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Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in Reconstruction
Women's Role in Strengthening Civil Society
Findings and Conclusions
November 19, 2003

The creation of a vital civil society in Iraq will be key to the country's rehabilitation and reconstruction. To ensure a vibrant sector that can monitor and partner with the country's new government, it will be essential to:

1. Immediately ensure that the donor community utilizes a high standard for gender balance that is broadly and consistently applied. This would include, for example, having strong women's representation among the donor leadership and hiring Iraqi women for reconstruction tasks.
2. Immediately secure funding to provide women with education, legal aid, and training in business and management skills, particularly accounting, program development, grant proposal writing, and program monitoring and evaluation. In the long term, these funds should be distributed or administered by local women's organizations.
3. Immediately focus NGO training on organizational development (structure and management), fundraising and proposal writing, media and public relations, advocacy training, coalition building, program development, and information technology.
4. Immediately begin to use media as a tool to reach out to and educate communities about their constitutional rights and responsibilities, as well as wider issues relating to democracy and civil society.
5. Immediately clarify the relationships between NGOs and the government. Detail specifics related to NGO registration, qualification, and funding.
6. Immediately intensify and accelerate the creation of women's organizations in the south and center of the country, while continuing to support those that exist in other parts of Iraq.
7. Immediately encourage the creation of legitimate, provincial-level mechanisms that can elect national representatives to facilitate coordination among women's groups.
8. In the medium term, establish direct links between US and other international NGOs and Iraqi NGOs.
9. In the medium and long term, build on and expand efforts to create civil society networks, particularly among women. Representation should be both geographically and ethnically diverse. Additionally, increase transparency in the selection of participants and the development of recommendations at conferences that bring together NGO and other civil society representatives.
10. In the medium to long term, create a media network focused on women's priorities, issues, and concerns to ensure that their voices are heard.
11. In the long term, establish a permanent institute on gender to increase attention to gender issues in Iraq.
12. In the medium to long term, support organizations that provide aid to vulnerable groups, such as victims of sexual crimes, domestic abuse, and the previous regime; widows; orphans; and the infirm.

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Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in Reconstruction
Women's Role in Constitutional Law and Legislation
Findings and Conclusions
November 19, 2003

The formation of a new constitution and a new body of legislation are milestones along the path toward sustainable peace. The principles and rights enshrined in the constitution become the guidelines by which other laws are formed, policies developed, and programs implemented. It is key that the temporary and permanent Iraqi constitution and related legislation and processes:

1. Represent the interests of the entire Iraqi population, without regard to race, ethnicity, language, social origin, religion, or sex. The members of the constitutional drafting committee should include representatives of all interested groups.
2. In the short term, empower women within the constitutional process through a 50 percent quota for women on the constitutional drafting committee.
3. Allow for affirmative action on behalf of certain previously disadvantaged groups, including women. Immediately abolish all laws and regulations that violate the internationally recognized rights of women and enact laws to prevent the abolition of all laws and regulations that benefit women. Create a monitoring committee to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women.
4. Immediately and throughout the process, create educational and media programs to raise Iraqis' awareness about the Constitution.
5. In the medium term, provide for an independent judicial branch and, over time, ensure a well-trained judiciary.
6. Throughout the process, be respectful of the religious sensibilities of society, in order to promote the acceptance of the Constitution by the people.
7. Protect and guarantee the rights of all ethnicities and religions.
8. Ensure the separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.
9. Immediately form a committee of women lawyers and other qualified professionals that will define and protect women's rights and, over time, guarantee the effectiveness of the above.



Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in Reconstruction
Women's Role in Women's Participation in Democracy, Governance, and
Decision-Making
Findings and Conclusions
November 19, 2003

In the lengthy process of democratization, key components of good governance must be addressed by local and international actors in order to aid the transition from violent conflict to democracy. For effective implementation of these structures, women's inclusion is essential. Moving forward, it will be key that all concerned parties:

1. Immediately create mechanisms for ensuring women's full participation in all transitional and permanent national, regional and local governing structures developed in Iraq, possibly through women-only elections or the selection of women for participation in governing bodies.
2. Immediately and throughout the process, establish a 50 percent quota for women in all levels of government; this quota would apply to all government representatives and employees.
3. Immediately create and institutionalize links between the Governing Council and other developing national governing structures in Iraq, and local communities, municipal bodies and other provincial governing entities.
4. Immediately move forward with the appointment of at least five female deputy ministers, as agreed to by the Governing Council.
5. Immediately and throughout the process, ensure and encourage the appointment of qualified, well-trained women judges throughout Iraq.
6. In the short term, create a Gender Advisory Council that reports to the Prime Minister. This Council would be chaired by either a Minister for Gender Affairs or the Minister for Human Rights, whose portfolio and title would be expanded to Minister for Human Rights and Gender Affairs. The council and the Minister would oversee and monitor the work of gender focal points within each Ministry to ensure that women's needs and concerns are mainstreamed into work in all sectors. In the long term, assess the need for creating a Ministry of Gender Affairs.
7. In the short and medium term, support the women on the Governing Council and those in other emerging governing structures in Iraq. This could be achieved through formalizing relationships between the women governing at the national level and civil society, women's groups, and women in key ministries (e.g., a cross-sectoral women's caucus).
8. In the short and medium term, train women governing at the national, provincial and local levels to further enhance their communication and administrative skills.
9. In the short term and throughout the process, initiate media campaigns to promote issues raised by women to give them a platform.
10. In the short, medium, and long term, provide democracy education for the entire Iraqi population, with at least one training provider per province and ongoing educational programs.
11. In the medium and long term, continue to develop a National Plan of Action for women for which all women at all levels can advocate. This plan would build and reflect the Beijing Platform for Action created at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.



Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in Reconstruction
Women's Role in Economic Rights and Empowerment
Findings and Conclusions
November 19, 2003

As economic power leads to political clout, women's equal position in the economic landscape is key to equity in other areas. In order to secure Iraqi women's full participation in the economic rehabilitation of Iraq, it is vital to:

1. Immediately abolish laws that act as an impediment to women's employment, including laws restricting women's right to work and travel, enter certain professions, or work particular hours. Laws promoting women's economic freedom must be part of the labor code. Throughout and following reconstruction, monitoring and implementing in this field is vital.
2. Immediately ensure the participation of women in all economic planning, decision-making processes, and policymaking. This should include the appointment of qualified women to key positions in finance and planning ministries and the inclusion of a gender focus for the Coalition Provisional Authority and the Iraqi Governing Council.
3. Immediately invest in the collection of sex-disaggregated data for all economic studies and reports.
4. In the short term, provide employment training to build women's employment capacities. The training, focusing on the needs of women, must reflect market needs, rather than addressing only those areas typically seen as "women's work."
5. In the short term, create an organization to link businesswomen throughout Iraq.
6. In the short and medium term, provide special grants, loans, and training for unemployed women.
7. In the short, medium, and long term, provide women equal access to economic and financial resources, including: credit, education, property, scholarships, and contracts. A percentage of all financial resources, technical assistance, and educational and exchange opportunities should be set aside for women.
8. In the short, medium, and long term, create youth programs targeting the 15-30 age group, with the aim of creating jobs and formal employment.
9. In the short term, create and maintain provisional safety nets for vulnerable women, including the elderly, the disabled, widows, and women with no means of support. Such safeguards could include but are not limited to pensions, social security, free or reduced-cost housing, insurance, and retraining programs.
10. In the medium term, create an organization, in coordination with the Iraqi government, specialized in collecting data on the skills of women seeking jobs and the needs of employers in the region, connecting women with jobs when possible.
11. In the medium term, introduce laws and regulations that provide for the well being of retirees and the elderly.
12. In the medium and long term, create a "gender friendly" infrastructure to aid women as they balance the demands of home and work life. Such infrastructure would include, though would not be limited to, safe and reliable transportation, trustworthy childcare, sufficient security, and training incentives.
13. In the long term, develop, with the government, a favorable economic environment for women's economic participation.

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Building a New Iraq: Women's Role in Reconstruction
Women's Role in Security and Security Sector Reform
Findings and Conclusions
November 19, 2003

The current lack of security is an impediment to all aspects of life for Iraqis. There is a general perception that the violence is largely being perpetrated by a combination of forces including Ba'ath Party loyalists, Al Qaeda members, and other anti-American actors that have entered Iraq. There is also concern that the presence of US military in civilian areas in some parts of Iraq creates fear and has caused civilian casualties, and that Iraqis contributing to the transition process, particularly women who have taken a lead in organizing civil society, are targets as they are perceived to be supporters of the US. As women directly experience the consequences of insecurity and violence at all levels of society and have important contributions, it is key that they play a significant role in the rehabilitation of the security sector. In the short term, with their guidance, it is necessary to:

1. Immediately ensure street lighting. Currently the lack of lighting in urban and rural areas, including highways, allows for increased burglaries, theft, kidnapping, and other forms of violence.
2. Immediately increase the numbers of Iraqi police across the country.
3. Immediately involve local councils in the selection of police, thus helping to ensure that the officers selected were not active members or officers of the former regime.
4. Immediately increase border security through the creation of border police, in cooperation with the Coalition Provisional Authority and the new Iraqi army.
5. Immediately and in the short term, increase the number of women in the police and security forces.
6. In the short, medium, and long term, hold training for the police and security forces that includes courses in communications, ethics, human rights, and gender.
7. In the short, medium, and long term, ensure good salaries and benefits packages for members of the new police and security forces, and in so doing make the positions more respectable and desirable, and less amenable to corruption. Provisions should also be made to distribute pensions to the widows of deceased members of the new security force.
8. In the short, medium, and long term, create community forums to ensure more responsiveness and the exchange of ideas between civilians and police forces regarding security issues.
9. In the short, medium, and long term, raise the awareness of women regarding security issues. As some 55 percent of the population, they need to be active participants in this reform. As natural networks within and among communities, women are well placed to monitor the local security situation informally. In moving forward, it will also be necessary for women to address their evolving notions of security.