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The Editor
Fox News Website

On Jan 11, 2010 Fox News published an article on its website entitled "U.S. ignored U.N Aid Agency's Fraud and Mismanagement." The article refers to a report by the United States Government Accountability Office on UNOPS.

The GAO investigation was prompted by reports of UNOPS weak management and financial controls in the period between 2002 and 2006, mainly in relation to UNOPS implementation of grants from USAID in Afghanistan. UNOPS has acknowledged publically on several occasions that serious mistakes were made in Afghanistan during this period. Financial and management controls were unacceptably weak.

The GAO refers to several reports and investigations by different audit and investigative bodies. It should be stressed that all these reports relate to the period 2002-2006. UNOPS received an unqualified audit opinion from external auditors for the biennium 2006-2007.

Major reforms have since been implemented, and UNOPS is determined to push on with this process. In the conclusion of its report GAO notes that current management has made "significant progress in improving UNOPS's financial position and in making changes to its systems that are designed to address the deficiencies highlighted in numerous UN oversight organizations' audits and investigations."

UNOPS would also like to counter any impression that the organization did not fully cooperate with GAO. UNOPS worked closely with GAO over 17 months, however as an entity of the UN, the organization is bound by the "single audit principle" approved by the UN General Assembly that gives the UN's external auditors the exclusive right to audit the accounting records and financial statements of the UN. As GAO notes in their report: "The United States supports the "single audit principle" and we note that GAO has successfully completed a body of work reviewing UN entities in which we successfully gained the voluntary cooperation of UN entities to perform our work. We had similar cooperation from UNOPS and had access to sufficient information to complete the review."

UNOPS has supported USAID deliver tangible benefits to the people of Afghanistan. These include 875 km of mostly asphalt roads constructed as part of the Secondary Roads Program with more than 100 successful infrastructure and training projects completed as part of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Quick Impact Program. These developments continue to benefit millions of Afghans.

The rehabilitation of a Women's Dormitory has provided safe and secure accommodation for more than 1,000 women allowing them to attend classes of higher education at five faculties in Kabul. The

USDA funded Afghanistan Conservation Corps has generated about 400,000 labour days for thousands of the poorest households in Afghanistan. On behalf of USAID, UNOPS is also managing the construction of two high schools in Kabul providing high-quality learning facilities for over 10,000 boys and girls.

UNOPS supports other partners in Afghanistan including the World Bank, UK Department for International Development, the European Commission, the Swedish International Development Agency, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the Governments of Australia, Estonia, Italy, Japan and Spain. Among the projects implemented for its partners UNOPS has managed the construction and rehabilitation of 9,632 km of roads, 66 bridges and 14 airfields, connecting rural Afghanistan in all 34 provinces. These projects have been delivered in extremely challenging circumstances.

Through their engagement in Afghanistan, USAID and other donors have been able to deliver real benefits to the Afghan people. UNOPS continues to work tirelessly to improve the quality of life of the people of Afghanistan, supporting the national government and donor partners, building roads, schools and clinics and strengthening the capacity of the country's own institutions to deliver the infrastructure and services the people so desperately need.

UNOPS welcomes the report of the GAO and pledges to continue to implement reforms that strengthen the organization's management and financial control. By delivering services in a more transparent and accountable way UNOPS will be able to better serve its partners and the people of Afghanistan.

[UNOPS welcomes GAO report and pledges to continue reforms](#)

[UNOPS formal response to GAO](#)

[Management improvements at UNOPS](#)

UNOPS, Copenhagen