

Iraq Compact Annual Review Conference

Stockholm 29 May 2008

Address by the Minister for Development Cooperation, H.E. Ulla Tørnæs

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first of all thank the Iraqi Government, the United Nations and our Swedish hosts for organizing this conference. One year after launching the International Compact with Iraq, we are gathered to show our continued support and commitment to Iraq and the Iraqi people.

Developments in Iraq during the last year show that our approach is working. Substantial progress has been achieved, and I would like to commend Prime Minister Maliki and the Iraqi Government for their enormous efforts to push things forward. Security has improved and [security] responsibility has now been handed over to the Iraqi Government in nine provinces. Economic reforms have been implemented. Growth is increasing. And focus has been put on national reconciliation – just to mention a few examples.

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Needless to say, the situation in Iraq is still fragile and the Government of Iraq is facing immense challenges. Reconciling the different groups of Iraq constitutes the main challenge. Promoting the rule of law and human rights are among other important concerns. There is a strong need for improvements in the living conditions of the Iraqi people by strengthening the provision of social services to the whole country, while keeping in mind the importance of

protecting the rights of women, children and minorities. Those are major tasks, but as we all know, sovereignty comes with a lot of responsibilities.

We highly welcome the decision to hold provincial elections next fall, which will hopefully be another important step towards further reconciliation. And we are grateful that the UN is heavily involved in this process, as the UN has gradually strengthened its presence and efforts in Iraq.

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Denmark has had a strong engagement in Iraq militarily, politically and economically ever since the fall of the former regime and we are firmly committed to continue our support to Iraq. In close consultation with the Iraqi government, we have adjusted our military and reconstruction efforts and focus is now on building capacity in ministries and central institutions in Baghdad. Because of that, we are increasing our presence in Baghdad.

Recently, the Danish government announced an additional 20 mill. USD to reconstruction and prolonged our assistance program to the end of 2010. For the time period 2003-2010 Denmark has allocated 180 mill. USD for reconstruction and humanitarian aid.

Furthermore, Denmark will continue to be involved in training of Iraqi police through our bilateral police program and through the EU JUST LEX. We also contribute to training of the Iraqi army through the various training missions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I had the opportunity to visit Jordan and Northern Iraq in February this year. It gave me a good first-hand understanding of the Iraqi refugee situation and I saw the results of our humanitarian aid. Denmark is a strong supporter of humanitarian activities in Iraq and neighboring countries. For the period 2007 – 2008 Denmark has committed over USD 37 mill. to the Iraqi refugee situation. We are pleased to find ourselves in the top 3 in absolute terms among humanitarian donors to Iraq in 2007. Denmark will maintain its humanitarian commitment to the Iraqi people in 2008 and hope that other donors will follow.

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Events in 2003 gave Iraq the opportunity for a new beginning. And from 2003 on the Iraqi people has undertaken vital steps towards building a new Iraqi state – a state founded on democratic institutions with respect for human rights and the rule of law. It is a long and difficult effort, but we believe Iraq is on the right track. And Denmark will continue its support to promote a free and democratic Iraq.

Thank you.