

Final Statement

Iraqi Al- Amal Association Third Conference

Converting the Accomplishment into Innovative Ambition

Under the banner (For the welfare of humanity), Iraqi Al-Amal Association concluded its third general conference in Baghdad on the 19th of December 2008. Many members of the Association attended the conference from different governorates as well as from abroad together with several prominent members of the civil society.

The conference was opened by the oldest member, who announced a quorum, and then requested the attendees to stand up in a minute of silence in memory of the martyrs of civil society, followed by the national anthem. The Chairman of the Association, Noaman Muna, welcomed the participants and wished the conference every success. He also remembered, with deep sorrow, the loss of two of the Association's founders, the martyr Kamil Shiaa , who was assassinated last August, and Sheikh Atta Al-Talabani, Chairman of Kurdistan Branch and Deputy Chairman of the Association's Management Committee , who passed away April 2000.

The conference elected a Steering Committee and approved the agenda which included the Management Committee report, the Supervisory Committee report, the financial report, the proposed amendments to the Constitution and the Association's strategic plan.

In the course of two days, and in a democratic atmosphere, full of transparent and high sense of responsibility, the participants discussed the Association's programmes and activities over the previous nine years, following the second general conference which was held in Erbil in 1999. The relocation of the headquarters to Baghdad in May 2003 represented a turning point in the course of developing its humanitarian and development programmes in the fields of aid, health, education, training, capacity building, advocacy and lobbying campaigns on the constitution, national unity, deteriorating public services and the legislation of non-governmental organisations law. The Association's programme also included raising awareness in the concepts of the constitution elections, human rights and gender awareness amongst various social sectors and throughout the majority of Iraqi governorates. The Association established

links with other NGOs and government institutions for mutual actions, as well as developing cooperation with international organisations and UN specialist agencies.

The conference highly commended the contribution of the staff and volunteers of the Association, who faced dangerous challenges of deteriorating security, and social and political situations, compounded with bad public services and the discomfort and endless suffering they generate in the daily life of ordinary people. They worked selflessly and endlessly to achieve Al-Amal's humanitarian aims.

The Association's strategy for the next three years, unanimously approved by the conference, stressed the principle objectives as: "Towards the rebuilding of the human being and influencing social awareness to establish a modern civil society". On these basis the Association, as a civil society organisation with its effective and distinctive position and its historic initiatives in advocacy and influence on the decision makers, will endeavour to take part in promoting social peace and political stability in Iraq, and to raise the level of human security for all citizens, and to help in providing and developing a free democratic atmosphere.

The strategic plan included a number of sectors for the Association's future activities, amongst which are: the campaign for amending the constitution, the governorates and parliament elections, promoting human and gender rights among judges, workers in the judiciary sector and in law enforcement institutions as well as among various social sectors. The Association will actively work towards achieving legal reform in the light of treaties and international conventions on human rights, and raising awareness and providing solutions to contain the danger of administrative and financial corruption within the official institutions. On the issues of the youth, the Association will encourage civil dialogues to combat violence and extremism, adhering to the principles of citizenship, social coexistence, equality, equal opportunities for citizens, the rule of law, and enabling citizens to actively take part in the democratic transformation process and development at all levels.

One of the strategic sectors includes the importance of extending literacy among women, their education, developing their skills in IT, and encouraging them to enter the business market. Of importance is the campaign to raise awareness in women's rights, the active participation of women in public life, and combating violence against women. The strategy also includes expanding projects for medical clinics, especially for women and children, in the rural and poor areas and raising health and environmental awareness.

The importance of establishing networks between non-governmental organisations was emphasised, in order to increase the influence of the civil society movement, and its participation with the government, its various institutions and the legislative authorities,

in the process of making and implementing decisions, as well as in the monitoring and evaluation process, as a basic component in the building of democracy.

The requirements for developing the entity of the Association, as an institution, were included in the strategic plan. This requires adopting the principles of specialisation and division of responsibilities, clearly identified through internal procedures and the continued development of the capacity of its staff.

The proposed changes to the Constitution were unanimously approved to accommodate the expansion in the Association's activities and its geographic coverage.

Supervised by a lawyer, the conference concluded its work with the election of the board of trustees by secret voting, of seven members and two substitute members.

In its first meeting after the conference, the Board of Trustees elected Noaman Muna as chairman of the board. The deputy chairman, the secretary, and the financial manager were also elected. All duties which the board will undertake were defined for the next six months, in accordance with the strategic plan approved by the third general conference.

Baghdad 21/12/2008