Afghanistan

Land Area: 652,000 sq km

Population: Estimated at around 27 million

Capital city: Kabul (population approximately 2.2 million)

Ethnic groups: The main ones are Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen; minor ones are include Baluch, Nuristani, Brahui, Qizilbash

Religion: 99% Muslim (approx 80% Sunni, 20% Shi’ite)

Languages: Dari (Persian) and Pashto are the official languages; there are more than 30 other languages, of which only Uzbek, Turkmani, Arabic, and Baluchi have written forms.

Literacy: UN estimates less than 10% overall, and probably no more than 2% for women

Life expectancy: 40 years (UNDP)

Infant mortality: 165 per 1000 live births (UNICEF 2002)

Under-5 mortality rate: 256 per 1000 live births (UNICEF 2002)

Maternal mortality: 1600 per 100,000 live births (UNICEF 2002)

External debt: Estimated at $5 billion in 1900, the bulk of it owed to the Soviet Union. No debt has been serviced since 1992.

Access to safe water: 23 per cent of population (World Bank 2003)

Adequate sanitation: 12 per cent of population

Electricity: 6 per cent of population

Location: Afghanistan is located in South Asia, to the north west of Pakistan and shares a border with Iran. For a map of its location please click on this map of Afghanistan.

Source: Afghanistan, Chris Johnson, Oxfam Country Profile, 2002