

Years of conflict and economic sanctions have led to severe negative impacts in the livelihoods of the Iraqi population. FAO has been operating in Iraq ever since the early 1990s and had a major role in developing the agricultural sector as well as building the capacity of the national technical staff in the various sub sectors; horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries, poultry, beekeeping etc... FAO further played a vital role following the 2003 crisis in Iraq where it maximized efforts to assist in restoring and reviving the agricultural sector in Iraq through implementing emergency projects and advocacy.

As clearly elaborated in the NDS (National Development Strategy for Iraq), the 2003 crisis had devastating impact on all segment of Iraq but most importantly on the livelihoods of the population particularly in the rural areas where agriculture constitutes the largest source of household income. The NDS specifically indicates the important role that this sector can play in reviving the Iraqi economy. The ICI (International Compact with Iraq, 2007) also emphasizes the role of the agricultural sector in Iraq in realizing its national vision. "The MoA has set the following priorities and is supported by action plans which are progressing: a) improving food security; b) increasing agricultural investment; c) improving qualifications and capacity of agriculture workers; d) improving management; e) correcting the imbalance of agricultural economics and agricultural marketing; f) developing value-added for national agricultural products; g) improving the environment through forestation and combating desertification, and building naturally protected areas; and h) implementing the Integrated Pest Management Program in order to reduce of the use of chemical pesticides to protect crop production, and the environment."

The FAO emergency interventions in Iraq add up to more than US\$ 100 million in the various sub sectors. This programme is implemented in close collaboration with the GoI particularly MoA and MoWR.

FAO has now adapted to and adopted a more developmental approach for Iraqi agriculture, where at the request of the GoI, FAO has been coordinating with the Iraqi line ministries (MoA, MoWR and MoPD) to establish a long term strategy for the FAO interventions to assist and develop the agricultural sector in Iraq.

In April 2008, a validation workshop was held in Amman which endorsed the **Five-Year Proposed Strategy for FAO Assistance to the Agricultural Sector in Iraq**. The workshop, which was co-chaired by the Minister of Agriculture – HE Dr. Ali Al-Bahadly was attended by the DSRSG Mr. David Shearer as well as around 50 participants including senior officials from the GoI (representatives from MoA, MoWR, MoPD, COSIT and the KRG), Senior Officers from FAO- HQ and FAO Iraq team Senior Technical Consultants in addition to the World Bank, UNISCO, NGOs and the private sector. A special thanks to the Chief TCES - Mr. Christian Miczaika for his attention and support to this initiative.

The five-year strategy was adopted and fully reflects the priorities of the GoI as expressed in the ICI/NDS. The said strategy is also part of the UNCT-Iraq framework as it is fully consistent with the UNCT Agriculture and Food Security Sector Outcome Team Strategy.