

## Afghanistan Update

### Standing Committee on National Defence (SCOND) Visit to Afghanistan

The Standing Committee on National Defence (SCOND) travelled to Afghanistan this month to visit various locations within Kandahar Province. Joint Task Force Commander Afghanistan, Brigadier-General Denis Thompson, along with the Representative of Canada in Kandahar, Elissa Golberg, hosted the Members of Parliament and provided an overview of security, development and governance operations in the Province of Kandahar.

The successful three day visit included meetings with District Councillors, Parliamentarians, the Afghan Minister of Defence, and President Hamid Karzai. It is through visits such as these that we are helping keep the lines of communication open between our governments.

The visit was also an important opportunity for the Members of Parliament to see the significant progress in southern Afghanistan and witness firsthand the hard work of our Canadian Forces members.

Thanks to the efforts of our Canadian Forces, the progress in Kandahar, most notably in security, governance, development and reconstruction, is truly impressive.

Recent progress includes:

- Electricity, which is now providing villages with light;
- Children are attending school;
- Teachers are being trained;
- There is better access to healthcare; and
- Village councils are being set up; and
- Development projects are underway, which include homes, grape-drying huts, irrigation canals, and roads.

These may be considered as small steps to some, but are in fact making a huge difference in the daily lives of Afghans. Rebuilding Afghanistan after decades of war is a long-term undertaking that requires patience and commitment.