

FALLEN OFF THE AGENDA?

MORE AND BETTER AID NEEDED FOR IRAQ RECOVERY



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Introduction

As foreign troops are withdrawing from Iraq¹ and a new government is to be formed², Iraq finds itself entering a phase of transition. Attention is now turning to how the emerging Iraqi democracy and the future Iraqi government will be able to ensure long-term stability and sustainable recovery for the country. While there has been some improvement in the humanitarian conditions and security situation in Iraq over the past two years, these gains remain fragile and easily reversible.

Large-scale security incidents have increased both in the run-up to the election and post-election. Since August 2009, hundreds of civilians have lost their lives and hundreds more have been wounded in bombings in Baghdad and other parts of Iraq. Decades of wars, economic sanctions, and dictatorship have left Iraq in chaos. The country's infrastructure has been severely damaged; millions of people have been displaced inside Iraq and throughout the region; and access to the most basic goods and services -such as drinkable water or healthcare- remains restricted. The livelihoods of large numbers of Iraqis have been destroyed, the economy is extremely weak and dysfunctional and poverty has increased considerably.

Despite the country's oil reserves, the Government of Iraq does not yet have the capacity to effectively manage this potential and to respond to the most basic needs of the population. Iraq ranks seventh in the Failed States Index produced this year by *Foreign Policy* and *The Fund for Peace*, after Somalia, Chad, Sudan, Zimbabwe, the D. R. Congo and Afghanistan.³ Although it has slipped from its second place position from 2007, Iraq clearly remains a very fragile state⁴ today. The country is therefore at a critical and difficult juncture, struggling to rebuild itself, and without increased support the country could once again unravel. Effective aid delivery and development assistance from the international community is still absolutely necessary to achieve positive change inside Iraq.

Yet, the international community's attention and support for Iraq is presently waning. This year, the European Commission and many EU Member States, including the United

¹ 142,000 US troops are expected to withdraw from Iraq by summer 2010, leaving between 35,000 and 50,000 troops with the mandate to advise Iraqi security forces, conduct counter-terrorism missions and protect US personnel. All remaining troops should withdraw by December 2011. The vast majority of UK troops have already left Iraq.

² The last Iraqi national parliamentary elections took place on 7 March 2010.

³ The Failed States Index 2010, *Foreign Policy* and *The Fund for Peace*.

⁴ According to the European Commission, fragility refers to weak or failing structures and to situation where the social contract is broken due to the State's incapacity or unwillingness to deal with its basic functions, meets its obligations and responsibilities regarding service delivery, management of resources, rule of law, equitable access to power, security and safety of the populace and protection and promotion of citizens' rights and freedoms. –Communication from the Commission, “Towards an EU response to the situation of fragility –engaging in difficult environment for sustainable development, stability and peace”, Brussels, 25/ 10/ 2007.

Kingdom, drastically reduced their aid budgets for Iraq. Moreover, the capacities of humanitarian and development Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), both international and national, are not being maximized by current strategies in Iraq. Yet they are often best positioned and have the greatest expertise and experience to provide effective aid delivery and community-led development assistance.

Most of the support provided by the international community has been focusing on large-scale reconstruction and development programmes with little local participation. A number of donors have prioritized private sector initiatives at the expense of support for greatly needed humanitarian and development programmes. Other donors tend to point to significant investment into the Government of Iraq as a reason for their disengagement from supporting civil society activities.

In order to effectively contribute to Iraq's recovery, the EU and its member states, including the UK, should acknowledge the need for more significant and longer-term commitment. Furthermore, they should improve aid effectiveness by ensuring more direct participation of the Iraqi people in the recovery processes.

1. Main challenges for Iraqis

A) Insecurity and Lack of Protection

Over the past few years violence has decreased in Iraq when compared to the levels of 2006 and 2007. However, violence still affects the country and has a considerable impact on civilian lives. In August 2009, the International Committee of the Red Cross reported that about 500 people on average were still being killed every month and 2,000 were wounded in mass explosions and indiscriminate attacks⁵. Moreover, since mid-2009 as tensions rose in the election run-up and post-election, several major attacks, which claimed hundreds of lives, took place mainly in Baghdad and the central and southern governorates. Criminal violence such as kidnapping for ransom continues to plague Iraq, and children are frequently targeted. Random detentions and ill-treatment of prisoners, huge number of detainees and secret detention centres are also issues of great concern to the Iraqi communities and NGOs.

Iraqis are also further threatened by landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). Iraq has one of the greatest concentrations of landmines and ERW in the world⁶. Yet, Iraq currently has less than 2,000 active de-miners, less than a quarter of the 9,000 required to honour its commitment to clear all landmines by 2018⁷. Besides, decades of conflicts have left widespread ERWs and depleted uranium throughout the country. It is estimated that 1,730 square kilometres of land are contaminated by landmines and unexploded ordinance, impacting the livelihoods and safety of more than 1.6 million Iraqis⁸. Depleted uranium rounds have been linked to increased rates of leukaemia, congenital malformations and various cancers⁹.

The security and stability prognosis for 2010-11 remains uncertain due to recent major political changes, including the formation of a new government, the ongoing withdrawal of foreign troops, and other important factors, such as the political disagreement over

⁵ International Committee of the Red Cross, *Civilians Without Protection Report*, August 2009.

⁶ UN OCHA - *Humanitarian Action Plan 2010*.

⁷ Article 7 *Transparency Report for the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention*.

⁸ UNDP/UNICEF *Overview of Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War in Iraq 2009*.

⁹ UN OCHA - *Humanitarian Action Plan 2010*.

the disputed territories¹⁰, and the administration and ownership of oil resources¹¹. Moreover, considering that most armed groups and militia have not yet been disarmed, and the slow and only partial integration of the Sons of Iraq members into the Iraqi security forces¹², security is far from being guaranteed¹³.

In the disputed territories, where violence between ethnic groups persists and is exacerbated by political tensions and armed groups, the situation remains largely unstable. A group of local humanitarian NGO representatives and human rights activists based in Kirkuk explain that violence related to politics is still recurrent in the city of Kirkuk. And recently, several houses were also set on fire due to sectarian tensions in the Khalis district of Diyala. The lack of agreement between Arabs and Kurds concerning the administrative jurisdiction of these territories and oil administration represents a very serious threat to Iraq's future stability and security. In the province of Kirkuk, one thousand civilians were killed and wounded in more than 220 car bombs and suicide attacks in 2009¹⁴. As civilians remain the primary victims of these incidents, ordinary Iraqis continue to live in fear and insecurity. In some parts of the country this lack of security and protection continues to hinder the population's access to basic supplies, services, employment, and it prevents economic recovery.

Years of violence and deprivation have also badly affected the population's physical and mental health. The numerous civilian casualties in Iraq have also had terrible consequences on many households' livelihoods and on the life of thousands of children who have lost one or both of their parents.

Iraq still has very serious protection issues, including those related to women, children and youth, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), returnees, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. The Iraqi institutions and mechanisms that should ensure physical, social and legal protection for women, children and youth are dysfunctional and unreliable. As a result, the most vulnerable are exposed to exploitation and abuse, such as killing and maiming; kidnapping; gender based violence; human trafficking; recruitment and use by armed groups; child labour; and deprivation of liberty.

B) Restricted Access to Essential Services

The Iraqi population's most fundamental human rights -such as the rights to protection, shelter, food and water, health and education- have not yet been met. Humanitarian

¹⁰ Arab and Kurdish Iraq disputed areas, which are located in the southern boundary of the Kurdistan Region.

¹¹ The deadlocked Hydrocarbon law –a package of critical legislation on division of the oil revenues between federal and regional/ governorate state structures- is withholding critical resources from the Iraqi people by preventing the full development of Iraq 's oil wealth –IAU Common Country Assessment 2009 –October 2009

¹² One of the key elements of the US counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq has been to form “awakening councils”, or Sons of Iraq. The US army recruited and provided paid employment to roughly 80,000 local Sunni “security” personnel in exchange for their commitment to work alongside Coalition forces. The Government of Iraq has agreed to integrate 30 to 50% of them into the Iraqi security forces. The rest will have to find new employment whereas - and many are illiterate and lack job skills.

¹³ Recent media reports indicate that the relation between the Government of Iraq and the Sons of Iraq is deteriorating especially in Diyala, as the Government of Iraq annulled their weapon permits, which most likely will worsen the security situation where they are operating.

¹⁴ Statistics provided by Kirkuk districts and sub-districts police.

needs remain acute, but there is no one-size-fits all assessment as illustrated by the different situations in Northern, Central and Southern Iraq (i.e. mass explosions and indiscriminate attacks regularly occur in Baghdad, Ninewa and Diyala governorates, while under-development and poverty affect a larger part of the population in the south). Regions of great concern are: the disputed territories, mainly Ninewa, Kirkuk and Diyala governorates; all the regions that have been particularly affected by violence¹⁵; the regions where minorities are located; and those that have been most neglected in previous years. Many sectors of Iraqi society and large areas of the country remain in need of humanitarian assistance. Millions of Iraqis are still extremely vulnerable due to decades of conflicts, related displacement, sanctions, neglect and ineffective public services.

Today, in many parts of the country, people are still lacking, or have very limited access to most essential services. This is mainly due to Iraqi institutions' lack of capacity, as well as corruption and political conflict between rival factions. To effectively address these issues requires long term commitment and large-scale investment to increase access to quality services for the most vulnerable communities, and to ensure the stability and development of communities' by addressing the root causes of the country's vulnerabilities.

Shelter and Electricity

According to the United Nations, there is a deficit of 1.5 million housing units in Iraq, expected to increase at a rate of 300,000 units annually until 2015¹⁶. Most Iraqi people have housing problems but Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and returnees suffer more directly. If security continues to improve and returns of the displaced increase, shelter assistance to returning families will become a very urgent need. Of those IDPs who wish to return, 19.4% report that their properties have been destroyed, amounting to approximately 30,000 units¹⁷. Electricity shortages also still plague Iraq and Iraqis continue to rely on a multiplicity of sources –including generators.

Water and Sanitation

Only 45% of the population has access to clean drinking water¹⁸. Because of a lack of infrastructural and institutional capacity and regional bi-lateral political issues over water resources, Iraq is currently only producing two-thirds of the ten million cubic metres of potable water required for human consumption per day¹⁹. These problems have been aggravated by the lack of fresh water and drought, which increased salinity of water in Southern Iraq²⁰. For instance in Basra, as tap water is too salty for human consumption, the population still relies on bottled drinkable water. In rural areas, irrigation systems, pumping stations, water tanks and pipes also require urgent repairs. Some of the pumping stations in rural areas and especially in the Anbar governorate stopped working due to drought. Regarding sanitation, the United Nations reports that up to 83% of the sewage generated in Iraq is let out in rivers and waterways²¹. Poor access to water, combined with a lack of proper sanitation and hygiene services, represents a serious threat to public health, particularly to the most vulnerable, as it can create serious health crisis and contribute to the spread of epidemics.

¹⁵ Which are often regions characterized by an ethnically diverse social fabric.

¹⁶ UN Habitat Iraq Country Programme Document 2009-11 -June 2009.

¹⁷ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) -2009.

¹⁸ According to the Brookings Institution, February 2009.

¹⁹ UN OCHA- Drought Report - September 2009.

²⁰ UN IAU Iraq Common Country Assessment -October 2009.

²¹ UN IAU –Baghdad Press Release on World Water Day- 18 March 2010.

Food

In Iraq, one million people are still food insecure and 6.4 million are dependent on the food rations of the Public Distribution System (PDS), which struggles to reach those most in need²². Yet last April, because of a budget deficit –due to a drop in oil prices- the government of Iraq cut by half the number of items in state food aid parcels²³ - a decision that could affect roughly half of the population, according to the Iraqi Ministry of Trade ²⁴.

Moreover, food prices in Iraq have doubled between 2004 and 2008, contributing to an increase in poverty and leading to a 20% drop in protein acquisition in poorer households²⁵. Poverty, combined with rising food prices, lack of national food production and drought, increases food insecurity. In some regions of Iraq, Children experience acute malnutrition, with nine districts suffering from acute malnutrition rates over 10% among those aged 0 to 5 years²⁶. Many media reports indicated that the bad quality of food delivered via the PDS in some governorates has sometimes caused serious health problem. Several cases of food poisoning have been reported in Southern Baghdad and other governorates. Furthermore, PDS food rations are often delivered after months of delay.

Health care

The health system is over-burdened and suffers from a shortage of infrastructure, equipment and and professional staff. Doctors were particularly targeted during the conflict –in 2008, official Iraqi sources reported that more than 2,200 doctors and nurses had been killed since 2003²⁷. Many more were threatened and found refuge in neighbouring countries. Moreover, in some areas, access to civilians remains difficult because of transport and/ or security reasons. Maternal mortality in Iraq is more than double the level in neighbouring countries²⁸. For under-five mortality, neonatal mortality and low-birth weight deliveries, Iraq ranks among the last in the Middle East region.

In some parts of Iraq, the healthcare services' lack of capacity and the lack of security have contributed to the spread of the measles outbreak in 2009. Thirty thousand cases of measles were reported during the first 39 weeks of the year compared to 8,100 during the whole of 2008. Two thirds of those who contracted the disease were aged 5 years or under, which clearly indicates the low levels of vaccination during the past four years²⁹. Given the lack of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene services and the very weak healthcare service provided in most parts of Iraq, cholera preparedness should also remain a priority. Many cases of smallpox, toxoplasmosis and hydrodiarrhea were reported in Baghdad. Some cases of leishmania were also reported in Missan, Diyala and

²² WFP Comprehensive Food Security Survey 2008.

²³ In the future, parcels will contain only flour, rice, sugar, cooking oil and milk.

²⁴ Reuters: "Iraq: State Food Package Slashed", 1st April 2010.

²⁵ The Food and Agriculture Organisation and Information and Analysis Unit of the United Nations – "Iraq Food Prices Analysis", August 2009.

²⁶ UN WFP Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis in Iraq – 2008.

²⁷ International Committee of the Red Cross – Iraq: Not Let Up in the Humanitarian Crisis – March 2008.

²⁸ 300 per 100,000 in Iraq versus 140 per 100,000 in Iran which has the second highest level in the region. Source: UN Iraq 2010 Humanitarian Action Plan

²⁹ UN Iraq 2010 Humanitarian Action Plan.

Kirkuk governorates. In the city of Fallujah, in the western governorate of Anbar, a critical increase of congenital birth defects was also identified.

The increase of cancer cases is one of the major health problems faced by the population especially in the southern governorates. A study entitled “The Increase in Cancer Cases as Result of War Debris”³⁰ published in early May revealed that cancer-related diseases are now one of the main causes of deaths in the southern governorates. “At least 45% of deaths in the southern provinces are caused by cancer. Some patients develop related diseases, which worsen their condition, leading to a faster death. The statistics are having a serious impact on the health system and urgent funds are needed,” said Imad Hassan, a health specialist and member of the commission, which produced the study. “Southern governorates have been seriously affected by wars, especially in the past 20 years and it is a region in which chemicals and pesticides are used in fishing and agriculture,” Hassan added. According to him, drinking water in Basra, Muthana, Dhi Qar and Missan governorates has been found to be unsafe. In some places, especially in and near rural areas, the water is highly contaminated, including with pesticide residues.

There has been a significant increase of several cancer cases in the Najaf governorate. Dr Assad, working for the Iraqi NGO, Muslim Peace Team, highlighted two trends: “First, there has been a dramatic increase in cancers related to radiation exposure, especially sarcoma, a very rare soft tissue cancer, and leukaemia. Secondly, the age at which cancer begins in an individual has been dropping rapidly, with incidents of breast cancer at 16 years of age, colon cancer at 8, and liposarcoma at 1.5.” Dr. Assad noted that 6% of the cancers reported occurred in the 11-20 age-range and another 18% between 21-30.

Finally, access to healthcare services remains a critical concern in many districts of Iraq and also in areas where people have very limited access to vaccination or nutrition services, particularly where the prevalence of chronic malnutrition is high. According to a survey done by the NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq (NCCI), in late 2009, the number of primary health care centres is insufficient in most Iraqi governorate especially in rural areas. Additionally, there is a lack of skilled health staff working in existing infrastructures.

Education

Around 18% of Iraq’s population above 9 years old is illiterate³¹ and illiteracy rates among women (25%) are over double those among men (11%)³². The illiteracy rate in rural areas is a serious problem with 35% illiterate adults compared to 19% in the urban population³³. Nearly 9 in 10 children under 15 do not attend primary schools regularly, primarily because of the distance to school or insecurity³⁴. A group of Iraqi humanitarian NGO representatives and human rights activists working with the International Non Governmental Organisation (INGO), Mercy Corps, in Kirkuk explained that, because of the recent improvement in security, the Iraqi military is no longer protecting schools in the city of Kirkuk. Yet, given the high rate of child abductions, parents are very concerned and some have now decided to keep their children home. Fourteen per cent of children are also out of school because they have no access to suitable schooling or

³⁰ The study was published by Basra University Medical College with input from researchers from the Iraqi Ministry of Health.

³¹ UN Human development report -2008.

³² The UN Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) -2008.

³³ COSIT and WFP Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis Report-2008.

³⁴ UN IAU Iraq Common Country Assessment -October 2009.

are obliged to work to contribute to household income³⁵. Different surveys³⁶ also indicate that enrolment of boys is systematically higher than girls, at all levels.

Education in Iraq is desperately lacking appropriate infrastructure, essential educational and pedagogic equipment and material, and qualified and experienced teachers. The lack of public schools and universities is a problem that dates back from before 2003, but the conflict has aggravated the situation. The United Nations report that more than 1 in 6 schools have been vandalized, damaged or destroyed³⁷. According to the Iraqi Ministry of Education, more than 23,000 schools are operating today, yet Iraq has less than 17,000 school buildings -so, there is a gap of nearly 6,000 facilities³⁸. Moreover, school premises are often in very bad condition and lack access to water, toilets and garbage containers. The shortages of school buildings and classrooms have led to the creation of 2 to 3 shifts in each school allowing some pupils only 2 to 3 hours of daily contact with teachers. In some part of Iraq, like in Kirkuk, most schools are now also ethnically segregated.

The poor quality of education is a significant factor in the high rates of student dropout both at the primary and secondary levels. In particular, the rate obtained through the Education Management Information System for the 2007/ 8 academic year highlights overcrowded classrooms and poor teaching capacities, while repetition rates have been forcing students with as much as 6 years of age difference to remain in the same classroom. Moreover, in some areas there are not enough schools that can provide adequate instruction in the language required by displaced children from other areas, (for instance: Arabic-speaking children in Northern Iraq).

Reform of the educational curriculum is also urgently needed. Most curricula have been in use for 3 or 4 decades without any real reform. The Ministry of education is incapable of reforming the curriculum in an appropriate way due to lack of capacity and experience.

The whole national education system needs to be considerably strengthened at national, governorate and district levels to ensure access to quality education.

Poverty and Economic Development

Twenty three per cent of Iraqis (almost 7 million) are living under the poverty line, on less than US\$ 2 per day³⁹. Unemployment remains at very high levels. Unemployment stands at 15%; around 27% of the labour force work less than 35 hours weekly; and 8.5% is underemployed⁴⁰. The population groups most affected by unemployment are women and youth.

Even if Iraq's economic growth has been positive during the last few years, it remains volatile, unsustainable and non-inclusive⁴¹. The Iraqi economy is oil dependant and

³⁵ World Food Programme - Iraq Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis - 2008.

³⁶ IHSES; CFSVA; MICS-III.

³⁷ UN IAU Iraq Common Country Assessment -October 2009.

³⁸ UN IAU Iraq Common Country Assessment -October 2009.

³⁹ World Bank the Iraqi Central, the Organisation for Statistics and Information Technology (COSIT); and the Kurdistan Regional Statistical Office (KRSO) - "Iraqi Households Socio-Economic Survey" -2007.

⁴⁰ The UN Labor Force Survey -2008.

⁴¹ IAU Common Country Assessment 2009 -October 2009

therefore highly vulnerable to oil price fluctuations⁴². The government's lack of capacity, the country's insecurity and insufficient resources for investment have impeded Iraq's economic diversification. It has marginalised economic sectors that traditionally contributed to growth and which offer greater employment opportunities than the oil sector does -such as agriculture and industry⁴³. Iraq's dependence on oil revenue has also created a system of patronage leading to weak participation of civil society and lack of transparency in the use of resources⁴⁴.

The economy in Iraq is also in a transition phase. Shifting from a state-run economy to free market -where the private sector could play a much greater role- will be a long process, which will require important reforms. This transition phase slackens and impedes effective planning. Today, the private sector is still very weak and as the situation is neither secure nor stable, investors remain very cautious. Most of the population continue to rely on the government to provide employment. The recent sharp drop in oil prices and the absence of other budget sources will make it harder for the government to continue employing more civil servants to meet the demand for jobs. High public sector salaries are actually straining the public budget, consuming over a third of planned government expenditures in 2009⁴⁵.

Trade unions, which should be at the heart of public debates to ensure that economic development and growth are translated into concrete improvements in people's lives, continue to find it very difficult to organise. Due to the continuation of Saddam Hussein-era labour laws, public sector workers are prevented from joining trade unions while many unions suffer continual harassment and interference from government, with the aim of weakening and splitting the union movement.⁴⁶

The presence of rich natural resources in Iraq has not translated into consistently high growth rates, and revenues are not maximized to create productive and decent work, better services or poverty reduction –which are the very foundations of social justice⁴⁷.

C) Vulnerable Populations

Those suffering most are, inevitably, Iraq's most vulnerable people: women, children and youth, IDPs, returnees, communities hosting displaced people, people with disabilities, the elderly, and people with no or limited access to basic services.

Women, children and youth represent the majority of the Iraqi population. Most of them live in precarious conditions and they are particularly affected by the lack of effective public services, unemployment, poverty, illnesses, violence and marginalisation.

⁴² Fluctuations in domestic revenues from oil sharpen political fault lines, which in turn fuel disagreement over the ownership and division of revenue sources - IAU Common Country Assessment 2009 –October 2009. -

⁴³ IAU Common Country Assessment 2009 –October 2009.

⁴⁴ AIU Common Country Assessment 2009 –October 2009.

⁴⁵ IAU Iraq Labour Force Analysis 2003-2008 / Ministry of Finance, Official Government of Iraq Federal Budget.

⁴⁶ International Trade Union Confederation. 2010. 2010 survey of trade union rights violations around the world. ITUC. May 2010. <http://survey.ituc-csi.org/+Iraq+.html>

⁴⁷ IAU Common Country Assessment 2009 –October 2009.

Women

As stated above, in many areas of Iraq preference is still given to boys' education with a direct impact on women's illiteracy rates which are over double those of men. The United Nations Inter-agency Information and Analysis Unit in Iraq indicates in their report "Iraq Labour Force Analysis 2003-2008" that only 17% of women participate in the labour force of which 23%, are unemployed. Those findings show the strong impact of social restrictions on women's employment. The high proportion of women who are either unemployed or discouraged from looking for a job means that women are at particular risk of poverty.

An estimated 1 to 3 million Iraqi households are headed by a woman⁴⁸ –most of who are widows. In order to support widows, the Iraqi government has developed a social welfare programme, which includes widows' pensions amounting to 50,000 to 120,000 IQD (US\$60 to 100) according to the number of dependant children. Widows can also claim a compensation for "spouse killed by terrorism"⁴⁹. But aid experts say that this allowance is insufficient -especially for widows in rural areas who usually have more children, less education and fewer employment opportunities. Moreover because of governmental institutions' lack of capacity, limited reach to many areas outside of Iraq's cities, overly-complicated application processes, and sometimes because of corruption, many widows and other welfare recipients do not receive their allowances.

A survey conducted by the INGO Oxfam and Iraqi NGO Al Amal in five governorates across the country showed that only 24% of vulnerable women-headed households interviewed had been receiving their widow's pension.⁵⁰ Another survey conducted by the International Committee of the Red Cross with a local partner organization showed that only 25% of vulnerable women interviewed in one Baghdad district had obtained the compensation for "Spouse killed by terrorism"⁵¹. Some Iraqi humanitarian NGOs complained about the ineffectiveness of this service to the Iraqi Commission on Public Integrity –which works with all the Iraqi Ministries. The Commission tried to address the problem, informed the ministries concerned and asked for improvement, but so far no noticeable change has occurred.

Today, it is urgent and necessary to provide sufficient financial support to female-headed households so that they can meet their family's vital needs, and so the hundreds of thousands of children they are supporting will be equipped to contribute to a stable Iraq in the years to come. But it is also critical to define and implement an appropriate longer-term strategy to empower women. Women need to become economically productive and autonomous so that they can meet their family needs sustainably, and participate more fully in Iraqi society. Women also have a fundamental role to play to ensure Iraq's recovery –as members of the labour force, by fostering peace and by rebuilding a sense of community. Since women represent more than 50% of the population, their participation is absolutely critical.

Violence against women remains a very serious problem in Iraq. The problem of domestic violence against women is poorly documented because such incidents are

⁴⁸ The International Committee of the Red Cross – Iraq: Women in War – March 2009.

⁴⁹ 2.5 million IQD (42300) for spouse of victims of terrorism since 2003 –The International Committee of the Red Cross – Iraq: Women in War – March 2009.

⁵⁰ Oxfam – In Her Own Words: Iraqi women talk about their greatest concerns and challenges – March 2009.

⁵¹ The International Committee of the Red Cross – Iraq: Women in War – March 2009.

usually underreported –this is mainly due to fear of social stigma, reprisals and lack of confidence in the authorities’ will and capacity to provide the support required. Yet, it is widely acknowledged that Iraq suffers from a wide prevalence of domestic violence⁵².

Other types of violence affecting women are the so-called “honour killings” or “killing for honourable motives” (which are, to a certain extent, tolerated by both society and Iraqi law), and the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM). In its 2010 annual report, the INGO Human Rights Watch, reports that FGM is practiced mainly in Kurdish areas of Iraq, and that reportedly 60 percent of Kurdish women have undergone this procedure -although the KRG claims that the figures are exaggerated. Girls and women receive conflicting and inaccurate messages from public officials on its consequences⁵³. The Kurdistan parliament in 2008 passed a draft law outlawing FGM, but the ministerial decree necessary to implement it, expected in February 2009, was inexplicably cancelled⁵⁴.

The capacity and power of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs is extremely limited and clearly lacking support. In February 2009, the former minister for women's affairs, Nawal al-Samarai, resigned: "I have only an office, not a full ministry, with insufficient resources and limited authority - My mission is very hard, if not impossible, to achieve", she said.⁵⁵. In order to achieve progress, the Iraqi government still needs to show much more political will and commitment in addressing women’s issues. Besides, the comparison of Iraqi women's political reality versus their social and economic reality, can provide a good indication as to where the country is now. Even if Iraqi women have now 25% of political seats in the Iraqi parliament, most of them still lack basic knowledge about democratic governance. Prior to the elections, the INGO Mercy Corps launched in its women’s literacy centres in nine governorates a series of lectures on democracy, governance and elections. In ThiQar province, for instance, only 39.9% of the women surveyed before the lecture thought that in a democracy more than one person is involved in decision making. However, women role in community based organisation is really significant and the findings of an NCCI/UNDP joint national dialogue programme⁵⁶ indicate that their participation in community initiatives and NGOs programmes is higher than that of men.

Children and Youth

Currently, the Iraqi population presents a broad-based youthful age composition -with 43% under the age of 15⁵⁷. But this youth/adolescent bulge can become a concern in the context of a fragile state, few economic opportunities and poor service delivery. Severe schooling disruptions, poor quality education, violence, war and displacement have certainly had a very strong impact on children’s well-being, mental health and development. Other external factors like malnutrition, child labour and early marriage also inhibit child and youth education and development. Therefore, the new generation is not well equipped to enter adult life.

⁵² Various government’, UN’ and human rights NGOs’ reports indicate the wide prevalence of domestic violence.

⁵³ Human Rights World Report 2010 –Iraq, 20 January 2010.

⁵⁴ Human Rights World Report 2010 –Iraq, 20 January 2010.

⁵⁵ Iraq: Minister of Women's Affairs tenders resignation, IRIN/UNHCR –9 February 2009.

⁵⁶ This programme was implemented in 2008/2009.

⁵⁷ UN Population Division 2008.

As stated above, children and youth are lacking access to education and the quality of the education provided is very poor. For the majority of Iraqi children, schooling has been severely disrupted during the war for security and displacement reasons, and many of them have missed several years of education. There is therefore also a need to reintegrate all children that dropped out or missed several years of schooling.

Children have also been severely impacted by poverty. Chronic malnutrition also affects one in six children below the age of 5⁵⁸. Child labour is increasing -as a lot of children have lost their father, and the government is not able to address their needs. Besides, because of poverty, parents also often ask their children –particularly boys- to help to financially support the family instead of going to school. UNICEF estimates that 1 in 9 children aged 5 to 14 years old work⁵⁹. Children are polishing shoes; selling in streets; pushing carriages; begging... In Tameen governorate, more than 900 children have been reported begging in the streets in the city of Kirkuk -half of this number are IDP children and up to 100 orphans are included⁶⁰.

Youth unemployment is high and increasing: 57% of those aged between 15 and 29 are unemployed and 450,000 new young men are entering the labour market each year⁶¹. So Iraq's youth is increasingly vulnerable to poverty. Appropriate long term investment needs to be made to empower them to take part in the country's recovery process and development and to claim their rights. If their potential is not harnessed, Iraq's youth could become a significantly destabilising factor -as young uneducated, unemployed and desperate young men and women are easy target for those seeking to mobilize violence.

Furthermore, most unemployed young people do not have any social activities. The humanitarian INGO Mercy Corps runs a psychosocial and community support programme for the Youth in Baghdad. In a recent meeting -which gathered about 15 young men-, when asked about their availability to engage in community work, they all explained they were fully available –as they had nothing else to do. Another group of Iraqi young people –aged between 20 to 25 years old- who participate in the youth programme run by the Mercy Corps in Sulaymania, explained that most young Iraqis would like to leave Iraq because Iraq's future remains so uncertain. However, the findings of one NCCI's programmes⁶² indicate that youth's participation in community initiatives and NGOs programmes is higher than that of older generations.

Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and Returnees

More than 4 million Iraqis are still displaced. The total number of IDPs in the country today remains one of the highest in the world, at 2.7 million⁶³. Up to 1.7 million Iraqis

⁵⁸ UNICEF Iraq Statistics 2003-2008.

⁵⁹ UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006 (MICS-III).

⁶⁰ UNICEF Humanitarian Action Update Iraq 17 Feb 2009.

⁶¹ UN IAU Iraq Labour Force Analysis 2003-2008.

⁶² NCCI National Dialogue Programme Report- Phase Two; The right to Live in Safety Campaign- 2008.

⁶³ This figure includes 1.2 million who were displaced before 2006 and the 1.5 displaced since 2006. UNHCR Iraq, Monthly Statistical Update on Return, October 2009, p. 1. See also Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, "Little new displacement but around 2.8 million Iraqis remain internally displaced", March 2010. IDMC maintains an internet database on situation of internal displacement in Iraq available at <http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/iraq>

still live in neighbouring countries –mainly in Syria and Jordan⁶⁴. Despite some security gains, there has been no large-scale return so far and according to the UNHCR, the monthly IDP returns has even been slower in 2009 than in 2008⁶⁵. In total, less than 25% of displaced people have returned (approximately 20% of IDPs and 5% of refugees)⁶⁶.

Returnees face difficult conditions, including violence and lack of access to essential services, putting them at risk of being displaced once more.⁶⁷ Before encouraging any IDPs and refugees to return to their places of origin, significant progress must be made in terms of stability and living conditions (access to housing, to essential services, to employment must improve) -a premature massive return of IDPs and refugees would likely have a negative impact on the country's recovery process and stability. Besides, returns are difficult to manage in a country that has largely become segregated along ethnic and sectarian lines. According to IOM surveys, there are notable trends in the ethnic composition of IDPs at the governorate level. For instance, the majority of IDPs that fled their homes in Basra are Sunni Muslims, yet IDPs currently residing in Basra are Shia Muslims, predominantly from Baghdad.

A substantial number of IDPs and refugees have indicated that they have no intentions of returning home in the foreseeable future. Among Iraqi IDPs polled by IOM in 2009, 26% would prefer local integration and 20% wish to settle in another country. In some Southern Iraq provinces, up to 94% of IDPs, mainly from Central Iraq, would prefer not to return⁶⁸. A similar trend was observed with the refugees. Ninety two per cent of the refugees pooled in 2009 by the UNHCR in Syria and Jordan said that they were not planning to return to Iraq at that time. Some returning refugees explained that they returned to Iraq not because they voluntarily chose to do so, but rather because they could no longer cope economically in countries of asylum. Some IDPs in the North of Iraq also chose to return because they run out of resources or because of cultural differences leading to lack of integration.

Yet, many refugees and IDPs are now more vulnerable as their resources diminish and the resources of the host communities are strained. Public services, such as primary healthcare, are often overwhelmed in locations where a great number of IDPs or returnees are concentrated. The most pressing needs of IDPs and returnees nation-wide are access to decent housing and employment. Over a fifth (22%) of IDPs are living in a public building or makeshift shelter, with two-thirds of family members in employment.⁶⁹ The unemployment rate is particularly acute among IDPs in the South as well as Kirkuk⁷⁰. The main protection concerns of the returning IDPs and refugees include restitution and/or rehabilitation of property and access to the full range of rights in accordance with the applicable national and international legal standards.

Displacement due to drought is another crisis that afflicted some communities especially in rural areas. Many farmers and livestock breeders from Duhok, Ninewa, Diyala, Anbar,

⁶⁴ Based on estimates provided by regional governments. Of these, about 250,000 are currently registered with the UNHCR.

⁶⁵ UNHCR Iraq October 2009 Monthly Statistical Update on Return.

⁶⁶ UNHCR Monthly Statistical Return Update for August 2009.

⁶⁷ IOM Iraq, Emergency Needs Assessment, October 2009.

⁶⁸ IOM; Governorate profiles.

⁶⁹ UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) - IAU World Habitat Day Factsheet; IOM Governorate Profiles, July/August 2009.

⁷⁰ IOM Governorates profiles, July/August 2009.

Missan and Muthana governorates were internally displaced as drought hit their villages. Many of them are unemployed as they lost their livestock or left farms on which their livelihood was dependant: for example, 50 villages were completely abandoned in Baldruz district in Diyala governorate. Drought was also the key cause of salinity increase in Basra which resulted in the displacement of nearly 150 families in Fow district. According to OCHA-Iraq and the UNHCR there is no statistics on the number of drought driven IDPs.

Whether it is a matter of transport home, rebuilding property and livelihoods, or starting a permanent life in a different location, IDP and returnee families remain a vulnerable population in Iraq and are in urgent need of assistance to make their choices sustainable.

People With Disabilities (PWDs)

The Iraqi disabled community has increased greatly as a result of the violence and wars seen in Iraq, and the huge number of landmines and ERW that are to be found throughout the country. One local NGO based in Fallujah estimates that the fighting there between Coalition forces and Insurgents/ Al Qaeda has significantly injured the civilian population, disabling approximately 4,000 people. Yet, there are no agreed numbers or reliable statistics yet available. In February 2010, the international Arabic newspaper, Asharq Al-Awsat, reported that a study conducted by the organisation Disabled Peoples' International, in collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Health found that there are more than one million disabled people in Iraq suffering varying degrees of disability. This study revealed that 1 out of every 25 Iraqi citizens is disabled⁷¹. The large disabled population may be attributed to a variety of factors: the recent conflict, but also the war with Iran, 16 years of stringent economic sanctions, and genetic causes.

PWDs are a traditionally marginalised segment of any society, and this is particularly true in Iraq, where PWDs are often kept hidden away in the back rooms of homes with little interaction with society and even less opportunity to develop their talents and contribute to their communities. Most people with disabilities are actually socially and economically excluded because of a lack of infrastructure, medical care, prosthetic equipment and social and rehabilitation services, making it difficult for PWDs to engage in daily activities. Besides, as Iraqis have usually had very limited interaction with PWDs, there is a general lack of public understanding of their abilities. Therefore, PWDs are often met with fear or with misinformed stereotypes. Traditional beliefs in Iraq have even suggested that disability affects those who have done something wrong. Others view disability only as a medical issue, disregarding the many other attitudinal and physical barriers that the disabled face in accessing education, employment, and full participation in society. So there is an urgent need to empower PWDs to educate the public and advocate for their rights.

Yet, while the number of people with disabilities has considerably increased, the support for this group has decreased. Overwhelmed by emergency issues, the Iraqi government has relegated PWD issues to a low priority. The Iraqi Alliance of Disability Organisations (which consists of 30 disability organisations from across the country) explained that the Iraqi government has so many urgent issues and needs to address that

⁷¹ Iraqis Lose Their Limbs in Endless Series of Wars, by Huda Al-Jasim – in Asharq Al-Awsat, 08/02/2010.

very little support is provided for people with disabilities. In addition, the government has very little knowledge about how to support this group.

2. Major concerns in Iraq current context

Iraq is presently at a difficult juncture. Some progress has been made, but it remains a very fragile state. Iraq now needs to consolidate its political and security gains into a full and sustainable recovery. Yet, as stated above, the country still faces several major challenges on the road to recovery, and the international community's support to help Iraq meet those challenges is absolutely critical.

The government of Iraq does not yet have the capacity to deliver essential services to the population effectively. Its capacity to perform its main duties and to deliver quality services has been severely affected by wars, massive displacement, brain drain, the de-Ba'athification process⁷², corruption, and decades of sanctions. There is now a severe shortage of qualified and experienced professionals, particularly among civil servants, as well as a lack of infrastructure and equipment, that severely impacts the capacity of the public services to deliver. During the last few years, international donors have been investing in building the government's capacity, but this is a long term process and, in the meantime, the population's human rights and needs remain unmet. Civil society's capacity to help fill the gap in terms of service delivery -while the Iraqi government capacity is being built- is not maximised. Yet, if the population's most fundamental rights and needs are not sufficiently taken into consideration and effectively addressed, it will be very difficult to achieve any sustainable peace in Iraq⁷³. Whilst building the Iraqi government's capacity is an important objective, consolidating peace is a priority, and ensuring that citizens are part of the process of rebuilding the state is a critical condition for stability, peace and long term and sustainable development.

Today, the national civil society in general and the NGO community in particular, is not strong enough to effectively support the fledgling democracy in Iraq. As international donors and the US government in particular have already started reducing their financial support, and more budget cuts are expected after the foreign troops' withdrawal, Iraqi civil society will be endangered. In the last three years many Iraqi NGOs stopped their operations due to lack of funds. According to a survey conducted by the NCCI, very few national NGOs were established in comparison to the first 5 years following the 2003 war, and many had to close down. According to the same survey, one of the main obstacles faced by Iraqi NGOs is the lack or difficult access to neutral fund.⁷⁴

Public corruption and lack of accountability are two other major problems in Iraq that can be found at all levels. The NGO Transparency International placed Iraq fifth from the bottom of its 2009 ranking of perceptions of public corruption. The Iraq Integrity Commission⁷⁵ 2008 report⁷⁶ argues that while the number of corruption cases it has dealt

⁷² The de-Ba'athification process –actively promoted by the Coalition Provisional Authority in order to remove members of Saddam Hussein's party from power- virtually guaranteed that the few remaining skilled civil servants with experience in Iraq were prohibited from contributing to the construction of new structures and systems of governance capable of meeting the needs of citizens.

⁷³ In October 2009, the Associated Press reported that "Persistent deprivation got Iraqis in Baghdad streets to chant, "No water, no electricity in the country of oil and the two rivers."

⁷⁴ NCCI NNGO Mapping-2010.

⁷⁵ One of Iraq's three main anti-corruption bodies.

with has gone up each year, very few actually lead to convictions⁷⁷. The Iraq Integrity Commission explains that some suspects fled while others were protected by powerful officials or by an amnesty law meant to foster reconciliation between Iraq's feuding Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims. Iraq also suffers from weak implementation of the rule of law and impunity. Inadequate and poorly implemented legal and security frameworks and the vulnerability of relevant institutions to political and criminal interference are key factors affecting the Iraqi state's capacity to exert authority, to rule by the law to protect human rights, and citizens' opportunities to access justice⁷⁸. Not surprisingly, rampant public corruption –in addition to poor public service delivery- has severely undermined people's trust in the state. The lack of effective mechanisms to ensure citizens' participation in wider social, political and economic processes and decision making prevents a more effective and accountable public administration. The Iraqi government's accountability is still very poor. It is therefore crucial to invest in strengthening the emerging Iraqi civil society which can hold it accountable and contribute to the fight against corruption.

Finally, despite its oil wealth, Iraq's revenue is presently suffering from a depressed oil price and the country faces a financing gap of close to US\$ 5bn until the end of 2011. Iraq relies on oil revenues for as much as 90% of its income and desperately needs funds to rebuild after decades of conflict and sanctions. Furthermore, the high operational cost of the government is impeding any serious development process: 70% of the national budget is allocated to the running cost of the public sector whereas only 30% of the budget is allocated to development⁷⁹. So the government of Iraq recently took out a US\$ 3.5bn loan from the International Monetary Fund. This loan will certainly be helpful in the short term, but Iraq is still facing a financing gap of US\$ 1.5bn until the end of 2011. Reduction in the government's oil revenue will affect the allocation for operational expenditures on basic public services and social safety nets including the food Public Distribution System (PDS). This is happening at a time when the population is already suffering from a severe lack of access to essential services.

The international community's efforts to address humanitarian and development needs and improve the situation in Iraq have also been hindered by the limited presence and involvement of the United Nations in the country. After the August 19, 2003 Canal Hotel Bombing – which resulted in the death of the UN Secretary General's Special Representative in Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and 21 of his colleagues – the United Nations found it necessary to relocate to Amman, Jordan and limit their physical presence in Iraq. Besides, the UN have established very close relations with the MNF-I, which ensure their security during transportation and on sites. Seven years on, the UN Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for Iraq is still based in Amman, Jordan and the UN still lack visible or viable presence in Iraq -especially at the community level. International UN staff members in Iraq are predominantly confined to the Green Zone in Baghdad and the UN compound in Erbil⁸⁰. This has critical implications for its ability to accurately assess humanitarian needs and monitor projects on the ground as well as its credibility and reputation vis a vis the Iraqi people (many of

⁷⁶ This report was released in December 2009.

⁷⁷ Commission of Integrity, "Annual report for 2008," December 2009.

⁷⁸ IAU Common Country Assessment 2009 –October 2009.

⁷⁹ The Iraqi Council of Representatives: <http://www.parliament.iq/>

⁸⁰ Current UN international staffing levels are limited due to ceilings imposed on numbers of international staff in both Baghdad and Erbil, although UN Iraq has requested that the ceilings for international staff inside Iraq be increased for 2009.

whom believe that the UN has turned its back on Iraq). Furthermore, the UN OCHA in Iraq lacks independence. Humanitarian assistance should be neutral, impartial and independent –which means that it should not depend on political considerations, constraints and objectives. Yet, in addition to its political and reconstruction mandate, the Security Council Resolution 1990, also gives to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) the mandate and responsibility for humanitarian affairs. Consequently, the UN OCHA has difficulties to fill the role of an apolitical coordinator of humanitarian assistance. So, the UN still have serious difficulties today to ensure humanitarian and development coordination in Iraq because of security challenges and major restrictions and its lack of independence -politically and from the military forces.

3. International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and Civil Society Response

INGOs have been playing a significant role in providing humanitarian and development assistance to vulnerable people –and some have been working in Iraq since the mid-1990s. Since 2003, working in partnership with local Iraqi communities or civil society organisations, many INGOs have consistently found effective ways to ensure adequate provision of emergency assistance and to involve Iraqis in reconstruction and development programmes that contribute to the country recovery and stabilisation. Most INGOs do not use armed protection, preferring to utilise a security model that relies on seeking acceptance and support of the communities where they work.

INGOs are now the main implementing partners for UN agencies in Iraq. The engagement and presence of INGOs in Iraq is absolutely necessary for several reasons. There are still huge humanitarian and development needs in Iraq that the government does not yet have the capacity to effectively address. INGOs possess the capacity and experience which the Iraqi civil society needs, and this capacity, experience and professionalism cannot be transferred to the Iraqi civil society unless both parties work in partnership in the field. Working hand in hand with the Iraqi civil society, INGOs use community-led approaches and development methods which enable grass-root participation. Their approaches and methods increase access to communities, build capacity, encourages positive interaction between citizens and government, and contribute to stability. They involve community members in a way that promotes their ownership over decision making and builds the knowledge and skills to carry out decisions in complex tasks. Grass-root participation and sense of ownership is fundamental to ensure an adequate and sustainable recovery process.

Iraqi NGOs made a significant contribution to delivering humanitarian and development assistance, channelling both national and international resources. Most Iraqi NGOs were established as security conditions began to deteriorate and funds increased (2003-2005)⁸¹. With little or no prior experience, Iraqi NGOs accepted high levels of risk and adapted to deteriorating conditions and changing needs. Women and IDPs were among the main beneficiary groups. Most programmes addressed needs related both to post-2003 conflict and long-term deprivation from basic services dating back to the Iran-Iraq War. However, as the Iraqi NGOs still lack capacity and experience, the mentoring role of INGOs remains critical to empower the Iraqi civil society to effectively respond to the needs of their communities.

⁸¹ NCCI-NNGO Mapping-2010.

Like all key stakeholders involved in aid delivery in Iraq, INGOs and NGOs also face multiple obstacles in responding to the needs. However the key comparative advantages that they have are their streamlined approaches, and their ability to react quickly to respond to the needs, to develop strategies and ensure sustainability by:

- Adapting their modus operandi and activities to the volatile context;
- Building trust and acceptance with the communities they serve;
- Involving communities in the processes of deciding upon, investing in, implementing and maintaining projects that meet their most pressing needs.

This has allowed INGOs to maintain their capacities and expand their services and assistance throughout the country, while building the capacity of national NGOs. Today, they are one of the last humanitarian actors which still have access and work directly with Iraqi communities. A 2009 survey conducted by the INGO, Mercy Corps, in 4 governorates⁸² shows that community-led development is perceived by Iraqi community members and leaders as more effective, and INGOs are the actors perceived as most capable, effective and trustworthy in terms of community development⁸³.

At a time when INGOs are planning to redeploy or expand their activities in Iraq and when Iraqi NGOs have shown their ability and willingness to respond to the population needs but are still facing major challenges⁸⁴, the decline in the international community support will have serious consequences for the most vulnerable populations who are the main beneficiaries of INGOs' and NGOs' assistance. As we have seen previously, even the most pressing needs are not met yet and INGOs and NGOs who are presently carrying out the bulk of the humanitarian and development assistance to the Iraqi population will not be able to continue providing aid without a significant support of the international community.

The Iraqi NGOs community does not have yet the maturity, capacity and means to take on the main humanitarian and development challenges alone. More cooperation and partnership with the international community is needed to build a comprehensive, strong and independent civil society in Iraq. It is also the responsibility of the international community to pave the way for the Iraqi NGOs to improve their competence and adhere to international standards, to enable the emergence of a thriving, rightly directed and sustainable NGOs community, which would guarantee fully fledged democracy and be a key partner of the Iraqi authorities in the future.

4. Recommendations

Recommendations to the British government, the other EU Member States and European Commission:

1) Since the government of Iraq does not have the capacity yet to respond effectively to the population needs and while its capacity is being built, provide sufficient political and

⁸² Basra; Thi Qar; Missan; and Muthanna.

⁸³ Learning for Effective Aid Policy and Practice (LEAPP) Executive Summary –May 2010.

⁸⁴ Their capacity needs to be reinforced, but they are also facing challenges such as the lack of cooperation with the authorities and the lack of community understanding of NGOs' role - Outcomes from the Iraqi NGOs mapping done by the NCCI over 383 NGOs operating throughout the country, April 2010.

financial support for humanitarian and development agencies operating in Iraq, including INGOs and NGOs, to enable them to effectively fill the gap, respond to the population most pressing needs and contribute to the country sustainable recovery and development.

2) As Iraq is not yet stable, millions of Iraqis are still displaced, and in addition to the impact of ongoing violence in several parts of the country Iraq is also exposed to environmental hazards, allocate sufficient and flexible funding and especially mobilize more significantly ECHO funds to enable humanitarian agencies operating in Iraq, including INGOs and NGOs to address the persisting humanitarian needs effectively.

3) Press the United Nations to take the lead to develop, in coordination with the Government of Iraq, humanitarian and development INGOs and NGOs and all the major donors, a long-term strategy to efficiently address Iraq development needs and to facilitate and support an Iraqi-led recovery process.

4) Encourage the UN to establish effective coordination mechanisms between the key stakeholders involved in aid and development in Iraq –Iraq national and regional governmental institutions, the international organisations, including INGOs and NGOs, and the donor community.

5) Encourage and support the United Nations to play a full and robust role in improving and coordinating humanitarian and development assistance in Iraq, by:

- Given the recent improvements in the security conditions, encouraging the UN humanitarian agencies to continue increasing their operational presence inside Iraq, especially at communities' level.

- Pressing for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to regain an independent role;

6) Ensure, by adequately channelling and effectively monitoring the funds allocated, that they are reaching the most vulnerable persons –Women; children and youth; IDPs and returnees; host communities; people with disabilities; elderly persons; and people with no or limited access to most basic services.

7) Reinforce the Iraqi civil society to strengthen Iraq's governance, the government's accountability, and to facilitate grass root participation in the recovery process-, by

- Supporting Civil Society Organisations' projects implementation;

- Building Civil Society Organisations' capacity in terms of management; fundraising; and advocacy;

- Promoting the establishment of an appropriate legal framework that will facilitate civil society work and development;

- Providing specific training for the Government of Iraq on the civil society's role, added-value, and on ways to engage with Civil Society Organisations constructively;

- Encouraging the Government of Iraq to establish appropriate and effective consultation mechanisms with Civil Society Organisations.

8) Build the capacity of the local government so that it can function more effectively in a decentralised context.

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