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UN, Ministries discuss cooperation on enhancing the social protection system in Iraq



Photo by Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs

Baghdad, Iraq; 19 August 2020 - The United Nations in Iraq and the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Health and Environment, and Planning discussed on Wednesday the challenges faced by the national social protection system in Iraq in responding to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

An overview of the challenges confronted by the national social protection system due to the COVID19 was presented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Minister of

Labour and Social Affairs, Mr. Adel Al-Rikabi, emphasized that the issues faced by the increased number of vulnerable people are urgent and an accelerated response is needed. The UN agencies were represented by the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, Ms Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano. She encouraged strengthened collaboration among the Government and the UN Country Team to find effective solutions for rapid response to the pandemic as well as look for the medium- and long-term strategies to address the impact of COVID-19. A draft of the UN socio-economic COVID-19 response plan in Iraq was presented with the participants.

The attendees discussed collaborating on an inclusive, comprehensive social response to the COVID-19 crisis and its repercussions on the population. They agreed on accelerating joint efforts to scale up the rapid response to the COVID-19 impact on social sector, focusing on the Government areas of priority.

Ms Vojáčková-Sollorano reiterated the UN support to the Government and the people in Iraq: “Our meeting today is only the beginning and not our target. The UN tailors its programmes and projects based on the priorities of the Government and the needs of the people in Iraq. The UN will work with its government counterparts to ensure the rapid response plan to the needs of the most vulnerable.”

The participating UN agencies, who joined virtually in accordance to the COVID-19 Crisis cell recommendations, included representatives from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with representatives of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Labour Organization (ILO).