



# PRESS RELEASE

## Conference highlights importance of achieving SDGs to recover from COVID-19 pandemic

**Baghdad, October 21, 2020** - The challenges and opportunities of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of COVID-19 was the focus of a two-day conference organized by the Ministry of Planning in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq.

Held on the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the SDGs, the conference provided an opportunity for dialogue among development partners from ministries, civil society organizations, universities, the private sector, and youth groups to work together, exchange ideas, and identify opportunities for Iraq to progress on the ambitious SDG agenda.

Globally, COVID-19 has caused a crisis with far reaching impact on economic and human development. Iraq is not an exception, and the country has been impacted by the 'dual crisis' of COVID-19 and the decline in oil prices.

These shocks are more likely to have a more severe effect on marginalized groups, including women, the elderly, people with disabilities, minorities, displaced people, and people living in informal settlements. This makes it imperative to remember what the 2030 Agenda called for, to leave no one behind.

With only ten years remaining to achieve the ambitious agenda, the SDGs are more important today than ever before as they aim to transform systems that undermine well-being and perpetuate vulnerabilities.

"The past few months have given us an opportunity, in partnership with the esteemed Ministry of Planning and our partners in other sectors, to rethink what a 'new normal' would look like post the COVID-19 pandemic," said Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq, Zena Ali Ahmad. "We should collectively work hard to support the achievement of the SDGs in Iraq and prevent any regression in the development gains that have been achieved over the past years."

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### Media contact:

Mohammed Al-Bahbahanee, Communications Specialist | [mohammed.al-bahbahanee@undp.org](mailto:mohammed.al-bahbahanee@undp.org) | +964 770 439 9222