

## **The United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme: Focus on Humanitarian Relief**

*The Oil-for-Food Programme was established as a temporary measure to ease the unintended consequences of international sanctions on Iraq's civilian population. Responding to the prevailing political conditions in Iraq, the Security Council determined that the United Nations would implement the Programme in the country's three northern governorates, while the Government would carry it out in the central and south under UN observation.*

*The account below is only a sampling of the life-saving work done in the three northern governorates by UN agencies, including the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).*

### **A BETTER FUTURE FOR IRAQ'S CHILDREN**

- In the north, there was a 56 per cent reduction in chronic malnutrition among children under 5 from 1996 to 2002.
- During that period, the incidence of underweight children under 5 dropped by 44 per cent.
- At the same time, acute malnutrition dropped from 11 per cent to 5.4 per cent, while the percentage of underweight children dropped from 26 to 10.2.
- Children and adults in Iraq saw their daily caloric intake increase by 83 per cent.
- Also in the northern governorates, the UN ran a school feeding programme that included all primary age students – over 700,000.
- A supplementary feeding programme for malnourished children and pregnant women helped the youngest and most vulnerable Iraqis get a healthy start in life.
- High protein biscuits, therapeutic milk and vitamin A were distributed to children as part of efforts to ensure sound nutrition.

### **A HEALTHIER POPULATION WITH BETTER MEDICAL SERVICES**

- Under sanctions, the health of Iraqis began to deteriorate precipitously, but with the influx of medicines and other supplies under the Oil-for-Food Programme a marked recovery began. In the first five years, the number of malaria cases dropped from nearly 14,000 to just over 1,000, while diphtheria was cut by almost 90 per cent, from 290 to 32 cases.
- Polio was completely eliminated across the country.
- Thanks to immunization campaigns, the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases declined sharply. For example, in the northern governorate of Dohuk, there were nearly 8,000 cases of measles in 1998 – a figure which dropped to about half of one per cent of what it had been, to fewer than 40, in 2003.
- After several seasonal epidemics of cholera, the Programme helped contain the disease in northern Iraq. No case has been registered there since the year 2000.

- With an influx of supplies, Iraqi hospitals were able to carry out 40 per cent more major operations than before the relief effort started.
- Laboratory investigations increased by 25 per cent in the centre and south.
- Eighty per cent of schools in the north were covered by health programmes.
- Scores of Iraqi hospitals, specialized health facilities, and medical education institutions received biomedical and other health-related equipment, as well as other supplies, such as generators, oxygen plants, washing machines, dryers, vehicles, computers and photocopiers.
- Equipment included hundreds of hospital beds, dozens of haemo-dialysis beds, 38 complete operating rooms, two dozen delivery rooms, 49 radiology rooms and other life-saving machines such as CT scan and MRI Units.

### **SUPPORT FOR FARMERS GENERATED MORE FOOD FOR ALL**

In the north:

- Tens of thousands of Iraqi farmers were able to cultivate crops and raise livestock thanks to the Oil-for-Food Programme, which paved the way for the distribution of 25,500 tonnes of wheat seed, 4,800 tonnes of barley seed, 700 tonnes of legume seed, 120 tonnes of vegetable seeds and 100,000 tonnes of fertilizers.
- Over 170 orchards were established and 1,500 others rehabilitated in the year 2002 alone.
- Supporting the traditional honey industry in Iraq, thousands of local beekeepers received equipment, including over 20,000 frame beehives.
- Some 90,000 livestock owners received 220,000 tonnes of animal feed.
- Over 2 million farmers benefited from the vaccination and treatment for disease among more than 90 percent of sheep, goats and cattle in the north.
- Forty-five veterinary centres and 31 mobile veterinary clinics were rehabilitated or renovated.
- Thanks to an over twenty-fold increase in the number of poultry broiler farms – from 25 in 1996 to 660 in 2002 – the total number of birds raised jumped from 1.2 million to 13.6 million in the same period.
- More than 50,000 farm families benefited from a more than doubling of the area under irrigation, from about 30,000 hectares to over 70,000 during the Oil-for-Food Programme.
- More than 400 deep wells and 250 shallow wells were dug in order to provide water for households, cattle and cultivation.
- Some 16 million forest and fruit tree seedlings were produced for reforestation and forest improvement.

### **CLEAN WATER AND BETTER SANITATION IN HOMES AND SCHOOLS**

- The rehabilitation of the water and sanitation facilities in the north improved access to potable water for hundreds of thousands of people, and ensured improved health conditions for the population as a whole.
- Activities included replacing 840 pumps, drilling 600 bore wells and getting 500 pump/chlorinator houses in working order.

- Six hundred and seventy sanitation vehicles were provided or repaired.
- Some 50,000 household latrines were constructed.
- School sanitation programmes were operating in 230 schools.

### **RIDDING IRAQ OF DANGEROUS LANDMINES**

- With Oil-for-Food funding, the UN-led Mine Action Programme for Iraq resulted in the clearance of more than 12.2 million square meters land contaminated by unexploded ordnance (UXO).
- A further 24 million square metres of contaminated land was permanently marked.
- Over 79,000 UXO, 2,500 cluster bomblets, 11,000 anti-personnel mines and 560 anti-tank mines were destroyed.
- By the end of 2002, the number of Iraqis being victimized by landmines or UXO was cut by half.

### **BUILDING HOMES AND REVIVING IRAQ'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

- In the north, the UN helped some 1.3 million people – one third of the region's population – through its settlements rehabilitation programme.
- Some 21,200 houses, 765 schools, 134 health centres, 905 kilometres of water and sanitation systems, 2,940 kilometres of roads, 34 bridges, and 225 agricultural and community facilities were built as part of that effort.
- Over the life of the Programme, the number of registered contractors in the north jumped from 15 to over 900.
- At the same time, the local authorities were trained to manage one of the largest reconstruction projects in Iraq. This included establishing an elaborate construction supervision team to provide support to contractors at more than 2,000 sites.
- At its peak between 2001 and early 2003, the settlements rehabilitation programme helped create an estimated 80,000 jobs.

### **BOLSTERING EDUCATION**

- During the Oil-for-Food Programme, school enrolment rose markedly in northern Iraq, with 17 per cent more secondary students, a nearly 70 per cent jump in attendance at technical institutes, and a 72 per cent increase in the number of university students.
- Primary school attendance jumped by one third between 1996 and 2003.
- More than 600,000 students in northern Iraq received stationary annually.
- Some 3,300 schools received essential classroom supplies.
- Over 600 primary schools and 44 kindergartens were built or rehabilitated.
- The UN provided schools in the north with furniture, dormitories, examination materials, chalk and kerosene heaters.
- All secondary schools received textbooks, while Iraq's education ministry received support to print a further 2 million textbooks. Reference books,

- periodicals and journals were also supplied for universities and technical institutes.
- To improve the quality of teaching in the sciences, the UN provided lab equipment and computers to schools and universities.
  - As part of efforts to promote education, especially among girls, the UN hired and purchased school buses which ferried thousands of children to classes.

### **POWERING NORTHERN IRAQ**

- Before Oil-for-Food northern Iraq's devastated infrastructure made power cuts a daily event. By the end of the relief effort, the UN was effectively serving as a utility company catering to the needs of some 2.7 million consumers there.
- Hospitals and health centres which previously had only erratic electricity supplies received continuous and uninterrupted power.
- Uninterrupted power was also provided to essential services such water pumping stations and drainage facilities.
- The UN effort to repair the electricity infrastructure in northern Iraq involved emergency repairs on the spillway gates of the Derbandikhan Dam and to the draft tubes of the Dam itself.
- Thanks to the overhaul and repair of generators and turbines at the Dokan Hydropower Station, Erbil received electricity.
- Two major substations were constructed and ten others repaired to ensure the distribution of electricity to most of Erbil and Suleimaniyah.

### **TRAINING IRAQIS IN VARIOUS FIELDS**

- In addition to employing thousands of Iraqis, the Oil-for-Food Programme provided training to tens of thousands of others in a variety of fields.
- The UN established 630 farmer field demonstrations for training on new technologies involving seed cleaners and drills, threshers, stone pickers, artificial insemination and improved crop varieties.
- Over 1,500 training courses were held for more than 42,200 farmers.
- Some 15,500 rural women benefited from nearly 650 agricultural training courses.
- More than 500 training courses were organized for 10,055 local authority agriculture and extension staff.
- On the health front, after providing sophisticated medical equipment to Iraq, the UN helped the country's people improve their ability to use it. Over 100 workshops or local training courses were attended by 827 technical and medical staff.
- In addition, 95 medical and technical staff from different healthcare facilities took part in 63 overseas training courses on various imaging techniques and surgical practices.
- More than 208 workshops and training courses were conducted in various areas of public health with some 9,500 professionals participating.
- A dozen workshops and training courses on drug management helped over 250 technicians.

- Mine risk education provided to more than 290,000 people.
- The Programme also launched projects to train secondary teachers and supported teacher training centres through the provision of computers and other equipment. By the end of 2002, over 11,000 teachers had benefited from these projects.
- An additional 32,000 teachers received UNICEF training.
- Training activities in higher education were also supported, with courses for example in English, welding, health, environment, safety and computer programming. In Suleimaniyah governorate, for example, over 1,800 faculty members and non-teaching staff were trained in various areas.
- Two special training programmes benefited 228 senior teachers drawn from all governorates.
- 8,000 pump operators received training as part of water and sanitation projects.