

PRESS RELEASE

OPENING OF THE SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE UNCC GOVERNING COUNCIL

The Governing Council of the United Nations Compensation Commission will hold its sixty-sixth session from 21-22 October 2008 under the Presidency of Ambassador Van Meeuwen (Belgium) and Vice-Presidency of Ambassador Puja (Indonesia).

During the session, the Governing Council will discuss various issues relating to the work of the Compensation Commission including reports on the activities of the secretariat since the last session in April 2008; on the Follow-up Programme for Environmental Awards established by the Council to monitor the technical and financial implementation of environmental remediation and restoration projects; and on the distribution by Governments and international organisations of payments to successful claimants, the transparency of the distribution process, and the return of undistributed funds.

General background information on the work of the Compensation Commission is provided below.

A press release with information on the results of the sixty-sixth session will be issued on 22 October 2008.

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 process claims and pay compensation for direct 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 Compensation Commission received approximately 2.7 million claims. The total asserted value of these claims (i.e., the amount sought by the claimants) amounts to approximately US\$352.5 billion. Ninety-seven Governments filed claims on behalf of their nationals, corporations and themselves, as well as thirteen offices of three international organizations, which filed claims on behalf of individuals not in a position to submit their claims through a Government. They consist of the claims of individuals for departure from Kuwait or Iraq (category A claims), the claims of individuals for serious personal injury or death (category B claims), the claims of individuals for losses up to \$100,000 (category C claims), the claims of individuals for losses over \$100,000 (category D claims), the claims of corporations, other private legal entities and public sector enterprises (category E claims), and the claims of Governments and international organizations (category F claims). In June 2005, the Commission completed its processing of all submitted claims. The total compensation awarded amounts to approximately \$52.4 billion.

To date, the Compensation Commission has made available to Governments and international organizations approximately \$25.4 billion for distribution to successful claimants in all categories. Funds to pay compensation are drawn from the United Nations Compensation Fund, which receives a percentage of the proceeds generated by the export sales of Iraqi petroleum and petroleum products. This percentage was originally set at 30 per cent by the Security Council under its resolution 705 (1991), and was maintained in Security Council resolution 986 (1995) as well as in a number of subsequent resolutions. The level of funding was changed to 25 per cent as of December 2000 under Security Council resolution 1330 (2000). Finally, paragraph 21 of Security Council resolution 1483 (2003), adopted on 22 May 2003, changed the level of the proceeds of all export sales of Iraqi petroleum, petroleum products, and natural gas to be deposited into the Compensation Fund to 5 per cent. The Commission monitors the distribution of payments to claimants by the relevant Governments and international organizations which are obligated to distribute funds to successful claimants expeditiously and report back to the Commission on such distribution in accordance with applicable Governing Council decisions.

Following conclusion of the claims processing exercise, the Governing Council established the Follow-up Programme for Environmental Awards in December 2005 under decision 258 (2005). The Programme was established to monitor the implementation of approximately \$4 billion of environmental remediation and restoration projects by subject claimant Governments to ensure financial transparency and technical compliance with recommendations made by the F4 Panel of Commissioners in rendering environmental awards. The Programme is ongoing.

Further information about the Compensation Commission can be found on its website located at www.uncc.ch.
