

PRESS RELEASE

GOVERNING COUNCIL OF UNITED NATIONS COMPENSATION COMMISSION
CONCLUDES ITS SIXTY-EIGHTH SESSION

The Governing Council of the United Nations Compensation Commission, under the Presidency of Ambassador Christian Strohal (Austria), has today concluded its sixty-eighth session.

Representatives of Kuwait and Iraq addressed the fifteen-member Governing Council at its opening plenary meeting.

At the session, the Council considered a number of reports and information notes prepared by the Secretariat on the activities of the Commission since the last session; distribution by Governments and international organisations of payments to successful claimants; the transparency of the distribution process, and the return of undistributed funds. With the final phase under the current payment mechanism as set out in decision 256 (S/AC.26/Dec.256 (2005)) expected to be completed in January 2010, the Governing Council adopted decision 267 (S/AC.26/Dec.268 (2009)) concerning the payment mechanism and payment of remaining claims. This decision provides that following the payment of the final environmental award, the nine remaining claims, all awarded to Kuwait, will receive payments each quarter in rounds of payments of \$10 million, in the order in which they have been approved until all available amounts in the Compensation Fund have been exhausted.

The Council also heard a briefing from the Secretariat on the progress made to date by participating Governments under the Follow-up Programme for Environmental Awards as established by decision 258 (2005). That Programme was established to monitor the implementation of approximately \$4.3 billion of environmental remediation and restoration projects being undertaken by the Governments of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia with funds awarded under the F4 category of claims to ensure financial transparency and technical reasonableness. The Governing Council recalled that decision 266 (2009) taken at its last session provided for interest to accrue on the special accounts to be established by the participating claimant Governments, but left the issue of the use of the interest to be addressed by the Council at its sixty-eighth session. As a result, the Council adopted decision 268 (S/AC.26/Dec.267 (2009)) concerning the use of interest under decision 266 (2009), which essentially provides for accrued interest to be used by participating Governments for the implementation of the environmental projects under decision 258.

The Council decided to hold its next regular session from 27 to 29 April 2010.

The session just concluded was the last session for the delegations of Burkina Faso, Costa Rica (Vice-President), Croatia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and Viet Nam, whose terms of office end on 31 December 2009. As of 1 January 2010, the new members of the Security Council, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Gabon, Lebanon and Nigeria, will be joining the Governing Council for two-year terms.

The next payment to successful claimants pursuant to decision 256 is scheduled to be made on 28 January 2010. The overall amount of compensation made available to date by the United Nations Compensation Commission is approximately US\$28.2 billion.

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