



**MTR-CCA/UNDAF Workshop
22 - 23 June 2009, Baghdad**

Opening Address

**Dr. Naeema Al-Gasseer,
OIC UN Resident Coordinator and WHO Representative
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Excellencies, Colleagues and friends.

First, on behalf of my colleagues the Head of Agencies for United Nations, I would like to indicate our sincere appreciation to the Government of Iraq in lead this event and hosting it.

I am here to day in a different capacity that many of you have known me for. Today as the Acting Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of UN, I am privileged to be part of this process. I have witnessed and shared your hopes, aspirations, frustrations and agony over the past few years and the optimism that all of you are striving for to have a new free Iraq.

I have been privileged to have worked in Iraq with so many stakeholders and today to feel and touch the optimism and hope that Iraqi people have. Today, I am so pleased to see in the room the large number of UN experts representing the different tiers of the

organization at international and national level to bring collective strength and respond to the call of Iraqis to work within Iraq

Before we embark on the next two days, I want to reflect a little on why we are here. Most of us here in this room are civil servants. This means that we exist to serve Iraqi men, women and children. We are accountable to them and to their needs. Failure to meet their expectations for a better future will be our failure. If we support them to a better life, then we have achieved our only purpose.

The Iraqi people have needed strength beyond what is normally expected of citizens. Since the 1980s – almost a third of a century – Iraqi citizens have struggled through wars, economic hardship and civil unrest. Far too many have seen their businesses falter, their families injured, killed or displaced, their homes destroyed, and their schools and hospitals fall into disrepair.

Now Iraq stands on the brink of a brighter future. The unconquerable spirit of Iraq – the cradle of civilization – has led the country out of difficult times into a new unity. Great opportunities lie ahead – but great challenges too.

The question for each of us in this room is: what must I do today, tomorrow and in the years ahead, to fulfill my purpose and bring the fruits of peace and prosperity to every Iraqi man, woman, boy and girl.

The Government of Iraq has shown its determination to achieve this through embarking on a National Development Plan. I am confident this

will lay out a clear and inclusive vision for socio-economic revival in every Iraqi community. I hope also that it will be practical, realistic, grounded in respect for human rights and focused on those most in need of assistance and empowerment – children, women, the poor, the displaced and the marginalized.

The United Nations, in support of Iraq's vision, is undergoing its own strategic transformation for a coherent response to Iraq's needs. The UN and Government of Iraq Assistance Strategy 2008-2010 is a worthy first step to create a joint program of cooperation for Iraq's future. But the current situation demands something more. This brings us to why we are here today – and why such an array of international support is present.

Today we are embarking together a process to initiate the joint assessment of the situation in Iraq, using UN Common Country Assessment Framework (CCA) which will lead to the joint development of United Nations Development Assistance (UNDAF) for Iraq. With Government of Iraq, we discussed three reasons why this particular CCA/UNDAF process is different, and why it means so much for Iraq.

First, the CCA/UNDAF is a comprehensive strategic instrument that enables the UN to assist member states in reaching the Millennium Development Goals. It is only possible in countries that can demonstrate stability, political will and the capacity to make real progress. This CCA/UNDAF therefore recognizes that Iraq has, against the odds, made a remarkable transition and is ready for such a process.

Second, the CCA/UNDAF will, for the first time, bring the entire UN Country Team for Iraq into full alignment with Iraq's National

Development Plan. Without the National Development Plan, the CCA/UNDAF would have less meaning. It will guide us, as one UN family, to provide a coherent, harmonized development response to Iraq, ensuring that every program, every dinar invested, is working in support of Iraq's own priorities.

Finally – but most importantly – the CCA/UNDAF marks the UN's commitment to a greater presence and more active engagement in Iraq. For many years, our national staff has carried the burden of UN work in Iraq, as international presence was limited. But now, as Iraq transitions into a new phase of stability, the UN pledges to expand its international presence inside the country, to work shoulder to shoulder with government and become more visible at every level of Iraqi society as it is elsewhere in the world.

The CCA/UNDAF also represents responsibilities for Iraq's government. As a tool to support Iraq, As UN we do not have our strategies and programs for Iraq. We see this is the responsibility of Iraq's government and the CCA/UNDAF is a tool that the government can use to align the collective support of UN system to Iraq. The CCA/UNDAF is to led by Iraqis themselves and is seen to be consistently guided from the highest levels of government. It must be backed by government commitment and ownership – and indeed Iraqi resources alongside international resources. Again and again we must remind ourselves that it is the Iraqi people we serve, through the Iraqi government. They must lead every step of this process.

This workshop is not just another workshop out of the many all of us attend each year. This is the first step in a critical and strategic

process in support of Iraq's hopes. It is to beginning to bring the collective wisdom, strength and resources to bring collective goods for Iraqi people. Our objective – our mission – is to strengthen Iraq to implement its National Development Plan and the goals of the International Compact. It is to meet the needs of the most vulnerable by being a trusted, proactive partner - accountable for high quality, tangible results, and focusing on agreed outcomes.

Over the next two days we will focus together on building the foundations of the CCA/UNDAF. This foundation must be data, evidence and analysis. Only by understanding our current status and gaps can we be sure that we will develop the right strategies for the future. Today we start to create this common understanding.

The Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation for continuous support and cooperation towards this process are appreciated. We look forward collectively to capitalize on Iraq's intellectual capacities across the board, within and outside the government. Together with you, the UN wishes to embark on this process today in Baghdad, and to further build on it in Amman from 27-30 June. We will further align our efforts with government's by supporting a joint UN-Government of Iraq sectoral analysis for the NDP in August working closely with Dr. Sami Matti, the Deputy Minister of Planning and the team. I am also grateful to Dr. Mehdi Al-Alack, for seconding experts from his office to work alongside our colleagues in support of the joint analytical work that will contribute to develop the NDP and the CCA/ UNDAF.

We expect to finalize the CCA by September 2009, and the UNDAF by early 2010. Then several UN Agencies will formulate their respective

country programs, aligned with the UNDAF and NDP for final approval both from GOI and from their respective headquarters and boards by June 2010.

Colleagues and friends, we have a long way to go. But this journey is critical for Iraq and for its people. We expect to learn much along the way. Let us make a good start today as we embark on this joint venture in support of Iraq's future. I am reminded of proverbs that tell us 'one hand alone does not applaud'. Together we can achieve more than we think in the service of Iraq's men, women and children. Hence, I assure you of my utmost support and look forward to our most productive work together.

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