

# The Iraq Briefing Book

## Synopsis

This Briefing Book has been produced by international partners in Iraq on the occasion of the formation of a new government, and it is intended to inform forthcoming discussions between Iraqi authorities and international partners on key areas of mutual interest. The brief is comprised of two parts.

- Part I addresses key policy issues, including: macroeconomic challenges; development planning and prioritization; governance and public sector reform; anti-corruption; 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 and telecommunications; and cultural heritage.

There are a total of 16 chapters, each representing a key policy issue, and each one beginning 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 further initiatives. Attention has been paid to the need for practical, implementable guidance to address critical constraints that impinge on Iraq's socioeconomic recovery and on the lives of the Iraqi people.

A common briefing book was prepared for the government's convenience rather than separate briefs from the various partners. For each sector covered, content and contributions were gathered from partners active in the sector. That said, it is important to note that not all partners are active in each area, while certain sectors fall outside of the mandate of some partners. As such, partners cannot take responsibility for the content beyond their respective mandates or scope of activities and the proposed report does not necessarily reflect each partner's view. The report aims to inform government priorities while serving as a platform to discuss ways in which international partners might support efforts towards reconstruction and development in Iraq.

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 which have been initiated by the previous government but are not yet entrenched in the laws and regulations governing the various sectors.
- The capacity development needs of ministries and government institutions which have been severely affected by the erosion of their human capital and by the isolation within which they were working over the last several decades.
- The human development agenda which is negatively impacted upon by the decline in quality of services, the serious shortage of qualified manpower (in particular in the health services), the protracted displacement of over one and a half million internally displaced persons. Iraq continues to present a very mixed picture in terms of human development

with some indicators at levels more commonly found in much poorer countries but typical of post-conflict societies.

- The opportunity to respond fairly easily to the challenges of the social sectors given the shallow nature of poverty in Iraq and the potential for growth of the Iraq economy.
- The danger of strong economic growth driven by the extractive industries, but without job growth, leaving increasing numbers of young people in the economy without decent work opportunities.
- Urbanisation as both opportunity and challenge, particularly for the social services, which needs to be managed pro-actively by all levels of government if Iraq is to develop around the hubs of sustainable cities and towns.
- The imperative to tackle the negative impact on the environment of decades of neglect, and in particular to pay attention to water resources which will be the source of competition between people, agriculture and industry, especially the oil industry.
- Security shortfalls which continue to negatively impact on socio-economic and political development not only by the immediate and devastating consequences of acts of violence but also by the long-term deterrent to foreign investment and employment-generating growth.
- The opportunity to involve private sector companies through Corporate Social Responsibility programmes 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.

This is a broad agenda for any government to tackle but the resources of Iraq and the resourcefulness of its people encourage the international community to believe that the challenges can be met and Iraq can emerge from decades of conflict with a strong economy and exemplary governance structures.

The briefing book was prepared by members of the Iraq Partners Forum. It benefited from inputs and contributions from officials from Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Japan, Italy, Poland, the United Kingdom, the United States, FAO<sup>1</sup>, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNIFEM, UNOPS, WFP, WHO, UNAMI, the World Bank and the OECD.

International partners stand ready to engage on the topics contained in the briefing book and will answer any query in this regard. Questions should be addressed to Mr. Yahia Khairi Said, World Bank Resident Representative and Acting Country Manager, and Mrs. Christine McNab, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq and Resident Representative UNDP Iraq.

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<sup>1</sup> See glossary on page 5 for explanations of abbreviations and acronyms.