



National Center for Policy Research

The report of the reception at Serena

On Thursday 15 March 2007, the National Center for Policy Research (NCPR) held a reception at the Serena Hotel, aimed at presenting its research projects for 2007, and handing out Certificates of Appreciation to participants in its 2006 'German Afghan Research Forum' (GARF) training in research methodology.

The reception was attended by over 150 esteemed guests, including the Chancellor of Kabul University, Dr. Abdulhay Nazifi, the country representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Dr. Babak Khalatbari, the German State Secretary, Mr. Klaus Hedrich, staff and students of Kabul University, parliamentarians, civil society representatives, and other Afghan and international guests.

After verses from the holy Quran, recited by Mr. Qazi Hashemi, a fourth year law student from Kabul University, the opening speech was made by the NCPR Director, Mrs. Leila Jazayery, who introduced the Center, its history and its activities, as well as the program of the day, in Dari and English. She outlined the Center's main aims of:

- Conducting policy related research into topical issues
- Training researchers from the universities of Afghanistan and organizations involved in research and policy making.
- Facilitating dialogue and discussion between different social and political actors in and about Afghanistan

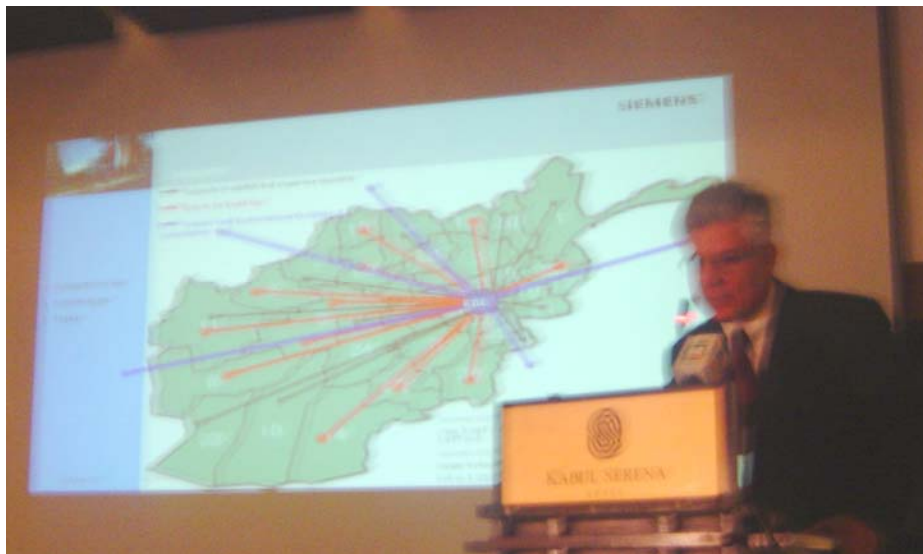


The Director talked about the importance of research and its relevance in the different areas of life, as well as the scientific basis of research. She also explained the Center's commitment to promoting and teaching research within all sectors of society, both within academia and outside. The Director finally explained the Center's desire to act as a forum to facilitate open dialogue and debate among representatives of all sectors of Afghan society.

This was followed by a speech delivered by Associate Professor, Hamida Barmaki, professor of law at Kabul University's Faculty of Law and Political Science, and the NCPR's Head of the Department of Law and Political Science, in which she introduced and explained the significance of the Center's Catalog of Studies and announced the Center's chosen research topics for 2007. Every year the NCPR conducts a number of research projects. The NCPR Catalog of Studies is a compilation of 90 research topics chosen by the Center's three Heads of Department in consultation with Kabul University's three corresponding Faculties. Of these three final topics were chosen for research by the Center's three Departments after further extensive consultation with government and non-government organizations, members of the parliament, civil society and other actors involved in policy making and implementation. The results of these consultations were computerized and the topics which scored the highest votes in each Department were chosen as the main research topics of 2007.



The program's next speaker was Mr. Hassanzadah, the Siemens representative in Afghanistan and member of the Center's steering committee, who spoke about the connection of science and economics. In his speech, Mr. Hassanzadah emphasized the importance and necessity of research in all areas of life. He also noted that all sections of Afghan society have a role to play and must participate in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, including academics.



The topic of the next speaker, Associate Professor Abdul Malik Halimi, professor of economics at Kabul University's Faculty of Economics, and Head of the NCPR's Department of Economics, were GARF and the Center's trainings in research. In 2006 the Center launched the 'German Afghan Research Forum'. As part of this program it held its first training course in research methodology for 60 members of Kabul University. The course trained 30 members of staff in all – 10 from each of Kabul University's Faculties corresponding with the Center's three departments -, and 30 top students – 10 from each Faculty. The course was conducted over a three month period and included a two month intensive course in research methodology followed by a practical research project produced over one month. The course was considered to be a great success by all concerned, and the Center plans to hold a second course in 2007. In 2007 the Centre plans also to conduct training courses in research methodology for non-academic researchers, such as those employed in the parliament, ministries, NGOs and other organizations involved in research and policy making. In addition, in the near future, it is hoped the NCPR will be able to offer training courses in research to universities outside of Kabul.





Dr. Abdulhay Nazifi, Chancellor of Kabul University, then spoke briefly about the importance and role of research centers in the academic life of Kabul University and Afghanistan's other institutions of higher education. This was followed by the handing out of Certificates of Appreciation to 60 GARF graduates by Dr. Nazifi and Dr. Khalatbari, the country representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the NCPR's sole donor.

The final guest speaker of the program was the German State Chancellor, Mr Klaus Hedrich. In his speech, Mr Hedrich expressed his satisfaction with the German funded Center's achievements during 2006, reiterating Germany's wish to support and aid Afghanistan's reconstruction. Mr Hedrich emphasized the need for all actors inside and outside of Afghanistan to engage in dialogue, and the role that centers such as the NCPR can play in facilitating constructive exchanges of views. He expressed his wish to see the effective establishment of the rule of law, respect for human rights, and equal rights for women throughout Afghanistan.



The ceremony's closing speech was made by NCPR Director, Mrs. Leila Jazayery, who took this opportunity to express the Center's gratitude to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and in particular its representative, Dr Khalatbari, for his relentless support and guidance for the work of the Center's staff.

The event was considered a great success both by the NCPR and KAS, and those attending. Many high-ranking guests, representing different sections of Afghan society and the international community, expressed great interest in the work undertaken by the NCPR, and appreciation for the commitment of the NCPR to both research and the holding of open dialogue.

Simultaneous with the NCPR's reception, the Konrad Adenauer also held an exhibition of paintings by young Afghan painters, on the topic of 'Democracy in Afghanistan', on the morning of the 15 March. This project was briefly introduced by its coordinator, Mr. Abbaszadah, just before lunch was served.

