

United Nations



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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

## **UN TRAINS IRAQI AID ORGANISATIONS ON HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE FUND**

(New York/Talil, 22 June 2009): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Iraq trained 31 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from southern Iraq on implementation of projects funded by the United Nations Expanded Humanitarian Response Fund (ERF) for Iraq. The training on grant application procedures and project implementation and management, the third so far in 2009, took place June 17 and 18 in Talil, Thi-Qar Governorate.

“Through the training, OCHA aims at enhancing the capacity of Iraqi civil society to respond to humanitarian needs in their own communities, said Yasmine Rockenfeller, OCHA Iraq acting Head of Office. ‘The Expanded Humanitarian Response Fund (ERF) provides quick funding for emergency assistance in support of those who are most in need in Iraq. Many of these projects are implemented by Iraqi non-governmental organizations, strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and Iraqis,’ added Ms. Rockenfeller. Since its establishment in 2007, projects supported by the Fund have reached more than 600,000 Iraqis in need of assistance with various forms of humanitarian aid.

OCHA has trained a total of 100 Iraqi and international non-governmental organizations operating across the country. The first two training workshops were held in Baghdad and Erbil in April and May this year.

The workshop also covered delivering assistance according to the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality. “We welcome training that aims at restoring respect for humanitarian standards,” said one workshop participant. The training also addressed rapid humanitarian needs assessments, principles of ‘do no harm’, application procedures and project monitoring. “Writing project proposals is not new to me, but this training gave me the chance to better understand how ERF projects should be designed and implemented,” said the participant, who has previously implemented ERF-funded projects.

“I especially appreciated the training on Results Based Management, because I believe every intervention should focus on effective delivery,’ said another workshop participant. Funded by the ERF, her organisation has previously distributed food and non-food items to the neediest groups in her community, including orphans who would otherwise be at risk of engaging in child labour. “In my experience, the ERF is the fastest funding mechanism for responding to humanitarian needs in Iraq,” she said.

Typical examples of ERF interventions are provision of non-food items in areas with large populations of internally displaced persons or returnees; food baskets for communities not covered by the Public Distribution System; mine and UXO awareness training; mobile health

clinics for remote areas; and rehabilitation of water systems. OCHA manages the ERF on behalf of the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq. The Fund's application requirements and eligibility criteria have recently been revised in order to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian projects it funds. The ERF was established in August 2007, and has a current balance of US\$11 million. So far, it has funded 67 projects across Iraq with humanitarian aid worth around \$9 million.

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