PRESS RELEASE

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JICA and UNDP Sign Partnership Agreement to Accelerate Economic Recovery in Iraq

Baghdad, 10 January 2013 – The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and UNDP have signed a new agreement to strengthen their partnership and accelerate the implementation of infrastructure and economic development projects in Iraq. The focus of the partnership will be in key sectors such as electricity, water and sanitation, oil, irrigation, transportation and industry. Fifteen projects are on-going, and JICA and the Government of Iraq signed agreements for four new loan agreements in October 2012. These projects utilise concessional loans by JICA which have a total value of US$ 4.1 billion and are implemented by Iraqi ministries.

Under this partnership, UNDP will work alongside JICA and the Government of Iraq on project monitoring and capacity development. By assessing existing capacities, UNDP will identify bottlenecks and gaps, and provide technical advice to the ministries in order to accelerate the implementation of projects in an accountable, transparent, and efficient manner. Most of the 15 projects are now in their implementation phase and have started to improve the delivery of services for the Iraqi people.

“Since 2009, UNDP has worked as a significant partner of JICA in Iraq. Today I am delighted to conclude a new agreement to reinforce our partnership with UNDP” said Mr. Takema Sakamoto, Chief Representative of JICA in Iraq. “JICA is aiming to support the Government of Iraq through our lending programmes, not only to develop tangible infrastructure projects that will have national impact but also to develop the capacities of officials in Iraq and the Government itself on project management,” he added.

“We are extremely happy to continue our partnership with JICA,” said Ms. Jacqueline Badcock, Resident Representative for UNDP Iraq. “Our partnership will have a significant impact on Iraq’s economy which will be reflected in the daily lives of the Iraqi people,” she added.

The Governments of Japan and Iraq have established a joint committee to monitor the use of these funds. This committee, under the leadership of the Prime Minister’s Advisory Commission (PMAC), the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Finance and representatives from the Embassy of Japan and JICA meet regularly with Iraqi ministries to discuss project progress. The mechanism not only identifies issues and solutions related to project implementation but also improves the current business climate in Iraq to contribute to private sector development.
“Iraq welcomes the stronger partnership between JICA and UNDP. Together, they can contribute to further improving Iraq’s national infrastructure and its various economic projects while also developing the Government’s project management capacities and its approach to internationally standardised business,” said Mr. Thamir Ghadhban, Chairman of PMAC. “The tripartite mechanism between JICA, UNDP and the Iraqi Government based on today’s agreement is a good example of international cooperation with the concepts of partnership and ownership at its heart,” he added.

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About JICA Iraq

JICA is the Japanese governmental agency in charge of providing a wide-range of Official Development Assistance like technical cooperation, concessional loans and grant financial assistance for developing countries in the world.

JICA has been one of the biggest donors supporting Iraq’s reconstruction and development since 2003. Throughout Iraq, JICA has provided 19 concessional loans to support infrastructure projects, amounting to USD 4.1 billion, in the fields of electricity, oil, port, water, sewerage, irrigation, etc. In addition, for capacity development, JICA has been providing training courses to more than five thousand Iraqi officials.

JICA established a new office in Baghdad in August 2011 to further strengthen partnerships with Iraq and to enhance JICA’s support.


About UNDP Iraq

UNDP has worked to support the Government and people of Iraq since 1976 in the areas of democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, and energy and environment. Since 2003, UNDP has been supporting a range of emergency physical rehabilitation projects to restore basic service delivery, including water and electricity.

Most recently, UNDP has contributed to strengthening the democratic process in Iraq primarily through its support to the 2010 national elections. UNDP also continues to work on anti-corruption, rule of law, justice, human rights, public sector reform, disaster risk reduction, and environment and climate change issues.

Supporting Iraq to achieve the Millennium Development Goals is among UNDP’s top priorities as it will ensure a better life for millions of Iraqis. UNDP is committed to assist Iraq achieve these goals by 2015 especially in the areas of enrolment in primary education, unemployment and access to safe and reliable water and sanitation services.

For more on UNDP's work in Iraq please visit www.iq.one.un.org

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