

PRESS RELEASE

OPENING OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE UNCC GOVERNING COUNCIL

The Governing Council of the United Nations Compensation Commission will hold its thirty-fifth session from 13 March 2000 to 15 March 2000 under the Presidency of Ambassador Hans J. Heinemann (Netherlands).

During the session, the Council will consider a number of reports and recommendations of the panels of Commissioners concerning claims filed by corporations. Issues relating to the processing and payment of claims will also be discussed by the Council.

A press release with information on the results of the session will be issued on 15 March 2000.

Background

The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) is a subsidiary organ of the United Nations Security Council. It was established in accordance with Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 692 (1991) to pay compensation for losses and damage suffered by individuals, corporations, Governments and international organizations as a direct result of Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait (2 August 1990 to 2 March 1991).

The Commission is composed of the Governing Council, panels of Commissioners, and the secretariat.

The Governing Council is the policy-making organ of the UNCC. Its composition is the same as that of the fifteen-member Security Council at any given time. The Governing Council provides overall policy guidance and acts on the recommendations regarding compensation for claimants made by the panels of Commissioners.

The panels of Commissioners review and evaluate the claims submitted by Governments on behalf of their nationals, their companies or on their own behalf. On the basis of their review, undertaken in instalments of claims, the panels recommend compensation awards to the Governing Council.

The secretariat, headed by the Executive Secretary, services and provides assistance to the Governing Council and the panels of Commissioners. The secretariat also administers the United Nations Compensation Fund.

The total number of claims received by the Commission within the filing deadlines amounts to a figure slightly above 2.6 million. The total asserted value of these claims (i.e. the amount sought by the claimants) amounts to over US\$320 billion. Ninety-six Governments have filed claims, as well as thirteen offices of three international organizations, which have filed claims on behalf of individuals not in a position to submit their claims through a Government.

The Commission has resolved 2,587,427 claims to date, representing all claims in categories 'A' (claims of individuals for departure from Kuwait or Iraq), 'B' (claims for serious personal injury or death) and 'C' (claims of individuals for losses up to US\$100,000), as well as a number of claims in categories 'D' (claims of individuals for losses over \$100,000), 'E' (claims of corporations, other private legal entities and public sector enterprises) and 'F' (claims of Governments and international organizations). There are 14,136 claims in categories 'D', 'E' and 'F' still to be resolved.

More than 1.5 million claims have been awarded compensation, with a total amount of over US\$14.6 billion.

The Commission has made available to Governments and international organizations over US\$5.5 billion to date for distribution to successful claimants in all categories.

Funds to pay the awards of compensation are drawn from the United Nations Compensation Fund which receives 30 per cent of the revenue generated from the export of Iraqi petroleum and petroleum products. Presently, funds are made available to the Compensation Fund from the proceeds of the 'oil for food' mechanism established by Security Council resolution 986 (1995) and subsequent resolutions.

Further information about the Compensation Commission can be found on the UNCC website located at <http://www.uncc.ch>.