

**Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against
Women**

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Republic of Iraq Delegation

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**Madam Nicole Ameline, Chairperson of the Committee on the
Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

Respected Delegations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me in my capacity as the Minister of State for Women's Affairs in Iraq, and members of my delegation in our capacity as the body overlooking the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to thank you for the opportunity to address your distinguished gathering today.

Today, the Iraqi delegation consisted of delegates who represents both the Federal and Regional Government of Kurdistan Region. The delegatuions includes members of different religious and ethnic sects. They reflects the mosaic nature of the Iraqi Society in all its aspects. Their individual experiences over different periods of our past including the dark period our nation went through reflects, the creativity and failure of women in our society, including the advances and retreats they made. Women long struggle to win certain fundamental women rights, as well as recent success achieved some time with restriction. Their experience also reflects steps been taking to overcome their difficulties and challenging, to continue their march with determination to reach their goals in developing a free, dignified, safe and stable life for all Iraq's women and through that a free and developed Iraqi civil society. A society and a country which is committed to all International and Regional Conventions and Instruments related to Human Rights. Including the

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women which my country Iraq, has acceded to recently.

Madam Chair person,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to make a brief reference some of the important developments which have taken place, following the submission of our earlier report in 2010, where we made a commitment to the application of the principles contained in Democratic Transparent Action Convention. Since, 2003, and irrespective of delicate internal security situation prevailing in some parts of the country, the Iraqi Government continues to make serious efforts to apply the basic principles of Human Rights and to follow up on the implementation of international and regional conventions ratified by Iraq related to this area, through establishing and developing our national institutions in charge of introducing and monitoring the implementation of all Human Rights Conventions we have ratified. A wide net work of government bodies have been set up to over look these tasks. Including: -

- The Ministry of Human Rights
- The Ministry of State for Women Affairs
- The Supreme Council of Women Advancement in the Kurdistan Region.
- The High Independent Commission of Human Rights
- The Directorate of Women Welfare, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs .
- The Directorate of Family protection, Federal Ministry of Interior.

In addition to the above, the Government undertook to establish number of Safe Shelters for Victims of Trafficking in the capital city of Baghdad.

- The Establishing Department for Women at each of our ministries and institution.

- The setting up of Independent Human Rights Committee in Kurdistan Region.
- The establishment of the r Directorate aiming at combating Violence against Women, at the Ministry of Interior in Kurdistan Region.
- Establishing number of Safe Shelters for women victims of violence in the Kurdistan Region.
- Setting up Investigation Units at all the Courts specialized in dealing with the Domestic Violence cases and or cases dealing with violations of Human Rights issues.

Finally, in early 2014, the Iraqi Government set up Court specialized in dealing with human rights violations in Baghdad.

IN the light of above, allow me to say that the Republic iof Iraq has taken major steps to adher and to develop policies which are aiming at the protection and advancement of women rights. The latter issue has become a corner stone in the national and regional governments policies, national strategies and plans of actions for the period 2010-2017, Including ; -

- the Strategy of poverty Alleviation.
- the National Plan for Human Rights Development.
- The National Employment policy.
- The National Banks Lending programme for Housing.

The establishment of the above mentioned institutions and entities were combined with setting up guidelines and operation manuals to facilitate their works. The reports to Ministry of State for Women's Affairs.

The latter Ministry has also established close and regular cooperation end coordination with the number of UN specialized agencies including UNDP, UNFPA, ILO.

In the field of international conventions and legislations:

- The Republic of Iraqi has adopted a new constitution inn 2005 which guarantees adherence and implementation all international

conventions and interments the country has ratified, including those related to Human Rights. A national committee has been established at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers to over see the harmonization of the national legislations with the international conventions. The committee carries out regular review of international obligations especially in the field of human rights In order to strengthen national legislations and administrative guidelines. It also monitor the performance of the governmental agencies to ensure compliance. The Committee also over see all recommendations by relevant associations dealing with women issues to ensure compliance with our international treaties obligations.

- Article 14 of the Iraqi Constitution guarantee the principle of the equality of all Iraqis before the law without discrimination Iraqi due to race, gender, religion and / or ethnicity.

Most Iraqi laws list the above principle except where it is other wise stated due to religious consideration. Accordingly, The Iraqi Government has proposed to amend number of national laws including the Law on Social Welfare in relation to entitlements, Labor Law, Personal Status Law and Law on Minors Welfare. I am glad to report that the Regional Government in Kurdistan has succeeded in introducing such amendments in relation to Article 25 relating to the Personal Status Law and the Penal Code in relation to benefit to women.

In 2012, the Iraqi Government lifted the reservation on the right of women to pass her Iraqi nationality to her child. A copy of the amendment published in the Official Gazette and a copy of it was sent to the Office of the United Nations in New York.

In the field of political participation:

The most prominent achievement for Iraqi women since the change of regime in 2003 has been increasing their political rights, representation and activity. Especially in the area of civil society. The 2005 Constitution guaranteed women a special quota in term of the number of seats they are titled to occupy at the National Parliament. They also have been guaranteed certain right to monitor all draft legislation related to women's rights at the legislature authority, in order to ensure their representation in relevant bodies including the National Human Rights Commission, the

Provincial HRs Councils, national HRs auditing the performance committees and local governments.

The ratio of women representation in the Iraqi National Parliament raised from 10,8% in 1990 to 27,3% in 2005

The Independent Electoral Commission has taken positive measures to encourage women to participate with independent individual lists or collective by reduction of the required amounts of financial insurance for women .women participate in the elections of parliament in 2014 that scheduled to be held in 30 April. Some 2,500 women candidates have submitted their names as candidates.

In the field of executive authority women has been elected for the first time as Chairperson of a local council in the Federal Government while in Kurdistan Region there have been more than one woman occupying the post Mayor and/ or District Manager. At the same time, the proportion of women's participation in the judicial authority has increased markedly. To cover regular civil and Criminal Courts as well as Juvenile Courts. In addition to occupying the post of Public Prosecutor in number of cities. Recently,women been appointed as judges, including Vice-President of the Appeal Court and Nine Judges. Plus the recent nomination of a women for the position of member of the Court of Cassation in the Federal Government.

In the field of Education

In the field of Education, I am glad to state that the Republic of Iraq has always adopted the principle total equality among sex in access to education. Thus, there has been no gender discrimination in access to all education centers including all schools at all levels of educations, universities and institutions. Government education at all level is available free of charges to all Iraqis irrecpective of their religion, sects and or gender. Of course there are private schools and universities available to those who choose that.

Due to successive wars, embargo, internal and external displacement, and on going terrorist activities in certain regions have decreased the rate of education enrollment, especially between females. The percentage of enrollment in kindergarten is 12% for the last year half of it were female.

In the primary schools the rate reached to 97% 45 of it were female. While, at the intermediate schools level it reached to 40% 45 for female. The rate at the secondary schools reached 22% 40 for female.

In the light of above, the Ministry of Education initiated an active strategy for women education by opening the accelerated learning schools and adolescents and evening schools for women. IT also supports and finances private education and illiteracy schools system aiming and encouraging women education especially in out reached areas and provinces. Today women represent 50% of the students enrolled in these schools. Moreover, recently the Iraqi Parliament approved a special financial grant to encourage all those enrolled in Primary, Intermediate, High schools and Universities. In addition students attending illiteracy centers are eligible to special financial incentive/ grant. .

Iraq has witnessed in the last four years, the phenomenon of Iraqi female students obtaining the highest grade at the Baccalaureate levels. .

In the field of higher education in Iraq There are no instructions and regulations discriminate between males and females in the acceptance in the initial studies and higher education.

The percentage of females attending schools at the primary level in the Federal Government Region is 44.5% . The percentage goes up to 51.2% in the Regional Government of Kurdistan Region. .

In the post-graduate level, the percentage of female are 43% and 46.25% in Kurdistan Region, the proportion of women gain scholarships are 26.1% and women gain fellowships are 16.7%. the rate of those who candidate for over sea scholarship is 24%.

Recently, a woman has occupied the post of Vice Chancellor of University for Scientific Affairs. A second woman been nominated and appointed for the post of Chairperson of Center For Cancer Research. A third woman been appointed for the post of Chancellor of University, for the first time in the history of Iraq. While at the same time an increasing number of women heading different science departments has increased from 15% to 19%. Similar increase is taking place in the number of woman occupying the posts of Deputy Minister, and or posts of Special Senior Adviser to Ministers.

In the field of health:

the indicators of development and progress in the health sector have fallen over the past decades because of war and the embargo and destruction of infrastructure and the decline of human capacity and financing as well as the environmental degradation and declining economic ability of the citizen, which led to high mortality rates and poor health services and the burden on the psychological and physical of the citizen.

The Iraqi Ministry of Health developed a special plan for the implementation of preventive and curative strategy by addressing immediate needs health need to improve services. It focus on primary health care, including transitional and non-transitional diseases and reproductive health services.

A particularly worrying factor is the sharp increase in cancer cases among women. Large numbers of women died due to cancer related symptoms. We are also witnessing a sharp increase in the cases of infant cancer. Ministry of Health has taken **several measures aiming at addressing this serious problem.**

- In the Kurdistan Region, steps been developed to establish an advanced specialized hospitals for women and children for cancer treatment.

In general death mortality rate among children under 5 years has decreased from from 34 per in thousand in 2008 to 24 cases in 2012. In the Kurdistan Region the mortality rate has been reduced from 40 in 2006 to 28 in 2013.

In the field of violence against women

The most sever situation that Iraqi women witnessed and still suffer from is the armed violence that occurred following 2003 events. Iraqi women were targeted directly by armed extremists including religion groups. The situation effected women from different fields including government employees, Journalist, members of Parliament, politicians, translators, businesswomen etc.. No adequate statistics exist of the number of women who were kill because of terrorists related activities. But, for sure the number exceeds thousands. IN some cases women were targeted due to their religious faith.

Such events has become much more limited to terrorist acts which hit all the different communities and civilians without distinction. According to official statistics in 2012, the official number of women victims of terrorist activities was 265 dead , 1133 wounded. This is in addition to 158 child, and 854 wounded child. 2678 dead men and 10. 195 wounded.

The implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325

Last year a Committee consisted of representative from the Federal Government, the Regional Kurdistan Government, Civil Society was established to implement Security Council resolution 1325. It also review the regional strategy of the Arab League. The national plan to implement this resolution been declared in a conference held on 6 February. The plan contain four main axes : Increasing the participation of women in decision; Increasing the participation of women in political blocks in three bodies including security agencies, in the national security program and including aid associations including Red Crescent, participation in the economic development institutions; providing fair legislative environment and governmental mechanism to protect women in conflict areas, while meeting their needs to integrating them in community.

The Iraqis Government and the Regional Government of Kurdistan supports these recommendations. It offered to hold international conference on fighting terrorism where women will have special axis and role.

Women of other religions:

All Iraqis are free to organize their personal life in line with the provisions of the Personal Status Law No. 188 of 1959, as amended. This includes non-Muslims Iraqis who have a choice. This law regulates the rights and obligations of all family members in Iraq and deal with their marriage, devoice and inheritance issues. The law organizes transactions at Special Personal Status Courts. Which held their decisions in following consultation with religious authorities of the faith of the persons party to the disputes.

Iraq minority women like many Iraq Muslim women can be subject of family violence in some cases. They also may face displacement terrorist

activities. The government is seeking to protect all components of the Iraqi society from violence both internal and family violence and terrorism. The Iraqi government provides special protection for the churches and temples, it opened schools and universities in the neighborhoods where minorities have specific religious characters and/ or requirements. The government also agrees on transferring their jobs to areas of the country where they feel safer including the Kurdistan Region and with the latter approval and agreement, as a temporary measures.

Vulnerable women:

Due to the misguided policies of former regime, Iraqi were drown into several of military conflicts, terrorist activities which have resulted in large number of death, distraction, and large scale internal and external displacement of population. The number of Iraqi widows has sky rocketed. The Iraqi Ministry of Planning noted that Iraq host today over over one million women widows in addition to 60.000 thousand divorcee women. The Directorate of Women Social Care, responsible to assist this group of women, today provides financial grants to some 450.000 women head of family, in addition to disable women. In addition to that the department is expected to assist a group of women who lost their spouses estimated at 1.300 martyrs and 8000 women who were prisoned by the former regime. Plus, the wives and children of those who lost their life in the Iraq- Iran war and those who were killed in prisons by the former regime. Includong the thousands victims of the Chemical weapons used against the Kurdish civilians residents of the town of Halabja in North of Iraq. The wise and magnitude of the responsibility of the latter department and the financial and administrative resources it requires to carry its mandate effectively exceeds what can be listed in this presentation.

Immigrant and Displaced women

In the field of Education

Iraqi women have been among the main victims of past military conflicts led by the former regime. Irrespective of on going efforts on the part of the central and regional governments to improver their wellbeing since 2033, large number of Iraqi women continue to suffer and need immediate assistance and financial aid, counseling and medical care.

Considering their very large number and taking into consideration the ongoing security situation prevailing in certain parts of the country. Which causing forced displacement inside Iraq and abroad. Ministry of Displacement and Migration continue to play a major role in implementing plans and programs to ensure their protection and assistance, it carries its work : First to reduce the negative impact of action taken by the former regime in displacing large number of persons, including through deportation and confiscation of their property and stripping of nationality, for those the aim is to encourage them and assist them to return to their area of residence, to recover their property and their documents. While, assisting to overturning laws and executive action which are illegal under international law, human rights principles. In doing so, the Ministry has been very careful to ensure that policies and strategies to support women's rights in particular, including the national policy to address internal displacement and the national policy for housing the displaced are being adhered to.

Today, the Ministry is assisting some 55,499 women heading families. In addition to 339 women families returned to their area of residence. .

Employment in the public and private sectors:

In the field of recruitment of women, Iraqi women applicants to job vacancies are given equal consideration as men, taking into consideration their education, experiences and the job requirements. A government unified job requirements is applied to men and women applicants. Salary level and entitlements are applied equally to men and women at the same job except for maternity leave requirements. Government salary and wages depends on education, years of service and grade related regulations. Women receive training programs and scholarship, though sometimes she not take her full entitlement. women suffer in all ministries from the severe shortage of leadership positions because many of such positions are subjected to political consideration and quotas requirements. Recently, the Council of Ministers demanded, **a stricter consideration and adherence women representation at senior ministerial and executive levels.**

Ministry of Labor implementing program of operating unemployed males and females in the private and public sectors, and granting income-

generating loans for women and men equally in addition to the training programs that presented in the specialized centers in the ministry of labor and ministry of culture.

within the agricultural initiative rural women granted agricultural loans without interest to both men and women, as well as a wide range of training and qualification programs held by the ministries of agriculture, health and women.

Mother employee gives birth vacation 72 days, followed by 6 months of motherhood with full salary and 6 months half-pay and for the woman puts twin

In the field of Education

women receive full one year leave with full salary. In Kurdistan she grants year with full salary.

In spite of the adoption of the Social Security Act for the private sector in Iraq. women in the private sector are still need support including establishment of national health insurance. In addition to national legislation regulating minimum wages.

Madam Chairperson, Distinguish Delegates , ladies and Gentlemen

The Iraqi Government and the Regional Government of Kurdistan are working hard since 2003, overhaul and improve the situation of women in Iraq at all level. With special emphasis on the difficult situation of the large number of women victims of the former regime. What they have achieved so far is a lot but, the task in front of them is bigger. The challenges continue and at different fronts but, the intention and commitment are their to guide them and guide all of us to achieve this task. Our national programmer is and will remains a priority for our central and regional government and Parliaments. We are sincere in our determination to see through the importance of our national programme and to see through its implementation at all levels with existing resources. Aimed at develop and improving national and regional infrastructure and policies affecting and improving the status and situation of all women in Iraq. We believe in women rights and we

are committed to support the implement of all provisions related to the CEDAW convention.

Thank you very much for your support and assistance. With my regards