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**WITH SUCCESSFUL ELECTIONS, IRAQ HAS EMBARKED ON 'HISTORIC PATH' TO
SHAPE FUTURE.**

**BUT DELAYS FORMING GOVERNMENT REAL TEST FOR TRANSITION, SECURITY
COUNCIL TOLD**

**Mission Head Says Onus on Iraqi Leaders to Ensure Peaceful, Orderly Transition:
Iraq Representative Says Most Important Issue to Relieve 'Burden of Chapter VIII'**

The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq called on that country's leaders to show a "higher sense of urgency" in forming a new Government through an inclusive process, while urging continued support for the country from the international community, as he addressed the Security Council this morning.

Ad Melkert told the Council that following the successful completion of parliamentary elections on 7 March 2010, and the certification of election results on 2 June 2010, there were still disagreements over who had the right to form the next Government, contributing to uncertainty and creating conditions that could be exploited by elements opposed to Iraq's democratic transition. "This process represents a real test for Iraq's transition to democracy and the commitment of Iraqi leaders to adhere to the country's Constitution."

"There is no reason to be pessimistic as yet, for Iraq has embarked on an historic path which will shape the future of the country", he said, as he introduced the latest report of the Secretary-General (see Background) ahead of the expiration of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), which he heads.

"However, the onus is ultimately on Iraqi leaders to ensure an orderly and peaceful transition of power," said Mr. Melkert, who was joined at the briefing by Hamid al-Bayati, representative of Iraq. "This is owed to the people of Iraq and expected by the international community," he added, pledging the Mission's continued commitment to assist Iraq's with a range of areas vital for the country's future.

"I believe that at this stage, Government formation could benefit from the adherence to a specific timeframe, as well as a collective process through which a resolution could be reached", he said. He pointed to some encouraging signs: the main political blocs had been discussing possible power-sharing arrangements and last week a common understanding seemed to have evolved on the need to consider a "caretaker" government to take care of day-to-day business of governing.

Delays in Government formation, he said, were affecting the country's basic infrastructure and service and, in turn, the livelihood and well-being of Iraqi citizens, as shown by protests over electricity, the supply of which was at about 67 per cent of peak demand, with periods of blackout still averaging nationally more than nine hours per day.

Political delays and "a less than clear strategic involvement of the international community" also stood in the way of the development agenda, following the signing of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Only 12 per cent of the \$187.7 million sought for the 2010 action plan for Iraq had been received. Although Iraq's national budget should provide the lion's share for development in the future, time was not on the side of Iraqis, who required support right now, he commented.

Once the Government had been formed, priority concerns to be addressed included

Arab-Kurdish relations, particularly in the area of boundaries, revenue-sharing, hydrocarbon legislation, the federal framework and the constitutional review process, he said. In that regard, the Mission was making serious efforts to promote dialogue in the Ninewa governorate. Among the critical subjects of those talks were security arrangements and ending the boycott of the Provincial Council.

Outlining UNAMI's efforts to facilitate progress on outstanding issues between Iraq and Kuwait, he said it was also essential for the new Government, once formed, to move quickly to fulfil all Iraq's remaining obligations under the Council's Chapter VII resolutions.

He said that in the current climate of "uncertainty and volatility", the Mission and the United Nations country team continued to provide support to the Government and people that contributed to stability, investment and long-term development.

The practical implications of the United States military drawdown, he said, were now starting to impact operations. In that regard, he pointed to discussions with the Government on the issue and the need for finalization of the United Nations-Iraq Status of Mission Agreement (SOMA), as well as a need for an increase of the United Nations own security and operational capacity encompassing aviation, transport, infrastructure and life support.

He stressed that adequate financial resources from Member States would inevitably be required, and he reminded the Council that a great number of United Nations staff were still operating under challenging working and living conditions. "A clear sign of ongoing commitment and support was critical to all those who are dedicating themselves to helping the Iraqi people build a peaceful and prosperous country," he said.

Mr. al-Bayati said the year had seen a substantial drop in violence and "manifest" improvement in the security situation, despite some terrorist attacks. Successful legislative elections on 7 March had elicited considerable Arab, regional and international attention, with monitors from UNAMI, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the League of Arab States expressing their confidence in the transparency of the event.

Moreover, he said, all major political parties were making extensive contacts in order to hold a fruitful session of the newly elected Council of Representatives, in which the new Speaker would be elected. The President would then ask the new Prime Minister to form a Government, based on the provisions of the constitution, a process he hoped would be undertaken without delay. In the field of development, the Government launched on 4 July a national development plan for the 2010-2014 period, which included some 2,700 strategic projects in various sectors valued at \$186 billion.

The most important issue, however, was to get rid of the burden of Chapter VII, he said, and Iraq would follow two courses. The first dealt with issues concerning the situation in Iraq; the second with issues relating to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. Because of the importance of the latter, there had been a common understanding to consider that path only after the formation of the new Iraqi Government. "We are keen that the movement on this path will be in consultation and coordination with our Kuwaiti brothers in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions," he said.

He said a letter sent to the Security Council President and Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on 18 January explained steps taken to fulfil all remaining obligations regarding disarmament, weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, and had requested the Council to consider immediately lifting all restrictions imposed under Council resolutions in those areas. Given the positive international response, Iraq had expected the Council to issue a resolution lifting the restrictions. However, that had not happened.

In that regard, he also pointed to Iraq's plans to adhere to the Optional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement between Iraq and the Agency, and he said that a national committee of experts had been set up for the liquidation of chemical residues of the former chemical weapons programme, and on 13 July, the Government joined The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

He also outlined his Government's efforts to deal with the remaining contracts from the oil-for-food programme and other financial claims inherited from the former regime, as well as settling its sovereign debts. He said Iraq was serious about disposing its Chapter VII provisions,

financial and other burdens that affected its sovereignty. In that regard, he requested the Council to “liberate” Iraq from all restrictions, which would enable the country to exercise its role as an effective member of the global community.

Iraq, he said, looked forward to UNAMI becoming more effective and influential through the return of United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes to the country. While reiterating its desire to extend the UNAMI mandate, the Government hoped the mission would provide support and assistance through a specific mechanism with prior approval from the Government.

The meeting began at 10:07 a.m. and ended at 10:40 a.m., at which time the Council immediately went into consultations on Iraq, as previously arranged.

Background

As the Security Council met today, it had before it the Secretary-General's report pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009) (document S/2010/406), providing an update on United Nations activities in Iraq since 14 May 2010, on key political developments and on the activities of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq.

As Iraq remained an “extremely complex operating environment”, the safety and security of United Nations personnel continued to be a concern, the report says. The planned drawdown of United States forces would inevitably impact the Organization. UNAMI was identifying new and alternative arrangements to ensure and enhance its operational capacity in the future. That would require strong financial support from Member States. The United Nations was committed to implementing its mandate and working in consultation with the Iraqi Government.

While the successful conclusion of the national electoral process on 2 June and convening of the new Council of Representatives on 14 June were key milestones in Iraq's democratic transition, the report notes that delays in the Government formation process had contributed to a growing sense of uncertainty. That risked undermining confidence in the political process, and elements opposed to democratic transition could try to exploit the situation. Thus, the Secretary-General urged all political bloc leaders to work together through an inclusive and broadly participatory process to end the present impasse.

Once the Government formation process had been completed, it was imperative for the new Government, with the Council of Representatives, make national reconciliation a priority and begin to address the many outstanding political and constitutional challenges, including Arab-Kurdish relations, revenue-sharing, and the adoption of hydrocarbons legislation, among other things. Encouraging compromise in disputed areas would greatly contribute to stability and the Secretary-General was encouraged by progress being made in talks assisted by UNAMI to end the impasse over the boycott of the Ninewa Provincial Council by Kurdish parties.

Another matter requiring attention, the report says, was the need for the new Government to fulfil outstanding obligations under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, notably issues related to Kuwait, as soon as possible. He called on Iraq to confirm its commitment to Security Council resolution 883 (1993), and strongly encouraged Iraq's neighbours to engage the new Government in addressing issues of mutual concern. To speed the pace of development and reconstruction, the Secretary-General urged commitment by the Government, the United Nations and the international community in the spirit of the Millennium Development Goals. Priorities identified in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and continuing humanitarian response programmes would require more resources from international donors.

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