



SIGAR

Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

March 01, 2016

The Honorable Gayle E. Smith
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development

Dear Administrator Smith:

I am writing to alert you to a safety matter that warrants timely action by your agency. As you know, SIGAR is conducting site inspections at USAID-supported health facilities throughout Afghanistan.¹ USAID's support for these facilities is intended to enable health service delivery by providing funding for staff, basic supplies, and utilities, and is not intended to fund the construction or refurbishment of health facilities.² While our site inspections at these facilities similarly focus on health service delivery, one aspect of our site inspections includes photographing and conducting a basic review of the structural integrity and safety of the buildings at each site. We believe that USAID, as the donor supporting operation of these clinics, needs to be aware of any issues related to the safety of the facilities providing those health services. As the enclosed photographs show, facility 1987 in Badakhshan province appears to have extreme structural damage that will likely put lives at risk.³

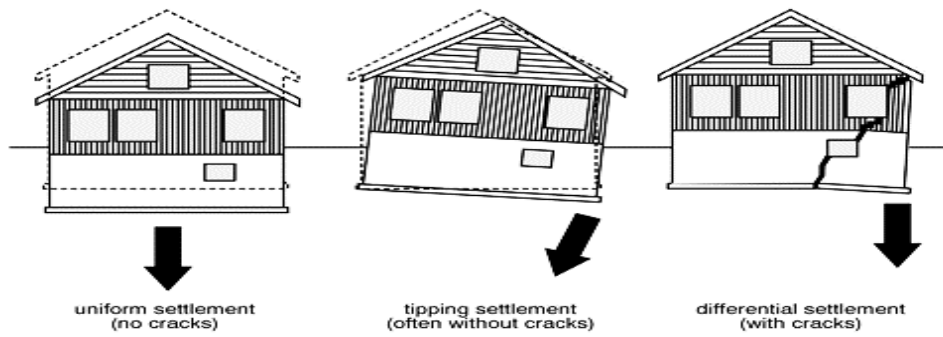
Following a November 21, 2015, site visit conducted by our Afghan partners, SIGAR analysts and engineers examined several photographs of health facility 1987 and found that the damage at the facility is substantial. Portions of the health facility's primary care center have large cracks throughout the foundation that could result in structural failure or collapse due to the extreme differential soil settlement around the facility or in the event of an earthquake (see Enclosure I). Differential settling occurs when a building's foundation settles unequally. Figure I shows the effect of differential settlement on a building.

¹ USAID's \$259.6 million Partnership Contracts for Health (PCH) program provided support for the operations of health facilities in 13 provinces throughout Afghanistan. That program began in July of 2008 and ended in June 2015. Immediately following the conclusion of the PCH program, USAID began providing funding to support the same health facilities through the World Bank-administered System Enhancement for Health Action in Transition (SEHAT) program.

² USAID, *Implementation Letter Number 43-01: the Ministry of Public Health System enhancement for Health System Enhancement for Health Action in Transition (SEHAT) Program: USAID agreement to support SEHAT*, January 15, 2014.

³ To encourage further Afghan cooperation with our site inspections in other provinces, and to protect sensitive identifying information of clinics, we are using the unique USAID facility identification number, rather than the facility names, to delineate facilities.

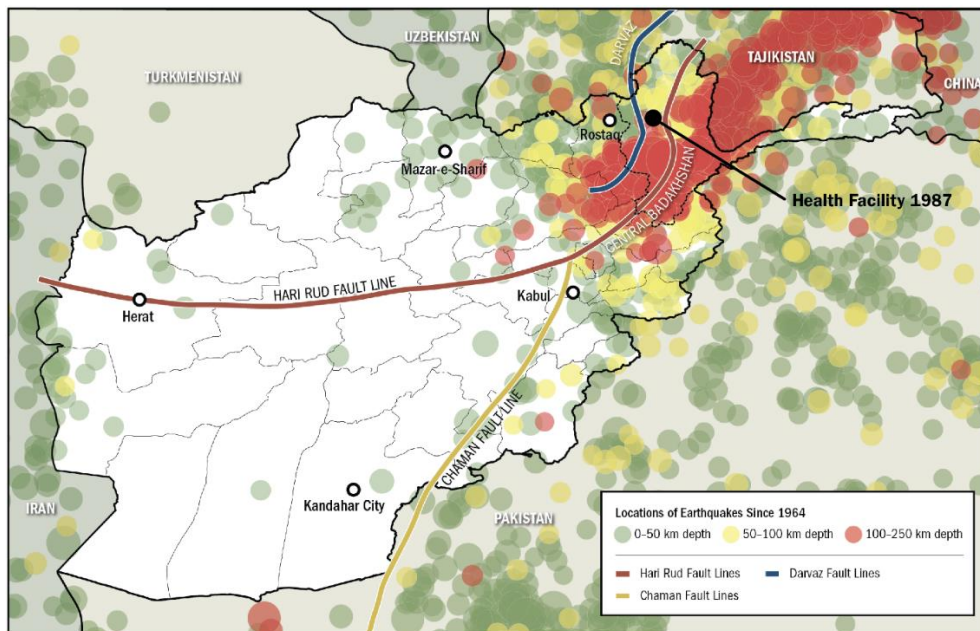
Figure 1 - Effects of Settlement on a Building



Source: American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI)

The differential settlement at the facility may have happened over time as the result of environmental conditions, such as flooding, frost, poor drainage, or earthquakes. Facility 1987, in western Badakhshan province, is in one of the most dangerous seismic zones in Afghanistan, between two major fault lines (the Central Badakhshan Fault Line and the Darvaz Fault Line) and is considered an earthquake high hazard area. In the past 4 months alone, Badakhshan province experienced two strong earthquakes.⁴ Figure 2 shows the location of facility 1987 and the location of earthquakes in Afghanistan from 1964 through 2004.

Figure 2 - Location of Earthquakes in Afghanistan



Source: U.S. Geologic Survey data, modified by SIGAR, showing the location of Earthquakes in Afghanistan from 1964 through 2004

⁴ On October 26, 2015, Badakhshan experienced a 7.5 magnitude earthquake. A second earthquake, on December 25, 2015, measuring 6.3 centered in Badakhshan and may have further exacerbated the damage. The second earthquake occurred after SIGAR's November 21, 2015, site visit.

Upon examining several photographs of health facility 1987, SIGAR engineers concluded its use should be curtailed because the structure has been compromised and can no longer carry the load of the building and occupants safely. SIGAR engineers also concluded it is highly likely that a large-amplitude ground motion from an earthquake could cause the soil presently supporting the foundation of the clinic to slide down the slope it is built upon, which would cause further damage or even the destruction of the facility.⁵

According to the most recent data available from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), 7,000 Afghans were killed by earthquakes between 1997 and 2007. At the time, USGS anticipated that “future large earthquakes, driven by ongoing active geologic processes in the region, will occur close to population centers and lifelines, with a consequent risk for greater casualties and damage.” Finally, USGS cautioned that “The seismic hazard must be considered in the siting, construction, and restoration of communities and facilities in Afghanistan.”⁶

SIGAR strongly urges USAID to immediately contact its partners in the SEHAT program (the World Bank and the Ministry of Public Health) and alert them to the damage at facility 1987 so corrective actions to the soil and surrounding terrain may occur as quickly as possible. Repairs can then be made to the building. SIGAR also urges USAID to contact its partners in the SEHAT program and recommend they examine all Ministry of Public Health facilities in the areas affected by the recent earthquakes and to make repairs as appropriate. Such actions would protect the lives and safety of medical facility staff and patients.

SIGAR received comments on this alert letter from USAID on February 28, 2016. USAID has informed the Ministry of Public Health and World Bank to the apparent structural damage at Health Facility 1987 in letters dated February 21, 2016. USAID comments are reproduced in full in Enclosure II.

We conducted this special project in Washington, D.C.; Badakhshan, Afghanistan; and Kabul, Afghanistan from November 2016 to February 2016, in accordance with SIGAR's quality control standards. These standards require that we carry out work with integrity, objectivity, and independence, and provide information that is factually accurate and reliable. For more information on the policies and procedures and quality control standards for conducting special project work, please see SIGAR's website (www.SIGAR.mil). SIGAR performed this special project under the authority of Public Law No. 110-181, as amended, and the Inspector General Act of 1978 and the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008. Should you or your staff have any questions about this project, please contact Mr. Matthew Dove, Director of Special Projects (Acting), at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Sincerely,



John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

⁵ See Enclosure 1, photos of clinic.

⁶ USGS, under the auspices of USAID, *Preliminary Earthquake Hazard Map of Afghanistan*, USGS Afghanistan Project Product No. 156, 2007, p. 1.

CC:

Donald L. "Larry" Sampler
Assistant Administrator for Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs
U.S. Agency for International Development

Mr. Herbert B. Smith
USAID Mission Director for Afghanistan

Encl: I-Photos of Health Facility 1987
II-USAID Response Letter to SIGAR

ENCLOSURE I: PHOTOS OF HEALTH FACILITY 1987

Photo 1 - Exterior of Health Facility 1987



Source: SIGAR, November 21, 2015

Note: Cracked foundation under window.

Photo 2 - Foundation of Health Facility 1987



Source: SIGAR, November 21, 2015

Photo 3 - Treatment Room of Health Facility 1987



Source: SIGAR, November 21, 2015

Photo 4 - Crack Running the Length of the Treatment Room in Health Facility 1987



Source: SIGAR, November 21, 2015

Photo 5 - Close-up of Cracked Floor in Treatment Room of Health Facility 1987



Source: SIGAR, November 21, 2015



USAID | AFGHANISTAN
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 28, 2016

TO: John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General for
Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR)

FROM: Herbert Smith, Mission Director

SUBJECT: Mission Response to Draft SIGAR Alert Letter titled
"Structural Damage at Health Facility 1987" (SIGAR
Alert Letter SP-113G)

REF: SIGAR Transmittal email dated 2/17/2016

USAID thanks SIGAR for alerting us to the structural damage at Health Facility 1987 and informed the Afghan Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) and the World Bank through an official letter dated February 21, 2016 of the situation.

As SIGAR notes in the alert letter, USAID has funded the World Bank-administered System Enhancement for Health Action in Transition (SEHAT) project. This project supports the MOPH's ability to deliver health services at Afghan medical facilities.

cc: U.S. Embassy/Kabul Coordination Directorate

Attachment: Copies of the letters to MoPH and World Bank