

**Statement by Mr. Benon V. Sevan, Executive Director of OIP
22 May 2003**

**Oil-for-Food Programme Welcomes End of
Sanctions and Begins Phasedown**

The Executive Director of the Oil-for-Food Programme (Mr. Benon Sevan) today welcomed the adoption of [resolution 1483 \(2003\)](#) lifting civilian sanctions on Iraq and phasing out the Programme over the next six months.

"The lifting of sanctions represents long-awaited relief for the Iraqi people," he said. "Iraq is blessed with natural and human resources, not the least of those being oil and a well educated and extraordinarily resilient population and an extremely competent cadre of industrial managers and experts capable of driving the economy forward. If peace and security prevail, their formidable capacity and ingenuity will be unshackled by today's resolution."

Mr. Sevan drew attention to the fact that the Oil-for-Food Programme was always intended by the Security Council to be a temporary measure. "This has been a very long seven years - from 1996 to the present day," he said. "We are fully committed to the most orderly and cost-effective phasing out of the programme over the next six months."

Mr. Sevan said he had already initiated the necessary actions to start the phasing out of the programme. "We will also continue to deliver goods and supplies in support of the programme over the next six months, while preparing to hand over all related activities, resources and assets." **(Posted 22 May)**