H.E. Dr. Ali Sindi, KRG Minister of Planning’s speech presented to the Decentralization and Local Governance Conference on 14 June 2011 in Erbil

Excellencies, Ladies Gentlemen good morning

It is a great honor to welcome you all to this important conference on decentralization of local governance. I wish you a very pleasant stay at your kind home, Erbil. Because of the importance of the subject to the general public please allow me to speak in Kurdish.

The democratization process is the distinguishing feature of the New Iraq. One of the prerequisites of any successful democracy is decentralization, because the essence of democracy is for the people to achieve self-determination. In order to achieve this, decision-making process must be as close to the people as possible. Decentralization is gaining increasing importance as one of the most effective methods of improved service delivery, while the public rightfully demand better services.

In Iraq, where we have inherited a highly centralized system of governance, achieving decentralization requires dedication and determination. We should view decentralization at two complementary levels; Regional and
governorate levels. None of these levels are complete without the other.

We in the KRG and our counterparts in the Federal Government in Baghdad have taken some steps in this regard. We should view these steps as experimentation with this new idea to our government system and we should also realize that there are many more steps to be taken. To make decentralization successful and appropriate to the local needs and desires, we need strong partnership with the Federal Government and our international partners.

Although decentralization is a political concept by its nature, we aim to concentrate on its developmental affects. Thus the Kurdistan Regional Government is attempting to assist the governorates to play their true roles as actors of social and economic development.

The Ministry of Planning is developing a vision of decentralization for the KRG. As of the next year we will allocate a share of the KRG budget for the community projects. The various communities will partake in deciding on the types of projects to be implemented in their areas and they will also participate in the implementation and review processes. Although the previously projects were implemented for the benefit of the people, but what
distinguishes this approach is its consultative and participatory nature.

Our international partners have been particularly helpful in this regard. Important projects have been implemented in this area such as Local Area Development Programme, lead by the UNDP, Community Action Programme by USAID and Local Governance Programme by RTI.

Here I would like highlight some details of the Consultative Service Delivery Program (CSDP), funded by the World Bank and KRG and implemented by the local communities with the support of ACDI/VOCA, in close cooperation with the KRG Ministry of Planning. I have chosen this project because it is a success story to be told. It is a success story in relation to decentralization and project implementation using co-financing approach. Allow me to take this opportunity to thank every individual who has worked on this project particularly the governors of the KRG’s three govenorates; Mr. Nawzad Hadi, Governor of Erbil, Mr. Bahroz Mhamad Salih, Governor of Sulaimani and Mr. Tamar Ramazan, Governor of Duhok.