



Housing and Shelter Sector Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter

ISSUE I

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Mr. Istabraq Al-Shouk, Senior Deputy Minister/ Ministry of Construction and Housing, talks about the Iraq Housing Sector



Mr. Istabraq Al-Shouk



Saba'a Abkar Complex, Baghdad

Photos: Ministry of Construction & Housing

Prior to 2003, the Iraq housing sector suffered for three decades from several problems that caused the need for housing to increase for many reasons, the most important being the long period of neglect from the government. Other reasons include demographical, economical and social - this has led to a rise in the housing need for over 300,000 housing units annually until 2015.

In keeping with the provision in the new Iraqi Constitution for securing adequate housing for all Iraqi citizens, the Government of National Unity has adopted it as a major goal in its programme of

work for this period.

The Ministry of Construction and Housing (MoCH) has been working hard to address these problems through formulating short and long term plans, such as:

1. Construction of low cost housing complexes for poor and low income sections of the society, financed from the general budget. Presently, there are 30 housing complexes (including two slum upgrading projects) in the various Iraqi governorates being built by the State Commission of Housing, under the MoCH.
2. Developing and supporting the Housing Finance sector by creating the Iraq Housing Fund to lend to citizens, as well as mortgage and investment companies.

3. Cooperating with international organizations, in particular, with UN-HABITAT to strengthen capacities of the staff of the Housing Ministry and other sectoral ministries and establishing the Training and Knowledge Centre, a GIS department and providing them with necessary equipment.

4. Addressing the absence of a clear vision and policy, the Ministry held its first National Conference of Housing (14-15 Jan 2009) that recommended the urgent need to formulate a comprehensive National Housing Policy. To that end, we are now working in cooperation with UN-HABITAT to formulate policies and required strategies to implement them.

Iraq National Housing Policy

The National Housing Policy is an important output of the Housing and Shelter Sector in the UNCT Assistance Strategy. The UN-HABITAT led process was launched at the National Housing Conference organized by The Iraqi Ministry of Construction and Housing at Baghdad on 14 and 15 January 2009 that drew wide participation from various national ministries, the Iraqi Parliament, banking and private sectors and the International Community. Over two days, participants discussed the challenges and future directions of the housing sector in Iraq. The Conference featured presentations from various ministries involved in housing delivery and technical specialists from UN-HABITAT. The need for the government to

partner with civil society in policy making and strategy development processes to enable communities to overcome the devastation of war and conflict, and the need for hard decisions,



patience and long term commitments from all actors including the international community were among the salient points of Ms. Anna K.

Tibajuka's (the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT) message, which also committed UN-HABITAT support for policy and institutional development and building the necessary capacities to improve housing delivery.

Speaking on behalf of SRSF Staffan de Mistura, the UN Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator Ms. Simona Marinescu welcomed the successful preparation of the Iraq Housing Market Study and the pilot sub national housing strategies which are key sectoral targets encapsulated in the International Compact with Iraq. Continuing such concerted efforts in revitalizing the housing sector will also enable displaced families to return and encourage young people to stay and build their lives inside the country.

Sector Lead: UN-HABITAT
Sector Deputy: UNHCR
Members: IOM, UNDP, ESCWA, UN OCHA, ACTED, CHF, DRC, ICRC, IMC, InterSOS, IR, IRD, JEN, LIFE for Relief and Development, Mercy Hands, MRDS, NCA, NCCI, Qandil, and RI

IRD Shelter Rehabilitation and Repair Projects

IRD implemented two shelter rehabilitation and repair projects for vulnerable returnee families in Baghdad, through USAID/OFDA Humanitarian Assistance to Iraq (HAI) Program funds. One project is

for 50 houses in Al-Hurriya (Al-Kadhmya sub-district of Karkh) and the other for 58 houses in Sabe' Al-Boor (Taji sub-district of Karkh).

In addition to these two projects targeting returnees, IRD also responded to the shelter needs of families continuing in displacement by implementing five projects in Al-Anbar governorate, to address basic shelter conditions for 325



Photos: IRD

Living conditions for IDP families in Abu Sderah village before IRD's intervention.



An IDP enters his new home

displaced families (1,966 individuals). These projects included the distribution of shelter repair kits to 303 families and the construction of additional rooms to provide increased covered living space for 22 families living with host families.

Expanded Humanitarian Response Fund (ERF)

The Expanded Humanitarian Response Fund (ERF) is managed by OCHA and has a maximum ceiling of \$400,000 per proposal. Proposals accepted under the ERF should fall into one of the following objectives:

- Save lives or protect threatened livelihoods
- Meet critical short term humanitarian needs
- Respond to sudden complex humanitarian emergencies

The Sector is involved in the very first phase of the approval, being responsible for pointing out any overlapping with other humanitarian actors or with the Government; for assessing the relevance of the intervention against UN priorities/strategies (UNCT Assistance Strategy, CAP etc) and for providing feedback on the technical aspects of

the proposed activities, including on the budget. The Sector provides, within four working days from the receipt of the proposal, a written note to the ERF Technical



Review Committee with all the above mentioned information. All the members of the SOT are strongly encouraged to participate in this review process.

In the period January-March 2009 the ERF had 5 ongoing shelter interventions - namely provision of household and W&S non-food items - (2 in Diyala, 1 Baghdad, 1 Kirkuk and 1 Anbar) that reached 1,853 IDP, 498 returnee, and 1,380 host community families, as well as 2,000 orphans. The total funding for the above mentioned interventions was equal to USD 680,564. One project was rejected by the Sector, due to overlapping with previous UN activities.

For any additional information please visit the ERF webpage at www.ochairaq.org (Charter and application templates are all downloadable from there) or contact Lina Sunna, NGO Grant Focal Point, at sunna@un.org.

“1,853 IDP, 498 returnee, and 1,380 host community families, as well as 2,000 orphans were assisted through the ERF”

UN-HABITAT annual programme review and planning meeting, Dead-Sea, 8 to 10 March 2009

UN-HABITAT, Housing and Shelter Sector Lead, held its annual programme review and planning meeting from 8 to 10 March 2009. The key objectives of this meeting were to, jointly with Iraqi partners: 1) review key results and lessons learnt from 2008; and 2) review the draft UN-HABITAT Country Programme Document 2009 – 2011, which is aligned with the Results Frameworks of the UN Assistance Strategy. The meeting was attended by the Iraqi counterparts: Ministries of



Photo: UN-HABITAT

Planning and Development Cooperation, Construction and Housing, Education, and

Municipalities and Public Works, and KRG officials. Ministry of Displacement and Migration could not attend due to other engagements. In the discussions with the Ministry of Construction and Housing the following priority areas for SOT support were expressed: a) rural housing, b) governorate level housing strategies, and c) studies and surveys in the housing and construction sectors. The ministry has agreed in principle to co-finance future projects and programmes.

Emergency Shelter Cluster (ESC) Training Workshop, Amman, 30 March to 3 April 2009



Photo: UN-HABITAT

In the context of the IASC Humanitarian Reform, UNHCR and IFRC, as co-leads of the Global Emergency Shelter Cluster (ESC), organized a training workshop for the

Emergency Shelter Cluster Coordinators in Amman, Jordan from 30 March - 3 April, 2009. To date similar workshops for the ESC coordinators were held in Geneva, Panama, Bangkok, Dakar, and Entebbe.

The workshop was attended by different UN agencies and international organizations from different countries – UNHCR, UN-HABITAT, NRC, Mercy Corps, Shelter Centre Geneva, Red Cross, IFRC, CARE, Habitat for Humanity, and IOM.

The main purpose of the workshop was to equip participants to lead and coordinate Emergency Shelter Clusters in the field, so as to provide a predictable and quality emergency shelter response. The workshop focused on the IASC

Humanitarian Reform and the cluster approach, Emergency Shelter Cluster leadership and coordination: knowledge, skills and attitudes, emergency shelter options, standards and related cross-cutting issues relevant to the ESC (e.g. rights-based interventions and community based approaches). The workshop also raised participants' awareness of shelter options issues, current thinking relevant to the coordination of emergency shelter responses, and information management, and how to establish network and contacts with potential ESC leaders.

Land Allocation for IDPs and Returnee Low-Cost Housing Construction in Iraqi Cities, Amman, 8 to 9 January 2009

The Shelter SOT, through UN-HABITAT, organised a workshop for UN Agencies and Iraqi stakeholders (ministries and members of the Iraqi civil society) on 8 and 9 January to discuss land allocation for housing IDPs and Returnees. In conclusion, the participants agreed on a housing assistance

criteria for beneficiaries, guidelines for housing options and a time frame that ensures a rapid land allocation and housing of the IDPs and Returnees.



Photo: UN-HABITAT

Introduction of UNHCR Shelter Guidelines

UNHCR held a workshop on 10 Feb. 2009 to demonstrate the final version of the 2009 Shelter Guidelines to be applied by their implementing partners in Iraq. UNHCR introduced: The guiding

principles; Shelter definition and characteristics; Planning, implementation, assessment, monitoring, and completion phases; The beneficiary selection, protection vulnerability criteria and

specific needs; Shelter options and priority needs; Bills of Quantities, implementation and budgets; and Monitoring and reporting.

Partner NGO Highlight

CHF International

Introduction to CHF International

CHF International's mission is to be a catalyst for long-lasting positive change in low- and moderate-income communities around the world, helping them to improve their social, economic and environmental conditions.

CHF International in the Region

Recovering from decades of conflict, Baathist party domination, and dramatic regime change, the people of Iraq face numerous challenges in rebuilding the political, social, and economic institutions of their society. CHF International aims to improve the social and economic circumstances of families and communities while strengthening the communities' use of democratic decision-making.

Access to Credit Services

CHF's Access to Credit Services Initiative (ACSI) is a micro-lending program that targets the working poor in need of small business and home improvement loans. Via loan products that are compliant with Islamic lending principles, ACSI seeks to assist entrepreneurs in strengthening their businesses and stabilizing their incomes, creating and sustaining jobs, and contributing to the economic revitalization of Iraq.

As of January 2008, ACSI had distributed nearly US\$94 million to clients in Iraq. ACSI has become the

largest microfinance program in Iraq and one of CHF International's largest microfinance programs worldwide. Currently, ACSI has over US\$28 million in portfolio outstanding, representing approximately 80% of the microfinance market in Iraq.

Community Driven Development

CHF implements the third phase of USAID's Community Action Program (CAP) in South Central Iraq and Anbar Governorate. CAP III is based on the premise that local community needs are best met by ensuring the active partnership of all stakeholders – citizens, local government, business and social leaders – in identifying priorities and designing interventions.

CAP I and II focused primarily on building the capacity of community action groups (CAGs) to fill the gap of local government and exercise true grassroots democracy by implementing projects on their own where necessary, and in partnership with local government where possible, to meet community needs. CAP III focuses on furthering the evolution of community-centered development by building the capacity of local government to take on its proper governance role as the locus of community needs assessment, prioritization, project design, funding and implementation.

Middle Market Lending



Photos: CHF International

Iraqis participate in a town hall style community meeting (CHF Int.)



CHF constructs a small house for a civilian victim of conflict as part of USAID CAP III's Marla Ruzicka Iraqi Victims of War Fund

The Iraq Middle Market Development Foundation (IMMDF) is a U.S. 501(c)3 tax-exempt charity created by CHF International in 2004. IMMDF is funded by the US Overseas Private Investment Corporation and provides debt capital exclusively to Iraqi owned small & medium-sized enterprises operating in Iraq. Most borrowers use IMMDF capital to upgrade or expand operations by purchasing new equipment, building new facilities and financing raw materials. In its first four years in operations it has disbursed nearly \$55.5 million to 35 clients.

Mission to Erbil to Introduce “Improving the Housing Delivery System in Erbil” Project, Erbil, 28 to 31 March 2009

UN-HABITAT and UNDP jointly organized a mission to Erbil from 28 to 31 March 2009 to introduce and discuss the newly approved project “Improving the Housing Delivery System in Erbil” with KRG officials. The delegate met with the officials of the Ministries of Housing and Municipalities and Erbil Governorate and visited slum-like potential target communities in Erbil Governorate.

This UN-HABITAT-UNDP project will operationalise Erbil Housing Strategy and assist in improving the Governorate’s capacity for Strategy implementation, enhancing slum upgrading and energy efficient housing practices, and disseminating housing strategy implementation experience for replication and further policy and legislative reform. A framework for Public Private Partnerships will also be developed for delivering low-cost energy efficient housing and sustainably managing infrastructure



Photo: UN-HABITAT

UN-HABITAT & UNDP delegates during their site visits in Erbil.

assets and service delivery, as well as an integrated pilot neighborhood improvement plan. Through partnership with CHF International, a community level micro finance facility will be established. The project is supported by in-kind contribution from the Erbil Governorate through necessary infrastructure provision and secondment of staff for management and implementation.

Studies Produced :

- IOM Emergency Needs Assessments, Three Years of Post-Samarra Displacement in Iraq, February 2009
- IRD Returnees Report, March 2009

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Shelter is a habitable covered living space, providing a secure, healthy living environment with privacy and dignity for the groups, families and individuals residing within it.

Adequate shelter: is more than a roof over one's head. It also means adequate privacy; adequate space; physical accessibility; adequate security; security of tenure; structural stability and durability; adequate lighting, heating and ventilation; adequate basic infrastructure, such as water supply, sanitation and waste management facilities; suitable environmental quality and health-related factors; and adequate and accessible location with regard to work and basic facilities, all of which should be available at an affordable cost.