**IRRI-KIIB  - Conference Address**

**"Introduction to the conference of Mr. Hoshyar Zebari, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Iraqi Transitional Government"**

**by Mr. Karel De Gucht,**
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.

Brussels, June 23, 2005

Excellency Hoshuar Zebari, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq,

Excellency Mohammed Jawad Al-DOREKY, Ambassador of Iraq, ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel very privileged to introduce the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Iraqi Transitional Government tonight to this audience of the Royal lnstitute for International Relations.

Minister Zebari was yesterday one of the main participants to the International Conference on Iraq. At this conference co-hosted in Brussels by the European Union and the United States of America, Minister Zebari, the Prime Minister of Iraq and his other colleagues, have presented the vision and the strategy of the Iraqi Authorities to more than 80 governments, to the United Nations, the World Bank and other main international organizations. I have to say that we were all impressed by the quality, the forcefulness and the commitment of this presentation. Everybody is well aware of the very difficult transition that your country, Excellency, had to go through in the last two years. The achievements of the Iraqi government are most impressive if we remember that it has been formed only in the last days of April.

The title of your address, Excellency, "Iraq: From Dictatorship to Democracy" underscores the crucial and delicate process in which your country is engaged. On January 30, Iraq entered a new phase of its history with the first democratic elections ever held, despite a very tense security situation in same parts of the country. The interlocutors of the international community in Baghdad have now democratic legitimacy; this is a decisive factor for its support. But as the titre of your lecture suggests, this is a political process that can only be consolidated by a policy including ail the components of the Iraqi society in it.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Beyond the humanitarian and reconstruction assistance that Belgium has been contributing to Iraq since 2003, we will now focus our support on the areas that we consider instrumental, and in a certain way conditional to the reconstruction and economic development of Iraq: I mean security, rule of law, public order and good governance.

In this spirit, we contribute financially to the organization of the elections and to the NATO Training Mission. Also, about ten Belgian officers will train the Iraqi military in cooperation with Germany in the United Arab Emirates.In Jordan, Belgian police officers take part in the training of Iraqi police while in the framework of EUJUST-LEX, a European Union's integrated programme, the Belgian Ministries of Justice and Interior will organize, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence and with funds of my Department, a specialized program of three weeks for 30 Iraqi magistrates and police officers.

But an important task of the Iraqi Transitional Authorities is the drafting of a Constitution. in order to support this effort, we have put some of our best constitutional experts at their disposal, in the framework of the assistance given by the United Nations to the constitutional process. Thanks to their own experience of the Belgian federal system and the consultations that these experts have given already in the past to other countries, I am really convinced that their contribution could be valuable.

Dear Colleague,

With ail our wishes for a process that should lead Iraq to security, stability, democracy, full sovereignty and prosperity, I have the pleasure to give you the floor.