlation of covariate and idiosyncratic shocks with poverty and vulnerability rates. ? Coping strategies employed to address shocks and the success of these coping strategies in relation to household characteristics of poverty rates.	End of February	MRRD/World Bank/WFP Renos Vakis Andrew Pinney Samir Wanmali
Education	? Enrolment rates described by region and poverty and vulnerability. ? Estimated literacy rates, male/female. ? Educational profile of houses and poverty rank. ? Frequency and reasons for school non-attendance by children of school age. ? Perceptions of problems with local school	End of February	To be decided
Health	? Health access and relation to poverty /food insecurity and nutritional indicators. ? Change quality of health services.	End of February	MoH/UNICEF/WFP Annalies Boreal Eric Kenefick
Labour/migration	? Migration and reasons for migration in relation to poverty, food and security statistics. ? Destination of migrants. ? Unemployment rates, employment/income diversity and underemployment. ? Seasonality of labour opportunities by gender/children	End of February	WFP Samir Wanmali
Markets	? Market access and relationship with poverty/food security and nutrition indicators. ? Market access and relation to the cost of the typical household food basket. ? Market access and relation to stated preferences for program intervention.	End of February	To be decided
Agriculture/land tenure	? Summary of agricultural production and crop diversity by region. ? Analysis of land tenure and distribution of land ownership. ? Analysis of changing land ownership patterns. ? Analysis of farming constraints. ? Analysis of livestock population information possibly supported with data from the recent livestock census.	End of February	MAAH/FAO Hector Maletta
Kuchi	? Poverty/food security rates for kuchi populations. ? Summer and winter map of kuchi populations. ? Analysis of all themes but for kuchi population.	End of February	MRRD/MFTA/WFP Frauke de Weijer Samir Wanmali

Theme	Analysis themes	Estimated completion date	Lead institutions Contact persons
Gender	? Analysis of the contribution the women to rural household livelihoods ? Women's differential access to education and health. ? Women's participation in households and community decision making. ? Analysis of programme preferences by gender.	Middle of March	MoWA/WFP/USAID
Opium	? Correlation of poverty/food security statistics with those districts heavily engaged in opium production. Indication all degree to which poverty and food security statistics account for opium income. ? Determinants of district characteristics like lead to engage in poppy cultivation.	Middle of March	MRRD/DFID David Radcliff John Ashley Andrew Pinney Samir Wanmali
Respondents perceptions	? Analysis of respondent's perception of change across a number of indicators and to what degree this reflects the various measures of poverty and food insecurity within the NRVA. ? Recommendations on the value of using respondent's perceptions as a proxy for other poverty, risk and vulnerability measures. ? Analysis of respondent's preference for program response (casual work, food for work or combination of both) in relation to market access and other access indicators.	Middle of March	WFP/MRRD/World Bank
Summary report	Executive summary of main results across all major themes.	End March	MRRD/WFP Andrew Pinney Scott Ronchini

For requests on the availability of the NRVA 2003 dataset or further information on the NRVA, please contact:

Andrew Pinney Vulnerability Analysis Unit Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development Shah Mahmood Ghazi Watt Kabul, Afghanistan andrew.pinney@mrrd.org 070 222 121, 079 337 470	OR	Ahmadshah Shahi / Scott Ronchini Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping World Food Programme Wazir Akbar Khan (opposite the French Embassy) Kabul, Afghanistan ahmadshah.shahi@wfp.org / scott.ronchini@wfp.org 070 282 551