



## Press Release

### **UNDP: Women crucial to Iraq's democracy, development and prosperity**

**Baghdad, 8 March (UNDP) – Women comprise nearly 65 percent of the Iraqi population and their full and active participation and contributions in society are crucial for building Iraq's democracy, development and prosperity, UNDP said on Monday.**

"Yesterday, when Iraq celebrated its second parliamentary general elections since 2003, millions of Iraqi women exercised their constitutional and basic human rights, casting their votes across the country. Today, on international Women's Day, we celebrate women's empowerment across the world," said Paolo Lembo, Director of UNDP-Iraq.

"We celebrate Women's Day recognizing women and their contributions as essential and integral parts of a nation's democracy, development and prosperity," he added

For UNDP, having worked with the Iraqi people and supported their nation's development since 1976, gender equality and women's empowerment are integral parts of its four main areas of work: Poverty Reduction, Democratic Governance, Crisis Prevention and Recovery, and Environment and Sustainable Development.

Through the Iraqi Constitution and National Development Plan, the Government of Iraq is committed to the empowerment of women and achieving their full participation in society. This is also an important part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and in particular MDG 3.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, 25.5 percent of Iraqi lawmakers are women, compared to an average of 10.1 percent in the Arab states. UNDP not only hopes that this figure is increased as a result of yesterday's vote, but also that similar figures can soon be achieved in the judicial and executive branches of the Iraqi government, as well as in its administration.

"While recognizing the great achievements made by Iraq on this front, nevertheless a lot of work remains. We believe Iraq should fully tap into the vast reservoir of knowledge and human resources its women represent - giving them equal rights and equal opportunities, and providing progress for all Iraqis," Mr. Lembo noted.

## United Nations Development Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي



*Iraq*

### **For editors:**

As the largest UN agency in Iraq, UNDP has over 140 national and international staff based at its headquarters in Amman, Jordan, and in Baghdad, Erbil, Basrah, Ramadi and Najaf. With an annual budget of some 90 million US dollars, UNDP has delivered some 500 million US dollars in humanitarian and development aid to Iraq since 2004.

UNDP's role is to support the government and people of Iraq in their transition towards reconciliation, peace and stability by focusing on the areas of governance, poverty alleviation, economic recovery, mine action and the environment. Currently the agency implements over 60 projects across the country.

**For more information, please visit: [www.iq.undp.org](http://www.iq.undp.org)**

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