

**Training of Training to empower female candidates  
in the upcoming Parliamentary elections in Iraq**

On 12 January 2014, the Iraqi Amal Association and the Dutch Hivos started a Training of Trainers workshop in Erbil for training female candidates for the upcoming federal Parliamentary elections (April 2014). This training of trainers is being conducted in the framework of a project on "Women's Power in Politics", implemented by the two organizations in partnership until March 2015. The project aims at enabling female candidates to run successful campaigns in the election process, and after the elections support more effective functioning of women parliamentarians in the House of Representative in its new course.

27 trainers from all Iraqi provinces are participating in the ToT workshop, which lasts six days, receiving training in gender concept, the political and electoral system in Iraq, the development of women's political participation, and communication skills with community and media, and how to build electoral campaign.

Two trainers from The Netherlands and Iraq are taking turns in training. The Dutch trainer is Mrs. Anne Graumans - a member of Amsterdam City Council until 2010, and trainer specialised in political campaigns, techniques of dialogue and meeting and communication with media. The Iraqi trainer is Ms. Ilham Makki Hammadi specialised on gender, violence against women and political participation of women.

Mr. Jamal Al-Jawahiri, member of the Board of Trustees at the Iraqi Al-Amal Association, welcomed the participants in the workshop and stressed the importance of the project for the promotion and development of women's political participation in building a democratic system in Iraq based on the principle of equality among all citizens without discrimination. Also, Mr. Marcel van der Heijden - programme manager of the Women Power in Politics programme at Hivos, pointed out in his welcoming statement, that this project is part of his organization's programme that focuses on the development of the political participation of women in various countries of Middle East and North Africa.

The trainers who participate at this workshop will do the training for 1000 female candidate for the next elections to the House of Representatives in all provinces, as well as the training of media professionals to strengthen their linkage with the female candidates, and organize community debates to candidates with voters to present their programmes and programmes of their blocs and political parties. In addition, the project includes empowering the new female deputies on parliamentarian performance, and providing them with opportunities to exchange expertise and experiences with Dutch women parliamentarians, and meetings with Iraqi political parties.

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