

## **Opening Remarks by Ambassador Gianludovico de Martino**

Your Excellency Deputy Minister Mehdi Ismail, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, in welcoming you to the Eighth IRFFI Donor Committee Meeting in Naples I would like first of all to express on behalf of all us our appreciation for the hospitality that has been kindly extended for this venue by the City and the Mayor of Naples, Rosa Russo Jervolino, and by the Regional Government of Campania.

Our work today will focus on an agenda which covers areas on which we have been working both at the Executive Committee level and during the last Donor Committee meeting held in Baghdad on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July last year, in pursuance of the goals set at the Sixth Donor Committee meeting in Bari in 2007, following the decisions taken earlier that year in Istanbul.

I will briefly mention the main results achieved in this process:

- the adoption of new governance architecture of the Facility, enhancing Iraqi ownership;
- its alignment to the goals of the International Compact with Iraq and to the National Development Strategy;
- the review of ongoing projects in order to draw lessons learned from the IRFFI experience and define best practices with regard to implementation rate, accountability and prioritization;
- the restructuring of the Cluster/strategic programming mechanism to have a more integrated and holistic sector approach.

In November 2008, the UNDG ITF Steering Committee approved, in line with the decision taken during the seventh Donor Committee meeting held in Baghdad, US\$15 million for support to the Humanitarian Emergency Response Fund (ERF) which is estimated to provide funding to about 65 projects in 2009-2010.

In the meantime IRFFI has also provided a forum of discussion with regard to the development of new tools of partnership and cooperation – such as co-financing - for the international community and Iraq and for the elaboration of effective coordination mechanisms for the optimisation of financial resources available through the various channels, multilateral and bilateral, also through the establishment of synergies in the field both at the central and provincial levels.

Our discussions and our deliberations today range from the progress in the implementation of IRFFI programmes to the presentation of the Multi-donor Stocktaking review, to the orderly closure of IRFFI, the World Bank Interim Strategy Note for Iraq, the United Nations Post-IRFFI mechanism to support Iraq, updates on the International Compact with Iraq and the establishment of Thematic Working Groups, the Government of Iraq capacity development and private sector promotion.

I am confident that we will be able to make significant progress on these issues and to adopt concrete steps to contribute to a strong and lasting partnership with Iraq, in this

crucial stage. Improvement of budget execution and promoting a diversification of the economy also through private sector growth are areas where the comparative advantage of IRFFI - through its two United Nations and World Bank windows – can play a significant role helping to unlock Iraq's considerable resources and to lessen its exposure to the fluctuations of oil prices.

To conclude I am sure that all of us share great appreciation for the recent holding of the provincial elections in Iraq which has demonstrated the commitment of the people of Iraq to a peaceful and democratic political process.