

## Text of Sayyid Al-Hakeem's speech on education in Iraq... Reality and Future Prospects



The text of Sayyid Al-Hakeem's speech at the symposium held by Al-Hakeem Foundation on Tuesday 25/10/2022 in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Paris and UNESCO at its headquarters in the French capital Paris titled (Education in Iraq... Reality and Future Prospects)

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Ladies and gentlemen...

I greet you with the most beautiful greetings and extend my thanks and appreciation to The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and its management team for providing this valuable opportunity to hold global specialized seminars that concern the affairs of member states and international organizations in areas related to their work. In addition, we stress the importance of continuing this cooperation to enrich and develop joint international work at all levels.

Pedagogy and Education stand at the forefront of files of paramount importance to all countries of the world, especially those countries that are working on the renaissance of their people to join the advanced global progress and the great human civilization that stands on the pillars of science and knowledge, the rule of justice, law, rights, and basic principles of freedom, and respect for human diversity and pluralism.

There is no doubt that we in Iraq, the people, the government, and the organizations, are eager to develop all our pedagogical, educational, and cultural sectors to enrich our ancient history, which recorded the first attempts at human writing in Mesopotamia. the first humanitarian schools, universities, and institutions, and scientific laboratories which extend

over our country's successive civilizations, its vein still pulses in the conscience of our democratic Iraq that aspires to rise forever.

- Now, we would like to present a set of principles that we believe in at (Al-Hakeem Foundation) and are working to activate in Iraq on one hand, and then present our vision and proposals for the pedagogy and educational file on the other.

- Al-Hakeem Foundation believes that the real capital of countries is not limited to wealth and natural and financial capabilities. But, (human) is the first station in the list of priorities and must enjoy the highest levels of care, attention, and empowerment. Hence, our main efforts have their focus on defending the rights of the family, childhood, and women through hundreds of local and international scientific and social conferences, seminars, and activities, to consolidate this principle and spread the culture of (Humans First), as an essential pillar in the development of everything related to it, and at the forefront of that comes pedagogy, education, upbringing, and empowerment.

Any expected renaissance in any country needs bright and creative minds capable of diagnosing shortcomings and providing the best possible solutions, through new ideas and creative leaps. This needs an embracing and inspiring environment, sound scientific curricula, advanced methods, and double the concentration of the countries towards achieving this lofty goal.

Starting with this, Al-Hakeem Foundation worked, in partnership with elites and national and international competencies, to motivate the Iraqi state towards raising the budgets of pedagogy and education within the state's general financial budget. Al-Hakeem Foundation has also stood with the claims to demand the rights of professors and teachers and work alongside them to develop their performance on their different levels. In addition, it developed methods, curricula, and infrastructure in the Iraqi provinces.

We also believe that the form of traditional education based on the random response of the teacher and full immersion in repetition and echoing of study materials in a traditional, rigid manner, and the adoption of written, transmitted, and reproduced needs a quick and safe transition to the form of advanced education based on participation, thinking, deconstruction and prudence in parallel with physical, social, and rights activities, as well as taking advantage of technology and scientific, experimental, and laboratory development in schools and universities.

These ambitious goals and projects are met with few obstacles in Iraq today. The most important of which can be summarized as follows:

Decades of wars, conflicts, and economic sieges at the time of the defunct regime have

destroyed the pedagogy and educational will and produced high rates of illiteracy in the country, in addition to the challenges of obscurantist terrorism after 2003, which focused on targeting and destroying schools and universities and the targeted killing of professors and elites over the past two decades, which resulted in a severe shortage of pedagogy and educational infrastructure in Iraq.

The state's greatest focus has been on strengthening the security and military infrastructure to confront the existential terrorist challenges, which has caused a clear imbalance in the level of funding needed for the education sector despite all the efforts made in this direction.

On the other hand, Iraq's long-term disconnection from its regional neighbors and international fields prevented it from capitalizing on global expertise, experiences, and developments, which led to the continuation of traditional education in the country at the expense of renewed and advanced education.

- Yet, with all the difficulties and obstacles mentioned, there was a clear societal will among Iraqis to develop this sector, and this can be seen through hundreds of model and advanced private schools in the country and dozens of prestigious private universities with which students interact and join, it also enjoys the attention and demand of parents, which prompted the state, to track the impact of these projects and work on building thousands of school buildings and providing modern technological requirements throughout the country, and work continues this orientation.

- We are still witnessing qualitative and continuous success stories that took place through individual and societal efforts through private schools such as Imam Ali "Peace Be Upon Him", (Bahloul), (Al-Tanmia Al-Ibdaiyah - Creativity Development), (Al-Takamul - Integration), (Mama Aysar), (Al-Qidees Toma - Saint Thomas), (Al-Hikma - Wisdom) and (Al-Ma'ruf - Knowledge) and others, and they need attention, follow-up, support, and permanent support from UNESCO and other organizations to consolidate them as development pillars for all public and private sectors in the country. With the formation of the new government and the relative stability due to the peaceful transfer of power, we hope to witness huge leaps in the pedagogy and educational sectors as we consider it an important area to construct both the people and the homeland together in our country.

We renew our thanks and appreciation to UNESCO, the Iraqi Embassy in Paris, and to all the friends and colleagues who accompanied us in this symposium of high importance, with our constant emphasis on working for the development of our country and the world together.