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### Media Note

#### Office of the Spokesman

Washington, DC

June 28, 2007

## U.S.-Iraqi Businesswomen's Partnership Launched

Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs [Paula J. Dobriansky](#) is pleased to announce the establishment of the U.S.-Iraqi Businesswomen's Partnership (USIBP), which will bring American women entrepreneurs together with Iraqi counterparts in a virtual mentoring program through December 2007.

The USIBP, administered by the Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, consists of a series of consecutive, six-month business mentoring partnerships between Iraqi and American women. The pilot program of approximately ten U.S.-Iraqi partnerships will include the exchange of insights and advice on business development. Each partnership will engage in bi-monthly e-mail exchanges on topics such as business planning, leadership, management, marketing, and finance. A group website has been established to facilitate communication and the sharing of training materials.

The Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues ([IWI](#)) has worked with a steering committee of U.S. women's business associations and civil society partners from the Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative to design and implement the USIBP.

Private industry partners include: Margaret Barton, President of the National Women's Business Council; Karen Kerrigan, President and CEO of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council; Wendy Baumann, President of the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation; Katherine H. Hoelscher, Assistant State Director of the Florida Small Business Development Center; and Julie Lenzer Kirk, award-winning entrepreneur. In addition to developing the program, these business leaders reached out to identify and include American partners for the first of the six-month programs.

NGO partners include Dr. Pary Karadaghi of Kurdish Human Rights Watch, and Zainab Al Suwaij of the American Islamic Congress. They provided valuable input reaching out to Iraqi women for inclusion in the program.

Other organizations, both in the United States and in [Iraq](#), were consulted for assistance in identifying Iraqi

businesswomen and entrepreneurs.

**2007/524**

Released on June 28, 2007

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