

Statement by H.E. Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

to the United Nations Security Council

New York, 28 August 2019 (final)

Madam President,

I would first like to start by thanking Ms Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing in her capacity as Special Representative for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

Iraq is at a key point in its history. A great deal of progress has been made, but a number of challenges remain.

Belgium welcomes the **formation of a federal government**, which is now almost complete. To deal with the many challenges, Iraq needs a strong, inclusive government, supported by **robust institutions and a functional public service**. Belgium calls for women to also be appointed to decision-making positions.

Belgium encourages the Government to continue its work to implement its programme. Executive Decree 237, according to which the **Popular Mobilization Forces** should be under the exclusive control of the Government, is a major step forward. Belgium hopes that this measure will be implemented in full by all the parties involved. Additionally, Belgium, as President of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, encourages the Iraqi Government to draft, sign and implement an action plan on this issue, with the support of UNAMI. This is an important action that will help Iraq to be delisted from the Annex to the Annual Report of the Secretary General.

We also welcome the attention the Government has paid to **the fight against corruption**. Other major challenges remain, including the economic situation and the business environment. Job creation and the provision of basic services to the population are important factors for the continued support of the Iraqi people. The fact that the situation in the **south of the country** seems to have remained calmer over the last few years is a positive development, although continued and increased attention is required. Furthermore, given the major impact of **climate change** on Iraq and its population, we consider it desirable for UNAMI to play a greater role in this issue.

At a time when Iraq is looking to the future, **reconciliation** is of paramount importance. This must continue and allow families to return to their communities and

resume normal life. We support UNAMI's important mission to promote a climate of justice and human rights protection.

Lastly, the security context and the reform of this sector remain a challenge for the Iraqi authorities. Islamic State may have been defeated in military terms, but the causes that led to the development of ISIS remain. Everything possible must be done to avoid the resurgence of this terrorist group.

Finally, Madam President, Iraq and its people can only begin to flourish again in a context of both domestic and regional stability. Actions should be guided by the basic principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. We call for a joint commitment by the region and the international community to this effect.

Thank you.