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“Peace and development go hand in hand and they are a prerequisite for a better and brighter future. The young people of Iraq, who represent over half the population of the country and its future leaders, need to be enabled and empowered to actively contribute in the shaping of Iraq's future”

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

Peace message for Iraq illuminates Erbil Citadel



The Peace Day slogan put up at the Erbil Citadel. Photo: UNAMI PIO/ Laila Shamji

As part of the world wide celebration of the International Day of Peace which falls on 21 September each year, UNAMI raised and illuminated on 19 September a fluorescent sign of the 2010 peace day slogan *Peace=Future: The Math is Easy* in Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

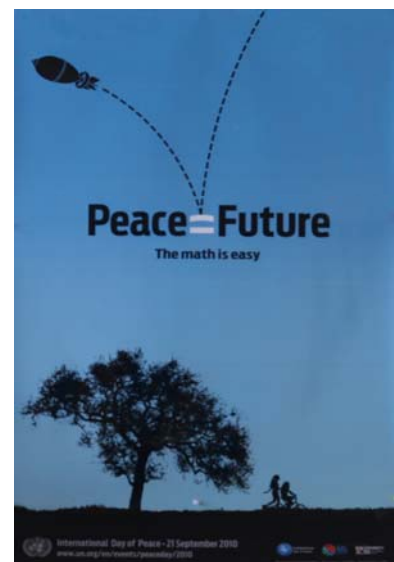
Scripted and illuminated in the Kurdish language, the peace message sat against the backdrop of the Erbil Citadel in the vicinity of the newly landscaped Shar Park and the city's bustling local bazaars. Large flex banners of the same message in English, Arabic and Kurdish were also affixed to the scaffolding on the walls of the Citadel to draw the public's attention to the importance of this year's peace day slogan and its global theme of *Youth for Peace and Development*.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSRG), Mr. Ad Melkert, welcomed the raising of the Peace Day slogan near the Erbil Citadel, renowned as one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the world.

On 30 June of this year, SRSRG Ad Melkert participated in the foundation stone laying ceremony which marked the second phase of the implementation of a project in which UNESCO is assisting the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalization in carrying out

urgent preventive works on ten of the Citadel's most unstable buildings. UNESCO is also working with national authorities in their efforts to enlist the site in the World Heritage List.

UNAMI collaborated closely with the offices of the Governor of Erbil and the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalization in implementing this activity.■



United Nations in Iraq celebrates the International Day of Peace



DSRSG McNab and President Mas'ud Barzani at the International Peace Day celebration in Erbil. September 21, 2010. Photo: UNAMI / Waseem Wastin

McNab while further emphasising the importance of "building a future where common ground is sought and common good is put before individual differences".

Representing civil society organisations, Ms. Mahabad Qaradaghi, an Iraqi author, journalist and a poet, stressed the need to establish and foster peace throughout Iraq. She stated that Iraqi youth and women "recognize more and more the value of peace and democracy. They are a key pillar in Iraqi society and must be empowered as messengers to promote civil rights and democracy in the country".

During the ceremony, white doves were released and peace songs were performed by the United Nations Fijian Contingent choir. Youth members from the Rajan Youth Centre and the Asuda Cultural Centre in Erbil performed a cultural dance and traditional music.

The event was organised by UNAMI in close cooperation with the office of the Governor of Erbil and the Department of Foreign Relations. ■

Represented by Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG), Ms. Christine McNab, UNAMI held a peace gathering on 21 September at the Sami Abdulrahman Park in Erbil with the participation of the President of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Mr. Mas'ud Barzani, the Governor of Erbil, Mr. Nawzad Hadi, Speaker of the Kurdistan Iraq Parliament, Mr. Kamal Kirkuki, Members of Parliament, the diplomatic corps and representatives from civil society organizations and United Nations staff.

"We hope that together with peace loving people, everywhere in the world there will be peace and prosperity" said President Barzani speaking at the ceremony. He also expressed hope that peace and stability will prevail throughout Iraq.

Governor Hadi welcomed commemorating the International Day of Peace in the city of Erbil and hoped to see more such events organized in the Kurdistan region and throughout the country. He also noted "the prevailing peace and stability in the Kurdistan Region" and expressed hope that "peace extends to the whole country".

Hosting this event for the first time in Iraq, UNAMI DSRSG McNab stressed the need to foster "peace that brings development, prosperity and wellbeing". "Peace is the greatest gift we can give our children", added DSRSG



Release of white doves at the celebration of the International Peace Day in Erbil. Sept 21, 2010. Photo: UNAMI PIO / Waseem Wastin

Photo Gallery



DSRSG McNab delivers a speech at the International Peace Day celebration in Erbil. Sept 21, 2010. Photo: UNHCR / Helene Caux



Celebration of the International Peace Day in Erbil. Sept 21, 2010. Photo: UNAMI PIO / Waseem Wastin



President Mas'ud Barzani gives a speech for International Peace Day in Erbil. Sept 21, 2010. Photo: UNHCR / Helene Caux

A survivor's answer to violence: help Iraqi youth build peace in Iraq



A football team in Baghdad. Photo: Amal Association

By Randa Jamal, UNAMI PIO

Rania Hadi, a 24 year-old Iraqi young woman, is a miracle survivor of one of Baghdad's horrendous bombings in April of 2006. As soon as she recovered from the serious injuries that left her on a wheelchair for an entire year, she joined the

Iraqi Amal [Hope] Association that helped her, together with relief organizations, undertake medical treatment in Jordan. Rania has since been involved in a wide range of activities undertaken by the Association throughout Iraq, including combating all forms of violence and discrimination, promotion of the culture of human rights and human security and training courses for women, children and youth so that they can participate effectively in public life.

Rania participated in many activities of the Association but the one initiative she cherishes the most is the organization of the first soccer game in 2009 under the slogan *Through Peace, we build our country and solve crises* between youth from two Baghdad communities that had contentious relations. "Soccer is very popular in Iraq and there is nothing better than a friendly sports competition to help people realize what peace would mean for all

Iraqis. The years of conflict in the country deprived us from enjoying the simplest pleasures in life", Rania said. "The seed we planted had borne fruit and we are still organizing soccer games for these two communities and, more importantly, the youth involved have succeeded in building strong friendships and have been active ambassadors for the cause of peace and reconciliation within their respective communities", Rania added.

"It is a simple initiative but one that helps my people cherish the gift of life and work together to build a peaceful Iraq where all Iraqis can simply enjoy a game, sit in cafe, go to school or to their workplace without fear and running the risk of being a victim of a terrorist attack. Surrendering to terror is not an option we can afford", Rania said with the determination she hopes she can instill in Iraqi youth. ■

Championing for peace in Kirkuk, Iraq



Kirkuk youth singing for peace at the championship event. Photo: UNAMI PIO / Waseem Wastin

By Waseem Wastin, UNAMI PIO

Under the theme of *Love and Peaceful coexistence is the basis for peace in Kirkuk*, a one-month youth sports and education programme was organized in Kirkuk and came to a close on 21 August 2010,

in the presence of students, parents and the community at large. A festive ceremony was held to celebrate the end of an exciting, successful and vibrant programme aiming to promote and educate the youth on values of tolerance, peaceful existence and unity among all ethnic and religious groups in the city.

Organised by the Evangelical Church in Kirkuk, and held annually for the past five years, this year's event was remarkably significant as 300 children between the ages of 5 and 16 years of age participated in the programme. With guidance and dedication from 40 trained volunteers, these children represented the Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen and Christian ethnic groups. Pastor Haitham Jazrawi, in his opening remarks said, "Our children are valuable for us, and they are the future. Tolerance, justice and love among brothers and sisters is necessary for peace and prosperity in Kirkuk, and indeed for Iraq".

Amidst an atmosphere of joy, laughter and harmony, various activities including sports tournaments, skits, poetry and story-telling and educational debates on the themes of peace, security, development and reconstruction were organised. The children learned the value of unity and tolerance by working in teams. Through active participation, they engaged in inspiring debates on how peace, education and security can aid in development and increase opportunities. Some students expressed their hopes of becoming engineers, teachers, doctors and nurses "so that we can help the sick, the poor, and the elderly and build our country. We will return next year with more ideas to share with the friends we have made here today". ■

A little peace picnic

By Sabah Abdulrahman, UNAMI PIO

A dozen young men and women from various civil society organizations initiated a one-day picnic for hundreds of internally displaced people in Bastasen Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp near Qaladzae town, northwest Sulaymaniya province of Iraq's Kurdistan Region, in July 2010. The activists took a large tent, pots of traditional Kurdish *yaprakh* food, fruits and vegetables enough for the entire community, boxes of colouring pencils for the children and ideas about peace and its necessity for development to discuss with the elders and the youth alike.

As the tent was set up with help from the welcoming young IDPs, the children lined up to receive colouring pencils and drawing notebooks. The pictures they drew illustrated vivid memories of burnt orchards and destroyed houses, but also memories of the safe haven that their villages were, further expressing hope that their homes would be restored as the big playgrounds they used to be. The drawings were collected and mounted inside the tent, with the youngest artist

officially declaring the exhibition open by cutting a ribbon amid applause from encouraging parents who seemed to have just realised how talented their children were.

Over the simple but hearty lunch that was served, the IDP community, youth and elderly, men and women, openly engaged in discussions about peace and candidly expressed their views on rehabilitation, development and what they need to enjoy a brighter future.

"We wanted to give a chance to the IDP community to be heard, we wanted them to know that their views matter and their voices need to be heard, we wanted the children to feel like children and enjoy a day of fun" said



IDP children depict memories of burnt orchards, destroyed houses, and a safe haven that was their village. Photo: Civil Society Initiative

Namo Sharif, one of the organizers of the picnic.

By sunset, the civil society activists left the camp with the promise to return for another visit and to bring with them *biryani* – a traditional Kurdish dish - to celebrate *Eid-al-Fitr* and the end of the holy month of Ramadan. ■

Census

On the census in Iraq: Speech of DSRSG Jerzy Skuratowicz



Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Jerzy Skuratowicz.
Photo: UNAMI PIO / Sarmad Al-Safy

Amid preparations for the upcoming housing census, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (DSRSG), Mr. Jerzy Skuratowicz, delivered a speech on 22 September at the Iraqi Expanded Meeting on the 2010 General Population and Housing Census that took place in Baghdad at the Council of Ministries in the presence of the Prime Minister, Mr. Nuri Al-Maliki.

DSRSG Skuratowicz stressed the importance of the census as a development, resource allocation and government planning tool that is able to support the development of a

properly resourced education sector, help ensure that sufficient resources are dedicated to the provision of clean water and electricity, spur the manufacturing sector and enhance trade, all towards promoting a sustainable economy with sustained job creation to meet the needs of the Iraqi people.

DSRSG Skuratowicz also highlighted the fact that the census can be a source of tension throughout the world particularly in countries which have emerged from oppressive regimes or conflicts, are multi-ethnic and emerging democracies, and are now faced with the challenges of new beginnings, beginnings linked to the equitable allocation of resources, or group identities.

Drawing on his experience in Sudan, DSRSG Skuratowicz stressed the need for Iraqis to initiate and engage in a consultative process designed to identify the fears and concerns, to begin to address them and to forge political consensus around the holding of the event by clarifying what the census is, what it represents, and what it is not.

It may also be worthwhile for the political parties and blocs to agree to a code of conduct and potential confidence-building measures, and to clarify any misperceptions or perceptions about the census and to forge a national consensus on holding the census,

DSRSG Skuratowicz added.

Securing agreement on key principles is critical to the success of Iraq's census, DSRSG Skuratowicz noted. This can be done by clarifying three facts: Firstly, the census does not nor can it under Iraqi law serve as legal document or legal reference to either validate property claims or grant legitimacy to claims of residency. Secondly, nor can the census data form the basis of any voter registry roll in light of the obligations on the privacy of individual information as per Iraqi law. Thirdly, the census takers themselves are not in a position to verify the accuracy of the data reported to them, nor is it their mandate to do so.

To support the operational confidence building measures, DSRSG Skuratowicz recommended several measures such as the use of multi-ethnic teams of enumerators in those areas where citizens need additional such assurances or the use of joint or ethnically mixed security forces.

DSRSG Skuratowicz concluded by reiterating that the decision of holding the census is an Iraqi sovereign decision, that the census cannot serve as a substitute for the resolution of political issues and that the complex political issues require inclusive negotiations among all stakeholders leading to broad-based agreement. ■

The Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons visits Iraq



RSG Kaelin talking to the press at a press conference held on 3rd October 2010 at UNAMI Erbil office. Photo: UNAMI PIO / Salar BRIFKANI

On an eight-day visit to Iraq starting 26 September, the Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Mr. Walter Kaelin, spent three days in the capital Baghdad before heading to Erbil in Iraq's Kurdistan region.

During his stay in Baghdad, Mr. Kaelin met with the Prime Minister, Mr. Nuri Al-Maliki, the

Minister of Human Rights, Ms. Wijdan Salim, Deputy Minister of Displacement and Migration, Dr. Salam Al-Khafaji and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Kaelin also met with representatives of the Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation and the international community. He also visited IDPs living in informal settlements in Baghdad.

During his visit to Iraq's Kurdistan region, Mr. Kaelin

met with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Mr. Azad Barwari, as well as with the Regional Government's Minister for Foreign Relations, Mr. Falah Mustafa, and the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Karim Sinjari. Mr. Kaelin also had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the various internally displaced communities, as well as members of civil

society and the international community.

Mr. Kaelin urged the government of Kurdistan to develop a comprehensive long term plan for IDPs in Kurdistan in close collaboration with the central government. Such a plan should include rental subsidies, financial assistance and livelihood interventions. He expressed concerns about allegations of detention and harassment of IDPs in Kirkuk and called upon all parties to ensure protection of displaced persons in the region during the upcoming census exercise.

During his first visit to Iraq, Mr. Kaelin held two press conferences in both Baghdad and Erbil in which he briefed the media on the situation of human rights of IDPs in Iraq.

Mr. Walter Kaelin, Professor of Law at the University of Bern (Switzerland), has been the Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons since 2004.

To learn more about Mr. Kaelin's visit to Iraq, read [his statement in Baghdad](#) and [his speech in Erbil](#) ■

Toward strengthening the monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children in Iraq

To strengthen the monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children in Iraq, UNAMI and UNICEF hosted on 9-11 September, a visit of a technical team from the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict for a workshop in Erbil. In addition to UNICEF and UNAMI staff, the workshop drew the participation of representatives from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Save the Children.

The workshop gave the participants an opportunity to learn more about UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1612 on the protection of children affected by armed conflicts. Unanimously adopted by the 15-member body on 26 July 2005, SCR 1612 focuses on the monitoring and reporting on six grave violations that may take place against children by parties to the conflict.

Additionally, SCR 1612 calls for the creation of a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism Country Task Force (MRM CTF). The MRM CTF is ex-

pected to collect timely, objective, accurate and reliable information on six serious violations against the rights of children in conflict situations. This includes: 1) killing and maiming of children; 2) recruitment and use of child soldiers; 3) rape or other forms of sexual violence; 4) abduction; 5) attacks against schools and hospitals; and 6) denial of humanitarian access.

Bi-monthly reports on the six grave violations produced by the MRM CTF are discussed by the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. The MRM CTF also undertakes advocacy efforts to reduce incidents involving the six grave violations as well as creating action plans to address violations, with the aim of eventually eliminating these incidents.

In Iraq, the MRM CTF was established on 7 June 2010 and is being co-chaired by UNAMI and UNICEF. By March 2011, the MRM CTF Iraq will produce a public report on Iraq that will review incidents of the six grave violations that occurred between January 2008 and December 2010. ■



Sadness on the face of an Iraqi child. Photo: IOM 2005

Iraq adopts UN plan to transform state-owned enterprises into corporations

By Paal Aarsaether, UNDP Iraq



Working Group for Tax Policy's joint meeting with UN PSDP-I, OECD and USAID, Baghdad, 15 April 2010. Photo: UNDP

international investment.

At the national level, the UN PSDP-I programme supports national policy to shape a more conducive environment for private sector development, while at the governorate-level, the Programme ensures that challenges to private sector growth are met through planning and implementation activities within three pilot

governorates.

To stimulate private enterprise building and reduce informality, the Programme also assists Iraq in setting up a dedicated, tripartite institution for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises which will address regulatory gaps and financial and non-financial service needs.

In tandem with this joint UN programme, the Government of Iraq has established the Task Force for Economic Reforms with seven initial working groups dealing with legislation revision, state-owned enterprise restructuring, small and medium enterprise development, investment policy, land reform, tax policy and social dialogue. The UN PSDP-I programme works in close cooperation with the Task Force, with regular consultations on policy formulation and institutional frameworks for economic reforms.

The Private Sector Development Programme for Iraq is an interagency initiative that encompasses seven UN agencies, namely UNDP (lead agency), UNIDO, ILO, UNOPS, UN-HABITAT, FAO and UNIFEM. UN agencies are working in partnership with other international organizations such as the World Bank, OECD and USAID to help Iraq create an effective, coherent, and comprehensive framework for private sector development.

For more information, please contact Mr. Paal Aarsaether: Paal.Aarsaether@undp.org

Acronyms used in this article:

UNIDO: United Nations Industrial Development Organization

ILO: International Labour Organization

UNOPS: The United Nations Office for Project Services

UN-HABITAT: United Nations Human Settlements Programme

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

UNIFEM: United Nations Development Fund for Women

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

USAID: United States Agency for International Development. ■

On 31 August 2010, the Government of Iraq approved a framework to transform state-owned enterprises into corporations. Entitled the *State Owned Enterprise Restructuring Roadmap*, the framework was developed by the joint UN Private Sector Development Programme for Iraq (PSDP-I) to guide the transformation of the 176 state-owned enterprises into competitive corporations for a rapid recovery of the country's competitive advantages, expanded trade, strategic investment and outsourced activities to the emerging private sector.

The UN PSDP-I programme supports the Iraqi government in restructuring its economy to increase sustainable employment opportunities and enhance the legal and regulatory framework in a way that would help increase and sustain domestic and

Education

European Union helps improve schools and quality of education in southern Iraq

By Jaya Murthy, UNICEF-Iraq

The poor quality and maintenance of school water systems and toilets in hundreds of other schools across Iraq affects school attendance and the quality of education of thousands of Iraqi children, causing some to leave school for several days or drop out permanently. A survey by the Ministry of Education shows that more than half of all schools are operating without water or sanitation facilities and that, due to the damaging or looting of other schools, schools with functional water and sanitation facilities are often burdened as a result of up to three additional schools using their facilities in shifts throughout the day.

Poor sanitation conditions and quality of toilets in the Al-Khawarnaq primary school in

Muthanna governorate in southern Iraq, for instance, deter 11 year old Ali Qassim from using them throughout the six hour school day during the week. Waiting until he returns home to relieve himself in better conditions, Ali doesn't realise the harmful effects of holding waste inside his body for prolonged periods of time.

Similarly, attending Al-Fasaha primary school in the same district, ten year old friends Halima Abdullah and Su'ad Salih also avoid using the school's toilets fearing that the old and dilapidated roof might collapse over their heads. Along with other pupils, Halima and Su'ad also suffer from a lack of drinking water, blocked sanitation facilities and the pungent odour of open sewage plaguing the school.



Al-Khawarnaq school's toilets before rehabilitation work. Photo: UNICEF

The absence of safe drinking water in these schools has forced most children to bring with them bottled water which they usually finish early in the day and spend the rest of the day thirsty and dehydrated from the scorching

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heat. The students are also unable to wash their faces and hands, especially after playing outside in unsanitary conditions during recess, making them dirty and at higher risk to contract diseases such as respiratory infections and diarrhoea, the first and second greatest killers of Iraqi children respectively.

In 2009, the Department of Education in Muthanna governorate asked UNICEF to construct and rehabilitate water and sanitation units in five primary schools; three in Al-Khidher district, including Al-Khawarnaq and Al-Fasaha primary schools, as well as two in Al-Rumaitha district. With funds from the European Union, work commenced in August 2009 and the schools were fully rehabilitated in March 2010.

Nearly 2,000 primary school pupils in the five schools have benefitted from the rehabilitation of 25 toilet units, three septic tanks and 50 water faucets as well as the installation of 30 new water storage tanks and 10 water pumps. In the Al-Fasaha school, a new roof for the toilet unit was also constructed.

Commenting on the new facilities, Ali Qassim joyously noted "with the clean water and new toilets, we now have normal lives. I hope to become a politician, or Minister of Education in the future so I can build model schools so they are suitable for studying." Meanwhile, Su'ad Salih said that the new facilities at her school



Batool school's toilets rehabilitated. Photo: UNICEF

encourage her to stay in school, adding that "I hope to be a very rich person one day to help the poor, not only in Iraq but in the entire world. I'd then be very happy that I was able to put a smile on the face of the poor".

The head of the Planning Division at Muthanna Education Department, Abdul-Hussein Muhammed Jawad, says "out of Muthanna governorate's 441 primary schools with 114,898 pupils and 121 secondary schools with 40,933 students, 75 per cent of the province's schools are in poor condition and need to be rehabilitated". "However, the Department has no budget to build or rehabilitate all the water and sanitation units in the schools", he lamented.

A 7 million Euro project funded by the European Union to improve Iraq's water and sanitation services is underway. Implemented by UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works in Baghdad and the Ministry of Municipalities in Kurdistan, the project will strengthen the government's capacity to plan, manage and develop Iraq's water and sanitation sector.

The project is also providing over 14,000 children in 30 schools across five governorates with improved access to water and sanitation facilities. The project supports the Government to attain the Millennium Development Goals in Iraq, especially the goals 2 and 3 aiming to achieve 100 per cent enrolment in primary school for all primary school-aged children, and the goal 7 which aims to increase the access in improved water sources to 91 per cent of the population from the current rate of 84 per cent and access to adequate sanitation facilities to 96 per cent of the population from the current rate of 84 per cent.

For more information, please contact Mr. Jaya Murthy, UNICEF Iraq: jmurthy@unicef.org ■

Education

United Nations helps tackle illiteracy in Iraq



Children and youth joining the Literacy Campaign in the Marshlands, Karbala. Photo: UNESCO

Two decades of war, sanctions and deprivation impacted on the quality and availability of education which has deteriorated dramatically since 1990. It has resulted in the emergence of a high level of illiteracy in the country which impacts in every aspect of life such as employment, health, civic participation and social attitudes.

With a rate as high as 24 per cent, illiteracy among Iraqi women is more than twice that of Iraqi men which is estimated at 11 per cent. Similarly, with 25 per cent illiteracy rate, rural populations are more adversely affected by illiteracy than urban populations with a rate of 14 per cent. In addition, within rural areas the literacy

According to the World Food Programme 2007 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) in Iraq, one in five Iraqis aged between 10 and 49 years are unable to read or write¹. However, there are significant disparities in literacy rates across gender, age and urban versus rural areas.

divide between men and women is wider.

When asked to read a sentence out loud, illiteracy disparity between rural and urban women proved to be further pronounced. In fact, less than 50 per cent of women aged 15-24 years living in rural areas were found to be literate, compared with 72-80 per cent literacy rates for women of the same age group in more urban areas².

Furthermore, there are significant differences in illiteracy rates amongst Iraqi governorates. The lowest rates of illiteracy appear to be in Diyala, Baghdad and Kirkuk, while the highest are estimated to be in Dahuk and Sulaimaniyah within Iraq's Kurdistan Region, and Muthanna, Missan and Qadisiya in the south³.

To help tackle the literacy problem in Iraq, the United Nations supports several literacy programmes operated by the Iraqi government such as the following:

1) **The Literacy and Adult Learning Programme.** This initiative is intended for students aged 15-45 years who did not

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attend formal education. A certificate equivalent to grade four of formal education is provided upon completion of a 14-month programme. New textbooks for Arabic language, mathematics and general culture have been developed with technical support from UNESCO.

2) **The Accelerated Learning Programme** is another initiative targeting students aged between 12-18 years who can re-enter formal education. This is a three-year programme that allows students who completed it to move into the formal education system to continue their studies. Supported by UNICEF as a pilot initiative, the Accelerated Learning Programme is now being extended to all the governorates of Iraq.

3) **Community Learning Centres** are currently eight pilot centres established by

UNESCO in coordination with the Ministry of Education. Each of these centres offers a variety of training in vocational and life skills and is operated in close cooperation with the local communities. This programme, targeting mostly women aged between 15-45 years, will be expanded in the coming years to cover all the governorates of Iraq.

4) In 2010, UNESCO launched the **Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE)** for Iraq with funding from the Office of the First Lady of Qatar. Ms. Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al-Missned. LIFE will contribute to strengthening the capacity of the Government of Iraq and civil society to deliver sustainable and empowering literacy for all.

For more information on the illiteracy in Iraq, read the [fact sheet](#) ■

References:

- (1) The 2007 World Food Programme CFSVA 2007, ***Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis in Iraq***. WFP CFSVA was prepared through a partnership between World Food Programme, the Central Organization for Statistics & Information Technology, the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office, and the Nutrition Research Institute, with the support and assistance of UNICEF, Food and Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization under the umbrella of the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation/Central Government and the Ministry of Planning/Kurdistan Region.
- (2) United Nations Children's Fund MICS, 2006
- (3) World Food Programme CFSVA, 2007

Education

Government of Iraq approves a national school feeding programme

By Caroline Legros, WFP-Iraq



School girls in Baquba, Central Iraq enjoying their morning snack of date bars. Photo: WFP

The Government of Iraq and the World Food Programme (WFP) have partnered to develop a national school feeding programme, initiating implementation with a USD 17 million contribution from the Government of Iraq.

WFP will implement the school feeding programme for the 2010-2011 academic year, targeting the most vulnerable districts of Iraq. The agency will also be improving the ability of the staff of the Ministry of Education to

implement the programme from September 2011 to June 2012 onwards.

In Iraq, a nutritious snack of date bars will be distributed to the primary school children. These date bars are high in energy and fortified with a range of vitamins and minerals, ensuring that children get the nutrition they need as studies show that it is difficult for children to learn without adequate food and nutrition.

In line with supporting local development, WFP is strengthening the ability of local industries to produce the date bars inside Iraq. This has additional benefits for the local economy in terms of job creation and for the local procurement of dates, wheat flour, sugar and other ingredients which are required to produce the date bars.

School feeding is an integral part of a cohesive social safety net system for Iraq. WFP is pleased that the Government of Iraq has taken ownership of this school feeding activity, including plans to budget for it in upcoming fiscal years.

WFP will support the Ministry of Education with a transition strategy that will provide the base for a future national strategy for school feeding. This will strengthen the government's capacity to design and implement similar programmes in line with international school feeding quality standards.

WFP's school meal programmes work towards achieving several Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The programmes directly contribute to the goals of reducing hunger by half and achieving universal primary education by 2015, and of achieving gender parity in education by 2005.

While contributing over the long term to combating poverty, school meals provide a platform for directly addressing child health and nutrition.

For more information, please contact Caroline Legros, WFP Iraq: caroline.legros@wfp.org ■

Iraq's first National Health Accounts survey completed

By Ruba Hikmat, WHO-Iraq



WHO/EMRO along with other participants during the Regional Workshop on Framework for Decentralization of Health Services in Amman-Jordan. Photo: WHO

Iraq's first National Health Accounts (NHA) survey was successfully completed in September 2010. The Iraqi Health Ministry assisted by the World Health Organization (WHO), is in the process of entering data prior to proceeding with data analyses based on

international standards and methods. The preliminary results are expected to be released by the end of November 2010.

The NHA is a resource tracking exercise that answers important questions regarding healthcare financing and

economics in a country. In Iraq, the NHA survey tracks financially the healthcare system over 2008. The survey covered a wide range of contributors to the health sector financing in Iraq including the private sector, non-governmental organisations, the international community, health insurance and employers.

Since October 2009, WHO has been thoroughly supporting the Health Ministry in the conduct of the NHA exercise. Following the development of survey tools for the NHA by a WHO consultant, WHO conducted several training sessions for the Ministry of Health officials at the central and the governorates level in all 18 Iraqi governorates. WHO trained 112 Iraqi professionals on basic concepts of NHA as well as the survey questionnaires and methodology in order to strengthen the capacity of government to undertake the NHA exercise in the future with nil or minimum external support.

The final NHA report is expected to provide a comprehensive set of data of flow of funds into the healthcare system in Iraq such as the source and use of funds. Such information can assist Iraqi policy makers in making an optimal resource allocation for health care. ■

News Briefs

Message from SRSO Melkert on the International Day of Democracy

On the occasion of the third celebration of the International Day of Democracy, marked worldwide on 15 September, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSO), Mr. Ad Melkert, addressed a message to Iraqi people and leaders in which he emphasised that the essence of democracy lies in three features: "First, the recognition that where people and communities live together conflicts of interest occur and should be resolved in a peaceful manner on the basis of the rule of law. Second,



Women voters register at a voting centre in Baghdad. Photo: UNAMI PIO

the right of each individual to choose their government and form of governance enabled by inalienable human rights such as freedom of expression and association and equal participation of women and men. And, thirdly, the creation of equal

opportunities through the eradication of poverty and access to education and basic health services and housing"

Hailing the March 7 election as "an important stepping stone toward achieving these fundamental freedoms in Iraq", SRSO Melkert described the post-election process as a "chance of a lifetime" for Iraqis to shape their future. "The many lengthy discussions about constitution, elections and government formation are worthwhile as long as their outcome will bring about social progress as well as stability and security, in reality demonstrating that democracy offers the best conditions to achieve this", SRSO Melkert stressed, adding that "the United Nations stands by the Iraqi people to offer assistance in making democracy work for everyone". ■

UNESCO calls for joining forces to promote literacy in Iraq



Marshlands' photo: Children and youth joining the Literacy Campaign in the Marshlands. Photo: UNESCO

On the occasion of International Literacy Day, celebrated globally on 8 September, UNESCO called on national institutions and civil society to join forces to promote literacy for all as a tool for inclusive and sustainable development in Iraq.

"I take this occasion to call upon governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to scale up their support to literacy," stressed Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO. *Literacy and women's empowerment* is the theme for this year celebrations, which focuses on the importance of literacy and gender equality as one of the global strategic priorities for sustainable development.

"Literacy is the necessary tool for social development and peace building," said Mohammed Djelid, Director of the UNESCO Iraq Office, adding that "the achievement of the Literacy goal of reducing illiteracy by 50 per cent by 2015 relies on the development of an effective strategy and implementation of inclusive policies for literacy."

To address illiteracy challenges, the Government of Iraq has developed new literacy textbooks, introduced accelerated learning programs, and opened new literacy centres. However, equal access and attendance remain obstacles to progress on literacy in Iraq.

To help Iraq address these challenges, the UNESCO Iraq Office in 2010 launched the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) for Iraq with funding from the Office of the First Lady of Qatar, Ms. Sheikha Moza bint

Nasser Al-Missned and UNESCO's Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education. LIFE, which is a 4 year project with a budget of USD 6.3 million, will contribute to strengthening the capacity of the Iraqi Government and civil society to deliver sustainable and empowering literacy for all. ■

WHO contributes to Improving blood transfusion services in Iraq

The Iraqi Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Jordan Directorate of Blood Bank, launched on 19 September a series of four training sessions benefiting 50 Iraqi health cadres working in the Iraq National Blood Transfusion Center and Regional Blood Banks. The four sessions of three weeks each aim to increase the technical and managerial skills of Iraqi professionals to ensure safety of blood and blood products and optimize blood usage for patient health.



SMS Training workshop in Amman. Photo: WHO

Hosted by the Jordan Ministry of Health/ Directorate of Blood Bank, the training is funded by the European Union as part of the three year project (Euro 13 million) to strengthen Specialized Medical Services in Iraq which started in January 2009.

In the last few years, the Government of Iraq has taken the strategic decision to improve blood transfusion services. In support of these efforts, WHO, in close collaboration with the Jordan Blood Bank, a WHO Collaborating Center, is providing to the Government of Iraq the necessary technical support to strengthen blood transfusion services, including building and

upgrading the capacity of Iraqi professionals at various levels. ■

Key stakeholders agree on recommendations on draft KRG NGO law

Meeting in Erbil, on 25 September, representatives of the Kurdistan Parliament, the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Presidency Council of the Kurdistan Region, as well as International NGOs, agreed on recommendations on the draft of the new KRG NGO law following a three-day roundtable on the topic involving all key players.

Following extensive preparatory work, the three-day Roundtable Conference – which was supported by international experts – provided participants with an opportunity to discuss the provisions of this draft in detail. The main regulatory challenges in the law are the registration of NGOs, legal guarantees to preserve the independence of NGOs, and rules to prevent interference in the work of NGOs by authorities or political parties. Once passed, a progressive law containing such provisions will help ensure the development of KRG civil society.

The Roundtable was organised by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) with funding from the European Union (EU), the Government of Finland and other donors through the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund as well as the US Department of State – Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Participants at the Roundtable also included representatives of the Iraqi Council of Ministers Secretariat, the NGOs Directorate, the outgoing Chair of Iraqi Council of Representatives' Civil Society Committee, the Iraqi State Ministry of Civil Society Affairs and international observers.

The outcomes of the Roundtable meeting will serve members of the Kurdistan Parliament in their further work on a draft law before the second and final reading of the bill. ■

United Nations in Action

UNESCO

- UNESCO and UNICEF launched the first national workshop for education under the joint "Iraq Public Sector Modernisation Programme" funded through the European Union. The workshop, organised in Erbil from 23 to 25 September 2010, brought together for the first time ministry advisors, presidents of universities and heads of Directorates of Education to present the current structure of the sector and discuss the need for an in-depth analysis of the ministries responsible for delivering quality education in Iraq.
- As part of its efforts to help the Iraqi Government and civil society put together a national literacy campaign, UNESCO launched a grant programme on the occasion of the International Literacy Day (8 September 2010) to mobilize civil society towards the development of a national Literacy Strategy for Iraq. Although the programme targeted 13 National Iraqi NGOs, more than 60 National NGOs joined the initiative and generated public debate on the National Literacy Strategy and particularly on the theme of literacy for women empowerment. Overall, advocacy and awareness raising activities, which took place in Iraq during the last week of September, in-

involved more than 27,000 people including volunteers, women illiterates, youth, community leaders, teachers and representatives of governmental institutions.

- UNESCO launched on 4 October 2010 a scientific survey of Iraq's groundwater to help the Government's capacity address water shortages in the country. The Survey is expected to provide a wealth of new data on the status of groundwater enabling the government to efficiently address water problems in the most affected areas. The project will also improve planning of new agriculture projects and enable sustainable management of Iraq's underground aquifers.

UNDP

- UNDP organised a workshop on 19-23 September in Erbil for 42 Iraqi police officers from across Iraq, including Baghdad, Basrah and the Kurdistan region. Focusing on the role of police in assisting survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), the workshop addressed several aspects of dealing with GBV, such as the GBV definition, illustrative examples, the legal framework for dealing with the GBV cases in Iraq as well as standard operating procedures for receiving survivors of violence at specialised police stations. The trainers included police from the Jordanian Family Protection Unit, UNDP staff and the Iraq Train and Assist Mission.

- UNDP and WHO organised a Single Stream Funding/Round 9 Grant Orientation Workshop for Iraq on 1 October in Amman, following the allocation of a new grant by the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria to fight Tuberculosis in Iraq. To enable implementing partners smooth implementation of the new grant, the workshop introduced the SSF work plan and performance framework, as well as the Fund's performance-based funding requirements. It also discussed updates and lessons learnt from the previous grant implementation in Iraq. The funding for Iraq over the next five years granted by the Global Fund totals USD 30 million. ■

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Celebration of the International Peace Day in Erbil, Sep. 21 2010

