



United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)
بعثة الأمم المتحدة لمساعدة العراق (يونامي)

**Speech of Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for
Iraq
Jerzy Skuratowicz
At the Opening Ceremony of
“The Iraqi Educational TV” & “The School Curricula Website”
23 February 2011, Baghdad**

Your Excellency Dr. Mohammad Ali Tameem, Minister of Education

Mr. Jobst von Kirchmann, Head of Cooperation at the European Union

Mr. Ghazi Mutlaq, Head of Curricula Directorate

Mr. Salem Nasrawi Head of Education TV

Distinguished guests and colleagues,

Today is a special day for the United Nations and for our Iraqi partners as we are here to mark a success story of the constructive partnership of the UN family, represented by UNESCO, and the Government of Iraq, represented by the Ministry of Education, and the European Union who funded the project, in identifying a problem and then finding a creative solution to that problem. Today we celebrate the launch of Educational Television and the Iraqi Curricula Website.

UNESCO and the Ministry have harnessed the power of the information communication technologies to ensure that Iraqi schoolchildren, no matter where they are in the world, can have access to an Iraqi education. We know that some children cannot get to school every day and that in some cases families have gone abroad and their children do not have access to education. Today, Iraq says to these families that you are not forgotten. Children in grades 6, 9 and 12 can continue their learning through these new tools.

Educational Television will be available regionally as a satellite broadcaster. The Website provides access globally, and is the first of its kind.

I would like to commend UNESCO and the Ministry of Education for the creative initiative of establishing and using distance learning tools, namely the Iraqi Educational TV and the Iraqi Curricula website. These two programs were designed to overcome time and space as well as the other challenges the education sector in Iraq has been experiencing. These challenges include decrease in enrolment, lack of qualified teachers and schools, lack of educational resources, outdated curricula and outdated teaching methods. The innovative projects we are opening today will be instrumental in alleviating these challenges by producing quality educational TV and electronic lessons and programs, based on the Iraqi curricula and broadcasting them on the Iraqi educational TV station and the Iraqi curricula website. I would like to emphasize here that these programs will not be limited to school curricula but will also include the promotion of noble social values, human rights, gender equality and many other themes that are of particular significance in preparing and equipping the Iraqi youth to be the leaders of tomorrow.

These two pioneering projects could not have been timelier as they not only represent a key strategic priority area for our joint work, that is education, but they also target a key priority category of the Iraqi population, that is children and youth, who will be the leaders of the future.

This commitment to education is about making a down payment on tomorrow. The progression is simple: education leads to opportunity, opportunity leads to progress, and progress leads to a brighter future for Iraq and the region.

Today, we see that the region is in turmoil. People in many countries, including Iraq, are calling on their leaders to give them the tools so that they can be part of the process of building a better tomorrow. They want to control their destinies. Iraq is leading the way as it strengthens its democratic institutions. Iraq has indeed come a long way in its quest to build a democratic, stable and prosperous State. However, the challenges yet to be met are many, in particular in the development sector. We all should recognize that the transition of Iraq from decades of dictatorship, war and sanctions to a stable and prosperous democracy is not an easy process that can be achieved overnight.

However, it is important for the Iraqi authorities to address, as a matter of priority, the legitimate aspirations of the Iraqi people, in particular the provision of basic services, and economic and social development as a means of ensuring a peaceful, prosperous future for the country and its entire people.

I would like to reiterate that the United Nations will continue to stand with Iraq and its people as an impartial partner and help them in their quest for sustainable prosperity and peace.

We stand ready to assist the Iraqi authorities in addressing the needs of its communities with programs like the ones we are launching today, along with other remedies that can address immediate concerns while the hard work of finding permanent solutions continues.

Education is a permanent solution.

Thank you