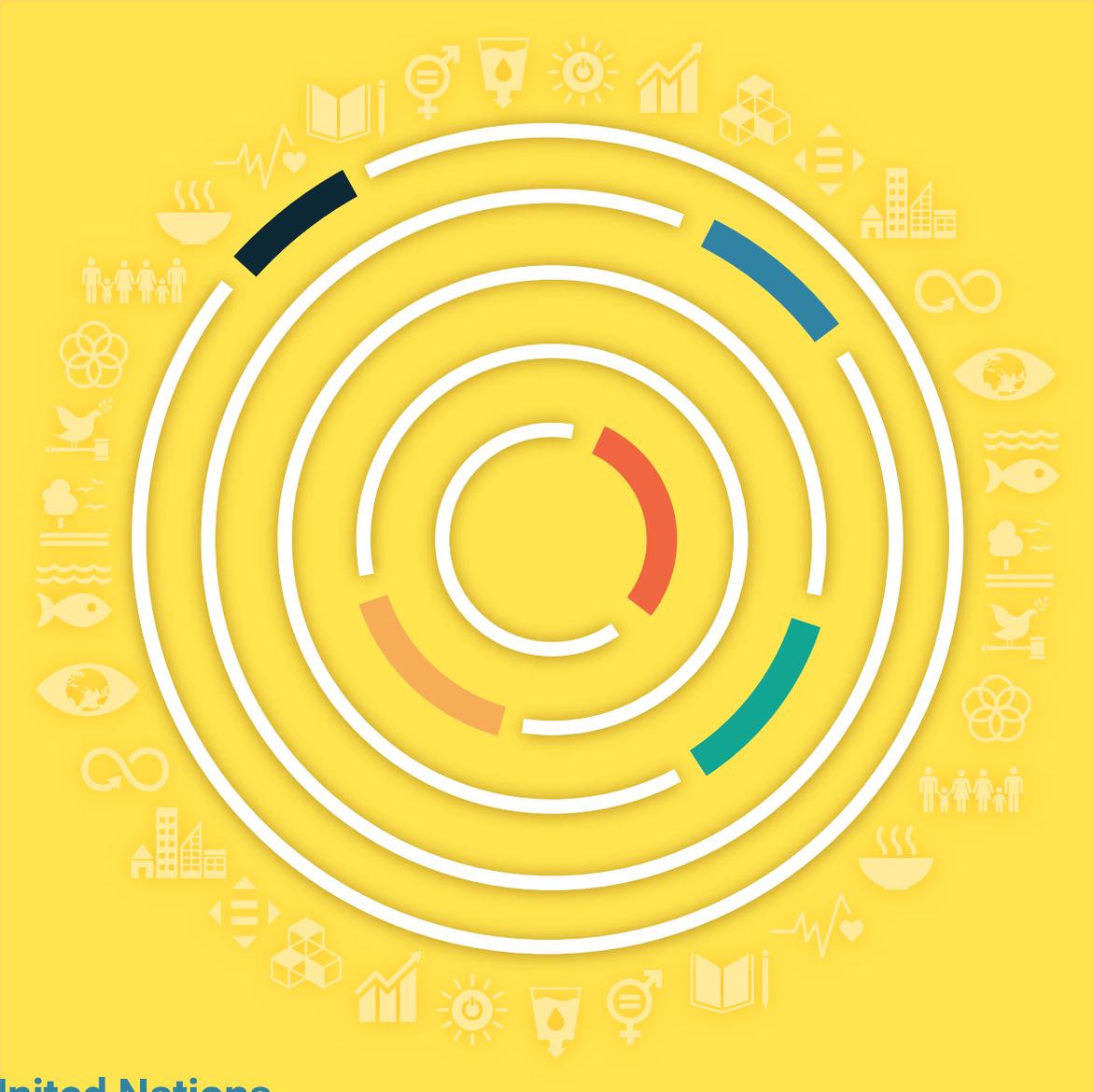


# Iraq Socio-Economic Response Plan



United Nations

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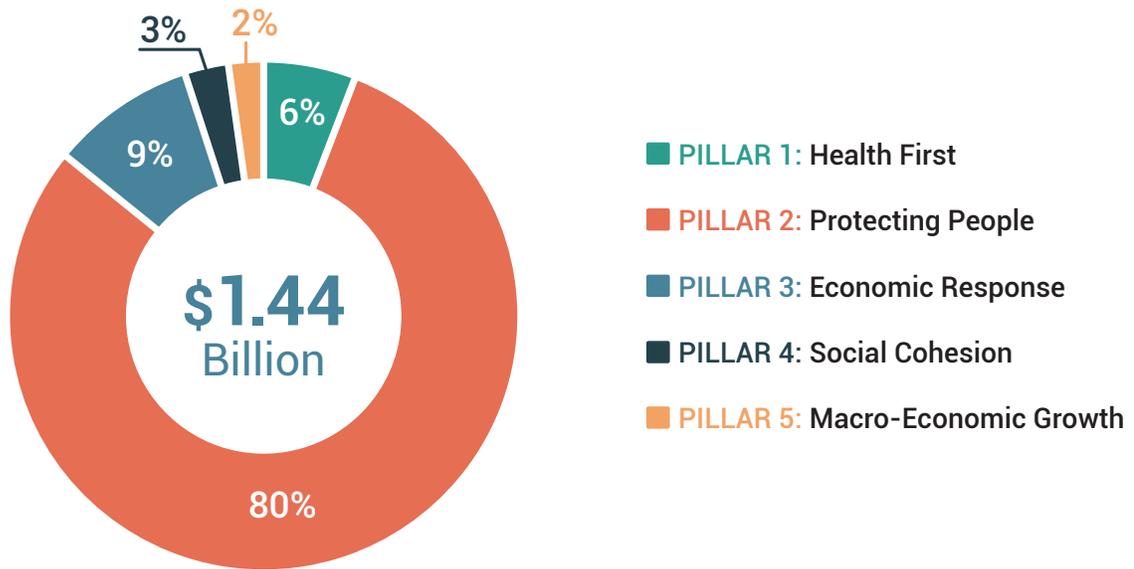
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# PLAN AT A GLANCE

## 817 Key activities

### Requirements by Pillar



### List of SDGs and targets covered by the Plan

SDG	Target	Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3	Pillar 4	Pillar 5
SDG 1	No poverty	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
SDG 2	Zero hunger	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
SDG 3	Good health and well-being	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
SDG 4	Quality education	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SDG 5	Gender equality	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
SDG 6	Clean water and sanitation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
SDG 7	Affordable and clean energy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
SDG 8	Decent work and economic growth	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SDG 9	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SDG 10	Reduced inequalities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
SDG 11	Sustainable cities and communities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SDG 12	Responsible consumption and production	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SDG 13	Climate action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SDG 14	Life below water	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
SDG 15	Life on land	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
SDG 16	Peace, justice and strong institutions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
SDG 17	Partnerships for the goals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



# INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

Emergency response cannot, on its own, permanently reduce the complex and sometimes chronic risks and vulnerabilities of a country in multiple crisis. This is becoming increasingly pronounced in Iraq during the COVID-19 outbreak where the pandemic has the potential to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and affect the overall fragility of the country.

In light of this, the UN system has decided to respond to the pandemic by taking an approach that bridges the gap between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding support. The intention is to reduce the impact of key risks and vulnerabilities in support of the Iraqi Government's response to COVID-19 and its overall roadmap towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations' urgent socio-economic support to countries and societies in the face of COVID-19<sup>1</sup> puts in practice the United Nations Secretary General Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity report<sup>2</sup> that is one of three critical components of the UN's efforts to save lives, protect people, and rebuild better, alongside the health response, led by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the humanitarian response, led by UNOCHA, detailed in the UN-led COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. The Framework presents an integrated support package offered by the United Nations Development System (UNDS) to protect the needs and rights of people living under the duress of the pandemic, with particular focus on the most vulnerable countries, groups, and people who risk being left behind, including women and girls.

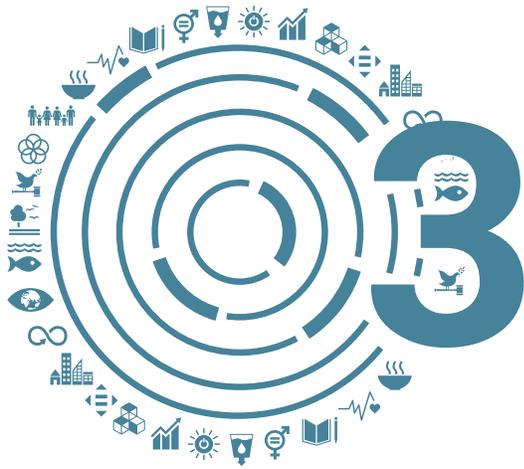
When development actors across many sectors better grasp and address the unique challenges of development in fragile contexts, a more sustainable path towards the Sustainable Development Goals can be set.<sup>3</sup> Crises can reverse decades of development progress, at the same time reinforcing those very dynamics that led to the crises in the first place. Development co-operation can have a positive impact, not only by building resilience to fragility, but also by improving the lives of the most vulnerable groups in fragile environments.<sup>4</sup> Under the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the emerging financial crisis resulting from the decline in oil prices, consequences for Iraq are likely to include exacerbating grievances around access to basic social services, including health care, and increasing inequalities, especially for marginalised and vulnerable groups, which could in turn undermine peacebuilding gains and heighten conflict risks over the mid-longer term.

It is with this in mind that the UN system, at the global level has established its COVID-19 response mechanisms under several pillars as indicated in figure 1 below. These present the strategic channels through which, at country level, the Iraqi Government can be supported in its responses to the immediate, short, medium and long terms needs arising from the pandemic.



The Socio-Economic Response Plan for Iraq (SERP) was led by the Resident Coordinator's Office with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as technical integrator, and with full participation of the United Nations Development System in the country between May-July 2020. The current strategy was prepared while several COVID-19 impact assessments by UN Agencies and other stakeholders were ongoing, while others were being planned. In this regard, the strategy should be seen as a living document that will be adapted and updated based on :

- i) the evolution of the pandemic in the country, including whether there is more than one wave
- ii) the data and results generated from the assessments processes, expected by August-December 2020.



# THEORY OF CHANGE

## THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change for the SERP is to support the Government of Iraq in addressing the socio-economic recovery needs of the Iraqi people and communities arising or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic over the next 18 months.

This is done through a holistic and complementary approach whilst guaranteeing their security, their dignity and their prospects for shared prosperity. Currently, the context in Iraq offers the opportunity to have humanitarian assistance and development aid, together with the efforts made by national and local actors, to take on a complementary and coherent approach to address key risks and vulnerabilities that contribute to long

term resilience and stability while supporting the progressive achievement of the SDGs.

Where the strategic objectives of the Iraq Country Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan Against COVID-19 (SPRP) are to address the immediate health consequences of the COVID-19 Outbreak, and the strategic objectives of the Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is to provide humanitarian assistance to groups most affected by the pandemic, the SERP will be complementary by focusing on the socio-economic needs that arise out of the pandemic in line with the UN global framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19.

### — 3.1 Guiding Principles for the SERP

The SERP aligns itself with the “Guiding Principles for the Rollout of the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 at country level” seen in Box 1 below.

#### Box 1: Guiding Principles for the Rollout of the SERP

##### OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

###### National ownership

The UN's socio-economic response must be aligned with and, where possible, part of the national response to the COVID-19 crisis.

###### Coherence across the health, humanitarian and socio-economic responses

The socio-economic response must be developed and implemented in full alignment with the health and humanitarian responses.

###### Focus on building back better

Beyond the immediate needs, the response must steer recovery towards more sustainable development trajectories, guided by the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

###### Collaborative leadership

The objective is to deliver a coherent UN development system response that effectively draws on the UN system's assets and support a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach. Collaboration, mutual trust, empowerment, and transparency will be key enablers of success.

###### Human rights based

The UN's socio-economic response must be human rights based, striving to leaving no one behind and aiming at ensuring gender equality.

###### Equity Focus

The UN's socio-economic response will give priority to vulnerable populations most affected by the compounded crisis including children, women, young people and person with disability

## OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

**Transaction costs** must be minimized to the extent possible, by using and building on existing agency platforms, capacities, institutions and systems.

**Coherence and discipline** must be everyone's focus, working with and through collective initiatives and frameworks, including when it comes to resource mobilization.

**Flexibility and speed must be enhanced**, by capitalizing on agencies' experience and drawing, where possible, on programming and operational modalities usually reserved for high risk/ conflict/ humanitarian responses.

**Collective and individual risks must be taken and managed**, by making full use of entity-specific and joint risk management tools, and by speeding up the sharing of information on what works and what doesn't at all levels.

In addition to the aforementioned global principles, a few other Iraq-specific principles and planning assumptions that drive this Strategy need to be highlighted:

### ● **“Leave No One Behind”:**

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 193 United Nations Member States pledged to ensure “no one will be left behind” and to “endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.” In practice, this means taking explicit action to end extreme poverty, curb inequalities, confront discrimination and fast-track progress for the furthest behind. This is specifically important in the case of Iraq given its post-conflict context.

### ● **Apply conflict and gender sensitive approaches:**

Governments and international actors should adopt conflict-sensitive, gender-sensitive, and inclusive approaches to local, national, and global COVID-19 response efforts. The Socio-economic response will be conflict sensitive to make sure that gains made in peacebuilding are not lost.

Local and national governments should support and engage local community representatives and peacebuilders as essential to help design and lead COVID-19 sensitization and response efforts to help

mitigate further conflict, prevent violence and social exclusion, including gender-based violence, adapt and sustain peace processes, and (re)build social cohesion. This is crucial in the case of Iraq where the Government, the UNDS programming, and partners focuses on stabilization, peacebuilding, reconciliation and social cohesion.

### ● **Protection of human rights:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has many human rights implications for civil, economic, political, social and cultural rights. Responses to the pandemic should be consistent with international human rights standards and address key human rights concerns. It should also ensure social equity, rule of law and accountability.

### ● **Response based on the comparative advantage of the UN system:**

Effectiveness of the Strategy is in part rooted in the fact that it is based on the comparative advantage that the UN System in Iraq can bring to the table as described in its Cooperation Framework.

The main planning assumption for the Strategy can be found in Box 2 below.

**Box 2: Key Planning Assumptions**

**The trajectory of the COVID-19 pandemic remains unknown as does its concrete impact on a number of sectors. The UN System therefore needs to remain nimble and agile in response to evolving needs.** This underlines the need for the UN system response strategies to remain flexible and responsive.

**The shrinking fiscal and monetary space created by the significant drop in oil price will make it challenging for the Government to implement the required reforms addressing the socio-economic demands voiced by the demonstrations.** This will be essential to ensure that the programmes needed to support the socio-economic response of the Government can be financed and implemented.

**A resurgence of ISIL and the level of other conflicts in the country continue to be present but remains localised.** This would indicate that the likelihood of violent conflict at the national and sub-national levels will continue to be manageable.

**Considering the high costs of addressing the pandemic domestically, it is likely that traditional donors will not be able to prioritise the necessary ODA to respond to priority governance reforms and socio-economic needs.** The majority of needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, whether humanitarian, development or peacebuilding, are rooted in chronic development deficits. It is key that these are addressed in the response strategies for a sustainable impact.

**Partnerships and engagements with the new national and sub-national authorities remain strong.** The main partner in Development remains the Government of Iraq. An internal breakdown or deadlock in the political arena will affect the ability of the UN System to efficiently provide development assistance.

**The COVID-19 containment measures might relax somewhat during Q3 2020 but significant caution will still be exercised pending a second wave, with the potential for a second lockdown. Lighter lockdown measures will make it easier to access beneficiaries and work with Implementation partners to implement programming.**

The SERP is guided by a number of key policy documents at global and Iraqi level that guide how the UN System in Iraq supports the government in responding to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lead Organisation	Global policy document that are informing the UN System response to COVID19- in Iraq	Date of publication
UN Global	Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of Covid-19	Mar 20
	A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19	Apr 20
	Policy Brief: COVID-19 and People on the Move	June 20

Lead Organisation	Global policy document that are informing the UN System response to COVID19- in Iraq	Date of publication
OCHA	Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19	May 20
	Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP)	Feb 20
WHO	Global COVID Strategy Update	Apr 20
	Maintaining essential health services: operational guidance for the COVID-19 context	June 20
Lead Entity	Iraqi Government Strategies and policy documents that are informing the UN System response to COVID19- in Iraq	Date of publication
Ministry of Planning	Iraqi National Development Plan 2018-2022	Jun 18
	Iraq Poverty Reduction Strategy 2018-2020 (only in hardcopy)	Jan 18
	The Future we want- Iraq Sustainable Development 2030 (only in hardcopy)	2019
Government of Iraq	First Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development Goals 2019	2019
Prime Minister	Government Plan 2020 (not available in official publication)	6 May 20
Ministry of Health	National Public Health National Action Plan for Health Security (2019-2023)	2019
Ministry of Planning -Kurdistan Regional Government	Kurdistan Region of Iraq 2020 - A Vision for the Future	Sept 13

An integral part of the SERP will be the launch of a number of key assessments that will allow for data collection through which a deeper understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in key areas can be attained (see Annex 1).

The UN will prioritize the collection and sharing of data and information, whether through rapid vulnerability analyses, assessments, policy papers, and blogs.

These will provide the evidence base for advisory services to the Government and inform relevant strategies and policies. The SERP will be updated once the majority of these assessments are finalised to integrate the findings and recommendations in the response strategy. As such, the SERP remains a living document that will allow for the UN system to support the Government of Iraq in a flexible and reactive fashion.



# CONTEXT OF THE RESPONSE FOR IRAQ

# CONTEXT OF THE RESPONSE FOR IRAQ

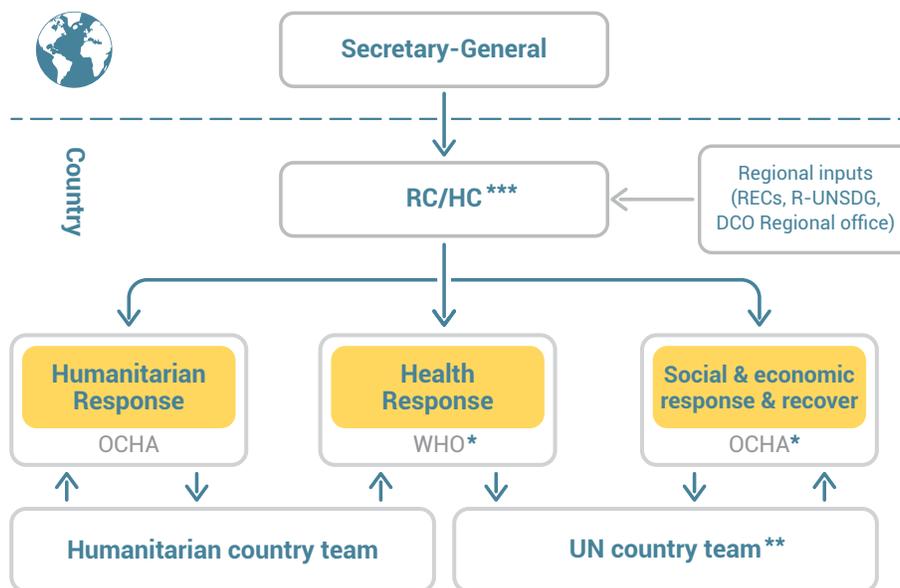
The global health crisis that was unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic has seen a global mobilisation in the effort to contain the virus and address its social and economic consequence on the world's populations and global economies. Initial assessments indicate that the pandemic will most likely increase poverty and inequalities at a global scale, resulting in a regression in human development, making achievement of SDGs even more urgent. Fragile countries with compounded crises, such as Iraq, are especially vulnerable, with the most vulnerable in the face of this crisis being those who were already at risk & who lack access to basic social protection or to any support systems, including women & girls.

Without urgent socio-economic responses, suffering will escalate, jeopardizing lives and livelihoods for years to come. Immediate development responses to this crisis must be undertaken to address the key risks and coping capacities that drive fragility and which are directly linked to the pandemic but also pre-existing ones that are exacerbated under the current outbreak, with the ultimate objective of resilience-building to shocks and stresses.

Development trajectories in the long-term will be affected by the choices that countries, such as Iraq, make now and the support they receive to respond to the crisis and recover from it. It is the intention of the UN System, therefore, to see this Strategy as a first step toward supporting the Government of Iraq in the development of a National Recovery Strategy for the country. The SERP reflects the opportunities the UN System sees for assistance to Government priorities to respond to and recover from the pandemic, based on their comparative advantage.

In line with Government priorities and the UN system global and national commitments, the UN has structured its response to the pandemic according to figure 2 below.

Figure 2 UN System Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Iraq



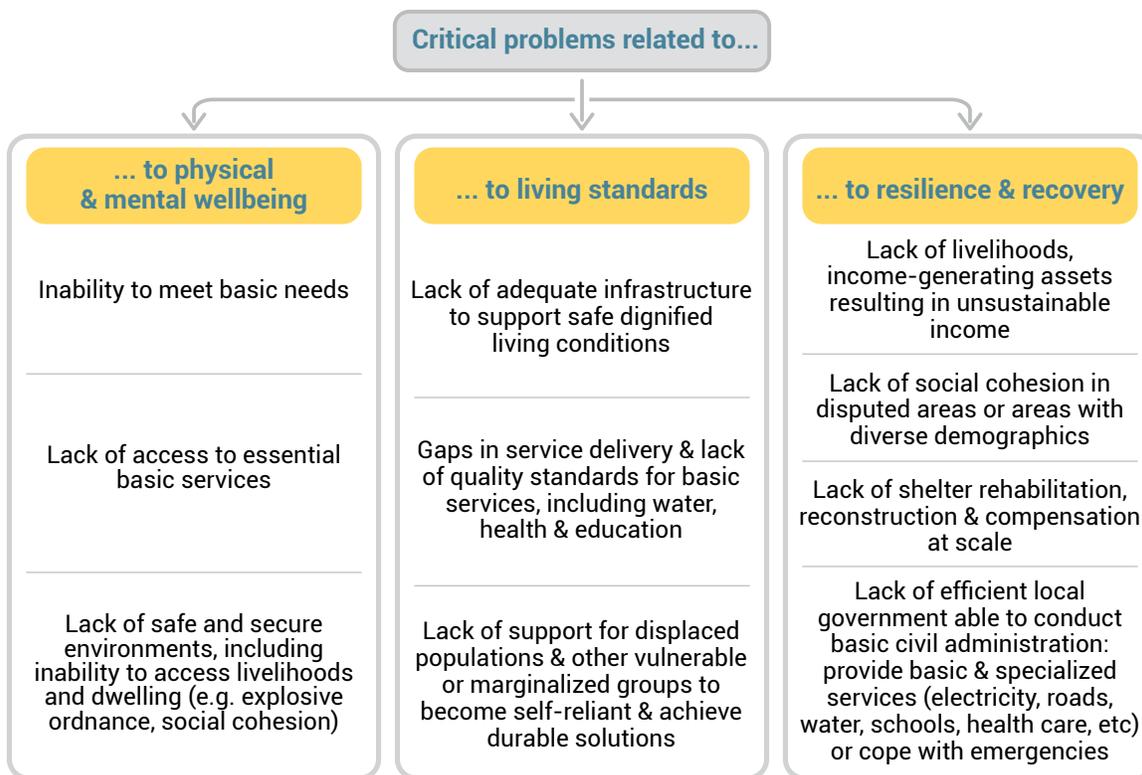
\* Technical lead    \*\* Irrespective of the physical location of the entity  
 \*\*\* In 29 countries, RCs also serve as Humanitarian Coordinator appointed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator

## Humanitarian Response

The COVID-19 public health emergency is generating additional humanitarian needs above the ones identified in the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and is very likely going to negatively impact the humanitarian outcomes of the 1.77 million people targeted by the Plan (out of 4.1 million in need) by exposing them to additional risk and exhausting coping strategies.<sup>5</sup> This is reflected in Iraq having the fourth biggest ask with USD263.3M in the May 2020 update of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP).<sup>6</sup>

In addition, the IDP population that was not identified as acutely vulnerable at the time of writing the HRP (estimated at 2.33 million, likely to access longer-term developmental & governmental assistance schemes) is at real risk of falling back into that category because of the pandemic. Despite considerable efforts to ensure that key activities continue uninterrupted, concerns have been noted around reduced response and quality of the response across all sectors. All population groups targeted through the HRP are currently being affected.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 3 Summary of Humanitarian Consequences<sup>9</sup>



In light of COVID-19, the Humanitarian Country team (HCT) developed a "Revised list of priority humanitarian activities" to stem the impact of COVID-19, whereas the Health Cluster developed an Addendum to the HRP with specific health related humanitarian support. In July 2020, the HCT published a COVID-19 Addendum to the 2020 HRP<sup>8</sup> that focusses more strongly on the impact and response of COVID-19 on humanitarian needs.

The Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) of 2020 identified priority needs for each of its humanitarian Consequences (see figure 3 below), all of which can be intrinsically linked to chronic deficits of development. These are being exacerbated further as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and will have an increasing humanitarian and socio-economic impact on the Iraqi population

## Health Response

The ongoing worldwide pandemic was first confirmed to have spread to Iraq in February 2020. The country reported its first confirmed cases of the Corona virus on 24 February 2020 in Najaf. As of 31 July, over 1 million tests have been done nationwide, with 124,609 of these being positive; out of these, 87,434 recovered and 4,741 died.<sup>10</sup> The country has been witnessing increasing trends in infection at the time of writing this document.

Containment of the COVID-19 pandemic has been a priority for the Government since the start of the outbreak, that was recently reiterated by new Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi as well as in the Government Programme commitments launched on 6 May 2020. (see Annex 2)

Shortly after the confirmation of the first few cases, the Government, along with the UN system, developed the SPRP to address

immediate public health needs for the next 12 months on the humanitarian and development spectrum. The strategy provides a detailed plan of actions which are structured into nine pillars as per Box 3 below.

The Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government established strict lockdowns measures early on in the COVID-19 pandemic. By 14th of March all international borders were closed, and international flights were stopped, and confinement was a fact. As of May 2020, some restrictions were eased whereas others were considered to be eased in the near future. Further measures will be addressed depending on the evolution of the pandemic, that has seen increasing trends at the times of elaboration of this strategy. Whilst airports reopened for commercial flights on 1 August, restrictive containment measures have been reintroduced.

### Box 3: Pillars of the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for Iraq<sup>11</sup>

**Pillar 1: Country Level Coordination** focusing on the activation of country-level multi-sectorial and multi-partner health emergency coordination mechanisms.

**Pillar 2: Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)** focusing on the dissemination of risk communication materials and the establishment of community information and feedback mechanism.

**Pillar 3: Surveillance** focusing on the reinforcement of national capacities for surveillance, rapid response and case investigation and the development and implementation of an integrated system for event-based surveillance developed and implemented.

**Pillar 4: Points of Entry (POE)** focusing on strengthening national capacities for early detection of COVID-19 at entry points

**Pillar 5: National Laboratory System** focusing on strengthening national laboratory capacities

**Pillar 6: Case management and continuity** of essential services focusing on strengthening national capacities on standard triage and isolation and case management of COVID-19

**Pillar 7: Infection Prevention and Control** focusing on the review and update of infection prevention and control practices and strategies

**Pillar 8: Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in COVID-19 outbreak** focusing on the mental health and psychosocial consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak

**Pillar 9: Logistics, procurement, and supply management** focusing on strengthening multi-sectorial country-level coordination in logistics, procurement, and supply management

## Development Response

The Development response in Iraq is driven by the key socio-economic needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This will start with addressing priority recovery needs of the most vulnerable people and communities over the next 18 months based on their fragility impact. The SERP will be the main vehicle for this. A crucial component of this strategy will be the series of assessments that have been or will be launched to capture clear data on the impact of COVID-19 (see section 5.2 below). This will ensure a holistic and in-depth understanding of the impact of the pandemic as well as serve to guide planning by various agencies.

The above is not only in line with the commitments the UN system in Iraq has made in the United Nations Sustainable

## Peacebuilding

The long-term effects of the pandemic on the global economy will have far-reaching impacts, especially in Iraq where the crisis is disrupting peacebuilding efforts and aid flows. This is aggravating grievances and mistrust over access to health services, decent jobs and livelihoods, and has the potential to create or exacerbate conflicts that could undermine development, peace and social cohesion gains. However, the social, economic and political disruption caused by the pandemic potentially opens policy space and opportunities for peacebuilding and youth engagement in conflict-affected settings, particularly where social distancing and other restrictive measures to halt the spread of the disease prove to be successful. Inclusive dialogues on issues such as health and health-care policies can transcend conflict lines and contribute to social cohesion, especially when they bring different groups together around mitigating the impact of the disease. Emphasis on equitable access to health care, resources such as food and other forms of support

Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2020-2024) towards building the resilience of the Iraqi people and its institutional systems (see Box 4 below), but also addresses the global engagements of the UN Secretary General in supporting countries in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic whilst remaining on the path towards the SDGs.<sup>12</sup> Finally, this is also aligned with the evolving priorities of the Iraqi government and other key strategic documents (see section 5.2 below).

This approach will look at prioritizing the response towards key chronic development deficits that are driving fragility and exacerbating humanitarian and public health response strategies creating a complementarity and coherence with the aforementioned strategies.

### Box 4: Pillars of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)

- SP 1:** Achieving Social Cohesion, Protection and Inclusion
- SP 2:** Growing the Economy for All
- SP 3:** Promoting Effective, Inclusive and Efficient Institutions and Services
- SP 4:** Promoting Natural Resource and Disaster Risk Management, and Climate Change Resilience

creates opportunities to prevent and address grievances. It will be key that the COVID-19 responses in Iraq are conflict sensitive.<sup>13</sup>

Ensuring conflict sensitivity indicates the need to conduct a rapid analysis of the various areas and context in which Covid-19 responses will operate; the interaction between programming and operational decisions and that context, including on the conflict dynamics; and act upon that understanding to avoid negative impacts on the conflict and support capacities for peace.

## 4.1 Marginalised and vulnerable groups

The UN system in Iraq, through its Common Country Analysis (CCA), has defined vulnerable groups, in the context of Iraq, as: "Any group or sector of society that is at higher risk of being subjected to discriminatory practices, violence, natural or environmental disasters, or economic hardship than other groups within the state; any group or sector of society (such as women, children or the elderly) that is at higher risk in periods".<sup>14</sup>

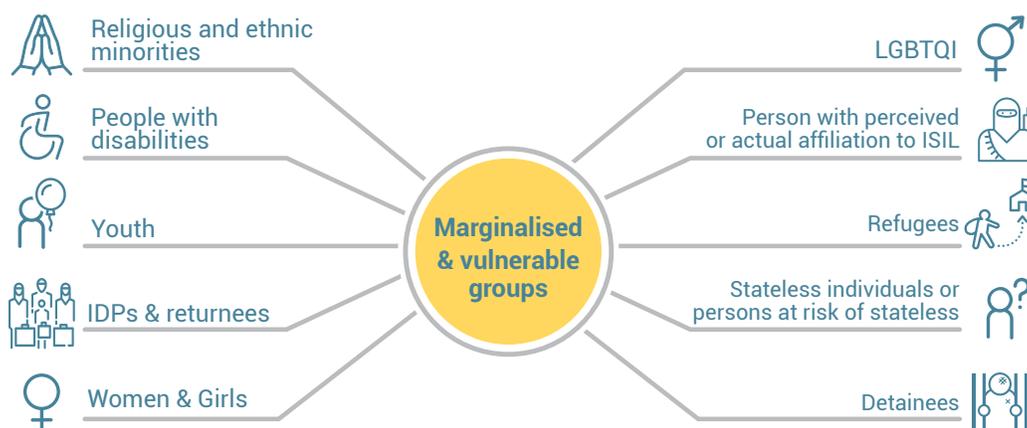
Ministry of Planning, UNICEF, and WB (July 2020) conducted a simulation of the impact on poverty and vulnerability, taking into account varying scenarios of containment (curfew) measures, food prices, and job and income losses. The most plausible scenario shows an increase in poverty by 11.7% to make the poverty rate 31.7% compared to 20.0% in 2017-2018. This translates to 4.5 million additional for poor as a result of the crises, adding to the 6.9 million already living in poverty before the crises. Children under 18 face a higher increase in poverty by 15.8% bringing the poverty rate to 37.9% under the baseline scenario. Majority of the new poor live in a family in which the head of the household is either unemployed (44.7%) or works in a private sector (32.1%). Additionally, on the onset of the crises 42% of the population were facing multidimensional vulnerability in terms of education, health and nutrition,

and resilience to cope with shocks. Children face a higher vulnerability rate 48.8% underlining the elevated risk children face in times of shock and social services disruption.<sup>15</sup>

According to recent data released for Iraq, 28 percent of families lack any access to income, while 45 percent are dependent on casual labour.<sup>16</sup> Besides, female-headed households comprise a substantial proportion of households in post-conflict areas where widows are proportionately higher in numbers, making nearly 10 percent of households.<sup>17 18</sup> A rights-based and gender equality response prioritizing the needs of the marginalised and vulnerable people and groups is essential, to avoid deepening inequalities and inequities.

The following categories of the population have been deemed as most vulnerable, particularly in humanitarian/crisis contexts. It should be noted that such groups are not exclusively in camp environments, but also in host communities and communities not necessarily impacted by recent conflict, but facing challenges nonetheless. These groups that were already vulnerable prior to the COVID-19 outbreak will be increasingly so now. The SERP, in its response strategy, will therefore specifically target these groups.

The list of marginalised and vulnerable groups includes but is not limited to<sup>19</sup>:



## — 4.2 Gender Equality

Decades of repression caused by a strong conservative culture, economic sanctions and armed conflicts have led to deterioration in the lives of women and girls in Iraq and an associated loss to the country, since women and adolescent girls are marginalized and unable to fully contribute economically, socially, culturally, and politically. Iraqi women, including women refugees, today suffer from insufficient educational and economic opportunities, and healthcare as well as limited access to the labour market and high levels of violence and inequality.<sup>20</sup>

Contrary to what would be expected, the cessation of military operations in Iraq has not diminished the need for humanitarian interventions, and internally displaced populations (IDPs), particularly women, adolescents, youth and children IDPs, and returnees face increased rates of violence.<sup>21</sup>

These conditions are often exacerbated by misinterpretation of religious texts, by cultural and social norms, and lack of awareness of women's rights and potential, as well as institutional and legal barriers. Violence and lack of security and stability constrain Iraqi women and girls to traditional reproductive roles, limiting their access to employment and education.<sup>22</sup>

Violence against women and girls, and most notably, domestic violence, has been consistently prevalent in Iraq in the last few decades while socio-cultural norms limit the participation of women and adolescent girls in their community, including in decision-making processes of importance to the community.<sup>23</sup> The pandemic is deepening pre-existing gender inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in social, cultural, political and economic systems which in turn are amplifying the impacts of the pandemic.<sup>24</sup> Across every sphere, from

health to economy, security to social protection, the impacts of COVID-19 are exacerbated for women and girls simply by virtue of their sex, more specifically in relation to the following:

- Compounded economic impacts are felt especially by women and girls who are more likely to be engaged in the fragile informal sector, generally earning less, saving less, and holding insecure jobs or living close to poverty, and in some cases heading their households.
- The same applies to access to quality education for women and girls and more specifically, access to quality skills development programs
- Access to community-based social and civic engagement, especially for adolescent girls and youth.
- While early reports reveal that more men are dying as a result of COVID-19, the health of women generally is adversely impacted through the reallocation of resources and priorities, including sexual and reproductive health services.
- Unpaid care work has increased, with children out-of-school, heightened care needs of older persons and overwhelmed health services.
- As the COVID-19 pandemic deepens economic and social stress coupled with restricted movement and social isolation measures, gender-based violence is increasing exponentially.<sup>25</sup> Many women are being forced to 'lockdown' at home with their abusers at the same time that services to support survivors are being disrupted or made inaccessible.<sup>26</sup> The absence of an Iraqi federal anti-domestic violence law poses a serious challenge in this regard.

As a result of COVID-19, there have been recent calls, by UN agencies and civil society in Iraq, advocating for

the enactment of the Iraqi Anti-Domestic Violence Law.

## — 4.3 Environmental Sustainability

The current COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder of the intimate relationship among humans, animals and the environment. The transmission pathways of zoonotic diseases from animals to humans, highlight the extent to which humans are placing pressures on the natural world with damaging consequences for all. The performance and resilience of our socio-economic systems depend on the state of the natural environment and ecosystems. The UN Framework for Socio-Economic Response prioritizes the role of environmental sustainability, across all sectors of response and recovery efforts, in building back better from the crisis.

Recent years have seen growing levels of food and water insecurity owing to a large extent to climate change, causing extreme weather events (i.e. droughts and floods) to grow in frequency, duration and severity. Globally, 2020 is also emerging as one of the warmest, if not the warmest, year on record globally. Thus, climate change poses serious risks to achieving and sustaining recovery results under this strategy. Climate change, extreme weather events (i.e. floods and droughts), water insecurity, non-renewable energy sources, and ineffective waste management systems pose a threat to the achievement of this strategy's goals. To take action on these issues and support a resilient recovery from the pandemic in Iraq, it is necessary to build capacities and institutions for resilience through enabling environment for the management of systemic multiple hazard risks (linking epidemics, climate, disaster, conflict and food chain threats), including

strengthening disaster and climate risk governance mechanisms. This is particularly the case for vulnerable sectors, such as agriculture, the environment, SMEs and infrastructure. Ongoing environmental degradation and desertification will undermine food production and the sector's profitability, which may fuel domestic instability. Large number of people in Iraq relying in their economy on the natural/ecosystem services (ESs) and goods. Wetlands provides significant services to support sustainable human well-being, and the global value of all ESs that are provided by one hectare of wetlands has been estimated at \$30,000/ha.<sup>27</sup> An Iraqi study indicated that the Iraqi Central Marsh could provide 3.05 Million USD across a 6-month period, which can support an average salary for 256 people.<sup>28</sup>

If not addressed, the adverse effects of climate change will further increase the exposure and vulnerability of the Iraqi people to natural and man-made hazards (i.e. internal and transboundary conflict), with severe consequences for their lives, GDP, and livelihoods.

The large numbers of internally displaced people in Iraq are disproportionately exposed to natural hazards and health pandemics including COVID-19. These households are less able to adapt, absorb and recover from their adverse effects, thus increasing their vulnerability. Furthermore, they are disproportionately affected by the deteriorating environmental health and can negatively affect it. Thus, in order to ensure long-term environmental sustainability and

food security for the Iraqi population, interventions must consider environment protection and rehabilitation to mitigate the impact of disasters and crises on communities' wellbeing.

To take action on these issues and support a resilient form of recovery from the pandemic in Iraq, recovery actions will need to include a dedicated set of green solutions and actions to ensure bio-diversity and ecosystem health. In this manner, mainstreaming climate adaptation into recovery measures is important for building back better and ensuring recovery achievements and gains are able to

withstand climate impacts. Diversifying energy, alleviating pressure on natural resources and tackling waste management will be key to achieving the socio-economic recovery goals of this strategy. More details of how Environmental Sustainability can be concretely mainstreamed across the five pillars of the SERP can be found under Annex 3.

Finally, these priorities will also be addressed through Chapter 10 of the Iraq National Development Plan, Strategic Priority 4 of the UNSDCF and the guidance from the UN Framework.

## — 4.4 Displacement and durable solutions

Two years on from the end of operations against ISIL, Iraq continues to face significant challenges in the areas of IDPs and IDP returns, with over 1.3 million people remaining in displacement, and 4.6

million IDP returnees many of whom remain in fragile situations notwithstanding their return. The following areas need to be prioritized for displacement affected populations of concern in Iraq:

### ——— 4.4.1 Displacement and durable solutions

A large proportion of IDPs lack civil documentation. Living standards are severely affected by missing documentation as individuals cannot exercise their basic rights fully, cannot access basic services or housing, social protection and safety nets, land and property rights, and children without documentation are denied access to education in parts of the country.

Populations without documentation are also subjected to movement restrictions. Further, child protection remains a serious concern; and children and young people among vulnerable population (IDPs, refugees, asylum seekers) are susceptible to various forms of child abuse, violence and exploitation, including the worst forms of child labour.

### ——— 4.4.2 Linking with government services

Durable solutions remain key for the displaced populations in Iraq. The impact of the pandemic has already led to increased returns in some areas, for example returns to Sinjar from Dohuk, and within Ninewa. Other durable solutions, including

settlement in areas of displacement, need to be explored, for both the IDP and the refugee populations in Iraq, many of whom are already de facto integrated in areas of displacement.

At the same time, to ensure long-term support, it is crucial that displacement affected populations have access to the social protection services administered by both federal and regional governments. This includes, among other things, social safety nets for those living below the poverty line, unemployment support,

and support for those with special needs. With the pandemic, the needs of those already in protracted crisis are likely to have been aggravated. As government programmes undergo reforms, displacement affected populations and their needs should formally be made part of them, including for COVID related support.

### 4.4.3 Child and SGBV protection

Many children and young people, both refugee or IDP, suffer from trauma due to conflict and displacement, and require age and gender-responsive specialized PSS and in some cases mental health support, often unavailable in areas of displacement and return. Importantly, birth certificate and documentation are among the key challenges for children and young people to access most services. Patriarchal social structures and practices also present challenges to effectively address issues, such as child marriage. Indeed, child

marriage, usually a precursor to early child bearing with subsequent health effects, remains high in Iraq and is compounded by the lack of alternative livelihood opportunities during this pandemic. Among displacement affected people, it is also an oft-cited negative coping strategy. Anecdotal evidence suggests this has increased in displacement settings due to the humanitarian crisis, with some families viewing it as a protective strategy to enhance the security of young girls and to expand their survival resources.



### 4.4.4 Livelihoods

Access to employment /livelihood opportunities continues to be the main concern of IDPs, compounded now by the covid-19 crisis. A similar situation exists amongst the 286,000 refugees hosted in Iraq, primarily in the KRI.

It is worth noting that refugees in urban areas have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic both from loss of livelihood opportunities and from the rising infection rate, including among women and girls.



# HEALTH PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE MEASURES THE COVID19- OUTBREAK

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The Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for Iraq was developed in March 2020 in close consultation with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, the WHO, and the humanitarian community (see Annex 4 for a detailed overview of the activities under that plan). This plan also takes into account lessons learned from previous pandemics (see Box 5 below). The Emergency Health Cluster, together with the Emergency Shelter Cluster have also developed guidance to ensure that adequate preparedness measures are put in place by humanitarian aid organizations to respond to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in IDP camps as well as quarantine for prevention purposes. Similar measures are also in place in refugee camps. It should be noted that IDPs and refugees suspected of being infected with covid-19, or confirmed as being ill, are mainstreamed into the national health service response for assistance and treatment as required. In addition, in preparation for this SERP, the UN Development Agencies also prepared detailed sectoral response strategies that formed the basis of this document.

After a strict lockdown, some restrictions have been recently eased with the intentions to further ease lockdown measures in the weeks to come, depending on the evolution of the pandemic.

Iraq's airports have now reopened for commercial travel but travellers must quarantine for 14 days on return to Iraq.

As the country begins to emerge from this response phase, the focus has been on the next set of challenges and plan for recovery through reflecting on what has worked, what has been learned; recommitting to working towards the wellbeing of all people in Iraq; redeploying the workforce and the humanitarian community to maximize their contributions; rethinking how the country can leverage the experiences of the COVID-19 response and the opportunity to accelerate the future development of the country, and realign various functions and operations with the most immediate priorities and pivoting towards meeting broad global and national sustainable development goals as well as country humanitarian response plan.

### Box 5: Lessons Learned from other Pandemics

- 1. A whole-of-society/holistic approach is needed.** An effective response needs to be multidimensional, gender sensitive, participatory, coordinated, swift, and decisive. It needs to be a result of strong political leadership and buy-in of the population. It needs to foster public trust; be focused on human values; and supported by solid institutions, technical skills, and financial resources. Everyone needs to play their part in the response.
- 2. The use of surveillance methodology and tools to track the spread of the coronavirus if used must be digitalized and automatized** through adapting advanced information technologies that could enable timely reporting, verification, and the response of the outbreaks in the future and would be in line with the international health regulation 2005, international human rights standards and the data protection protocols.
- 3. Civil society and grassroots organizations, including women's organisations, community-based organizations (CBOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) play a vital role at the local level.** These organizations serve as the main communication conduits about health mandates, hygiene practices based, and quarantine measures.
- 4. The research community – in government, academia, and the private sector – has a vital role to play, across the social and natural sciences, in policy formulation.** It can generate, share, and explain in lay terms the evidence that public and policy actors need to take effective preventive measures and to shape a safe and equitable recovery.
- 5. Medical and technological research and innovation are needed to accelerate the production of key medical materials and tests** and to discover the vaccines and treatments that are needed to protect people's right to health.
- 6. By making progress on the global roadmap to implement the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals<sup>29</sup> for a more inclusive and sustainable future, we can better respond to future crises - with stronger health systems, fewer people living in extreme poverty, less gender inequality, a healthier natural environment, and more resilient societies. Hence, there is a need to invest in effective and innovative delivery of public services to achieve sustainable and inclusive economies that leave no-one behind and safeguard country SDG programs from COVID-19-related setbacks.**
- 7. The government should increase spending on primary healthcare if the country is to close glaring coverage gaps and meet health targets agreed in 2030.** The country needs to be steadfast in moving forward with the implementation of these common commitments, especially investments in people, health, and social protection systems. These goals must shape our response and recovery, laying the foundations for resilient people and resilient societies.
- 8. Expansion and continued provision of contributions to the UN must be encouraged as a means of scaling up support.** Continuing dialogue and exchanges of information with existing networks are crucial, and identification and engagement of additional civil society partners working on the COVID-19 crisis should also be pushed forward.



# HOW DOES THE SERP ADDRESS SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEEDS?

## HOW DOES THE SERP ADDRESS SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEEDS?

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The Response of the SERP is framed by the Pillars of the UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19, and is fully aligned with Government priorities, global and national strategic documents, such as the UNSDCF, and is complementary to the SPRP and the HRP (see Annex 5). It is therefore important to see the SERP as complementary and in coherence with all of the aforementioned planning GOI and UN frameworks in the country.

The five workstreams of the UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 are:

- a) Health First – Protecting health Services and Systems During the Crisis:** ensuring that essential health services are still available and protecting health systems;
- b) Protecting People – Social Protection and Basic Services:** helping people cope with adversity, through social protection and basic services (including housing) accessible to all category groups including IDPs and refugees, while ensuring leaving no one behind, including women and girls;
- c) Economic Response and Recovery – Protecting Jobs, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and value chains, and Informal Sector Worker:** protecting jobs, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, and informal sector workers through economic response and recovery programmes, while ensuring gender equality;
- d) Support to Macro-Economic Growth:** guiding the necessary surge in fiscal and financial stimulus to make macroeconomic policies work for the most vulnerable and strengthening multilateral and regional responses; and
- e) Social Cohesion and Community Resilience:** promoting social cohesion and investing in community-led resilience and response systems, including support to governance, fundamental rights and freedoms and ensuring the rule of law.

Framing the response through these five streams of work, complements the UN's health and humanitarian response through the Humanitarian Response Plan and its COVID-19 specific addenda and the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan. It further ensures that development investments in resilience and in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognises that all life on this planet is interconnected.

The response under each Pillar is informed by the UN System preliminary assessment of the needs capitalises on the comparative advantage of each Agency, Fund and Programme of the UN System in Iraq to ensure the delivery of strategic and quality support to the government and the Iraqi population. As the majority of assessments release their findings and data, the SERP will be updated to reflect these.

These activities will be carried in partnership with national, local and sectoral public sector agencies, parliamentarians, vulnerable / marginalized groups, local communities, youth and women groups, peace promoting organisations, non-governmental agencies, civil society organisations, community-based organizations, the private sector and academia.

The response under each Pillar will be accompanied by a summary of the Joint Work Plans that provide the overview of costed activities per timeframe (See Annex 6)



# PILLAR 1: HEALTH FIRST

## PILLAR 1: HEALTH FIRST

### Protecting health services and systems during the crisis



The COVID-19 pandemic has a devastating impact on the health situation and outcome in Iraq. Iraq is highly vulnerable and may continue to face higher mortality rates than seen to-date. The reason for this includes the state of the healthcare system, which lacks special facilities to conduct COVID-19 tests or treatments. People with (symptoms of) COVID-19 visit the same hospitals and/or Primary Health Care Centers as other patients, dramatically increasing the number of infections and the chance of spreading the disease further to at-risk groups.

Access to care is limited, due to several structural issues, including the decrepit or destroyed healthcare infrastructure in the recently liberated Governorates of Anbar, Salah Al-Din, Kirkuk, Diyala and Nineveh. Dozens of health facilities have not yet been rehabilitated or equipped. In addition, the health care system lacks human resources. About 20,000 doctors left Iraq since the 1990s, leaving few qualified health workers in-country. Iraq has approximately 8 doctors for every 10,000 people (below WHO minimum standards 10:10,000).<sup>30</sup>

There is a severe lack of specialized facilities to respond to COVID-19. Iraq used to have some quarantine facilities in which a person (suspected to have an infectious disease) can be kept away from other people for a limited duration of time. Unfortunately, Iraq never established isolation wards equipped with High Efficiency Particulate Air filters (HEPAs). Many health workers are now infected by COVID-19, threatening the continuity of critical healthcare services.

Moreover, the health sector suffers from limited Government resources. The Ministry of Health operates on 1/12th of its regular budget. There have been limited additional funds received for the COVID-19 response, as the official budget for 2020 has not yet been passed. There is an urgent need for an integrated large-scale response to control the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, involving the Ministry of Health, the local health clusters and international organizations (including WHO and other UN agencies).

In addition to the direct impacts, COVID-19 has caused major disruptions to essential health services. As the priority has been to reduce the loss of life, a trade-off is sometimes made between those at-risk of death and the broader health concerns for the wider population. For example, reduced accessibility to health services and disruptions in health supply chains are likely to result in greater mortality than what can be expected from COVID-19 alone. Loss of income due to the economic impact of the lock-down may increase financial barriers to health care and lead to further deterioration for pregnant and lactating mothers and a de-prioritization of women's health care in general, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to address the following disruptions at the policy-level:

### **Maintain essential basic services:**

COVID-19 affects the capacity of authorities to maintain essential water, sanitation, and hygiene services. These services are essential to the prevention and control of the pandemic. The government is recommended to balance the demands of responding directly to COVID 19, while simultaneously maintaining essential health service delivery, mitigating the risk of a collapse of the health-care system.

### **Maintain maternal, new-born and child health services:**

The crisis disrupts essential maternal, new-born and child health (MNCH) services, with impacts on morbidity and mortality beyond what can be directly attributable to the virus. The lockdowns complicate accessing services and inhibit (pregnant) women and children to get to health facilities. Meanwhile, women and youth with chronic illnesses, including HIV and cancer, are at risk and in need extra care and support.

### **Maintain immunization services:**

Essential immunization services have been interrupted, thereby increasing the risk of vaccine-preventable disease. Measles and polio campaigns have been cumulatively targeting more than 5,439,371 children up to the age of 5 years including 1,199,955 infants of less than 1 year.<sup>31</sup> With current disruptions, immunization coverage will be compromised. This puts Iraq under the threat of another epidemic in addition to COVID-19.

### **Maintain reproductive health services:**

Access to reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) services have been greatly reduced. The overwhelming pressure on the health system in responding to COVID-19 crisis, had led to a diversion of attention and critical resources away from other health services. This may result in exacerbated maternal mortality and child morbidity, which should/could be prevented.

### **Reduce stress and stigma:**

People are at risk of increased anxiety and mental health. Governorates are isolated and families are separated. Nationwide curfews, shops are closed, people are stuck inside, sometimes in crowded homes. Kids have no space to play and learn. Men, especially daily workers, are without a job and income. Women mental health and wellbeing deteriorates. Middle and low economic status people are most affected by the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. Hence, stress levels are high. All people associated with COVID-19 have been stigmatized. Health-care workers (especially women) are being targeted and stigmatized due to perceptions that they carry and bring COVID-19 into communities.

### **Transport medical supplies:**

There is a severe lack of medical consumables, medication, sterilizing equipment. Health workers lack Personal Protective Equipment and health authorities all over the country are asking for support. In addition, the introduction of new tariffs and restricted movements and shipments are affecting the import of essential medicines and equipment. Movement restrictions should be lifted for humanitarian workers and goods.

## RESPONSE

The response should be built around initial assessments of the observed impacts which can be summarized as follows:

### Health effect on people:

The added burden of COVID-19 is profound in Iraq, where health-care is already severely challenged by the impact of conflict, displacement, concurrent disease outbreaks and frequent natural disasters. Demographic factors such as age, gender, IDP/refugee status and poor living conditions should be considered in the response. Health care workers and security personnel are at high risk due to their vital and critical professions.

### Age:

Although young people (10-24 years) are not the face of this pandemic, they risk being among the biggest victims. While young people thankfully have been largely spared from the direct impact of COVID-19, the crisis does have a profound effect on the development and wellbeing. Young people in Iraq are mostly affected by the socio-economic impact and mitigation measures, which may inadvertently do more harm than good. While the virus is a real threat to all age groups, the elderly have been most affected by COVID-19 and account for over 60 per cent of deaths. People with underlying health conditions and disabilities are equally at risk.

### Gender:

Women and adolescent girls are at risk of domestic violence during the pandemic. Family planning services have been

severely reduced by the lockdown, which leads to unplanned pregnancies.

### IDP/refugee status:

Internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities, asylum seekers, refugees, returnees and migrants are particularly negatively affected by humanitarian crises. The displaced or those living in camps and camp-like settings are faced with specific challenges and vulnerabilities for COVID-19. They are frequently neglected, stigmatized, and face difficulties in accessing health services that are otherwise available to the general population. During the current covid-19 crisis, the inclusion of IDPs and refugees living in camps into the existing national response system is commendable. However, it has been noted that refugees living in disproportionately affected urban areas (Baghdad for example) are facing challenges accessing national health care systems.

### Health care workers and security personnel:

These vital professional account for almost 6% of all the cases. This could threaten the continuity of health care and national security.

### Environment:

Solar solutions can be mainstreamed into recovery efforts, as a way of reducing energy shortages in health facilities including hospitals and clinics, alongside waste-to-energy solutions, in addition to safe management and disposal of expanding levels of medical and plastic waste.

The Priorities under this Pillar are reflected in Joint Work Plan of PWG 1 (output 1.2.1) and PWG 3 (outputs 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.2.1 & 3.2.2)

Total Funding required for the priorities under this Pillar is **USD 83,263,212**.

The funding gap is **USD 35,736,706**



# PILLAR 2: PROTECTING PEOPLE

## PILLAR 2: PROTECTING PEOPLE

### Social protection and basic services



#### ANALYSIS

Prior to COVID-19, Iraq was vulnerable to shocks due to a fragile political and economic situation, protracted conflict and insecurity, forced displacement, lack of comprehensive social protection system and recurrent natural disasters. At the onset of the crisis, 42% of the population faced multidimensional vulnerability in terms of education, health and nutrition, and resilience to cope with shocks.<sup>32</sup>

COVID-19 has only deepened pre-existing inequalities and exposed vulnerabilities in social protection systems and services, especially for children, young people,<sup>33</sup> women, elderly and displaced people. The loss of livelihoods erodes the ability of households to meet their basic needs, undermining their resilience to other shocks. The Ministry of Planning, UNICEF, and the WB (July 2020) conducted a simulation of the impact of COVID-19 on poverty and vulnerability,<sup>34</sup> taking into account varying scenarios of containment measures,<sup>35</sup> food prices, and job and income losses. The most plausible scenario shows an increase in poverty by 11.7% bringing the national poverty rate to 31.7% compared to 20.0% in 2017-2018. This will have a cascading impact, increasing rates of malnutrition and food insecurity, school dropouts and a learning crises, child and maternal mortality, and violations including child labor, gender-based violence and violence against children, and increased risks and stigmatization to displaced individuals and communities.

The Iraqi government may face difficulties to fund its existing and new safety net schemes, support ongoing basic service investments due to the shrinking fiscal space. In response to COVID-19, the government introduced cash assistance programmes (i.e. 'Minha' programme) to mitigate the impacts of the economic slowdown on livelihoods, but funding may prove to be a challenge. Expanding and sustaining social protection at scale, however, is more important than ever; a recent World Bank report estimates a 9.7% contraction in the economy and a doubling of the number of households under the poverty line (from 20% to 40%), which has serious implications for the food security, basic services and social protection schemes.<sup>36</sup>

#### Social Protection Programmes

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, the social protection system whether contributory or non-contributory in Iraq suffered from significant shortcomings despite making progress to improve the laws and regulations. First, gaps in coverage and benefit levels and inefficient targeting of those most in need (with significant exclusion errors) resulted in social safety net schemes benefiting only 20% of the poor.<sup>37</sup> Although the Public Distribution System remained and continues to be largely universal, levels of benefits varied across population groups with delays and gaps in duration and geographic coverage. Second, social protection schemes are fragmented across different ministries with

no systemic integration of the key functions in the social protection delivery chain.

The lack of data integration between government systems, such as a unified registry, required to better understand, coordinate and monitor social protection programmes and other sector programmes. Consequently, the national systems' ability to support poor households with integrated assistance and effectively respond to their needs is greatly undermined. Poor children in particular are at a higher risk with the majority 80% not covered by the social safety net and for those covered social protection is not integrated to access to health and education services leading to growing inequality and deprivation.<sup>38</sup>

One additional gap in the system is the absence of exit strategy and limited programs aimed at protecting vulnerable groups or supporting the poor to escape poverty and engage in skill development and gainful employment. Youth constitute another vulnerable group when considering that in 2018 one third of young people were not in employment, education, or training.

COVID-19 has only exacerbated the issues identified above, and its impact on groups most vulnerable to shocks, including those affected by displacement. Most of the workers falling outside of the formal social insurance mechanisms face the consequences of employment termination and are left with no income. Data from ongoing humanitarian programs suggests that more than 50% of vulnerable households rely on casual labour.<sup>39</sup>

With COVID-19 impacts, regular monitoring efforts evidence that across vulnerable households, 87% are unable to work, and 59% are unable to meet their basic needs. With the delayed public distribution system (PDS) (up to three months), more

households will be affected, as the proportion of the population living under the national poverty line has likely increased as lockdown and curfews constrained opportunities of casual labor. The ad-hoc response schemes, while providing short term relief, are further compounding pre-existing system gaps/silos and insufficient making it difficult to address exclusion in a sustainable manner. Additionally, as the government is facing tightening budgets and with ad-hoc schemes lacking integration within national policy framework and systems, they are set to be discontinued. As much as COVID-19 represents a huge challenge to the existing system, it is also providing opportunities to ramp-up and accelerate some key reform areas that were lagging behind, including strengthening of social protection system to guarantee income security and health protection of individuals, households and enterprises during covariate and idiosyncratic risks. This include urgently prioritizing funding for existing programs such as the Social Safety Net the PDS and investing in management information systems to improve coordination and reduce exclusion those most in need. In addition, special focus should be given to strengthening the existing social insurance system including extending the coverage umbrella to vulnerable groups including school children and strengthen National School Feeding Programme that promotes access to nutritious food, equitable education and equal opportunities as well as introduce short-term benefits such as unemployment, maternity, employment injury and sickness insurance. It is also important that people affected by displacement are formally made part of the social protection infrastructure of the government, and have specialized support to address their needs.

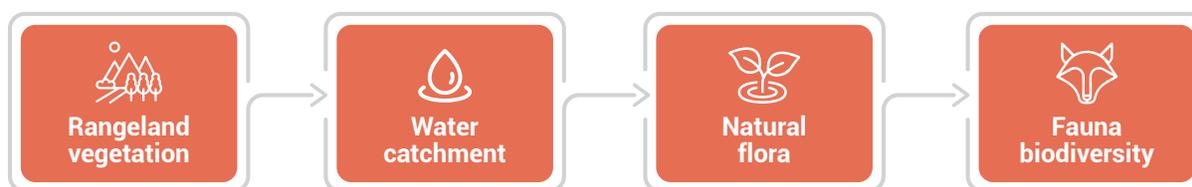
## Food Security

The agriculture and food security sector faced numerous challenges prior to COVID-19 pandemic, and these issues will only be exacerbated due to COVID-19. Food availability remains stable at the moment; however, the sector has identified several points along the value chains that should be closely monitored to ensure uninterrupted supply.<sup>40</sup>

On the other hand, food access will continue to diminish for a greater segment of the population, particularly Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in camps and non-camp settings, returnees, refugees as well as poor households including those who relied on daily income for subsistence. As these vulnerable groups lose their source of income due to the movement restrictions and lockdowns, they suffer from diminished purchasing power and may suffer from insufficient food consumption. Therefore, they may resort to negative coping strategies – delving into

savings, changing their diets, etc. Due to depleted savings and a loss of income, households may consume foods that are cheaper and have higher calories (i.e. rice, bread, etc.), rather than purchasing and preparing micronutrient-rich foods (i.e. fruits and vegetables). If this continues for a prolonged period, it may result in “hidden hunger”, affecting overall health and future labor productivity.

Environmental degradation will also continue to undermine food security, particularly food availability and stability, increasing households’ vulnerability to shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Natural and anthropogenic drivers of environmental degradation, including climate change, oil spills, poor natural resource management, rapid population growth and civil unrest, have contributed to the loss of essential provisioning, supporting, regulating and cultural ecosystem services.<sup>41</sup>



In Iraq, examples of affected ecosystem services are respectively the loss of rangeland vegetation to graze livestock, water catchment processes, natural flora and fauna biodiversity (including agriculture landraces), and cultural landmarks (i.e. the marshlands in southern Iraq).<sup>4243</sup> Agriculture-based livelihoods are particularly affected by deteriorating natural resource bases, negatively affecting their ability to absorb, adapt and recover from disasters and other shocks.

Thus, in order to ensure long-term food security for the most vulnerable, interventions must consider building the resilience of farmers and rural communities to climate risks through climate resilient agriculture (e.g. water management) for food security and community livelihoods, adaptive environment protection policies and early warning systems to mitigate the impact of disasters and crises on communities' wellbeing.

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Decades of war and violence have severely damaged Iraq's water supply and sanitation infrastructure and weakened the Government's capacity to manage WASH services, resulting in a lack of access to potable water and basic sanitation facilities. Iraq faces an acute water crisis due to climate change, upstream riparian development and poor management, further highlighting the need for stronger constitutional or legislative frameworks. Although about 86.6 per cent of the Iraqi population had access to a water supply network in 2016, only 60 per cent of households had access to chlorinated water, leaving two households in five at risk of avoidable water borne diseases.<sup>44</sup> According to the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS; 2018)<sup>45</sup> only 39.2 percent of Iraq population have access to safely managed water services, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases.<sup>46</sup> The 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) reported that 1.85 million people across Iraq remain in critical need of sustained, equitable access to safe and appropriate WASH services. Of these, 49 percent are women, 38 percent are children, and four percent are older persons. Displacement affected population groups are at particular risk, especially the most vulnerable among them as their access to safe water sources was already limited.

### Education

In light of COVID-19, the federal Iraq Government and Kurdistan Regional Government closed all schools and educational institutions in the first week of March and last week of February respectively, with a lack of clarity on when schools will reopen. Thus, approximately 10 million children and adolescents in (5-19 years age group) do not have access to

education, increasing learning inequality. This will likely have a long-term economic impact arising; the loss of learning will decrease the number of young people engaged in skilled economic activity, resulting in reduced earning potential and increased levels of poverty. There is also the additional threat of children dropping out of school among vulnerable communities, as household incomes decline due to prolonged lockdowns necessitated by the pandemic. Among displacement affected population groups, there was already a high number of households reporting that their children dropped out of school as a negative coping strategy to meet basic household needs. Finally, child nutrition is a vital concern. Many children in Iraq rely on school meals for a reliable source of daily nutrition; however, this resource is no longer available.

### Child Protection:

The Government of Iraq has made significant strides in developing strong legal and policy frameworks for children protection, including the National Child Protection Document (2017-2027) and Kurdish Region Child Protection Policy, both of which aim to protect all children and young people from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect in all circumstances. That being said, public investment in child protection is meagre and the institutional capacity to lead, coordinate and facilitate policy implementation is weak. The lack of reliable population-based and administrative child protection data remains one of the key barriers to effective policy, advocacy and resource allocations for national action.

The emergence of COVID-19 has quickly changed the context in which children and young people live and has heightened risk of

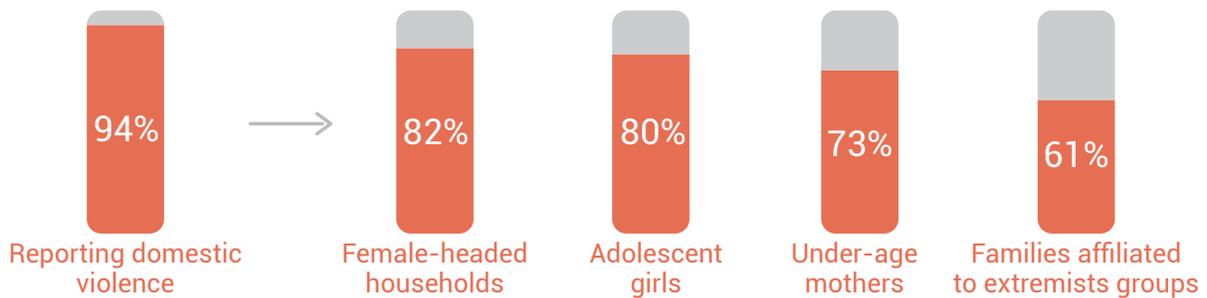
children witnessing or suffering violence and abuse, considerably exacerbating the potential increase of child and adolescent mental health problems. This may result from caregivers and other adult family members becoming increasingly distressed, a sense of support and belonging to the community being disrupted and using dysfunctional coping mechanisms.

Child protection cases are expected to increase due to the risks presented by COVID-19 and related control measures, such as children and young people being separated from their parents/caregivers due to the isolation/quarantine.

**Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV):**

During Iraq’s most recent cycle of large-scale armed conflict between 2014 and 2017, women and girls experienced

high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) including systematic, targeted rape, abductions, sexual slavery, mutilation, torture, and forced marriage as a deliberate weapon of war. In addition to that, most of the IDPs, women, young people and children suffered restricted movement and a general lack of access to services and civil documentation. Such factors coupled with economic hardship, have further compounded an increased risk of stigma and further sexual exploitation and abuse. Sexual violence remains underreported owing to fear of reprisal, security concerns and mistrust of the legal system. Even in the absence of conflict, violence is a significant hallmark of the lives of women and girls. Violence against women and girls within family is normalized and legitimized by survivors, perpetrators and communities through reference to cultural and religious norms.



COVID-19 has only exacerbated these issues; a recent study on the impact of COVID-19 on GBV occurrence and provision of relevant services in 11 governorates revealed that 65% of SGBV service points reported an increase in one or more types of GBV, with 94% reporting an uptick in domestic violence.<sup>47</sup> Female-headed households, adolescent girls, under-age mothers, and families perceived to be affiliated to extremist groups were reportedly among the top four vulnerable and at-risk groups for acts of GBV by respectively 82 percent, 80 percent, 73 percent and 61 percent of the

respondents. An overall reduction in GBV response services was reported by around 50 percent for case management, 60 per cent for psychosocial support, and 50 percent for awareness raising activities in March and April compared with the planned targets. Delay of referrals and distribution of dignity kits activities was also reported in most of the assessed service points during the lockdown and curfew.<sup>48</sup> Loss of income, harmful social norms or traditional practices, lack of health services (including reproductive health), and lack of safe shelter for GBV survivors were among some of the top reported GBV risks.

### Access to justice

While the Higher Judicial Council (HJC) remains committed to continued functions of the courts and justice departments, due to the ongoing partial lockdowns and social distancing policies, the court judges and the judiciary are facing many challenges to ensure uninterrupted service delivery. The working week is currently reduced to 23-days;<sup>49</sup> however, the Chief Justice, senior officials of the HJC (e.g. Cessation Judges, Chairmen of the Plea Courts, and Director Generals) continue with their daily functions to a full capacity. Vulnerable and marginalized groups – including poor, IDPs and refugees, migrants, women, girls, children and those with disabilities – are at a greater risk due to reduced court and justice services. Currently, in Iraq, there are no specific emergency measures in place to address these justice challenges that directly impact the poor and vulnerable communities. In addition, children, young people and women who come in contact with the justice system, as victims, witnesses or offenders face significant barriers to accessing formal justice systems and rarely enjoy the benefits of justice. Children and young people in overcrowded detention facilities and reformatory centers are at greater risk to contract the COVID-19 virus due to the confined conditions in which they live, and to the challenges they face in accessing a range of services, including health care, mental health and psychosocial support and education. They are also more likely to have limited access to information about the outbreak, including much needed information about how to protect themselves, identify symptoms, let alone to seek treatment.

### Key Infrastructure

Throughout this global pandemic, governments are relying on access to adequate housing to slow the viral spread by enforcing self-isolating or social

distancing measures. Yet, living conditions in poor or inadequate housing actually create a higher risk of infection, whether from overcrowding that inhibits physical distancing, or a lack of proper water and sanitation that makes regular hand-washing & appropriate garbage disposal difficult.<sup>50</sup>

In 2010, the Government of Iraq estimated that about 2 million dwellings will be required in urban areas by 2016.<sup>51</sup> This shortage has only increased due to natural population growth and residential damage as a result of ISIL occupation and subsequent liberation. Thus, many IDPs are unable to return to their areas of origin and increases the risk of transmission due to communal living in emergency/temporary shelters (e.g. IDPs). Other vulnerable groups include the homeless, poor households (i.e. residing in overcrowded conditions) and those in rental accommodation and facing job loss and economic hardship, which could result in debt, rental arrears or even eviction.

The pandemic may further expose vulnerable households, including female-headed households, IDP or refugee households, to unsafe or unsanitary housing arrangements, illegal increases in rent and eviction and lack of access to legal services and mediation support.

The electrical sector is encountering many challenges, including damage to infrastructure in liberated governorates, aging electric distribution networks and trespassing in the network. Currently, 14,000 megawatts (30% imported from neighboring countries) of electricity is available; however, the actual need is around 22,000 megawatts.<sup>52</sup> While considerable support has been provided by the international community and tangible improvements have been observed, the sector still lacks funding, suffers from corruption and partisan in-fighting.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

COVID-19 represents an enormous challenge to the existing system; however, it also provides opportunities for the UN and the donor community to support the Government as it ramps-up and accelerates key reforms. Using this momentum in favor of a people-centered agenda for future prosperity and resilience, the UN in Iraq will

— In order to ensure sustainable, effectual changes, the UN will work with the government to develop, finalize and operationalize legislation that improves services and social protections, including the Informal Settlement Law, Child Rights Act (federal), Child Rights Act (KRG). Decrees focused on vulnerable groups which also contribute towards achieving durable solutions for displaced populations, such as the housing, land and property rights tenure decree for Yazidis, should also be prioritized. In order to operationalize the legislation, local authorities should be empowered through the enforcement of the Decentralization Law. Efforts should also be made to deliver civil documentation as well as to build the capacities and increase resources available at both the national and local level, and municipalities and local directorates, with a particular emphasis on the decentralized provision of basic services (i.e. water/sanitation and electricity). Additional institutional support should be provided to the Government and related service providers to address social issues, including GBV, human rights, mental health and psychological support. Governorates should also develop a risk-informed education plan to ensure that learning can continue despite shocks,

work with development partners to support the Government to create comprehensive and shock-responsive and resilient systems to ensure the health, food security, social protection, GBV, access to justice, child protection and education for the Iraqi population.

particularly for the most vulnerable (i.e. learners with disabilities, girls, IDPs, refugees).

— Foster dialogue with social protection actors and agree on an evidence-based consolidated response plan and implementation modality adopting a mix of scaling-up the various existing social protection schemes and (if needed and viable) ad-hoc schemes (such as Minha). This will help in specifying the targets for scaling up social protection with focus on cash-based schemes in light of government plans and budget constraints and donor's capacity to support. UN key role is to support enhancing the effectiveness of short-term response of social protection in the areas of evidence-informed scheme.

— Design, targeting & eligibility, integration, and coordination of schemes including strengthening aspects of MIS services to better enable registration and information sharing across social protection programs based on defined data exchange protocols or agreements. For example, a unified social registry is required – an entry point would be to link the social safety network and the Public Distribution System (PDS). This type of data integration would improve targeting

for all existing social assistance programs and more efficient use of available resource. These types of reforms in particular social insurance system, should be supported by the ratification of ILO's Convention No.102, with a view to supporting private sector growth of the labour market, focusing on synergies with MSME-led private sector development. The reform will ensure that the social security system covering private sector workers is enhanced, for instance reducing the inequality between the private and public sector social security system and expanding the umbrella of social insurance coverage to vulnerable workers and their families. In order to build public trust, the government should focus on introducing under the existing social insurance system short-term benefits (i.e. health, maternity leave, unemployment, employment injury insurance) and providing emergency benefit i.e. an emergency unemployment benefit to help meet immediate needs. Coordination efforts should also be cognizant of the needs of displacement affected populations.

- Enhance poor's access to basic services required to complement social protection in addressing malnutrition and food insecurity, child and maternal mortality, education and learning continuity, and violence against children. UN will focus on supporting the integration at policy level as well as system tools to integrate services and cash-based schemes with focus on children to support household to invest in education, health and nutrition and positive parenting and break the inter-generational poverty cycle.

- Improved information management systems, data integration and early warning monitoring systems are key to improve the

development of evidence-based approaches, programme targeting and emergency preparedness. For example, in order to ensure food security, the government should strengthen their data collection and monitoring systems for agriculture production, livestock, water, trade, prices, market functionality and health/nutrition, with established data sharing procedures between relevant Ministries. Data availability is a key first step; however, it also requires integration between relevant ministries to ensure better targeting. As mentioned before, the Ministries of Trade and Migration and Displacement (MoMD) should explore data integration, leveraging the ongoing PDS digitalization process to improve targeting and improve resource use efficiency. The government should strengthen national initiatives aimed at establishing emergency preparedness, national early warning and monitoring systems, which is of particular importance as the impact of COVID-19 reverberates across sectors. Additionally, the Government should roll out and institutionalize the Child Protection Information Management System (CPiMS+) and Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIM+) to improve evidence base, case management systems and facilitate coordinated services; specifically, Government institutions, Child Protection Sub-Cluster and relevant service providers should establish referral mechanism between Directorates of Health, hospitals, quarantine centers and Department of Labour and Social Affairs (DoLSA) to provide alternative care for who were affected by COVID-19. To ensure sustained support for those affected by displacement and being served by humanitarian actors, linking of

humanitarian data systems with government ones is also important.

— In light of COVID-19, there is a need to introduce innovative solutions to provide basic services, safeguard food security and ensure continuity of social safety nets. Considering basic services, the Ministry of Education should adopt a blended approach to learning and adapt the curriculum accordingly, investing in the necessary infrastructure and introducing technology. To ensure equal access to digital education, the Government will need to engage the private sector to finance initiatives that bridge the digital and connectivity divide. In addition, to guarantee access to adequate food for the vulnerable children, the government should aim for an enabling and sustainable policy environment for the National School Feeding Programme. SGBV and other protection services should also be provided both in person and online; the government should build the capacity of service providers to conduct remote case management and referral system. Similarly, the Ministry of Justice, establish digital platform to enable courts to sit, to avoid postponement of court hearings, extension of pre-trial detention periods, and facilitate the release of children and young people in detention. To address food security concerns, agriculture sector should also adopt and expand digital extension services in order to ensure that farmers continue to be able to access the information needed to sustainably boost production and respond to management challenges. Innovation can be beyond the introduction of technology; the Government should establish meaningful partnerships with demographic groups that are normally sidelined from participations, such as children, youth,

women, elderly and disabled persons.” Engagement of these groups will improve the identification of needs, thus allowing for better programming that is age -and gender-responsive.

— The Government, in collaboration with key actors, should accelerate meaningful partnerships with children and young people and support their civic and social engagement. In Iraq, youth platforms could be repurposed for promoting hygiene practices, tracking and addressing COVID-19-related rumors and misinformation and improving the wellbeing of their communities. For many young people, the offline-online continuum should represent an everyday feature of modern civic engagement.

— Specific attention needs to be given to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on critical infrastructure and services. In order to improve the efficiency of the electrical grid, the Government should activate a strict monitoring system and prevent illegal tapping. Rehabilitation of critical government infrastructure should also continue despite COVID-19. For example, agriculture infrastructure rehabilitation should continue to be prioritized as it has the distinct advantage of employing large numbers of individuals, while also improving agricultural productivity and natural resource use efficiency. Additionally, the Government should establish equitable financing mechanisms that allow citizens to rebuild their homes in the wake of the conflict with ISIL. Donors cannot be expected to continue to fund housing rehabilitation ad infinitum, yet the restoration of these buildings are critical to facilitate returns to areas of origin.

## RESPONSE

The immediate priority is to ensure consistent and safe access to support and services for communities facing the multiple or intersecting shocks. The majority of the proposed responses are currently ongoing; however, they need to be further strengthened and scaled-up. Additionally, all immediate responses will aim to achieve social protection by transforming livelihoods and paving the way for inclusive, resilient and sustainable long-term development.

For example, there is an opportunity to cross-reference existing and on-going urban and shelter assessments with COVID-19 data to identify densely populated areas with a high concentration of vulnerable communities at risk, especially returnees in inadequate, unsanitary and/or overcrowded living conditions. As noted before, adequate housing and safe shelter provide the first line of defence against the transmission of infectious diseases. Additionally, surveys will be conducted to understand how young people, especially girls and other at-risk groups, are being reached and supported with accurate information and services, and if/how their healthcare and/or WASH needs are being addressed. The UN will also work alongside the Government to complement national initiatives to establish early warning and surveillance systems, particularly those capturing the potential impacts of COVID-19 on agricultural production, food security and livelihoods (i.e. improve food security monitoring and early warning systems). Agencies will also monitor and evaluate response activities in order to assess the impact and adjust the response accordingly.

UN will provide technical support at policy, systems, and capacity building levels of the

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for the scale up of the Social Safety Net (SSN) to the most affected group and support integration with the Public Distribution System. IDP specific needs and inclusion criteria should be taken into account to ensure their inclusion in the existing schemes. Additionally, linkages between SSN and social services will be strengthened to promote poor children and family's access to basic health and education services.

Emergency cash and employment support will be provided to households who experience a loss of income or livelihoods due to the pandemic, with a focus on refugees, IDPs, returnees and other poor or vulnerable, individuals. The response will also aim to support employment retention measures, business continuity and enterprise recovery. The UN will also ramp-up short-term employment programmes including Cash for Works and Food Assistance for Assets to boost local economies and rehabilitate communal infrastructure, targeting the worst-affected communities. Workforce initiatives will also be introduced to strengthen the entrepreneurial and technical skills of vulnerable groups, with a focus on young people. MOLSA's tool for identification of poor households, or humanitarian vulnerability assessment tools for identification of vulnerable households can be used to target emergency cash assistance to those in precarious conditions and likely to have experienced a loss of income or livelihood opportunities due to the pandemic. At the same time, the two cash support systems need to be linked to ensure that sustained government-led support is available for the most vulnerable.

The 2-targeting model should be better aligned, with the MoLSA SSN embodying displacement specific vulnerability indicators to ensure better compatibility and allow for referrals.<sup>53</sup> This will help sustain a much-needed social safety net for the most vulnerable households.

The UN will focus on improving service delivery through the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure projects, such as hospitals, sub-stations, water treatment plants and irrigation systems, universities and public open spaces in under-served neighborhoods and informal settlements. Agencies will also continue to invest in communal infrastructure along the food supply chain in order to improve natural resource use efficiency (i.e. irrigation water), boost productivity and reduce food losses (i.e. communal storage, cold chain infrastructure, etc.). Activities will target conflict-affected and chronically poor areas and will include vulnerable urban and rural populations, including women and girls. Rehabilitation efforts will be aligned with national priorities and promote national ownership, as well as gender equality and inclusion, where applicable to increase the impact.

To address food security concerns, the UN will focus on the four pillars: availability, access, stability and utilization. To ensure food remains available, agencies will provide agriculture inputs and promote the adoption of good and climate smart agriculture practices in order to improve the resilience of farmers (particularly smallholder farmers) and rural communities, while maintaining the natural resource base. Ecosystem services required for stable food production will also be achieved by investing in ecosystem restoration (i.e. southern marshlands, rangelands, etc.) and rehabilitating agricultural infrastructure.

Food access will continue to be addressed by complementing national initiatives and increasing coverage and food assistance to IDPs, refugee and newly vulnerable households.

In the area of WASH, the UN will create a step-change in how hand hygiene is promoted, enabled and mainstreamed throughout the whole of society. This aims to bring together multiple sectors around a common platform to coordinate voices and actions and, crucially, to align these behind national hand hygiene strategies. The UN will use a partnership approach to bring together the Government, international partners, public and private sectors, young people, and civil society to ensure affordable WASH products and services are available, especially in disadvantaged areas and camps, and to enable a culture of hygiene and to supply critical commodities for children and other vulnerable groups, both related to COVID-19 and beyond. Alongside this component, the UN is also stepping up to address water scarcity (particularly in the South) and climate resilience of WASH services. Lastly, relevant UN agencies will focus on the rehabilitation of water supply networks, in collaboration with relevant municipalities and directorates of water, to ensure housing interventions are complemented with adequate measures.

When it comes to education, the overall recovery strategy focuses on ensuring continuity of learning for children, adolescents and youth, with considerations for different school reopening scenarios. Activities will aim to strengthen education systems, identify alternative modalities/remote-based approaches to ensure learning continuity, develop the skills of youth, build the capacity of education personnel at national and sub-national levels to implement the new modalities and develop policies and guidance for all stakeholders, from government staff

to caregivers. The provision of language and digital skills training will also continue to provide income generation opportunities to refugees, IDPs and host communities, and other marginalized groups, including women headed household. Finally, the National School Feeding Programme will continue to support the nutrition of school children and ensure them access to healthy food.

Because of the range and complexity of child protection issues, especially in the context of COVID-19, the UN will engage with the Government to develop a national child protection system or strengthen the child and family welfare systems. By nature, this approach will provide a wider range of services to all communities and groups, reducing disparities and improving child protection. The response will also focus on strengthening social work as a profession, training social workers/child protection staff/community volunteers/committees on key prevention messages, case management, PFA and alternative care guidelines (including referral protocols for alternative care for affected children/families). In addition, the relevant UN agencies will train social workforce (health, education, child services and MHPSS staff) on COVID-19-related CP risks and identify strategies to provide psychosocial support to children and youth, especially those in quarantine or lockdown. Other critical interventions include provision/arrangement of safe and appropriate forms of alternative care for children and adolescents who may become unaccompanied (in and outside of camps) and those in institutions, provision of case management services and referral mechanisms and building/strengthening positive coping mechanisms of communities, families, caregivers' children and young people.

The UN will implement specific actions and strategies to ensure not only continuity of existing SGBV response and prevention services, but also to support the Government in preparing for the increased demand for such services in the context of COVID-19. The UN will support continuous access to age- and gender-appropriate SGBV responsive services to women, adolescents, youth and children, including awareness on SGBV/PSEA, SGBV case management, individual structured psychosocial support (PSS) (as well as through new modalities such as remote case management, increased role of the hotlines), referrals and distribution of dignity kits. Relevant UN agencies will train government, civil society, adolescent and youth networks, women NGOs, and community partners on prevention and response to SGBV and how they can support and increase information sharing on (bi-directional) referrals, linking communities and facilities and other support services for children and adolescents.

To support increased access to justice, the UN in Iraq will assist in the development and reform of national policies and frameworks on legal aid, and support capacity building of state and non-state actors who provide legal aid services in civil, criminal and family matters. The UN system will also support the provision of legal aid by strengthening capacities of rights holders, enhancing legal aid programmes empowering rights holders, particularly the poor and marginalized groups, and supporting legal awareness and legal aid clinics and public outreach campaigns.

In order to address housing concerns, the UN will continue to advocate for the government to issue a temporary moratorium to suspend all evictions and

utility cut-offs during the COVID-19 outbreak in the event that rental obligations and utility fees are not fulfilled, and no agreement has been reached between landlords and tenants. Finally, the UN will carry out awareness-raising on housing, land and property rights to educate households who are at risk of eviction due to the inability to pay rent for accommodation or utility bills about their rights.

Overall, COVID-19 mitigation and prevention will be integral to all responses. Agencies will conduct COVID-19 awareness

campaigns among rural farming, fishing and pastoral communities, in addition to urban and informal settlements, in order to mitigate transmission. Ensuring information is accessible to these groups will require careful messaging and consideration of appropriate media channels. Beyond information sharing, the response will also develop policies and guidance on how to care for individuals who have contracted COVID-19 and provide preferential testing services and medical support for children and young people in their family to limit further transmission.

The Priorities under this Pillar are reflected in the Joint Work Plans of PWG 1, PWG2, PWG3, and PWG4.

Total Funding required for the priorities under this Pillar is **USD. 1,155,890,947**

The funding gap is **USD 735,203,677**



## PILLAR 3: ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

### Protecting Jobs, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, and Informal Sector Workers



#### ANALYSIS

In Iraq, the rapid spread of COVID-19 has exacerbated an already fragile economic situation, impacted by drops in oil revenues, social turmoil and political standstill. The impact of ISIL in many locations and long-standing problems such as internal conflicts and poverty have worsened the outlook for foreign direct investment and private sector growth. GDP growth is now projected to contract by 9.7% in 2020, making it the country's worst annual performance since 2003.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, prior to COVID-19, Iraq's labour participation rate was already one of the lowest in the world, at 48.7% in 2019.<sup>55</sup> The country suffers from a lack of competitiveness in various economic sectors coupled by the free-flowing and smuggling of goods from surrounding countries, as well as high government spending on civil servant salaries, as opposed to public goods and services. Vulnerable groups, such as child and female headed households, displaced persons including refugees, and disabled persons are at risk of being left behind if SMEs are not supported to operate or compensated for losses due to COVID-19 challenges. A joint ILO-Fafo Rapid Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Populations and Small-scale Enterprises<sup>56</sup> found that:

- Unemployment rates were high among women and youth before the pandemic, particularly in areas within the Kurdistan region of Iraq:

- There is a high degree of informal employment among younger workers and almost no social security for workers.
- The pandemic has an adverse impact on the employment status and household income with younger workers and those in informal employment disproportionately affected, especially women:
- Economically vulnerable households are affected by the pandemic with limited coping mechanisms available at their disposal:
- There is limited awareness about government measures and a high level of dissatisfaction among respondents.

In the short term, livelihoods have been widely disrupted across the country, driven primarily by COVID-19 movement restrictions to limit the spread of the virus, some of which have already been lifted. Measures like the curfew and lockdown have negatively impacted the employability of daily casual labour as well as low income workers. Key informants from one impact survey have reported that, in 68% of sub-districts, a majority of people are unemployed and face financial difficulties as a result of COVID-19-related movement restrictions,<sup>57</sup> with the situation reported as most critical in Anbar, Basra and Dahuk.<sup>58</sup>

In the private sector, which employs approximately 58% of the workforce in Iraq, production and employment have both been negatively impacted by the measures.<sup>59</sup>

A primary assessment among 456 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) showed an average reduction in production of 52% in the month of April 2020, up to 68% in construction and manufacturing, and 61% among food-related industries.<sup>60</sup> The average reduction in the number of employees in SMEs compared to the typical number of employees during the month of April, in turn, was 63% overall, with a peak of 76% among construction and manufacturing SMEs.<sup>61</sup>

Key findings of another assessment, meanwhile, provides a snapshot of socio-economic impact of COVID-19 from 7 governorates. The findings show only 16% (195) of households (HHs) had savings, with the majority, 95% (189), of these estimating their savings would last less than 3 months. Anecdotal evidence points

to a rise in tensions due to an inability to purchase foods, and quantitative findings indicate that 45% of those surveyed had enough food to last two weeks. After which, 96.4% expect to incur taking on debt to meet basic needs. 85% of HHs faced an immediate and severe shock on income generation with at least one HH member being unable to work due to COVID-19 restrictions.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, 45% of households interviewed reported that they consider themselves at risk of eviction. In a similar survey conducted recently, 64% of families living in rented accommodation also indicated that they would not be able to pay rent in the next three months.<sup>63</sup> Overall, female headed HHs were identified as especially vulnerable to forced eviction, because of their dependence on a male relative or spouse to access land



or housing. In extreme cases, households might also have to prioritize rental payments over medical expenses or purchasing of hygiene items and/or food.

The Iraq Federation of Industries (IFI) also launched a survey assessing the needs of enterprises resulting from COVID 19,<sup>64</sup> which found that 95% of enterprises surveyed said that they have suspended work due to COVID-19 (with the most effected being primarily SMEs, employing around 15 workers), 40% of enterprises stated that they had to lay off some workers

as a result of the crisis, and 90% of the enterprises stated that the limited cash flow prevented them from fully recovering their operations. On average, business owners expect the crisis to continue for another four months and that they will unlikely be able to fully restore operations or sales to pre-crisis levels (with 40% saying that their enterprises will either be temporarily or permanently closed).

UNDP also deployed a survey targeting individuals and MSMEs in four governorates; Baghdad, Anbar, Karbala and

Basra, to assess the impact of COVID-19 on local level. The common findings among all interviewees showed income substantially decreased in all governorates. Taxi drivers were the most affected as their income decreased by 90% due to the curfew. The income of crop production farmers decreased by 25% and 75% in Basra and Anbar, respectively, yet increased in Karbala due to the price increase of dates and in Baghdad belt to higher demand on vegetables. The income of animal husbandry farmers decreased by 70% in Anbar, 50% in Erbil and Karbala, and by only 15% in Basra.

The previously mentioned FAFO/ILO study found that:

- The majority of the surveyed enterprises are micro and small businesses employing less than 5 workers, and almost half of the enterprises are located in the Ninawa province;
- There is a high degree of informality due to enterprises not being registered, and then providing no social insurance or health coverage to their employees.
- All the surveyed enterprises serve local and domestic markets only, and half of the enterprises had revenues below IQD 1 million prior to lockdown.
- More than half of the surveyed enterprises indicated that they were profitable prior to COVID-19 with three-quarters having no financial commitments:
  - One-third of the enterprises operate as before the pandemic.
  - Only a few enterprises have laid off employees, but the majority do not pay their employees who are not able to come to work:

— Few enterprises will be able to remain operational in the coming months, but almost half of them are confident they will weather through the crisis:

— In response to the health threats imposed by COVID-19, most enterprises distributed personal protective equipment.

— The vast majority of enterprises are not aware of any support schemes available to help them cope with the crisis.

The continuity in movement restrictions means that those still currently receiving salaries while not working may also be in danger of losing their jobs. The loss of income impacts the capacity of households to pay rent, putting vulnerable Iraqis at risk of eviction which could lead to an increase in homelessness, overcrowded housing as people move in with relatives, or an expansion of already densely populated informal settlements. Even though a majority (96%) of businesses surveyed by IOM in April 2020 expected, despite low sales, to be able to bring back full-time workers once movement restrictions are lifted, a loss of revenue during this period may change overall numbers of employees in the medium term, or prevent planned new hires.<sup>65</sup> Forty-seven percent of surveyed business owners, for example, estimated they would not be able to make rent payments under restrictions during the month of April, which may lead to overhang effects. Similarly, with low production, businesses are expected to be constrained in terms of their ability to expand production lines or divisions, and in some cases disinvest in previously planned expansions.

The informal sector is the largest employer in Iraq,<sup>66</sup> and daily labourers have been identified as the most socio-economically impacted group by COVID-19.<sup>67</sup> Private

sector workers with formal jobs have also reported being asked to stay at home without the security of their salaries.<sup>68</sup>

With informal workers unable to access wage compensation or social safety nets, businesses already struggling with financial literacy and credit-worthiness aspects, and traders are reportedly price gouging,<sup>69</sup> there is the possibility of currency devaluations given the volatile price of oil, and a fall in living standards in the coming months.<sup>70</sup> COVID-19 travel restrictions also limit the access of social and public actors to more rural, remote areas in Iraq, where women are more represented in the labour force, thereby inhibiting the ability of actors to promote inclusive, gender-sensitive and diversified green economic growth in the private sector.

Going forward, the already-dire situation is likely to deteriorate and become even more challenging in terms of job creation and

economic opportunity. Iraq's economy is expected to contract by 5% in 2020 and the economic growth to reduce to 1.9 to 2.7% in 2021-2022,<sup>71</sup> in part as a direct follow on from reduced demand for oil and firm-level reductions to output. While public sector salaries are continuing for the time being, the means of financing these will require trade-offs with investments in social safety nets for private sector workers and infrastructure improvements, including crucial investments in skills training and post-conflict reconstruction. Urgent, sector-targeted interventions with a market systems development approach will be critical to support the effective and sustainable recovery of the private sector, as well as overall economic reactivation.<sup>72</sup>

Longer term policies and programmes, such as tax relief and rental assistance programmes, may also ease financial burdens on small business owners.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The most important vulnerability is the financial crisis manifested on individual and SMEs due to the lower economic activity, mobility and lower oil revenues. Any policy schemes leading to mitigate the financial stress on individuals and SMEs should be adopted including but limited to direct targeted financial/cash assistance and minimizing financial liabilities on the short term and revitalization schemes to boost economic activities on medium term.

Vulnerable firms and employees, whether SMEs or firms operating in the informal sector or in the most impacted sectors, need swift, continuous and expedited government support (e.g. tax holidays,

reductions or rescheduling; interest-free loans; wage and employment subsidies etc.) but also help from banks and other financial institutions (flexibility with debt, more lending - possibly conditional on retaining workers etc.) and other parts of the private sector.

Initiatives to mitigate the negative economic impact of COVID-19 movement restrictions may wish to give special prioritization to MSME's which hire female heads of households as staff, or female owned MSMEs.

Furthermore, efforts to register or formalize MSMEs may wish to pay special attention to the safety nets afforded to casual workers employed by MSMEs- for example,

supporting the provision of written contracts to workers as a pre-condition to financial support, or other forms of encouraging the protection of informal and at-risk labourers. Special efforts can be made to prioritize sectors otherwise at risk of disappearing, such as traditional industries, which are at risk of otherwise losing the support of government and private investment as priorities pivot, and otherwise identify labour intensive industries in the private sector that can catalyze job creation if invested in. Additional, appropriate measures to support and enhance the socio-economic response to COVID-19 through livelihoods could include:

#### **In the short term:**

- Undertake a range of regulations mainly to protect jobs for marginalized groups such as women, the handicapped, and displaced persons, such as requiring employers to avail teleworking options and revised hours to employees
- Protect small, medium & large business owners from excessive debt, mortgage payments and rent by investing in compensatory or subsidization programming
- Advocate & prioritize community-based initiatives, where different community groups can mobilize financial and in kind (food baskets, financial support, etc) for those left behind due to the pandemic. Enhance and amplify the voices of activists, community-based organizations, and local groups to mainstream inclusive programme design, where access challenges and digitization shortcomings may otherwise leave blind spots.
- Maintain governmental grants for the most affected businesses to pay the salaries of their employees.

- The government and CBI are encouraged to set aside funds from the remaining foreign reserves for food imports that could be tapped by private banks and traders to ensure stable supplies on the domestic markets.

#### **In the medium term:**

- Offer targeted tax relief for the most effected sectors and tax exemptions for businesses for a period of six months.
- Repurposing existing funds where applicable, to inject money immediately in the market where supply chain interruptions may mean the collapse of minor industries.
- Refocus public spending & environmental and economic regulation to support industries most at risk of closure or collapse due to COVID-19 closures, including the construction, manufacturing and agri-food systems, blending public and private funds to facilitate agricultural investment/credit amid COVID-19 shock.
- The government will be supported to review and implement policies and legislation aiming at more sustainable production system post COVID-19
- A moratorium on loan payments and interest, plus the suspension of vendor commissions on electronic payment tools for a period of six months, will have a positive effect on medium-size food and agriculture enterprises already integrated within the banking economy and that have digitized their payments. Nevertheless, the majority of the food and agriculture sector remains cash-based and not engaged with the private banking sector. The government and the central bank need to stimulate the engagement of the food and agriculture sector with an improved private banking sector, in addition to providing the stimulus for digitization across the food value chain.

— Invest in alternative learning modalities to close the skills gap and encourage labour market integration. Prioritize access to finance, including investing in innovative financial products that can address financing bottlenecks facing the private sector, particularly female entrepreneurs.

If implemented, such programs should be designed with simplified administrative processes to facilitate and expedite access of those in need to the different services and funds provided.

## RESPONSE

As of today, economic recovery and employment-intensive programming is also ongoing, and SMEs across Iraq are being provided with grants to produce medical equipment and supplies to respond to COVID-19 adequately. Investments to increase productivity and improve working conditions in micro and small-medium enterprises (MSMEs) have also been allocated, and digital solutions (i.e. e-wallets)<sup>73</sup> to allow secured access to services during the ongoing pandemic have also been developed. Revitalizing food production and marketing systems, supporting the revival of Mosul and Basra's old cities, and developing online platforms for entrepreneurship will also support the UN's effort to respond to COVID-19 impacts in line with UN efforts to support the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. With rising transportation and production costs and logistical bottlenecks, and drops in demand, efforts to revitalize local production capacities (such as investing in the infrastructure to repair, expand, or increase production by factories) will be reprogrammed towards sectors hardest hit by COVID 19 movement restrictions, such as agri-food MSMEs.

In the medium term, compliance with decent work standards can be scaled-up in other geographical areas and sectors to support decent work for all.<sup>74</sup> Certain interventions will support longer-term

institutional change, including through implementation of agricultural worker bylaws, development of an agriculture worker's union and collective bargaining agreements. The UN will also invest in a range of employability and skills development activities, to promote both immediate and decent job creation through to graduation pathways to sustainable livelihoods, and will support immediate employment creation to respond to COVID -19 while helping enhance workers' skills and support national vocational training and certification systems. The capacity of financial and non-financial service providers to provide local entrepreneurs with high-quality entrepreneurship and financial literacy training, coaching and loans will also be invested in.

The response will also focus on providing short term income generating opportunities through Cash for Work schemes to those who lost jobs and income opportunities in urban areas as well as integrating solar solutions into recovery investments to help stabilize agricultural livelihoods and reduce energy costs through solar irrigation, enhance stability of electricity supply to MSMEs through decentralized solar technologies, and expand use of sustainable energy solutions for other key sectors in focus for the economic recovery.

In the longer term, the UN will take advantage of the present crisis to redress the underlying and more significant inequality and poverty crisis in Iraq that has been laid bare by the pandemic. The UN will aim to invest in partnerships with the private sector that can promote women's

leadership, projects that support small/medium construction enterprises (MSMEs), and formal and informal manufacturing industries that provide local jobs and enhance inclusive and diversified green economic growth.

The Priorities under this Pillar are reflected in the Joint Work Plans of PWG 1 (Outputs 1.1.1 & 1.2.1), PWG 2 (2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.1 & 2.2.2), PWG 3 (Output 3.1.1) & PWG 4 (Output 4.1.1 & 4.2.1).

Total Funding required for the priorities under this Pillar is **USD 133,009,749**

The funding gap is **USD 57,250,000**



**PILLAR 4:  
SOCIAL COHESION  
& COMMUNITY  
RESILIENCE**

## PILLAR 4: SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



### ANALYSIS

Almost two decades of recurrent conflict and instability has created significant divisions in Iraqi society, often because political and security actors have exploited ethno-sectarian identities for their own gain. The impacts of COVID-19 and the response to it are likely to exacerbate existing drivers of social tension and conflict, as well as produce new forms of vulnerability, fragility and tension.

The COVID-19 pandemic has yet introduced another crisis to Iraq that was already in turmoil with mass protests calling for an end to the post - 2003 Muhasasa political system, rampant corruption, high unemployment, and poor public services. Furthermore, the country's fragile state-society relations reached a historic low due to the government's violent crackdown against largely peaceful protesters. Four hundred and ninety protesters lost their lives, and another 7,783 were injured since the start of the demonstrations in October 2019.<sup>75</sup> The Coronavirus outbreak also comes at a time when Iraq is still grappling to create a secure and stable state after years of violent conflict and, an estimated 1.38 million people are still internally displaced within a backdrop of highly complex geopolitical settings.<sup>76</sup>

In previous years, there have been numerous attempts to promote reconciliation, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in Iraq, most of them started at bringing together different political groups, others were designed to respond to

challenges posed by ISIL, but there has been no clearly articulated policy for reconciliation, and social cohesion in Iraq, marked with a lack of inclusion of women, youth and IDPs in previous national reconciliation initiatives.<sup>77</sup> Despite the lack of momentum nationally, reconciliation initiatives and structures at local level appear to be increasing in importance, with local initiatives gaining momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic. The new government is attempting to implement reforms that could have a beneficial impact on reconciliation and social cohesion – both vertical and horizontal, and has committed to supporting the return of IDPs and ISIL-affiliated families, providing opportunities for international partners engagement at a national level.<sup>78</sup>

It is against this backdrop that the COVID -19 pandemic threatens to exacerbate existing fragilities and derail Iraq's road to stability and a more resilient future. The pandemic has cast a spotlight on country's fragile social contract-/state- society relations, and its dysfunctional health and non- health public service institutions. All presided over by decades of poor governance, endemic corruption, and an economy already struggling to the brink.

The spread of COVID and its collateral affects (e.g. economic crisis, movement restrictions, inability to access dispute mechanisms, expansion of security forces etc.) is likely to increase existing tensions and vulnerabilities within and between

communities, it also undermines access to the full range of formal and informal dispute mechanisms, due to movement restrictions, limitations of group assembly, and government closures.

A second key area affected by COVID-19 is peacebuilding and community-based reconciliation, as the restrictions on movement and limitations on group meetings, in addition to the increased uncertainty can affect peace processes at a time when they are of utmost importance. Sustainable solutions for IDPs, including return and reintegration are not possible without addressing key grievances at the community level and engaging in (national) dialogue regarding reconciliation between different groups. Community-based reconciliation initiatives are essential to build or strengthen relations between groups or individuals affected by the conflict at a time when social relations are facing additional stress and strain as the result of COVID-19 and the related economic crisis.

Certain groups are more exposed to the effects of weak social cohesion. IDPs and returnees may face stigma and new forms of inequality during the COVID-19 crisis due to the perception of camps or mobile populations as potential carriers of the virus, adding to existing stigma towards IDPs as sources of insecurity. Families formerly associated or perceived with links to ISIL will also be at high risk of stigmatization and targeting since their return already triggers social tension and grievances, and this is likely to increase, due to a contracted economy, perception of returnees as potential COVID-19 vectors, and breakdown in security and rule of law.<sup>79</sup> As security deteriorates, these families may be blamed and then punished with violence or forced into secondary displacement. For both IDPs and stigmatized returnee

families, rising social inequality, lack of jobs, exclusion, diminished trust in authorities and the collapse of social structures may provide opportunities for extremist or other armed groups to recruit vulnerable individuals, particularly youth. If the crisis continues unmitigated, a UNDP study suggests that it may lead to widespread unrest and the breakdown of social fabric and conflict mitigation systems.<sup>80</sup> Groups in areas already affected by low levels of social cohesion are likely to be disproportionately affected as their resilience and coping strategies are weaker.

Access to non-health basic services such as education, social welfare, housing/shelter and law enforcement will be restricted and new vulnerable groups are likely to be created due to the sharp decline in budgetary revenues and impact of the containment measures in the formal and informal employment of Iraqi citizens. This will put vulnerable and marginalized groups i.e. the poor, IDPs and refugees, migrants, women, girls, children and those with disabilities at a greater risk by limiting their resilience to cope. Fiscal risks have made also the government pay only partial public sector salaries and pensions and there has had delays in making their payments. These terrible socio-economic conditions may also lead to a surge in informal settlements because people cannot afford rental accommodation. On the other hand, the increase of population density and lack of adequate health and other basic facilities in the informal settlements increases the risk of the rapid and undetected spread of the virus.

Other vulnerabilities from the COVID-19, socio-economic stresses could be created for the migrant workers and their families. Migrants will lose jobs in the host countries where they are not eligible for getting any social and/or financial support and

adequate health care. In addition, their families will miss remittances in a situation when the chances for social care and financial support from the Government are lower.

This may be an additional factor for increasing informal settlements and irregular migrant flows from neighboring Syria and Iran due to poor capacities and other vulnerabilities of Iraqi border control officials. The pandemic had also placed multiple stresses on the rule of law. The local police have been engaged in raising awareness, enforcing curfew, managing checkpoints, transporting residents to hospitals, transporting disinfection /sanitation workers, helping the economic departments monitor the markets to ensure non-profiteering, and helping with supplies to vulnerable families. They have worked closely with the health sector. However, at times it had also given rise to disputes and tensions between local police and community members who are desperate to earn a living, and feed their families.<sup>81</sup>

Measures involving self-isolation and social-distancing are simply not viable in many contexts, and their imposition by security sector actors in violent or suppressive manner may exacerbate existing tensions or ill-sentiment towards such actors as well as towards the state.

While incidences of crime such as theft and burglaries have gone down during the crisis, there was an increase in domestic violence and gender-based violence.<sup>82</sup> The health pandemic has also led to multiple security breaches in Iraq. A large number of Iraqi security forces were redeployed from their outposts to urban locations to impose curfew, and assist with COVID-19 response efforts of which ISIL have exploited to attack a number of military and civilian targets in Iraq.<sup>83</sup> Criminal organizations may also resort to corruption to maintain, and strengthen illegal activities at national, and transnational levels, giving rise to drug trafficking.<sup>84</sup>

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen participatory and consultative decision-making processes by encouraging and nurturing citizens' voices to be heard and acted upon at national and local levels. Invest in participatory consultative mechanisms that allow women, men, youth, the poor, disabled, IDPs and refugees, marginalised and vulnerable groups to actively and freely engage in meaningful dialogue with the State on issues affecting public service delivery.
- Bolster the legitimacy of public service institutions with immediate action to improve their capacity to function and negotiate through transparent, accountable, and inclusive processes which in turn can

lead to more collaborative and effective responses in addressing public service delivery needs in a timely, cost- effective and gender equality-based manner.

- Encourage developing a sustainable vision on reconciliation and social cohesion through a bottom-up and inclusive process, linking local-level initiatives with national policy while addressing other community social, political and economic needs and grievances in parallel with enforcing rule of law, fighting corruption to build trust in the government, in addition to the quick responses for critical priorities of the inter-community reconciliation and respond to protestors demands.

- Strengthen rule of law institutions and their oversight capacities in order to serve and protect Iraqi citizens. Review existing legislation and introduce new laws/policies to protect human rights, including women's rights and public freedoms of all individuals regardless of their socio- economic status, ethnicity, religion, denomination or gender.
- Avoid worsening inequality & escalation of conflict by mapping and closely monitoring social tensions and triggers for conflict, actors and power dynamics. This should be done via a range of tools including community-level mapping to capture acute vulnerabilities, equity of assistance and feelings or perceptions of inequality, data and monitoring platforms to inform the response and as a basis for

advocacy, and monitoring social cohesion indicators through social cohesion & gender/conflict sensitive assessments and information sharing.

- Empower and connect community-based organizations and networks with focus on women and youth leaders into community-led response systems and ensuring inclusivity to enhance resilience and peacebuilding.
- Ensure continuity of community dialogue, peacebuilding and reintegration processes among different groups, IDPs, ISIL affiliated families and engage local mechanisms, women and youth as catalyst for peace to promote social cohesion and prevent violent extremism.

## RESPONSE

Communities in Iraq will bear the brunt of the social and economic crisis caused by the pandemic. However, they are also fundamental to the success of the country's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. Therefore, communities must be placed at the heart of COVID-19 recovery and response efforts with emphasis on strengthening social cohesion, reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing their resilience to cope with adverse shocks and stresses. Moreover, countries with tenuous social contracts, such as Iraq, are at greater risk of exacerbating the effects of the COVID-19 health pandemic. As such response and recovery efforts must be tailored to strengthen state-society relations/social contract combined with core governance principles participation/inclusion, transparency, non-discrimination/equality, rule of law /accountability and community led

resilience/promote direct led community response and recovery reaching the most vulnerable groups. It is also essential to find ways to continue peace processes at the national and community level even while COVID-19 restrictions apply, and to build the resilience of communities hosting IDPs as well as those receiving returnees during a time of enhanced fragility. In parallel COVID-19 response and recovery efforts must also strive to restore public service delivery that is adaptable to people's needs and vulnerabilities, capable in efficient service delivery, and adept in identifying and mitigating internal and external risks to sustain institutional stability.

The UNCT will support the parliament and relevant government ministries and agencies to develop policies/ legislation (policy level), and also to implement initiatives (operational level) that will

mitigate tenuous social contracts, enhance state - citizen partnerships, and bolster the legitimacy of public service institutions. In doing so, UNCT will adopt a dual approach:

a) Invest in social capital and empower the most vulnerable communities to cope with dire socio-economic stresses reverberating from the COVID-19 health pandemic (e.g., the poor, IDPs and refugees, migrants, women, girls, children and those with disabilities)

b) Strengthen public service institutional performance, adaptability, and stability to manage and mitigate socio-economic impact caused by the crisis and to enhance the rule of law.

UNCT will offer a range of tools to monitor conflict and tension within communities through early warning systems developed by NGOs, local peace structures to capture acute vulnerabilities and equity of assistance; and develop data platforms to inform the response and as a basis for advocacy.

UNCT will monitor that aid and response is gender and conflict sensitive, reaches marginalized groups and is distributed in a fair, transparent and equitable manner.

UN agencies will also provide accurate information about the pandemic to counter rumours and misinformation and counter the messages or stigmatization that lead to violence.

UNCT will support and facilitate access to civil society, mediators, community leaders including religious and tribal leaders, women and youth leaders/activists and organizations who work to resolve disputes, with an emphasis on using technology in order to keep within the COVID-19 requirements; also engaging youth peace

leaders and youth led organizations in peace building processes, target at-risk youth, women and other vulnerable groups for economic and psychosocial support, as well as awareness-raising to counter the risk of recruitment into extremist or other armed groups.

UN Agencies will empower and connect community-based organizations and networks into community-led response systems. Partnering with community-led organizations will promote direct community-led prevention, support, and recovery services to the most vulnerable and most hard to reach people.

Create spaces enabling communities to maintain social ties through voluntary joint activities and advocate for social cohesion against a common threat. These activities will target at-risk youth for economic and psychosocial support, as well as awareness-raising to counter the risk of recruitment into extremist or other armed groups.

UN agencies will dedicate attention to marginalized groups, IDPs including families with suspected ISIL links, agencies will engage in advocacy, monitoring, and dialogue with the host communities, IDPs and perceived ISIL families to ensure that gains made prior to COVID-19 are not jeopardized. The focus will be on advocating for durable solutions at the national and local level, supporting sustainable reintegration; monitoring families who have returned in order to identify threats to their reintegration; countering threats or actual instances of forcible displacement or other violence against families formerly associated or perceived with links to ISIL; and engaging in community dialogue to support a positive inter-community relationship.

UNCT will support the attempts of government to strengthen the linkages of local initiatives with a national policy for reconciliation, social cohesion, sustainable reintegration and return through an inclusive bottom up approach

The Priorities under this Pillar are reflected in the Joint Work Plans of PWG1 (Outputs 1.3.1 & 1.3.2), PWG2 (Outputs 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.1 & 2.2.2), PWG 3 (Outputs 3.1.1) & PWG 4 (Outputs 4.1.1 & 4.2.1).

Total Funding required for the priorities under this Pillar is **USD 40,451,761**

The funding gap is **USD 18,508,644**



## PILLAR 5: SUPPORT TO MACRO-ECONOMIC GROWTH



### ANALYSIS

Iraq's economy is dominated by oil. It is one of the world's largest exporters, and possesses some of the world's most significant proven reserves. Iraq is also one of the most oil-dependent in the world, with the hydrocarbon sector accounting for just under 60 percent of the country's GDP, 99 percent of exports, and more than 90 percent of central government revenue. This dependence has grown over time as Iraq's non-oil industry and agriculture sectors have suffered heavily in recent decades. The economic sanctions of the 1990s, intermittent armed conflict since the 1991 Gulf War, and ongoing political tension have limited space for growth and diversification.<sup>85</sup>

Macroeconomic conditions were benign in 2018 and 2019. Relatively high oil prices led to budget surpluses of 11.2 and 1.3 percent GDP in 2018 and 2019 respectively, and public sector debt was on a downward path, falling from 49.3 to 44.6 percent of GDP between these two years. These favourable fiscal conditions allowed government to respond to citizen protests in late 2019 by further expanding public sector employment. In the external sector, current account surpluses of 6.9 and 2.5 percent of GDP over 2018 and 2019 allowed for the accumulation of substantial financial reserves. Just before the Covid-19 crisis at the end of 2019, macroeconomic conditions combined with a bumper harvest to generated broadly positive economic conditions.

Long-standing structural challenges remain, however. Historically pro-cyclical fiscal policy exacerbates the revenue and expenditure impacts of swings in the oil price. The public sector wage bill stands at 14.7 percent of GDP – notably above the regional average for oil-exporting MENA countries of 11 percent of GDP; and it rose by 13 percent in 2019 alone. Combined with poor execution of non-wage expenditure, this squeezes out room for investment in the non-oil economy. Unemployment is also high – with around half the rapidly-growing youth workforce not in employment, education, or training (NEET). Most workers operate in the informal economy, thereby reducing their contact with formal institutions of tax collection and welfare provision. State-owned enterprises dominate many sectors, reducing the space for private sector growth. The financial sector, in particular, is dominated by a small number of state-owned banks operating predominantly in the oil sector.

The first half of 2020 saw 'twin shocks' affect Iraq's economy: rapid and significant falls in oil prices, and restrictions on social and economic activity related to Covid-19. Over the first quarter of 2020, average annual prices for Iraq's oil are forecast to drop by over 50 percent, from \$61 to \$30 a barrel. Globally, March 2020 saw the single largest monthly decline of oil prices on record and the current oil price decline is deeper than any other previous global recession. Starting from 22nd March 2020, the government imposed a range of

restrictions on economic and social activity in a bid to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus. These have placed Iraq towards the top of the combined index of Covid-19 related responses, as measured by the University of Oxford.<sup>86</sup> While these are a vital part of the fight against infections, these restrictions have substantially reduced activity across the economy.

These twin shocks are having a dramatic impact on key macroeconomic indicators. Forecasts for Iraq's GDP in 2020 and beyond have been progressively reduced in successive quarters, in common with countries across the world. GDP growth is expected to be negative at -9.7 percent in 2020 with non-oil GDP contracting by 4.4 percent. Regarding the external sector, the current account will turn sharply negative by an estimated -18 percent and foreign reserves built up in the Central Bank of Iraq (CBI) – while moderate at 10 months of imports in 2019 – are expected to start being run down.

Projection for oil prices in the near future do not suggest a rapid rebound, with negative implications for Iraq's public finances over the coming year. Despite agreements by the OPEC+ group in April and June 2020 to cut production and support prices, oil futures suggest a period of prolonged low prices with only a modest – and highly uncertain – recovery in 2021. Globally, oil prices had moved up to over \$40 a barrel by early July 2020<sup>87</sup> and overall, they are forecast to move upwards in 2021 by a modest 6.3 percent compared to 2020; partially offsetting the 42 percent decline between 2019 and 2020. Given that a \$1 change in the oil price is estimated to change Iraq's oil-based GDP by around 1.1 percent, the future direction of oil prices will be critical to the length and severity of Iraq's current macroeconomic imbalances. According to some estimates, Iraq's current

pattern of public spending with an increased wage bill, higher pensions, and more demand for Public Distribution System goods will require an oil price of around \$76 per barrel to finance recurrent spending, and \$58 a barrel simply to meet the public sector wage and pensions bill alone. This means that current macroeconomic conditions of a substantial imbalance between revenue and expenditure is likely to widen for at least the coming year.

The dramatic decline in the macroeconomic situation as a result of oil price declines is mirrored in projected public finance outcomes over 2020 (see box 1 below).<sup>88</sup> The budget balance is expected to swing dramatically from a 1.3 percent of GDP surplus in 2019 to a massive -29.6 percent deficit in 2020. As a result, total debt is expected to increase significantly from 44.6 percent of GDP in 2019 to 81.2 percent GDP, and thereafter rise more slowly. Although debt interest costs as a percentage of GDP are expected to only increase modestly over 2020, and Iraq does not face an immediate risk – of debt default, the country's growing macroeconomic and fiscal imbalances pose a serious risk to debt sustainability in the coming years. The public sector wage bill will rise substantially as both a percentage of GDP and government expenditure. Indeed, current forecasts suggest that the wage bill alone will be higher than total government revenue over 2020. In addition, demand for, and reliance on, the Public Distribution System of subsidised essential goods – a system that already accounted for around 10 per cent of government recurrent expenditure in 2018<sup>89</sup> – will increase. As a result, capital and other recurrent expenditures are expected to face significant reductions.

The government does not intend to pass a full budget for 2020. The current government itself was only formed relatively

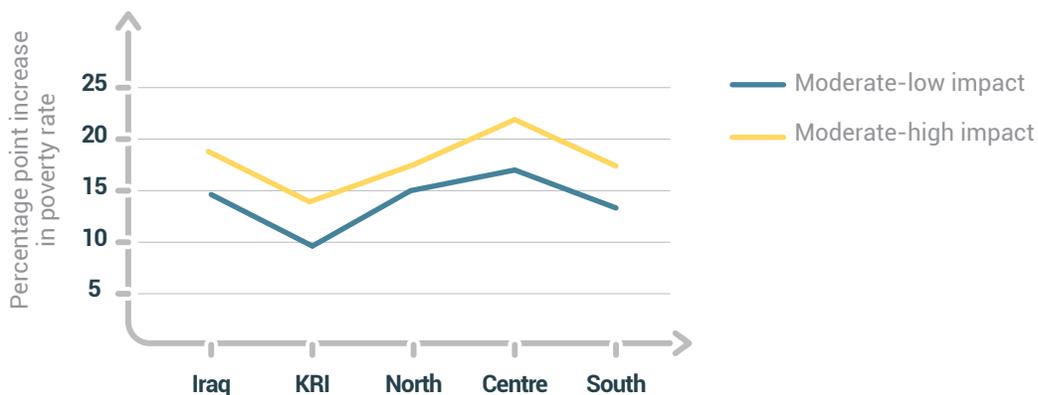
recently, following a period of political and social unrest. Media reports suggest that the government believes that the dramatic declines in oil prices have rendered the planning assumptions for the 2020 budget moot. Instead, it will focus its planning efforts on developing the 2021 budget.

On the financing side, the government did recently win Parliamentary approval to seek additional domestic financing of around \$13bn to meet its expenditure needs, and has sought international bilateral financing support from other countries in the region.<sup>90</sup>

The dramatic deterioration in macroeconomic and fiscal positions will put further pressure on Iraq's financial sector. Even during the relatively benign conditions of 2019, large state-owned banks were

already burdened by legacy assets and loans to state-owned enterprises, and banks across the financial sector were facing rising rates of non-performing loans (NPL), in particular those made to the oil sector. The collapse in the oil price in 2020 will further intensify this problem. At the extreme, this will represent a significant contingent risk to public finances if the banking sector requires re-capitalisation. A weakened banking sector will mean that credit availability – already constrained outside of the oil sector – will face further restrictions. Globally, financial conditions have tightened meaning generally higher costs of government and private sector financing; although Iraq does not yet appear to face an immediate shortage of financing for its deficit.

#### POVERTY RATE - INCREASE UNDER INCOME AND FOOD PRICE SCENARIOS



These macro-fiscal conditions will have a significant negative impact on employment. While public sector employment – estimated at 42 percent of the workforce – is likely to be mostly insulated from these events in the short-term, overall unemployment is expected to rise above its 2018 level of around 10 percent. Global evidence suggests that informal, casual, and/or low-income workers will bear the brunt of income and job loss in low and middle-income countries.<sup>91</sup> Surveys of Iraq suggest this is indeed happening. Already,

a substantial number of Iraq's micro, small, and medium-size enterprises – the backbone of employment in Iraq's predominantly informal economy – are experiencing significantly reduced income, engaging in staff lay-offs, and facing potential closure. Many of the sectors most affected – for example, hospitality services and construction – are those that make most use of the low-wage and flexible informal labour that provides an income to the poorest households. These workers are most likely to see their incomes fall, and

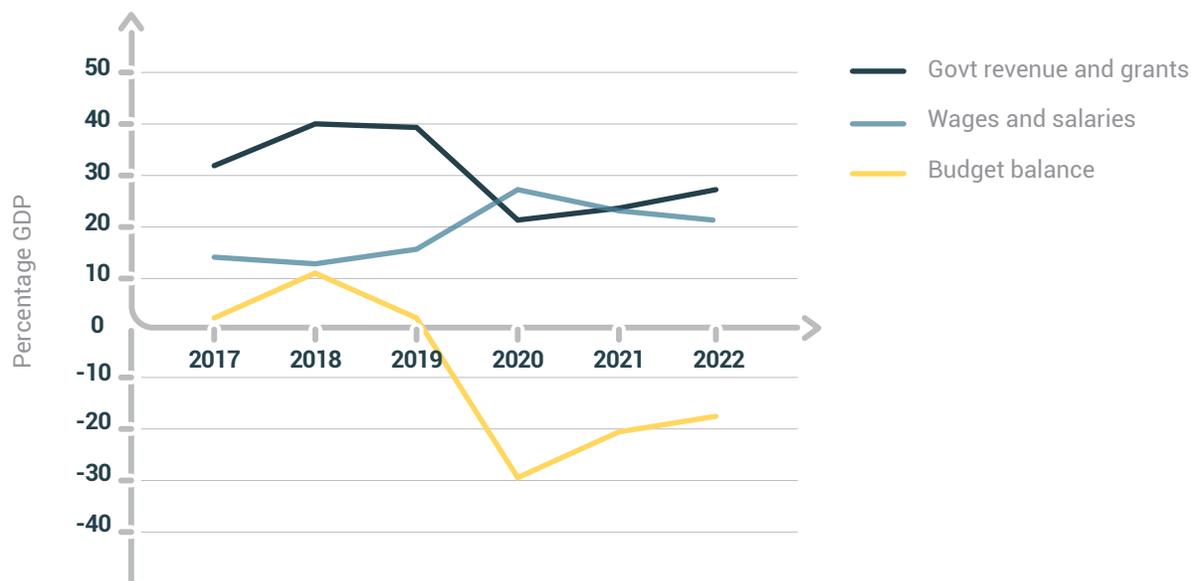
potentially disappear, while economic and social restrictions remain.<sup>92</sup>

The impact of these twin shocks on poverty is therefore potentially significant (see the box below).<sup>93</sup> The most obvious channel of transmission into household incomes is from unemployment and/or reduced working hours as a result of the shrinkage and/or closure of certain firms, as noted above. In addition to the risk of losing work, workers may well be absent from work as they care for vulnerable or sick family members, or recover themselves from illness. Scenarios simulated by the World Bank involving 'low-moderate' and 'moderate-high' falls in household income and increases in food prices suggest

increases in poverty rates across all regions of Iraq. At the high bound estimate, this would lead to a doubling in the poverty rate from 20 percent to 40 percent over this period.<sup>94</sup>

One relatively positive outcome for struggling households at present is subdued inflation. Annual consumer price increases projected to remain low at just over 1 percent in 2020. This will help maintain the purchasing power of household budgets. Alongside continued public distribution of heavily subsidised essential goods, this will go some way to addressing the worst impacts of extreme poverty.

#### IRAQ - SELECTED FISCAL INDICATORS



There are risks, however, over the medium term with regard inflation. If global supply chains are disrupted for too long this will lead to scarcity and therefore higher prices for certain goods – particularly imported items. In addition, the pegged exchange rate will face increasing pressure as Iraq's foreign reserves are used to maintain current exchange rates or finance the deficit under a context of a prolonged current

account imbalance. Foreign reserves are already being used up and are forecast to decline from over 10 months of import cover in 2019 to less than 3 months of import cover by 2021. If Iraq's external position continues to weaken and foreign reserves are used up, maintaining the pegged exchange rate may no longer be viable at which point a sudden devaluation will result in a rapid increase in inflation.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A proactive and radical government response to this challenge is required, and some steps have already been taken. To support the financial sector, the CBI has already provided liquidity to financial institutions and allowed for temporary debt payment holidays. The government has sought financing from the domestic market, from neighbouring countries, and has begun negotiations with the IMF for a multi-billion-dollar loan. At significant fiscal cost, government has broadly maintained spending on the wage bill, pensions, and the Public Distribution System. Together these provide substantial social support to significant parts of population.

A further response is needed in order to protect the most vulnerable households. While the fiscal challenges are manageable in the immediate term, a prolonged oil price depression will rapidly erode the ability of government to finance its current pattern of expenditure and risk the exhaustion of international reserves and a sudden and significant currency devaluation. Both will have negative effects on the poorest households. Government will need to consider a range of policy options for both the short and medium term to counteract this such as:

### In the short-term:

- Better target expenditure within the wage and pensions bill by maintaining salaries for low-paid workers, health other essential public service workers, and pension benefits for low-income retirees as a form of social support; while reducing (temporarily or permanently) salaries and pensions for wealthier recipients.

- Re-prioritise expenditure where possible away from low-value capital and recurrent spending and towards the rebalanced wage and pensions bill.
- Modernize, protect and/or expand through improved targeting the Public Distribution System as a form of direct food aid to the most vulnerable households.
- Seek budget financing from a range of sources.
- Maintain CBI liquidity facilities, temporary financing, and debt payment suspensions for firms, particularly the small and medium-sized enterprises that provide most employment for low-income households.

### In the medium-term:

- Rationalise, reduce, and better target the wage bill through a carefully-planned re-purposing of existing public sector employment.
- Review the Public Distribution System to ensure that subsidies are effectively targeted at the poorest households.
- Undertake a range of business environment and economic regulation reforms to support the growth of the non-oil economy, with a focus on bringing firms and workers into the formal system of taxation and benefits.
- Adopt a new fiscal framework that builds in a counter-cyclical policy stance so as to reduce the impact of oil price swings on public finances.

## RESPONSE

The UN system response will support the government in its macroeconomic response with a focus on 'leaving no one behind', in line with its global agenda to protect human development during the pandemic.<sup>95</sup> Other institutions – notably the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) – are already engaging with government on an agenda to respond to immediate-term macro-fiscal challenges, including the provision of loans. As a result, UN inputs will focus on supporting government to understand the situation of, and provide protection for, vulnerable households.

The convening power of the UN system will be used to support wide-ranging policy dialogue between government and its partners in delivering the response. The conclusions of a Social and Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) will be used to support policy dialogue between government, key social and economic stakeholders, and the UN system to develop a Post-Covid-19 Recovery Strategy. This process will support the government-led framework through which national stakeholders and development partners can coordinate their recovery efforts.

The UN system will provide technical assistance and analytical advisory services to support government in understanding and responding to the economic protection challenge. In the first instance, this will be through the SEIA and consider in particular how the macro-fiscal context is affecting household-level poverty and social inclusion. This will provide information on the current situation, as well as policy options for how government can rapidly re-deploy its financial and policy levers to support an economically-inclusive response. The UN system will then provide rapid capacity development programmes for key officials to support them in developing and delivering the socio-economic Covid-19 response.

The UN system will mobilize public and private finance to accelerate the uptake of sustainable energy as means of socio-economic recovery while helping keep momentum on SDG 7 under Iraq's Vision 2030.

The Priorities under this Pillar are reflected in Joint Work Plans of PWG2 (Outputs 2.1.1, 2.2.1 & 2.2.2), PWG3 (Output 3.1.1) & PWG4 (Output 4.1.1).

Total Funding required for the priorities under this Pillar is **USD 30,941,053**.

The funding gap is **USD 14,500,691**



## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The opportunity presents itself for the UN System to be a thought leader on the COVID-19 Development response in Iraq. Leveraging existing and upcoming strategic partnership with key development actors would allow to steer development investments where these are most needed while ensuring complementarity and coherence across the response for the COVID-19 pandemic for a sustainable impact.

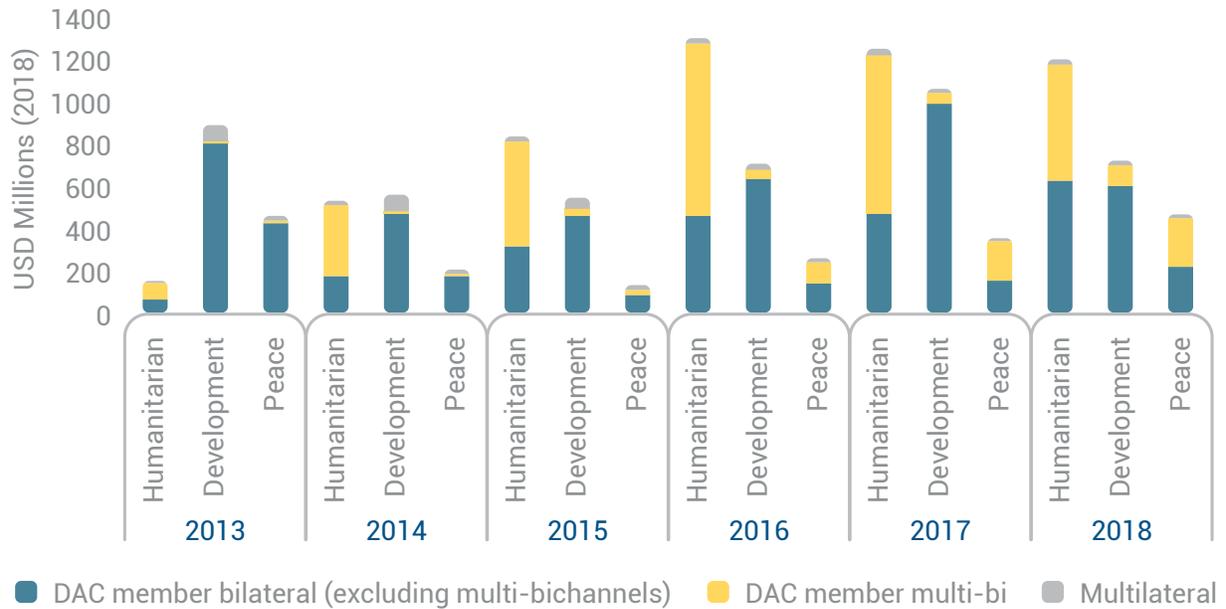
This is crucial considering that the bulk of development funding in Iraq flows through bilateral aid programmes and not through the multilateral system. Key partners in this respect would be the World Bank, the IMF and the Islamic Development Bank as well as the top five bilateral donors to Iraq being the United States, Japan, Germany, the EU and the United Kingdom.<sup>96</sup>

A number of bilateral donors (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Sweden/SIDA and the United States) and the European Union have supported immediate health activities under the COVID-19 Response in Iraq by financing the UN System and/or through other implementing partners. A significant increase in ODI to address the breadth of recovery needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is not expected. However, a certain degree of repurposing of programmatic funding has been agreed with UN partners. This could also be linked to the fact that a concrete GoI Recovery Strategy has not yet been prepared.

A strategic partnership has been forged with the World Bank which saw joint assessments and data collection exercises to be undertaken with regards to COVID-19 data such as the FAO-IFAD-WB-WFP-COVID Weekly Food Security Monitor and MoP-UNICEF-WB Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Poverty and Vulnerability. This partnership is also very likely to lead to strengthened collaboration with regards to joint priorities under the WB Country Strategy and the UNSDCF.

Figure 4 from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) illustrates this in the Humanitarian, Development and Peace domains over the period 2013-2018.

**Figure 4** Overview of ODA in Iraq by channel 2013-2018, OECD<sup>97</sup>



Note:<sup>98</sup>

**Bilateral aid** represents flows from official (government) sources directly to official sources in the recipient country.

**Multilateral aid** represents core contributions from official (government) sources to multilateral agencies where it is then used to fund the multilateral agencies' own programmes.

**Multi/Bi:** In some cases, a donor can contract with a multilateral agency to deliver a programme or project on its behalf in a recipient country. Such cases are typically counted as bilateral flows and are often referred to as Multi/Bi



# ANNEXES

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1 - Assessments undertaken by the UN System

Assesments	Notes
1 WHO - Joint external evaluation of International Health Regulations core capacities - IRAQ (March 2019)	
2 ESCWA- COVID-19 Economic Cost to the Arab Region (March)	English & Arabic
3 UN- Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of Covid-19 (March)	
4 UN Women COVID-19 and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (March)	
5 FAO- Impact of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on Agriculture and Food Supply Chain, Nineveh Governorate (March)	
6 UN Common Country Analysis – Iraq (31 March)	
7 Iraq- National Action Plan for Health Security (March)	
8 UNHCR – Iraq COVID-19 UPDATE VIII (06 May)	Periodic
9 FAO – WB – WFP – IFAD: Iraq COVID-19 Food Security Monitor (14 April)	Periodic
10 WHO- COVID-19 Strategy Update (14 April)	
11 IMF – World Economic Outlook (April)	
12 Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights- Assessment COVID 19 Response (April)	
13 ESCWA - Regional Emergency Response (March)	
14 ESCWA - Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19- Poverty and Food Security in the Arab Region	
15 ESCWA - The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality	
16 ESCWA -Key Messages on Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality	
17 ESCWA - The Impact of COVID-19 on water-scarcity	
18 FAO-WB-WFP- Iraq COVID Food Security Monitor Iraq_21Apr20	English & Arabic periodic
19 Global HRP COVID-19 (20 April)	
20 OCHA- Iraq COVID-19 Situation Report 12 (26 April)	
21 UN - Socioeconomic Framework Report on COVID-19 (April)	Periodic
22 UN WOMEN – Responding to COVID-19 in Iraq from a gender perspective: A Guidance Note on Different Actors’ Engagement (April)	

23	<b>FAO-WB-WFP</b> - Iraq COVID Food Security Monitor Iraq (28 April)	English & Arabic periodic
24	<b>WB</b> - Iraq Economic Monitor Navigating the Perfect Storm	
25	<b>FAO-WB-WFP</b> - COVID Weekly Food Security Monitor Iraq (5 May)	English & Arabic periodic
26	<b>OCHA</b> - COVID19_SitRep_No13 (10 May)	
27	<b>UNHCR</b> - COVID-19 Update VIII- (13 May)	Periodic
28	<b>FAO-WB-WFP</b> - COVID Weekly Food Security Monitor Iraq (2 May)	English & Arabic periodic
29	<b>UNHCR</b> - COVID-19 Update IX – (28 May)	Periodic
30	<b>MoP-UNICEF-WB</b> - Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Poverty and Vulnerability	
31	<b>IOM-UNDP-UN Habitat</b> - Iraq Stabilization forecast May 2020	
32	<b>WFP</b> - Iraq Market Monitor April 2020	
33	<b>FAO-WB-WFP</b> - COVID Weekly Food Security Monitor Iraq (2 June)	English & Arabic periodic
34	<b>UNICEF</b> - Knowledge and risk perception of Iraqi People regarding COVID-19	Survey
35	<b>FAO-WB-WFP</b> - COVID Weekly Food Security Monitor Iraq (9 June)	English & Arabic periodic
36	<b>UNHCR</b> - COVID-19 Update X - 11 June	Periodic
37	<b>UNFPA</b> - Rapid assessment on the impact of covid-19 outbreak on gender-based violence in Iraq ( May-April 2020)	
38	<b>UNHCR</b> - COVID-19 Update XI - 24 June	Periodic
39	<b>FAO-IFAD-WB-WFP</b> - COVID Weekly Food Security Monitor Iraq (28 June)	English & Arabic periodic
40	<b>UNOPS- Ground Truth</b> – COVID-19, Perceptions of people in need in Iraq (June)	
41	<b>UNHCR</b> - COVID-19 Update XII- 12 July	Periodic
42	<b>IOM</b> - DTM COVID 19 Mobility Restrictions - 30 June to 13 July 2020	Periodic
43	<b>FAO-IFAD-WB-WFP</b> - COVID Weekly Food Security Monitor Iraq (14 July)	
44	<b>FAO-IFAD-WB-WFP</b> - COVID Weekly Food Security Monitor Iraq (28 July)	English & Arabic periodic
45	<b>UNHCR</b> - COVID-19 Update XIII ( 04 August)	Periodic
46	<b>WFP</b> Monitoring Food Security & Market Functionality assessment, by phone	
47	<b>UNHCR</b> Analysis of (type of) complaints and requests of refugees captured in RAIS through IIC hotlines	
48	<b>ILO</b> - Rapid Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Populations and Small-scale Enterprises in Iraq (July 2020)	English
49	<b>FAO-IFAD-WB-WFP</b> : FOOD SECURITY IN IRAQ- IMPACT OF COVID-19 (April to June 2020)	

## — ANNEX 2 - Iraq Government programme (as of 6 May 2020)<sup>99</sup>

On 6 May 2020, Iraq's Council of Representatives (Parliament) approved by a majority the government programme presented by Prime Minister Mr. Mustafa Al-Kadhimi.

The programme is a general framework that sets out the government priorities, which include:

- Holding free and fair early elections after finalising the new electoral law
- Mobilising all resources to combat the coronavirus pandemic, and laying the foundations for a modern health system
- Restricting weapons to state and military institutions
- Submitting to Parliament a special draft budget law to address the economic crisis
- Launching a national dialogue with all sections of Iraqi society, listening to the demands of the protest movement, bringing to justice those involved in the spilling of Iraqi blood and looking after the families of the martyrs
- Protecting the sovereignty and security of Iraq, continuing to fight terrorism, and providing a national vision on the future of foreign forces in Iraq
- Fighting corruption and protecting the wealth of Iraq
- Promoting the values of shared Iraqi citizenship, respecting Iraq's ethnic, religious diversity, and rejecting all forms of discrimination
- Providing all the necessary requirements to support internally displaced people to return to their home, and end internal displacement in Iraq

### Developing and reforming security institutions

The programme outlines the government's plans to reform and modernise Iraq's military and security institutions, and confirms that:

- The duty of the Iraqi Army is to protect Iraq's external borders, sovereignty, & democratic process. It must not operate inside civilian areas unless by exceptional orders from the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces
- The security formations of the Ministry of Interior will be responsible for internal security, maintaining civil peace, the rule of law, and protecting human rights. These formations will be reorganised, will receive further training, and be properly equipped
- The National Intelligence Service, the National Security Agency, the Counter-Terrorism Service, and Popular Mobilisation Units will continue to perform the tasks assigned to them as directed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces
- The security forces will be properly equipped and provided with the necessary arms and ammunitions to enable them to protect Iraq from terrorism and to secure its borders
- The Armed Forces will be governed by a professional military doctrine with a strict respect for the chain of command, and be representative of all segments of Iraqi society

## Addressing the economic and fiscal challenges

The programme outlines several measures the new government will implement to address current economic challenges, including:

- Reducing public spending, ending non-essential expenditure, developing an effective system for collecting customs tariffs, and starting negotiations to restore Iraq's oil production share which was reduced recently
- Working with global financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to develop programmes to minimise the impact of the economic crisis, especially in relation to reducing the budget deficit, and ensuring efficient management of financial resources
- Establishing the Supreme Council for Construction and Investment which will be responsible for drawing up a comprehensive plan for building Iraq's infrastructure, and for encouraging investment in all provinces
- Submitting to Parliament a draft Iraqi National Oil Company Law, and establishing a team to negotiate with oil companies changes to Iraq's oil licensing rounds to reflect recent developments in global markets
- Launching a "Made in Iraq" national project to encourage local industry and agriculture by adopting appropriate mechanisms and laws, and through the consistent and effective application of customs tariffs
- Directing the Central Bank of Iraq to develop a plan within a year for the modernisation of the Iraqi banking sector
- Undertaking comprehensive administrative reforms of state institutions, removing unnecessary procedures, and implementing anti-corruption measures
- Restarting the e-government and transparency projects to include all state institutions
- Adopting programmes to empower young people to access jobs in the private sector and provide them with social security benefits similar to those enjoyed by their counterpart in the public sector
- Expanding the scope of social security benefits to support low- and fixed-income groups
- Adopting automation and modern technology in state institutions, especially at the Border Crossings Authority and in the customs system

## Iraq's foreign relations

The programme outlines three pillars that will guide the government's approach to foreign relations:

- **Sovereignty:** Iraq will not allow any country to violate its sovereignty, and will not permit its territories to be used to launch attacks on any of its neighbours or be used as an arena to settle regional or international scores
- **Balance:** Iraq will not become part of any regional or international axis, and will adopt a balanced policy of positive engagement with its Muslim and Arab neighbours, countries around the world, and abide by its international commitments

- **Cooperation:** Iraq seeks to build an integrated system of common and shared interests as a basis for its foreign relations, and seeks to contribute effectively to resolving regional and international crises, combating terrorism, money laundering, and organised crime. The government will also commence detailed preparations for the upcoming talks with the United States on the future relationship between the two countries and the presence of the Global Coalition in Iraq, with the aim of preserving Iraq's higher interests and fulfilling the aspirations of the Iraqi people.

### **Combatting corruption and administrative reforms**

The programme outlines a range of measures to combat corruption, including:

- Conducting an audit of the financial records of companies and commercial entities belonging to political parties, public figures, and others which are suspected of having illegitimate sources for their assets
- Reforming the system of awarding government contracts and changing investment rules
- Enforcing current laws to pursue & return Iraq's money that have been smuggled abroad
- Holding corrupt individuals accountable, regardless of their influence

### **Delivering justice and judicial independence**

The government will propose laws and adopt measures to safeguard the independence of the judiciary, and to pursue and hold accountable law breakers.

### **Protecting the right to protest, empowering youth**

The programme underscores the government's commitment to protecting the right to peaceful protest, describing it as a "fundamental democratic practice". It also highlights the critical role of young Iraqis in shaping the future of the country. The programme commits the government to:

- Establishing an advisory council of young Iraqis representing all provinces, linked to the Prime Minister's Office, to be part of the policy formulation process with regard to the government reform agenda. The proposed council will also advise the government on the development of mechanisms and regulations to protect the right to peaceful protest.

### **The Federal Government, the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Governorates**

The programme sets out a number of steps to regulate relations between the Federal government on the one hand and the Kurdistan Regional Government and the governorates on the other, including:

- Working with the Kurdistan Regional Government to address outstanding problems in accordance with the Constitution.
- Working with Parliament to develop necessary legislation to organise the relationship between the Federal Government and the governorates in a way that guarantees an effective distribution of powers between the centre and the provinces.

## — ANNEX 3 - Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability across the SERP pillars

The current COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder of the intimate relationship among humans, animals and the environment. The transmission pathways of Zoonotic diseases from animals to humans, highlight the extent to which humans are placing pressures on the natural world with damaging consequences for all. The performance and resilience of our socio-economic systems depend on the state of the natural environment and ecosystems. The UN Framework for Socio-Economic Response prioritizes the role of environmental sustainability, across all sectors of response and recovery efforts, in building back better from the crisis.

Accelerating impacts from climate change and droughts, expanding levels of water insecurity, chronic lack of access to sustainable energy, and ineffective waste management systems all pose risks for the sustainability of results to be generated under this strategy. To take action on these issues and support a resilient recovery from the pandemic in Iraq, it is necessary to build capacities and institutions for resilience through enabling environment for the management of systemic multiple hazard risks (linking epidemics, climate, disaster, conflict and food chain threats), including strengthening disaster and climate risk governance mechanisms. recovery actions will include a dedicated set of green solutions to be mainstreamed into recovery projects and investments.

### a) CLIMATE CHANGE

Natural and anthropogenic drivers of environmental degradation, including climate change, water scarcity, pollution, poor natural resource management, rapid population growth and civil unrest, have contributed to the loss of essential provisioning, supporting, regulating and

ecosystem services in Iraq. Most communities in Iraq affected by the pandemic and its economic crisis are also highly vulnerable to climate change and droughts. Recent years have seen growing levels of food and water insecurity owing to a large extent to climate impacts, with droughts and floods growing in frequency and severity. With 2020 emerging as one of the warmest, if not the warmest, years on record globally, climate change poses serious risks to achieving and sustaining recovery results under this strategy. This is particularly the case for vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, environment, SMEs, infrastructure, and rural communities already suffering from resource scarcity and desertification. Ongoing environmental degradation and desertification will undermine ecosystem services, natural systems, food production, and the sector's profitability, which may fuel domestic instability. A number of people in Iraq rely on the natural/ecosystem services (ESs) and goods for their livelihoods. Wetlands, for example, provide significant services to support sustainable human well-being. The global value of all ESs that are provided by one hectare of wetlands has been estimated at \$30,000/ha (UNEP 2005). An Iraqi study indicated that the Iraqi Central Marsh could provide 3.05 million USD across a six-month period, which can support an average salary for 256 people.<sup>100</sup>

If not addressed, the adverse effects of climate change will further increase the exposure and vulnerability of the Iraqi people to natural and man-made hazards (i.e., internal and transboundary conflict), with severe consequences for their lives, GDP, and livelihoods.

The impact of climate change on Iraq is not uniform. Exposure to climate change is different (e.g., southern Iraq is exposed to sea level rise, temperature increases up to almost 5 C degrees, and a decrease in rainfall). The middle of Iraq and other regions have different exposures. Southern Iraq is considered the most vulnerable region in the country according to Iraq's first national communication report. The report found that Iraq is the 5th most vulnerable country to climate change globally and one of the most vulnerable countries in the region (GEO 6 report).

The large numbers of internally displaced people in Iraq are disproportionately exposed to natural hazards and health pandemics including COVID-19. These households are less able to adapt, absorb and recover from adverse effects, thus increasing their vulnerability. Furthermore, they are disproportionately affected by the deteriorating environmental health and can negatively affect it. Thus, in order to ensure long-term environmental sustainability and food security for the Iraqi population, interventions must consider environment protection and rehabilitation to mitigate the impact of disasters and crises on communities' wellbeing.

As the COVID-19 crisis continues to evolve, some of the directly visible impacts increasing environmental fragility may include:

- i) Temporary halt of activities to conserve ecosystems and biodiversity due to movement restrictions;
- ii) A rise in volumes of unrecyclable waste; organic waste and medical waste, thereby leading to land, soil, air and water pollution, which if left unaddressed can further undermine food security and coping capacities; and
- iii) Increased vulnerability due to abandon of existing sustainable production in order

to generate income quickly in domestic markets, potentially resulting in further poverty and over-exploitation of natural resources and ecosystems.

Mainstreaming climate adaptation and environment into recovery measures is important for building back better and ensuring results are able to withstand climate impacts in the near term.

A number of activities that can be mainstreamed:

- **Health First:**

Address climate and disaster risks within health sector assessments and health system capacities and ensure safe management and disposal of expanding levels of medical and plastic waste.

- **Protecting People:**

Building the resilience of people to climate risks (e.g. water management and sustainable energy) for environmental sustainability, food security, and community livelihoods.

- **Economic Response and Recovery:**

Integrate climate resilience into national recovery plans and investments (agriculture, livelihoods, SMEs and informal sector. Support use of PDNA and Climate Impact Analysis tools in the recovery planning process.

- **Social Cohesion & Community Resilience:**

Climate resilient agriculture for food security and community livelihoods, capacity development for national disaster/crisis agencies, and community early warning systems.

- **Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Collaboration and Bi-lateral:**

Mobilize public and private finance to synergize climate investments with economic recovery measures, explore scope for Debt for Climate Swaps with

lenders, and help advance SDG 13 under Iraq's Vision 2030.

#### **b) PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE ENERGY**

Iraq suffers from a chronic lack of energy access, an important factor in social and economic instability in recent years. Enhancing energy access will be key to achieving the socio-economic recovery goals of this strategy. While conventional fuels will continue as a main source of power, Iraq has also set itself ambitious targets to expand the use of solar solutions, as a decentralized and cost-effective means of enhancing social and economic resilience. Under this strategy, solar solutions can be mainstreamed into recovery efforts, as a way of stabilizing and empowering health facilities and other community services, expanding waste-to-energy facilities, and empowering the economic recovery of the agriculture sector, SMEs and other key sectors.

A number of activities that can be mainstreamed:

- **Health First:**

Decentralized solar solutions that reduce energy shortages in health facilities including hospitals and clinics, alongside waste-to-energy solutions.

- **Protecting People:**

Advice on enhancing energy subsidy policies to expand protection for those most in need, and enhance access to solar solutions for poor and IDP communities at particular risk from the pandemic and the economic crisis.

- **Economic Response and Recovery:**

Integrate solar solutions into recovery investments to help stabilize agricultural livelihoods and reduce energy costs through solar irrigation, enhance stability of electricity supply to MSMEs through decentralized solar technologies, and

expand use of sustainable energy solutions for other key sectors in focus for the economic recovery.

- **Social cohesion and community resilience:**

Deploy locally tailored solar solutions for empowering community services such as schools, shelters, orphanages and CBOs.

- **Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Collaboration:**

Mobilize public and private finance to accelerate the uptake of sustainable energy as means of socio-economic recovery while helping keep momentum on SDG 7 under Iraq's Vision 2030.

#### **c) ENVIRONMENT**

##### **(Bio-diversity & eco-system health)**

A strong connection exists between socio-economic resilience and challenges of ecosystem health in Iraq. Achieving the goals of the recovery strategy can benefit from actions to address chronic pressures on natural resources and expanding levels of waste. Chronic deficits in water access and waste management systems in some communities for example place them at greater risk from the impacts of the pandemic, while also generating risks to the sustainability of outcomes under the recovery. As Iraq moves ahead with recovery investments, an opportunity exists to improve ecosystem management, water access, and waste management, to protect bio-diversity and build community resilience. In Iraq, there are 82 key biodiversity areas; a large percentage of them can be defined as "Socio-Ecological sites" meaning that locals rely on nature in their daily lives.

- **Health First:**

Safe management and disposal of expanding levels of medical and plastic waste.

• **Protecting People:**

Expand water access for people and ecosystems in the Socio-Ecological sites to increase resilience of people and prevent displacement/migration and make people stick in their areas/places. In addition, water is essential to increase species resilience at the sites.

• **Economic Response and Recovery:**

Advance nature-based solutions and waste recycling solutions as a source of new SME and informal sector livelihoods.

• **Social Cohesion & Community Resilience:**

Nature-based solutions to restore oases (to support the Bedouin community), marshlands, and other ecosystems as basis for restoring community livelihoods and resilience.

• **Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Collaboration:**

Support integration of environmental solutions in new fiscal policies to emerge from the economic crisis, and explore Debt for Nature swaps to build fiscal resilience while restoring natural assets.

**SUMMARY TABLE**

UN framework pillars	Environmental Sustainability in Crisis Recovery		
	Energy	Environment	Climate
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Health First:</b> Protecting health services and systems during crisis</p>	<p>Address climate and disaster risks within health sector assessments and health system capacities and ensure safe management and disposal of expanding levels of medical and plastic waste</p>	<p>Safe management and disposal of expanding levels of medical and plastic waste</p>	<p>Address climate and disaster risks within health sector assessments and health system capacities and ensure safe management and disposal of expanding levels of medical and plastic waste</p>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Protecting People:</b> Social protection and basic services</p>	<p>Advice on enhancing energy subsidy policies to expand protection for those most in need, and enhance access to solar solutions for poor and IDP communities at particular risk from the pandemic and the economic crisis</p>	<p>Expand water access for people and ecosystems in the Socio-Ecological sites to increase resilience of people and prevent displacement/migration and make people stick in their areas/places. In addition, water is essential to increase species resilience at the sites</p>	<p>Building the resilience of people to climate risks (e.g. water management and sustainable energy) for environmental sustainability, food security, and community livelihoods</p>

<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Economic response &amp; recovery:</b> Protecting jobs, SMEs, and informal sector</p>	<p>Integrate solar solutions into recovery investments to help stabilize agricultural livelihoods and reduce energy costs through solar irrigation, enhance stability of electricity supply to MSMEs through decentralized solar technologies, and expand use of sustainable energy solutions for other key sectors in focus for the economic recovery</p>	<p>Advance nature-based solutions and waste recycling solutions as a source of new SME and informal sector livelihoods.</p>	<p>Integrate climate resilience into national recovery plans and investments (agriculture, livelihoods, SMEs and informal sector. Support use of PDNA and Climate Impact Analysis tools in the recovery planning process</p>
<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Social cohesion and community resilience</b></p>	<p>Deploy locally tailored solar solutions for empowering community services such as schools, shelters, orphanages and CBOs</p>	<p>Nature-based solutions to restore oases (to support Bedouin community), marshlands, and other ecosystems as basis for restoring community livelihoods and resilience</p>	<p>Climate resilient agriculture for food security and community livelihoods, capacity development for national disaster/crisis agencies, and community early warning systems</p>
<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Macroeconomic response and multilateral collaboration</b></p>	<p>Mobilize public and private finance to synergize investments under SDG 7 and accelerate use of sustainable energy for crisis recovery</p>	<p>Support integration of environmental solutions in new fiscal policies to emerge from the economic crisis, and explore Debt for Nature swaps to build fiscal resilience while restoring natural assets</p>	<p>Mobilize public and private finance to synergize climate investments with economic recovery measures, explore scope for Debt for Climate Swaps with lenders, and help advance SDG 13 under Iraq's Vision 2030</p>

## — ANNEX 4 - Overview of Helath preparedness and response measures against COVID-19 outbreak

Pillars	Response measures undertaken / in process
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Country Level Coordination</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment/activation coordination mechanisms (multi-sectoral and multi-partner), including mechanisms to support coordination between central and governorate levels</li> <li>• Establishment of mechanisms for information sharing between the Government of Iraq and partners and among government agencies and levels</li> <li>• Review and, if necessary, strengthen or establish referral/coordination mechanisms between health and social welfare and ensure frontline staff are aware of these procedures. This may involve sensitization /briefing/training sessions to other sectoral teams to enable referral to protection services.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an audience targeted national risk communication and community engagement strategy/plan based on risk analysis, and coordination mechanism;</li> <li>• Conduct rapid assessment on perceptions and needs of the community and care providers regarding the nature and evolution of COVID-19, its spread and ways to protect as well as social data on people's attitudes and psychosocial aspects. Based on the findings of the assessment, additional messages are to be developed and disseminated engaging sociologists and psychologists. This will help in drafting the correct messages to the targeted people, focusing especially on stigma, misinformation, wrong traditional beliefs and other complicated social attitudes.</li> <li>• Develop targeted, tested, and localized messages with the participation of communities and identifying key communication channels for different target groups;</li> <li>• Implement community engagement activities at the community level, in partnership with local actors such as civil society organizations;</li> <li>• Engage and build the capacities of the community groups, especially the youth and adolescent groups (both in data collection and messaging) to ensure delivery of accurate information on prevention assistance as well as in rumor tracking, data collection activities on myths and misconceptions using online social messaging platforms such as U-Report, peer-to-peer information and education, etc.</li> <li>• Focus to be given to more deep-rooted and risk-informed behavioral change approaches that are grounded in evolving epidemiological and social data using latest existing evidence while also contributing to the generation of new data.</li> <li>• Develop fact sheets to showcase the national response to the COVID-19 outbreak, pinpointing regional 'hot spots' and variances.</li> <li>• Establish community feedback mechanisms</li> </ul>

### 3

#### Surveillance

- Developing a multipronged surveillance and containment strategy which could lead to enhanced case detection & reduced transmission of COVID-19;
- Developing an event-based surveillance system using unstructured information from domestic and international sources as an integral part of a comprehensive surveillance system;
- Updating and disseminating surveillance guidelines including case definitions, investigation protocols and case reporting;
- Transitioning from paper-based to electronic reporting;
- Establishing community-based surveillance and active case finding;
- Strengthening surveillance at health facilities, particularly at primary health care level;
- Conducting quick assessment of the capacity of the social welfare system to respond, including logistic considerations on operational capacity and geographical coverage of existing services across the country;
- Establishing and training of contact tracing teams;
- Providing training to health professionals on COVID-19 surveillance;
- Conducting training for national RRT teams in case stabilization, specimen collection and transport, contact tracing, decontamination, investigation, social mobilization, and safe and dignified burials;
- Providing technical guidance to ensure RRTs are trained and equipped to investigate suspected cases, especially regarding the provision of appropriate investigation protocols and case definitions, systems and tools for contact tracing, and surveillance

### 4

#### Points of Entry (PEO)

- Developing SOPs for detecting, reporting, and managing suspected cases;
- Developing public health emergency plan for key POE and updating of existing plans for designated POE;
- Conducting capacity building to border health teams focusing on: proposer screening of new arrivals at IDP/refugee camps using standard SOPs; reporting of cases with suspected COVID-19 infection; and following standard isolation and referral services;
- Providing health personnel at POE with the necessary equipment and PPE to carry out their duties;
- Ensuring POE have isolation, initial case management and referral capacity for those with suspected COVID-19 infection. UNOPS can provide mobile clinics in places such as ports, airports, and land crossing points to be operated as detection and suspected cases management, in addition to provision of testing kits. The number of staff assigned depends on the volume of travelers & the complexity of the POE in terms of terminal facilities. Ill or suspected COVID-19 cases with signs and symptoms indicative of fever or respiratory infection, or both, who have a history of exposure to the COVID-19 virus are isolated at the point of entry following the standard procedure until they are able to be safely transferred to a healthcare facility for further assessment, diagnosis and treatment
- Establishing effective referral pathway for safe transport of suspected cases.

## 5

### National Laboratory System

- Reducing the load on the Central Public Health Laboratory (CPHL) through establishing a lab network that covers all governorates of the country;
- Adapting and disseminating standard operating procedures for bio-hazardous specimen collection, management and transportation for COVID-19 diagnostic testing;
- Strengthening the pre-analytical phase (specimen collection and transport), during-analytical phase (availability of testing kits) and the post-analytical phase (data analysis and sharing) – as a weakness in any of these phases, especially on the pre-analytical phase, will have a big impact on the test results.
- Enhancing coordination between the central laboratory and regional laboratories and build capacity for the collection, storage and transportation of samples. This is by providing technical guidance and by conducting in-service training and mentoring among laboratory technicians;
- Establishing and sustaining laboratory confirmatory capacity for COVID-19 by ensuring availability of testing kits and other essential supplies at all reference laboratories;
- Establishing a process for shipment of specimens to CPHL and other reference laboratories; and
- Establishing surge plans in case of increased testing demand from different governorates.

## 6

### Case management and continuity of essential services

- Conducting rapid assessment of case management capacity, including health worker, triage, and isolation capacities;
- Adapting and disseminating case management guidelines;
- Establishing negative pressure isolation units in selected high-risk governorates and sharing up-to-date WHO IPC guidance and necessary training on IPC and case management for the clinical staff from MoH and partners;
- Providing training to health workers on COVID-19 case management - provide technical expertise and guidance to MoH and partners on case management, that would be further cascaded towards to the health facilities and public health staff at district level. The training will also include health care/ambulatory teams involved in the stabilization and referral of suspected COVID-19 cases;
- Ensuring referral pathways exist and are functional between different levels of the health system;
- Supporting case management of patients who are recovering at home and looking at the continuity of care and patient follow-up. If case management in person is not feasible, alternative modalities, such as follow up by phone, are to be explored to ensure continued support. If access to beneficiaries and capacities of case management actors are limited, high-risk cases are to be prioritized for follow up;
- Providing guidelines for outpatient services provided at the IDP /refugee camps;
- Equipping ambulances and training personnel – ensuring that they have received the necessary training on correct use, proper putting on and taking off, and disposal of used PPE. This, apart from meeting the minimum hospital acquired infection of the disease, will protect health care workers who manage suspected, probable and confirmed cases from admission to discharge to.
- Establishing synergy and coordination among UN Agencies.

## 7

### Infection Prevention and Control

- Due emphasis to enhance the country's infection prevention and control capacity:
- Updating and disseminating the distribution of IPC guidance on COVID-19 to all public and private hospitals, primary healthcare centres as well as home care providers;
- Monitoring IPC practices at healthcare facilities to ensure adherence with IPC measures; particular attention is to be given to ensuring IPC compliance with basic IPC principles at the first point of care (usually primary care) - capacity for triage, early recognition, standard precautions, isolation capacity, and referral procedures should align with WHO IPC guidance on COVID-19;
- Procuring, stockpiling, and distributing PPE to reduce nosocomial infections and improve health worker safety – ensuring that health professionals are educated, trained, and have practiced the appropriate use of PPE prior to caring for a patient, including attention to correct use of PPE and prevention of contamination of clothing, skin, and environment during the process of removing such equipment. Procuring and distributing critical hygiene and prevention items including soap, hand-sanitizer, masks, drinking water dispensers, disinfectant and PPE for use in schools, health facilities, and public spaces;
- Supporting implementation and monitoring of infection prevention and control enhancements in schools, health facilities, markets, and other public spaces, mainly through developing guidelines, IEC materials and providing orientation or training; and
- Supporting the Ministries of Education and Health and Environment (MOE, MOHE) to develop and implement guidelines for safe school operations during a COVID-19 outbreak (e.g. promotion of hand and respiratory hygiene, screening and referral of suspected cases, as appropriate), and education about COVID-19 prevention.

## 8

### Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in COVID-19 outbreak

- Integrating MHPSS response activities into existing services, community outreach, case identification and contact tracing, as well as activities at health facilities and quarantine sites, and in discharge/aftercare strategies;
- Providing MHPSS to people in isolation and support people in quarantine (Tele-MHPSS);
- Addressing and supporting mental health and wellbeing of frontline workers by giving them access to sources of psychosocial support;
- Addressing mental health and basic needs of people with pre-existing mental health conditions who are affected;
- Sharing MHPSS information and tools between all sectors/emergency pillars;
- Strengthening MHPSS coordination by facilitating collaboration between MHPSS agencies, government and other partners; WHO to work closely with UNICEF on mental health dimensions for vulnerable groups such as: children and adolescents (e.g. design messages and activities to help children deal with stress); PSS in schools (once they open) or at community (when children are at home), WASH and Health Facilities (particularly in IDP/refugee camps); adults in isolation /quarantine. Moreover, ICC in coordination with the GBV, Child Protection, and Protection cluster, will distribute key messages that can help the community during the time of stress and concerns. The cases will be shared with the relevant cluster for assistance and further follow up;

# 9

## Logistics, procurement, and supply management

- Addressing stigma and discrimination at all phases of the COVID-19 emergency response, including towards persons who have been infected, their family members and health care and other frontline workers, at grass root level and institutional levels;
- Developing and distributing community MHPSS messages;
- Linking MHPSS activities to community engagement and empowering different stakeholders and partners, including youth groups, to support psychosocial support wellbeing of community members, through culturally appropriate social arts activities and peer to peer outreach sessions by linking-up with health care professionals for mentoring.

- Conduct an assessment to identify gaps and map available laboratory reagent stocks for infection prevention and control;
- Develop a list of items needed for resupply or procurement;
- Receive, inspect, consolidate, kits and dispatch emergency medical supplies;
- Ensure rational use of PPEs and support the prioritization of PPE for frontline healthcare workers
- Report on available supplies and dispatches completed;
- Liaise with WHO regional office and HQ to monitor and report on global supply availability and forecast (ETA for new supplies);
- Monitor and report on supply chain disruptions or blockages

— ANNEX 5 - Linkages between the pillars for the recovery response and the guiding strategic documents

	Health First	Protecting People	Economic Response and Recovery	Social Cohesion and Community Resilience	Support to Macro-Economic Growth
Linkages with the sectorst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Access to Justice</li> <li>• WASH</li> <li>• Social Protection</li> <li>• Food Security</li> <li>• Child Protection</li> <li>• SGBV</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment / Livelihoods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Cohesion</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Rule of Law</li> <li>• Security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Macro-Economy</li> </ul>
<p>Linkages with the National Development Plan</p> <p>(aligned with the 11 Strategic Goals of the National Development Plan 2018-2022)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Boost sustainable human development indicators</li> <li>* Accomplish recovery of the communities affected by displacement and insecurity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Accomplish recovery of the communities affected by displacement and insecurity</li> <li>* Boost sustainable human development indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Achieve economic reform in all its financial, monetary, banking and commercial dimensions</li> <li>* Accomplish recovery of the communities affected by displacement and insecurity</li> <li>* Provide the conditions for an enabling environment for all forms of investment and strengthen the role of the private sector</li> <li>* Increase the rate of economic growth in line with the potential and requirements of the Iraqi economy</li> <li>* Increase the real per capita income</li> <li>* Reduce unemployment and underemployment rates</li> <li>* Boost sustainable human development indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Lay the foundations for good governance</li> <li>* Accomplish recovery of the communities affected by displacement and insecurity</li> <li>* Make possible security for the poorest and most vulnerable groups</li> <li>* Boost sustainable human development indicators</li> <li>* Lay the foundation for decentralisation to strengthen spatial development</li> <li>* Align the general development framework with urban structures based on the foundations of urban planning and spatial comparative advantages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Achieve economic reform in all its financial, monetary, banking and commercial dimensions</li> <li>* Provide the conditions for an enabling environment for all forms of investment and strengthen the role of the private sector</li> <li>* Increase the rate of economic growth in line with the potential and requirements of the Iraqi economy;</li> <li>* Increase the real per capita income</li> </ul>

	Health First	Protecting People	Economic Response and Recovery	Social Cohesion and Community Resilience	Support to Macro-Economic Growth
<p><b>Linkages with the UNSDCF</b></p> <p>(aligned with the 4 Strategic Priorities of the UNSDCF)</p>	<p><b>SP 3:</b> Promoting Effective, Inclusive and Efficient Institutions and Services</p> <p><b>SP 4:</b> Promoting Natural Resource and Disaster Risk Management, and Climate Change Resilience</p>	<p><b>SP 1:</b> Achieving Social Cohesion, Protection and Inclusion.</p> <p><b>SP2:</b> Growing the Economy for All</p> <p><b>SP3:</b> Promoting Effective, Inclusive and Efficient Institutions and Services</p> <p><b>SP 4:</b> Promoting Natural Resource and Disaster Risk Management, and Climate Change Resilience</p>	<p><b>SP 2:</b> Growing the Economy for All</p> <p><b>SP 4:</b> Promoting Natural Resource and Disaster Risk Management, and Climate Change Resilience</p>	<p><b>SP 1:</b> Achieving Social Cohesion, Protection and Inclusion.</p> <p><b>SP 3:</b> Promoting Effective, Inclusive and Efficient Institutions and Services</p> <p><b>SP 4:</b> Promoting Natural Resource and Disaster Risk Management, and Climate Change Resilience</p>	<p><b>SP 2:</b> Growing the Economy for All</p> <p><b>SP 4:</b> Promoting Natural Resource and Disaster Risk Management, and Climate Change Resilience</p>
<p><b>Linkages with the HNO Humanitarian Consequences</b></p> <p>(aligned with the three humanitarian consequences identified in the HNO 2020)</p>	<p>* Critical problems related to physical and mental wellbeing</p>	<p>* Critical problems related to physical and mental wellbeing</p> <p>* Critical problems related to living standards</p> <p>* Critical problems related to resilience and recovery</p>	<p>* Critical problems related to resilience and recovery</p> <p>* Critical problems related to living standards</p>	<p>* Critical problems related to resilience and recovery</p>	<p>* Critical problems related to physical and mental wellbeing</p> <p>* Critical problems related to living standards</p> <p>* Critical problems related to resilience and recovery</p>
<p><b>Linkages with the SPRP</b></p>	<p>Complementary to the pillars of the SPRP</p>				
<p><b>Linkages with the SDGs</b></p>	<p>SDG1; SDG2; SDG 3; SDG4; SDG6; SDG7; SDG9; SDG 10; SDG11; SDG12; SDG 13; SDG14; SDG15; SDG16; SDG17</p>	<p>SDG 1; SDG 2; SDG 3; SDG 4; SDG 5; SDG 6; SDG7; SDG8; SDG 9; SDG 10; SDG 11; SDG 12; SDG 13; SDG14; SDG17</p>	<p>SDG 1; SDG4; SDG 8; SDG9; SDG 11; SDG12; SDG 13; SDG 14; SDG 15; SDG 16; SDG 17</p>	<p>SDG1; SDG2; SDG3; SDG4; SDG 5; SDG6; SDG7; SDG8; SDG 9; SDG 10; SDG 11, SDG 12; SDG 13; SDG14, SDG15; SDG 16; SDG 17</p>	<p>SDG 4; SDG 8; SDG 9; SDG 11; SDG 12; SDG 13; SDG 17</p>
<p><b>Cross Cutting</b></p>	<p>Gender Equality, Displacement/ Durable Solutions, Resilience &amp; Environmental Sustainability (the latter will be taken into account under SP4 from the UNSDCF)</p>				

— ANNEX 6 - Summary overview of the SERP cost

JWP Output #	Output title	COVID activities aligned under UNSCDF output			Output has new projects
		Funded	Unfunded	Total	
1.1.1	Government is supported to promote and develop evidence-based policies, legislation, and mechanisms ensuring gender-sensitive, inclusive access to quality social protection and protection services.	\$ 11,591,216	\$ 10,244,303	\$ 21,835,520	Yes
1.1.2	National institutions and mechanisms are supported to promote and advocate for more inclusive social cohesion and peace-building.	\$ 3,700,000	\$ 3,800,000	\$ 7,500,000	Yes
1.2.1	Gender-and-age sensitive protection and social protection services are progressively expanded to include all persons in Iraq.	\$ 51,761,257	\$ 172,528,735	\$ 224,289,991	Yes
1.2.2	Marginalized and vulnerable populations have improved access to quality, integrated, shock responsive and inclusive protection and social protection systems and services.	\$ 79,018,027	\$ 194,319,817	\$ 273,337,844	No
1.3.1	Women, adolescents and youth are supported for increased engagement and participation in leadership, decision making and peacebuilding mechanisms.	\$ 9,543,117	\$ 4,658,644	\$ 14,201,761	Yes
1.3.2	Community mechanisms, including schools and social groups, are supported to inclusively engage community members to contribute to peacebuilding and social cohesion.	\$ 2,730,000	\$ 1,450,000	\$ 4,180,000	No
2.1.1	Government supported to develop and implement gender-sensitive, and evidence-based inclusive legislation and policies for employment and economic growth.	\$ 19,690,362	\$ 13,000,000	\$ 32,690,362	Yes
2.1.2	Support provided to accelerate investment, innovation and entrepreneurship in non-oil sector development, with particular focus on inclusive partnerships, sustainability, technical inputs, research, equitable access to assets and promoting skills supply.	\$ 25,200,000	\$ 15,400,000	\$ 40,600,000	No

JWP Output #	Output title	COVID activities aligned under UNSCDF output			Output has new projects
		Funded	Unfunded	Total	
2.2.1	Inclusive access to skills development services and assets is increased, contributing to improved employability and socio-economic status.	\$ 69,659,051	\$ 27,135,000	\$ 96,794,051	Yes
2.2.2	Inclusive access to skills development services and assets is increased, contributing to improved employability and socio-economic status.	\$ 8,300,000	\$ 3,050,691	\$ 11,350,691	No
3.1.1	National and sub national information management and research systems increase the generation, analysis and dissemination of quality and timely disaggregated data essential for evidence-based service delivery.	\$ 14,741,807	\$ 25,450,000	\$ 40,191,807	Yes
3.1.2	Government supported to develop and implement gender-sensitive, and evidence-based, inclusive legislation and policies in accordance and adherence to international instruments for improved services to the people of Iraq.	\$ 5,330,000	\$ 9,980,000	\$ 15,310,000	Yes
3.1.3	Service delivery systems at national and local levels are supported to progressively deliver universal access to services in more responsive, equitable, inclusive, accountable, and transparent manner.	\$ 16,565,661	\$ 53,705,822	\$ 70,271,483	Yes
3.1.4	Comprehensive support and advocacy provided for increased opportunities for women's participation & leadership in decision-making at national, sub national & community levels	\$ 480,000	\$ 1,750,000	\$ 2,230,000	Yes
3.2.1	Decision-making processes related to improved services delivery are supported to promote & ensure inclusive participation of communities, civil society, & vulnerable populations.	\$ 231,197,726	\$ 261,946,706	\$ 493,144,432	Yes
3.2.2	Community-based mechanisms promoting individual & community engagement & dialogue are improved for quality, equitable, gender-sensitive & rights-based access to services.	\$ 21,398,780	\$ 15,180,000	\$ 36,578,780	Yes

JWP Output #	Output title	COVID activities aligned under UNSCDF output			Output has new projects
		Funded	Unfunded	Total	
4.1.1	Government supported to develop and implement evidence-based, gender- responsive, inclusive policies, legislation and mechanisms for the management of natural resources and developing renewable resources.	\$ 1,450,000	\$ 10,400,000	\$ 11,850,000	No
4.1.2	National and international institutions and partnerships strengthened to promote gender-responsive environmental protection and management of natural resources.	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 100,000	No
4.1.3	Gender-responsive policies and strategies are scaled up to deliver on Iraq's climate change targets & commitments related to adaptation & mitigation across sectors & populations.	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	No
4.2.1	Engagement and coordination of subnational and community actors, with particular focus on vulnerable populations, are increased to promote gender-responsive improved natural resource management, environmental protection and disaster risk reduction	\$ 8,550,000	\$ 29,850,000	\$ 38,400,000	No
4.2.2	New gender- & age-responsive technologies are identified & made universally available at national and subnational levels to promote community-based environmental action.	\$ 1,400,000	\$ 5,300,000	\$ 6,700,000	No
<b>TOTAL (in US Dollars)</b>		<b>\$ 582,857,004</b>	<b>\$ 867,199,717</b>	<b>\$ 1,443,556,722</b>	

## — ACRONYMS

<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus disease 2019
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>UNOCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>UNDS</b>	United Nations Development System
<b>GHRP</b>	Global Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>SPRP</b>	Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan
<b>SERP</b>	Socio-Economic Response Plan
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>HRP</b>	Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>DCO</b>	Development Coordinator Office
<b>RCO</b>	Resident Coordinator Office
<b>HCT</b>	Humanitarian Country Team
<b>HNO</b>	Humanitarian Needs Overview
<b>RCCE</b>	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
<b>POE</b>	Points of Entry
<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>CCA</b>	Common Country Analysis
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>CBOs</b>	Community-Based Organizations
<b>FBOs</b>	Faith-Based Organizations
<b>HEPAs</b>	High Efficiency Particulate Air filters
<b>MNCH</b>	Maternal, New-born and Child Health

<b>RMNCAH</b>	Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health
<b>PDS</b>	Public Distribution System
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>MICS</b>	Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey
<b>HNO</b>	Humanitarian Needs Overview
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
<b>HJC</b>	Higher Judicial Council
<b>MoMD</b>	Ministry of Migration and Displacement
<b>CPiMS+</b>	Child Protection Information Management System
<b>GBVIM+</b>	Gender-Based Violence Information Management System
<b>DoLSA</b>	Department of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>SSN</b>	Social Safety Net
<b>MOLSA</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>HHs</b>	Households
<b>IFI</b>	Iraq Federation of Industries
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>CBI</b>	Cash Based Intervention
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>PWG</b>	Priority Work Group
<b>CBI</b>	Central Bank of Iraq
<b>NPL</b>	Non-Performing Loans
<b>IFIs</b>	International Financial Institutions
<b>SEIA</b>	Social and Economic Impact Assessment
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>PPE</b>	Personal Protective Equipment

## — ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, April 2020.  
<https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-framework-immediate-socio-economic-response-covid-19>
- <sup>2</sup> Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19  
<https://unsdg.un.org/resources/shared-responsibility-global-solidarity-responding-socio-economic-impacts-covid-19>
- <sup>3</sup> OECD (2018), States of Fragility 2018, OECD Publishing, Paris,  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264302075-en>.
- <sup>4</sup> The OECD characterises fragility as the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes including violence, the breakdown of institutions, displacement, humanitarian crises or other emergencies. Source: (OECD, 2016[1]), States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264267213-en>.
- <sup>5</sup> Initial Mapping of COVID-19 Humanitarian Activities, Inter Cluster Coordination Group, 10 April 2020
- <sup>6</sup> The three countries ahead of Iraq are Syria (384.2M); Ethiopia (322.6M); and DRC (287.8M).  
[https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHRP-COVID19\\_May\\_Update.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHRP-COVID19_May_Update.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> COVID-19 Impact on Humanitarian Operations, Inter Cluster Coordination Group, 17 May 2020
- <sup>8</sup> COVID-19 Addendum to the Humanitarian Response Plan, July 2020.  
[https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/iraq\\_hrp\\_2020\\_covid-19\\_addendum\\_20200719.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/iraq_hrp_2020_covid-19_addendum_20200719.pdf)
- <sup>9</sup> Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), 2020.  
[https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iraq\\_hno\\_2020.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iraq_hno_2020.pdf)
- <sup>10</sup> WHO Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Dynamic Infographic Dashboard for Iraq (As of 31 July 2020).  
<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoibjJMDhiYmltZTlhMS00MDhlLTg3MjltMDNmM2FhNzE5NmM4IiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQtNGIzOS04MTBiLTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCIslmMiOjh9>
- <sup>11</sup> Iraq Country Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan against COVID-19, WHO, March 2020
- <sup>12</sup> A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, April 2020.  
<https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-framework-immediate-socio-economic-response-covid-19>
- <sup>13</sup> Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic, PBSO
- <sup>14</sup> UN Common Country Analysis, 2020, p.13
- <sup>15</sup> Ministry of Planning, UNICEF, WB July 2020 (Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Poverty and Vulnerability in Iraq)
- <sup>16</sup> These figures are based on analysis done by the Cash Consortium for Iraq, of over 25,000 household-level Vulnerability Assessments spanning Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa & Salah al-Din, collected (Sept 2019 & March 2020).
- <sup>17</sup> UN Women, 2018. The Business Case for Women's Economic Empowerment in the Arab States Region. UN Women. Available at:  
<http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20arab%20states/attachments/2016/business%20case%20report%20en%202016.pdf?la=en&vs=215>
- <sup>18</sup> OCHA. 2020. Iraq: COVID-19. Situation Report No. 10. 9 April 2020.  
[https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/09042020\\_COVID19\\_SitRep\\_No10.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/09042020_COVID19_SitRep_No10.pdf)
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Iraq ranks 120 out of 189 on the Gender Inequality Index (GII). <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>
- <sup>21</sup> UNFPA, 2019. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support: Humanitarian Crisis Persists in 'Post-Conflict' Iraq. Available at:  
<https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/19-255-MHPSS-Case-IRAQ-2019-10-04-1308.pdf>

- <sup>22</sup> GENDER PROFILE – IRAQ A situation analysis on gender equality and women's empowerment in Iraq, UNWOMEN Oxfam, December 2018.  
<https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620602/rr-gender-profile-iraq-131218-en.pdf>
- <sup>23</sup> UN Common Country Analysis, 2020, p.7
- <sup>24</sup> UN Women: "Responding to COVID-19 in Iraq from a gender perspective: A Guidance Note on Different Actors' Engagement". April 2020.
- <sup>25</sup> According to the GBV Sub Cluster Iraq Rapid Assessment on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, 65% of the assessed service delivery points reported an increase in one or more GBV types in their areas of intervention during the COVID-19 pandemic, of which 94% accounted for domestic violence reportedly perpetrated by the spouse or other family members. People who have been abused often undergo prolonged psychological pain and require support to facilitate healing and recovery. The assessment recorded 123 GBV-related suicide attempts or incidents involving women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic and additional 62 incidents whereby families denied the female access quarantine or health facilities due to social norms and fear of exposure to GBV risks. (source: GBV Sub Cluster, Rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on GBV, April 2020, page 2)
- <sup>26</sup> According to information from the Department for Combating Violence Against Women (DCAW) of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) the shelters affiliated to DCVAW have received 1176 visits by women with complaints related to VAW between February and April 2020; much lower figures compared to the average reported in January 2020, which is attributed to the lockdown and movement restriction.
- <sup>27</sup> <http://www.teebweb.org/publication/mainstreaming-the-economics-of-nature-a-synthesis-of-the-approach-conclusions-and-recommendations-of-teeb/>
- <sup>28</sup> Fazaa, N A & Dunn, Jonathon & Whittingham, Mark. (2018). Evaluation of the Ecosystem Services of the Central Marsh in Southern Iraq. Baghdad Science Journal. 15. 369-380.
- <sup>29</sup> The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- <sup>30</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/iraq-health/>
- <sup>31</sup> Ministry of Health, Iraq Vaccine Supply Chain (Cold Chain Inventory) Report 2019
- <sup>32</sup> Ministry of Planning, UNICEF, WB July 2020 (Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Poverty and Vulnerability in Iraq)
- <sup>33</sup> Adolescents, youth and young people are in a transition period and these terms vary from context to context. This document defines the following specific age ranges: The term 'young people' is used for people ages 10 to 24, combining 'adolescents', ages 10 to 19, and 'youth', ages 15 to 24.
- <sup>34</sup> Ministry of Planning, UNICEF, WB July 2020 (Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Poverty and Vulnerability in Iraq)
- <sup>35</sup> Containment measures implemented by the Government of Iraq to halt the spread of COVID-19 include lockdown and curfews
- <sup>36</sup> WB Iraq Economic Monitor  
<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/446201588465646751/pdf/Iraq-Economic-Monitor-Navigating-the-Perfect-Storm-Redux.pdf>
- <sup>37</sup> MoP-UNICEF "Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey 2018) showing that only 22% of the poorest wealth quintile are receiving cash social safety net  
[https://mics.unicef.org/news\\_entries/125/IRAQ-2018-MICS-DATASETS,-SURVEY-FINDINGS-REPORT,-AND-SNAPSHOTS-RELEASED](https://mics.unicef.org/news_entries/125/IRAQ-2018-MICS-DATASETS,-SURVEY-FINDINGS-REPORT,-AND-SNAPSHOTS-RELEASED)
- <sup>38</sup> Ministry of Planning, UNICEF 2017 (Child Poverty in Iraq)
- <sup>39</sup> Rapid Assessment of the Impacts of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Populations and Small Scale Enterprises in Iraq. [https://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS\\_751209/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_751209/lang--en/index.htm)
- <sup>40</sup> Ministry of Planning, UNICEF 2017 (Child Poverty in Iraq)

<sup>41</sup> Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan, 2018 – 2020; and UN, Iraq Common Country Analysis, 2020

<sup>42</sup> Ibid

<sup>43</sup> United Nations in Iraq Inter-Agency Information and Analysis Unit

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Climate%20change%20In%20Iraq%20Fact%20sheet%20-%20English.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> UNICEF, Environmental Survey 2016

<sup>45</sup> MoP-UNICEF "Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey 2018) showing that only 22% of the poorest wealth quintile are receiving cash social safety net

[https://mics.unicef.org/news\\_entries/125/IRAQ-2018-MICS-DATASETS,-SURVEY-FINDINGS-REPORT,-AND-SNAPSHOTS-RELEASED](https://mics.unicef.org/news_entries/125/IRAQ-2018-MICS-DATASETS,-SURVEY-FINDINGS-REPORT,-AND-SNAPSHOTS-RELEASED)

<sup>46</sup> Safely managed water services are defined as an improved drinking water source on premises, whose source water was tested and free of E. coli and available when needed; SDG indicator 6.2.1

<sup>47</sup> GBV Sub-cluster, Iraq (May-April 2020), The GBV sub-cluster Rapid assessment Report on the impact of COVID-19 outbreak on Gender Based Violence in Iraq.

<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/iraq/assessment/gbv-sub-cluster-rapid-assessment-impact-covid-19-outbreak-gender-based>

<sup>48</sup> GBV SC Iraq Rapid Assessment on COVID-19 impacts on GBV

8 Based on over 30,000 household-level assessment records collected by the Cash Consortium for Iraq across Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al-Din between October 2019 and June 2020.

9 Cash Consortium for Iraq, Beneficiary Market Perspectives Survey, Round 9; figures are based on 1,468 assessments covering 16 districts in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al-Din between 30 March and 1 June.

<sup>49</sup> UNDP meeting notes, meetings with higher judicial council officials in Baghdad, June 2020 .

<sup>50</sup> UN Human Rights/Office of the High Commissioner (2020). "COVID-19 Guidance Note: Protecting Residents of informal settlements" by Leilani Farha, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing – updated 23 April 2020.

<sup>51</sup> "Iraq National Housing Policy", October 2010, Ministry of Construction and Housing.

<sup>52</sup> Source of information is a government employee working in the sector of electricity

<sup>53</sup> The Humanitarian cash assistance targeting model is using the same MoLSA methodology (PMT, proxy mean test) since 2018 in an attempt to align the humanitarian assistance scheme with the Gov. social protection one. Nonetheless the 2 systems are not fully aligned as the hum. cash is accounting for conflict affected population specific indicators. In fact the usage of the same methodology allows - so far - only to estimate the humanitarian caseload that might be eligible for gov. ass. We would suggest that the hum. sector and MoLSA should continue with this workstream seeking for a better alignment.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

<sup>55</sup> World Bank, "Overview, Iraq," April 1, 2019, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/overview>.

As of 2019. World Bank, "Overview, Iraq," April 1, 2019

<sup>56</sup> ILO; Fafo (July 2020) , Rapid Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Populations and Small-scale Enterprises in Iraq,available at:

[https://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS\\_751209/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_751209/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>57</sup> IOM Iraq DTM – COVID Portal, <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/COVID>

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> As per 2014. Iraq Ministry of Planning.

[https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/iraq\\_national\\_development\\_plan\\_2018-2022\\_arabic.pdf](https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/iraq_national_development_plan_2018-2022_arabic.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> Average reduction in production and employment in the past month. IOM Iraq. Impact of COVID19 to SMEs in Iraq. May 2020. Pending publication.

- <sup>61</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>62</sup> DRC (April 2020), Post-COVID-1 Basic Needs Assessment
- <sup>63</sup> NRC, Information Counselling and Legal Assistance COVID Rapid assessment, April 2020.
- <sup>64</sup> <https://kapita.iq/storage/app/media/Research/Covid19-IRAQ-Research.pdf>
- <sup>65</sup> [http://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/COVID-19/iom\\_dtm\\_COVID\\_19\\_Main\\_Findings\\_Apr\\_2020.pdf](http://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/COVID-19/iom_dtm_COVID_19_Main_Findings_Apr_2020.pdf)
- <sup>66</sup> UNESCO Iraq, 2019. Assessment of the labour market & skills analysis: Iraq and Kurdistan Region-Iraq: informal sector, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371374>
- <sup>67</sup> IOM Iraq DTM – COVID Portal, <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/COVID>
- <sup>68</sup> Coppola, Maurizio, April 1, 2020. Covid-19 in Iraq: The Virus of Social Inequality, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/covid-19-iraq-virus-social-inequality/>
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>70</sup> Tabaqchali, Ahmed, April 24, 2020. Will Covid-19 Mark the Endgame for Iraq's Muhasasa Ta'ifiya? Arab Reform Initiative. <https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/will-covid-19-mark-the-endgame-for-iraqs-muhasasa-ta-ifiya/>
- <sup>71</sup> World Bank. "Overview, Iraq", May 1, 2020, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/overview>. As of 2019. World Bank, "Overview, Iraq," May 4, 2020.
- <sup>72</sup> ILO: As job losses escalate, nearly half of global workforce at risk of losing livelihoods. [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_743036/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_743036/lang--en/index.htm) April 29,2020.
- <sup>73</sup> World Bank (Spring 2020) Iraq Economic Monitor: Navigating the Perfect Storm (Redux). With a Special Focus on Laying the Foundation for a New Economy in Iraq: Digital Transformation
- <sup>74</sup> ILO standards
- <sup>75</sup> Human rights special report, abductions, torture and enforced disappearances in the context of ongoing demonstrations in Iraq, 3rd update, Human Rights Office, UNAMI, 23 May 2020
- <sup>76</sup> <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/>
- <sup>77</sup> Iraq Political Economy Analysis - Promoting Social Cohesion, Peaceful Coexistence and Community Reconciliation at central level in Iraq, First call partners, December ,2019
- <sup>78</sup> Iraq Political Economy Analysis Update- Promoting Social Cohesion, Peaceful Coexistence and Community Reconciliation at central level in Iraq, First call partners, June 2020
- <sup>79</sup> [https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHRP-COVID19\\_May\\_Update.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHRP-COVID19_May_Update.pdf)
- <sup>80</sup> Strengthening Social Cohesion COVID 19 Response- Programmatic offer UNDP
- <sup>81</sup> Conflict Assessment in Support of Efforts to Improve Local Policing in Iraq, UNDP, June 2020, Unpublished.
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid
- <sup>83</sup> Iraq Biweekly Estimate, March - April 2020, UNAMI Joint Analysis Unit (JAU).
- <sup>84</sup> The Word Drug Report 2020, UNODC, June 2020
- <sup>85</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all figures are drawn from: IMF (2019) Iraq: Article IV consultation and staff assessment; IMF (2020) World Economic Outlook; IMF (2020) Regional Economic Outlook – Middle East and Central Asia; World Bank (2017) Iraq: Systematic Country Diagnostic; World Bank (2020) Iraq Economic Monitor; World Bank (2020) Middle-East and North Africa – Economic Update. Macroeconomic and fiscal data is drawn from the World Bank data series presented in the 'Iraq Economic Monitor' unless otherwise noted. In some cases these figures differ to macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts provided elsewhere, for example from IMF sources. While the specific forecasts may vary, they are broadly consistent. For the sake of consistency of presentation the World Bank dataset is used unless otherwise indicated.
- <sup>86</sup> Data for Iraq is available at <https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/research-projects/coronavirus-government-response-tracker>.

The Oxford Stringency Index collects information on a range of common policy responses that governments have taken to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, such as school closures or travel restrictions. It codes these policy measures quantitatively to create an index score for each country. A higher score indicates more stringent lockdown policies. As of mid-July 2020, Iraq's score was around over 90 on a scale of 1-100, with 100 being the most stringent policy measures.

<sup>87</sup> Data taken from oilprice.com and refer to global oil prices rather than the specific price for Iraq's oil. As an example of the severity of the oil price decline, certain types of US oil were trading at negative prices in late April 2020.

<sup>88</sup> Source: World Bank (2020) Iraq Economic Monitor. 2020 estimated; 2021 and 2022 projections.

<sup>89</sup> World Bank (2020) 'Iraq's Universal Public Distribution System – Utilization and Impacts During Displacement'

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.thenational.ae/world/iraq-government-gets-parliament-s-nod-for-massive-borrowing-1.1039314>; and

<https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2020/5/24/saudi-arabia-signals-warming-ties-with-neighbouring-iraq>

<sup>91</sup> United Nations (2020) A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to Covid

<sup>92</sup> IOM (2020) Impact of Covid-19 on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Iraq

<sup>93</sup> Source: World Bank (2020) Iraq Economic Monitor. Staff estimates based on national poverty estimates and household surveys

<sup>94</sup> The World Bank simulation presented here used data from the 2017-18 Rapid Welfare Monitoring Survey to simulate poverty dynamics in 2020. The analysis looks at reductions in household welfare through loss of employment/labour income and increases in food prices. Public Distribution System benefits are assumed to be constant and no other dynamic effects (e.g. substitution actions for goods purchased or income generated) were assumed. The analysis assumed a 20 per cent increase in food prices; and differential impacts on income among five segments of the labour market (public sector employed; self-employed urban; self-employed rural; not working; and private sector). 'Moderate-Low' assumed that public sector workers and the self-employed in rural areas maintained their income, and other groups' income declined by 20 per cent. The 'Moderate-High' scenario assumes the same, except that public sector workers also see income declines of 20 per cent.

<sup>95</sup> UNDP (2020) Covid-19 and Human Development: Assessing the Crisis, Envisaging the Recovery

<sup>96</sup> <http://www3.compareyourcountry.org/states-of-fragility/countries/IRQ>

<sup>97</sup> OECD analysis of the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding funding flows prepared for Iraq as of May 2020.

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/faq.htm>

<sup>99</sup> <https://gds.gov.iq/iraqs-parliament-approves-government-programme/>

<sup>100</sup> Fazaa, N A & Dunn, Jonathon & Whittingham, Mark. (2018). Evaluation of the Ecosystem Services of the Central Marsh in Southern Iraq. Baghdad Science Journal. 15. 369-380.

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