

18 March 1999

Press Release for the Closing of the thirty-first session of
the UNCC Governing Council

The Governing Council of the United Nations Compensation Commission concluded its thirty-first session today under the Presidency of Ambassador Hans Heinemann of the Netherlands. The delegations of Kuwait, Iraq, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey addressed the 15 member Governing Council at its opening plenary meeting.

The Council considered seven reports of the Panels of Commissioners. Six reports concerning claims filed by corporations were approved with a total award value of US\$173,603,874 in respect to the 259 claims included in the reports. The Council also considered one report concerning claims filed by Governments. The total award value approved by the Council in respect of 24 claims from 14 Governments is US\$14,653,766.

The Council discussed a report of the Executive Secretary on the summary of activities of the Commission. The report addressed the appointment of commissioners, the processing and payment of claims.

The Council also discussed the issue of distribution of payments to successful claimants by Governments and international organizations. The Council expressed concern over the significant amount of funds being held by some Governments that have not yet been distributed to claimants within the one year time limit set by the Council and are due to be returned to the Commission. The Council decided to withhold future payments to those Governments failing to distribute monetary awards to the claimants or to return undistributed funds to the Commission.

The Council continued consideration of the issue of priority of payment and the payment mechanism to successful claims from individuals, corporations and Governments. It heard a presentation made by the representative of Bangladesh on behalf of eight non-member states on this issue. So far, the Council has accorded priority of payment to claimants in categories "A" (departure claims), "B" (individual claims for serious personal injury and death) and "C" (individual claims for damages up to US\$100,000).

The Governing Council decided to hold its thirty-second session from 22-24 June 1999.