OBJECTIVES:

The main purposes of the visit were:

1. to prepare the way for signing a protocol with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2. to look at the possibilities of opening an ACBAR representational office in Kabul in the future.

At the same time ACBAR staff were also requested - to deliver some medicines for cholera, being provided by SERVE to the Ministry of Public Health; and to check on and obtain any available information on reported cholera out-breaks in Kabul city as well as other parts of the country.

ON THE WAY TO KABUL:

Travel was made by road. No major problems were faced on the way, even though the vehicle was stopped many times during the journey. However, in Sarobi a person who needed a ride got into the car by force. Later on he was almost the cause of a major problem by arguing with a group of gunmen who also wanted the vehicle to stop for them. To try and avoid similar problems it is recommended that nobody, armed or not armed, be given a ride. A valid excuse to such people is that the vehicle belongs to an Agency (Muwasisa) and there is no permission to give a ride to other people. The journey took some eight hours; the road condition is generally very poor from Jalalabad even though it improves slightly after Sarobi.

ACCOMMODATION:

Expatriates going to Kabul should, if at all possible, make arrangements for their accommodation before hand. The hotels are currently not functioning properly in Kabul and the few which are open are extremely expensive, according to their "published" rates.
CHOLERA - THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH:

People met: The Minister (Dr. Sayed Mohd Amin Fatimi) and Director General of External Affairs of the Ministry

The Ministry of Public Health has officially announced the out-break of cholera in the city. Since June 13, more than 4,000 people with severe diarrhoea and vomiting have been admitted to the hospitals out of which 238 have been diagnosed as cholera. The MOPH laboratory has tested samples of the cases and also some samples were sent to Islamabad. Both places have confirmed the cholera. However, both ICRC and MSF were of the view that the real problem in Kabul was more one of seasonal diarrhoea (also an extremely critical problem). In an over populated city like Kabul (2.5 million people according to the MOPH) with extremely poor sanitation, improper disposal of wastage and lack of clean drinking water a major out-break of disease such as cholera could blow up in the city in 1/2 weeks, if not in days.

The MOPH has received reports of cholera out-breaks from most of the northern provinces, Ghor, Kandahar and Herat and has been requested to provide assistance. ICRC and MSF confirmed the presence of acute cholera in Puli Khumri where MSF is involved in assisting the people. ICRC has taken some medicines to Mazar.

WHO, UNICEF and some other organizations have been helping the MOPH. Seminars on Case Management of Cholera are organized for the staff of the Ministry with the support of the mentioned organizations. Some chlorine has been distributed to people and health messages are broadcasted through radio and TV.

The Minister requested agencies to help him at this critical point to help the people. A list of medicines needed for cholera provided by the stock controller of the Ministry is attached. The Minister also requested emergency kits in order to help the injured people in the northern areas recently bombed by the Russians. A Commission headed by a deputy Minister has recently been to the north to assess the situation and assist the people.

61 boxes of two types of anti-dysentery syrups provided by SERVE were delivered to the Minister.

The contact person of the MOPH in Peshawar is Professor Ahmad Shah Jalal. He can be contacted for any information. ARIANA Airline has promised the Ministry to facilitate transportation of commodities between Peshawar and Kabul.

As far as the general policy is concerned the MOPH works as a neutral body politically and serves all parts of the country on the basis of need. The Minister believes in the sustainability of the health system and will support efficient and cost effective health services. He gives more importance to the health care rather than the medical care.

A set of ACBAR publications was handed over to the Minister and he was briefed on the visit to Kabul as well as ACBAR activities and plans.
People met: Deputy Foreign Minister (Mr. Hamid Karzai), Head of Economic Affairs (Mr. Hafizullah Ayubi), Deputy Chief of Protocol (Mr. Atigullah Atifmal) and Official responsible for NGO Affairs (Mr. Sameen)

Procedure for Signing a Protocol: International organizations need to approach the Department of Protocol (Tashrifat) of the MFA which will arrange meeting(s) with appropriate people in the MFA or outside with other governmental departments.

For signing a protocol the agency should submit its application along with the charter and activity reports to the Department of Economic Affairs/NGO Affairs of the Ministry. The agency would be contacted (following approval generally up to two weeks later) and the Director or an authorized person will need to go and sign it. The attached questionnaire, prepared by the Ministry, should be completed - this covers most of the information needed.

A briefing on ACBAR, its functions, role, importance and future intentions was made. Publications, including a copy of the Statutes of Operation and the 1992/93 Annual Report were submitted. It was agreed that a protocol will be signed between ACBAR and the MFA in the near future - quite possibly in Pakistan as both the Director of Economic Affairs and the Official responsible for NGO Affairs (Min Foreign Affairs) will be in Islamabad during the last week of July attending some official meetings.

The Deputy Minister was also briefed on the current position of NGOs, trends of donor organizations and issues which could encourage or discourage NGO operations.

Both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Planning raised the question of ACBAR signing a protocol on behalf of all its members. It was explained to them, that under the current status and mandate of ACBAR, this was not possible. Each member organization is a separate entity and has its own mandate, policies and systems of operation and, hence, it will be necessary for a separate protocol to be signed between each organization and the Ministry. However, ACBAR would be available to advise and assist members wishing to sign.

It was hoped that the role of ACBAR in Afghanistan could be developed in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Planning and the sectoral Ministries in a way which could serve them as well.

The intention of having an ACBAR delegation visit Kabul in the next few weeks was mentioned to the Deputy Minister who welcomed the idea.
AFGHAN NGOs - MINISTRY OF PLANNING:

People met: Deputy Minister (Mr. Sultan Hussain) and Head of Int'l Affairs & NGOs (Mr. Farahmand)

The Ministry of Planning, which deals with Afghan NGOs, has now drafted a set of rules and regulations to serve as the protocol between NGOs and the Ministry. ACBAR's comments on the set of rules would be much appreciated and will certainly be considered before they are finalised. A number of NGOs have been issued letters of recognition by the Ministry, without providing information on their activities. These NGOs need to refer back to the Ministry.

A set of ACBAR publications was handed over to the Deputy Minister who requested more copies of each. It was mentioned that the ACBAR "Statutes of Operation" has been updated and one of the recent changes is the membership criteria. A signed protocol/recognition letter of the Government of Afghanistan satisfies the membership criteria especially in the case where an agency has not been able to obtain an NOC from the Government of Pakistan.

ACBAR will cooperate with the Ministry where possible; for example, ACBAR could easily work with the Ministry in preparing a standard format for NGO reporting, which would not only assist the Government but also make it easier for agencies to meet their obligations. ACBAR will provide any collective information on NGOs required by the Ministry for example the database and directory.

ACBAR would be very pleased to invite the Minister of Planning, preferably sometime when His Excellency is in Pakistan, to visit ACBAR and address a meeting of a selected number of NGOs.

The UN Rehabilitation Strategy was being reviewed by the Ministry. The role of ACBAR and NGOs in developing the strategy was admired by the Ministry.

ACBAR OFFICE IN KABUL:

All government departments visited wished to see ACBAR open an office in Kabul. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs mentioned that ACBAR can go ahead and make its plans for opening an office and assume that a protocol has already been signed. Also the NGOs/agencies that were seen during this brief visit (TAM, ICRC, MSF-F and Halo Trust) were of the opinion that it was a good idea. ACBAR will examine the issue in detail now and formulate its plans. Office space, etc. will be studied more closely during the next trip.
FOLLOW UP TASKS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ACBAR will send its regular publications to certain heads of departments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Public Health and other departments;

- ACBAR will translate its Statutes of Operation into Dari and send copies to the Government;

- At least 50 copies of the new edition of the Database and the Directory be sent to the Ministries, when published;

- ACBAR will consider opening a representation office in Kabul in the next 3 to 6 months, if the security conditions remain as now and given funding arrangements;

- Agencies should give consideration to undertaking projects for Kabul city. Such projects as "cleaning the city - rubbish removal" under the frame of "Food for Work" projects to improve the sanitation and hygiene would appear particularly valuable;

- NGOs should consider providing anti-diarrhoea medicines. Even if there is no cholera in the city, this is still a major problem. The people regularly suffer from seasonal dysentery.

26 July 1993.
Name of the Agency

1. In-charge of the Agency
2. The competent body of the Agency
3. The aims and fields of Agency activities
4. The Agency's country's of origin
5. Agency's financing country/organizations
6. No, & date of registration of the Agency in the country of origin
7. No, and date of registration of the Agency in the UNO
8. Date of the beginning of the Agency's activity inside Afghanistan
9. Names and particulars of the Agency's projects in Afghanistan
10. Agency's headquarters and address

A: In Afghanistan

B: Abroad
LIST OF MEDICINES REQUESTED BY THE MOPH

- Serum Ringer Lactate 500 cc
- Serum Ringer Lactate 1,000 cc
- ORS
- Chlorine Bleaching Powder
- Capsule Doxacycline 100 mg
- Capsule Tetracycline 250 mg
- Syrup Co-trimoxazole
- Syrup Furazolidone
- Antiseptic solutions
- Disposable syringes

Note: Thanks are due to SERVE for their cooperation in providing a vehicle for travel to and from Kabul and to staff of the International Assistance Mission (IAM) for the generous offer of accommodation.