

## **On World Humanitarian Day Let Us Double the Iraq Recovery and Reconstruction Efforts**

By Dr. Naeema Al-Gasseer

The world celebrates today the first World Humanitarian Day. The United Nations General Assembly designated this Day to shed light on the humanitarian situation in the world and to honour the memory of those who sacrificed their lives while delivering relief services to the afflicted.

This Day reminds us of the importance to support the helpless, provide assistance to the most vulnerable groups and strengthen and promote the humanitarian principles and concepts to be best utilized in humanitarian work.

Iraq stands today at a challenging crossroads. It will determine its recovery and reconstruction as a society and a nation. Accordingly, the United Nations and in collaboration with the different humanitarian organizations, is working to bridge humanitarian gaps and respond to urgent needs with the view of ensuring that all Iraqis have access to basic services including water and sanitation, education, food, employment and health services, in addition to poverty reduction and job creation.

This Day coincides with the sixth anniversary of the horrific bombing of the United Nations Office in Baghdad in which 22 of our colleagues lost their lives. Among those killed, were The Special Representative of the Secretary General Sergio Vierra De Mello and his Chief of Staff Nadia Younis. Despite that the United Nations has never left Iraq. Its committed staff members stayed in Iraq to provide urgent humanitarian services and emergency aid to the most vulnerable and needy.

On this Day, we call upon all stakeholders to join efforts to continue the journey we began together which will ensure that each Iraqi child will get his/her right to learn and play with friends safely, that each woman has access to the required health care, right to participate in the labour force and the political process, that each Iraqi man has the right to get to his work to provide food for his family with dignity and pride and that the youth enjoy achieving their aspirations and the elderly Iraqis live their old age in safety.

Our message today focuses on the need to achieve this mission and turn it into a reality to bring about peace and security to the hearts of Iraqis, Arabs and the whole world.

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