

Directorate of Public Libraries

COUNTRY: AFGHANISTAN

PRESENTER: FRAIDOOON ZAHID – DIGITIZATION EXPERT

2ND COMMITTEE MEETING 16-06-2026

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Public Libraries of Afghanistan:

The Directorate of Afghanistan's Public Libraries was established in **May 1966**.

Currently, **105 state libraries**, more than **30 private libraries**, and **12 mobile libraries** operate under its umbrella across Afghanistan.

The most important of these is the **Kabul Central Library**, which features **Eight** reading Halls.

Priorities of the Public Libraries:

- **Resource Digitization:** Transitioning from traditional storage to an electronic database to preserve historical texts.
- **Promoting reading culture:** Enhancing the "reading culture" by modernizing the 105 operational public libraries nationwide, organizing academic seminars, book reading contest and book festivals
- **Human Resource Professionalization:** Training staff on modern library technologies and advancing their capacity in international librarianship standards.
- **Heritage preservation:** Safeguarding Afghanistan's rich but fragile cultural heritage, particularly rare manuscripts and historical texts

Digital Initiatives & Current Projects

- **Database system:** Creating a centralized public Library Database and electronic archives.
- **Website:** creating website to provide online services and digital guides for researchers.
- **Book Scanning & Archiving Process:** Actively digitizing and scanning physical resources. Over 300 rare and valuable books have been successfully scanned recently to build the digital repository.
- **Facility Renovations:** Active reconstruction, upgrade, and renovation of physical reading halls and specialized children's sections across public libraries.
- Expanding **Mobile library** services
- Standardizing our publications using international systems like **ISBN and CIP**.
- Expanding our **digital library infrastructure** into an advanced system.

Areas where expertise can be shared:

- **Post Conflict Rehabilitation:** Expertise in rebuilding library networks and re-establishing public trust and academic operations in resource constrained environments.
- **Resource Optimization:** Strategies for maximizing the impact of limited technological infrastructure.

Needed Cooperation And Support:

- **Professional Training & Capacity Building:** Collaborative training opportunities for Afghan library staff abroad to learn modern management principles and digital library frameworks.
- **Scanners for Books, Magazine and Newspaper:** providing standard scanners for scanning magazines, newspapers, maps and etc.
- **International Diplomacy & Partnerships:** Strengthening institutional relationships and initiating joint projects with global networks like **IFLA, UNESCO, and OCLC**.
- **Inter-Library Resource Sharing:** Establishing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with ECO member states to allow Afghan researchers access to regional digital databases, scientific journals, and cross-border digital archives.

THANK YOU.

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