Preface

The Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH), in partnership with the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation/the Central Organization for Statistics & Information Technology (COSIT) and the World Health Organization’s Iraq office (WHO/Iraq) are pleased to present the preliminary report of the 2006/7 Iraq Family Health Survey (IFHS). This report summarizes the key findings of the survey which was conducted under the leadership of the MoH, COSIT, the Ministry of Health/Kurdistan region (MoHK) and the Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office (KRSO). Technical and financial support was provided by WHO, United Nations Development Group (UNDG), Iraq Trust Fund (ITF) and the European Commission (EC).

The Iraq Family Health Survey (IFHS) 2006/7 is a nationally representative survey of 9,345 households and 14,675 women of reproductive age and covers all governorates in Iraq. This is the second nationally representative health survey since the Family Gulf Survey in 1989, although it is the first survey to disseminate the results. The IFHS 2006/7 was conducted in the central and southern governorates during August and September 2006, in Anbar during October and November 2006, while fieldwork in the Kurdistan region was carried out during February and March 2007. The survey had gone through a detailed and intensive planning and preparatory phases which was particularly important given the dire security situation in Iraq at the time of the survey. Not only were rigorous training and pre-testing undertaken, but a planning approach based on a number of different scenarios was adopted to respond to anticipated challenges. All interview teams were carefully supervised and given continuous support throughout the period of the survey.

The principle objective of the survey is to provide critical information for policy-makers and programme managers working in health and development. It complements other surveys recently conducted in Iraq on the situation of women and children, namely the Iraq Child and Maternal Mortality Survey (ICMMS 1999), the Iraq Living Conditions Survey ILCS 2004, and the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey MICS III 2006. Also the survey results will present data on a wide range of indicators related to women’s and family health. It is also the first national survey ever conducted to present data on adult mortality, including the causes of deaths. The IFHS is the first national survey in Iraq to investigate domestic violence, as well as chronic illnesses. Detailed information was also collected on health expenditures and health care seeking behaviour, as well as a range of other health and demographic indicators. Blood test was carried out to measure the level of anaemia among women of reproductive age including pregnant and lactating women.
It is important to acknowledge that this survey was a critical step in the development of skills and technical capacities among the Iraqi professionals. The expertise gained from implementing this survey will be invaluable in conducting future national surveys to international standards.

Lastly, we hope that the survey results contribute to the revision of Iraq’s National Development Strategy. The data generated will contribute to the ongoing efforts of the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation (MoP), the Ministry of Health (MoHK), and the Ministry of Planning (MoPK) in Kurdistan Region, as well as other ministries, non-governmental organizations, and international agencies in formulating effective programmes and policies for the benefit of the health of Iraqi families.

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