Dear friends, colleagues, and partners,

This spring has been bustling with activities. We celebrated four international days, received the visit of UNESCO Director General Ms. Irina Bokova, launched two major projects, and stepped up our work in all the four Sectors. The World Press Freedom Day, the World Cultural Diversity Day, the World Environment Day, and the Global Action Week, were all important occasions that UNESCO marked by demonstrating its continuous dedication to the people of Iraq. Numerous events were organized in the framework of these international days, including a conference at the Iraqi Parliament to support Iraqi journalists, an exceptional concert of traditional Iraqi music and poetry, a national seminar on Early Childhood Care and Education in cooperation with UNICEF, and a photo exhibition on the themes of sustainable development and green economy.

Furthermore, UNESCO launched two important projects, namely a cultural project with the support of the Ministry of Culture: Preserving Najaf’s cultural heritage and promoting its international visibility, and an education project funded by the Government of Japan: “Fighting Youth Unemployment through Education” in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Youth.

On a less positive note, UNESCO is greatly concerned by the building of an oil pipeline through the Sacred Complex of Babylon, and therefore gave its precautionary advice to the Government of Iraq, pointing out the consequences on the integrity and protection of this valuable site of Iraqi national heritage.

We are proud to share with you in this issue our activities for the period April – June 2012, and we look forward for a busy summer ahead.

UNESCO Iraq Office Director
Mohamed Djelid
Children in Iraq: Facts and Figures

Many children in Iraq face critical conditions in the first years of their lives, with continued exposure to the effects of conflict and violence, exposure to domestic abuse and violent disciplinary methods in both homes and schools. The expansion and improvement of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is the first goal of the Education for All (EFA) Framework for Action, which is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults.

On 15 May 2012, UNESCO and UNICEF offices in Iraq and the members of the Education Priority Working Group supported a key activity in this year’s Education for All Global Action Week: the National Seminar on Early Childhood Care and Education in Iraq organized by the Child Welfare Commission and the Ministry of Education. The seminar was attended by the Ministries of Education; Higher Education and Scientific Research; Labour and Social Affairs; Environment; Human Rights; and Justice as well as representatives of the UN agencies and NGOs in Iraq.

“Early childhood programmes are an important means of guaranteeing the rights of young children. Strong foundations for children are also strong foundations for building more equitable societies.”

UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova

Goal 1 EFA
“Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education is important, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.”

Quick Facts about Children in Iraq:
- Less than 10% of Iraqi children (4-5 years) have access to any form of pre-primary education; (2011)
- During 2005 – 2010, 85% of children (1-8 years) were exposed to violence; (2011)
- Less than 40% of all children are fully immunized; (2011)
- 25% of children are breastfed exclusively for the first 6 months; (2010)

Recommended Proposals During National Seminar on ECCE

1. Supporting ECCE involved high-level committees within the Government of Iraq in partnership with UNESCO, UNICEF and other agencies and local/international NGOs to lead the advancement of ECCE in Iraq
2. Develop a comprehensive and holistic ECCE strategy in Iraq in coordination with existing national development plans
3. Map and strengthen existing ECCE services and improve the quality and reach of these services
4. Explore alternative delivery mechanisms for ECCE services in Iraq including home and community-based programming
5. Mobilize different resources including government, non-government, communities and families, focusing particularly on the mother, and the media to advance ECCE in Iraq

Malnutrition Prevalence Weight for Children Under Age 5 (%)

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Jan 04/08</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 98/02</td>
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Source: World Bank
As the only UN agency with a mandate for culture, UNESCO has been keen on preserving and showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Iraq. The Office’s culture projects concentrate on safeguarding heritage and rehabilitating institutions. UNESCO also provides the Iraqi Government with technical expertise to fight against the looting of artifacts, protect intangible heritage, promote tourism and prepare Iraqi sites for nomination to the World Heritage List.

We support cultural diversity as we believe it is a strength. Acknowledging the other is important to promote tolerance and understanding, key values for a peaceful living together.

Minister of Culture Mr. Saadoun Al-Dulaimi

Culture at UNESCO Iraq

Iraq is a mosaic of cultural diversity and history. Through the centuries a myriad of cultures have interacted and evolved in a pattern that has been repeated for generations. This diversity is deeply rooted in Iraq’s identity and constitutes the main pillar in achieving peace and stability. The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development is celebrated on 21 May of every year to create discourse between cultures and generations through the arts and other cultural expressions.

Under this theme “Cultural Diversity in Music and Poetry”, UNESCO Iraq office organized cultural events in Baghdad, bringing together performers and poets from all over the country. On 25 May a unique music festival featuring different Iraqi traditional music styles was hosted at the Oil Cultural Centre in Baghdad. On 26 May young poets gathered for a poetry contest under the theme: “Our Cultures Come Together in a Poem”.

This year’s events brought together young artists as well as female artists who showed the importance of intergenerational transmission of musical and poetic skills. Emphasizing the importance of cultural diversity for social development, UNESCO Iraq Director Mohamed Djelid assured that “the recognition of cultural diversity can help to ensure that ownership of development and peace initiative is vested in the populations concerned”.

Better knowledge and recognition of our differences lead ultimately to better mutual understanding, constructive interaction, and an environment favorable to creativity and development.

"Cultural diversity is the societal fabric of individual nations, and full respect for human rights creates an enabling environment for fundamental freedoms."

-Deputy Special representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to Iraq, Ms Jacqueline Badcock
**Economic Prosperity vs National Heritage**

The Sacred Complex of Babylon is considered one of the most important archaeological sites in the world. Its walls enclose the Esagila temple, the legendary tower of Babylon and countless undiscovered relics. In view of its historical and archaeological significance the recent laying of oil pipeline within the site’s boundaries represents a particular concern to UNESCO.

This pipeline can potentially cause serious damage to the walls of the ancient city, as well as to the uncovered remains beneath. This damage can occur due to the construction process itself, but also due to potential explosions which put the surrounding people and environment at great risk. Additionally, this procedure has put the site at risk of not being considered for inclusion in the World Heritage List as a result of its tainted integrity, undermining protection and preservation efforts.

UNESCO stressed its “deep concern about the impact of the pipeline on the integrity of this irreplaceable site”, warning that it will also threaten the surrounding environment and the possibility of developing sustainable tourism in the region”. UNESCO Iraq Director Mr. Mohamed Djelid reaffirmed UNESCO’s support for the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and urged the Iraqi government to take the proper steps in protecting this national icon.

Established by King Hammurabi (1792-1750 BCE), Babylon was capital of ten Mesopotamian dynasties and. It expanded over 200,000m² and reached its prominence as the great kingdom of Babylonia. This city was once the most populated of the ancient world and achieved its zenith again under King Nebuchadnezzar II (605-563 BC). The government of Iraq has submitted this site for inscription on the World Heritage List three times since 1981.

**Promoting Najaf’s Visibility**

In the framework of supporting the Iraqi government to develop tourism in its different aspects and protect Iraqi cultural sites, UNESCO signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Culture that paves the way to valorize and conserve the heritage of the city of Najaf. UNESCO Iraq, Ministry of Culture, and local authorities launched the project “Preserving Najaf’s cultural heritage and promoting its international visibility”. This project aims to move forward with preparing a World Heritage Nomination file for the Wadi Al-Salam Cemetery of Najaf; build local capacities to conserve the valuable collection of Islamic manuscripts, and enhance the international knowledge about the heritage and culture of the city.

In collaboration with Ministry of Culture, UNESCO will commission two books on Najaf, and a twenty minute film on the important religious history and heritage of the city. Additionally, UNESCO will provide training for four manuscript curators and support the acquisition of conservation equipment. The promotion of Najaf will continue with the organization of a round table on the contribution of Imam Ali’s thoughts on a culture of peace and intercultural dialogue. UNESCO Iraq Director Mohamed Djelid praised this project saying that "Najaf holds a bountiful knowledge and heritage of Iraqi and Islamic culture that should be shared with the rest of the world".

**Erbil Citadel: Two years of achievements**

Celebrating the second anniversary for launching this second phase of the "Erbil Citadel Revitalization Project", the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalization (HCECR) and UNESCO organized on 27 June 2012 a special event inside the historic Citadel to present the finalization of a number of the project’s activities and launch others.

Under the title "Erbil Citadel Revitalization Project – Two Years of Achievements (2010 – 2012)", the event began with official welcome and opening remarks by Mr. Dara Al-Yaqubi, Head of the HCECR, Mr. Mohamed Djelid, Director of the UNESCO Iraq Office, and Mr. Nawzad Hadi, Governor of Erbil. Participants were introduced to the main achievements accomplished by UNESCO and the HCECR during the last two years that include the completion of conservation works on some of the buildings, the finalization of the Citadel’s management plan and a proposed institutional framework for the HCECR, and capacity building initiatives.

During the event, around 100 guests performed a site visit. Attendees included the Minister of Culture and Youth, Mr. Kawa Mahmoud Shakir, Minister of Housing and Reconstruction, Mr. Kamaran Ahmed Abdullah, Qa’im Maqam of Erbil, Mr. Nihad Khoja, Erbil Governor Mr. Nawzad Hadi and Mr. Hakim Azad Mullafrangi, the legal advisor of the KRP’ime minister and head of the legal committee of the Council of Ministers. Additionally, a number of Director Generals, representatives of several consulates in the Kurdistan and members of the Erbil community and the media, also attended.
Education at UNESCO Iraq

Since 2004, UNESCO Iraq Office has been working on rehabilitating the Education Sector in Iraq after the damage caused by the previous wars and the imposed economic sanctions. The office aims, through all its initiatives and programmes, to provide technical assistance to the Iraqi government in order to enhance the sector by rehabilitating the educational institutions, building the institutional, administrative, and human capacities at all levels, fighting illiteracy, and formulating plans and policies for better planning for the future of Education in Iraq.

UNESCO presents the findings of textbooks evaluation to Minister of Education

Upon request of the Ministry of Education and in the framework of the Curriculum Development project funded by the Office of Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser Al Missned - First lady of Qatar and UNESCO special envoy for Basic and Higher Education; UNESCO Iraq Office presented to H.E. the Minister of Education, Dr. Mohamed Temim the completed assessment of math and science textbooks for grades 4, 8 and 11 according to the international standards and using content analysis approaches.

A team of eight Iraqi experts worked jointly with six UNESCO international experts to finalize the evaluation. The exercise was conducted using eight sets of standards, namely: 1) Textbook Description; 2) General Structure; 3) Textbook Philosophy; 4) Content Analysis; 5) Textbook support to the learning process; 6) Assessment Students Acquisition; 7) Strengthening and supporting the learning environment, and 8) Graphic design and production.

Starting September 2012, the experts will also evaluate the teaching practices of the current curriculum, using two valid and reliable questionnaires, thereby increasing the value added of the new curriculum in terms of impact on students’ knowledge acquisition and their achievement.

Fighting Unemployment through Education: Investing in Youth

On 31 May 2012, UNESCO Iraq office, in cooperation with the Kurdistan Regional Government and Japanese Embassy in Iraq, launched, at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the project “Fighting Youth Unemployment through Education” – another UNESCO initiative to create employment opportunities for youth and contribute to reducing poverty in Iraq.

Funded by the government of Japan, this project tackles youth unemployment by fostering entrepreneurial skills for unemployed Technical Vocational and Educational Training (TVET) graduates. The project will provide 400 male and female graduates with entrepreneurship training that will enable them start their own businesses, 200 of which will be awarded dedicated loans on the basis of their business plans, by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Mr. Ken Mukai, deputy Chief of Mission and Minister Counselor in the Japanese Embassy Mr. Ken Mukai, with UNESCO Office Director Mohamed DJelid and Project Manager Ilaria Vanzin at the launching event in Erbil © UNESCO Iraq 2012

Higher Education: Improving Quality in the Colleges of Engineering of Iraq

UNESCO Iraq Office in cooperation with the office of Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, organized in Erbil a six day review workshop, from 16 to 21 June 2012, entitled “Assessment for Quality Improvement of Iraqi Engineering Colleges”. The workshop gathered sixty Iraqi faculty members and management officers, including deans and head of departments and a team of six distinguished experts from the Network of Iraqi Scientists Abroad (NISA), who teach in prestigious foreign universities. These professors shared their international experiences and were actively engaged in the review and analysis of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by the various aspects of college performance, namely: teaching, learning, research activities, curriculum development, organization and management.

The discussion brought to light the need for establishing a national body for quality assurance and accreditation. This national body would be in charge of defining the relevant regulation and ensure implementation of a quality assurance system for higher education, in line with international standards. With an effective system in place, Higher Education Institutions will be able to prepare for the Board for Engineering and Technology Accreditation (ABET), a leading accreditation process for engineering and a main target for the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

UNESCO Project Manager Semia Saadaoui welcomed the praise and involvement of the Minister and noted that: “Quality Assurance can only be effective when all stakeholders understand and embrace its challenges and benefits”, and that “developing a culture of quality requires strong and committed support from national leaders”.

The event was also the occasion for the official launch of the Quality Assurance Portal for Higher Education in Iraq (www.qahei.org). The portal provides multiple resources to promote quality education in higher education institutions.
On 3 May 2012 in occasion of the World Press Freedom Day, UNESCO Iraq office together with the Human Rights’ Office at the United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI), the Human rights Committee at the Iraqi Council of representatives and the International Media Support organization, organized a major conference at the Iraqi parliament to celebrate this special day and discuss the status of Freedom of press in Iraq and the ways to improve it.

Around 200 participants from the Iraqi parliament, media and academic sectors, local and international NGOs, Civil Society and UN organizations, in addition to human rights activists and bloggers, gathered under this year’s theme: "new voices: MEDIA FREEDOM HELPING TO TRANSFROM SOCIETIES".

One of this year's highlights was the official launch of the UNESCO Journalism Curriculum commissioned by the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Ali al-Adeeb. Praising the efforts and courage of Iraqi journalists, Dr. al-Adeeb called for the Iraqi government and UNESCO to focus on "drafting the law of the right of access of information because it is the main pillar to support the press, media and Freedom of Expression".

In his speech, the Deputy of the Special Representative of the Secretary General in Iraq Mr. Gyorgy Busztin emphasized the "need for joint actions and more efforts to achieve freedom of expression in Iraq". UNESCO representative and head of the Communication and Information programme in Iraq Ms. Amani Soliman confirmed that "Iraq remains one of the most dangerous countries for journalists", reassuring UNESCO’ openness to work with all concerned organizations from the public and private sector to protect journalists and fight impunity.

The event also featured a painting exhibition organized by female Iraqi artists around the theme of lack of freedom of expression.

As the only UN agency with the mandate to promote Freedom of Expression and Information, UNESCO works towards achieving freer and independent media and Iraq.
Communication and Information at UNESCO Iraq

The UNESCO Office for Iraq has launched a series of projects based on a strategy focusing on the importance of good governance and constitution building, evolving democratic processes, and national reconciliation. A key focus has been granted to improving the flow of information during elections, both through professional elections reporting and through coordination between electoral and media institutions. As always, UNESCO has focused on promoting human rights awareness through these projects and emphasizing the importance of the safety of journalists, academics and human rights activists. UNESCO is the only United Nations agency with a mandate to defend freedom of expression and press freedom.

Iraqi CMC Staff visits UK’s OFCOM

Through the project “Enhanced Media Coverage and Monitoring of Electoral Processes”, UNESCO Iraq office is strengthening the capacities of Iraqi journalists and members of the regulating authorities, and introducing them to the most advanced international practices. UNESCO Iraq office invited three senior members of the Communications and Media Commission (CMC) in Baghdad: the Director of the CMC Dr Safaa Eldin Rabee, and two members of the CMC Board, Dr Ali Al-Khawaldi, and Mr Ali Al-Aoussi to attend a training seminar in Cambridge, UK from 23 to 25 May 2012. During their stay, the executives were also accompanied to official visits to the BBC and Ofcom (the UK’s communications regulator).

The seminar, entitled “Media and Communications Regulation Masterclass”, was an important event involving media practitioners, such as communications and broadcasting regulators, broadcast policy makers, public and private broadcasting companies, as well as media experts. Facilitated by specialists in the fields of communications and broadcasting, participants shared insight about traditional principles of broadcast regulations and policies, with an emphasis on emerging issues such as convergence, Internet regulation, online intellectual property rights and digital switchovers.

This seminar was an opportunity for the CMC members to gain better knowledge of international current practices and regulations regarding communications and media. The CMC Director, Dr Rabee, commented on the training by stating that it was the most relevant to his work he had ever attended, and that the knowledge they were able to acquire will guide them in their effort to shape the future of Iraqi communications.

Safety Training to Protect Journalists, Human Rights defenders and Academics in Iraq

In collaboration with Hart Security Australia, UNOPS and UNAMI Human Rights Office with generous funding from the European Union through the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund, UNESCO Iraq Office conducted security training seminars from 24 April to 1 June 2012 through the “Protection of media professionals, human rights defenders and members of the academic community in Iraq” workshops, bringing together 240 academics, journalists and human rights defenders in Basra, Erbil and Baghdad. These workshops were created in response to the continuous risk faced by journalists, human rights defenders and academics working in Iraq. The training enabled participants to cope with the daily risks encountered during the course of their work through training courses which exposed them to important topics including security, self protection, risk management and trauma first-aid. With the support of Hart Security, UNESCO developed a safety manual on basic knowledge and practical skills which were distributed along with first aid kits to participants throughout the training. The workshop was followed by a Training of Trainer seminar on safety and security for participants who wished to be trained as trainers, thus becoming resources to their peers.

Safety Legal Awareness Training to foster human rights

Human Rights experts from the University of Sydney, Australia organized under UNESCO’ project the “Protection of media professionals, human rights defenders and members of the academic community in Iraq” an advanced Legal Awareness Training in Erbil from 16-18 May 2012. Attended by 22 representatives from several Iraqi Ministries addition to the Iraq’s Bar Associations, the training focused on the concept of the UN human rights system, regional protection mechanisms, international and domestic implementations, restrictions and limitations on human rights, the relation between civil society organizations, and governments and human rights.
The Sciences at UNESCO Iraq

UNESCO is contributing to the natural science sector’s development, especially through **water resource management** and **protection of biodiversity**. Natural Sciences activities of UNESCO Iraq contribute to both short and long term reconstruction efforts by building institutional and technical capacities for water resources management, supporting science and technology institutions, development of environmental policy and networking Iraqi scientists with local and international communities.

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**World Environment Day: Iraqi Environment through Photos**

UNESCO is a lead organization in promoting the preservation of the environment and the protection of biodiversity. World Environment Day, celebrated on 5 June, is the largest annual event that fosters positive environmental action by encouraging people to become agents for environmental change and equitable development. To celebrate this occasion for this year, UNESCO Iraq Office has organized, with the support of the Ministry of Environment, a photo exhibition to raise awareness on the environmental challenges in Iraq, and the new methods and approaches to achieve sustainable development. The exhibition was inaugurated at the Equestrian Centre in Al Jadriah district of Baghdad, on 11 June. It was attended by the advisor to the Minister of Environment Dr. Toma al-Helo and other distinguished representatives of the community. Over 60 photographs from 18 governorates were featured. The photographs, taken by the Iraqi Photographers Society, reflected the themes of the beauty of Iraqi nature, biodiversity, deterioration and pollution.

Iraq is one of the most environmentally diverse areas in the region and UNESCO, through its Science programme, gives great importance to the protection of Iraq’s natural resources and ecosystems.

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**Green Economy: Does it Include Iraq?**

Within the framework of the World Environment Day, whose theme for 2012 is: “Green Economy: Does it Include You?” UNESCO, with the support of UNEP, is planning a seminar on Green Economy. The objective is to raise the awareness of Iraqi media professionals on the current global focus on Rio+20 (United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development) and to provide them with up to date, technical knowledge on environmental and economic sustainability. The seminar will focus on promoting Iraq’s economic reform and agricultural sustainability by encouraging the establishment of a pro-poor investment strategy to create public involvement and advocacy for investment in newly emerging environmental sectors and markets. UNESCO Iraq strongly believes that Green Economy will contribute to eradicating poverty and increasing food security, thus improving the welfare and livelihood of the Iraqi population by creating new jobs, reducing pollution, and minimizing threats to natural resources.

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**Percentage* of GDP & Employment Provided by the Oil Sector**

- **Oil Sector**: 60% GDP, 40% Employment
- **No Oil Sector**: 1% GDP, 99% Employment

*Staff estimates based on IMF and GOI

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**Contact Us**


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