UNITED NATIONS
FOLLOW UP TO THE ELECTORAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION TO IRAQ
March 2018

1. Further to the UN electoral needs assessment mission (NAM) deployed in November 2017, a follow-up assessment mission was conducted from 4-11 March 2018 to review preparations for the Council of Representatives (CoR) elections on 12 May 2018. The mission met with a wide range of national and international interlocutors, including the CoR, the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), political parties, civil society organizations, the judiciary, and the international community, including the UN family.

2. The IHEC requested urgent UN action to scale up its assistance in priority areas and support its efforts in public messaging and confidence building. Efforts are currently underway by the UN to deploy key additional advisors, particularly in areas such as public outreach/voter education, ICT, operations, and complaints & appeals procedures. An UNDP project document, supported by UNOPS, has also been developed and approved for immediate implementation.

**Action points and recommendations**

The NAM recommended consideration of the following points:

3. **To national authorities and other entities:**
   a. Continue efforts to promote a political, social and security environment that facilitates the holding of peaceful, inclusive, credible, and accepted elections and for broad participation, including of women.
   b. Continue efforts towards the adoption of and adherence to a political party code of conduct.
   c. Continue to facilitate and enable media and civil society organizations to play their role in the electoral process, including as domestic election observers.
   d. Plan and facilitate access of domestic and international observers to IDP camps.
   e. In close cooperation and consultation with the IHEC, ensure a proactive awareness campaign is implemented to sensitize the electorate on the electoral process and encourage broad voter participation, particularly women, first time voters and other vulnerable groups.
   f. With a view to supporting the forthcoming electoral events and IHEC’s long-term institutional capacity development, consider contributing to the funding of the UN electoral assistance project.
   g. Ensure a timely and impartial review and adjudication of possible complaints and appeals that may arise before, on and after election day.

4. **Independent High Electoral Commission:**
   a. Recognizing the efforts already undertaken by IHEC, consider additional steps to further enhance voter participation in the elections, including by women, through promoting public trust and confidence in IHEC’s ability to perform in
an independent and impartial manner, including by timely publishing IHEC’s decisions, procedures and regulations on its website.

b. Sustain its efforts in public outreach and voter education to all segments of the electorate, with a special focus on minorities and vulnerable groups including women, youth (particularly first-time voters) and IDPs.

c. Ensure a robust communication strategy with the media, political parties and candidates, as well as international and domestic observers promoting transparency and access to information throughout all phases of the electoral process.

d. Continue to communicate to the public and other stakeholders on the process for complaints and appeals, particularly in the context of the new technologies.

e. With the introduction of new technologies and the necessary contingency plans, ensure sufficient time and quality control of the cascade trainings of electoral officials on procedures.

f. While acknowledging ongoing efforts in building confidence in the electoral process, carry out a nationwide simulation exercise on the voting and tabulation of results as soon as possible.

g. Communicate contingency plans related to the use of technology and conditions for their activation to stakeholders (voters, candidates, political parties, media, and observers).

h. With two different vendors involved in delivering election day technologies, ensure accountability of the companies.

i. With a view to ensuring a safe and secure electoral environment free from fear and intimidation, continue coordination with the High National Security Committee.

5. **International community:**

a. Continue to promote peaceful, inclusive, transparent and credible elections with high voter participation, including women; and encourage all parties to work towards a peaceful acceptance of results.

b. Provide financial and other support to civil society organizations in conducting domestic election observation.

c. Contribute to funding of the UN electoral assistance project, in support of the forthcoming electoral events (including Governorate Council elections) and IHEC’s long-term institutional capacity development.

d. Consider deploying observation teams, including in IDP camps and in out-of-camp voting, to assist in confidence-building.