22 March of every year marks a special occasion as humanity celebrates the World Water Day. Leading this year’s festivities, UNESCO Iraq office, in partnership with Iraqi civil society organizations, held during a period of five days a series of seminars and lectures in several provinces all over the country under this year’s theme: "Water and Food Security". Entitled "gender mainstreaming in water management", the lectures focused on several topics directly related to vulnerable communities.

Among these topics:
- Rationalization of water consumption and safe use;
- Optimal use of natural water resources;
- Dealing with water as an economic, social and environmental good;
- Involving women in development projects and management of water;
- Raising public awareness through schools, media and religious centres;
- Increasing the green areas and combating desertification through the use of wastewater;
- Supporting sustainable agriculture;
- Providing employment opportunities for women in rural communities;
- The importance of holding workshops, training and awareness campaigns on water conservation;
- Building water dams and reservoirs for water harvesting;
- Optimum utilization of water wells and lining of water distribution channels; and
- Use of modern irrigation methods.

The seminars were organized in cooperation with ten local NGOs active in different provinces of Iraq and working in different humanitarian aspects. These devoted organizations are:

- No Borders Humanity Organization (Dhi Qar)
- Sorouh Foundation for Sustainable Development (Salah al-Din)
- Jousour Youth Organization (Dhi Qar)
- Kurdistan Civil Rights organization (Kurdistan)
- Darya Centre for Developing Woman and Communities (Dahuk)
- Harikar Organization (Dahuk)
- Al–Furat Institution for the Care of Women and Children (Qadissiya)
- Al–Rafidain Feminist Organization (Muthanna)
- Al–Zuhoor for Disabled Development (Baghdad)
- Hibet Al-Hayat Center for Development and Environment (Karbala)
- Buthoor Al- Khair (Diyala)
The events were attended by different segments of the Iraqi society and unions' representatives, including delegations from "Union for International Peace" and the Iraqi Union for journalists and artists, representatives from security firms, local officials and social figures, teachers, students and employees, in addition to local women communities.
Wide media coverage was also ensured as satellite channels, including Baghdad Channel, Dohuk TV, Kurdistan (Kurdsat-NRT), Free Iraq, Radio Dohuk; and local newspapers were actively present such as The Latest Events, The World Pulse and some of them even participated in lectures, discussions and presentations.

The sessions witnessed high interaction between the audience and the organizers who were praised for this important activity that comes in the moment when the water crisis become an aggravated issue in the entire Iraq, especially in villages and rural areas. On the other hand, Iraq is facing deterioration in the quality of water resources due to unsafe human activities that has caused harmful effects on the environment, and has hampered many development projects.

Finally, participants came out with a set of recommendations which the most important are:

- Enacting laws and international agreements on water with neighbouring countries
- Cooperation with United Nations organizations and specialized international agencies
- Activation of the role of media in raising awareness and disseminating environmental education
- Wastewater treatment
- Promotion of conferences on water and environment
- Development of inclusive strategies on climate change adaptation
- Use of water meters and the application of laws to curb fresh water abuse and to control water contamination
For this year, UNICEF in coordination with Directorate of Education in 18 Iraqi Governorates, NGOs, local Councils and with the support of Governors has sent hygiene and water conservation messages to more than 17,500 students in 40 schools throughout the country. The celebration included the distribution of 4,000 T shirts, 3,400 leaflets on water conservation, 10,000 drawing booklets. In addition, TV and radio programmes were aired locally to the Iraqi audience with the participation of UNICEF and Minstry of Water Resources representatives and youth who addressed the water pollution and wastewater treatment as a priority.

Communication with interested individuals has been maintained on the best ways for conserving the water which has reflected the good response and interaction by the local communities on the water issues.

In its continuous efforts to strengthen the institutional capacity of water directorates UNICEF has distributed flow meters, pressure transmitters and data loggers to minimize the water losses from the networks. Also, UNICEF has distributed instruments and softwares to in 10 governorates to enhance their capacity in designing water supply systems.