



**National Review of the  
Implementation  
of Beijing +25 Declaration  
and Platform for Action**

**REPUBLIC OF IRAQ**

**2019**

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United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women

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**Foreword by HE Dr. Adel Abdel-Mahdi  
Prime Minister, Republic of Iraq**

It is my pleasure to start by thanking all those who contributed, through their various expertise and positions, to drafting this Beijing +25 Report, which we are all proud of its completion.

In the last decades, Iraq faced many disasters and wars, among them terrorism standing out as the most serious and dangerous, as it drained many of our human, financial and organizational energies, disrupted our development and confounded our plans and programmes. Terrorism also had the worst impact on the lives of our citizens, especially women who suffered its scourge. But we didn't give up, we countered challenges and went through confrontation with determination and resolve. We achieved many goals, foremost of which is defeating the forces of evil pursuing the quest to achieve peace, security and restoring social cohesion. Achieving these important goals will remain unattainable until we have wiped away all the tears of the victims, especially women who suffered from the heinous terrorism that swept our country.

On this basis, I personally believe that the steps taken in the implementation of the Beijing commitments are only the beginning of what must be done to bring justice to the victims of terrorism and marginalized groups, especially women and girls. Therefore, we consider that the diagnosis adopted by the Drafting Committee is a realistic and accurate diagnosis of all forms of suffering by Iraqi women in cities and the countryside, at home or at work, on the one hand, and of the shortcomings in legislative, organizational and structural aspects, on the other hand. The report bravely acknowledges the male-dominated patriarchal culture and traditions, and suggests solutions, the most prominent of them related to laws explicitly guaranteeing universal women's rights, in childhood, within the family, educationally and professionally, as a citizen on equal footing with male citizens, as an entitlement and not as a favor.

In this regard, I would like to commend the vital role of the Council of Representatives for its role in ensuring the success of this civilizational trend, which will be recorded in the history of our country and our people, and elevate our position among developed countries which defend their women and men and which aspires to guarantee the rights of future generations. The real guarantee for the continuity of any reform is its legislative pillars, as laws are the protector of every reform process against any regression or infringement by any party whatsoever. I, therefore, take this opportunity to call on female and male members of our Council of Representatives to give priority to the Anti-Domestic Violence draft law and other bills that guarantee the rights of women, family and children, particularly the establishment of a women machinery within a harmonized structural system that coordinates roles and functions of various bodies and institutions to harmonize their efforts and achieve the desired purpose.

To conclude, I assert that these noble goals cannot be attained without the concerted efforts of various governmental and non-governmental actors. We should work to achieve collective awareness and civic maturity that advance our thinking in order to achieve a civilized social transformation in which women get the place they are entitled to as full citizens equally with their male counterparts. This can only be achieved by doing justice to them and providing them with the opportunities they deserve throughout their lives in all educational, knowledge and professional fields, enabling them to reach decision-making posts. These goals will not be difficult for our nation and our country to achieve.

## Introduction:

In implementation of the directives of the Iraqi Government to abide by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, adopted at the United Nations General Assembly at its 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Session, Iraq submitted its first report in 2000 and second report in 2014 which covers the period from 1995 to 2013, as the second, third and fourth reports of the Republic of Iraq.

Despite the progress made in many aspects of the life of Iraqi women throughout the period, there has been a decline in other aspects due to the failure to enact new laws that protect women rights and to tackle domestic and societal violence against women. In addition, there are still prevalent traditions and customs that are not religion-based, and which violate women's rights and prevent them from receiving their entitlements and services they deserve. All this required national strategies to combat violence and promote women's rights. In addition, new challenges emerged during the second half of 2014, beginning with the control of the terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (known as ISIL) of Iraqi cities, the deterioration of the security situation and the accompanying displacement, rape and enslavement of women, which led to an increase in the numbers of widows and orphans. According to statistics, (4.3 per cent) of children, in 2018, were with one or both parents who are deceased, and (7.9 per cent) of women were widows in 2016. Illiteracy rate stood at (14.8 per cent) in 2016 and (22.5 per cent) below the poverty line in 2014. Most of them are women-headed households, as well as (7.3 per cent) of child labor aged 5-17 years.

The Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) have therefore sought to meet these challenges through real partnership with CSOs (CSOs) to promote peace and establish a culture of peaceful coexistence despite the lack of resources and limited capabilities. In addition, most of the funding has been allocated to humanitarian needs at the expense of serving the development process. This has caused most organizations to provide humanitarian assistance and basic services to displaced and affected families, from the areas that were controlled by *ISIL*. Despite all these constraints, CSOs are doing their utmost to protect and empower women and to strengthen their role in decision-making.

The present report aims to detail progress in the area of women empowerment in view of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, identify current challenges, and propose policies and strategies that contribute to improving women's status in compliance with Iraq's international commitments. The Committee made it sure to follow the methodology required for the report preparation, relying mainly on official sources, including the last report on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), approved by Council of Ministers Resolution N<sup>o</sup>159 of 24/3/2019, and the Iraqi National Action Plan (INAP) for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2014-2018), the Poverty Reduction Strategy (2018-2022), the updated Strategy against Violence against Women (2018-2030), Iraq's Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development, Iraq's National Voluntary Report on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2019, statistical reports issued by the Central Statistical Organization and other reports issued by the Ministry of Planning.

This report provides an overview of the work of the Iraqi government and CSOs in accordance with international reporting requirements. This report is composed of four chapters. The First on the priorities, achievements, challenges and obstacles. The Second reviews the progress made on the 12 critical areas of concern. The Third chapter reviews a simplified overview of national institutions and related procedures. Finally, the Fourth one covers data and statistics.

In conclusion, appreciation and gratitude have been expressed to institutions and individuals who contributed to the preparation of this report, particularly the UN Women's Iraq Country Office, for its technical support in preparing this report in Arabic and editing its translation in English, as well as to ministries, government institutions and CSOs which provided the report Drafting Committee with data and information. A special thanks to the Drafting Committee members for their great efforts and commitments.

## **Chapter I: Priorities, Achievements, Challenges and Constraints**

### **Section 1: Analysis of major achievements, challenges and obstacles:**

Iraq has adopted the promotion of positive discrimination in favor of women in order to empower them economically, politically and socially to participate in accordance with the principles of equality, parity and to ensure that the rights which are granted to them by the Constitution are applied. This is done in order to improve social cohesion, to ensure that women become active participants in the economic recovery process and are part of the political decision-making process. While the State focuses on reform and change that increases capacities of women and empower them to be able to make family decisions that is in the best interest of their family, it also aims to put in place a framework in place to promote values of coherence within the family entity and society. This will ensure that women can lead a life in which their dignity and humanity is preserved, away from the scourges of poverty, violence and fear.

#### **1. Main Achievements:**

The most significant achievements over the past five years in women empowerment can be summarized as follows:

##### **A. Women Empowerment in the National Development Plan 2018-2022**

Based on the principle of optimal investment of human resources, the National Development Plan (2018-2022) adopted a programme for women empowerment, which falls under the Human and Social Development theme related to knowledge, health and economic support. Several goals have been identified in order to realize the vision of an Iraqi woman who is healthy, educated and economically empowered, especially for the women living in the regions affected by the impact of ISIL and its terrorist acts.

##### **B. Women in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals - Agenda 2030**

Specialized teams have been formed to implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including a Human and Social Development Team in charge of monitoring and evaluating the goals related to social aspects in general and women in particular:

- Iraq's Vision 2030 aims at achieving: "An educated and healthy woman who is capable of playing an effective, participatory and sustainable role in the economic and social life."
- This Vision aims to achieve SDG 5: "Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls" as well as achieving the other goals (SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10 and 16).
- Iraq submitted the National Voluntary Review of SDGs to the High-Level Political Forum in July 2019. The report attached great importance to gender equality and women issues in general.
- The team is monitoring and evaluating the performance of Iraq in regards to the indicators related SDG 5, through their use surveys and questionnaires and in coordination with the Central Statistics Organization.

##### **C. Women in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325:**

The Iraqi government has developed a plan to implement the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, related to "Women, Peace and Security", which includes activities aimed to empower women in situations of conflict. These activities are being implemented by a dedicated team working together to achieve the National Plan three pillars: "participation, protection and prevention". The contingency plan was followed by the transitional plan of 2018. The second Iraqi National Plan for the period 2019-2023 is currently being drafted with the support of UN Women, Iraq Country office.

**D. Women in the National Strategy for Poverty Alleviation:**

Women issues have been integrated in the outcomes of the National Strategy for Poverty Alleviation, 2014-2018, to enhance capacity and empower poor women through the provision of loans and other livelihoods means.

**E. Women Empowerment in the Reconstruction of Liberated Areas Framework:**

The Ministry of Planning prepared an executive plan to achieve the human and social development goal included in the document on Reconstruction of the Liberated Areas to enhance women participation in reconstruction operations. The plan also included the following objectives: reducing women unemployment rates, empowering women, reducing the number of students dropping out of schools, rehabilitating and reintegrating the survivors of sexual violence into society by providing them with life skills training and education.

**F. National Strategy on the Violence against Women (2013-2017) and the Strategy for the Advancement of the status of Iraqi Women (2014-2018)**

This Strategy has been updated to encompass the 2018-2030 period. The National Strategy for the Advancement of Status of Iraqi Women, 2014-2018, which was drafted in cooperation with the civil society and the support of UN Women and the Iraq Country Office, is currently being updated to cover the period 2019-2022.

**G. National Strategy for Development of the Status of Women in KRG (2016-2026)**

The key areas of this Strategy are legislation, education, public health and reproductive health, women participation in the labor force, in politics and in decision-making. The implementing bodies are the Ministries of Interior, Justice, Health, Education, Labor and Social Affairs.

**2. Challenges to the empowerment of Iraqi women:**

Although the Iraqi legislation doesn't discriminate between women and men in various areas, such as holding high positions in the political sphere, there are inherent cultural and social factors, which have had a negative impact on women' rising to hold position of power. Indeed, the patriarchal beliefs widespread within the Iraqi society have limited the enactment of certain legislations to support women empowerment and equality with men, although they exist in the Constitution.

The obstacles to women empowerment include:

**a)** Women suffer from inequality attributed to gender-based discrimination which render women more vulnerable to the consequences of poverty, unable to access and control resources, and more likely to be unemployed or to have to do unpaid work, especially in rural areas. These put pressure on women, in addition to the lack of access to decision-making positions in State institutions.

**b)** The negative impact of harsh conditions in Iraq over the past five years on the structure and institutions of the society widened the gender gap and reduced financial support for women empowerment activities.

**c)** A growing number of widows and orphans caused by a climate of deteriorating security and the control of terrorist gangs in some Governorates. This generated also high dropout rate of girls from schools in intermediate and secondary levels due to economic and social factors in general, in addition to the security situation.

**d)** Many government policies and plans lack impact assessment indicators on women participation in restoring of stability, building security, peace and community reconciliation, and providing adequate

protection during armed conflict. This is in addition to the fact that the public budget is not gender sensitive. Therefore, to find solutions to these issues, it is necessary to provide opportunities for women to raise their expertise and knowledge in general and hold the status they deserve in public life.

**e)** Since the abolition in 2015 of the State Ministry of Women Affairs, departments and commissions with diverse functions and roles have been established. This has caused fragmentation of efforts and resources, which in turn has impeded the advancement of women status and called for the re-establishment of a women machinery according to the Beijing commitments.

**f)** The existence of strategies dealing with women issues without action plans, budgets and timeframes for their implementation made it very difficult to find real execution on the ground of national and international commitments. This created an impediment for women political, economic, social and cultural rights.

**g)** As for missed opportunities, they were reflected in the failure to enact the Anti-domestic violence Law during the last parliamentary session 2014-2018, despite advocacy campaigns by CSOs and the partnership with the Government and the Council of Representatives. The draft law would have allowed some degree of protection and rehabilitation of victims and reduced the impunity for perpetrators. It is still hoped that it will be enacted 2019.

It is noteworthy that the KRG has enacted its anti-domestic violence law since 2011.

Considering the magnitude and gravity of these challenges and obstacles, the solutions must be stronger in order to overcome them, as women political participation and access to decision-making positions should contribute to the overall and balanced development process and enable Iraq to achieve the 17 SDGs as well as the current National Development Plan.

## **Section 2: Most Important Priorities to Accelerate the Advancement of Women and Girls:**

The most important priorities of the government were to update the social protection file to include only the most eligible groups, especially women. The following has been achieved:

### **1. Poverty Eradication and Support to Agricultural Productivity and Food Security:**

Iraq adopted a Poverty Reduction Strategy in the country during the period 2014-2018. This strategy included programmes to support agricultural production and food security through provision and sustainability of production and marketing supporting infrastructure.

The five-year national plan (2013-2017) along with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) included the principles of equality, non-discrimination between members the Iraqi society, poverty alleviation and tackling the deteriorating economic and social situation of already fragile groups. 11,090 loans were provided to women as part of the poverty alleviation policy from (2012 to 2016). 24,033 loans were granted to small-income generating enterprises from (2013 to 2017). 370 industrial services loans were granted from (2015 to 2017) and 388 community rehabilitation loans: (2007-2017). Despite all these efforts, they do not amount to the scale of the problem, and more is needed to alleviate poverty, as intended by the current Plan (2014-2018).

Restructuring of the Higher Committee for the Management on Poverty Alleviation Policies through Council of Ministers Decision N° 344, 2017, which provides for amending Article (3) of Council of Ministers Decision N° 409 of 2009 where the Committee shall be chaired by the Prime Minister and membership of Ministers of Finance, Trade, Education, Health, Planning, Reconstruction and Housing, Municipalities, MOLSA and Agriculture. In addition to the Secretary General of Council of Ministers, Chairman of National Investment Commission, Minister of Planning in KRG and the Executive Director of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

In terms of agricultural productivity and food security, achievements of Rural Women Development Section of Ministry of Agriculture centered on the following:

- Establish agricultural projects for rural women in the agricultural areas and at the level of family farm;
- Develop knowledge and skills of rural women and young people in the investment of agricultural crops and surplus in the food industry and focus on rural industries by exploiting and investing in the raw materials available on the farm and the implementation of productive projects to raise the level of rural household income.
- Develop environmental and health awareness of the rural family and paying attention to raising children and educating rural women on aspects that have a role in social and human development.
- Hold specialized seminars in the fields of agriculture, health and environment, and the establishment of exhibitions and festivals in the field of agricultural and rural industries and food.
- Upgrade performance of rural women by implementing specialized training curricula, in coordination with the Manpower Development Department and training centers in the governorates.

The Department of Social Protection for Women (MOLSA), implemented a project for the advancement of rural women in coordination with the Ministry of Women Affairs and the Agricultural Initiative for obtaining loans for rural women accordingly to the following steps:

- Train rural women scientifically, culturally, materially, economically and socially.
- Chair Commission for the granting of agricultural loans to women, granted by the Agricultural Bank on the project of rural women development (5) million Iraqi dinars for each of the small projects in Baghdad and in the governorates.
- Assist beneficiaries to obtain a loan from the Rasheed Bank upon submission of a proposal for a small or medium project. Women are instructed on how to set up a project and obtain a loan. The loan amount is linked to the value of the project (feasibility study) ranging from 2 to 5 million Iraqi Dinars.
- MOLSA completed 4500 transactions in Baghdad and the governorates in cooperation with the Agricultural Cooperative Bank in the Rural Women Development Program to enable beneficiaries to obtain a loan of 5 million Iraqi Dinars from the Bank to establish income-generating projects.
- Participate in local and international exhibitions of rural products for the purpose of marketing rural products.
- Ministry of Health provides women in rural areas with primary health care services through health centers in their areas such as reproductive health services and health awareness in all areas of concern to women health at all ages. However, there is still shortage of health centers in villages and rural areas.
- Implement recommendations of the Higher Committee for Reform of Ration Cards as stipulated by the Executive Order N<sup>o</sup> 39, 2015, the direct pilot project environment for the reform of the ration card system, noting that it does not include women only.

## **2. Access to Health Care, including Mental, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights:**

The Iraqi Ministry of Health undertook a range of measures and policies to promote the psychological, sexual and reproductive health of women through the following:

- Develop a strategy for maternal and child health and reproductive health (2013-2017), which establishes the following vision as a framework for a health system that adopts primary health care as an essential foundation that ensures health services that meet the needs of the individual and society and aims to reduce maternal mortality.
- Increase the number of medical checkups for women for early detection of breast cancer to 10-20 per cent of the total number of women visiting primary health care centers, and introduction of referral

system for suspected cases to specialized clinics. A special referral form containing all information on women such as age, work, and family history. Cooperation should be made with media to disseminate and broadcast health education messages on early detection of breast cancer after puberty and its prevention.

- Mental health care for women as a priority in public health plans and policies due to the pressure and mental disorders that this vulnerable group has been exposed to. Partnership with CSOs is also an important element to provide psychosocial support and rehabilitate patients to cope with their condition, not to be isolated from society and to exercise their normal life.
- Family planning services are provided by health centers as part of a package of primary health care services. Expansion in health centers that provide this service is gradual so the annual increase percentage of outlets is 20 per cent, according to the Maternal and Child Health and Reproductive Health Strategy (2013-2017). Percentage of health centers that provide family planning services for 2016 was 60 per cent of the main health centers to cover all areas.
- Ministry of Health currently conducts a study on abortion cases and is in process of data entry and analysis. The Iraqi law still allows for safe abortion only in the narrowest and critical cases.
- Out-of-hospital births, in 2015 was 29.8 per cent and in 2016, were 36.7 per cent.

### **3. Considering Gender Perspective to limit disaster risk reduction and resilience building:**

Water scarcity issue in Tigris and Euphrates rivers has been exacerbated by climate change. In 2011, the World Bank estimated that there is a shortage of renewable water resources compared to actual needs from (2000 to 2009) up to 16 per cent, while this is expected to reach 37 per cent from (2020 to 2030), which will increase to reach 51 per cent from (2040 to 2050). This explains the collapse of the agricultural sector with a clear impact on agricultural production. The increase in evaporation rate caused by the rise in temperature elevated the consumption of water by agricultural crops and increased the speed of growth, which leads to limited season on some annual crops, and a shortage of production especially in fruit trees. In addition, the lack of rain led to a decline in the production of wheat to 2974136 tons in 2017, compared 3052939 tons in 2016, despite the increase of cultivated area.

In view of the above and the fact that climate change has a negative impact on humans, the National Commission on Climate Change, which includes governmental institutions, academic and research centers, CSOs and trade unions, produced the draft climate change system for 2018.

- Nationally defined contribution document: This document provides a basis to build a future vision for Iraq in the area of adaptation and climate change impacts that will be minimal to the potential impact of climate change, especially with regard to reducing risks to fragile sectors that are key to sustainable development. Implementation of this document will require regional and international cooperation and support to enable Iraq to obtain its adequate water share for the development of the agricultural sector, protection of human health, protection of natural systems and biodiversity.
- Care has been taken to integrate Iraq's readiness to deal with the Green Climate Fund, which aims to:
  1. Build the equal capacity of women and men to address climate change and ensure that both women and men contribute to implement activities on the ground.
  2. Address potential risks to the project and assess them for women and men, whether in resilience or mitigation activities.
  3. Contribute to bridge the gap between men and women that results from adverse effects of climate change and work to mitigate the worsening social, economic and environmental conditions that may impact women.
  4. Accountability for outcomes, gender impacts and climate change.

5. Work to align the project or programme submitted for funding with the Green Climate Fund policy while at the same time adapting to national policies and priorities and the participation of stakeholders without discarding any category or segment, especially women.
6. Adopt national and international institutional competencies in the institutional framework of the project/programme, considering competencies of young women to create a new generation of experienced and competent men and women alike.
7. Equitable allocation of resources so that women and men benefit equitably from Fund's mitigation and resilience activities.
8. Consider gender sensitivity as an essential component in social and environmental safeguards for the project or programme sustainability.
9. Ensure support for projects, programmes and initiatives related to climate change that are financed by the Green Climate Fund address inequities due to the impacts of climate change and the provision of gender-sensitive solutions to climate change mitigation, resilience or preparedness.

As for the project to increase agricultural resilience towards climate change in Iraq, this is an internationally funded project by the Adaptation Fund in cooperation with International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as an executing agency. It aims to promote ecological and social agro-ecological flexibility on climate change in the four target governorates to further improve livelihoods, food security in rural areas and to manage scarcity of irrigation water. The four target governorates are *Muthanna, Qadisiya, Maysan and Dhi Qar*, where poverty rate is 53, 41, 42, and 41 per cent, respectively. These are the governorate with the highest poverty level.

Gender balance in the project is measured by:

1. Rehabilitation and training of women on agricultural production increasing techniques.
2. It is estimated that at least 30 per cent of the direct beneficiaries of the irrigation infrastructure are women.
3. The benefiting percentage from this project shall 40 per cent of the households directly linked to this programme, and from scholarships provided to the female-headed households (1800 households).
4. In the field of training on income-generating activities and business management, 50 per cent of trainees will be women.

#### 4. Unpaid care and domestic work:

On review of Iraqi laws and legislation, it has been found that there are many laws that respect women rights and ensure their participation in public life as well as their economic and social contribution in compliance with international conventions such as *(CEDAW)*. In the framework of reconciliation between family and work, there are other laws related to the empowerment of women such as the Social Protection Law N<sup>o</sup> 11 of 2014, which provides financial protection to widowed, divorced and abandoned and single woman, unmarried girl of 18 years of age who lost both parents. In addition to the Labor Law N<sup>o</sup> 37 of 2015, which includes provisions pertaining to working women and the legal protection it provides them and regulating the relationship between employees and employers and the articles that address discrimination on the basis of gender, origin, opinion, belief, religion, sect, health or economic condition.

The law also prohibits sexual harassment, or any other behavior that leads to the creation of an intimidating work environment. In addition, the law guarantees paid leave for female employees in particular, including 21 days annual leave, 98 pregnancy and delivery leave, and maternity leave (six months with full pay and six with half salary), and a five-year leave with the payment of the nominal salary of the tax and the calculation of the period of leave for purposes of service and annual

allowance, retirement, deceased husband (130 days), and full pay and prevent from working in night shifts except in very cases, and ensure the return of women to work after the end of pregnancy and maternity leave, and to prohibit child labor and forcing women to do arduous work.

Article 19 of the Care of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs Law N° 38 of 2013 stipulates that persons with disabilities whose disability has not met their normal life requirements and who require those who accompany them to meet their needs continuously have the right of full-time appointment. If the appointee is an employee, he shall be given leave from his job in full pay with the fixed allocations, which are renewed annually, and if he is a non-employee, he shall be paid a monthly salary equal to the minimum salary in the salary scale of the employees. The directive was issued after 2015 and included more than 4,500 full-time staff members, of whom (80 per cent) were women. More than 3,000 full-time staff members were included, about (50 per cent) of whom were women.

## 5. Gender-Sensitive Social Protection:

The Social Protection Act N° 11 of 2014 and the systems and regulations facilitating its implementation were issued to replace Law N° 126 of 1980, which necessitated changing the social care system to achieve the greatest justice and equal opportunities among all the poor and excluding those above the poverty line. However, this may require a focus on creating an enabling environment and strengthening the administrative apparatus of MOLSA, including the Department of Social Protection for Women to implement the new law, which was not easy due to the security conditions that Iraq was living under during the terrorist aggression of *ISIL*. According to this law, in addition to the Social Protection Authority's system N° 1 of 2016, which is considered by the Department of Social Protection for Women to be one of its forms:

- Support women enter the labor market through training, vocational education and capacity development. E.g. the Women social protection Directorate provided (698) trainings for women without breadwinner.
- Assist in obtaining employment or a loan or grant for the establishment of small income-generating projects.
- Activate free health service with Ministry of Health.
- Assist in education, health and housing, and holding seminars on psychological and social support.
- In addition to granting the social protection salary to women below the poverty line, within the framework of Cabinet Decision N° 245 of 2016, the social protection salary for women was increased.

The Women Empowerment Directorate is also partnering with relevant government institutions and the World Bank on a social protection project.

## Section 3: Measures to end discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls

### 1. Women who suffer from physical or mental disability:

The ongoing conflict and violence against persons with disabilities in Iraq has disproportionately affected and made them face significant challenges, including social, economic and political discrimination, as well as the lack of opportunities and adequate protection, where they are most at risk of domestic, social and sexual violence. People with disabilities also lack their own infrastructure and development programmes that meet their needs, such as education and health. In addition, there is a lack of accurate survey and statistics for this population, although most of them are covered by social protection salaries. They also continue to face significant social stigma, as most are treated as charity cases rather than as productive members of society. Although Iraq has ratified the Convention on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>1</sup>, the Government has not implemented appropriate measures as required by article 33 of the Convention. It should be noted that the definition of persons with disabilities under Iraqi Law 38 (2013) is based on a care-based, that is not in line with the definition set forth in the Convention<sup>2</sup> ratified by Iraq in 2012<sup>3</sup>. However, there is a positive discrimination for persons with disabilities, as per Articles 17 and 18 that provide for tax exemptions for the importation of a car for persons with disabilities, whether female or male. Instructions were issued in 2017, for the implementation of these exemptions, benefiting many persons with disabilities.

This lack of legislation coupled with the weakness of basic medical services increases their vulnerability during conflicts. Indeed, lack of easy access to transport networks implies that many persons with disabilities will be cut off when areas are vacated, and that they will often be unable to reach shelters and camps, in addition to the discrimination done by some shelter workers in Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps. The number of people with disabilities is increasing as a result of violence, landmines and explosive remnants of war. Women with disabilities face complex gender discrimination in addition to their disability<sup>4</sup> and experience more likely physical abuse, discrimination and exploitation than their male counterparts<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, they have less access to education and work, and thus lack of economic autonomy<sup>6</sup>. Adherence to traditional gender roles also means that women with disabilities will often lack freedom of movement, because of the shame felt by their families who will also prevent from leaving the home even for treatment<sup>7</sup>.

As for the KRG, and under the Law of Rights and Privileges for People with Special Needs N° 22, 2011, there is in the region:

- 4 shelters, accommodating 50 people and providing all humanitarian and health services.
- 3 special shelters for social care and 18 educational centers for people with various disabilities, in addition to the *Rochne* Center for Computer in addition to 7 vocational training centers on different skills.
- Instructions for leave for mothers with children with disabilities.

## 2. Women in humanitarian situations:

The MOLSA Department of Social Protection of Women sponsors women who have lost their breadwinner, such as widows, divorcees, wives of the missing and others. When the financial allocations are stopped for the social protection salary, the Department provides services through cooperation with donors and humanitarian organizations, including:

- Sponsorship of orphans.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2012/01/401792-un-welcomes-iraqi-ratification-pact-rights-persons-disabilities#.WWdhN4SGPeY>

<sup>2</sup> UNAMI & OHCHR, Report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Iraq, p. 16 (December 2016), [http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=6690:ohchr-report-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-iraq-december-2016&Itemid=650&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=6690:ohchr-report-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-iraq-december-2016&Itemid=650&lang=en)

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection, Status of Ratifications of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-15&chapter=4&clang=\\_en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-15&chapter=4&clang=_en).

<sup>4</sup> UNAMI & OHCHR, Report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Iraq, p. 8-9 (December 2016), [http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=6690:ohchr-report-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-iraq-december-2016&Itemid=650&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=6690:ohchr-report-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-iraq-december-2016&Itemid=650&lang=en); Iraqi Alliance of Disability, The Parallel Report for the Government's Report on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), p. 8 (January 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Iraqi Alliance of Disability, The Parallel Report for the Government's Report on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), p. 9 (January 2018); UNAMI & OHCHR, Report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Iraq, p. 9 (December 2016), [http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=6690:ohchr-report-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-iraq-december-2016&Itemid=650&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=6690:ohchr-report-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-iraq-december-2016&Itemid=650&lang=en)

<sup>6</sup> UNAMI & OHCHR, Report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Iraq, p. 9 (December 2016), [http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=6690:ohchr-report-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-iraq-december-2016&Itemid=650&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=6690:ohchr-report-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-iraq-december-2016&Itemid=650&lang=en)

<sup>7</sup> Iraqi Alliance of Disability, The Parallel Report for the Government's Report on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), p. 9 (January 2018).

- Providing aid and stand beside families in their humanitarian situations, maintain communication channel with them and providing in seasonal school events.
- Preparing a statistical form on the hearings of survivor and battered women, in addition to developing a database to document cases of psychological support, which is in headquarters of the Department of Social Protection for Women, and was used in most centers such as in *Slaheddine, Al-Anbar, Dialy, and Mosul/Ninawa...* When ISIL took over few governorates, alternate centers were open in *Dohuk, Erbil, Felouja, Karbalah...*
- Conducting individual hearings for battered women to relieve them of negative energy, help them discharge emotionally and integrate into society, in addition to group sessions. This helped the affected woman to admit the situation and impact of the damage done to her in order to overcome this ordeal and crisis.
- Including women in humanitarian situations such as displacement, immigration and natural emergencies, with the necessary package of services and health care, including care of pregnant women and mothers, reproductive health, obstetric care and family planning in coordination with international organizations. CSOs have played great role in providing mental health services, psychosocial and free legal support through legal and awareness-raising psychosocial support centers, including mental health services and psychosocial support through psychosocial units in health centers.
- Preparing work guide for health volunteers for home visits for displaced persons and refugees in the camps for children and newborns.
- Building the capacity of mothers, pregnant women, obstetric care and family planning in humanitarian settings.
- Addressing the effects of terrorist crimes and deterioration of economic, social and security conditions.
- The number of social welfare units of all types increased from 96 units in 2013 to 98 units in 2016.
- Increase in the number of female and male beneficiaries of social protection network salaries from (878,507 beneficiaries) in 2013 to (905,773 beneficiaries) in 2016, while disbursements to the social welfare network decreased from (2.6 billion Iraqi Dinars) in 2013 to 1.1 billion Dinars in 2016. Number of households covered by the Social Protection Network for 5<sup>th</sup> batch 1,107,779 in 2018 for amount of 309,348,022,953,00 Iraqi Dinars.
- The beneficiary /wage-earners/cooperatives index rose from 20.6 in 2014 to 22.4 in 2015.
- The Council of Ministers issued the Decision N<sup>o</sup> 92, 2014 to approve considering what components of the Iraqi people from *Yezidi, Turkmens, Christians, Shabak* and other components have been exposed to terrorists as mass genocide.
- The Council of Representatives issued Decision N<sup>o</sup> 27, 2016 to treat victims of the Tuzharmatu district on 21 November 2015 and 24 April 2016 as martyrs in terms of rights and privileges. The Council of Representatives issued also Decision N<sup>o</sup> 43 of 2016 on actions taken by the government to liberate the Yazidi abducted with the reconstruction of Sinjar district and discuss issues around their genocide for presentation in the international criminal courts for investigation.
- Forming a working group that comprises representatives of the relevant authorities and directly coordinated by the National Security Adviser to prepare a national policy for managing the displaced in Iraq. This policy has been adopted by the Council of Ministers Decision, N<sup>o</sup> 414 of 2015.
- Approving the strategy to provide health, preventive and curative services for displaced and returnees to liberated areas since 2014.

The Department of Social Protection opened outlets in the governorates to receive displaced women and facilitate the procedures as follows:

- Developing alternative sections and outlets in governorates, based on the Ninawa (3 alternative sites: *Dohuk, Erbil and Kirkuk*); *Tal Afar* (alternative site is *Karbala*), *Al-Hamdaniya* (alternative site is *Karbala*), *Al-Anbar* (alternative location is *Amiriyah Al-Falujah/Erbil*), *Slaheddine* (alternative site *Balad and Dujail*). Opening a new outlet in *Erbil, Hawaain Kawa*, which is connected to the Department's headquarters to facilitate the delivery of services for displaced women, including for Christians and *Shabak*.
- Directing all sections and outlets of the Department to receive displaced women from tension governorates covered by the salaries of Social Protection Network and give them priority to issue new identity cards and update their data.
- Coordinating with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to include many survivors of Yezidi, where a joint committee was formed to overcome difficulties in delivering the best services.
- Obtaining approval of MOLSA to exclude survivors of Yezidi from captivity and accept the support of the High Commission for Human Rights and the Directorate of *Awqaf* and Yazidis Affairs Office in Kurdistan Region, where the Yezidi survivors (1529 beneficiaries) were included through the joint committee between the Department of Social Protection of Women and the High Commission for Human Rights. It included 88 women from *Shabak* group who survived ISIL oppression.
- Obtaining approval of the Minister to include 169 beneficiary women in *Al-Alam* Area in Salah al-Din Governorate, including 337 survivors of terrorist gangs, whose names were presented by humanitarian organizations, and were included by the Minister due to violence they were subjected to. The data of displaced women from liberated Mosul in conjunction with the liberation operations has been updated, including several displaced from *Shabak* and Christian components on the same exceptional measures.
- Updating data and providing relief to 68,332 displaced women and amount of (21,355,700,000 Iraqi Dinars). Communicating with CSOs to undertake joint programmes to provide services to women in displacement camps, as well as visiting displaced families and provide in-kind, financial and food assistance to them and check their conditions.

### **3. Women living in remote and rural areas:**

Iraq recently has witnessed a remarkable improvement in the ratio of primary and secondary enrollment by both males and females. There has also been improvement in literacy. However, despite this improvement, there are gaps in indicators between males and females, indicating disparity in the enrollment of primary and secondary schools between urban and rural areas, according to the economic and social situation of the family.

Enrollment rates for grades from kindergarten to junior high: Net enrollment rates for females were lower than for males in the primary, intermediate and secondary levels, as well as for the university during *ISIL* terrorist's acts. There is a lower turnout of both males and females in intermediate and secondary schools and has only improved in the past two years. According to the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 6), whose results were released at the end of 2018, the proportion of children aged 3 to 5 years from the completion of the final stage of elementary school, is (73 per cent) for females and (78 per cent) for males. As for the middle stage, it is 47 per cent for females and 46 per cent for males. In the preparatory stage, the proportion of females was 43 per cent and males 45 per cent. And in order to facilitate service provision to rural women who lack family support, more centers were open in Baghdad and other governorates.

## Section 4: Impacts of humanitarian crises on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

The humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict have played a major role in hindering the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, which is one of the worst challenges facing Iraq and that illustrated by *ISIL* having seized Mosul after June 2014 and later the governorates of *Anbar*, *Salahuddin* and some areas in *Diyala* and *Kirkuk*. Instead of progressing in the implementation of the 12 areas of concern of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the reality indicates that Iraqi women, especially women lacking family support, situation has deteriorated significantly in all areas of concern, in the cities occupied by *ISIL* and has led to the suspension of many services.

The repercussions of the events that happened in Iraq since 2003, through the period of sectarian fighting and displacement and ending war against *ISIL* in the cities they occupied, led to a significant disruption in the organs of the State of service and investment because of the depletion of energies of all kinds in wars and the liberation of cities. This has negatively affected the development or implementation of programmes for the empowerment of women and gender equality, as well as the disruption of the lives of thousands of urban citizens who have been dominated by terrorist gangs because of the crises of displacement, extermination, sexual abuse and restriction of freedom. All of this has resulted in humanitarian disasters and violent crimes against women and girls, one of the most important obstacles to women advancement:

1- The National Plan for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325/2000 (2013-2017) was launched. However, because of *ISIL*'s attack in June 2014, the implementation of the plan was hindered. It was replaced by an emergency plan to cater for women needs during the period of armed conflict, however its implementation on the ground was compromised because of the lack of a dedicated budget.

2- *ISIL*'s violence has caused an increase of the number of displaced families to reach 892,311 with 123,135 families with women as the main providers, in addition to a group of children who are being raised by the community as a result of the sexual violence inflicted on their mothers whose civil and human rights are not being protected. In addition, the climatic conditions of the country have greatly affected the life, stability and safety of the environment for the IDPs. They were also affected by the conditions of severe heat throughout summer, as well as difficult humanitarian situation due to heavy rains and hurricanes in the winter for several seasons, which led to the destruction of the camps and damaged their health, safety and stability.

The government has focused on confronting the crisis of displacement of entire cities and to resort families to the outskirts of cities and within the following:

- a) Issuing emergency and immediate grants of one million dinars to each displaced family. CSOs have played a major role in helping to issue an ID for the displaced to obtain the rights resulting from humanitarian initiatives and government activities such as the Higher Committee for the Relief of Displaced Persons, Ministry of Migration and Displaced and other ministries, including MOLSA.
- b) The Ministry of Education has been able to provide school seats for displaced children with the exception of the outskirts of the city of Mosul, due to the limited potential of the schools.
- c) In early 2018, the government implemented a plan to return displaced persons to their areas facilitated by the concerned authorities and the management of the compounds by providing large vehicles for transport and facilitating their entry into the cities, but with slow reconstruction as a result of administrative corruption.
- d) The Council of Representatives passed a Decision 3/2016, which included the formation of a Committee to develop remedies for the problems left behind by the organization in the

governorate of Ninawa and the Council of Ministers issued a Decision 27/2016 to compensate for damages and determine benefits.

- e) Recognizing the difficulties and all the challenges, the Women Empowerment Directorate, the Higher Committee for the Advancement of the Status of Women, the 1325 Committee, the National Reconciliation Commission, the High Commission for Human Rights and CSOs are still working on the implementation of the requirements of reconciliation and reintegration, the levels of compensation, the legal and judicial redress and psychological rehabilitation. Moreover, the Women Social Protection Directorate went on many field visits to refugee camps.
- f) KRG sheltered two million refugees, displaced immigrant, established camps and issued residence permits to settle in the governorates, especially in Erbil and Dohuk.

## **Section 5: Priorities to accelerate women advancement for the next five years:**

The government's policy aims to increase the number of women in the labor force by (5 per cent) over the next five years. The adoption of national statistics will serve as a baseline for measuring and monitoring progress towards this goal, although the ILO's data may differ from the government's statistics.

### **1- Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice:**

The following laws benefit both men and women:

- Guidelines and wages for inmates through the social reform department's rules N° 32 issued in 2015;
- First Amendment to the Law for the Compensation of Persons Affected by Military Operations, Military Mistakes and Terrorist attacks – Law N° 20 issued in 2009 and Law N° 57 issued in 2015;
- The General Amnesty Law N° 26 of 2016;
- The Human Organ Transplantation and Prevention of Trafficking Act N° 11 of 2016;
- The Law supporting Physicians N° 36 of 2016;
- The article 1 of the Labor Law N° 37 of 2015 asserts the principle of non-discrimination while article 4 of the same law affirms the provision of decent work for all without discrimination.

As for the KRG, the draft Constitution, in article 20 under the heading "Equality", states that:

“**First:** All are equal before the law”.

“**Second:** All forms of discrimination on basis of race, color, sex, language, social background, nationality, origin, religion, belief, thought, age, social, political or economic status, or handicap are prohibited. The principle of equality shall not prevent redressing the effects and consequences of past injustice perpetrated by former regimes against the citizens of Kurdistan and its ethnic, religious and linguistic groups”.

“**Third:** Men and women shall be equal before the law. The Government must seek to remove all obstacles hindering equality in all spheres of life, and in civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights. The KRG guarantees that all shall enjoy their rights, as stipulated in this Constitution and the ratified international instruments. For information, this Constitution is still awaiting the referendum of the people of Kurdistan to enter into force. As for the role of women in the judiciary and in application of the principle of equality, the proportion of women in the judiciary and the general prosecution has been increased.

The Law of the High Judicial Council was promulgated in Region N° 7 of 2009. As a result, the number of women judges in the Region is increasing, with 30 women judges out of 233 judges and 56 out of 202 general prosecutors. In 2014, 13 out of 41 graduates of the High Judicial Council judges and prosecutors were women. The following year, twelve judges and prosecutors out of 35 graduates were women. Then,

in 2018 for the current graduating class, 28 out of 60 women were accepted into the High Judicial Council. There are therefore now more than 85 women who are judges and prosecutors in the Region.

## **2. Poverty Eradication and Support of Agricultural Productivity and Food Security:**

The following decisions/decrees were decided by the Council of Ministers:

- Cabinet Decree N° 178 of 2014 was issued to exempt widows who are supported by the Government to not have to refund any income earned that is higher than the set minimum salary;
- The Cabinet Decree N° 254 of 2016 was issued to positively distinguish the minimum monthly subsidy set at 255,000 dinars for women compared to 175,000 for men;
- Restructuring the High Committee for the Management of Policies for Poverty Alleviation through Council of Ministers Decisio N° 344 of 2017.

## **3. Participation and Political Representation**

Article 41 of the draft Constitution of the KRG states that: "(There) shall be considered in the system of election of the members (of the parliament) a fair representation of the various groups of the Iraqi Kurdistan and women shall account for no less than 30 per cent of seats in the parliament. Article 106 of the draft Constitution concerning municipal councils stipulates that: "The law on the election of municipal councils should aim to achieve a representation of women of no less than (30 per cent) of the total number of its members." The Parliament has also passed Law N° 2 in 2009 on its elections, in which the representation of women has been determined to be at least 30 per cent of the total number of seats in the Parliament. In addition, Law N° 4 of 2009 has similar rules for the provincial council elections. As for the current government formation, which is the eighth one, which has emerged from the 2013 parliamentary elections, one woman was elected out of 20 ministers as the Minister of Municipalities and Tourism.

The Parliament promulgated its new rules and procedures on 17 July 2018, which stipulated that the Presidency of the Parliament shall include among its three members (the President and the two Deputies) at least one woman and after the elections of 30 September 2018, the first woman speaker was elected. Another parliamentary woman was elected to the post of second vice-speaker of the ethnic or religious minorities. However, her functions are confined to managing the administrative matters of the governing body. The Council of Ministers has previously issued a special Decree to form the High Council for Women Affairs in the region, in charged with formulating policies that support women' causes and improve women's status. There is a serious commitment during the current session of Parliament to legislate a law which would require that at least 30 or 40 per cent of women should be represented in the executive branch.

## **4. Women and Entrepreneurship:**

The Economic Empowerment Plan for Iraqi Women was developed in cooperation with the World Bank and UN Women (Iraq Country Office). The plan was launched within the framework of plans for Jordan and Lebanon alongside Iraq at the Mashreq Conference on the Economic Empowerment of Women held in Beirut under the patronage of the Lebanese Prime Minister on January 19, 2019. Special emphasis will be placed on creating work opportunities for women entrepreneurs, especially for widow who are the breadwinner of their families.

## **5. Right to Work and Rights in the Workplace:**

On 17 May 2015, the Labor Law was issued to protect women by prohibiting any form of sexual harassment at the workplace (Article 9). The law also emphasized the importance of equality and non-discrimination in wages and leave. However, female employment rate in the labor market remained low. According to the data shared by the Iraq Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation Survey: during 2017,

the percentage of female workers aged 15 years and above was 12.6 per cent, while for males aged 15 years and above, it was 72.7 per cent. The female unemployment rate is higher than that of men in Iraq. The overall unemployment rate of 13.8 per cent is distributed as follows: 10.9 per cent of men versus 31.0 per cent of women. The percentage of women belonging to the labor force is among the lowest in the region: 14.5 per cent as opposed 72 per cent of males according to the Central Bureau of Statistics. This disparity is due to the limited economic opportunities, which negatively affect the ability of women to find jobs.

The number of unemployed persons grew steadily due to inability of the State to employ large numbers of them in the public sector. The number of unemployed persons in Iraq registered in the internal database from (2003 to 2017) was 559,815 persons. To solve this issue, a budget has been allocated to implement the National Strategy for Poverty Alleviation (2013-2017). The budget was of 7 billion dinars for 2016 and 3 billion dinars for 2017), in addition to the accumulated budget of the Lending Fund and the implementation of micro-credit programmes and support of small income-generating projects in accordance with Law N<sup>o</sup> 10 of 2012. In addition, loans supporting society rehabilitation and other supporting “skilled young woman” were granted since the year 2010. The Employment and Loans Department provides loans in accordance with the principle of gender equality, although the number of females applying for registration in unemployed database is much lower than their male counterparts. This is due to women having less access to the programme to those with electronic illiteracy and lack of access to the necessary information needed to register to the programme, suffering from technological illiteracy or living in rural remote and poor areas.

The Statistics Department’s data demonstrates that while 8,861 men were registered in the unemployment database, only 896 females (constituting 10 per cent of the number of men) during the period from 2016 to 2017. To address the issue of women unemployment fairly and achieve real equality, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs implemented a programme for young skilled women since October 2017. The programme is important for women to meet their requirements for economic empowerment. The Ministry also adopted the principle of inclusion of women prisoners and beneficiaries, in shelter who have completed their sentence terms and have some skills, in small loans. In addition, women with disabilities have included in easy loans, provided that the disability percentage is (50 per cent) or less, in the Community Rehabilitation Programme, which is in place since 1997, if the beneficiary is capable to manage the project. Business Incubators Programme was another inclusion opportunity that was launched for period (2015-2018), on which a loan to the businesswoman and another loan were provided to unemployed beneficiaries for implementation of a joint-venture. This programme was implemented in Baghdad where 50 projects were accepted. Another 4 incubators (2 in *Baghdad*, 1 in *Karbala*, 1 in *Dhi Qar*) will be opened. At the same time, work is underway to activate the programme as part of the new Poverty Reduction Strategy (2018-2022).

Many legislative measures have been taken to strengthen/enforce laws, policies and practices in the workplace that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors and legislation on equal remuneration. Article 22 of the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 stipulates that (1) Labor is a guaranteed right for all Iraqis to ensure a decent life; (2) The law regulates the relationship between workers and employers on economic grounds, considering the rules of social justice. The establishment and accession of trade unions and professional federations, regulated by law.

The Labor Law N<sup>o</sup> 37 of year 2015 was issued and entered into force on February, 7<sup>th</sup> 2016. Article (1/6) defines the worker as any person, male or female, who works under the direction and supervision of an employer under his administration, verbal, explicit or implied, or as training or testing, or performs any intellectual or physical work for remuneration of any kind under the law. The law also

guaranteed equality between men and women in wages, increments and allowances, as well as granting them some of the preferential benefits of obtaining full-time leave in pregnancy and childbirth. Article 6 of the law states that "Freedom of work is safeguarded and the right to work cannot be restricted or denied." The State pursues a policy to promote full and productive work and respects fundamental principles and rights, whether in law or practice which include:

1. Freedom of association and practical recognition of the right to collective negotiation
2. Elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor
3. Actual elimination of child labor
4. Elimination of discrimination in employment or profession.

Article 2 of the Labor Code N° 37 of 2015 stipulates that decent work is guaranteed to all without discrimination. Article 4 of the Constitution stipulates that: "Work shall be the right of every citizen, and the State shall endeavor to provide it on basis of equality of opportunity without discrimination of any kind." Article 6 refers to the elimination of discrimination in employment or occupation. Article 8 indicates the danger of exceeding or violating the principle of parity of opportunities and equality in treatment, especially discrimination between workers, whether directly or indirectly in matters related to vocational training, employment or work conditions and requirements. Article 42 stipulates that the right of the worker to enjoy equality of opportunities and treatment in employment, away from any form of discrimination. Article 48 stipulates that a contract shall not be terminated due to discrimination in employment, whether direct or indirect.

Article 11 of the Labor Law stipulates that: (a) The worker shall have the right to resort to the Labor Court to file a complaint, if he is subjected to any form of forced labor, discrimination or harassment in the recruitment and occupation; (b) whoever violates provisions of articles in this Chapter related to child labor, discrimination, forced labor, sexual harassment, individually, shall be imprisoned for a period that does not exceed six months and shall be fined one million Iraqi Dinars, or one of these penalties. The MOLSA Department of Social Protection through the Poverty Reduction Strategy, has granted 11,090 loans (2012-2016) and 24,033 loans for small income-generating projects from (2013-2017). It also granted 370 loans within the industrial services during the period (2015-2017) as well as 388 loans for community rehabilitation projects in 2017 and 107 microenterprise loans in 2018.

As for the KRI, instructions N° (2) have been issued since 2016 regarding the mother's care for her disabled child, namely, granting her personal leave from work and providing her with her full salary. Social security provisions were also adopted in 2018 under the Social Security and Social Security Act N° 39 of 1971 on foreign and domestic workers which supported 861 women. The Directorate of Vocational Training provided employment opportunities for women through. For instance, 104 women were provided with jobs in various fields, and for the years leading up to 2017, 1,198 women were granted small loans.

However, the presence of women in the labor market, as investors, remains weak compared to men. This is why the government aims to set up economic empowerment programmes in partnership with the UN. The Labor Law N° 37 of 2015 contains clear provisions in Chapter 10 of the Law (Article 844) to protect the rights of women working during pregnancy especially to ensure that those involved in heavy labor do not have to engage in work that is hazardous or harmful to their health or that of their baby as well as providing a salary to women after childbirth during maternity leave. According to article 11 of this law, the Labor Court was formed to settle the complaints of workers employed in the private sector. However, women are scared of using their right to file a complaint, in the case of sexual harassment not to losing their job. Thus, extensive awareness campaigns are needed to inform women working in the private sector of their legal rights under this law.

## Chapter II: Progress made across the 12 areas of concern

### Section 6: Actions for unpaid care and domestic work

Actions taken include: Investment in time and labor-saving infrastructure, such as public transportation, electricity, water and sanitation which have decreased the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women.

According to the Central Statistical Organization, the population of Iraq was 38 million in 2018 with 19.3 million men and 18.9 million women, which thereby accounts for 49 per cent of the total Iraqi population. Since women represent almost half of the population of Iraq, depriving them of access to infrastructure services and rendering them unable to invest in them means wasting and squandering resources.

The percentage of the population that has access to safe drinking water sources in 2018 was 96 per cent in urban areas and 87 per cent in rural areas according to the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey of the Ministry of Planning. According to the findings of the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey in 2018, (99.2 per cent) of the people in Iraq used safe drinking water sources. The percentage was 100 per cent in the *Erbil, Basra* and *Maysan* governorates, while the lowest percentage was found in the *Diyala* Governorate at (97.2 per cent), followed by *Babel* at 97.8 per cent), the *Najaf, Salaheddine and Wasit* Governorates at (98.1 per cent).

The percentage of areas which are served by sewerage networks in the Baghdad governorate is (90 per cent) and covers 514 localities. This is a good indicator of the availability of sanitation services that support women's work and reduce the burden on them. The strategic projects which have contributed to improving the infrastructure services for all the citizens in the capital city and are either completed and/or are close to completion, are as follows:

- Implementation of a main South-West Carrier Line near *Karkh* with its related stations which serves the areas located within the towns of *Mansour* and *Rashid* (completed); and the additional Western transport with a pumping station which serves the municipal areas of *Dora, Mansour, Al-Shoula, Kadhimiya* (82.5 per cent completed); as well as of a main South-East carrier line *Al-Khansa* which serves the residential areas and commercial stores located within the district of the *Shaab* Municipality, *Sadr* Municipality 2, *Sadr* Municipality 1, *Al-Ghadeer* Municipality District, and New Baghdad Municipality District (95 per cent completed);
- Implementation of a main carrier line within the 77th Street with the pumping station which serves the areas located within towns of *Ghadir* and *New Baghdad* (77 per cent completed), and a complementary one to Al-Quds line from Square-83 to the intersection of Oil Club and serves the districts of *Al-Shaab* Municipality (100 per cent completed).

There are many issues and obstacles that impede the performance of the sewage system in Baghdad governorate and have a direct and an indirect impact on the quality of service provided which, in turn, affects male and female citizen.

### Ratio of Population serviced by Sewerage Systems and Plants (2015, 2016, 2017)<sup>8</sup>

#	Year	Cost
1	2015	16.71
2	2016	16.26
3	2017	15.63

The random urban expansion seen all over Iraq is the result of decades of crises and conflicts. As poverty rates have increased, there are now (8 per cent) of people in Iraq who live in substandard housing. The number of random housing units is 347,000 dwelling according to the National Development Plan (2018-2022), which expands on the reasons and consequences of the lack of urban planning. The abundance of these substandard housing has increased the amount of wastewater produced, which is higher than the absorptive capacity of the lines and networks.

As for the public transportation sector, the Projects Department in the city of Baghdad is responsible for paving and asphaltting the main streets, building and maintaining bridges and tunnels, modern roads in new residential areas, repairing previously paved streets, installing road signs, protective fences, and fixing traffic lights at intersections. The area which was asphalted per month was 125239 meter<sup>2</sup> in 2018. The paved area had decreased in 2017, while the total asphalted area in 2018 was 4,000,000 meter<sup>2</sup> (or 47 per cent of the total area).

The Iraqi Government seeks to develop the energy sector, strengthen the role of private sector and its reliance on the electricity sector by improving the efficiency of the electricity system and the quality of services provided to consumers. Women's access to electricity and other sources of energy is often limited. Women are primarily responsible for collecting and using biomass for energy production, which has negatively affected their health and safety. In addition, women's access to transportation remains a major challenge.

Overall, the most important SDGs for Iraq to achieve are the ones related to: water, food, health, shelter and services. The Iraq National Development Plan (2018-2022) aims to ensure a steady supply of potable water and access to the share of the consumption of the individual net water which is compatible with population growth and at least 250 liters/day/person in Baghdad and Governorate centers, 200 liters/day in the provinces and districts. It also seeks to improve the quality of the drinking water and reduce water losses to less than 10 per cent, and increase the rate of access to sanitation services to 97 per cent in Baghdad and 66.7 per cent in the other governorates and ensure that the treated water conforms to the international quality standards.

Women in Iraq spent an average of 228 minutes per day on housework (food preparation, and other activities around the house) in 2012; in contrast men spent only 93 minutes. This disparity adversely affects women's ability to engage in income-generating activities.

- The number of women in urban areas is greater than their counterparts who live in rural areas by almost double, which requires an emphasis on non-agricultural projects for women. In addition, women assist male household in trade or agriculture activities, pro-bono or for a small compensation. This is a common practice in rural and grassroots whereby women are not rewarded monetarily for any work within the household because free housework is considered a household duty according to the stereotypical societal perspective, in addition to social traditions that oppose interference by the State in family matters.

<sup>8</sup> Source: Ministry of Reconstruction, Housing, Municipalities and Public Works

- The National Strategy for Poverty Alleviation (2013-2017 & 2018-2022), the National Development Plan (2018-2022) and the Sustainable Development Plan +30 include goals and outcomes which focus on the development of infrastructure services that will directly affect women performance at home.
- According to the Social Protection Act N° 11, 2014, women who bear the responsibility of subsidizing their children or parents with disabilities receive a monthly stipend, regardless of their economic status, including men and women. However, the reality indicates that the majority of those who undertake this task are women. Therefore, the State pays wage for this type of unpaid care within the family. Per this law, a medical committee has been established to work on documenting disability rates and issue subsidy decisions according to an online mechanism. The Social Protection Act N° 11 of 2011 dealt with the women-headed households, poor families headed by unemployed and old people. As for the law N° 38, 2015, it deals with the institution taking care of the disabled people (men and women).
- The State shall support working women during pregnancy, before and after the period of delivery, by granting them maternity leave and full maternity allowance for six and a half months after delivery, to enable them to manage their health conditions as well as that of their babies. As for women working in private sector, the Labor Law N° 37 of 2015, in chapter 10 provides similar protection with some differences to achieve a balance between the interests of the employees and those of the employer.
- The loan system adopted by MOLSA and the Ministry of Agriculture, developed within the National Strategy for Poverty Alleviation and other programmes mentioned above, provides opportunities for housewives, especially rural women, to set-up their own investment projects.

## **Section 7: Actions to reduce and eliminate poverty among women and girls**

The Government considers the empowerment of women in the Poverty Reduction Strategy (2018-2022), which has been updated and adopted a new plan. Indeed, in January 2018, the Iraqi government announced the adoption of this strategy to reduce poverty, which is a good initiative towards improving the economic and service level of the poor, which included the fifth outcome of effective social protection and efficiency, in addition to the development of the economic empowerment plan for Iraqi women.

While the presence of women in the public sphere, both as political actors and in social or economic movements, is increasing, they are also becoming more present in the wage-earning workforce as a realistic response to their enrollment in education, which is a true expression of women empowerment in Iraq. The national development plans, sectoral strategies and policies adopted by the government of Ministry of Planning emphasize the provisions of the 2005 Iraqi Constitution on the provision of education, employment and health opportunities to achieve equality between men and women as a right for all, with emphasis on vulnerable groups such as widows. The MOLSA Directorate of Social Protection for Women under and through the strategy of poverty alleviation granted 11,090 loans from 2012 to 2016, and granted 24,033 loans for small income-generating projects from 2011 until now, 370 loans within the industrial services in the period of 2015-2017, and 388 loans for community rehabilitation projects from 2007 until mid-2017.

The Directorate of Social Protection for Women under MOLSA sponsors widows, divorcees, disabled women, abandoned women, the wives of missing persons, unmarried women...

**First**, the subsidy started being disbursed every two instead of three months to poor families.

**Second:** To provide a supportive income for families through the education of the beneficiary, as well as a skill to train and equip them with the necessary equipment to carry out the training in coordination with local and international organizations and donors.

**Third:** Launching the emergency project to support social stability and stability in Iraq with the financial support of the World Bank Group in the form of a loan of 200 million dollars included in the budget of 2018, in order to focus on the liberated governorates, especially returnees through the provision of cash for work and temporary jobs and other. The allowed for providing social support for the most vulnerable groups in order to restore confidence between the State and the citizen and support economically of more than one million citizens in the liberated areas. Furthermore, the Women Social Protection Directorate requested that some of these projects are allocated to women in certain governorates and two women have been elected as members of the programme Task Force.

## 1. Rural women in the family:

Rural women usually carry more burdens than their urban counterparts. They are responsible for the delivery of water and access to water sources in places where health conditions and many services are lacking. The results of the Food Security and Vulnerability Survey for Iraq in 2016 show that the percentage of women who are heads of household aged 12 years and over is (7.6 per cent) in urban settings and (11.4 per cent) for rural areas. When comparing the data of the Iraq Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment for 2016 with the results of the Maternal Mortality Survey for 2013, we find that the percentage of women heads of household is still slightly low, and that the households headed by women in Iraq are only (10.5 per cent). In the rural areas of the city, the percentage of female-headed households is lower. This is certainly due to the social status of the family in the rural environment.

In the KRI, the development of rural women is one of the most important priorities in the "National Strategy for the Development of the Status of Women in the Kurdistan Region 2016-2026" in line with the objectives of the strategy of sustainable development 2030. There is also the project of social and economic empowerment of rural women of 2014 in rural areas of the provinces in the areas of health, reproductive health and education, as well as their training in life skills. However, the project had to be suspended by the end of 2015 due to the economic crisis. There is also a programme to support rural women, who have returned to their villages and homes, by giving them sheep and other livestock, so they are able to use and sell milk and other produce in support of the agricultural market in the region. The efforts of Ministry of Agriculture during this period are summarized as follows:

- Agricultural land contracts with women were concluded at (20-30 per cent). The number of women benefiting from these loans reached 18,000, as well as the village girls who were involved in the work that was provided by these agricultural lands.
- In previous years, 200 women were trained in beekeeping, cattle, cattle and domesticated birds and the production of some agricultural foods such as bees, jam and raisins. This productive group of women is still currently active.
- The Ministry of Agriculture in the Region, in cooperation with UNIDO, is working continuously to develop agricultural food based on the manual product and educational courses for this type of product, in addition to receiving training on the use of advanced agricultural machines used in agricultural production. The Ministry also cooperates with the organizations involved in the financing of commercial projects set up by women farmers and women working in agriculture, thus encouraging women to engage in productive agricultural activities.

## 2. Women in some governorates:

- a) The villages in the southern governorates lost their traditional economic identity of agriculture and livestock production after the survey teams conducted a survey showing that women do not have a significant share of the fixed income earned by the villagers. Most of the income is for men and comes from civil and military jobs (15 per cent). Every person who is not an employee or not affiliated with the military and security service describes himself as unemployed even if he works in the private sector because he does not feel financially stable and because the private sector is not stable. Therefore, more than 80 per cent of the villagers describe themselves as unemployed for work, a frequent term for those who work irregularly and do not have a stable income.
- b) The Government provided loans under the Agricultural Initiative and the Agricultural Bank Administration during the years preceding 2014, but it is noted that most farmers cannot provide the conditional guarantees for obtaining these loans because they do not have the necessary guarantees such as: registered property or employee bail. Loan spent according to the objective is rare because of the inability of farmers to invest in agricultural land successfully, which led to the misuse of loans.
- c) Illiteracy remains high among both men and women, especially among young people. This is due to the period of economic siege, which has caused many families to not pay attention to the study of children and now because of the difficult economic situation that has hit the villages because of climate change.
- d) Women and girls in rural communities which represent most of society in the southern governorates work in some handicrafts industries, but suffer from the lack financial and community support.

Rural women have suffered from forced displacement and violence in all of its forms because most terrorist groups used orchards as a safe haven for them and therefore many rural areas were the starting point for their terrorist acts. The tragic incidents and violent acts include:

- The burning of orchards and farms, which constituted the largest source of income for the rural women has left most of the women below the poverty line and this has caused the displacement of the women and internal migration to the cities to search for work.
- The phenomenon of forced marriage of girls by terrorist groups has left wives without official documents. It is a painful status that hundreds of Iraqi families live in some governorate every day, in addition to suffering the pain of their children who have been denied Iraqi identification papers. This has caused denying the children education and access to all other public services. One of the reasons the marriage contracts have not be officially registered is the fear that these women might also be terrorists.
- Many women joined these extremist groups and these women were used in their terrorist operations. The first female suicide bomber was in *Diyala*. The phenomenon of female suicide bombers is due to reasons related to extremist ideologies and the exploitation of women who lost their relatives, those with mental disabilities or those who have reached a vulnerable state of utter despair.
- Upon the withdrawal and flight of terrorist groups, women and children were left behind and were out casted of the society for their probable relationship with terrorists. The Action Plan of the Joint Declaration against sexual violence between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UN is dealing with this issue.
- There are still pockets of sleeper terror cells that warn of possible imminent danger in rural areas in particular, which causes rural women to feel insecure and negatively affect all aspects of their lives and restrict their freedom.
- Tribal system has inflicted the most harm on rural women as it impacts all aspects of their lives: marriage, divorce, polygamy, control of resources such as inheritance.

- The migration of men to cities or abroad, in order to raise the standard of living, has forced women to shoulder the responsibilities for the family.
- Rural women see working in the fields and farms of the family as an extension of their domestic work, so they work more than 15 hours without pay.
- *Diyala* governorate registered during the period 2015-2016 only 4,841 divorce cases, (40 per cent of divorces were due to economic reasons.
- The rate of dropout of students from schools was more than 9 per cent, according to unofficial statistics with 90 per cent of the students coming from the displaced communities.
- According to MOLSA, there are 104,916 widows, 53,288 divorced women, in addition to women with no family support, disabled women, wives of prisoners... In addition, (9,300 widows) and (3,000 divorced) receive salaries from MOLSA.
- The governorate recorded 36.7 per cent of births outside the health institutions, especially among rural women because of the lack of family medicine centers. Only 7 centers were registered in *Diyala* governorate. There are serious diseases among rural women such as: anemia, viral liver disease, breast cancer, tuberculosis and others.

## **Section 8: Actions to improve access to social protection for women and girls**

Women constitute approximately (54 per cent) of those covered by the Social Care Network. Many decisions have been adopted by the Council of Ministers:

1. The decision of Council of Ministers N° 312, 2016 to exclude beneficiaries who are not entitled to the Social Protection Network and reverted the amounts to disadvantaged people. The eligibility criteria depend on the method mentioned in Article 6 of the Social Protection Law N° 11 of 2014. It is quite challenging to put into action this law as there is no committee in charge of auditing the database of beneficiaries and number of those who are included might not deserve it. The Commission faced difficulties in accessing the data and updating it based on the input provided by the monitoring teams. Currently, 43 per cent of the beneficiaries of the social protection are not categorized as 'poor' due to the category- targeting mechanism in accordance with the Social Welfare Law N° 126 of 1980. This measure is favorable to the disadvantaged, as the majority of them are widows and divorcees. This allows for less transgressors and their replacement with new people, thus widening the absorption of the budget allocated.
2. The Council of Ministers Decision N° 245 of 2016 amending the social benefit ceiling according to the provisions of Article 24 of the Social Protection Law N° 11 of 2014, which raised the ceiling of the social protection salary for women compared to men as follows: The amount of monthly benefit for men in terms of household size (1-100000), (2- 125000) (3-150 thousand), (4-1750000). The amount of the monthly subsidy for women in terms household size (1-100,000), (2-150000 thousand), (3-20000 thousand), (4-2250000), which promoted positive discrimination in favor of women.
3. The Council of Ministers Decision N° 124 of 2017 approving the disbursement of social benefits to those covered by the provisions of the Social Protection Law N° 11 of 2014 in the governorates liberated from the terrorist occupation to accept the new subsidy, after ensuring their safety and security
4. The Council of Ministers Decree N° 431 of 2017, approving the amendment of the order N° 110 of 2011 to recover the amounts provided to those who exceeded the salaries of the Social Protection Network (mostly women) for a period of ten years.
5. Exemption of widows who exceed the Social Welfare Pension from the decisions of restitution according to the decision of Council of Ministers N° 178 of 2014. A previous amendment to the Social Welfare Law has been amended by the Law N° 28 of 2013.
6. Provide or strengthen social protection for women with no family support such as: unemployment benefits, public works programmes and social assistance.

7. Establishing 44 units of the Department of Social Protection in remote and rural areas to facilitate the access and provide services to the beneficiaries, as well as the use of mobile teams during the displacement.
8. Created income-generating projects that supported the economic empowerment of women by providing them with sewing machines and other tools, in cooperation with CSOs. They also provided them with in-kind assistance during school and holiday seasons.
9. Giving small loans to the breadwinner's as a substitute for social benefits. After claims by the Department of Social Protection for Women, the age limit for of the breadwinners became 55 instead of 50.
10. In 2016, the disbursement of the social protection salary started to be delivered electronically in order to facilitate access to the service.

The Social Protection Directorate organized 4 charitable markets, in which beneficiaries were able to sell handicrafts and handmade products in cooperation with CSOs. The aim of such markets is to: a) Incentivize women to market their product well in order to be able to sell more of it, and b) Provide social and educational benefits to orphans.

In the KRI, the social protection network is specialized in supporting broken families as well as families living below the poverty line. The benefits of this network were the following:

- According to statistics conducted between 2016 and 2017, the number of women benefiting from the social protection, in Erbil, reached 20,863 women: 14,120 in *Duhok* and 20,049 in *Sulaymaniyah*. The total number of beneficiaries accounted for 55.32 per cent of women living in the three governorates of the KRI. The women who benefitted from this project were: widows, divorced women, orphans, women with disabilities, women without dependents, female students, and elderly women.
- As for the microcredit project, a fund has been set up for the purpose of empowering young people financially and to raising their standards of living and employing them. The number of women who received loans was: 152 women in the Arbil governorate, 89 in the *Sulaymaniyah* Governorate, 375 in the *Dohuk* governorate and 583 in the *Karameen* governorate. The women were able to implement various projects in the fields of trade, industry, services, agriculture, and tourism.

## **Section 9: Actions taken to improve the health outcomes of women and girls**

Many actions have been taken in Iraq to improve the health of women and girls; examples are:

1. Issuance and implementation of the National Strategy for Reproductive Health and Health of Mothers, Newborns, Children and Adolescents for the years 2016-2020.
2. Building national capacity in maternal and child health and reproductive health at the national and local levels.
3. Preparing and updating working manuals on maternal, child and reproductive health:
  - Manual for the care of pregnant women and mothers.
  - Maternal and Newborn Health Counseling Manual.
  - National Family Planning Institute.
  - Obstetric care manual.
  - Comprehensive care guide for neonatal health and children under five.
4. Updating policies and working contexts for maternal and reproductive health in line with the provision of quality services.
5. Prepare a national strategy for family planning and prepare a plan of action on obstetric care and maternal mortality, with the support of external expertise.

6. Supervision and follow-up of the field of services and health care provided to the target groups.
7. Work with CSOs to ensure the dissemination of health awareness on maternal and reproductive health as well as family planning.
8. Co-ordination and participation in surveys and studies related to maternal, child and reproductive health, including the sixth multi-indicator cluster survey for 2018.
9. Coordinate and work in all directions to achieve the goals of sustainable development to ensure access to a high level of health and reduce the number of patients and deaths.
10. Establishment of psychological support centers in seven governorates (*Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, Babel, Salah al-Din, Diyala and Anbar*).
11. The Ministry of Health provided free tickets to all IDPs through primary health centers and convoys, including integrated health care services in cooperation with civil society.
12. Programme to develop the capacity of forensic personnel to collect evidence of violence and genocide, as well as a management protocol and clinical measures for sexual assault survivors and other survivors.

In the KRI, there is a strategy for maternal and child health (2018-2022), where Ministry of Health provides services to citizens and women in particular through health centers including (238 primary health care units) and services free of charge for pregnant women.

- Care for pregnant mothers: provide them with full examination and analysis necessary with vaccines as well as a card for women who need full attention and continuous follow-up.
- The Family Planning Programme implemented in 167 hospital and health centers in the KRI, provides contraceptive services with important instructions for selecting family planning methods, and the use of contraceptives 58.2 MICS3 and MICS4 61.9.
- The existence of 7 specialized maternity hospitals with birth sections, the implementation of emergency obstetric and neonatal care programmes in hospitals and the evaluation of the ones providing delivery services and newborns care. The number is 20 health units, MICS3 31.8 while MICS4 52.6.
- The existence of specialized centers for pre-marital examinations. Sixteen centers and all necessary tests to ensure the health of newly married people, such as Hepatitis, Thalassemia, Cyclone Anemia and AIDS. Thalassemia was detected in (223) in 2017 and in 2018 (342) were discovered.
- Start the project of providing integrated reproductive health and delivery services from 2017 to reach 11 specialized centers and (5 centers reached so far), helping to reduce the incidence of diseases and deaths between mothers and children, providing an integrated package of reproductive health services.
- The existence of specialized centers for the early detection of breast cancer 3 centers in the region with the presence of health awareness units in the health centers in (227) health awareness centers on early detection of breast cancer and received 7392 cases in 2018.
- Health campaigns are varied about the first health care programmes at the rate of one campaign every three months for areas that need health care and the implementation of vaccination campaigns for children including four campaigns annually and as needed, as well as the implementation of awareness campaign to reduce the proportion of early marriage, MICS4 (5.7 per cent) and 5.6 per cent (MICS6).
- A follow-up and data collection programme on FGM/C in 11 health centers in high risk areas. Registration of cases and awareness of mothers about the risks of FGM and distribution of awareness materials initiated in 2015 as well as awareness campaigns initiated in 2010 through WHO and UNICEF where they were compared to (42.8 per cent) in 2011 while in 2018 it reached 37.5 MICS in 2018.
- Evidence of gender-based violence and the clinical management manual for rape cases.
- The presence of (60 per cent) of cadres trained to receive survivors at the rate of ten health centers in each governorate in the region in addition to training doctors in maternity hospitals for the forensic medical emergencies.

- The presence of health volunteers in the camps to raise awareness about violence and guide survivors about services.
- The existence of a specialized center for psychological care in *Dohuk* to receive Yazidi survivors after the events in 2014 and many cases have been treated and the survivor encourages her peers to visit the center for treatment and enable the survivor to return to society.
- Health awareness campaigns for students and lectures on sexually transmitted diseases and violence through local organizations and health institutions and the distribution of health publications.

#### Health Services for Refugee Women:

- The existence of a health unit in each camp provided by local and international organizations for reproductive health services and treatment of violence. In 2014, (12,327) pregnant women were screened.
- The presence of an ambulance in each emergency camp
- Implement health awareness campaigns on primary health care issues
- Implement vaccination campaigns for children.

### **Section 10: Actions taken to improve the skills of women and girls' education**

Women education continues to face significant challenges. Illiteracy is still a major concern and a heavy burden, especially in rural areas where the percentage of women who do not have primary certificates is (50.6 per cent) of all rural women compared to (27 per cent) of all urban women<sup>9</sup>. Among the challenges to continuing education in general, especially girls' education:

- Customs, traditions and patriarchal culture.
- Poverty and the unwillingness of parents to send their daughters to schools for education because of the distance between school and home, with the deteriorating security situation in some areas of Iraq.
- Deterioration of educational infrastructure and lack of schools, especially in rural areas.
- Lack of training programmes and rehabilitation of educational staff, due also to the lack of financial allocations which led to the lack of expansion in the provision of nearby schools.

The male enrollment rates are higher than females in general due to the economic, security and social conditions on female education. The families 'interest in their daughters' participation in the study stages declined, reflecting the dominance of male culture. However, it is worth noting that the female enrollment rate for the primary stage gradually increased since 2012. During the academic year (2014-2015), the rate of 107 for the primary stage corresponds to 112 for males for the same year. As for the middle school, where enrollment rates for males (97 per cent) compared to (70 per cent) for females for the academic year 2015-2016 and for university education, the female enrollment rate increased from (18.5 per cent) (2014-2015) to (20.2 per cent) for the academic year (2015-2016)<sup>10</sup>.

In the integrated survey of women social and health status in 2011 on the certificates obtained by women, the following<sup>11</sup>:

- Percentage of women who did not receive a certificate of (33.6 per cent).
- Percentage of women who received a primary certificate (34.3 per cent).
- Percentage of women who received an intermediate certificate (14.4 per cent).
- Percentage of women with university degrees and more (7.6 per cent).

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Planning, Women Empowerment Report, 2015

<sup>10</sup> Statements of Ministry of Education

<sup>11</sup> Central Statistics Organization, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6)

Comparing the enrollment ratios with percentage of educational attainment, the large gap in the number of people completing the various educational stages is evident.

The closing remarks pointed out by CEDAW Commission on the Status of Education in Iraq and the Necessary Reforms<sup>12</sup>: "The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party's delegation regarding the continuation of efforts aimed at integrating human rights principles and values, including equality between women and men, in the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Status of Education in Iraq and the reforms required. The Committee also notes the State party's efforts to address the high illiteracy rate through the enactment of Act N° 23, 2011 and its application through many measures, such as the establishment of local literacy centers, but the Committee is concerned that:

- a. The reported increase in illiteracy rate, especially among girls in rural areas and women aged 15-24 (33.6 per cent);
- b. Difficulties in estimating the extent of drop-out rates in primary and secondary schools, since there are no data disaggregated by sex and age group, geographical location;
- c. Factors hampering girls' access to education, such as road insecurity, long distances to school, poverty and child marriage;
- d. The low budget allocations for the education sector and the lack of technical and vocational training opportunities for girls.

**The Committee recommends that the State party:**

- a. Ensures the elimination of gender stereotypes in the context of the revision of curricula and textbooks.
- b. Strengthen its efforts to increase literacy rates under Law N° 23 (2011), particularly among girls and young women in rural areas, and to set time-bound targets and monitor their achievement.
- c. Takes effective measures to prevent girls from dropping out of school, especially at the secondary level; to collect and analyze data disaggregated by sex, age and geographical location to assess the impact of policies and programmes in this regard.
- d. Addresses obstacles preventing girls from having access to education effectively by, inter alia, enhancing road security to schools and ensuring that schools enjoy the protection of law enforcement officials and combat harmful practices such as child marriage and scholarships for girls who suffer of poverty;
- e. Allocates sufficient financial resources to the education sector to improve and standardize the quality and expand the availability of technical and vocational training programmes in non-traditional areas.

Women awareness of decent work opportunities, as well as the advancement of the family and society, is based on the principle of: "educated women who contribute to the process of development." The extrapolation of the educational status of women in Iraq through enrollment rates in kindergartens, primary, intermediate and preparatory levels indicates that male enrollment rates are higher than females in general and for the primary, intermediate and secondary levels. Dropout rates for primary, middle school levels, despite the limited enrollment of females versus males in school levels, showed a higher dropout rate for females than males, which is directly proportional to the development of educational stages.

In the review of the SDGs, namely the 4<sup>th</sup> Goal of good education, six gender-sensitive indicators were identified, plus the "Pre-school enrollment rate indicator" or the "alternative indicator for percentage of male children enrolled in the first grade who had previously attended pre-school education where male percentage was (4.9 per cent), while female percentage was (6.1 per cent) in Iraq, considering

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<sup>12</sup> Closing Remarks on the Comprehensive Report for the Periodic Reports from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, CEDAW/c/IRQ/co/4-6/Add.1

enrollment in pre-school education (kindergartens) within a regular learning programme as important condition for children readiness to enroll in school with indication that the percentage of children at school age, and those enrolled in elementary education is (69.4 per cent), and elementary school completion indicator” where percentage for whole Iraq is (69.7 per cent); and for males (72 per cent); and for females (67.2 per cent) according to the reports of the Directorate of Social and Educational Statistics. Iraq is one of the Arab countries with declining rate. As for Parity Indicator in Higher Education, it was 0.88. The number of female students in general education for (2014-2015) was 154950 in general education, 74205 in secondary education; 35319 in university education; 4919 in vocational education; and 6373 in kindergarten.

Article 8 of Labor Law N° 37 of 2017 stipulates that: "Discrimination shall not be regarded as any advantage, exclusion or preference in respect of a particular work, if it is based on the qualifications required by the nature of such work."

- The Women Office coordinates literacy courses for women, and with Ministry of Health, conducts health education seminars. The Office also coordinates with the Women Affairs Department, where many divorced women, widows and disabled persons were covered.
- The Office held many seminars on human development in accordance with the policy of the Women Office in the National Reconciliation Commission and the role of national development and key pillar and in peacebuilding.
- The Office works to improve skills of women in areas such as sewing and computer to support them to get a job through the training courses organized for this purpose. The Office also participates in the implementation of the activities and steps of the programme of combating terrorism.

In the KRI, the actions can be summarized:

- System and instructions on non-discrimination between the students in rights and duties
- Increase the number of girls' schools in 2015 by 575 and in 2016 by 636. Increase the number of girls in Kindergarten in 2017 by 369 and in the basic phase 12531 and middle school 1078 between refugees and IDPs. The proportion of girls in the last 5 years was: kindergarten (50 per cent) and basic (47 per cent). Girls in middle school (51 per cent), vocational (36 per cent), institutes (31 per cent), accelerated education (29 per cent).
- The decision to change the curricula on the basis of gender in 2017-2018 in cooperation with local organizations.
- Implementation of the 1325 Resolution by providing decision-making training for supervisors and managers in 2017.

## **Section 11: Forms of violence against women and girls and priority actions:**

Priority has been given to address domestic, partner and gender-based violence and child abuse.

### **1. Addressing domestic violence:**

Lack of comprehensive official statistics on number and nature of incidents of violence against women constitutes a major obstacle to understand the extent of this challenge. There are also factors that contribute to poor reporting of incidents of violence against women, including social sensitivity, fear of social stigma and vengeance, lack of legal protection for the victims of violence and lack of confidence in law enforcement and the justice system. However, the establishment of family protection units to follow-up on cases of violence, although limited to provincial and metropolitan centers, has improved, to a certain extent, women and girls' access to protection. However, the main obstacles that face these units is the failure to reach the enactment of the Anti-domestic violence law, which, if approved, can provide provisions to protect women and girls subjected to violence in

accordance with international standards, as well as the lack of appropriate workplaces and qualified female staff for work.

Protection of Iraqi women and girls against gender-based violence requires comprehensive legal reforms, including amending the Iraqi Penal Code (The 2019 draft is still under review) especially Article 41, which allows husbands to punish their wives without fear of prosecution, and article 398, which excludes offender in cases of sexual assault if he marries the victim, and article 409, which authorizes the so-called "honor protection" as an excuse to reduce the punishment for violent crimes, including murder, against family members.

## **2. Minors, early and forced marriages**

Although Article 7 of Iraqi Personal Status Law N° 188 of 1959 (amended) has set 18 years as minimum age of marriage for males and females, Article 8, states that: (a) If a person who is 15 years of age is required to marry, the judge may authorize her if her eligibility and physical fitness are proved to him after the consent of her legal guardian. If the guardian refuses, the judge request his consent within a fixed period. If he objects or if his objection is inadmissible, the judge shall authorize the marriage; (b) the judge may authorize marriage at 15 years of age, if there is any emergency. There is clear gap in the possibilities of marriage below the age of 18, these "loopholes" created imbalances in the judicial enforcement system, where Personal Status courts proceed with minor marriages and/or ratifying them. Indeed, one of the shortcomings in minors' marriage is the fact that the contract takes place outside the courts (known as "Sharia offices") by clerics, where contract can subsequently be ratified by courts.

The percentage of Iraqi girls who are married before the age of 18 is estimated at (24.8 per cent). A 2015 study on marriage in 9 Iraqi governorates found that (33.9 per cent) of marriages were outside the court system, with an average of (22 per cent) elsewhere. Forced marriage and early marriage have become a strategy for economic and security survival for many poor Iraqi families living in the context of ongoing conflict and insecurity. Poor access to education and economic opportunities also make women and girls unable to support themselves financially and force them to accept unwanted marriages in the hope that they will be able to support their families. The percentage of all forced marriages analyzed in a 2015 research, supports the idea that cultural and traditional practices have firmly been established over the years and reports of a revival of this practice.

In the KRI, there is a behavioral change plan called the Combi Plan for child marriage. This project has been implemented by the concerned authorities in 2016. It is maintained in the centers of governorates, courts and districts, as well as in camps for the displaced and refugees.

## **3. Women killing or what is known as "Honor Killings":**

It is difficult to investigate such crimes because of the strict adherence to customs and traditions that do not allow to challenge them, especially among rural communities. Many cases are not reported or concealed by families. Monitoring results reveal that the rates of conviction for such crimes remain low even if trials are conducted and there is only one case in which the offender was prosecuted. Many suicide incidents have also been reported of many women of various ages, which constituted a source of concern for government and non-government institutions. Many cases have been followed up on and documented throughout Iraq including KRI, with the highest rates being reported on in *Muthanna and Dhi Qar* Governorates.

## **4. Directorate of Family Protection:**

The Directorate of Protection of Family and Children from Domestic Violence, under the Ministry of Interior works round the clock to receive complaints and communications from battered women using any of the following methods:

- a. Record complaints when the victim is present.
- b. Receive information from hospitals, schools and other government agencies on occurrence of any domestic violence.
- c. Interview with battered males and females, considering victim sex, where women are interviewed by women officers in a room designed for this purpose.
- d. Send victims to medical examination and treatment and link medical reports that substantiate their abuse during case investigation.

Currently, there are 4 shelters for protection of battered women and girls in Governorates of *Erbil, Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah and Karamiyan*. 3 of these shelters are government-owned, while the 4<sup>th</sup> one belongs to a CSO.

The Ministry of Defense Directorate of Human Rights receives through its hotlines all complaints related to human rights violations, including women rights, and verifies the information, its validity and then forward it to the judicial authorities if it's a valid case.

The Ministry of Interior has worked to attract and integrate women to work in the security field despite the obstacles of tradition and stereotyping of women. Many courses have been organized for women at the rank of officer and assigned them to security institutions, especially community police departments and family protection. As a positive indicator to highlight the role of non-stereotyped women in the job, the number of female officers in the Ministry of Interior stood at (273), the number of women at the rank of Commissioner is (853) and (2516) are civil servants. There are also military courses in the field of human rights and women rights, but this does not prevent the challenges that women face in practicing this non-stereotypical role in the distribution of roles and tasks to male leaders.

## **5. Violence against women in the KRI:**

Violence against women, including domestic violence, remains a matter of concern throughout the KRI because of traditional practices and attitudes regarding the role of women within the family and society. Indeed, women and girls are subjected to many types of violence and discrimination, including physical abuse, murder for so-called "honor crimes", self-sacrifice, sexual violence and harassment, as well as inequality and social exclusion.

The Parliament of the KRI issued the Law N° 3 of 2015, in which the provisions of Article 409 of the Federal Penal Code were suspended, namely, to commute the punishment of a person who kill his wife or one of his *mahrms* or assault them in case of adultery.

In March 2017, the Directorate General for Violence against Women issued statistics on violence against women for the months of November and December 2016 on its website. According to the final statistics for 2016, a reduction in the number of cases has been observed since (2015-2016) (from 8.002 to 7.123) compared to general increase between (2013-2015). It is not known whether this reflects a decrease in the incidence of violence or a reduction in reporting. It covers the total number of cases of violence against women in 2016 (7,223 cases) from 6 directorates to combat violence against women in *Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk, Rabrin, Karamian and Soran*. This figure includes 119 cases of murder and suicide, 317 cases of burning and self-sacrifice, 6,579 cases of verbal and physical abuse, and 108 cases of sexual violence. It should be noted that the latest statistics in May 2017 show an increase in the number of cases of violence against women (3,789) compared to the same period in 2016 (2,642 cases).

As for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): After years of mobilization and campaigns, the KRG enacted a law in 2011 prohibiting this harmful practice. Article 6 of the law against domestic violence, N° 8 of 2011, states:

**First:** Whoever incites on doing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) shall be fined for no less than 1,000,000 (One Million Iraqi Dinars) and no more than 5,000,000 (Five Million Iraqi Dinars); **Second:** Whoever does or help doing FGM shall be imprisoned for no less than (6) Six months and fined for no less than 2,000,000 (Two Million Iraqi Dinars) and no more than 5,000,000 (Five Million Iraqi Dinars) or shall be punished by one of the two penalties. **Third:** Whoever does or help doing Female Genital Mutilation of minor female shall be imprisoned for no less than (1) one year and no more than (3) Three years and fined for no less than 5,000,000 (Five Million Iraqi Dinars) and no more than 10,000,000 (Ten Million Iraqi Dinars) or shall be punished by one of the two penalties."

The figures have begun to decline since then. The High Council for Women Affairs in the KRI worked with the Ministry of Planning in the region in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund and the Hartland International Alliance to issue a report on the survey related to the prevalence of this phenomenon, in 2015 and 2016. The report contains surveys and statistics at the level of the governorates and the recommendations necessary to combat this crime, and the preparation of the 2017 and 2018 reports are underway. With regard to the marriage of minors in the region, the High Council for Women issued the Plan of Behavioral Change (Combi Plan) in 2016 for the purpose of reducing the rate of marriage of children and minors in the region and began its implementation with the beginning of 2017 for 3 years as the first phase.

## **Section 12: Strategies and actions to address violence against women and girls**

Article 29 of the Constitution provides for the family, in particular women, the requirements of preservation, sponsorship, education, care, and the prevention of violence. On the other hand, clan inheritance undermines the dignity of women and makes them a mean of resolving tribal conflicts, along with legislation that permits violence against women. Article 41/1 of the Iraqi Penal Code N<sup>o</sup> 111 of 1969 provides that: "No offense shall be committed if the act is committed using a right established by law. The use of the right shall be regarded as the husband's discipline of his wife and the discipline of parents and teachers and minors under their jurisdiction".

Based on Iraq's international commitment to the CEDAW, the requirements of the 1325 Resolution, and the translation of the Constitutional provisions listed in the section on rights and freedoms, in particular (article 29), which prohibits all forms of violence and abuse, as well as (Art. 37), which prohibits forced labor and the slave trade, prohibits trafficking in women and children, sex trafficking and other provisions that affirm the human rights of women and considers its violation as a form of material and moral violence. In view of the increasing frequency of violence against women because of wars and security unrest, this file is among the first files that need to be addressed at the level of prevention and protection. The most important achievements of the government were the development of a system to protect women and girls from violence in all its forms:

The Government has launched the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women (2012-2017), and updated it to reach the 2018-2030 range, and the National Strategy for the Advancement of the Status of Iraqi Women (2013-2018), (that will be updated to cover 2019-2022), drafted in collaboration with civil society, and the implementation of the 1325 INAP. But the implementation of the outcomes failed due to the *ISIL* terrorist attack, that led to the mobilization of funds and energies to confront the aggression and the war of liberation. This happened along the transitional stage after the abolition of Ministry of Women Affairs.

With the end of the *ISIL* aggression, which resulted in thousands of victims and survivors of violence, especially sexual violence, the Joint Statement on the Prevention of Sexual Violence was signed between the Iraqi government and the United Nations during the 71<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly on 23/9/2016, to help survivors of violence to return safely and effectively and to

provide them with a decent living, as well as enable them to document and integrate them into public life. In light of this, an executive plan for the joint statement was launched under the auspices of the General Secretariat of Council of Ministers on 5/3/2018.

The Council of Representatives passed Decision N° (43), 2016, which includes taking the necessary measures by the government to liberate the abducted Yazidi, instructing the reconstruction of Sinjar district and restoring the services and infrastructure of the judiciary. In addition, the victims of terrorist acts committed by the terrorist gangs against the people of Sinjar should be considered as martyrs and their relatives should be given all the rights and privileges enjoyed by this group. The committee should also discuss the issue of the genocide of the Yazidis by terrorist gangs, the case to the International Criminal Court for investigation.

On the other hand, the High Commission for Human Rights and the Government, represented by the Higher Committee for the Advancement of Women, the Women Empowerment Directorate, CSOs, and international organizations have succeeded in freezing all efforts to pass the draft amendment to the Personal Status Law N° 188 of 1959, the so-called *Jaafari* Law, on texts that violate the girl's freedom to marry, including the marriage of child girls.

According to the Social Protection Act N° 11, 2014, the safe house was opened to house the victims of domestic violence in Baghdad and the establishment of another in the holy governorate of Karbala as a first attempt until the adoption of the law against domestic violence. The Department of Social Protection of Women also issued a statement on the fight against violence against women to the Presidency of Council of Ministers and in turn the Presidency of Council of Ministers circulated to the government departments.

The Department of Social Protection of Women has opened psychological support centers in eight governorates (*Baghdad, Babel, Karbala, Najaf, Diyala, Salah al-Din, Anbar* and *Mosul*). 14 Women stories of violence within the project Support for national reconciliation the number of stories documented for survivors (118) stories of those subjected to violations. As well as awareness campaigns and educational lectures on violence against women.

The Directorate of Family, Women and Children Protection, affiliated to Ministry of the Interior, is the only competent institution to adopt complaints of domestic violence and to complete legal comments based on the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure. (28 sections) in Baghdad and the governorates, and the government took these precautionary measures until the adoption of the law against domestic violence.

As a member of the Ministry of Interior, the community police are active in implementing a prevention policy for women and children from serious violations and domestic violence through the deployment of their teams and monitoring humanitarian cases of street children and displaced persons, especially psychosocial patients, as well as urging official responsible bodies and society to cooperate in solving their humanitarian problems with government support. Their efforts have also been effective in combating the electronic extortion practiced by social networking criminals against women.

In accordance with the Anti-Human Trafficking Law N° 28 of 2012, which established an appropriate system to reduce these crimes. In implementation of Iraq's compliance with the International Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings and in response to the social and economic situation which resulted in negative phenomena that contributed to the expansion of crimes of exploitation of women and children. The Ministry of Interior and the Central Committee and subcommittees in Baghdad and the governorates, as an institutional system to adopt the fight against those crimes, in

addition to the opening of the safe house for victims of human trafficking in Baghdad. The process of activating the law has encountered several obstacles, the most important of which is the security situation and the challenges of war, which are caused by the widening phenomenon of human trafficking, and preoccupied decision-makers and burdened budgets.

The former Iraqi Foreign Minister signed a joint statement with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict situations on September, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016, marking the beginning of joint action by Iraq and the United Nations to address the risks of sexual violence against women and some of Iraq's challenges to accountability on these crimes and bring the perpetrators to justice in accordance with Iraqi laws. The Committee on Reconciliation was also appointed in the courts of domestic violence, in addition to the inclusion of the principles of protection against domestic violence in family education for the fifth grade, along with the enactment of the Protection of Witnesses, Experts and Victims Law N° 58 of 2017.

The government is making clear efforts to announce national plans and strategies that seek positive change, but despite these efforts, monitoring and evaluation procedures and processes are still weak, while they should be an integral part of any national strategy or policy. Indeed, in the Monitoring & Evaluation system, clear mechanisms should be established to measure the implementation of those policies in accordance with specific timetable.

In the KRI, the national strategy to combat violence against women in the region has been updated by the Supreme Council for Women in 2017 so that the strategy became effective for 10 years (2017-2027). The High Council for Women Affairs and the General Directorate against Family Violence and in coordination with CSOs made huge efforts to amend the law against domestic violence N° 8, 2011. The allocation of judges investigating the crimes of violence against women, as well as the allocation of hotline number 119 by Ministry of the Interior of the Territory to report cases of violence and harassment against women.

The number of investigation offices for violence against women and the family in the governorate reached 2018 in the governorates of four districts and districts, 6 sub-directorates and 28 offices affiliated with the Directorate General against Violence against Women and the Family. With the beginning of the *ISIL* occupation of some Iraqi cities in 2014 and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of families to the governorates of the region, the KRG through Ministry of Interior and the Directorate General, in 2016 allocated and formed 10 roving teams to monitor the status of women and follow-up on their rights and open court records. Complaints have been made on 312 different cases during the last four months of 2016 and in 2017 with an increase of the number of teams to 14 teams for the same purpose. Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, in coordination with the High Council for Women Affairs, has opened gender studies centers in the universities of the Region to prepare gender studies, identify gender gaps and work towards equality.

Ministry of Higher Education in the Region has also decided to teach gender concepts and equality to students of the first stage of colleges with the start of the academic year 2019-2020.

There is also a strategy: "Vision of the Kurdistan Region 2014-2020", issued by Council of Ministers and one of its axes aims at achieving gender equality<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Report on Status of Women Advancement in Kurdistan Region of Iraq

### **Section 13: Actions taken to protect women and girls from technology misuse**

The procedures of the Ministry of Interior regarding extortion are preventive measures in coordination and cooperation with CSOs. They have carried out awareness campaigns for women and girls about the dangers of electronic extortion through social media sites and the incorrect use of these means through distributing posters and leaflets, in order to reduce its risks so that they do not become victims of attackers.

**Procedural steps:** The Ministry of Interior has set up an electronic crime control unit to issue a report on the crimes of electronic fraud. The social media handler was arrested and referred to the competent courts after receiving several complaints from girls who have been extorted financially for personal films or photographs. There are about 70 accused during the previous period, 54 of them in Baghdad and this indicates the effectiveness of the law enforcement agencies after the formation of specialized electronic extortion units.

In the KRI, and within the context of violence against women and girls facilitated by technology, the Region has enacted the Prevention of Abuse of Electronic Communication Act in Region N° 6, 2008 to date, and the offices of the Investigation into Domestic Violence of the Directorate General Against domestic violence associated with the Ministry of Interior. The KRG through the High Council for Women Affairs, has established with the United Nations agencies (the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women) in the region where it was approved in accordance with Resolution N° 8 of Council of Ministers of the Region (2012-2016) and thereafter the strategy was updated (2017-2027) according to its objectives, principles and plans and consists of four areas and general objectives as follows:

- **Objective 1:** The legal field: To eliminate all forms of legal discrimination against women and provide them with legal protection.
- **Objective 2:** Prevention: Raising awareness of the causes and effects of violence against women on the family and society.
- **Objective 3:** Protection: Supporting and advocating for victims of violence and protecting women from all forms of violence.
- **Objective 4:** Field of care: Improving services for women survivors of violence.

The Parliament of the Region enacted the Law on the Prevention of Misuse of Communication Devices in the KRI N° 6 of 2008. Article 2 states: "A term of no less than six months and no more than five years shall be imposed and a fine of no less than one million dinars, or one of these two penalties for the misuse of the cell phone or any wired or wireless communication equipment or the Internet or e-mail by threatening, libel or defame or spread news that create terror and the diversion of conversations or static images or mobile or SMS , which are contrary to public morality, and without the authorization or attribution of dishonorable acts or incitement to commit crimes or acts of immorality, on the basis of information relating to the private or family life of individuals which he has obtained in any manner whatsoever...".

There are numerous cases that have been classified as e-extortion cases in the investigation courts in the region. On the other hand, the Territory continues to apply the Federal Public Prosecution Law N° 49 of 2017, including its Article 2 that states: "The Public Prosecution, in addition to other parties designated by law, requires moving a complaint or authorization from a competent authority". It is necessary to give greater authority to the Public Prosecutor's Office to initiate complaints of extortion as a crime against public order and not to restrict the complaint to the victim, as it has a negative impact on the fabric, security and integrity of the society.

## Section 14: Measures to address violence against women subjected to multiple forms of discrimination

According to the Law for the Care of Persons with Disabilities N° 38 of 2013 in application with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a Commission for Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs, was formed:

- Includes car exemption from customs taxes for people with disabilities.
- Allocate for them a monthly salary and leave with full monthly salaries.
- 51 Institutes for Disabled Persons in 2016, provide full-time care.
- Provide protection and empowerment for battered women with disabilities and follow-up by the relevant authorities, including special programmes to promote and protect their rights and target them in financing programmes and small loans.
- Provide training programmes for service providers to cater for women survivors of violence with special needs.

Other several measures were taken as follows:

**First:** On April, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, competent authorities, represented by the Ministry of Interior, granted the first national identity card for the Gypsies who had been subjected to discrimination, as they were referred to in the previous civil status as “Gypsies”. They are around tens of thousands of nomads, mostly women and children who dance and sing at weddings. They are scattered in the outskirts of *Baghdad, Basra, Diwaniyah, Ninawa and Muthanna*. They were subjected to marginalization and racial discrimination because of social traditions and then to displacement, disconnection of services and denial of their human rights, especially after 2003, where they were threatened and liquidated by extremist groups. After series of humanitarian interventions by local governments, they now enjoy stability, send their children to school and freely practice their profession. They have been provided with basic services, reinforced by the recent initiative of considering them as Iraqi citizens who are equal with others by enjoying civil identity.

**Second:** Thousands of women from the Yazidi and *Shabak* ethnic group who live in the Ninawa plane, especially the Sinjar district, have been harassed by gangs since June 2014. They have been subjected to various types of sexual violence, captured and trafficked. Some of them were suddenly liquidated at unprecedented speed before the State can reach them. Joint efforts have been made at international, national and local levels to save as many as possible. Informal statistics indicate that the number of Yazidis in Iraq is 550,000, where 370,000 displaced due to aggression, 1293 martyrs who were survived by 1759 orphans from father, and 407 orphans of mother. Approximate 100,000 Yazidi have immigrated. The number of abductees reached 3548 women, 2869 men. 73 mass graves have been discovered in Sinjar, of which 3425 Yazidi were survivors (1170 women, 337 men and 1616 children). The Government, through Ministries of Migration and Displaced, and MOLSA, added 1529 Yazidi women survivors and 88 women from *Shabak* exceptionally in social welfare payroll, including 337 women survivors of *ISIL*. Data on displaced women from liberated Mosul have been updated concurrently with liberation operations and inclusion of a number of displaced women from both the *Sabean* and Christian components through same exceptional measures. A total of 574 smart cards have been issued to residents living in Iraq. Currently, special programme for these segments are implemented according to the 1325 INAP and the Joint Statement on Prevention of Sexual Violence, in cooperation with UN agencies.

**Third:** The Council of Minister issued the Decision N° 86 of 2018 approving the compensation of employment posts following the movement of personnel of the Christian component with citizens of

the same component, each according to his/her area, whether male or female, to guarantee civil rights in employment for this component, which was affected as a result of migration in the periods of sectarian fighting and insecurity.

**Fourth:** Council of Ministers issued the Decision N° 92/2014, considering that minorities were subjected to genocide and the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a statement demanding Government to comply with its content. However, there is a shortcoming towards the enforcement of this order considering the crimes of rape, kidnapping, captivity and trafficking that women suffered. The Commission called on the Secretariat General of Council of Ministers to urge the authorities concerned to accelerate the reconstruction as well as providing the compensation to those affected as soon as possible. Efforts need to be intensified to search for the abducted Yazidis, punish the perpetrators and rehabilitate all survivors in order to reintegrate them into society and support them psychologically and financially. This is why the Presidency office proposed to the Parliament a draft law to protect the rights of Yazidi women and receive a compensation for all the harm they have been subjected to.

**Fifth:** Council of Representatives issued the Decree N° 43/2016 which includes taking necessary measures by Government to free the Yazidi abductees, give instructions for reconstruction of Sinjar district, restore services and infrastructure to the district, consider victims of the terrorist acts committed by *ISIL* gangs against people of Sinjar district martyrs, give their relatives all rights and privileges and to form a committee of competent authorities to discuss issue of genocide against Yazidis to bring the case before the International Criminal Court (ICC) for investigation.

**Sixth:** A national joint team composed of representatives from Council of Representatives, General Secretariat of Council of Ministers, and Higher Commission for Human Rights, and several relevant ministries was dispatched to Sinjar district, where it met with many survivors and documented the crimes against them and assessed the humanitarian situation, they live in. The team has concluded that the crimes committed by *ISIL* are far in atrocity from what was presented by the media. This report and others were used as a basis for assessing the situation and use it as official documents.

**Seventh:** Records of 3 prisons visited revealed that there were 565 foreign women and 1,162 children who were charged by belonging to *ISIL*. Those are 5 women and 10 children from Turkmenistan; 3 women and 3 children from Afghanistan; 6 women and 13 children from Dagestan; 12 women and 21 children from Kyrgyzstan; 3 women and 7 children from Syria; 2 women from Algeria; 27 women and 55 children from Russia; 1 woman and 3 children from Georgia; 335 women and 706 from Turkey; 113 women and 248 from Azerbaijan; 2 women from Morocco; 1 woman from Kurdistan; 2 women from Ukraine; 9 women and 24 children from Uzbekistan; 4 women and 6 children from Iran; 24 women and 45 children from Tajikistan; 4 women and 5 children from Kazakhstan; 2 women and 2 children from France; 1 woman and 3 children from Germany<sup>14</sup>.

**Eighth:** Based on Federal Budget law/2015-28 (12) and Regulation 4/2015, Fund for Reconstruction of Affected Areas was established and began work in early 2015 in addition to the allocation of the government in accordance with Article 41 of the Federal Budget Law 2017.

After the Yazidis were subjected to a systematic genocide by the terrorist *ISIL* on August 2014, in the areas of Sinjar and others, where some thousands innocent Yazidis were murdered, kidnapped and sexually exploited or slaved, the Council of Ministers of the KRI issued a decision N° 5170 on 21 August 2014 to form a Higher Committee to introduce the Yazidis who were subjected to genocide.

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<sup>14</sup> Statistics of National Security Advisory.

The committee was chaired by Minister of Martyrs and Victims of Genocide in Anfal operation in the Region and membership of Minister of MOLSA, Head of External Relations and Spokesperson for KRG, Secretary General of Council of Ministers and a representative of the Yazidis. The Committee has worked over the past years to internationalize the case and to have the International Criminal Court (ICC) adopt it. However, because Iraq is not member of the ICC, and because it didn't request UN Security Council to refer the case to the ICC, the objectives were not achieved.

At the same time and as part of local efforts by the Region to deal with this heinous crime, and to preserve the features of these crimes and not to blur them, the Judicial Council of the Region, in coordination with the committee concerned and Council of Ministers, issued on 7 September 2014, decision N° 23 of 2007 to form a judicial body chaired by an investigation judge and membership of two judicial investigators to investigate the crimes committed by the terrorist *ISIL* in Sinjar and other surrounding areas, and to document these crimes and record testimonies of the victims, survivors, claimants of personal rights and witnesses. A great number of cases that exceeded thousands since the formation of the Commission to date, were documented. The Ministry of Interior has set up field mobile teams in all camps to report sexual violence or harassment against women and girls. The Center for Treatment, Support and Rehabilitation has been opened for women who survived the grip of *ISIL* in *Dohuk*. Another 50 centers were opened for awareness raising and provision of health and psychological services in the camps. The Genocide Center was also established in *Dohuk* Governorate, where the implementation of the protocols relating to the investigation and documentation of rape crimes during conflicts is part of the tasks assigned to this center, as well as the implementation of the 1325 INAP 1.

### **Section 15: Actions taken to promote women participation in public life and decision-making**

The number of female members of the Council of Representatives in 2018 was 84. As for the women-headed committees, there are only two committees before and after 1/4/2014, namely the Committee on Women, Family and Childhood, and the Committee for Reconstruction and Services. Regarding the political representation of women in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the electoral law has been amended so that the ratio is 30 per cent instead of only 25 per cent.

#### **1. At the Executive Power level:**

Taking the status of employment in Ministry of Planning as an example of women participation, the percentage of women who held the post of director general in Ministry was 36 per cent of the total general manager's post, while the percentage of women in senior management was 37 per cent of the positions, in 2016. The qualitative progress in due to women participation in security ministries is distinct from other Arab countries, where number of women working in Ministry of Defense, in both military and civilian categories, is 1491, including women with the rank of officer, and 537 other ranks. Women who held leadership positions in their civil capacity were with 3 women as assistant director general, 15 senior directors, 78 associate directors and 772 civil servants in varying grades. A law was adopted to allow women to work in security ministries such as Ministry of Interior and intelligence services. Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided a database on training of female staff and their career grades in an effort to increase the number of women in decision-making positions in Ministry and diplomatic missions. Ministry of Finance set-up banking facilities for businesswomen to encourage them to establish and operate women businesses to empower women and boost the national economy.

The Ministry of Finance has also increased the representation of women in leadership positions from 18 to 33 per cent during the past four years. The participation of women in the army and the police also increased, as women hold 23 positions (as assistant director general) in Ministry of Interior, 35 per cent of senior director positions and 3 per cent of director general positions. There are 197 female officers, 7304 female staff, and 2142 civil staff. In the Ministry of Defense, the percentage of women in the position of assistant director general is 3.92 per cent, senior manager 9.16 per cent, and director (8.33 per cent). The number of female officers, and soldiers are 47 and 330 respectively. In 2017, the

members of the Commission of Commissioners of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (15) were elected by (4) women and (11) men. The number of women on the Board of Commissioners is less than one-third and is somewhat closer to the Supreme Court decision 42/2012 on the representation of women by one-third in compliance with the Commission's law, with no mention of the Committee of Experts and the Council of Representatives towards increasing the representation of women in the Council.

## 2. At the Judiciary Level:

In the field of justice, the number of women judges was 18 in 2003 and reached 113 judges in 2017. The Judicial Institute receives graduates of faculties of law of both sexes to prepare them to work in the judiciary. There is a gap between the sexes, but it is gradually and slowly reduced. There are (94) judges, the president of the State Consultative Council and seven advisers in the same body.

As for the KRI, in the context of increasing the role of women in the judiciary and in application of the principle of equality, the percentage of women in the judiciary and the public prosecution has increased. The Judicial Institute Law N° 7, 2009 has been enacted and as a result, the numbers are growing. There are now 30 judges out of 233 judges and 56 prosecutors from 202 public prosecution judges. In the year 2014, 13 judges and prosecutors graduated from the first cycle of the Judicial Institute out of 41 graduates. 12 judges and prosecutors in 2015 out of 35 graduates within the third session of 2018, which is currently ongoing, 28 women out of 60 were accepted into the Judicial Institute, so that there are now over 85 judges and prosecutors.

## 3. At Other Reforms Level:

In addition to the presence of one university president, three female ambassadors, the secretary of Baghdad and the deans of female colleges. 75 The Political Parties Law N° 36, 2015 included the representation of women in the public body and the body established under Article 11 Council of Ministers' Decision N° (175), 2015 stipulates that widows should be exempted from downsizing procedures because of career decline. Cabinet Decision N° (99), 2015 directed ministries to nominate a percentage of leadership positions to women for the level of director general and above. The following comparison shows the distribution of women in career positions with the rank of Director General compared to men and indicates a clear gender gap:

Ministry or entity	Male	Female	Ministry	Male	Female
Justice	14	4	Electricity	28	1
Telecommunications	5	2	Reconstruction & Population	19	1
Sunni Waqf	13	0	Agriculture	10	3
Shite Waqf	12	0	Council of Representatives	11	2
Chamber Shite Waqf	4	1	Industry	52	2
Finance	20	2	Foreign Affairs	4	1
Culture	21	1	Health	10	0
Interior	19	0			
Cabinet Presidency	10	0	Commerce	8	2
Integrity	5	1	Supreme Judiciary Council	2	3
Election High Commission	29	0	Central Bank of Iraq	6	1
Education	36	4	Immigration and Immigrants	4	1
Planning	10	7	Transport	14	1
Labor and Social Affairs	12	4			
Environment	3	1	Youth	14	0
Central Bank of Iraq	23	6	Oil	26	1

In the KRI, under a paragraph on “Reform of Constitution, Laws and Regulations” that promote participation of women in politics and decision-making, the draft Constitution stipulated in Article 41 that in the election of members of Parliament, equitable representation of the constituents of Iraqi Kurdistan people should guarantee at least 30 per cent of seats to represent women. Article 106 concerning municipal councils stipulates that the law of the election of municipal councils should target to achieve a representation of women no less than 30 per cent of the number of members. The Parliament of the Region also passed Law N° 2, 2009 on the elections of the Parliament where the representation of women was set to be no less than 30 per cent of the number of seats in Parliament. Also, Law N° 4, 2009 on provincial elections was issued in the Region. At least 30 per cent of the members of the Council of each governorate of the region. As for the current government formation, which is the 8<sup>th</sup> structure of Government that emerged from the 2013 parliamentary elections, women share was only one portfolio out of 20, which is the Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism.

In addition, on 17 July 2018, the Parliament issued a new internal Decision which stipulated that a member of the 3 members of the presidential body of the Parliament, at least, should be a woman. Consequently, after the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 elections, members of Parliament elected, on 18 February 2019, the first parliamentary women as speaker, in addition to electing another parliamentary woman for the post of Second Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, whose duties are limited to the secretarial affairs of the presidential body. Council of Ministers in the Region issued the Decision N° 1, 2010 on the formation of the High Council for Women Affairs to take care of the interests of women and the formulation of policies supporting the issues and improving the status of women in the region. During the current session of the Parliament, the 4<sup>th</sup> session, the members are in the process of legislating the law of the representation of women by no less than 30 or 40 per cent in the executive authority as well as the issuance of a law for the High Council for Women Affairs.

Within the framework of promoting minority participation, the Parliament of KRI passed the Law N° 5, 2015 to guarantee religious and national rights of minorities. The presidential body of the parliament which is composed of a speaker and 2 deputies, one of them should be from the national or religious minorities. At the same time, the Regional Parliament Election Law N° 2, 2009 in Article 8 provides 6 seats for Chaldeans, Assyrians and Armenians and 5 seats for Turkmens out of 111 parliamentary seats.

## **Section 16: Actions taken to increase women’s participation in media decision-making**

After 2003, Iraq witnessed a great media breakthrough in all areas, where the number of women working in mass media has increased remarkably, especially after the emergence of private media sector, as satellite and local channels exceeded 100 channels with same number in printed and broadcast media. Thus, media has become an integral part of public and private life of society and individuals that accompany the huge technological development of mass media and information, especially the social media which occupied an important and influential position in daily life.

In spite of the security conditions, women working in the media sector have proved their competence in broadcasting, television and newspaper editing, and their endeavor to offer the best but cautiously in view of surrounding social environment and direct and indirect targeting by social media which are still impeding women progress. This is why, many women deserted media and journalism despite their will and ambition. Women suffer from discrimination in the Media, therefore, it necessary to put forward a developmental discourse to improve the status of women in general, and contribute to promote women universal rights.

The proportion of women presence in media decision-making positions is still small, and does not reflect the true picture of women representation in this sector. Women are still absent from active participation in the leading media institutions, supervision of political programmes, and writing

editorial column. Their presence is confined to writing stories that concern women's affairs. The various media organizations are aware of this fact and are reluctant to mention it. The Board of Trustees of the Iraqi Media Network, Media and Communication Authority and the Ministry of Information can be cited as an example of the absence of women representation, with the exception of a single woman in the Iraqi Media Network. In this regard, Iraqi Women Media Forum, with the help and support of the Iraqi Women Network is putting pressure for the inclusion of the quota in the Iraqi Media Network Act with a percentage no less than the third, which has been adopted by the Act.

A specialized field research on the status of women journalist under the supervision of experts and members of CSOs, revealed that there is discrimination, injustice and inequality on the basis of gender, as (67 per cent) of women journalists stated that there is disparity between male journalist and female journalist for opportunities to assume positions of responsibility, in addition to low participation of women journalist in local and international conferences, and were not given chances for training and development.

Some mass media outlets deliberately reversed stereotype of women journalist in their programmes or subjects in printed media, and ignorance of the leadership role that they should undertake. The study indicates that although women journalist work in the media field for the last 20 years, their share in labor force is director (1 per cent); section head (9 per cent) and employee (90 per cent). No women journalist has undertaken management of a newspaper nor public or private media corporation. Although the recently adopted Iraqi Media Network Law has secured quota in board of trustees by at least one third, but Government did not comply with this, and appointed two members of the board of trustees of the network a man and a woman from outside the constitutional and legal contexts where nomination and competition mechanisms should be away from quotas, and should take place in the Council of Representatives. The decision took away the seat allocated for women.

Moreover, harassment is among the obstacles and difficulties faced by female journalists. Many women journalists complained of harassment, a kind of violence linked to social media websites, and Facebook defamation is made by fabricated news, fake pages, photos and video clips.

Retract the decisions of former Prime Minister outside the legal and constitutional frameworks regarding appointment of members of the Board of Trustees of Iraqi Media Network, and in respect of the decision of the Federal Court on case N° 90 and units 99/107/Federal/2015, issued on 27 June 2016 which authorized the Council of Ministers to nominate for membership of the network on condition of approval by the Council of Representatives, before the appointment according to provisions of Article 47 of Constitution of the Republic of Iraq. The decision also forced the Council of Representatives to adapt Article 8 of Law of Iraqi Media Network N° 26, 2015 to ensure balance between legislative and executive powers in this regard, in addition to:

- Implement the recently approved Iraqi Media Network Law regarding the selection of members of the Board of Trustees of the Network and the commitment to quota for women stipulated by law.
- Achieve a balance between women and men in Ministry of Culture in terms of Ministry agents, general managers, department heads and in information offices of all ministries.
- Exclude the decision to appoint in media positions on the political decision and quotas, women are often excluded to become the choice between male journalists.
- Provide women journalists the opportunity to benefit from the training courses provided by governmental, non-governmental and international institutions, and to strive to build their capacities and develop their journalistic skills.
- Demand legislative power to enact a legislation on sexual harassment and not to resort to alternatives provisions from other legal articles (such as indecent assault) as this crime is different from the sexual harassment crime in terms of its effects and the severity of the punishment.

- Include women journalists in the promotional reward for the purpose of supporting the continuation of work and provide the best in governmental and non-governmental institutions.
- Document cases of violations against female journalists and continuously through the establishment of a monitoring and follow-up center in information and communications authority, the union of journalists, unions and organizations, prosecuting responsible bodies and encouraging women journalists to report violations through awareness campaigns and education.
- Adopt a system of formal contracts in the private sectors for the purpose of protecting women journalists from cutting the salary or dismissal without justification and account for the institution that does not abide by it.
- Change prevailing stereotype of women in the media and working on an information strategy to change that view and strengthen the status of women in society through the production of programmes and reports showing their achievements, role and constitutional entitlements.

As for the KRG, according to the statistics carried out by the Kurdistan Journalists Syndicate in 2017, contribution of women journalist was classified as follows:

- Owner of newspaper house 13
- Women newspaper and editor-in-chief 17
- Newspaper of women 17
- Editor-in-chief of magazine
- Total working and associate women journalists 1500.

According to the Syndicate by-laws, there are two female members in the administrative body in all the branches and offices attached to the Syndicate. In a later development, two journalists held the post of officer-in-charge of *Dohuk* and *Khanqin* branches. As part of Kurdistan Journalists' Syndicate, a committee was formed to defend the rights of female journalists. The Committee was directly attached to the Syndicate Council. These media associations had an effective influence and according to the stages in which they were issued and with varying degrees of influence and effectiveness. Some of these publications are still in the lead, while others are no longer published various reasons. They can be classified as follows: 31 newspapers; 39 magazines; 4 radio stations. Most of these media outlets are managed and sponsored by women and human rights organizations which were concerned with the administrative and editorial bodies of these publications.

## **Section 17: Strategies, plans and budgets to promote gender equality**

### **1. Percentage of the budget invested in promoting equality and women empowerment**

For many years, Iraqi governments have integrated women empowerment and gender issues in economic policies and programmes concluding to integrate gender in general budget. To that end, the government initiated the establishment of gender units and divisions in most ministries to gather data and develop indicators on women status. Committees were set up at several levels and several workshops, seminars and conferences were held to encourage the enactment and amendment of laws on the basis of the principle of gender equality, as well as to develop the capacities of local governments and CSOs to achieve gender mainstreaming in the public budget.

However, despite international support, these efforts couldn't achieve tangible results for many reasons, including:

- Lack of specialized expertise in the field of budgeting of gender sensitive.
- Technical difficulties in collecting economic data related to gender due to political and security instability.

The shift towards gender responsive budgeting requires a comprehensive transition in being responsive to all vulnerable groups in society such as youth, people with disabilities, orphans and

marginalized population. Accordingly, the budget remains a budget for items and paragraphs and has not been converted into a gender-sensitive programme budget.

## **2. Measures to Control Public Finance:**

In view of the financial crisis caused by the decline in oil prices and the war against terrorism, austerity policy was taken, but without examining the impact on the implementation of programmes and strategies. A first package of government reform was launched in August 2015, which included series of measures, including reducing the number of ministries and agencies to improve efficiency in government work and cutting expenditures. Some ministries, such as Ministry of Women Affairs, were abolished. This decision, although it was through a reform package based on ministerial rationalization because of the financial crisis and the low level of revenue. However, this action led to the suspension of the national mechanism for women in Iraq, resulting in disruption of coordination and implementation of the strategies and plans mentioned above. Moreover and as an outcome of the feminist movement and continuing demands to find an alternative mechanism for abolished Ministry, the Prime Minister emphasized continuity of work in the committees to implement the strategies to promote the status of women and the status of rural women, and set up a special operations room to follow up the implementation of the 1325 Resolution in the General Secretariat of Council of Ministers.

## **3. Strategy and action plans to achieve gender equality**

The State has more than one gender equality plan and programme, including the National Development Plan (2018-2022), which emphasizes gender equality and is consistent with Iraq's vision for achieving the Agenda 2030, specifically the 5<sup>th</sup> Goal and other goals related to women and equality. It also adopts the Plan for the Reconstruction of Liberated Areas, which includes activities and programmes to empower women that are in line with the 5<sup>th</sup> Goal of the SDGs. As for the cost of this plan, it is calculated within the amounts allocated to ministries and all parties concerned to achieve the objectives of these plans.

- The Council of Ministers approved in 2013 the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women (2013-2017) which aims to promote the rights of Iraqi women in their respective age group and to protect them against all forms of discrimination, violence and reduce the consequences. The Strategy includes four pillars: prevention, care, protection, policies and implementation. The Strategy was based on references that included agreements on women rights and the Constitution, which in many articles has provided for gender equality and equality before law. The Strategy also relied on national documents, the most important of which was the National Five-Year Development Plan, Poverty Reduction Strategy, National Human Rights Plan and the Social Health Survey for Iraqi Women. The Strategy is based on the will of the Iraqi government to lift the Iraqi society from the deteriorating status as a result of previous policies and instable security conditions that have caused intolerant ideological conditions that adversely affected the status of women in Iraq.
- More women were recruited in security services, such as the Community Police, Family Protection Police and the Women Training Institute in Ministry of Interior. There is also a special section for women security within the National Security Service, in addition to the gender units in the security ministries, all of which work to integrate the gender in the security service.
- Include domestic violence in family education for grade 5 preparatory school.
- Increase women participation in the army and police, where the first female batch in protection of personalities graduated in 2013.
- Organize training courses for police personnel in charge of family protection, including women with officer rank and integrate human rights and domestic violence in the curricula of the Police Academy.

The bill on protection against domestic violence includes establishment of shelters to protect women survivors of violence. Once adopted, this law will provide shelters for survivors of violence. The Anti-Human Trafficking Act also provided for establishment of houses for trafficking victims. MOLSA currently reviews the possibility of opening shelters to address cases of women who have been exposed to violence, while waiting for the law to be enacted.

The Ministry of Planning conducts periodic surveys that contain indicators for women exposed to violence in general, such as the Iraq Women Integrated Social and Health (IWISH) survey, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6) about women and children in Iraq, and in-depth reports on violence against women. All these indicators have been integrated into the national plans and strategies. As part of updating the national development plans (2010-2014), they are extended for the period of (2018-2030) to include a theme on gender.

The Iraqi government has been keen to strengthen laws that advocate women and has issued many decrees and approved national plans in favor of women issues, most notably were:

- Regarding health and education issues, a detailed study was conducted on the status of women in these two areas, and on that basis, necessary outputs were developed in the Strategy for Advancement of Iraqi Women.
- Council of Ministers Decree N° 175, 2015 on excluding widows' segment from downsizing due to career slack, in addition to the Decree N° 178, 2014 exempting widows who exceed the subsidy's salary limit from redemption.
- The decision of the National Council for Housing to reduce the price of housing units for needy groups including widows by 75 per cent in the residential complexes that have been or will be allocated in the future upon approval of the Secretariat General of Council of Ministers in 2012. Recommendation sent to institutions to recruit widows, provide advances and allocate housing units by 75 per cent reduction of the price and allowing the balance to be paid in easy installments.
- Council of Ministers Decree N° 99, 2015 directing ministries to nominate a percentage of women candidates for leadership positions for levels of Director General and above.
- The Council of Ministers issued a decree N° (254), 2016, which positively fixed the minimum monthly subsidy which was set at 225,000 Iraqi Dinar for women, compared 175,000 dinars for men.
- The Women Empowerment Directorate, in coordination with the Ministry of Planning, worked to include women issues in the National Development Plan. The Government included gender issues in the Poverty Alleviation Strategy and provided equal access for women and men to the economic resources while integrating human rights principles, equality and justice values and gender concepts in all policies, programmes and projects, along with increasing women representation in embassies and diplomatic missions.

In November 2016, the KRG launched the National Strategy for the Development of Women Status in KRI 2016-2026 to empower Kurdish women and promote gender equality. The Strategy is based on six key outcomes which were based on improving the legal, educational and health environment, integrating women into the labor market, participation in decision-making and peace-building, and supporting institutions concerned with women affairs. The Government of the Region has also adopted a Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2017-2027, which aims to provide protection, prevention and care for women survivors of violence.

#### **4. Plan for Implementation of Recommendations of the CEDAW Committee and the Universal Periodic Review Recommendations**

The Department of Human Rights in the Ministry of Justice, in charge with Reports drafting, and follow-up the implementation of recommendations and concluding observations, including:

1. Receive concluding observations from the Committee concerned after discussion of the report study and circulate them to the concerned parties to implement them.
2. Receive answers from the relevant authorities, that allow the Ministry to draft the report by the National Committee
3. Study, approve the draft and submit it to the General Secretariat of Council of Ministers for approval.
4. Submit the report to the concerned committee through Ministry of Foreign Affairs for discussion.

## **Section 18: High Commission for Human Rights**

The Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (HCHR) was established as a national human rights institution based on the Paris Principles under Law N° 53 of 2008. The Commission's commitment to the Paris Principles is illustrated by its financial independence, and through its association with the legislative authority represented by the Iraqi Council of Representatives under article 2 of its law. The formal and objective procedures related to its formation were completed on 2012 and it undertook to carry out the assigned tasks which includes communicating with independent international and non-governmental human rights institutions promoting a culture of human rights.

The High Commission for Human Rights in Iraq has been accredited by the International Coordination Committee (ICC) and has been classified as (B), which allows it to participate as an observer in international and regional meetings. The Commission is currently seeking to obtain the category (A) by the Commission.

The activities that the Commission seeks to undertake in the field of economic, social and cultural rights relate to the submission of proposals and draft laws to the Council of Representatives, including the Labor Law, the Social Security Law, the draft Child Protection Law and the formation of the Supreme Council for Child Welfare in Iraq, to enact legislation to protect cultural monuments and to report on all violations committed by in the field of human rights. In addition, the Commission monitors the status of women rights and assesses the level of performance of the government and legislative and judicial authorities in order to implement Iraq's international obligations to the CEDAW.

The mandate of the Commission on Gender Equality derives from its objectives and the functions entrusted to the Board of Commissioners under Article 12 of the above-mentioned Commission Act, which refers to the adoption of decisions and recommendations. It aims to prevent the violation of the rights and freedoms of citizens guaranteed by the Constitution and the legislation in force. All this indicates the absolute jurisdiction of the rights of groups, including women, since the Constitution focuses on the rights of women and the family through texts 14, 29 and 30 and other comprehensive texts.

In addition, the Board of Commissioners deal with women issues through its decision N° 2, 2018, which includes the Women Division specialized in monitoring, the women committees within the offices of the Commission located in all governorates, as well as the Women Empowerment Committee which promotes the concept of work according to gender perspective, as well as monitoring, evaluating and documenting the humanitarian situation of women. The most important examples of policies promoting gender equality are:

1. The Commission intends to direct its demands to the decision-makers to indicate any situation that leads to a deviation in the course of the institutions' work on protecting women from any violations of their rights. UNHCR has developed a monitoring plan to assess the level of protection of girls' rights

when marriage contracts are conducted through field monitoring of personal status courts, governorates and private legal marriage offices, especially those not licensed.

2. The Commission shall participate with the national committees responsible for the implementation of international and national laws as observers, in order to present any violation of the law and ensure its inclusion within the policy of these committees.
3. Based on one of the functions of the Commission in evaluating the situation of women, it has worked for two sessions of the Board of Commissioners to prepare a parallel report on the periodic government report of the CEDAW (sixth and seventh).
4. The Commission follows all humanitarian cases and violations published by the visual media through satellite channels and social networking sites and intervenes directly to reduce the violation by contacting and interviewing the concerned people.
5. The Commission follows up on the community ladder through a specialized section of the Monitoring Section that documents all efforts in peace-building and national reconciliation. UNHCR has carried out specific visits to areas of conflict in *Ninawa*, as well as direct work there by its office in Mosul, which is moving towards efforts to restore national cohesion.

In the KRI, it is found in an official institution concerned with the human rights file under the name: "Independent General Commission for Human Rights in the Kurdistan Region", established under Law N° 4 of 2010.

### **Section 19: Actions to strengthen women to establish and maintain peace and crisis management**

In mid-2014, *ISIL* occupied the city of Mosul and large areas in the governorates of *Ninawa*, *Slaheddine*, *Anbar* and *Diyala*, which caused a shock to the human conscience because of the tragic events that Iraqis experienced in the occupied governorates, including women who were held in captivity, murdered, raped and sold as slaves! These terrorist acts led to the displacement of about 3,088,254 people, (51 per cent) of them were women and only 1,277,234 persons could return to their liberated governorates. While women were the most vulnerable to all types of terrorist aggressions, they were also in turn influential players in managing humanitarian plans and events, during *ISIL* invasion and beyond. They also actively contributed to the negotiations, finalization of agreements and peacekeeping initiatives ensuring their sustainability, especially in the reconstruction efforts.

Women have played a pivotal role in contributing to the psychological and emotional awareness of women and children victims of terrorist attacks and to facilitate their integration into economic and social life and in providing their living, health and housing needs.

#### **1- Examples of women participation in peace efforts:**

##### **National Reconciliation Implementation and Follow-up Committee:**

After the work of the Women Office in this Committee was suspended in 2014, during *ISIL* invasion, and when the reconciliation was nearly frozen, the Office reopened in 2015, and it was one of five offices in charge of the IDPs and their needs for services and relationships with the relevant international organizations.

##### **Women Peace and Security: Implementation of the UN Resolution 1325**

The UN Security Council, in 2000, acknowledged both the impact of conflicts on women, as well as the necessity to consider them as active actors capable to manage conflict prevention and resolution and issued the Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The UNSCR 1325 focuses on the role of women in peace building, negotiations, and responding to humanitarian and reconstruction efforts

after the conflict. Iraq joined the group of countries who developed and realized National Action Plans (NAP) when the Federal Government of Iraq and the KRG committed to the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in order to increase women participation in peace and security matters.

They took part in a consultative process with CSOs, security sector, gender and legal experts, relevant ministries, members of federal and Kurdish parliaments, in addition to legal experts. This led to the establishment of a "Multi-sectoral National Task Force" that worked in a participatory manner between 2012 and 2014 to develop Iraq's first national action plan (INAP). By doing this, Iraq has become the first country, in the Middle East and North Africa to develop a NAP in order to enforce and activate the UNSCR 1325. The purpose being to include women in peace-keeping and decision-making process during and after armed conflict, and protect them from all forms of violence.

An assessment of the implementation of the INAP has been launched in December 2018 by the Cross-Sector Task Force 1325, chaired by the SG of the Ministers Council, with the support of UN Women and UNAMI. The second INAP 1325 should also include the active participation of women in peace and security efforts and the prioritization of their needs in planning, programme development and implementation. The report will inform and guide the formulation of the second INAP (2019-2023) which will be launched by the Cross-Sector Task Force 1325 in 2019.

### **The first INAP was built on three basic pillars: women participation, protection and prevention:**

The overall objective of the **participation pillar** was to increase the women representation in negotiations to achieve and strengthen national peace and political decision-making, in order to contribute to building of comprehensive peace and security, including women safety. On this basis, an analytical database was created to provide a clearer picture of women participation, notably in the judiciary, which contributes to making court decisions more gender-sensitive. Increased women representation in embassies and overseas missions as well as in decision-making positions have contributed to making them gender responsive.

As for the **protection pillar**, it was designed to ensure minimum protection and safety for women to ensure a free and decent life by protecting them against gender-based violence and providing safe shelters for victims and survivors of violence, in addition to ensure their rehabilitation and reintegration into society during transitional phases of armed conflicts and beyond. This plan has achieved important positive results in various areas of the affected governorates and various age groups of the Yazidis, *Shabak* and Arab women.

As for the **prevention pillar**, two strategic objectives have been identified: to mainstream the gender concept in all policies and processes related to conflict resolution, prevention and peace-building, in addition to raising awareness and empowering women and enhance their capacities through a rights-based approach. This has resulted in increased awareness and knowledge about gender standards, mechanisms and women rights among ministries' personnel involved in the implementation of the INAP, providers of services responsive to gender, and to mainstream gender in government programmes at both federal and Kurdish levels. This was a positive change in the stereotypical perspective of the role of women and men in the community among the leaders and personnel of relevant ministries. The main outcomes of the activities of the prevention pillar were:

The National Multi-Sectoral Action Team served as a necessary platform to bring together all decision and policy makers on issues related to Women Peace and Security. This joint action has made it possible to develop and implement a space for all to enhance skills and increase capacity in the field of women rights, in addition to enabling them to understand the interrelated nature of women participation in decision-making and the building of peace and security.

## **2- Actions taken to strengthen women leadership in crisis management**

The National Reconciliation Committee of the Prime Minister's office established a special office for women where all staff are women. The office follows-up on all issues related to Iraqi women to enable them to play a pioneering role in the national reconciliation process under a direct supervision of the Councils attached to the National Reconciliation Committee. The main tasks that the Office focused on are:

- Promote cultural awareness of the necessity of women participation in building national unity and cohesion through seminars and conferences targeting all Iraqi governorates.
- Organize courses to raise security concerns and participate in all efforts aiming at raising awareness on the importance of peace and achieving a successful national reconciliation.
- Partner with NGOs to achieve national reconciliation with many segments of Iraqi women
- Open women representative offices near *Baghdad, Karkh and Rusafa*, and in other governorates to follow-up their work and that of women backup councils to provide cultural and social courses aimed at spreading concepts of peace and national unity.

Involving women in the development, identification and management of humanitarian activities and events during and after armed conflicts, supported them in the decision making related to negotiation of conflicts and their resolution, peacekeeping agreements and initiatives. In addition, women from conflict-affected societies shall be involved in conflict resolution process so they can be part of conflict resolution to prevent their reoccurrence to achieve sustainable peace. All these prove that returnee women are increasingly involved in reconstruction of their areas of origin. One of the most important objectives is also to involve, support and encourage displaced women in camp management and to give attention to women issues, as well as development and follow-up of women empowerment programmes in economic and social fields.

## **3- Enhancement and support for women participation in peace processes and implementation of peace agreements**

The (INAP) was a unique opportunity to implement a multi-sectoral, comprehensive and indispensable approach to meet the multiple security needs of the most vulnerable women and girls, based on Iraq's commitments to international women rights mechanisms. The INAP was also a complementary mechanism to the existing government efforts to promote women rights and improve their status in society.

In line with the overall objective of contributing to achieving peace and security in Iraq, as well as to reach stability and build a comprehensive peace in the region and in the world, the INAP provided a common platform to enhance institutional, organizational and personal accountability, and promote a multi-sectoral cooperation on gender-based equality among various active parties such as governments, institutions, women rights organizations, media and academics. There was an interest to achieve these strategic objectives and to create mechanisms that ensure fair proportional representation and full women participation in all State powers (legislative, executive and judicial), decision-making centers at the local and national levels, and to ensure fair proportional representation of women in all reconciliation committees, peace-building negotiations, conflict resolution and national peace achievement councils.

Regarding the participation pillar, qualitative progress has been recorded in the participation of women in the security ministries that may reach the level of excellence in the region. According to the latest statistics, the actual numbers of women working in the Ministry of Defense, both civilian and military, there are (1491 women with an officer rank and 537 in other ranks. Women also held senior civil

status positions with three women with the rank of Assistant Director General, 15 Senior Managers and 78 Associate Directors, in addition to 772 civil servants.

The efforts to support participation were not confined to the employment of women in the Ministry of Defense. Gender mainstreaming was carried out through the establishment of the Gender Unit within the Division for Women Affairs as the body responsible for supporting and developing the work of women working in the Defense Ministry. Members of the Women and Gender Division were involved in the Action Team for the Implementation of the INAP, with 32 representatives from all departments and directorates of the Ministry. Periodic meetings of liaison members are held at the headquarters of the Human Rights Directorate to share opinions and suggestions on how to find mechanisms and action plans that will increase the effectiveness of the empowerment of working women in the Ministry of Defense. In the context of increasing their effective participation in the decision-making positions and in all the committees that are formed within Ministry, which resulted in a significant increase in the number of women employed in various centers in the Ministry.

The Ministry of Migration and Displaced also promoted women to administrative positions by official correspondence or administrative instructions. A Coordination Committee with National Reconciliation Commission and gender indicators were integrated in the Ministry's database. In addition, the Ministry has organized educational seminars on Resolution 1325, and on the importance of women participation in the negotiations and peace building for Ministry staff. Ministry of Migration and Displaced also played a prominent role in training displaced women in dealing with the different situations inside the camp and supporting them to participate in camp management, or to raise funds to create small projects that help to live a decent life, especially women without spouses, in addition to organizing awareness symposiums outside the court.

MOLSA gave due attention to the 1325 Resolution and organized several activities, including:

- Train and educate senior staff in Ministry on the priorities of the Resolution above and in coordination with the task force in the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.
- Train Ministry's sectoral team on report writing mechanism related to the Resolution and documentation of activities, as well as organize awareness raising seminars on gender and the Resolution 1325 during armed conflict phase and beyond.
- Implement several joint programmes with several ministries such as Ministry of Migration and Displaced and Ministry of Interior.
- Arrange field visits to displaced persons' camps, in coordination with Ministry of Migration and Displaced, targeting female-headed households, update displaced persons' data, review their difficult situation in order to provide aid.

## **Section 20: Actions to enhance judicial accountability for international humanitarian law violations**

On 16<sup>th</sup> December 2018, the National Multi-Sectoral Team launched the Special Report on the Implementation of the 1325 INAP, which outlined key achievements, challenges and gaps during the implementation process (2014-2018) and made recommendations and proposals for the development of the second version of the Plan. However, this report included a lot of discrepancies in information and data as well as overlapping in the implementation of activities. Most of the outcomes were not reached due to lack of familiarity with gender issues, lack of expertise, competencies, accountability and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

- National policies and strategies on women, peace and security in Iraq are subject to the 1325 Resolution which was adopted later on conflict-related sexual violence, women participation from a gender-sensitive perspective.
- Training of women leaders on how to participate in peace corps formations.
- Iraq adopts a broader political scope that addresses women and girls' issues during the armed conflict phase and beyond.

The Iraqi government and the Special Representative of the UNSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, signed a joint statement, at the United Nations Headquarters on 23 September 2016. This Statement guarantees the following items:

- Support legislation, policies and services reforms to enhance protection of women against crimes of sexual violence and to address them
- Ensure accountability for sexual violence through strengthening the capacities of national and regional authorities
- Ensure provision of services, livelihood support and compensation for victims and children born as a result of rape
- Involve tribal and religious leaders, civil society and women human rights defenders to in prevent sexual violence crimes and facilitate the return and reintegration of victims
- Ensure that considerations relating to sexual violence are sufficiently reflected in the work of the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Committee
- Raise awareness and deepen knowledge about sexual violence in conflict
- Draw up a plan to implement the joint statement of Iraq and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in participation with institutions concerned with implementation, local and international organizations and other partners
- Work on developing standards for safe havens that will include survivors of sexual violence, in cooperation with the Supreme Judicial Council, and ministries of Justice, Interior, Labor and Social Affairs and CSOs.
- Work on developing clinical measures for survivors of sexual violence, in cooperation with the Supreme Judicial Council and ministries of Health, and Interior and CSOs
- Ministry of Health prepared a plan for gender and the UNSC Resolution 1325 of 2017, and signed the Protocol on Survivors of Sexual Assault.
- In addition to this, MOLSA organized several training courses and educational workshops on human rights and related conventions, such as the (CEDAW), or how to deal with the survivors of violence and how to provide services and legal protection to them, in addition to concluding remarks on Iraq's report on the (CEDAW).

The joint United Nations and the Iraqi Government statement on sexual violence related to conflicts includes the following points:

- Review and adjust the existing policies to promote women participation at the local and international levels, as well as establish a database for women in leadership and decision-making positions, along with opening women offices in ministries and governorates and constituting emergency teams devoted for women special situations.
- Involve women in decision-making and decisions related to negotiation and conflict resolution, agreements and peace-keeping initiatives.
- Represent women in societies that experienced armed conflicts in the process of dispute settlement. Involve returnee women in reconstruction and rehabilitation in their areas of origin by supporting and encouraging displaced women in camp management.
- Protect displaced women and eliminate violence against them to ensure that no impunity is granted to perpetrators by integrating women rights into the justice and security system.

- Build shelters for displaced women while ensuring the application and implementation of laws necessary to protect women who were subject to abduction and sexual assault.
- Harmonize national legislation and international standards on women rights, including the 1325 Resolution, to ensure women get justice and perpetrators are prosecuted.
- Ministry of Migration and Displaced, in coordination with MOLSA, Health, Women Empowerment Directorate and CSOs to advance the status of women-headed households to be covered by humanitarian security and stability programmes, in order to establish income-generating projects and include them in grants allocation.
- Ministry of Health provides maternal and child care services, nutrition assessment, early diagnosis of chronic diseases, provision of necessary drugs and follow-up of cancer cases.

As for the KRI, there are series of procedures, amendment or enforcement of laws that include: the decision of the Judicial Council in the Region on 7 September 2014 to form a judicial body under Article 31 of the Law of the Judicial Authority N° 23, 2007 to investigate crimes against the Yazidis Sinjar region, gather evidence and document crimes committed. The UN Security Council Resolution 2379 issued on 21 September 2017, on the formation of an investigation team to document crimes under an international supervision. Although one and a half year have elapsed with the appointment of a team leader since May 2018, the work of the investigation team is moving slowly.

On another hand, the Parliament of the Region issued Law N° 6 of 2018, which provides for the enforcement of the Federal Law N° 28 of 2012 on combating human trafficking. Moreover, the Ministry of the Interior issued a Ministerial Order on 28 August 2018 establishing the Higher Committee to Combat Human Trafficking and forming a Directorate for that purpose, as well as establishing six offices in provincial centers and independent departments to investigate human trafficking crimes. As for Law N° 20 of 2009 concerning the compensation of those affected by military operations, military errors and terrorist operations, as amended by Law N° 57, 2015 no procedures have yet materialized despite all the terrorist crimes committed against the territory.

## **Section 21: Actions taken to eliminate discrimination against girls' rights**

Despite the deteriorating security situation and political instability, the government is committed to protect children. Continued calls for prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against children achieved progress, including discussions for legal child protection which can be summarized:

- Implement legal and policy reforms to address and prevent violations of the rights of women and girls, and strengthen the institutional capacities, including justice system and transitional justice mechanisms (as appropriate) during conflict and crisis response.
- Strengthen the capacity of the security sector institutions with respect to human rights and to prevent all forms of sexual violence.
- Increase opportunities for women affected by conflict, refugee or IDPs to violence prevention and protection services.
- Take measures to combat trafficking in women and children, and against illicit arms trade and the production, use and illicit trade of drugs.

As for the measures taken to address humanitarian crises due to armed conflict explained earlier, the following points can be stated:

**First:** The 1325 INAP and its contingency plan that targeted displaced persons' compounds, and formation of national team and sectoral teams to implement the 3 pillars of the Resolution.

**Second:** Form a crisis cell and a higher committee to provide relief to IDPs following ISIL's attacks on cities. A relief programmes has been implemented in partnership with the UN and other

international organizations. Moreover, IDPs have been provided with identity papers lost during their escape from their cities.

**Third:** Cooperation between the Government and humanitarian organizations to release women and children of Yazidi ethnic group captured by *ISIL* on grounds of racial discrimination.

**Fourth:** Sign the joint statement by the Government and the United Nations to prevent sexual violence and launch of the national plan for the implementation, as explained above.

**Fifth:** Take care of the *ISIL* children by issuing civil status identities based on the nationality of an Iraqi mother (who wish to retain her child and receive foreign children whose mothers refuse to raise them because of forced pregnancy) and diplomatic coordination to hand them over to their parents or representatives. Out of 88 children, 32 were deported, and 56 (18 girls and 38 boys) were placed in orphanage.

**Sixth:** Take care of *ISIL* families who have been marginalized and threatened and protect those within the Nimrod Complex in Mosul to ensure that they are not subjected to racial discrimination or retaliation.

**Seventh:** The National Security Council approved the strategy of reforming the security sector in 2015 and then got it endorsed by Council of Ministers in 2016. It aims at the comprehensive reform of the security system in accordance with the priorities of fighting corruption and recognizing human rights and ensuring the interests of vulnerable groups and the rights of minorities and other groups socially excluded, including the empowerment of women working in the security field. As for the impact of insecurity on increasing violence against women, the current reform process has been slow, but its effects can be projected in the future.

**Eighth:** The Security Reform Programme needs to be complementary to the national security strategy and the anti-corruption strategy. It should also be transparent and human rights-based to ensure its sustainability and comprehensiveness.

**Ninth:** Extreme Violence Combat Strategy: In line with the 1325 Resolution and the ICRC's observations, the National Security Advisory Organ is working to launch a strategy to combat violent extremism, which has been one of the biggest causes of insecurity and the increasing number of women and children victims. As the efforts to combat extremism were scattered among the relevant government institutions and international organizations, the roles were divided into a strategy that mimicked some of the tasks included in the observations and recommendations of the CEDAW Committee, particularly vis a vis the rise of religious extremism at the expense of Human rights and fundamental freedoms for both sexes. A national team of 24 experts from various ministries, security institutions and many independent experts and CSOs will develop programmes for the concerned ministries, especially in the field of awareness raising, education and other activities targeting all groups, including women.

**Tenth:** Military operations to defeat *ISIL* terrorist militia and liberation of cities: The government carried out a large-scale military campaign over two years (2016-2017) inside and outside the occupied cities and has achieved great success in the expulsion of the terrorists and liberate retained families. This achievement is a significant progress despite the great losses incurred in the lives of civilians and the military and the damages of infrastructure amounting to the destruction of entire areas. Thus, the price that the State and citizens paid to liberate the cities was very high, and required determination to begin the reconstruction phase.

**Eleventh:** Regarding combating international crimes:

- a. The arms trade was important in the absence of security during the period of sectarian fighting. The State is now controlling the arms, especially after the legalization of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) which have been integrated within the military system. Occasional inspections and disarmament of unlicensed weapons were carried out, in addition to intelligence work to freeze the arms trade in an integrated and holistic manner.

- b. Drug trade activities has grown recently and the State is working with its security and intelligence agencies to control the drug traffickers of Iraqi and foreigners alike and hand them over to the judiciary.
- c. As for the Anti-Human Trafficking Act N° 28, 2012 has established a system of institutional anti-crime body which is the Central Committee and Sub-committees, as well as Anti-Human Trafficking Department within the Ministry of the Interior, and an intelligence section, in addition to the shelters for the victims of human trafficking. Thus, the course of combating crime is consistent with Iraq's compliance with the conventions, especially the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and Transnational Organized Crime, which covers all international crimes investigated.

**Twelve:** The Child Welfare Authority of MOLSA adopted a policy to protect children, that has been approved by the Cabinet and the executive plan for the policy which is being prepared to contribute to the achievement of the objectives set forth therein.

## **Section 22: Gender equality-based actions within environmental policies**

### **1. Importance of gender in environmental disasters:**

The Red Crescent and Civil Defense undertook a gender awareness campaign to address flood disasters in the affected areas. The campaign included school children in cooperation with UNICEF, as well as a field campaign in flood disaster areas to train the volunteers and the Red Crescent staff who are already in four Iraqi governorates where female population are 75,000 (or equivalent to 45 per cent of the population). The percentage of women participation in the Civil Defense campaign was estimated to be 10 per cent, which reflects the poor involvement of women despite the huge role they can play in protecting the society against disasters at all stages from preparedness to recovery.

### **2. The role of women in the water sector and the effects of climate change**

It is recognized that water is the mainstay of life in both rural and urban areas for human being, animals and trees. Women are at the forefront of the water sector, both in terms of use and disposal. This necessitates a role and a voice in the decisions related to water management, but also their participation in the management and governance of the environment and natural resources as recommended by international organizations. In this context, Iraq has a clear vision about the importance of partnering with the international community to minimize the effects of climate change on its territory. This is why, it accessed to the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Iraqi Ministry of Health and Environment has developed a national structure to deal with the requirements of this agreement within its Technical Department which became later the National Center for Climate Change.

### **3. Women Initiative for a Safe and Green Iraq**

This initiative was launched in 2017 with the participation of many ministries and relevant bodies such as (Health and Environment, National Security, Culture, Science and Technology, Water Resources, Electricity, the Red Crescent Society, and *Al Nahrin* Center for Strategic Studies). The overall objective of the initiative is to ensure a safe and environmentally sound future that responds to the roles and needs of both men and women. Therefore, it is necessary to:

- Strengthen evidence and/or raising awareness about environmental and health risks related to gender.
- Increase women access to land, water, energy and other natural resources and control to ensure Iraq's preparedness to deal with the Green Climate Fund clear objectives and activities, the most important being:

1. Develop the capacity of women and men to address climate change and ensure equal contribution of both women and men to the implementation of activities on the ground.
2. Address and assess potential risks to the project for both women and men whether in adaptation and mitigation activities.
3. Contribute to reducing the gender gap due to the negative effects of climate change and to work to mitigate the worsening social, economic and environmental conditions that women are facing.
4. Harmonize the project or programme submitted for funding with the Green Climate Fund policy while at the same time adapting to national policies and priorities and ensure inclusive participation of all stakeholders. This is done along adopt national and international institutional competencies, taking into consideration the young women competencies to create a new experienced and specialized generation.
5. Equitable allocation of resources so that women and men benefit equitably from IFAD's mitigation and adaptation activities.
6. Consider gender mainstreaming as social and environmental safeguards for the sustainability of the project or programme.
7. Ensure that climate change projects, programmes and initiatives funded by the Green Climate Fund address inequities due to climate change impacts and provide gender-sensitive solutions to mitigate, adapt to, or prepare for climate change. It is therefore imperative to promote the education of women and girls in the fields of science, engineering, technology and other disciplines related to the natural environment, as well as increase women access to sustainable and time-saving infrastructure and employment.

Iraq has adopted a project to increase the resilience of the agricultural sector to climate change. An internationally funded project from the Adaptation Fund in collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as an executing agency. The main objective of the project is to promote ecological and social agility for climate change in the four selected governorates which are *Muthanna, Qadisiya, Maysan* and *Thi Qar*, where poverty percentage is respectively (53 per cent, 41 per cent, 42 per cent, 41 per cent), which are the highest level of poverty in Iraq.

The number of farmers in these governorates is estimated at 71480 people and the agricultural land is about (12.5 per cent). Consideration for the gender balance through:

1. Qualifying or rehabilitating women and train them efficiently on the topics of increasing agricultural production efficiently. 50 per cent of trainees in the field of training in income-generating activities and business management should be women.
2. It is estimated that at least 30 per cent of the direct beneficiaries of the irrigation infrastructure are women. In addition, 40 per cent of the 1,800 households will benefit from grant programmes for women-headed households.
3. Measures to protect and preserve the knowledge and practices of women in local communities relevant to traditional medicines, biological diversity and conservation techniques. Steps are also taken to ensure that women benefit equally from jobs that are appropriate for the green economy. Iraq is supporting the promotion of the status of rural women with the provision of loans to rural women through the Agricultural Initiative Fund. Furthermore, the impact of environmental policies and sustainable infrastructure projects on women will be monitored and evaluated.

## Section 23: Gender equality in disaster risk reduction programmes and climate change resistance<sup>15</sup>

Iraq is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change in the Middle East. Its future impact is expected to be significant for Iraqi society in general and for vulnerable groups, especially women and girls. Iraq faces real challenges as a result of the increase in annual rates of temperature and the steady decline in annual rainfall rates, affecting the health sector.

1. There are several disasters that Iraq is likely to be exposed to including natural disasters, environmental pollution due to conflicts and wars, floods, drought, earthquakes, epidemics, solar radiation, drinking water scarcity, greenhouse effect to increase methane released from cow raising, gas pipelines and the use of chemical fertilizers. In such circumstances, women are not only taking care of domestic duties and childcare, but also have to ensure the access to living resources given their considerable knowledge of adaptation and mitigation to challenges. This double burden affects also women reproductive health, including an increase in infertility rates for young women and the need for the use of artificial insemination.
2. The formation of a national climate change committee that includes government institutions and bodies, academic, advisory and research centers, CSOs and trade unions, in order to produce the climate changes system for 2018.
3. As for the recommendations to highlight the participation and role of women:
  - Integrate and promote gender and empower women and explicitly clarify their role by adding an item in all national strategies, development process, project management and environment-related activities.
  - Allocation of elective materials to all disciplines in universities on the subject of climate change.
  - Development of an item in the draft Climate Change System that sets out the mechanism for monitoring the mitigation process through the application and development of policies and procedures related to environmental legislation.
  - Coordination between municipalities, provincial councils, local councils, unions and CSOs, including integrating mitigation concepts and procedures and adapting to climate change in local development plans.
  - Integrate the objectives of national climate change strategies, action plans and policies into the sectors of industry, transport, agriculture, energy, water and tourism when updating sectoral plans and programmes.
4. The most important mechanisms and methods for measuring and monitoring the effects of climate change on the enjoyment of women and girls of their rights are monitored from various governmental bodies such as ministries of (health, environment, agriculture, higher education...), research centers, provincial councils.

One of the most important challenges faced by women in Iraq are the drought and lack of arable land, especially during the winter season. This leads to unproductive agricultural season that affects the income of farming households. The drought in the Ahwaz areas led to intermittent migrations towards the cities and the disruption of the social and financial situation for these families and women in particular.

The crisis of internal displacement that took place in Iraq in 2014, due to *ISIL invasion*, was considered a model for the cooperation of various parties to address the challenges faced by the affected families and to solve some of the difficulties they faced. Despite the constraints, those working in this area have shown an interest in women special needs and have become part of their

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<sup>15</sup> Resolution No. A/HRC/38/4 – Human Rights and Climate Change

suffering. Demolition of homes and neighborhoods, and sometimes the destruction of entire neighborhoods, as well as the presence of many bodies under the rubble, have had a significant impact on the environment of those areas. In addition, the diminution of agricultural land due the laying of mines caused many injuries to farmers and amputation, including women. Among the objectives and activities of the project is "preparing Iraq to deal with the Green Climate Fund":

1. Build equal capacity of women and men to address climate change and ensure that women and men contribute to the implementation of activities.
2. Address and assess potential risks to the project for women and men.
3. Contribute to reducing the gender gap resulting from the negative impacts of climate change and gender mainstreaming is essential in the social and environmental safeguards of the sustainability of the project to reduce the worsening social, economic and environmental conditions facing women.
4. Coordinate the project with national policies and priorities and stakeholder participation without neglecting any category, especially young women, with the aim of creating a new generation with experience in this field.
5. Allocate equal resources so that women and men benefit equitably from IFAD's adaptation and mitigation activities.

In the KRI, Council of Ministers, issued the Decision N° 1, 2015, on 14 January 2015, to establish of a Joint Center for Crisis Coordination under the direct supervision of the Minister of the Interior as a proactive step to address crises and humanitarian disasters. A bill on Crises and Disaster Risk Management was prepared by Ministry of Interior in 2018 and submitted to the Council of Ministers to be presented to the Parliament for enactment.

## Chapter III: National Institutions and related Procedures

### Section 24: The current National Mechanism for Gender Equality

The government of Iraq has made many efforts to contribute to ensuring gender equality at the policy and institution levels and established the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 2003. On June 9th, 2004, the Ministry was set up and led by different women ministers, however, it was underfunded and understaffed. In 2015, according to Article 78 of the Constitution and the Diwani Decree N° 312, the Council of Ministers decided to abolish four ministries and merged eight others. Among them were the Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of State for Women Affairs which submitted the National Strategy to combat violence against women (2013-2017) and the one for the Advancement of Iraqi Women Status (2014-2018). This decision generated the failure of the implementation of both strategies. Following this abolition, a Women Empowerment Directorate was established, under the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, and two committees, namely the Standing Committee for the Advancement of Iraqi Women, and the Standing Committee for Rural Women, were reconstituted.

However, the non-allocating of necessary human and financial resources to all these mechanisms, and the overlapping responsibilities and conflicts of interest between them, led to the fragmentation of efforts and resources in the follow-up process of the implementation of national policies and plans for women and generated a degradation in the status of women.

Currently, there are three national mechanisms in Iraq for gender equality:

#### First – The Standing Committee for Advancement of the Status of Iraqi Women

This Committee was established by the Diwani Decree N° 73, 2018, following the abolition of the Committee that was formed by the Executive Order N° 31, 2017 of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, in charge of proposing the general policies on women issues at national level and following-up on Iraq's international obligations.

- Chairperson of the Committee (with a Minister rank) is currently Dr. Thikra Mohammed Jabir Alwash, who is also the Mayor of Baghdad.
- Advisor to Presidency of the Republic and institutions concerned with women issues in different state institutions from the rank of Director General.
- Women figures with experience in women affairs and holding different positions.
- Representative of the Committee on Women, Family and Children and the Legal Committee of the Iraqi Council of Representatives.
- Male and female guests as necessitated by meetings and functions of the Committee and membership of 17 representatives of the various executive bodies and representatives of three CSOs.

The *Diwani* Decree N° (73), 2018 defines the functions of the committee as follows:

- a) Proposing the general policies of the State in issues related to Iraqi women.
- b) Consider and recommend the detailed reports prepared by the bodies represented in the Committee.
- c) Focus on all matters related to Iraqi women, gender equality and the budgets allocated to this objective, health and education and any other tasks that the committee decides to add.
- d) Follow-up to Iraq's international commitments to address women's issues with relevant national authorities.

e) Coordinate the work with the Arab Women Organization regarding the work of the Executive Council for Women and the Department of Women, Family and Childhood of the League of Arab States.

The Women Empowerment Directorate shall provide technical and secretarial support to the Standing Committee, its administration and the follow-up to its recommendations as stipulated in Articles 4, 5 and 6.

### **Second - Standing Committee for Advancement of the Status of Rural Women**

(Attached to the General Secretariat of Council of Ministers)

Based on the recommendations of the discussion session to promote the status of rural women, the Diwan Decree N° (30) for the year 2017 was issued. The decision also included the cancellation of the previous Committee, by the Decree N° 65 and the new chairmanship of the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, who is currently Mr. Hamid Al-Ghezzi.

The functions of the Committee are included in item III and are as follows:

- a) Present a unified national plan on rural women's issues.
- b) Approve plans and programs to serve the needs and requirements of rural women.
- c) Supervise the work of the Committee subcommittees.

The Women Empowerment Directorate shall provide technical and secretarial support and management, as well as the follow up to the implementation of its recommendations and submit periodic reports in accordance with the sectorial tasks.

### **Third - Women Empowerment Directorate**

(Attached to the General Secretariat of Council of Ministers)

The Directorate has been officially created by the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, in 2017 by the Diwani Decree N° 4 that defines number of sections, their functions and activities under 3 sections. The Directorate is currently headed by Dr. Ibtisam Aziz.

## **1. Mandate**

- a) Build a National Network composed of gender offices and units in Ministries;
- b) Mainstream gender into strategies and government policies;
- c) Concretize an enabling legal environment free from discrimination against women and guarantee women legal protection;

## **2. Structure**

- a) The Community Development Section that is composed of two divisions:
  - Development Programs Division
  - Gender Division
- b) The Women's Rights Section composed of two divisions:
  - Division of Plans and Programs
  - Follow-up Division
- c) The Coordination Support Section composed of two divisions:
  - Relations Division
  - International Cooperation Division

As for the KRI, the Council of Ministers issued an order to form:

1. The High Council for Women Affairs, which will take care of women interest, formulate policies that support to improve the status of women in the region. The Council is an official body that is attached to the KRG, which is the guardian and sponsor institution for policies and strategies of the KRG in all political, social or economic women matters.
2. The Council was established by the Council of Ministers Order N° 1 of 2010, which states that the Prime Minister of the region chairs the Council and held its first meeting on 15 June 2011.
3. The Council includes the ministries of Justice, Internal Affairs, Finance and Economy, Health, Education, Culture and Youth, Labor and Social Affairs and have gender units that implement and develop strategies and projects related to women rights in all fields.
4. The Council is headed by a Secretary-General with the rank of Minister, who directly supervises the affairs of the Council, as well as the 6 members of the Board, with the rank of Director General.

### **Section 25: Head of the National Authority implementing the SDGs**

The Executive Order No 19 was issued on 2016 forming a Cell charged with following-up on the results of the National Report to achieve the SDGs, developing the policies and procedures needed for their implementation, and submit recommendations to the Council of Ministers to take the necessary decision. The Cell is chaired by the Ministry of Planning working alongside the Technical Undersecretaries of the Ministry of Oil, of Higher Education and Scientific Research, of Electricity, of Trade, of Education, of Communications, of Health, of Industry, of Labor and Social Affairs, as well as the Director General of the Ministries of Planning, Transport, CSOs and federations. The Women Empowerment Directorate is represented in the National Commission for Sustainable Development, which is chaired by the Minister of Planning, and the Secretariat-General of the Council of Ministers is also a member of the Follow-up Cell for the SDGs 2030.

**First:** There is a formal existing mechanism for various stakeholders involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

**Second:** There is a formal mechanism involved in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Plan. Indeed, two specialized teams have been formed and are affiliated with the National Commission for Sustainable Development, which is chaired by the Minister of Planning. The first is the Human Development Team and the other is the Population and Development Team. Both teams work towards achieving the objectives of the 2030 Plan, particularly SDG 5, which aims to achieving gender equality and women empowerment. As part of the World Development Agenda 2030, the Ministry of Planning prepared a plan under this global agenda by forming the National Commission for Sustainable Development. The Commission began its work by forming a group of task forces according to the global agenda themes, and holding 4 conferences to prepare a road map for the sustainable development framework. The first scientific conference was held on 24 November 2016 under the logo of "Iraq 2030: The future we aspire to". The National Commission held its first meeting on 2 August 2018, to work towards integrating the SDGs into the Five-Year National Development Plan (2018-2022) through partnerships with international organizations and bodies at level of specialized teams of the Commission"<sup>16</sup>.

At the end of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, without achieving all goals, the 2030 Agenda presented with complementary objectives and outcomes that meet the objectives of the women empowerment, especially in areas of reproductive health and poverty. The Ministry of Planning is collaborating with a national team and sectoral teams to develop policies to achieve these objectives.

<sup>16</sup> [http://mop.gov.iq/office\\_ministry/view/details?id=29&sub\\_content=0&id\\_sub\\_content=0&sub2content=nothing](http://mop.gov.iq/office_ministry/view/details?id=29&sub_content=0&id_sub_content=0&sub2content=nothing)

The greatest challenge is to integrate these objectives into policies at the ministerial level, to allocate adequate funding for training and to implement these projects in collaboration with the international community.

The Ministry also highlighted the challenges that had hindered the implementation of the MDGs and the Development Plan in its first phase (increase in poverty rate to 22.5 per cent) due to the ISIL crises, decrease in oil prices, increase in rates of rural-urban migration and expansion of the informal sector, the inability of the private sector to absorb job seekers, irrational population inflation which is incompatible with the amount of natural resources available, growing demand for environmental resources, and services and random urban housing expansion, which lacks access to basic public services. In addition to these challenges, some negative phenomena have emerged such as: the widespread violation of the law, tribal disputes and drug abuse.

## **Section 26: Mechanisms for the Implementation and Monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda**

There is a National Sustainable Development Committee with representatives from ministries, CSOs, the academia and the private sector that are assigned to the specialized teams that operate under the umbrella of the committee mentioned by 10 specialized teams:

1. Poverty Eradication Team
2. Environmental Resources Sustainability Team
3. Green Economy Team
4. Cities and Human Settlements Team
5. Human Development Team
6. Population and Development Group
7. Education and Awareness Team
8. Good Governance Team
9. Statistics and Information Team
10. Panel of Experts Team

The structure below reflects national mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the SDGs:

### Follow-up Cell

The Follow-up Cell is chaired by the Minister of Planning and membership of Ministry undersecretaries, CSOs and representatives of the private sector. Its role begins upon preparation of the monitoring report by the National Committee for Sustainable Development, where it directs programmes and policies to achieve the targets and submit to Council of Ministers for adoption ministers and require local governments to implement



National Committee for Sustainable Development



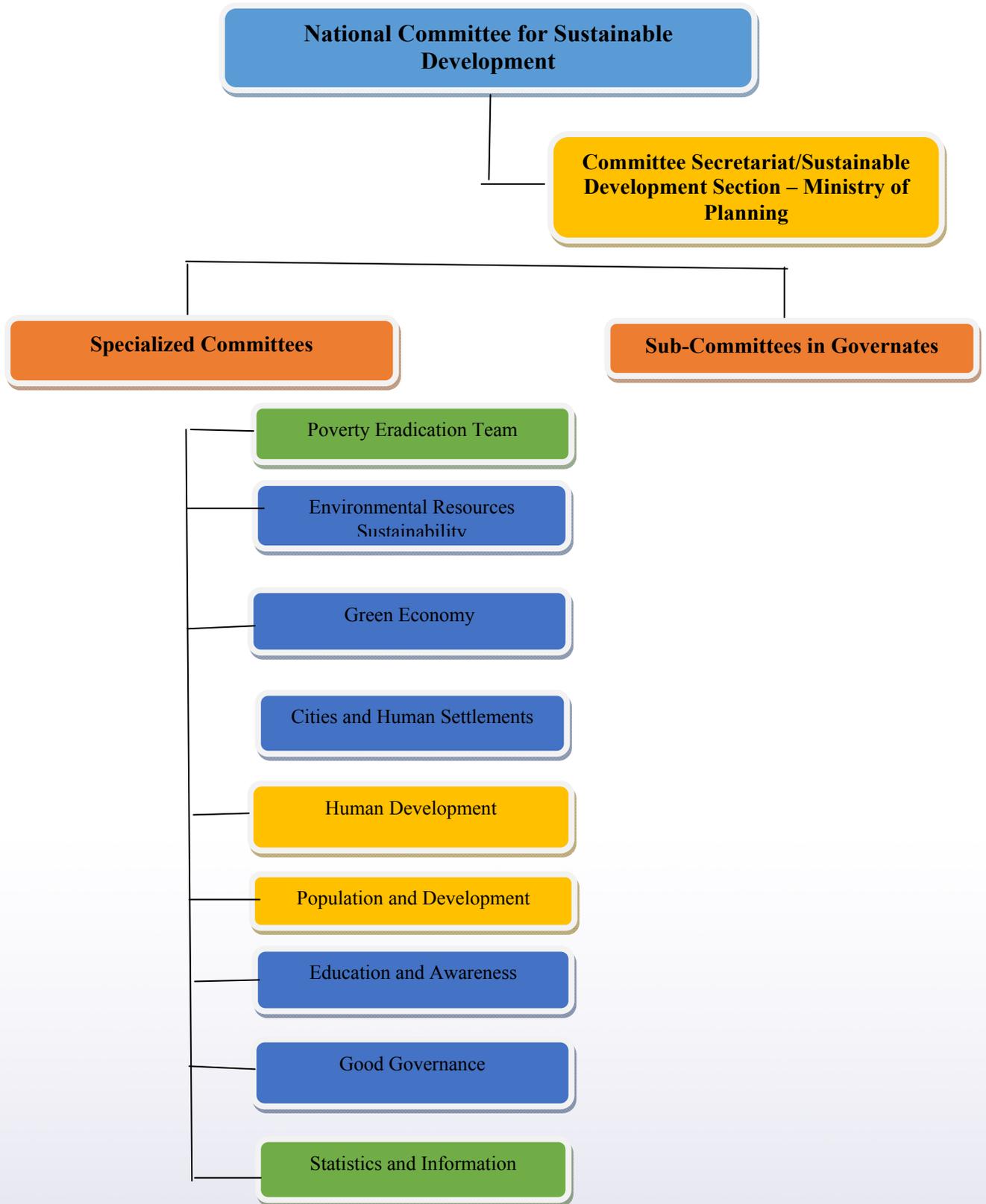
Sustainable Development Committee in Governates

This Committee is chaired by the Minister of Planning, and includes representatives of relevant ministries who are at grade of Director General or Expert.

**Terms of Reference of the Committee:**

Monitoring and Preparation of a national report on the achievement made by the specialized teams attached to the Committee.  
The Committee submits its reports to the Follow-up Cell.

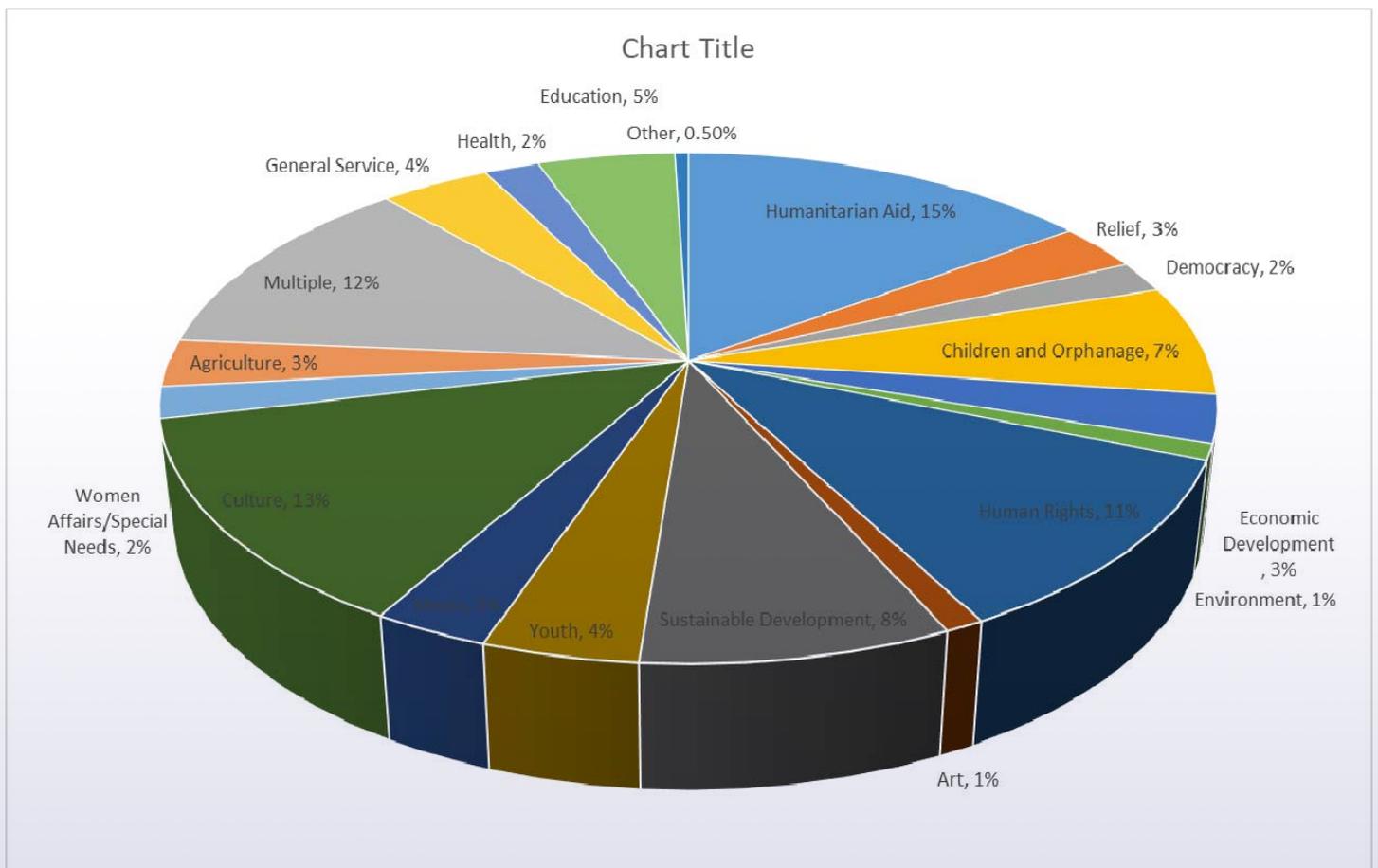
This Committee is chaired by the Governor, and the Assistant Technical Governor as Vice Chairman. The members are:  
Director of Environment in the Governate  
Representative of Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources  
Representative of Ministry Municipalities and Works  
Representative of Governate Planning Directorate of Ministry of Planning  
Vice Chancellor of the University in the Governate  
Representative of the private Sector  
Civil Society



There are several bodies, departments and committees working on multiple tasks to follow-up the implementation of Iraq's obligations towards the decisions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which are affiliated with various institutions of Iraq, including:

1. Committees of the Iraqi Council of Representatives working on issues concerning women and human rights and public services, including the following committees: Human Rights; Health and Environment; Women, Family and Childhood; CSOs; Parliamentary Development; Education; Labor and Social Affairs; Higher Education; Services and Reconstruction; Reconciliation, Tribes and Religious Affairs; and Finance;
2. The Higher Committee for the Advancement of Status of Iraqi Women, the Higher Committee for Advancement of Rural Women, Women Empowerment Directorate and the Committee on Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325, all under the umbrella of the General Secretariat of Council of Ministers;
3. Social Protection Department in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs;
4. Anti-Violence Protection Department in the Ministry of Interior;
5. Ministry of Planning;
6. Women empowerment offices in Iraqi ministries and independent bodies;
7. Center for Women Studies, University of Baghdad;
8. Women and Human rights CSOs.

The graph below explains the percentage of the Beijing areas of concern.



- a. Work is underway in Iraq to strengthen the principle of gender equality and ensure the participation of women without discrimination, whether at the level of the Constitution or the laws or in the practical operational aspect in various fields, especially in government institutions.
- b. The following bodies contributed to the follow-up and implementation of the decisions of the Beijing Conference in two ways:
  1. A direct method, by being a member in the drafting team which is called “Iraq Report Team” which is formed by the Executive Order N° 9 of 2018 under the supervision of the Prime Minister and the chairmanship of Dr. Thikra Mohammed Jabir Alwash, Chairwoman of the Higher Committee for Advancement of Status of Iraqi Women.
  2. An indirect method, by providing above-mentioned team with the information and statistics required to achieve all factors of success in this task.

### **Section 27: Gender equality as a priority in the SDG National Plan implementation:**

Gender equality is a key priority in the National Plan (2018-2022) for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 5 aims to ensure gender equality and empower of all women and girls. This goal calls for the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against women, including harmful practices, and to seek to ensure opportunities in area of sexual and reproductive health, reproductive rights, recognition of their employment, access to productive resources and equal enjoyment like men of political and economic life. Article 14 of the Constitution stipulates that Iraqis are equal before the law without discrimination based on gender and Article 16 adds that equal opportunities are guaranteed to all Iraqis. Despite all these constitutional provisions, the role and participation of women in decision-making remains limited despite positive measures such as the quota system and emphasis on women participation in economic, social and political development process.

The Human Development and the Population and Development Teams of the National Commission for Sustainable Development work on localizing SDG 5 in the annual development plans as well as programs with international organizations as follows:

1. Gender equality is at the heart of the plans and strategies to implement the SDGs.
2. Focus on provision of statistical data by gender highlighting gender-based gaps and disparities to monitor and assess progress made in achieving the SDGs.
3. Coordinate with all the ministries concerned with women’ issues, specifically ministries that can strengthen the mechanisms of equality by providing services able to contribute to achieving the SDGs.
4. The National Voluntary Report for the SDGs which was presented in July 2019 to the High-level Political Forum for the SDGs emphasized the importance of empowering women and girls.
5. Iraq's Vision for the SDGs 2030 considers gender equality as one of Iraq’s national priorities.

The National Development Plan (2018-2022) includes a theme for women empowerment in the human and social development pillar, as well as women’s education and health, economic empowerment, as follows:

1. Increase women’s participation in negotiations and representation in national peace, reconciliation and peaceful coexistence committees.
2. Establish mechanisms to ensure fair representation and women participation in all powers and decision-making positions.
3. Involve women in formulating, identifying and managing of humanitarian activities and events during armed conflict and post-conflict phases. Involve women from conflict-affected societies in conflict resolution processes to take part in conflict resolution and prevention to achieve sustainable peace.

Ensure fair proportionate representation and full participation of women in all reconciliation committees and peace-building negotiations.

4. Involve women in decision-making processes related to conflict negotiation, resolution and peace-keeping agreements and initiatives. Involving women in the reconstruction of their areas of origin. Involve, support and encourage displaced women in camp management
5. Develop and implement programmes for women's economic and social empowerment. To this effect, the Government is mainstreaming women empowerment in its poverty- reduction strategy, which is currently being updated. Gender formations in ministries and non-Ministry entities work on gender mainstreaming in their institutions' policies.

The National Development Plan, sectoral strategies and policies adopted by the Government, through Ministry of Planning, underscore the provisions of the 2005 Iraqi Constitution in order to provide education, employment and health opportunities, achieve equality for men and women as a right for all without discrimination. Vulnerable groups such as widows, divorced women and those without parental care are also taken into account. The Department of Social Protection for Women,<sup>17</sup> provided care for women without breadwinner.

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<sup>17</sup> 15 CEDAW/C/IRQ/7 -15 August 2018

## Chapter IV: Data and Statistics

### Section 28: The important areas where most progress in gender equality occurred

1. Laws, regulations or statistical programmes, and the strategy that determines the development of the gender statistics, while working on developing a conceptual framework to improve the gender statistics.
2. Establish an inter-agency coordination mechanism for gender statistics, such as a technical working group and inter-agency committee on cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) on gender statistics.
3. Conduct new surveys to produce basic national background information on specialized themes (such as use of time, gender-based violence, assets ownership, poverty and disability), implementation of the Iraq Woman Integrated Social and Health Survey (I-WISH), National Youth Survey in 2019 and the Household Socio-Economic Survey.
4. Develop a database or an online central follow-up board on gender statistics, or an on-line program on gender statistics.
5. Participate in capacity building to promote the use of gender statistics (through training courses, seminars on statistical estimation), such as the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Group of Experts and Agencies on Gender Statistics and several training courses on gender statistics.

The Central Statistical Organization of the Ministry of Planning issued new surveys based on the latest database in 2019 for the year 2017-2018 related to nation-wide gender statistics. In its statistics, the Central Statistical Organization will use international and local standards, classifications and quality standards<sup>18</sup>. As for development of the online database and a central follow-up unit on gender statistics, the website of the Central Auditing Organization was updated on 3/4/2019 during the preparation of this report, in cooperation with all ministries in the Iraqi government based on statistics, reports and studies issued by these ministries collaboratively.

As for conducting new surveys to produce specialized background information, the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Statistics Conference held on 2018, cooperation with UNFPA to discuss the preparation of the 2020 Population Census, and implement the Iraq Woman Integrated Social and Health Survey (I-WISH), which was attended by the Head of Central Statistics Organization, Head of Statistics Organization in KRG, in addition to the directors general of the directorates in the Organization, and the managers of the provincial Statistics. The conference was also attended by focal points in the institutions and relevant bodies in the Country.

For statistical capacity-building to increase the statistical estimation for users, the Central Statistics Organization in Iraq adopted capacity-building training, and presented a study titled "Use of technology in the Census of Population and Housing"<sup>19</sup>.

### Section 29: Most important priorities establishing a reliable national database on gender statistics

1. New surveys have been conducted to produce national background information on specialized themes (such as use of time, gender-based violence, assets ownership, poverty and disability).

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<sup>18</sup> <http://cosit.gov.iq/ar/2018-12-19-08-39-42>

<sup>19</sup> [http://cosit.gov.iq/images/news\\_pictures/2018/conf/3.pdf](http://cosit.gov.iq/images/news_pictures/2018/conf/3.pdf)

2. Statistical capacity of users has been built to increase statistical estimation and use of gender statistics (for example, training courses and seminars on statistical estimation).
3. A database or an online central follow-up board on gender statistics, or an on-line programme on gender statistics, have been developed.
4. More gender-friendly data for gender equality in policy formulation and implementation of programmes and projects have been used.
5. An inter-agency coordination mechanism for gender statistics has been established (such as technical working group and an inter-agency committee).

In the KRI, surveys such as MNCHS, and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6) were carried out in 2016 and 2018 respectively, in addition Manpower Survey (2015), Demographic Survey (2017), and Food Security Survey (2016). There is a joint committee with the center in Baghdad for the implementation of surveys, in addition to a coordination mechanism between ministries to collect data from the relevant ministries through the statistical units.

### **Section 30: National indicators for monitoring progress made in the SDGs**

The Ministry of Planning has established a national working group composed of a working group with the Central Statistics Organization, in cooperation with a working group of various ministries in the Iraqi government. Ministry also identified 71 indicators to monitor progress of the SDGs. Those gender-related indicators are 22 indicators. For example:<sup>20</sup>

- Indicators of ratio of illiteracy among women compared to males
- Indicators of dropout rates for girls from different levels of education compared to males
- Indicators of representation of women in the Council of Representatives and provincial councils
- Indicators of cases of violence against women
- Indicators of percentage of ownership and holdings of women in the factors of production compared to males
- Indicators of proportion of women who hold leadership positions at different levels compared to males
- Percentage of women participation in local and parliamentary elections
- Maternal mortality rates
- Number of births under health care.

#### **I- Priority indicators and policies for the fifth target within the SDGs**

The Central Statistics Organization prepared two reports on the 5<sup>th</sup> Goal using the available indicators and including 6 out of 14 indicators of the statistical surveys. It was not possible to use other indicators because of the specificity of the indicators and the lack of updating administrative records. The data were compiled and integrated in the National Plan (2018-2022) related to<sup>21</sup>:

##### **1. Women education:**

<sup>20</sup> <http://cosit.gov.iq/ar/2013-03-29-08-38-50>

<sup>21</sup> National Strategy for Iraq, 2018-2022

- a. The rate of female enrollment in elementary education in 2015-2016 increased to 79 per cent for primary schools, 44 per cent for secondary schools. Enrollment rate for university education in 2011, increased to 18.5 per cent (instead of 13.4 per cent).
- b. Dropout rates in primary, middle and middle school (4.7 per cent for LAM (2015-2016).

## **2. Economic Participation:**

Data from the Social and Economic Household Survey in 2014 revealed that percentage of working women to economically active women was 78 per cent, while the percentage of women working in the private sector to economically active women was 29 per cent in 2014.

## **3. Women health**

The indicator of births under the supervision of specialist health staff increased gradually to 87.7 per cent, 91.5 per cent and 95.5 per cent in years 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively, thus achieving the intended goal which is an important indicator to assess the level of reproductive health services. As for premature deaths due to non-communicable diseases, the mortality rate in 2015 has dropped to 41 deaths per 100,000 population, instead of 58.9 cases per 100,000 inhabitants during the years 2009 to 2015, which is also a positive indicator. As for breast cancer in women, The Ministry of Health data showed a significant increase in the incidence of breast cancer in 2015, to a high rate of 30.6 per cent, which is the highest rate since 2009 (19 per cent). This is due to environmental threats and the impact of terrorist attacks on health conditions, in general, which necessitates intervention through well-established health programmes in order to reduce the risks.

## **4. Social Protection:**

The number of people covered by the social protection system has increased in the years (2010-2015) to 471,318, which is a positive indicator of the social care enjoyed by the Iraqi women.

## **5. Social conditions**

The percentage of female-headed household at the national level, according to the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) 2016 is 10.5 per cent, noting that the highest percentage of women-headed households registered in the capital Baghdad (13.6 per cent), followed by Sulaymaniyah Governorate (12.3 per cent) in comparison with previous years.

The percentage of women married at age of 12 and above at national level was 53.9 per cent, noting that the highest percentage of women married at this age at governorate level, in the (Iraq Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis Survey 2016), was recorded in *Muthanna* Governorate (56.9 per cent). The percentage of women in the 20-49 age group who were married by age 18, according to the (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6)) in 2018 was 24.8 per cent.

The highest levels of the country-wide registered marriages were (246,430) in 2009. If compared to those in 2016, there is a decline in marriage to its lowest level in 2014, which has a negative impact on the society dynamics, mobility and stability. This was evident in the low marriage rate (190,026) for marriage, but the demand for marriage rose again later but did not reach previous levels.

The decrease in marriage levels is associated with a rise in divorce cases. The Higher Judicial Council data indicates that divorce has reached its highest level in 2011 when (59,515) cases were reported. On the other hand, year 2016 witnessed a remarkable increase in divorce cases which reached (56,594) cases compared to (52,028) cases in 2014.

The Iraqi society witnessed cases of escalating domestic violence, which reached its highest level in 2016. The number of cases reached (8,552) cases of domestic violence, as documented and completed investigation cases in Family and Child Protection Sections on domestic violence in Iraq. The Community Police in the Ministry of the Interior reported cases of assault on women by (10,701) cases in 2016, which was mainly physical, verbal and psychological violence.

Psychological support centers that are part of the Directorate of Social protection in the governorates of (*Baghdad, Babel, Al-Nagaf, Al-Ashraf, Karbala, Salahuddin, Dialy, Al-Anbar, Mosul/Ninawa*) many cases of violence that reached (2944) cases according to registered cases.

*ISIL* Terrorist operations, displacement forced immigration had an impact on women in particular and resulted in a large number of widows and divorced women who became the only bread-winners. According to the statistics of the Organization of Women Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) in 2015, the number of women abducted, raped, trafficked and subsequent psychological damage was 4,000<sup>22</sup>.

## 6. Women in sectoral strategies

- National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women (2013-2017)
- National strategy for the advancement of the status of Iraqi women (2014–2018)
- National Strategy for Developing Rural Women

These strategies were not implemented at the required level due to the security circumstances that Iraq experienced during the preparation of these strategies.

Women Empowerment Goals in the National Development Plan (2018-2022).

**Goal 1:** Women scientific and knowledge empowerment

**Goal 2:** Women economic empowerment

**Goal 3:** Women health empowerment

**Goal 4:** Women empowerment in areas affected by terrorism.

**Goal 5:** Expanding women participation in the private sector.

The Ministry of Planning merged the 5th Goal titled "Sustainable Development towards Better Empowerment of Iraqi Women" as follows<sup>23</sup>:

### **Goal 5: Achievement of Gender Equality and Empowerment of All Women and Girls.**

- 5.1** Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere.
- 5.2** Elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls, including human trafficking, sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation.
- 5.3** Elimination of all harmful practices such as child marriage, early marriage, forced marriage and female circumcision.
- 5.4** Recognition and assessment of unpaid care work and domestic work through provision of public services and infrastructure, formulation of social protection policies and promotion of responsibility sharing among household at the national level as appropriate.
- 5.5** Guarantee of full and effective participation of women and leadership opportunities available for women equally with men at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

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<sup>22</sup> National Development Strategy, 2018-2022, pages 235-237, and pages 239-240

<sup>23</sup> Sustainable Development towards Better Empowerment of Women and Girls, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistics Organization, Human Development Statistics Section, 2018

- 5.6 Ensure that all people have access to sexual and reproductive health services and reproductive rights as agreed upon according to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the final documents of conferences reviewed.
- 5.7 Undertake reforms to give women equal rights in economic resources, as possibility of ownership and control over land and other property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources in accordance with national laws.
- 5.8 Enhance use of enabling technology, especially information and communication technology (ICT), to promote women empowerment.
- 5.9 Adopt sound policies and enforceable legislations and strengthening of existing policies and legislations to promote gender equality and empower all women and girls at all levels.

**II- Categories that are routinely provided by the main surveys**

- 1. Geographical location
- 2. Income
- 3. Sex
- 4. Age
- 5. Education
- 6. Marital status
- 7. Migration status
- 8. Disability.