

## World Health Day 2012 in Iraq; Good Health adds life to years

**Baghdad, 7 April 2012** – On World Health Day 2012, WHO is calling for urgent action to ensure that, at a time when the world's population is ageing rapidly, people reach old age in the best possible health.

H.E Dr. Majeed Hamad Amin, the Minister of Health in Iraq stated that “population ageing and delivery of health care services to the elders will present new and serious challenges for national health care system in Iraq” H.E clarified that “the number of elderly is increasing worldwide, in Iraq the number of elderly age 60 and above is 1,127,536; it constitutes 4% of the total population. It is expected by 2050 the number will be reached to 4,720,658. This will have a major implication for health and socioeconomic developments”

Good health throughout life can help elders both women and men to lead full and productive lives, and continue to be a source of support and wisdom to their families and communities. Today, Iraq honor this day by drawing the attention to the importance of taking serious action to plan for environment and services that are conducive to healthy ageing.

UN agencies are working in coordinated manner to address different needs of elderly population however there is a need for a more and tense collective action which should tackle the various challenges which the elderly population currently is confronted and that's make more useful member of society and community.

“Realizing the significance of quality health services for the overall development of Iraq, the UN Country Team stays committed in supporting the efforts of the Government of Iraq in addressing the extensive health related challenges in the country, “ affirmed Mr. Edward Kallon, Acting UN Resident Coordinator in Iraq.

. “WHO promotes a healthy lifestyle across the life-course to save lives, protect health and alleviate disability and pain in older age. Age-friendly environments and early detection of diseases as well as prevention and care improve the wellbeing of older people”. said Dr. Syed Jaffar Hussain, Representative of WHO – Iraq Office and added “WHO reaffirms its commitment to support the Government of Iraq in bringing the needed reform in health sector in Iraq through inter-sectoral approach and providing an integrated health care for elders which will assure the achievement of socioeconomic and human development goals in Iraq.

The Iraqi Ministry of Health in collaboration with the World Health Organization – Iraq organize a series of events in all governorates in Iraq to celebrate this year's World Health Day 2012 "Good health adds life to years" where educational materials will be distributed, symposiums, field visits and events will be conducted.

**For more information, please contact:**

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## About World Health Day

The World Health Day is celebrated on 7 April to mark the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948. World Health Day is a global campaign focusing on new and emerging health issues. The topic for this year's World Health Day is Ageing and Health with the theme "Good Health adds life to years."

Ageing populations occur everywhere, but less-developed countries are witnessing the fastest change. Although older people are a vital and often overlooked resource for families and for societies, however, this transformation represents both challenge and opportunity for both policy makers and society.

Focusing on new and emerging health issues, World Health Day provides an opportunity to start collective action to protect people's health and well-being. It is an opportunity to engage in finding solutions that benefit us all.

Each year the world health day has a topic, related to a subject of major importance to global health. For 2012 the topic that will be highlighted during the campaign is "Ageing and health". The focus is how good health throughout life can help older men and women lead full and productive lives and are a resource for their families and communities. Ageing concerns each and every one of us – whether young or old, male or female, rich or poor – no matter where we live.

## About WHO Iraq

*WHO has been on the ground in Iraq since 1960. WHO through its various programmes is currently work on revitalizing, strengthening and sustaining the Iraqi health system based on primary health care.*

*WHO works with the Government and other partners to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals through improved access to quality health services, helping support the Government of Iraq in shaping health policy, and providing technical support in a multitude of programmes and areas like maternal and child health, adolescent and school health, nutrition, tackling communicable and non-communicable diseases, strengthening implementation of the International Health Regulations and mental health.*