



Administrative approaches and goals of Independent directorate for local governance in Afghanistan

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Annotation The goal of this article is to identify some problems of public administration of Afghanistan, and to identify some administrative approaches and goals of Independent directorate for local governance in Afghanistan and to analyze them in order to find methods to improve its effectiveness.

Key words – Independent directorate for local governance, administrative capacity, local governance, public administration.

Afghanistan is a region where several religions, empires, and political systems are in contact. Here International community is involved simultaneously in peace building operation and in civil war which lasts for more than 30 years. It is very important to be highlighted that in this situation the process of establishment and functioning of the public administration of the country faces specific difficulties and has typical characteristics. Insufficient capacity of all levels of the public administration of Afghanistan is a factor that provokes debate for the effectiveness of the policy that NATO applies in the country. Functioning of competent and effective government with needed structures of administration is a key condition for the transfer of authority from International community to the citizens of Afghanistan.

The measures for stabilization, taken by International community, include improvement and stabilization of the public administration and security forces. For the last decade, for development of adequate public administration structures, the government of USA provided for Afghanistan more than 20 billion dollars. This amount includes the fund for equipment and training.

In order to strengthen the position of the country as country with strong and effective institutions which does not represent a threat for the region, progress in all areas in the civil society and government as well, is needed.

The objects for analysis of this article are some specific administrative approaches of Independent directorate for local governance (IDLG), which are result of the complicated and violent processes of reconstruction of the administration of the country.

The thesis is that until now IDLG realizes successfully programs and initiatives for improvement of the way of operating of public administration. It is very important, the support for the activities for creation local government's capacity to continue and to continue the public administration reform, as well.

1. Administrative capacity and local governance.

Public administration has been created simultaneously with the state as phenomenon. The history of state is a history of the administration, as well. There is no state without

administration at both levels, central and local.

Consolidation of the public administration capacity guarantees creation of professional and effective administration.

Consolidation of the institutional and administrative capacity of Afghanistan has a key importance for the accomplishment of reforms and successful realization of policies and initiatives. Smooth operating institutions and administration are prerequisite for successful formulation and accomplishment of policies, better financial management, which leads to economic and social development and better security as a result of that. Effective administrative capacity is prerequisite and basic requirement for economic development and employment.

With establishment of IDLG and Independent administrative reform and civil service commission, significant efforts are involved in order to be achieved goals for effective local governance and establishment of structures which are capable enough and possess administrative capacity to realize successfully policy and initiatives of central government, at local level.

Development of administrative capacity promotes development of professional administration that is people oriented. As a result of that expenses and bureaucratic procedures are minimized, new mechanisms that guarantee better accountability and transparency are introduced.

Functioning of local governance means that population has opportunity to make decisions on local issues, which are important for local communities. There are everywhere local institutions all around the world. Their relations with central government vary in different countries, but their main purpose and task is to execute specific governmental function over the certain area. Over the territory of the state in combination with central government operate institutions for local governance.

As important element of state mechanism, local governance is adapted toward central administration and work mainly on local issues and stands up for the interests of local population. Administration that is known from local people is local administration, often central administration for them is just idea.

Financial and organizational support provided by central government to structures of local governance is basic and very critical during the period of establishment and recognition.

Local governance operates in the state. Its principles are part of state's principles therefore these principles are written in the Constitution, the basic law of the state.

In accordance with article 136 of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Administration of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan shall be based on central and local administrative units in accordance with the law. Local governance administration has features of governmental structures. It realizes and applies governmental policy at local level. The government, while preserving the principle of centralism, shall - in accordance with the law - delegate certain authorities to local administration units for the purpose of expediting and promoting economic, social, and cultural affairs, and increasing the participation of people in the

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development of the nation. Central and local administration function in agreement and harmony, they do not fight each other.

For the purpose of the implementation of the provisions, and ensuring the values of this constitution, the state shall establish the required departments.

Local governance is decentralized public governance and it can be met mainly in two possibilities:

- Local governance is decentralized or deconcentrated unit of central governmental administrative management. It is presented by local units of central government;
- Local governance structures play the main role in managing local administrative units. Their representatives are elected by local people and serve and stand for the rights of local people.

These activities of state's institutions are applied only on the territory of the state, over the specially divided administrative - territorial units. The importance of local administrative management is conditioned by the functions of administrative units in the modern state.

Administrative units and the units of local governance are some of the basic and valuable and most essential elements of the governmental structure.

Organizationally, the structure of administration of local governance of Afghanistan has been **divided into 4 levels**:

1. Provincial level;
2. District level;
3. Municipal level;
4. Village level;

In accordance with articles 136 and 139 of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the number, area, parts, and structures of the provinces and the related administrations are regulated by law on the basis of population, social and economic conditions, and geographic location. The provincial council takes part in securing the developmental targets of the state and improving its affairs in a way stated in the law, and gives advice on important issues falling within the domain of the province. It performs their duties in cooperation with the provincial administration.

This administrative structure has some important internal relations and features. Scrutinized as one, these specifics frame the key "problems of local governance".

As such paramount problems could be defined:

- 1 - The overall structure is characterized by significant systemic contradiction.

Representatives of various Ministries are direct formal and budget authorities for the delivery of services in the provinces. The structure of all Ministries is extremely centralized. They work in vertically integrated model with the relatively weak external linkages between them.

- 2 - Even given the choice of a centrale governance and service-delivery intergovernmental structure for Afghanistan, existing institutional arrangements are often highly inefficient.

In particular, Line Ministries tend to be over-centralized, with their offices in Kabul retaining functions which could be much more efficiently performed at the provincial level. To some extent this problem is not unrelated to the one discussed above. So long as Line Ministries perceive that any significant deconcentration of budget or functional authority to their Provincial Departments is likely to make these authorities subject to influence and capture by the Provincial Governors, they are unlikely to have much incentive to do so.

-3- The current system is both asymmetric and inequitable.

While some of the current institutional asymmetries appear to make sense, others are the result of arbitrary processes connected with history, varying donor practices, and the like rather than considered designchoices. It is not clear why administration at local level varies in different provinces. This diversity is serious obstacle for finding one working model of administration at local level.

- 4 - The structure of administration of local governance has been affected by problems and challenges typical for the country in economical and political transition.

As such can be defined insufficient administrative capacity, the lack of equipment and infrastructure which are essential for the day to day functioning of administration. It is almost impossible to achieve goals of public administration reform without well educated and motivated specialists.

- 5 - Relations among structures of public administration are very different in different regions of the country.

Different Ministries apply different systems and programs to control the spending of the budget. The goal is to improve the transparency and accountability of the local governance. There is no clear prospective what is happening at provincial and district levels. In that way the administration at local level stays in very unpleasant position to create development plans without having clear budget frame established. The results often are catastrophic.

- 6 - Insufficient relations and interaction of local administration with the citizens.

The population is not informed enough about initiatives, programs and reforms undertaken by administration. This fact is extremely problematic when the word is about legislative reforms which directly affect all the population.

Communication between citizens and elected bodies of local governance is critical. There are no clear channels for information exchange between Provincial Development Committees and population.

The efforts should be oriented toward strengthening the positions of the political system that works for the reforms in public administration of Islamic republic Afghanistan.

2. Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG).

There are many ongoing programs for reform of public administration and developing administrative capacity in Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Some of these programs have been active for years, while others are just on the beginning. In this article I will do some research about the initiative named IDLG.

IDLG has been established on August 30, 2007 by President's decree. It is subordinated directly to the President, who takes the responsibility for the way of functioning of that organization. The main goal of that initiative is to strengthen the structures of public administration at local level, by making their plans open for the citizens and improve the communication between population and administration. Special attention has been devoted to the provinces with problems in security.

IDLG has received a task from the President to undertake all measures required in order to improve relations and interaction between central and local governance. Special attention has been devoted to the sparsely populated regions.

IDLG's mission is *"To consolidate peace and stability, to achieve development and equitable economic growth and to achieve improvements in service delivery through just, democratic*



processes and institutions of good governance at subnational level."

IDLG's vision is *"To make a difference in the lives of Afghan citizens by providing them good governance."*

IDLG's goals are:

- To ensure that Afghanistan's framework for subnational governance upholds the principles of good governance, including open, transparent, accountable, participative, effective, coherent and inclusive governance based on consensus and rule of law at the sub-national level;

- To establish and strengthen government institutions at sub-national levels in order to ensure people's participation in governance and to achieve measurable improvements in the delivery of services and the protection of rights;

- To create and support opportunities for citizens and stakeholders to participate in governance at the sub-national level;

- To ensure that sub-national governance institutions play an active role in facilitating the delivery of national activities and programmes aimed at improving the wellbeing of Afghans.

For 2011 anticipation is that IDLG will apply successfully reforms in the system of local governance. As a result of these reforms the units of local governance administration would be more effective, with better communication and coordination of the efforts. The main IDLG's priorities are formulated in "Policy for local governance". Application of these policies has been planned for the period 2010-2013.

Anticipated results of the application of "Policy for local governance" for the period December 2010 – December 2011 are:

- The national system, procedures and legislative framework for application, functioning and control of the local governance institutions are in place;

- The offices of Provincial and District Governors are prepared to manage application of the strategies for improvement of the security and economical development;

- IDLG is capable to supervise application of the public administration reforms;

- Provincial and district councils have capacity to advise and consult local population, and to participate in planning, control and execution of local policies;

- Democratic elected municipal administrations are capable to collect taxes. They have improved organizational structure to deliver services to population;

At the end of 2010 IDLG has operational structures which operate throughout the country. The policy of the Independent administrative reform and the commission for civil service is supported by the Program for local governance. As a result of good cooperation and interaction have been established 7 regional offices, 34 provincial offices, 23 provincial training centers and Public affairs department. For 7 provinces reforms in public administration aimed improvement in relations between IDLG and offices of Governors, mayors and governmental agencies.

As something very important and stimulating is assessed the fact that operational procedures have been improved, there are clear procedures and policies for providing of qualitative administrative capacity. Exists data base for the governmental employees and promotion system for merit based career development in accordance with the qualifications that the candidate possesses.

This data base shows that young specialists assigned in provincial administrations during 2006 have been 1975, for 2008 they were 10 955. Simultaneously the attestations conducted in 2006 have been 44, for 2008 this number has been increased to 3894. This change promotes assignment of well motivated and well trained young specialists in administrative structures.

CONCLUSION

Identified problematic areas and planned IDLG's activities demonstrate that the effective and specialized structure that has responsibilities to reform public administration needs support.

It is necessary the system of management to be improved because of the identified risks of insufficiently developed administrative capacity of public administration and local governance. In order to minimize the current level of internal contradictions it is very important and vital the role of the office of the Provincial Governor for planning and coordinating the efforts of governmental agencies to be increased. Simultaneously some kind of restrictions over his responsibilities to exercise budget and operational control should be in place. This would make the work of the Line ministries to deliver services to the population easier and more effective and efficient.

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