

PRESS RELEASE

GOVERNING COUNCIL OF UNITED NATIONS COMPENSATION COMMISSION
HAS CONCLUDED ITS FIFTY-NINTH SESSION

The Governing Council of the United Nations Compensation Commission, under the Presidency of Ambassador Tassos Kriekoukis (Greece), has today concluded its fifty-ninth session. Representatives of Kuwait, Iraq, and India addressed the fifteen-member Governing Council at its opening plenary meeting.

The Council elected the Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Congo, Ambassador Roger Julien Menga, as a Vice-President of the Governing Council of the United Nations Compensation Commission. Ambassador Shigeru Endo, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan, which has held the other Vice-Presidency since January 2005, presided over the opening plenary meeting.

The Council considered a number of reports and information notes prepared by the secretariat on matters such as the activities of the Commission during the last quarter; distribution by Governments and international organisations of payments to successful claimants; the transparency of the distribution process and the return of undistributed funds; potential inaccuracies with regard to some awards; and corrections of awards pursuant to article 41 of the Provisional rules for claims procedure.

During the session the Council also heard a briefing from the secretariat and discussed the results of two recent regional meetings on environmental rehabilitation. These meetings which were held in Kuwait on 21 December 2005 and in Jordan on 15 and 16 February 2006, respectively, were attended by claimant Governments (Jordan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia), having been awarded compensation for environmental damage, and by Iraq, as well as the UNCC in an observer capacity. The participants addressed the guidelines for the follow-up programme for environmental awards approved by the Governing Council at its fifty-eighth session in December 2005, as well as a separate programme, Regional Environmental Remediation Programme (RERP), aimed at enhancing regional cooperation on the remediation of environmental damages, and issues pertaining to a regional environmental databank on environmental information. In addition, representatives of Iraq and Kuwait held bilateral discussions with a view to developing details for the purpose of Iraq's presentation of its war-related environmental rehabilitation projects to RERP. The Governing Council welcomed the continuation of these bilateral discussions and regional initiatives and encouraged the efforts of claimant Governments and Iraq in establishing the regional programme, to which Iraq will be provided the opportunity to present its war-related remediation projects.

The Council decided to hold its next regular session from 27 to 29 June 2006.

The next payment to successful claimants pursuant to decision 256 is scheduled to be made in April 2006. There are now 69 approved claims (in categories D, E and F), with a total outstanding balance of approximately US\$32.2 billion, that have not been paid in full. The overall amount of

compensation made available to date by the United Nations Compensation Commission is approximately US\$20.3 billion.

Further information about the Commission, including the text of Governing Council decisions and reports and recommendations of the panels of Commissioners, can be found on the United Nations Compensation Commission website located at www.uncc.ch.