

THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL  
EQUALIZING ACCESS TO PUBLIC HEALTHCARE

The United Nations and its committee, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), acknowledge the importance of health in a global population and understand that global health crises can cause major instability in a country's economy, while also having detrimental effects on society. The 3rd Sustainable Development Goal declares one of the United Nations' main topics as ensuring healthy lives and well-being for people of all ages. In the Declaration of Alma-Ata in 1978, the United Nations recognized the importance of primary health care as a major step towards improving healthcare. The 2012 resolution A/RES/67/81, by the General Assembly, gave multiple suggestions as to how member states should move towards universal health care in regards to the context of the country, as well as discussed the issue of financial barriers in healthcare. The Universal Health Care 2030 initiative provided a global framework with specific goals and guidelines for all member states in order to increase equal access to healthcare and to help combat various diseases. The Innovation Care for Chronic Conditions Framework (ICCC), which was developed in 2002, emphasizes the urgency for better distribution of information and surveillance of population health regarding the chronic disease.

The Republic of Iraq understands the significance of a quality public healthcare system for the economy and society. Iraq also acknowledges that years of conflict had previously weakened public services across Iraq, but public healthcare has improved a great deal thereafter. The United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS), along with funding from Japan, has rehabilitated and equipped seven primary healthcare centers in Iraq, which has resulted in better quality healthcare for about 123k citizens. Gender and inclusion considerations have also been factored into these primary healthcare centers, such as by having dedicated breastfeeding areas and inclusive bathrooms. After the 2003 invasion of Iraq, healthcare systems were devastated throughout the country; but with progress, child immunization rates increased, hospitals and clinics were reopened as a result of physicians coming back to work, and overall government spending for public healthcare tremendously increased. Article 30 of The Republic of Iraq's Constitution states that Iraq shall guarantee social and health security to all Iraqis without any discrimination, and Article 31 furthers that by stating that every citizen of Iraq has a right to healthcare and Iraq will maintain public healthcare by building various hospitals and health institutions.

The Republic of Iraq proposes for more clinics to be built and distributed thoroughly in the member states. This would limit the cost of transportation for citizens as it would create clinics closer to them, thereby increasing access to healthcare. The Republic of Iraq would also recommend for new physicians be required to work exclusively in public hospitals for a minimal amount of years before becoming eligible to move to more private hospitals, which would thereby increase the number of physicians for public healthcare. However, in order to relieve the economic stress for physicians providing for their families, physicians could have the option to work in private practice outside of the time required for physicians to work in public hospitals. Further stipulating this, the number of hours worked should be linked to the compensation earned in public hospitals, which would help ensure that physicians work as much as possible every week.

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RESPONSIBILITY OF FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) acknowledges the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as it is a crucial initiative used to create a more sustainable and ideal world for all of the global population. The United Nations understands that without the SDGs, emerging issues would not be prevented on a global scale. Currently, the Joint SDG fund is dedicated to accelerating the progress of the SDGs, and incentives for the creation of transformative policies through financial assistance from the Joint SDG fund. Additionally, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework allows member states to use money from the Joint SDG fund in order to create programs specific to their country in order to help achieve the SDGs. The Third International Conference on Financing for Development developed the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which helps engage investors with the actions needed to address the SDGs. The ECOSOC Forum on Financing and Development furthers the Addis Ababa Action Agenda by examining if the SDGs are being achieved on a national level, as well as if the financing remains transparent.

The Republic of Iraq understands how important the SDGs are towards solving major emerging issues on a global scale and is proud to state that the funding for the SDGs that has gone to Iraq has been used productively towards achieving the SDGs. The Iraq Vision 2030 plan was launched in 2016 and covers 74 percent of the SDGs topics, and is essentially a series of goals that Iraq wants to accomplish based on the SDGs dimensions. Additionally, the National Development Plan 2018-2022 (NDP) covers 77% of the SDGs. The NDP addresses the falling oil prices in global markets, thereby leading to a decrease in Iraq's financial revenue, as well as the implications of terrorist groups occupying some local governments in Iraq. The Republic of Iraq has also implemented Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), which monitor the status of the NDP within Iraq and also share the benefits and drawbacks with other countries for them to implement the NDP as well in order to faster achieve the SDGs. In 2022, the United Nations Programme Iraq and the United Nations Population Fund signed an agreement to work with the government of Iraq toward youth development, which is an important topic of the SDGs.

The Republic of Iraq encourages the rest of the member states in the United Nations to adopt the Voluntary National Reviews, as it would result in data being shared faster to examine whether specific policies accelerate the process towards achieving the SDGs. The Republic of Iraq also suggests the idea for loans to be made for lower-income countries by countries who are further in their SDGs completion. While the Joint SDG fund supplies countries with some additional money in order to accelerate the completion of the SDGs, member states have needed to use part of their GDP towards the SDGs, but low-income countries cannot afford any of their GDP to go toward the SDGs. By giving these low-income countries loans, the completion of the SDGs would be achieved faster. Afterward, the loan plus interest, which would be the incentive for countries to give loans, would be paid back to the countries who gave out the loans. The Republic of Iraq also proposes the use of local NGOs in member states to evaluate a country's status and to propose longer-term approaches toward completing the Sustainable Development Goals.