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PRESS RELEASE

OPENING OF THE THIRTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE UNCC GOVERNING COUNCIL

The Governing Council of the United Nations Compensation Commission will hold its thirty-third session from 28 September 1999 to 30 September 1999 under the Presidency of Ambassador Hans J. Heinemann (Netherlands).

During the session, the Council will consider a number of reports and recommendations of the panels of Commissioners concerning claims filed by corporations. Issues relating to the processing and payment of claims will also be discussed by the Council.

A press release with information on the results of the session will be issued on 30 September 1999.

Background

The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) is a subsidiary organ of the United Nations Security Council. It was established in accordance with Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 692 (1991) to pay compensation for losses and damages suffered by individuals, corporations, Governments and international organizations as a direct result of Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait (2 August 1990 to 2 March 1991).

The Commission is composed of the Governing Council, panels of Commissioners, and the secretariat.

The Governing Council is the policy-making organ of the UNCC. Its composition is the same as that of the fifteen-member Security Council at any given time. The Governing Council provides overall policy guidance and acts on the recommendations regarding compensation for claimants made by the panels of Commissioners.

The panels of Commissioners review and evaluate the claims submitted by Governments on behalf of their nationals, their companies or on their

own behalf. On the basis of their review, undertaken in instalments of claims, the panels recommend compensation awards to the Governing Council.

The secretariat, headed by the Executive Secretary, services and provides assistance to the Governing Council and the panels of Commissioners. The secretariat also administers the United Nations Compensation Fund.

The total number of claims received by the Commission within the filing deadlines amount to a figure slightly in excess of 2.6 million. The total asserted value of these claims (i.e., the amount sought by the claimants) amounts to over US\$320 billion. Ninety-six Governments have filed claims, as well as thirteen offices of three international organizations, which have filed claims on behalf of individuals not in a position to submit their claims through a Government.

The Commission has resolved 2,585,832 claims to date, representing all claims in categories "A" (individual claims for departure from Kuwait or Iraq), "B" (claims for serious personal injury or death) and "C" (individual claims for losses up to US\$100,000), as well as a number of claims in categories "D" (claims of individuals for losses over \$100,000), "E" (claims of corporations, other private legal entities and public sector enterprises) and "F" (claims of Governments and international organizations). 15,723 claims in categories "D", "E" and "F" are still to be resolved.

Nearly 1.5 million claims have been awarded compensation, with a total amount of about US\$12.8 billion.

The Commission has made available to Governments and international organizations over US\$3.6 billion to date for distribution to successful claimants in all categories.

Funds to pay the awards of compensation are drawn from the United Nations Compensation Fund which receives 30 per cent of the revenue generated from the export of Iraqi petroleum and petroleum products. Funds are made available in accordance with the "oil for food" mechanism established by Security Council resolution 986 (1995) and extended by Security Council resolutions 1111 (1997) and 1143 (1997), 1153 (1998), 1210 (1998) and 1242 (1999).

Further information about the Compensation Commission can be found on the UNCC website located at <http://www.uncc.ch>.
