Habiba SARABI  
**Governor of Bamiyan, Afghanistan**

Dr. Habiba Sarabi (born 1956) is a hematologist, politician, and reformer of the post-Taliban reconstruction of Afghanistan. In 2005, she was appointed as governor of Bamiyan Province by President Hamid Karzai, becoming the first woman to ever be a governor of any province in the country. She previously served in Karzai's government as Minister of Women's Affairs as well as Minister of Culture and Education. Sarabi has been instrumental in promoting women's rights and representation and environment issues. She belongs to the ethnic Hazara people of Afghanistan. Her last name is sometimes spelled Sarobi.

Sarabi was born in Mazari Sharif and spent her youth traveling around the country with her father. She later moved to Kabul to attend high school and study medicine at university. After graduating, she was awarded a fellowship by the World Health Organization and moved to India to complete her studies in hematology.

During the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, Dr. Habiba and her children fled to Peshawar, Pakistan, but returned frequently in secret. Her husband stayed behind in Kabul to care for his family. She also worked underground as a teacher for girls, both secretly in Afghanistan and in refugee camps in Pakistan for Afghan refugees. In 1998, she joined the Afghan Institute of Learning and eventually became the General Manager of the entire organization. She was also the Vice President of Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan.

As governor, she has announced one of her focuses will be on tourism as a source of income. The province has historically been a source of Buddhist culture and was the location of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, the two ancient statues destroyed by the Taliban prior to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. However, Bamiyan continues to remain one of the poorest and most under-developed provinces of Afghanistan, with a litany of problems including high rates of illiteracy and poverty.

In 2008 Time Magazine included her in its list of Heroes of the Environment (2008), partly for her work in establishing the Band-e Amir National Park in Bamiyan.