

UNAMI Newsletter



United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

Newsletter - Issue 14

July 2011

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“ It is time to develop Iraq’s vision, policies, strategies and plan of action for youth based on the representative participation and leadership of youth, ”

Mr. Ad Melkert, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq

Security Council extends UNAMI mandate



Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ad Melkert, is welcomed by the United Nations Guard Unit at UNAMI headquarters in Baghdad. Photo: Rick Bajornas/UNAMI PIO

In Resolution 2001 adopted unanimously on 28 July 2011, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for another year, welcoming recent security improvements in the country while stressing the need for further progress on the humanitarian, human rights and political fronts.

The Resolution noted that Iraq’s security situation had improved “through concerted political and security efforts” and stressed that further advances will be made through meaningful political dialogue.

Council members urged the Government to continue to promote human rights, including by supporting the country’s Independent High Commission for Human Rights and by develop-

ing strategies to ensure that women can play a much greater decision-making role in society.

Members also called upon the Government to continue its ongoing cooperation with the Kuwaiti Government and meet its outstanding international obligations.

The Resolution is in line with the latest report of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the work of UNAMI. The report summarizes key political developments, as well as regional and international events concerning Iraq since his last report, dated 31 March 2011.

In the July report, the Secretary-General expresses concern that nearly seven months after the Parliament approved the current Government, and 16 months after Iraq’s parliamentary elections,

there are outstanding issues relating to government formation, particularly appointments to key security posts. "I call on the political leaders of Iraq to put aside their differences and move swiftly to agree on the way forward," Ban Ki-Moon says.

Recalling that considerable challenges still need to be addressed to ensure that fundamental rights and freedoms are protected in Iraq, the UN chief expresses support for ongoing preparations to create the Independent High Commission for Human Rights.

The report also notes that although the status of Kirkuk and other disputed internal territories remain divisive issues, the Secretary-General is encouraged by recent efforts on the part of key stakeholders to find common ground.

Earlier in the month, on 19 July, the Secretary-General's Special Representative

for Iraq, Ad Melkert, briefed the Council members on the situation in the country. He addressed Iraq's internal affairs with regard to humanitarian, human rights and political matters and touched on pending issues between Iraq and Kuwait.

"In some important aspects, Iraq is at the heart of fundamental changes in the region. The Iraqi system of government incorporates a power-sharing Constitution, guaranteeing the participation of women and minorities and nurturing a culture of ongoing constitutional debate," said Melkert in his [speech](#), highlighting major gains made and challenges ahead.

"Regular elections have taken place, conducted in line with international standards. While drawn out, government formation has indeed progressed. Meanwhile, the Parliament is taking an increasingly important role in decision-

making. And in a departure from decades of authoritarian regime, negotiations between all parties have become the predominant feature of political life," he added.

"Whilst many challenges remain to in-grain human rights and democracy fundamentals into the minds and acts of all stakeholders, it is hard to see that the change could be reversed," he noted.

"The change, however, has come at an extreme cost, still visible and tangible on a daily basis in the victims and the damage despite eight years that have gone by. Developments in the region are showing that change must, and eventually will, come primarily from within," he added.

"For the foreseeable future, the United Nations will be well placed to remain a trusted partner in this endeavour," Melkert concluded.

World Population Day

Census takes forefront as Iraq marks World Population Day



In an event marking World Population Day on 11 July 2011 in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, Ad Melkert receives Iraq's 2010 National Population Commission report on the state of population in the country. Photo: Sarmad Al-Safy/ UNAMI PIO

Iraq joined the world on 11 July 2011 in marking World Population Day with the release of a report by Iraq's National Population Commission. The date, which serves as a time to celebrate humanity and diversity, was celebrated in Iraq at events in Baghdad and Erbil.

This year represents a milestone in that the world's population is soon expected to reach 7 billion. While poverty, inequality and increased stress on resources represent major challenges, the world is more interconnected than ever before, creating enormous possibilities.

The report, entitled "The State of the Population in Iraq 2010," depicts a preliminary representation of the demographic situation in Iraq. It serves to pave the way for a comprehensive objective study that constitutes a reliable, scientific, analytical and authoritative

base on the size, structure and distribution of the population, thus enhancing knowledge of the vital interrelation between demographic issues.

In Baghdad, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki, UNAMI Special Representative for the Secretary General (SRSG) for Iraq Ad Melkert and Iraqi Minister of Planning Ali Shukri addressed senior Government officials and representatives from UN agencies and the international community on the topic. Most notably this included highlighting the need for a population policy, the importance of completing a census, women's empowerment issues, reproductive health, and youth and adolescent needs.

"Today is a welcome occasion to highlight the new stage that Iraq has embarked upon after so many years of suffering and devastation... It is the

stage of counting the people that make up Iraq: counting the numbers as much as counting the aspirations. In order to deliver services accordingly the one cannot be without the other," said SRSG Melkert in a speech to the group. He added that while a 2007 figure placed the country's population at 29.6 million, the number remained in question as to whether it was derived for the country or broken down from the regions.

Mr. Melkert went on to discuss the importance of reducing poverty and gender inequality, noting that the two issues are linked irrevocably with population growth. "If properly addressed, it can result in the empowerment and participation of women and girls as agents of change, and as a consequence lead to the acceleration of human, social and economic growth," he said.

A similar event, headed by Kurdistan Minister of Planning Ali Al-Sindi, took place simultaneously in Erbil.

In conjunction with UNAMI, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has been working in Iraq since 2005. In the past three years, UNFPA has implemented a US\$ 7 million budget to provide technical assistance to the Central Statistical Organization of Iraq to assist them in conducting a nationwide census.

The census is to provide the Government with the information to help leaders and policy-makers to make informed decisions about the needs on the ground to reduce poverty and hunger, advance education, address health and gender equality issues and to effectively respond to humanitarian crises.

Youth Report

Address the needs of Iraqi youth says Melkert



Young Iraqi students in the village of Halshoo, located in the Suleimania Governorate of Iraq's Kurdistan region, enjoy a break during a mine risk education session, a summer programme implemented by the General Directorate of Mine Action and funded by UNICEF. Photo: Bikem Ekberzade/ UNAMI PIO

"It is time to develop Iraq's vision, policies, strategies and plan of action for youth based on the representative participation and leadership of youth," said Ad Melkert, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq.

The comment, delivered in Baghdad by the SRSG on 16 July, came at the launch of Iraq's Youth Status Analytical Report, an event which attracted more than 300 participants, including some 200 youth representatives. The report analyzes the needs and priorities of Iraqi youth in the areas of education, employment, health, access to media and technology, sports, security, political and civil society participation, and poverty.

The UNAMI head noted that a number of youth development indicators are of concern. Those enrolled in secondary education stands at 21 per cent, illiteracy rates are staggering and unemployment among those between the ages of 15 and 29 exceeds 57 per cent. Further, 42.8 per cent of

women ages 16 to 18 are married, leading to a high risk of infant and maternal mortality.

Calling upon the Iraqi decision-makers "to listen to the needs of young people and respond to their legitimate demands and expectations," SRS G Melkert outlined a series of recommendations.

First, there should be policy targets and

timelines set geared toward improving the economic and social prospects for young people. Second, a widely representative "Youth Dialogue Platform," with participants between 18 and 25 years of age, should be created for the purpose of holding regular consultations with the Government. Last, a "Jobs for Youth" programme should be formed with the objective of leading to a month-by-month increase

in the number of young people provided with a job, training or self-employment opportunities.

The report was compiled by the Baghdad and Al-Rafidain Universities with the assistance of the the Ministry of Planning and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Human Rights

Working towards the establishment of a new human rights body for Iraq

By UNDP Iraq



Participants discuss the selection criteria for commissioners during a workshop held on 1-6 July 2011, in Beirut, Lebanon.
Photo: UNDP - Iraq

A national, independent human rights body serves as a fundamental institution for advancing open, democratic governance by undertaking the promotion and protection of human rights as required by the State's international human rights obligations. The Government of Iraq is in the process of establishing such an independent institution, to be known as the Independent High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR).

A Committee of Experts (COE) was ap-

pointed in 2009 by the Iraqi Parliament, pursuant to the IHCHR Law No 53. The COE has been tasked to develop and implement a transparent and open procedure for appointing the commissioners of the IHCHR and to assist the Government in drawing up regulations that will govern the role, duties and operation of the Commission once it is established.

Due to the drawn-out government formation process following the 2010 general election, the work of the Committee was suspended. However, in the

first quarter of 2011, the COE's work was endorsed by the Parliament and it commenced the process of selecting commissioners in May 2011.

The UN, represented by UNAMI's Human Rights Office (HRO) / Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), is supporting the Government in the establishment of this critical body by providing technical advisory support, institutional development and capacity building to the Secretariat and COE to support the establishment of the selection framework for the commissioners.

On 1-6 July 2011, OHCHR/UNAMI HRO and UNDP Iraq organized a workshop for 20 members of the COE and the Secretariat to examine international best practices on the processes for selecting commissioners and establishing human rights commissions. This workshop was the first meeting to bring together the COE and the Secretariat.

During the event, Mr. Greg Hassom, a human rights expert from the Asia Pacific Forum, presented a number of regional case-studies on successfully established human rights commissions. Participants discussed administrative procedures and methodologies to standardize the work of the Experts Selection Committee and the Secretariat.

In addition, they discussed a variety of methodologies for selecting the commissioners that adhere to international best

practice standards and which will be as open and as transparent as possible.

The workshop provided a forum for the Secretariat and the COE to discuss and outline the commissioners' selection mechanism and the UN will continue to provide technical and operational support to assist the work of the Committee.

"UNDP Iraq and UNAMI HRO's support provided an opportunity for participants to compare the Iraqi experience with

best practices and other regional experiences. The Committee will take into account these practices to formulate the final recommendation for selection," said Dr. Salim Al-Jabouri, Chairman of the COE, stressing that the UN's assistance is essential at this stage. He also advocated for continued UN support once the commissioners are appointed and the Human Rights Commission is established.

To date, the Secretariat has received an

impressive 3,085 applications for 11 commissioner positions. The forum was an important step in the process of ensuring the implementation of an open, transparent and effective selection process which will, in turn, support the establishment of a human rights institution in Iraq that will comply with international standards.

For more information, please contact Nahid Hussein, Project Manager, UNDP Iraq: nahid.hussein@undp.org

Humanitarian Assistance

UNHCR assists hundreds of displaced Iraqis along Iranian border

By *Hélène Caux, UNHCR Iraq*



Displaced Iraqi children in Gojar, a village located along the Iraq-Iran border. Photo: H. Caux/ UNHCR/2011

Displaced people and local authorities told the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that shelling along the Iraq-Iran border has been taking place for years. "This has been happening every year during the same season for many years," said Mohamed, a displaced Iraqi from the country's Kurdistan region, who had to flee his village in Qaladiza district, Sulaymaniah Governorate, at least seven times in the past five years. He found refuge with his family some kilometres away, in Gojar.

"The difference this time is that the shelling is reaching our villages. Before this,

the shells landed more in the surrounding area," he said, worried that he would not be able to return to his village to harvest his fields and take care of his 30 goats.

Most of the displaced earn a living from farming and rely on their harvests and livestock as their primary source of income. Some have lost orchards and beehives due to the shelling. "We don't want to be dependent on others, but we now have no choice," said Mohamed. "It is impossible to return permanently to our homes at this time."

Some are also worried about their children's education when the school term be-

gins in September. "We just need stability for our children," said 28-year-old Aveen. "We are tired of constant displacement."

Rasul said he was watching television in his home in the village of Suney, located three kilometres from Gojar, when a rocket hit the next room. "It was pure luck that nobody was hurt," the 56-year-old said, while showing UNHCR the damage and shell fragments. "My grandchildren were playing in another room at the time," he adds.

School buildings and several houses in Suney were also damaged by shelling and several civilians were killed and injured along the border following cross-border shelling.

The Iraqi Government, UNHCR, and partner organizations have been helping hundreds of the country's civilians recently displaced by these attacks.

At least 845 Iraqi civilians, mostly women and children from 175 families, fled these border areas in mid-July. Many of whom have since taken up shelter in two settlements in the mountainous Gojar area of Sulaymaniyah Governorate, located in Iraq's Kurdistan region.

UNHCR has distributed tents and plastic sheeting to this group of displaced persons, while other humanitarian actors have distributed food, mattresses, iron beds, water filtering machines, stoves and kitchen sets. UNICEF will also build up emergency temporary latrines and bathing spaces.

Local authorities report that an additional

100 families from seven villages in the Zharaw border district had fled their homes following the July shelling and have found refuge in Pirdi Hosu. On 27 July, UNHCR provided tents and plastic sheeting to the group while additional aid agencies distributed food and other relief items.

"The temperature has already reached 47 degrees Celsius and it will rise even further in August," explained UNHCR field officer Kamaran Ali who has been supervising the

delivery of tents in Gojar. "Together with local authorities, we are trying to make sure they have shelter from the sun and heat during the day and have routine access to clean water."

Water is trucked in every day by local authorities from the nearby city of Qaladiza and ambulances and medical staff visit the settlements when needed.

These are not the only areas UNHCR is

working in, there are also border regions that are being addressed by the Agency. Several hundred families are reportedly displaced in the towns of Haji Omran and Schoman in the Erbil Governorate, with many staying with relatives or host families. UNHCR is prepared to assist in this next challenge.

For more information, please contact H el ene Caux, Senior External Relations Officer, UNHCR Iraq: caux@unhcr.org

Development

Iraq launches groundwater database to reduce uncertainty in country's water supply

By Caroline Fisher and Christopher Maroshegyi, UNESCO Iraq



Representatives of the Government, academia and the international community at the launch of Iraq's first groundwater database on 3 July 2011. Photo: Sarmad Al-Safy/ UNAMI PIO

The Government of Iraq reasserted its commitment to tackle the ongoing water crisis on 3 July as it completed the first stage of a national initiative to map the country's underground water resources.

Representatives of the Government, academia and the international community recently met at a high-level gathering in Baghdad to inaugurate the country's first centralized groundwater database and commission the next phase of the multi-million dollar initiative led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Government efforts to address drought and other complex water-related issues have been hampered in recent years by a lack of reliable and up-to-date information on underground water. While the water flowing in the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers—the country's primary sources of water—is well understood, existing knowledge of groundwater in Iraq is considered incomplete, outdated and fragmented to provide a basis for strategic water planning.

In 2010, UNESCO Iraq launched a nationwide initiative to integrate the country's groundwater data into a centralized database and help the Government take stock of groundwater supplies. The results of

the first phase were delivered during the UNESCO-sponsored event, entitled "National Validation Seminar for the Advanced Hydrogeological Survey for Sustainable Groundwater Development in Iraq (Phase I)."

A new National Hydrogeological Resources Assessment Network and Database for Iraq, known as "geoFIA" (www.geo-fia.org), was unveiled at the meeting. Designed as an interactive web-based platform, it will be used by Iraqi experts to collect, update and analyze information on groundwater on a continuous basis. GeoFIA is expected to underpin water master planning and bolster scientific research in the country.

The inauguration of geoFIA also marks the transition towards launching the next stage of the program, a two-year, US\$ 10 million initiative that will map Iraq's aquifers and develop a more complete understanding of water below the earth's surface.

In his opening address, Mr. Thamer Al-Ghadhban, Chairman of the Prime Minister Advisory Commission and co-host of the national seminar, emphasized that a stable and safe supply of groundwater is instrumental to the national security of Iraq. Providing decision-makers with facilitated up-to-date and transparent scientific data will help encourage the Government to embrace a modernized and collaborative system for the management of groundwater resources. Mr. Thamer called on the Government to engage the international community and to finance joint projects that address priority issues such as water.

H.E. Jana Hybaskova, Ambassador of the European Union to Iraq, praised the “efforts of the Government and UNESCO for an integrated groundwater management scheme. We intend to continue our support towards protecting Iraq’s water resources. Our priority is to build the necessary ca-

capacity for sustainable management of the increasingly scarce resource water.” The EU had provided the funds (US\$ 675,000) for the first phase of the UNESCO-led initiative.

The national seminar was attended by other high-level dignitaries, representatives and experts from the Ministry of Water

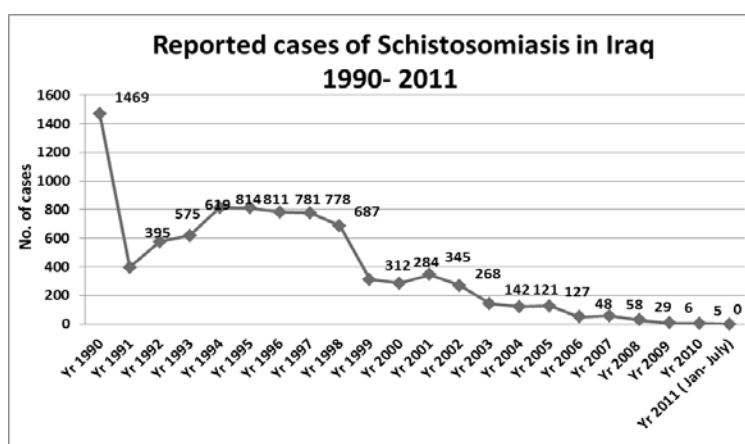
Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Planning, and Ministry of Higher Education.

For more information, please contact Casey Walther, UNESCO Natural Sciences: c.walther@unesco.org

Health

WHO: moving towards a schistosomiasis-free Iraq by 2013

By Ruba Hikmat, WHO-Iraq



Schistosomiasis remains one of the world’s most prevalent diseases. Despite more than a century of efforts to control it, including the introduction of highly effective drugs in the 1980s, the disease remains. More than 207 million of the world’s most vulnerable people living in communities without access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation are currently infected

with the disease and more than 700 million people worldwide are at risk of infection in 74 endemic countries.

Schistosomiasis, also known as bilharziasis or snail fever, is a disease caused by parasitic worms. It occurs in contaminated fresh water when the flatworms, of the genus Schistosoma, penetrate the skin of those in contact with the water. The result is a

chronic inflammatory disorder associated with disabling anemia and under-nutrition, as well as poor performance in school and at work. Although it has a low mortality rate, it is the second most socioeconomically devastating parasitic disease after malaria.

In Iraq, schistosomiasis has been on the decline. In the early 1990s the estimated number of reported cases was 1,469. The Government, with the assistance of the World Health Organization (WHO), has moved toward eliminating the disease through a prevention and control programme in high-risk areas.

The Schistosomiasis Programme has entailed a combination of drug treatment, water management, snail control (through habitat modification, irrigation changes, and the use of molluscicidal sprays), and the control or treatment of sewage. As a result of these efforts, the number stood at just five in 2010 and in 2011 there has yet to be a case.

WHO will continue to work with the Government towards eradicating the disease, with a commitment to reaching a schistosomiasis-free Iraq by 2013

For More information, please contact Dr. Buthaina GHANEM, Epidemiologist, WHO-Iraq: ghanemb@irq.emro.who.int

Urban Development

Iraq land policy focus of workshop

By Dyfed Aubrey, UN-HABITAT Iraq

Building on the influential Berlin Statement of March 2011, which highlighted the importance on managing and accessing land effectively in Iraq, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) Iraq Programme organized a workshop in Amman from 3 to 5 July 2011 for the Working Group in Land Reform. The objective was

to create a plan of action that would turn the Berlin vision into a National Land Policy for Iraq.

The three-day forum aimed specifically at achieving consensus on recommendations for land policy development and raising capacity development for Iraqi participants on issues related to land policies formulation, engagement of stakeholders and the connection these measures have on other national policies.

The event helped expose participants to team-building through discussions around contentious and difficult land issues. The

meeting also introduced key lessons learnt that can be applied to Iraq from an international experience as presented by UN-HABITAT’s consultants.

The workshop was attended by the Working Group which is comprised of senior Iraqi Government officials from those ministries responsible for delivering an effective Land Policy for Iraq and ensuring that the benefits for Iraq and its citizens are maximised.

For further information, please contact Mr. Dyfed Aubrey, Land and Housing Expert, UN-HABITAT: dyfed.aubrey@unhabitat.org

Study to estimate burden of tuberculosis in Iraq

By Dr. Sevil Huseynova, WHO - Iraq



World Health Organization staff examine tuberculosis cards during their June visit to Azadi hospital in Duhuk, located in Iraq's Kurdistan region. Photo: WHO - Iraq

Estimating the burden of tuberculosis (TB) in Iraq was the focus of a World Health Organization (WHO) - Iraq workshop held in Erbil, in Iraq's Kurdistan region, from 29 May to 2 June 2011.

The National Tuberculosis Control Program (NTP) of the Ministry of Health of

Iraq, with the technical support of WHO-Iraq, is now in the final stage of field work for its one year capture TB study in eight selected governorates in the country.

Affecting 16,000 people every year, tuberculosis is a major public health problem in the country. Despite cases of TB

decreasing from 2002 to 2007, it has been on the rise again. Among the reasons for this is that non-NTP public and private sectors are not fully engaged in surveillance and have poor referral and notification to NTP.

This study aims to involve all NTP and non-NTP facilities to estimate the burden of all TB cases in Iraq in 2011. The field work involves gathering TB data from all non-NTP private and public facilities in eight selected governorates (Duhuk, Sulamaniya, Basrah, Misan, Wasid, Najaf, Diwaniyah). The data collectors at the district level monitor the participating doctors and laboratories on a weekly basis through supervisory visits, followed by cross-referencing registers and data.

The mission concluded that the study protocol is fully understood by the responsible focal persons in the eight governorates and correctly implemented and will help Iraq in policy decisions and in measuring the impact of TB Control activities and progress towards WHO Millennium Development Goals.

For more information, please contact Dr. Sevil Huseynova, WHO - Iraq: huseynovas@irq.emro.who.int

Food & Agriculture

Iraqi Government, FAO to improve agricultural sector

Mohammad Raafi, FAO- Iraq

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is focused on increasing the potential of the agricultural sector in Iraq through capacity development and job creation.

One of the primary ways this is carried out is through the Iraq Agricultural Growth and Employment Generation Support Program (I-AGES), an investment program. The initiative, supported by the Government and FAO, consists of two phases. The first addresses urgent analytical and

diagnostic work in relation to agricultural growth and rural employment, while the second phase formulates a national agricultural policy and strategy.

Significant progress has been made in developing political support for the project. This has fostered consensus over the need for economic diversification, to secure the future welfare of the Iraqi population and the important role that agriculture plays.

In June 2011, the first Ministerial meeting of the Iraq Agricultural Growth and Employment Generation Support program was jointly convened in Beirut, Lebanon, by the Government of Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture and FAO. The forum, attended by senior Iraqi officials from the Ministries of Agricul-

ture, Planning and Water Resources, acknowledged the central role agriculture performs in achieving economic diversification, employment and prosperity in Iraq.

The delegates agreed on the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Task Force, a Policy and Strategy Support Unit and a steering committee to provide the management structures necessary to oversee and facilitate work throughout the lifespan of the I-AGES program and beyond.

For more information, please contact Mohammad Raafi Hossain, Programme Officer, FAO-Iraq Programme: mohammad.raafi@faoiraq.org

Dohuk solid waste master plan finalized

A master plan to improve the management of solid waste in the Dohuk Governorate was finalized on 30 June 2011. The initiative, a component of a US\$ 10 million UNICEF project funded by the European Union, is designed to develop Iraq's water and sanitation sector.

On average the Governorate, with a population of roughly 970,000, generates 1,000 tons of garbage a day—an amount more than 30 per cent higher than international standards.

The Solid Waste Master Plan provides a blueprint to guide and coordinate the efforts of decision-makers, managers, solid waste service providers, special waste generators, community representatives, developmental partners, and the general public, to address all solid waste needs of Dohuk Governorate.

The objective is to clean all cities and communities in the Governorate over the next five years, including closing over 200 illegal landfills; establishing three official landfills in densely populated locations within the next 5-10 years; and, generating electricity from solid waste within 10-20 years.

As part of the overall three year project, UNICEF has already completed a similar solid waste master plan in Basra governorate and is currently developing solid waste plans in the governorates of Anbar, Thi qar, Sulimaniyah, and Erbil.

Ten-year national nutrition strategy revamp at hand



Staff at the Ministry of Health monitor the growth of an Iraqi child in Baghdad. Photo: Iraqi Ministry of Health/Baghdad

The Iraqi Ministry of Health has requested UN agencies (WHO and UNICEF) support and help develop a comprehensive national nutritional strategy and plan of action for 10 years (2012-2021). The plan is to cover various nutrition related areas such as policies, maternal nutrition strategies, obesity control, school meals, people with special needs, food security and safety and micronutrient deficiencies.

The draft of the strategy was facilitated by WHO international experts and developed during a meeting that brought together experts from the Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF in coordination with the World Food Programme, on 24-26 July 2011 in Erbil.

The strategy serves as a way forward for stronger partnerships within the nutrition sector and between nutrition and other sectors and ministries. The shared goal is to improve the nu-

tritional status among all age groups, thereby contributing to an overall improvement in their survival, growth and development.

New UNHCR Representative takes up her post in Baghdad

The new representative of the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) for the Iraq operation, Ms. Claire Bourgeois, arrived in Baghdad in early July. Ms Bourgeois, a Belgian national, has been working with UNHCR for the past 17 years, including in Afghanistan, Chad, Kosovo, Albania, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and most recently in Yemen where she was UNHCR representative.

Ms. Bourgeois, a medical doctor by profession, was one of the founders of Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) in Belgium in the early 1980s. She worked for MSF in Thailand, Kenya and Belgium and brings to the Iraq operation years of experience working with refugees and internally displaced persons.

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List of UN Acronyms

There are 16 UN organisations, programmes, agencies and funds working in Iraq. They are the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO).

The UN Agencies at Work

Photos by Bikem Ekberzade

The UN children agency (UNICEF) has been working with partners in northern Iraq delivering Mine Awareness Education in schools since 2005. More than 15,000 children have benefited from these summer courses, 600 within 2011.

The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative was launched by World Health Organization and UNICEF in 1991 to implement practices that protect, promote and support breast-feeding. There are 32 hospitals enrolled in the initiative across Iraq. UNICEF has been operational in the country since 1983.

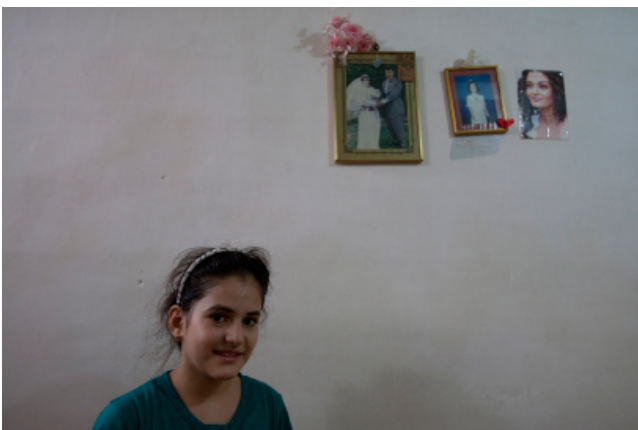


Ashawa, Dohuk Governorate, Kurdistan region of Iraq -- A student from Ashawa Primary School, one of the beneficiaries of the UNICEF-supported Mine Risk Education Summer programme in Ashawa village. The initiative is implemented by the General Directorate of Mine Action and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency and funded by UNICEF. The programme runs through the long summer holiday, offering children a nice alternative in education.



Ahmedi, Dohuk Governorate, Kurdistan region of Iraq -- A mother and her baby in Ahmedi hospital where UNICEF is implementing the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) and training the staff. UNICEF's work across Iraq aims to support the Government to develop child-friendly policies, build the capacity of institutions that deliver essential services to children, and convene all duty bearers to realize the full rights of Iraqi children.

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) provides cash assistance to refugee families once a year based on a needs assessment basis. In Erbil, these funds are distributed through UNHCR's Protection Assistance Center, which is managed in coordination with Public Aid Organization, the agency's implementing partner in the region. In 2011, 133 refugee families benefited from this programme.



Girdachal, Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan region of Iraq -- Absalam Abdulaziz's family has been taking refuge in Girdachal, a northern sub-district of Erbil since they fled Iran in 1998. Andami, a member of Absalam's family, suffers a disability that makes her family eligible for UNHCR's cash assistance programme.



Girdachal, Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan region of Iraq -- Perwana Abdullah Muhammed Nazhad has been a refugee in Girdachal since her family fled Iran in 1998. Her husband's disability makes the family eligible for cash assistance provided by UNHCR's cash assistance programme.