

## **Authorities Defend Jirga Costs**

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Ten western countries and the United Nations contributed to these expenses - which average out to about 80,250 dollars for each of the 162 articles in the constitution.

The drafting and revision of the constitution, public information campaign and soliciting of public comment cost 7.5 million dollars, according to Dr Farouq Wardak, head of the constitution commission's secretariat.

The commission, which had an office in each of the 32 provinces, distributed 150,000 copies of the draft, published a monthly magazine about the process and put up posters to educate people.

It also administered both the registration of local representatives, who elected the 502 delegates to the gathering, and the elections themselves.

The Loya Jirga itself cost 5.5 million dollars, which included the complete reconstruction - to European standards - of the Polytechnic buildings where the assembly was held, Wardak said.

The gathering's operating costs - food and transport for the delegates, and electricity and heat for the buildings - was said by President Hamed Karzai to amount to 50,000 dollars a day.

Some delegates grumbled about the overall costs and wondered where all the money had gone.

Mohammad Asef Muhseni, a delegate appointed by Karzai who served on the coordination committee, suggested that there had been significant mismanagement of funds. He said he estimated that " 150,000 dollars daily was taken out of the pocket of this unlucky and hungry nation".

Wardak disagreed with this criticism, insisting that the work of the constitution commission was transparent. He said the cost of the Loya Jirga process would be justified if it brings about security and peace in the country.

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**Location:** [Afghanistan](#)

**Focus:** [Constitutional Loya Jirga, 2003](#)  
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