

## Erbil and Sulaymaniyah International Airports set up their disaster preparedness levels with help from Deutsche Post DHL Group and UNDP

**Erbil, Iraq, 15 April 2019:** The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and DPDHL, in partnership with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)'s Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCCC), will conduct a 'Get Airports Ready for Disaster' (GARD) workshop in Iraq from April 14 to 18, 2019 to prepare airport personnel for post-disaster logistics situations. The five-day workshop will provide training to a mixed group of thirty (30) airport staff as well as employees from relevant government agencies, at Erbil International Airport. This is the first time a GARD workshop is held in Iraq.

Iraq, in addition to security issues, faces multiple threats from natural disasters due to its varied climate, including drought and desertification, floods, sandstorms, and earthquakes. Along its border with Iran, where the Eurasian and Arabian tectonic plates meet, earthquakes occur frequently. In November 2017, a huge earthquake measuring 7.3 magnitude hit this area. It was the largest ever recorded in this region and considered the deadliest quake in the world that year.

"As a frequent responder to help after natural disasters, we at DPDHL see it over and over again – airports quickly get overwhelmed by the chaos of incoming relief aid, UN and NGO personnel, military organizations and the crowds of people trying to leave. Add to this the fact that humanitarian aid sometimes arrives faster than the airport can organize for it to get out, and you get a massive bottleneck in the flow of relief logistics. Timing is critical during a disaster and the more efficient an airport is at processing incoming aircraft, the faster aid can get out to those in need," says Chris Weeks, Vice President, Humanitarian Services, Deutsche Post DHL Group. He continued, "We are really proud to be conducting our first GARD workshop in Iraq, and hope the authorities here see value in the training."

One expected outcome of the GARD workshop is to identify areas in the airport that could potentially serve as key locations for disaster logistics operations. The GARD workshop will also evaluate the airports' capacities for processing high volumes of passengers and cargo and warehousing relief supplies.

"We are very pleased with this partnership and we welcome this first-of-its kind initiative of the "GARD" as it will further enhance our crisis management capacities to respond to disaster-affected people timely through expediting and fast-tracking the importation and movement of relief items and humanitarian assistance as well as the entry and exit of the humanitarian personnel. We extend our thanks to UNDP Iraq and DPDHL for conducting this programme".

said Mr. Hoshang Mohamed, Director General of the KRG's Joint Crisis Coordination Centre, Ministry of Interior.

Mr. Vakhtang Svanidze, the UNDP Resident Representative in Iraq says the airport preparedness matters to UNDP because "the threat of natural or man-made disasters remain high. For example, due to torrential rains, the country continues to witness large scale floods which have claimed lives, displaced people and destroyed property. The Mosul Dam poses significant risks to the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable communities along the Tigris flood plain." Mr. Svanidze continued that "managing the logistics of a large-scale disaster response can be complex. Air transport is crucial to providing smart and speedy humanitarian aid" and therefore UNDP actively "advocates for the vital role of airport preparedness for efficient disaster response".

Since 2009 nearly 50 GARD workshops have been held in 24 countries, and nearly 1,160 attendees trained. In the Middle East, workshops were previously held in Tehran (2017), Almaty (2017), Aqaba (2016), Amman (2014), Yerevan (2013) and Beirut (2012).

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**About GARD**

In 2009, GARD was developed by Deutsche Post DHL Group in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the aim of preparing airports in disaster-prone areas to handle the surge of incoming relief goods after a natural disaster occurs. It also enables the various organizations and aid agencies to better understand the processes at the airport in the aftermath of a disaster, which will help facilitate relief efforts and enhance overall coordination.

To date, GARD workshops have been held at more than 43 airports in Armenia, Bangladesh, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon, Macedonia, the Maldives, Nepal, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, the Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

GARD trainers and training materials are provided free-of-charge by Deutsche Post DHL Group while UNDP leads the project implementation and facilitates the coordination with the national authorities and governmental ministries. GARD training workshop arrangements and logistics costs are fully covered by UNDP with funding contribution by the government of Germany.

GARD is an integral part of Deutsche Post DHL Group's GoHelp program in which the Group pools all of its activities related to disaster preparedness and management. As a form of crisis prevention, GARD workshops are used to prepare airports for coping with potential natural disasters. Should a disaster strike, Disaster Response Teams (DRTs) provide emergency aid and ensure that relief supplies can be accepted in a coordinated manner and passed on to the correct aid organizations.

The DRTs were established in cooperation with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). They encompass a worldwide network of more than 400 volunteers, all specially trained employees of Deutsche Post DHL Group.

## **About Deutsche Post DHL Group**

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Deutsche Post DHL Group is home to two strong brands: Deutsche Post is Europe's leading postal service provider. DHL offers a comprehensive range of international express, freight transport, and supply chain management services, as well as e-commerce logistics solutions. Deutsche Post DHL Group employs approximately 550,000 people in over 220 countries and territories worldwide. The Group generated revenues of more than 61 billion Euros in 2018.

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## **About UNDP**

UNDP works in close to 170 countries and territories, helping to achieve the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion. We help countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities and build resilience in order to sustain development results.

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