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TO/A: Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary General				
CC:				
THROUGH/VICE PAR:				
FROM/DE: Jeffrey Feltman, USG, DPA				
Date: 22 March 2013		Ext: 3-5055		Room No. - No de bureau: S-3520
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SUBJECT/MESSAGE:

Please find attached for your attention a summary note of the Security Council meeting on Iraq on 21 March.

POL/06/001

Summary Note of the Security Council Meeting on Iraq
held on 21 March 2013

Overview: On 21 March 2013, **SRSK Kobler** briefed the Security Council on the Secretary-General's second report (S/2013/154) pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2061 (2012) on UNAMI (see attached remarks). During the open briefing, **the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations** thanked the SRSK and his teams in Baghdad and New York "for their tireless efforts to assist the Government and people of Iraq". He pointed out that Iraq is witnessing a political stalemate with polarization among political blocs and ongoing demonstrations that are infiltrated by terrorist groups aiming at stirring sectarian tensions and civil war. He highlighted concrete measures that the Government has taken in response to demonstrators' legitimate demands including the release of 5,500 detainees and completion of 91,000 pension applications. He cautioned against sectarian violence and the impact of the Syrian crisis on regional stability. Despite these challenges, he emphasized that the demonstrations are mostly peaceful and Iraq has moved from an armed conflict to a peaceful conflict within the framework of the constitution, and the political process is continuing with the Provincial Council elections set for 20 April. He condemned the attack on Camp Hurriya and reaffirmed his Government's commitment to bringing the perpetrators to justice and ensuring the security and safety of all residents. He commended the SRSK's continuous efforts on the resettlement solution including having convinced the Albanian Government to accept 210 residents. He also commented on Iraq's economic and social progress with the 2013 budget being the largest in Iraqi history. On the relations between Iraq and Kuwait, he underlined recent progress, particularly marked by the resumption of Iraqi Airways to Kuwait after a 23-year halt.

Informal consultations with Security Council members

SRSK Kobler opened the informal consultations with two particular concerns: (i) the current political stalemate in Iraq is taking the country back with unabated demonstrations, increasing demands and radicalized agenda, which have made managing the crisis more difficult; (ii) despite the improvement of relations between Iraq and Kuwait, lack of trust persists. If the Iraq-Kuwait Border Maintenance Project (IKBMP) is not completed by the set timeframe, bilateral relations would face a setback. Iraq should make efforts to remove the obstacles (specifically the 3 houses) on the border regardless of the difficulties during this election period.

All Council members expressed their appreciation and support for him, UNAMI and the UN's work in Iraq, which they recognized as being carried out in a very challenging situation. **SRSK Kobler** thanked Council members for all their words of support which were particularly appreciated in the current difficult situation.

Internal Politics: Most Council members (US, UK, Luxembourg, France, Pakistan, Morocco, Azerbaijan, China, Argentina, Togo, Guatemala) expressed concern regarding political tensions including continued demonstrations and strained relations between the Government of Iraq (GoI) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and underlined the need for progress on national

reconciliation and the importance of inclusive dialogue. **Russia** underscored that deterioration of the situation could lead to a full-scale war and must be avoided. **Argentina** lamented the exploitation of the crisis by political and religious leaders, which has exacerbated sectarian differences. **South Korea** and **Argentina** noted that the absence of President Talabani has left a vacuum in the dialogue between the central and regional governments. **Togo** underlined that the Kurdistan opposition parties should have accepted the invitation to join the Regional Government. **Azerbaijan** underlined the importance of cooperation on resolving issues concerning internal disputed territories. **Luxembourg** recognized the progress made on reconciliation over the past 10 years, despite the current political impasses. **Luxembourg** welcomed UNAMI's good offices to defuse the political tensions and asked how the SRSG views the Security Council's role. **Australia** also underlined that UNAMI's efforts are critical and together with **Guatemala** thanked UNAMI's dialogue with high-level interlocutors in Iraq. **South Korea** asked the SRSG to help bring parties to the conflict together. **SRSG Kobler** in his response emphasized that in its good offices, UNAMI continues to offer to host meetings, draft bridging proposals and witness potential agreements despite the limited space provided to the mission by GoI. He also cautioned against exaggerating the role of UNAMI, whose focus was assisting and advising the GoI and facilitate Iraqi solutions. In the end, the Prime Minister should steer the process by meeting with all key political blocs.

Security: Council members (**US, Morocco, Azerbaijan, China, Australia, Guatemala**) were concerned about the violent attacks and the high number of casualties in Baghdad. They expressed concern about the attacks' impact on the already fragile political situation. **Australia** welcomed the Secretary-General's quick condemnation of such attacks. The **US** feared that such attacks are tearing apart the already fragile fabric of the country and together with **Rwanda** urged action against Al-Qaida. The **US** was particularly concerned about women and children being victims of such attacks. **SRSG Kobler** in his response underscored that the attacks are aimed at igniting sectarian violence and provoking counter actions from the Shiites. Though the situation is mostly stable compared to 2006 and 2007, there is a danger that sectarian violence could be ignited by attacking a holy place.

Iraq-Kuwait relations: Many Council members (**US, Luxembourg, France, Pakistan, Morocco, South Korea, Rwanda, Azerbaijan, China, Argentina, Australia, Guatemala, Russia**) praised the improvement of Iraq-Kuwait relations particularly as witnessed by the recent resumption of Iraqi Airways flights to Kuwait. **The US** thanked the SRSG's good efforts in this regard, and echoed the SRSG's call for GoI to remove the three houses on the border in order to move ahead on the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Maintenance Project (IKBMP). **France, Morocco and China** encouraged the completion of IKBMP by 31 March and urged Iraq to remove the obstacles. **South Korea** underlined that the normalization of Iraq-Kuwait relations is a historical moment, and hoped that the completion of IKBMP could serve as a milestone in bilateral relations. **UK, Luxembourg, Pakistan and Togo** underlined the need to keep momentum in continuing to strengthening their relations and in consolidating gains, and they encouraged Iraq to make progress on the issues of missing persons and property as well as fulfilling other obligations under Chapter VII. **Russia** stated that the Security Council could consider Iraq's exit from Chapter VII under the precondition of no claims by either side. **Azerbaijan** also noted encouraging development between Iraq and other neighbouring countries.

Elections: Council members (**UK, South Korea, Australia**) commended the role of UNAMI in supporting Iraq's electoral activities. **US, UK, France, South Korea, Azerbaijan, China, Australia and Russia** expressed concern about the postponement of the Provincial Council elections in Ninewa and Anbar. **Russia** stated that the delay could lead to serious destabilization. Underlining the UN's important role, the **US** expressed appreciation for the SRSG's statement and echoed that there is no democracy without elections and that citizens of these provinces are looking forward to these elections and should not be disappointed. **France** was concerned about the impact of elections being held only in Shiite-dominated areas. **Azerbaijan** hoped that the Independent High Electoral Commission and UNAMI could make sure the elections take place as planned. The **UK** and **Guatemala** emphasized the need for peaceful, orderly and timely elections. **Luxembourg, Australia and South Korea** urged that women and minorities should be duly included in the election process. **Rwanda** commended Iraq's adoption of 25% women representation in the Governorate Councils, and hailed that for the first time there is a greater women representation in Iraqi politics. **Russia** cautioned about UNAMI's micromanagement in proposing percentages of women's representation while **Argentina** disputed that this was a strategic priority as set out by the Charter. **SRSG Kobler** in his response pointed out that the postponement of the Provincial Council elections is not a security problem and he thanked Council members' support for elections without delay.

Impact of the situation in Syria on Iraq: Council Members (**US, UK, South Korea, Morocco, Rwanda, Argentina, Guatemala, Russia**) expressed concerns over the humanitarian, security and political impact of the crisis in Syria on Iraq. **France** commended the UN's assistance to Syrian refugees. Some Council members (**Luxembourg, Rwanda, Azerbaijan, Togo**) thanked the GoI for hosting more than 100,000 refugees and commended its efforts to meet the basic needs of these refugees. **Morocco** and **Togo** called for the international community's support to Iraq. The **US** recognized the humanitarian challenges that Iraq faces including those caused altogether by Syrian refugees, internally displaced persons, and Iraqi returnees, and urged the Government to balance border and humanitarian concerns. **France, Argentina and Australia** underlined the importance of keeping the border open for Syrian refugees. The **UK** called on Iraq to prevent the transportation of weapons to Assad's regime by preventing overflights. **SRSG Kobler** in his response highlighted that most refugees from Syria are in the Kurdistan Region, and he commended the high cooperation of the KRG on integrating the refugees and providing education child refugees.

Camp New Iraq and Camp Hurriya: Council members (**US, UK, France, Pakistan, China**) commended UNAMI's efforts on finding resettlement solutions to the residents. The **US, France, Pakistan, South Korea, Azerbaijan, Argentina, Togo and Guatemala** condemned the 9 February attack on Camp Hurriya. **Luxembourg** and **Guatemala** urged the Iraqi government to investigate and bring the perpetrators to justice. The **US, Pakistan and Argentina** welcomed the progress made on resettlement of the residents and thanked the Government of Albania for its offer to accept 210 residents. The **US** expressed hope that the MeK organization would change its mind and accept the resettlement offer. The **UK** and **Azerbaijan** urged the MeK to cooperate and engage constructively on resettlement. **Togo** emphasized that the Security Council should work with the Secretary-General on the resettlement of all residents. The **US** and **France** stated that they are working on solutions to accept a number of residents. **SRSG Kobler** responded by thanking

the Council members' solidarity and underlined that the issue does not have a negative impact on UNAMI's mandate.

Human Rights: **Luxembourg and Argentina** expressed serious concern about the deterioration of the human rights situation in Iraq and urged protection for women and children. **Argentina** urged GoI to urgently heed the protestors' demands on protecting human rights. **Argentina** also highlighted the root causes such as lack of basic services and lack of proper opportunities for youth, as well as the social and economic marginalization of vulnerable groups, and drew attention on the recent human rights report on Iraq. **France** expressed concern over ongoing reports about violence against children and urged that the UN must establish a formal mechanism for cooperation with Iraq on human rights. **Togo** also called for a formal mechanism to protect children and expressed concern over overcrowding in Iraqi prisons and emphasized that UNAMI must have access to the detainees. **France and Australia** underlined that UNAMI's role was absolutely essential and actually more important now than ever. **Rwanda** deplored the detainees' situation in Iraq, and supported the appeal for a moratorium on the implementation of the death penalty.

Luxembourg also underlined its contribution to strengthen UNAMI's security arrangement. **Guatemala** inquired about the status-of-mission agreement to which the SRSG responded that a few details are still being negotiated.

DPA/MEWAD/Iraq Team
22 March 2013

As Delivered

Briefing of SRSg to Iraq Martin Kobler to
UN Security Council
New York, 21 March 2013

Thank you, Mr. President.

I am honoured to present to the Council today the second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2061 of 2012 (S/2013/154) on the activities of UNAMI. I shall also brief Council members on the most recent developments in Iraq.

Mr. President,

I would like to begin by describing two significant and contrasting events that recently took place in Iraq.

On 27 February, Iraqi Airways flight number 157 landed at Kuwait International Airport. This historic flight was the first after the 22-year halt in commercial air traffic between Iraq and Kuwait.

This event affirmed the strong desire of the leaders of Iraq and Kuwait to open a new chapter in their relations. These relations have been heavily burdened by history.

However, a few days later, on the 4th of March, over 40 Syrian soldiers, and 10 Iraqis, were killed inside Iraqi

territory. And this week, a series of atrocious terrorist attacks added more innocent persons to the long list of victims of such attacks. My condolences go to the families of the victims and the people of Iraq.

These incidents demonstrate how Iraqis face a complex set of interrelated problems, among them the very real **potential** for a spill-over of violence from Syria. Such destabilization would add to and fuel the existing political and security challenges facing Iraq, which threaten the achievements of the last decade.

Since late December, tens of thousands of demonstrators in Iraq's western provinces have taken the streets to voice their grievances.

Their demands are centred on issues of human rights and access to basic services. They feel unprotected, insecure, and excluded.

My colleagues and I witnessed this firsthand in Ramadi, Samarra, Mosul, Fallujah, Tikrit, and Kirkuk. Around the country, we listened to the demonstrators' frustrations. Over time, they spoke more harshly and proposed more radical solutions.

The volatility on the streets is also reflected at the political level.

The ministers of the Sunni bloc al-Iraqiya continue their boycott of cabinet meetings, which has lasted for almost three months. Political coalitions are weakening. In essence, the political fabric is fraying.

The Government has taken a number of initiatives to address the demands of the demonstrators. I have welcomed these efforts, which have yielded some results.

One such initiative is a committee chaired by Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Shahrستاني. The committee has reported that it has facilitated the release of around 3,400 prisoners. In addition, all female prisoners have been transferred to their home governorates, where they will serve the remainder of their sentences. These measures are in direct response to the demands of the demonstrators.

The committee has also reinstated pension payments for 11,000 public sector retirees who were members of the former Ba'ath regime. Combined with decisions on other issues, the Shahrستاني committee claims that their decisions have covered roughly 100,000 individuals.

A second committee under the chairmanship of the National Alliance's Head, Dr. Ibrahim Jaafari is focused on finding common language for three pieces of highly contentious legislation: the law on Counter-terrorism, the Accountability and Justice law, and a new General Amnesty Law. Here, tangible results still have to be achieved.

Mr. President,

Since the onset of demonstrations, I have sought to advance inclusive and direct political dialogue and national reconciliation. I have offered our good offices, firstly as a means of relaying information between the demonstrators and the government.

I have expressed our approach as follows.

1. UNAMI is an impartial actor. We keep equal distance from all sides. We offer good offices, whether for mediation, convening, or witnessing, any negotiated agreement.

2. However, UNAMI is not neutral when it comes to human rights. We have spoken up against the increasing use of

sectarian language. We have advocated the principle of non-violence, including to the demonstrators. We have called upon the government to exercise utmost restraint.

3. UNAMI urges the government to respond to those popular demands which can be addressed in the short-term, and to do so immediately. Other demands will require more time for a response.

The demonstrations have been underway for nearly three months now. However, the mistrust among the components of Iraq - Shia, Sunnis and Kurds and other communities - goes much deeper.

The deep-seated lack of trust threatens the political fabric and the social bonds that should bring Iraqis together in one united, federal country on the basis of the constitution.

Mr. President,

Members of each and every ethnic and social group continue to be the target of acts of terrorism, assassination and kidnapping, including while practicing their faith. Terrorists seek to ignite sectarian

conflict and turn the clock back on Iraq's nascent stability.

In total, acts of terrorism from November 2012 to the end of February 2013 have claimed the lives of almost 1,300 civilians. More than 3,000 innocent Iraqis have been wounded. Furthermore, almost 600 Iraqi Security Forces have been killed and over 1,000 injured as a result of these atrocious acts.

I have condemned these acts in the strongest possible terms. I have called on all of Iraq's leaders and religious authorities, to rise as one to stop the bleeding.

Relations between the central government and the Kurdistan Region Government continue to be strained.

Kirkuk remains the flashpoint for Arab-Kurdish relations. On 16 January, for example, a series of attacks resulted in 26 deaths and the wounding of 190 other individuals.

The absence of President Talabani who has had a truly stabilizing role in Iraq is bitterly felt. I wish him from here a speedy recovery.

I strongly encourage talks between the Iraqi Army and the Peshmerga on the withdrawal and relocation of troops to continue.

To bring fruitful relations between the central and regional governments, the passage of the revenue sharing and hydrocarbon laws would be crucial.

I call on the parliament and the political blocs to reach a consensus on these laws without further delay.

I wish to renew my offer of good offices to the parties, and call upon their goodwill. The sharing of the immense natural resources of Iraq in a fair and equitable way is a must and a prerequisite to rebuilding trust. We will continue to build trust no matter how difficult it is.

Mr. President,

Iraq is set to hold Provincial Council Elections in less than a month from now.

On 19 March, the Cabinet decided that the council elections in the Ninewa and Anbar provinces would be postponed by six months, with reference to the deteriorating security situation in these provinces.

I have expressed my concern about this decision, as the citizens of these provinces are looking forward to these elections with great hope.

As the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) is continuing the technical preparation for the elections in all 14 provinces, I have called on the government and IHEC to ensure that elections can take place as scheduled in a peaceful and secure environment.

I wish to commend the leadership of the High Electoral Commission, in particular Chairman Mr. Sarbast Rasheed, as well as the dedicated staff of the Commission and polling stations, that are subject to continued pressure, for their excellent work.

Unfortunately, and despite our efforts, there has been no consensus to pass the law on holding elections in Kirkuk province.

Mr. President,

Iraq is committed to strengthening its relations with its neighbours. By doing so, it aims to fully take up its rightful place in the Arab world, the region and the international community.

I have mentioned the progress achieved towards the normalization of relations between Iraq and Kuwait, including through Iraq's positive steps towards fulfilling its remaining obligations under Chapter VII of the Charter.

A major milestone in this process will be the completion of boundary maintenance work.

The finalization of the removal of obstacles along the border, in particular the three houses in Umm Qasr, is a necessary step.

Understandably, this step is sensitive and politically difficult for Iraq. However, it must be done by 31 March.

Also, I urge the Government of Iraq to accept the funds set aside with the United Nations for the compensation of Iraqi farmers pursuant to Security Council resolution 899 (1994).

I sincerely hope that this progress will lead to consensus on further outstanding issues, including the file of missing Kuwaiti nationals and property.

During my most recent visit to Kuwait on 5 March, I sensed a spirit of optimism within the Kuwaiti leadership. Therefore, it is with much anticipation that I welcome the upcoming visit of Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Sabah to Baghdad in the near future.

In December, I visited Saudi Arabia. I sensed the potential for relations between Iraq and Saudi Arabia to strengthen in a number of fields, including:

- A prisoners' exchange based on the agreement reached between the two sides. It would be a notable gesture if an agreement could be reached before the holy month of Ramadan;
- The opening of a crossing between Saudi Arabia and Iraq along their 800 kilometres common border;
- The active and committed participation of both countries in a new regional initiative led by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) to combat sand and dust storms.

I urge the two countries to build upon the recent visit of a high-level Iraqi delegation to Riyadh. The restoration of normal relations would benefit the two peoples of the two countries and the region.

Mr. President,

More than a year has passed since UNAMI began its considerable efforts to facilitate the humanitarian transfer of the residents of Camp Ashraf to the temporary transit location of Camp Hurriya and their relocation to third countries.

I wish to reiterate my best wishes on the occasion of Nawrooz today, in particular to the residents of Camp Huriya and Camp Ashraf.

The urgency of relocating residents outside of Iraq was underlined on 9 February, when an attack on Camp Hurriya killed eight residents and injured an additional forty. The Secretary-General, myself, and others have condemned this attack in no uncertain terms.

I have fully supported requests to the highest level of the Government of Iraq to improve security at Camp Hurriya. The government remains responsible for the safety and security of the residents in accordance with

the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the United Nations signed on 25 December 2011.

The government has assured me that it will spare no efforts in preventing further attack.

We face two major problems:

First: The only durable solution is to relocate the residents outside of Iraq.

I have visited Albania on 15 March for talks with the Prime Minister Berisha. I welcome the decision by the Government of Albania to accept 210 residents as early as next month. I sincerely thank the Albanian Government for this humanitarian gesture. Albania is, thus, the first country to accept a large number of residents. I urge other member states to take similar steps.

Yet, despite additional offers being made, the residents of Camp Hurriya continue to boycott relocation interviews with UNHCR. I join the Secretary-General in urging the residents to fully cooperate with UNHCR. Offers must be accepted.

Second: The one hundred residents remaining at Camp Ashraf refuse to join the larger group at Camp Hurriya until the completion of property negotiations.

I encourage both the Government of Iraq and the residents to constructively engage with one another to promptly resolve this matter. I urge the residents to nominate their lawyers for this purpose.

Finally, I also appeal to the camp leadership

- not to prevent residents who wish to leave the camp from doing so;
- to cooperate with the Iraqi authorities when it comes to medical treatment;
- and to abstain from aggressive behaviour against our UN monitors. UN monitors must be able to freely interact with the residents of Camp Hurriya.

Mr. President,

I would like to thank the Member States, in particular the European Union and the United States, for their financial contributions and their support to these efforts for the peaceful resolution of the issue of Camp Ashraf and Camp Hurriya.

I also wish to recognize the hard work of 136 UN staff, including 60 security staff, who are actively working on this file.

Mr. President,

Having just spoken at length about the group of 3,200 members of the Mojahedin-e-Khalq in Iraq, I would like to note that our far larger humanitarian effort is focused on three groups: Syrian refugees, returnees from Syria, and the internally displaced persons

Iraq currently hosts nearly 120,000 Syrian nationals. They have fled to Iraq seeking safety and humanitarian assistance.

Most of the Syrian refugee population is currently located in the Kurdistan Region. An average of 800 individuals enters the country on a daily basis.

UNHCR is leading the Humanitarian Country Team in conducting a massive emergency operation to respond to the refugees' humanitarian needs. This operation will support the Iraqi Government in ensuring that the refugees are protected and assisted.

As Delivered

I would like to commend the Government of Iraq for its generosity and for its hospitality to the individuals and families seeking safety and security in Iraq. I call on the Government to extend its generosity by reopening the Al-Qa'im and Rabhi'a border crossings.

I also appeal to all member states to urgently step up their contribution to the Refugee Response Plan, which still requires funding beyond June 2013.

In addition, approximately 80,000 Iraqis have fled from Syria to return to Iraq in the last few months. They fall into the larger group of 1.2 million internally displaced Iraqis.

Both returnees and the IDPs are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. The majority of these persons live in informal settlements and constantly face the threat of eviction.

These settlements are in appalling condition. Returnees and the displaced lack access to basic services, as well as to proper public health facilities and schools.

I would like to call on the government to increase the amount and speed of assistance it provides to Iraqi returnees from Syria. I also call on the government to ensure the fast re-integration of Iraqi returnees.

Mr. President,

I would like to turn now to the broader human rights situation in Iraq, and specifically the administration of justice. This is an area that continues to be of concern.

Many detainees continue to complain of abuse, mistreatment, and torture, in particular in prisons under the authority of the Ministry of Interior. Every case of torture is one case too many. Confessions under duress are unacceptable.

Courts continue to be under-resourced. This causes long delays in processing cases, beyond lawful limits.

I wish to reiterate the Secretary General's call for Iraq to consider a moratorium on all executions in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Respect for the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities also remains inconsistent. These

groups face discrimination and other social, cultural and legal barriers to their full participation in the economic, social, and political life of Iraq.

Despite the problems noted, Iraq is making progress in establishing the High Commission for Human Rights, with the active support of the Government of Iraq and the assistance of the United Nations.

The Commission will serve as a cornerstone of an Iraqi owned and led system to guarantee the protection, respect and promotion of the human rights of all Iraq's citizens in the future.

On matters of the environment, dust storms have increasingly become a major problem for the Iraqi people and the region. The dust storms in the region are mainly generated in Iraq.

From airports to agricultural lands, dust storms extract a heavy annual economic toll amounting to billions.

Dust storms also place significant strain on public health. Hospitals are overwhelmed with treating persons with respiratory conditions caused by dust.

Last month, I joined the environment ministers of the regional governments at a UNEP-hosted meeting in Nairobi. We established a clear political agreement on the need to address the issue of sand and dust storms. UNEP will lead in the creation of a regional program, in partnership with governments, private sector, and civil society.

A trust fund has been established for this effort. I appeal to Member States, and especially those affected by dust storms, to contribute resources.

I also welcome the initiative of the Government of the United Arab Emirates to host the next regional meeting to discuss further concrete steps.

Mr. President,

As in all my previous briefings to the Council, I would like to conclude with the urgent problems facing the youth of Iraq.

After the devastating effect of war, and caught amidst a soaring political crisis, Iraq's youth are largely left to fend for themselves. Youth unemployment stands at 23%.

I have made youth a priority because, with their potential and passion, they are the future of Iraq. They will carry forward the stability, security and prosperity that all Iraqis seek to build.

I very much welcome the government's efforts to work toward a youth agenda. With the support of UNFPA, a National Youth Strategy will be launched in the second quarter of 2013.

In February, I visited three different holy places in Baghdad with thirty young Iraqis of different faiths and backgrounds. Together we sat in shrines, churches, and temples in order to discuss what unites us, along with our differences. I saw firsthand that reconciliation in Iraq can truly begin with the young.

UNAMI will continue to provide a platform for young people to express themselves, be empowered, and vocalize actions that will build their country.

Mr. President,

In closing, I am reminded that the Iraqi people are blessed with three important assets: a rich and ancient

culture; a vibrant young population; and, third, natural wealth.

I hope that Iraq will remain determined and steadfast in this very challenging time, and take advantage of this rich endowment to further advance the country.

With the continued support of Member States, UNAMI will continue to assist the people and Government of Iraq in its mandated tasks.

I wish to thank the Government of Iraq for its cooperation during 2013, as in the years before.

Mr. President, I wish to place on record my deep thanks to the Security Council for its continued support.

THANK YOU.