

## **During the Conference on Education and Teaching, Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim Calls for an Educational Revolution, Considering It as the Basic Pillar of a Just Modern State**



In the presence of a big number of academics and educators, Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim, head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, maintained that the education and teaching sector in Iraq needs a revolution, not a reformative initiative or project. He said the Martyr of the Niche movement will raise the slogan of an educational revolution in Iraq as one of the pillars of the just modern state building project in our new Iraq, calling on the sponsors of the educational project and its main founders to uphold this banner and go forward with it and describing teachers, professors and educators as fearless warriors who exercise the most noble profession, that of prophets and messengers. Here, he stressed the importance of supporting teachers in all aspects to distinguish them from others and preparing them for this great profession. In his opinion, one should start with teachers to build an integrated educational project. Moreover, he incited educationalists to take advantage of this conference and declare their appeal for the educational and pedagogic revolution in Iraq, pointing out to the importance of setting the courses and developing plans, ideas and a well-defined vision by enabling teachers and educationalist and then moving on to install the other pillars of the educational and pedagogic process. His Eminence also suggested building an educational university that graduate educators and teachers for all educational stages starting from the kindergarten and offer modern scientific and educational programs with international standards. This came during the first Conference on Education and Teaching held on Saturday, February 15, 2014 in his office in Baghdad.

### **Building a University that Graduate Educators and Teachers**

His Eminence explained the teacher-enabling project is the cornerstone and the basic pillar of the educational process pillars, designed to habilitate teachers scientifically, morally and financially, calling for introducing the educational administration major in the educational colleges, so that educationalists can acquire the administrative skills used in running the utilities of education and which help create a state of integration between the education and the administration at schools and universities, as well as rising the admission level in universities so as to be one of the highest levels to attract the competent cadres who are willing to take the responsibility of building the new generation. Moreover, his Eminence underlined the importance of uniting the education institutions which graduate teachers and educators exclusively within the education colleges, asking for giving exceptional privileges to the education college students and teachers in order to create the incentive that attracts the young competent skills. This is why he called for setting up the national center for rehabilitation of teachers and carrying out a global training campaign including all teachers and educationalists. His Eminence also suggested submitting the teacher allowance draft to the

Council of Representatives to pass it and enforce it and that such allowances be detailed in law and related to the diplomas and courses teachers can have; that teachers' remunerations be compatible with this dangerous and heavy duty with which they are entrusted; that the national educational and cultural protocols be activated with the international Islamic and Arabic education institutions through the occupational competitive effort; that neighborhoods for teachers be set up in the cities and provinces with lands to be allotted to them or decent residential compounds be built with the help of the federal government and the local ones; and that the freshly-graduated teachers be granted easy governmental loans that enable them to live a stable social life. And these are the most important ways that help habilitate a distinguished and skillful teacher.

#### Adopting a National Strategy for Education Based in its Values on the Iraqi Constitution

The Head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq stated that the suggestions represent preliminary steps towards building a qualitative educational reality; they can be discussed, debated, modified and developed. He stressed that education is the cornerstone of the modern State which is based on the pre-requisite of knowledge to reach a decent living for all community groups. His eminence indicated that the Martyr of the Niche's vision for education is to promote the Iraqi individuals and make them attain the highest academic and intellectual capacities that originate from the spiritual and human values, as well as to build human resources and disseminate the culture of tolerance, good citizenship, optimism and the ability to make decisions in a modern democratic Iraq. Sayyid Al Hakim suggested developing and adopting a national strategy for education that is based in its values on the new Iraqi Constitution, particularly articles 14, 24 and 28, and on article 7 of the Iraqi declaration of human rights, as well as other international instruments related to education, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1965, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1981, the international conventions on the education for all and the inclusion of the Education for All objective among the Millennium Development Goals. His eminence considered that all these instruments are the pillars for developing a national education strategy in Iraq, calling for proceeding with the implementation of the strategy's programs, including the development and update of the legislative, legal and administrative systems of the education sector, the establishment, expansion and rehabilitation of infrastructures, the improvement of school and college environment and the development and management of human resources. He also stressed the need to provide all the necessary financial and investment resources to advance the entire education sector underlining the possibility of talking about a reduction of expenses in all areas and sectors except in education, for it is an investment in the future generations and in the nation's future. Any weakness in education, he added, cannot be overcome no matter how much we progress in other fields. Sayyid Al Hakim pointed out that any concrete development in

education reflects positively on society, ensures comprehensive quality in all areas and puts Iraq on the path of achieving good quality and counting on education. He mentioned as well that scientific research studies and relevant results should be aligned with the requirements of sustainable development in the country, and that the curricula should be reevaluated to make them adapted to modern needs. His eminence also highlighted the need to adopt the principle of cognitive education and link it to the needs of society and development in a way that respects privacy and reflects the national cohesion originating from the nationalist, religious and sectarian diversity, and the need to encourage private education institutions through introducing legislations that motivate the private sector to invest in education. He suggested moreover to adopt the principle of procuring the educational service, by determining the cost of each student for each cycle, and the student can give it to the public or private school, which is a way to instill the concept of social justice, insofar as poor students are able to afford private education and discrimination in education is eliminated. Another suggestion put forward by his eminence was to establish the supreme federal council of education as an independent entity in charge of developing the educational policy to build a productive and efficient generation, and consisting of representatives of public and educational institutions and civil society stakeholders, in collaboration with specialized institutions in the Arab League, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, United Nations and others. The council shall have a statute that defines its goals to eventually have the national education strategy be implemented by public and civil institutions to advance Iraq to the level of successful countries. His eminence added that his suggestions include according attention to pre-primary education by establishing an integrated network of kindergartens and giving serious attention to educational and specialized supervision, while excluding all forms of interference in it by virtue of a law to be enacted for this purpose, developing school buildings in terms of architecture, equipment, laboratories and capacities. Propositions in this regard also include the implementation of an educational system at schools mainly based on the lesson not the class, teaching foreign languages and diversifying them through the use of modern teaching techniques, and the use of the concept of educational complexes in cities, districts and regions and of university cities in provinces to ensure a modern educational environment.

#### Education, an Important Pillar of the Sustainable Strategic Development

His Eminence called all generous people to support the educational process by giving away or designating the lands they own to establish schools thereon or to contribute to their setting up, for their rewards are great because they contribute to the building of the human, explaining that the sustainable strategic development cannot be achieved unless by developing its key pillar, which is education. To him, an illiterate people is a people that is denied competition in the international community which knowledge is its most prominent characteristics. Here, his Eminence wondered: Do we have an integrated project to habilitate teachers and educators? Do we have a strategic planning to have distinguished teachers? Have we

put this distinguished social class in society in its right place and preserved its moral and physical presence? He said the world today is widely open and cultures are moving across boundaries, exceeding the geographic restrictions, adding that the strongest culture will eventually prevail since it will dominate the weakest one, and the culture of any community is determined by the level of its education and the education means it adopts, for a scientific program has no value without teachers who are able to convey it, explain it and establish it in the minds of their students and unlucky are the students who do not get the chance to be taught by great teachers. In addition, he stated that reforming the education sector is a responsibility that must be shared by homes, schools and civil society organizations in cooperation with the public institutions whose duty is to provide assistance and care under the community's values and principles, calling for looking for action tools to coordinate the efforts between all those sides. Finally, he confirmed that the Martyr of the Niche movement's vision is based on the great educational revolution and attaches importance and gives priority to teachers, educators, educational supervisors and principals.