



**PRESS RELEASE** **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**REPORT SHOWS "MEANINGFUL" IMPACT OF UN PROJECTS IN IRAQ**

**BAGHDAD/ERBIL/AMMAN, 1 April 2009** – The United Nations welcomed an independent report released last week which shows UN reconstruction projects in Iraq have made a "real and meaningful impact" on the country's recovery.

David Shearer, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Iraq, said "I am very pleased and reassured by these results. They show that the Iraqi people have benefited from our efforts and donor funds have been well invested, despite a very difficult operating environment for our staff." More than 85 UN and NGO workers have been killed in Iraq since 2003.

The *Stocktaking Review* was initiated by several international donors and carried out by the Norwegian aid effectiveness firm Scanteam. It assessed a selection of UN projects funded through the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI), the world's largest UN multi-donor trust fund. The IRFFI has channeled \$1.3 billion from 25 contributing nations into UN Agency Iraq-wide projects since 2004. It closes to new contributions on 30 June 2009. The European Commission, Japan the United Kingdom, Canada and Spain are the largest donors to the IRFFI.

The report found that 80% of UN projects surveyed in the field were "acceptable" or "satisfactory" – the highest grade – with security costs at just 2% of overall project costs. Surveyors in the field, who visited project sites inside Iraq, also found no evidence of systematic corruption.

"The UN was able to deliver despite the poor security situation through our close working relationship with government, civil society and local partners," Shearer said. "We relied on a large team of more than 400 national staff in governorates and local offices. This team has been present in Iraq for many years. Their low-profile approach helped us carry out our work during the worst periods of violence."

The report also identified some weaknesses in the way UN projects are monitored, reported and delays in completion. Shearer acknowledged room for improvement and said the UN agencies had already taken steps to strengthen these areas of operations.

The UN currently has humanitarian and development projects active across Iraq that support essential services such as schools, hospitals and water, stimulate economic reform and job creation, strengthen governance, promote human rights and provide protection for vulnerable groups including women, children, displaced families and returnees.

Shearer said Iraq's development prospects have recently improved due to better security – but there are still some difficult times ahead. A 32% budget deficit is projected this year due to falling oil prices, with capital investment half of 2008. The UN will be expanding its assistance and presence inside Iraq in 2009, but shifting to support the government with more technical expertise. Key priority areas include private sector development to create new jobs, public sector reform and strengthened essential services – to translate political gains into better living standards.

"The international community deserves thanks for its generous support to Iraq over the past five years, and I hope the same level of commitment can be maintained during this critical transition period," Shearer said. "A coordinated development effort is more vital now than ever to consolidate Iraq's recovery."

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