



Symposium Outcomes: The Ministry of Planning: Vision, Challenges and Development Projects

Al-Rafidain Center for Dialogue (RCD) organized a symposium entitled " Ministry of Planning: Vision, Challenges and Development Projects", at Sergio de Mello Hall, in which Professor Dr. Khaled Battal Al-Najm, the esteemed Minister of Planning presented a lecture, at first, he reviewed the general structure of the Ministry of Planning, explaining the most prominent departments and institutions and the tasks of each of those departments, stressing the importance of some of them, such as the Central Bureau of Statistics, which described it as the black box at the ministry, as the lecturer also talked about the ministry's relationship with other ministries and provinces, and also addressed the problems facing development in Iraq, especially private sector development.

At the end of the symposium, the minister listened to the interventions of the attendees, who are from the academic elites, civil society organizations, businessmen and directors of government departments in the province of Najaf.

Lecturer: Prof. Dr. Khaled Battal Al-Najm, respected Minister of Planning.

Moderator: Dr. Aqeel Al-Khaqani, Senior Fellow of Al-Rafidain Center for Dialogue (RCD).

Symposium Date: 8/22/2020





Conclusions:

- 1- Ministry of Planning Law which is scheduled in 2009 did not give the ministry the role that should play.
- 2- The state should not be the one directing the private sector, but the private sector must organize by itself, and the state's role should be limited only for solving the problems facing that sector, especially in the transitional stages such as Iraq is going through.
- 3- The Central Apparatus Standardization and Quality Control for Ministry of Planning has contracted with reputable international companies to examine the products imported to Iraq and find out their conformity with the Iraqi standard specifications, and that such a procedure is applicable by all countries as the quality control devices in any country cannot have branches in Countries of import.
- 4- The general population census faces financial and technical problems that hinder its completion during the current year. Due to the Corona pandemic and the delay in training 150,000 meters, the date for it will take place next year through the adoption of the electronic form, electronic entry via tablet devices, and the training of specialized cadres to establish a data collection center.
- 5- There is a law to deal with informal settlements in the Iraqi governorates, some of which reach 30% of what is already in governorate.
- 6- The state cannot employ all graduates, who they are hundreds of thousands, as the number of state employees in relation to the population is the highest in the world, with four and a half million employees out of a total of forty million people.
- 7- One of the Ministry of Planning's future projects is coordination with the Ministry of Education to define higher education inputs, as well as cooperation with higher education regarding expansion plans.
- 8- The facilities in the region reduce the value of imports through the border crossings in the center, including the import of gold.





- 9- All projects approved by the Ministry of Planning are aligned with the National Development Plan 2018-2022.
- 10-The Ministry seeks to contract with specialized companies in order to evaluate projects after completion.
- 11-The number of projects in Iraq is more than 6250 projects that require more than 125 trillion Iraqi dinars to complete.

Recommendations:

- 1- It's necessary to implement the customs tariff law in order to encourage national industry, without that the wheel of industry and agriculture cannot move forward.
- 2- Reducing the routine procedures for granting investment licenses, as it requires the investor to obtain 71 signatures to complete the investment license despite the tendency of previous governments to reduce it.
- 3- It's necessary to move from balancing items to balancing performance. Balancing items is an old method that has been abandoned in developed countries since the fifties of the last century, while Iraq is still clinging to it despite the problems it creates in evaluating the performance of ministries and federal and local institutions.
- 4- Iraq needs to put in place the appropriate mechanisms to prevent Iraqi capital leakage to the outside, as a lot of capital goes to other countries and invests there, and this is due to the inadequacy of the Iraqi bureaucratic environment for investment.

