



Iraq Briefing Book Conference

مؤتمر كتاب ملخص أوضاع العراق

Baghdad, 14 May 2011

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The Main Pillars of the Briefing Book

It is my pleasure to be here today and present to you on behalf of the Iraq Partners' Forum a briefing book prepared as a basis for policy discussions with the Government of Iraq. The Briefing Book was written by the donor community together with the United Nations and the World Bank. It highlights possible development policy options in a non prescriptive manner. Attention is directed towards the need for practical and implementable solutions to address critical constraints that currently hinder Iraq's socioeconomic recovery.

Let me just say a few words about the Iraq Partners' Forum. It is a group that works on development issues. The Forum supports information sharing and a consultative environment for discussion on strategic issues related to international development cooperation in Iraq. We are very much guided by the Paris Principles of aid efficiency and Government ownership and leadership of the development agenda.

The Iraq Partners' Forum is comprised of: the United Nations, the World Bank and donors, namely: Austria, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, EU, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, and the USA.

The Forum is currently chaired by the United Nations and the World Bank, but it is hoped that the Forum will soon be co-chaired and led by the Government to further the coordination of international development cooperation flows to Iraq

The Book presents a critical opportunity for the international community in Iraq to support the foundations for policy reform and sustainable development by entering into a dialogue with Government on practical solutions and priorities for Iraq's development.

We gave much thought to how the Briefing Book should be structured and decided on a document that can be read as a whole, or used as a reference book on specific issues. The resulting document is a book consisting of 16 chapters, each of which represents a key policy issue. The chapters are consistently structured with an overview of the sector followed by an outline of the main issues facing the sector based on a thorough analysis of Iraq's context and experience. A discussion of recent and ongoing policy actions is then presented, as well as recommendations for future action.

The 16 chapters are divided among two main sections:

Part I addresses key policy issues, including:

Macroeconomic challenges; development planning; governance and anti-corruption; public sector reform; private sector development; social protection; and the challenges of regional cooperation and internal disputed territories

Part II focuses on sectoral and cross-cutting issues including:

Human rights protection, civil society and the media; gender mainstreaming; basic social services; water resources management; agriculture; environment; energy; transport; telecommunications; and cultural heritage.

It should be noted that the Briefing Book is seen by its authors as a means to provide technical support and assistance towards achieving common goals. Recommendations contained within the Briefing Book are not directives to the Government, but rather areas where the international community stands ready to assist.

Although the Briefing Book covers a wide range of areas, a number of common themes emerge from the analysis. These are:

- The imperative to continue with implementation of reforms and modernisation processes.
- The capacity development needs of ministries and government institutions which have been severely affected by the erosion of human capital and the isolation within which they have operated.
- The human development agenda which has been negatively impacted by the decline in service provision including a serious shortage of qualified manpower and the protracted displacement of over one and a half million persons.
- The danger of strong economic growth driven by the extractive industries being without significant job growth, leaving increasing numbers of young people without decent work opportunities.
- Urbanisation as both an opportunity and challenge, and particularly in terms of social services, which need to be pro-actively managed by all levels of government if Iraq is to develop sustainable cities and towns.

- The imperative to tackle decades of neglect which have negatively impacted on the environment and in particular water resources which will become, if not managed well, the source of competition between people, agriculture and industry.
- Security shortfalls which continue to negatively impact on socio-economic and political development while also acting as a deterrent to foreign investment and employment-generating growth.
- The opportunity to develop the private sector through regulatory and institutional reforms and public private partnerships, in the broader development of Iraq.
- The opportunity to more directly involve citizens in their own and their communities' development through improved communications, access to quality media, and the enabling of civil society organisations to contribute to the development agenda.

In summary, the Briefing Book is an enabler of a structured dialogue between the donor partners, including the World Bank and the United Nations, and the Government of Iraq and, by extension, with the people of Iraq. Today's Briefing Book conference, an active and hopefully lively debate between Government and Donor's, is the culmination of many hours of thought and dialogue on key development issues in Iraq. I very much look forward to the following presentations and panel discussions and, a bit longer term, to working on the key issues identified for future priority action.

Thank you