

Advisory Report to the Ministry of Interior

on

LAND SETTLEMENT AND RELATED PROBLEMS

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MAJOR CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

1. Several major land development and settlement programs are underway in Afghanistan. Emphasis has been on irrigation and drainage structures and land leveling. Much less attention has been given to soil improvement and to providing settlers with necessary supplies, services and supervision.
2. The basic requirements for successful land settlement are the same as those for upgrading small farmers of a traditional agriculture. The composition of inputs will vary, of course, for different conditions of settlement, but they also vary in the upgrading of different types of traditional farmers.
3. The amount of new lands for settlement was consistently reported to be small. It is limited to agricultural lands where there is available water from rivers and streams and potential ground water for pump irrigation.
4. The costs of bringing new lands into agricultural use will continue to be high. In addition to the construction of irrigation facilities, land development improvements call for substantial investments prior to allotting units to settlers.
5. Uncontrolled plowing of hilly or mountainous grazing lands is leading to serious soil erosion and destruction of land resources for both grazing and agricultural uses.
6. The nomadic life of the kochis in its economic, social, and land-use respects should be significantly improved. Careful planning is necessary for the management and improvement of grazing lands, and the effective utilization of grazing lands in combination or in association with tillable agricultural lands.
7. Land settlement should be conceived as the allotting of productive land in farm units of economic size to well-chosen settlers, and providing them with good seeds, fertilizers, tools, credit, and other essential services, and close supervision in good farming practices. And unless the knowledge of good practices is brought to the farmers in a practical and profitable manner, knowledge in itself is rather sterile.
8. The task of land development and settlement involves many difficulties and problems. Much is to be learned and much needs to be done. One approach would be to establish an integrated program in a few well-selected areas within major areas of development.
9. Study should be given to the education and training of men to organize and supervise cooperatives and credit societies. The focus of planning for all types of farm credit should preferably be that credit would come from one source, extended and supervised through credit societies and repayments scheduled in relation to farm income.
10. The Cadastral Survey, Land Classification Program, and Land Registration are of basic importance. They are, however, only a part of a land settlement program, and particularly that part dealing with the

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delineation of boundaries of ownership rights in private and government lands. Because of a confused situation in regard to private rights in some lands generally considered as government lands suitable for settlement, the ownership status of these lands must be clarified.

11. There is a need for a land tenure study dealing with the ownership pattern, with particular reference to extent of large landholdings, limitation of opportunities on these lands, intensity of land-use by size of holdings, and landlord-tenant relationships. Closely related to such a research project is a need for a study of water rights. The research efforts should result in a better understanding of the land tenure situation; of rights in water; and in revealing legislation and measures for progress.

12. The planning, programming, and operating of a coordinated and integrated land development and settlement program will require a re-organization of the Department of Land and Settlement. And for the total land problem of Afghanistan, there is a need for constant high-level consideration for improved administration, budgetary support and staff improvement in dealing with major land-water situations and problems. The conservation, development and management of the extensive land and water resources warrants, in the private and public interest, much closer administrative consideration.

13. The social and economic aspects of the pressures of landless people for land is a part of a larger problem; that is, expanded agricultural production on land now in farms. This is necessary not only to meet increasing food needs, but to expand the domestic market for local products of industry. The production and exchange processes that would follow are basic to a solution of the settlement problem in that many new opportunities for employment will occur with an expanded agricultural economy.

14. Rural people must be motivated in a number of ways; constant effort must be made to obtain the means for providing increasing opportunities for them; and to give increasing expression to their desires and aspirations.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A WORK PROGRAM

1. Appoint a well-qualified person to head the General Land and Settlement Department. Upgrade its program operations to attract and hold a good staff.

2. Hire a nucleus staff of about ten trainable people for on-the-job training.

3. Request foreign technical assistance for a land settlement project to include the services of a land economist, a specialist in land and water law, and a rural sociologist. This suggestion could well be a part of the suggested land tenure research study. The purpose of the project would be to assist the Government of Afghanistan to:

a. Organize the General Land and Settlement Department;

- b. Develop operating procedures;
- c. Train personnel;
- d. Investigate the land tenure system and to seek additional research assistance, if desirable, in the field of land tenure, water law, and other action oriented studies related to land settlement problems;
- e. Encourage concentrated efforts on a sound integrated agricultural program including improved seed, fertilizer, pesticides, credit and supervision with existing farmers on lands presently under irrigation and cultivation within or near major land settlement areas in order to obtain needed experience which can be transferred and applied to land settlement areas generally.
- f. Vigorously support organization of credit societies and water associations, training of supervisors, and the supervision of services through the reactivated Agricultural Bank.
- h. Postpone implementing any new large-scale land settlement and land reform schemes until present settlement activities are moving along satisfactorily.

LAND SETTLEMENT AND RELATED PROBLEMS

I. Introduction:

1. Services Requested:

The USAID-Afghanistan Mission requested at the invitation of the Royal Government of Afghanistan that the Consultant prepare an advisory report to guide the General Land and Settlement Department of the Ministry of Interior in the following areas:

- "a. The feasibility of, and planning for, settlement of nomads, including resettlement;
- b. Need for, and policies related to, various kinds of land use allocations;
- c. Relation between land use, agricultural credit, and other supporting needs for settlers;
- d. Government land management policies as they relate to land settlement and the sound use of land-water resources;
- e. Multilateral bodies most suitable to provide long-term land tenure technical assistance.
- f. And appraisal of land settlement and the nomad problem, in the agricultural development of the economy of Afghanistan."