



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
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PRESS RELEASE

UN-Habitat receives generous support from the Government of the Netherlands to initiate policy dialogue on the Land Legal Framework Reform and Secure Tenure Rights for internally displaced Iraqis

Baghdad, Iraq – 25 September 2023

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) welcomes a contribution of USD 1.9 million from the Government of the Netherlands through the LAND-at-scale programme (<http://rvo.nl/landatscale>) to reform land legal framework, build local capacity on housing, land, and property (HLP) rights, and contribute to increasing the security of tenure for all Iraqis, including vulnerable internally displaced people (IDPs) and returnees in conflict-affected governorates.

On 25 September 2023, Mr. Ghulam Isaczai, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC), Ms. Rania Hedeya, Regional Representative of the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States, and Mr. Ahmed Jamal Mohammed, Head of Foreign Relations Department, Ministry of Justice, visited the Embassy of the Netherlands and signed a Contribution Agreement to initiate policy dialogue on the reform of the land legal framework to enhance land governance and resolve land claims for vulnerable IDPs and returnees in Iraq.

The project will directly support the Government of Iraq on the policy dialogue on land legal framework, benefit 1,600 IDPs and returnee households by providing legal support and counselling services to restore or obtain HLP documentation, and file compensation claims for destroyed or damaged property.

Through this project, UN-Habitat will work in close collaboration with Iraqi government counterparts on the land legal framework. With the generous support of the Government of the Netherlands, the project aims to bolster the Government of Iraq's land management system.

HLP rights management is one of the key challenges for those rendered vulnerable through displacement in Iraq. The legal reform on land is set to address issues of inadequate land management and insecure tenure, which not only poses risks for IDPs and returnees, but also restricts the potential for overall economic and social development in Iraq.

Mr. Jacob Wiersma, Chargé d’Affaires of the Netherlands embassy in Baghdad highlighted the importance of housing, land and property (HLP) rights for all Iraqis, including vulnerable people, as access to these rights contributes to peoples’ security, reintegration, and well-being. With this new programme the Netherlands, in cooperation with UN-Habitat, will be supporting the Government of Iraq in improving land governance and processing land claims by its citizens.

Mr. Ghulam Isaczai emphasized that the commitment of the Government of the Netherlands to support UN-Habitat in its efforts to ensure the land legal framework contributes to and improves land governance, while strengthening the security of tenure and protection of HLP rights for all Ghulam.

Mr. Ahmed Jamal Mohammed emphasized that the Ministry of Justice welcomes this initiative and is happy to see that the project will contribute to improving the legal framework on land, supporting IDPs, and contributing to the strengthening of the security of tenure.

Ms. Rania Hedeya reiterated UN-Habitat’s commitment to continue supporting the Government of Iraq, IDPs and returnees, highlighting that the improvement of land governance will contribute to and promote the safe and sustainable return of IDPs to their area of origin.

In case of questions about the LAND-at-scale project in Iraq, please contact: Mr. Muslim Qazimi (muslim.qazimi@un.org) or Ms. Gemma Betsema (gemma.betsema@rvo.nl).
