



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

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### Media Note

#### Office of the Spokesman

Washington, DC

October 16, 2008

## U.S. Department of State Implements Iraq Cultural Heritage Project

Following today's announcement by Mrs. Bush launching the Iraq Cultural Heritage Project (ICHP), the U.S. Department of State will begin implementation of this initiative to assist in the preservation of the ancient history of Iraq. The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad has awarded a grant of nearly \$13 million to International Relief and Development (IRD), a non-governmental organization. As part of its ongoing support of Iraq's cultural heritage, the Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) will provide an additional \$1 million to this new initiative and lead efforts to secure up to \$6 million in private sector contributions. Iraqi resources are anticipated to complement the ICHP, as the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage plans to request enhanced funding from the national parliament.

Implementation of the ICHP begins immediately and will take place over a two-year period. The project consists of three main areas of activity to be carried out with the guidance and cooperation of the Iraq Ministry of Culture, ECA, and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. These include:

- 1) Establishment of a Conservation and Preservation Institute in Erbil to be implemented with technical guidance provided by the Walters Art Museum, the Winterthur Conservation Program, the University of Delaware, and the U.S. National Park Service;
- 2) Improvements to the Iraqi National Museum including the design and implementation of collections storage facilities, and enhancements in exhibition galleries and conservation facilities to further the core mission of the museum; and
- 3) Development of a professional training program for Iraqi archaeology and museum professionals in collections management, conservation, education, and management in consultation with the Field Museum of Natural History and the Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago; publication of scholarly reports of archaeological research in Iraq by Iraqi archaeologists in collaboration with The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq; and, development of research library collections in Baghdad and Mosul, a collaboration between the State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook and the Iraqi National Museum.

The U.S. Department of State recognizes the scope of the challenge faced by Iraq to protect and preserve a rich and fragile cultural legacy that is part of humanity's heritage. We are committed to supporting the Iraqi government and people as they rebuild their country and work to restore its heritage for future generations.

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