



PRESS RELEASE

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UNDP and WHO Handover First Specialized TB Hospital to the Government of Iraq

Sulimaniya, 28 January 2012- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) handed over the first specialised Tuberculosis (TB) hospital to the Government of Iraq at a ceremony. The Hospital is located in the Sulimaniya Governorate, and will be supported by the Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government. The KRG Minister of Health, Dr. Tahir Hawrami, and officials from the national TB programme in Baghdad, were also present at the ceremony.

The project to renovate the hospital in Sulimaniya, which was completed in December 2011, is part of a larger TB project for Iraq, funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and jointly implemented by UNDP and WHO. The Government of Iraq, including the Kurdistan regional government, will provide the resources to equip and staff the hospital, and it is expected that the hospital will be fully operational in the next few months.

“I am very pleased to be in Sulimaniya today to handover this hospital to the Government” said Peter Batchelor, UNDP Country Director in Iraq. “This hospital is part of a larger package of support that UNDP and WHO are providing to the Government to help address the TB issue in Iraq” he added.

The new hospital in Sulimaniya, which is the first of its kind in Iraq, has a capacity of 30 beds and will provide specialised treatment and medical services to Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) TB patients.

“The emergence of resistance to first-line anti-TB drugs, and particularly of MDR-TB, has become a major public health problem in Iraq in recent years.” said Dr. Syed Jaffer Hussain, WHO Representative of Iraq. “This hospital will therefore assure the rights to health, provide a crucial service and hope for the patients to heal” he added.

Iraq has a relatively high number of TB patients (estimated 64 cases per 100,000 people) which is much higher than other countries in the region. The percentage of successful treatment among identified TB cases under the direct observation treatment short course

is 90% in 2011. Particular challenges however exist in providing quality treatment for MDR-TB those who exhibit resistance to the first-line TB treatments

Over the coming months, UNDP and WHO will continue working with the Ministry of Health in Baghdad (including the national TB programme) and the KRG Ministry of Health to provide technical assistance until the hospital is fully operational aiming that all the TB patients in Iraq, including the MDR-TB patients will receive the universal access to quality TB diagnosis, treatment and care.

For more information and media queries please contact

Ms. Juliette Touma, UNDP Iraq, juliette.touma@undp.org , +964-7810626264
or +962-798263437

Ms. Ruba Hikmat, WHO Iraq, hikmatr@irq.emro.who.int, +926-799499455

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

About WHO Iraq

WHO has been on the ground in Iraq since 1960. WHO through its various programmes is currently working on revitalizing, strengthening and sustaining the Iraqi health system based on primary health care.

WHO works with the Government and other partners to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals through improved access to quality health services, helping support the Government of Iraq in shaping health policy, and providing technical support in a multitude of programmes and areas like maternal and child health, adolescent and school health, nutrition, tackling communicable and non-communicable diseases, strengthening implementation of the International Health Regulations and mental health.

For more on WHO's work in Iraq please visit <http://www.emro.who.int/iraq/>