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Abstract of paper to be presented at the conference.

For details of the conference programme go to [www.iraqistudies.org](http://www.iraqistudies.org)

**Speaker: Beriwan Khailany, Minister's Adviser, Kurdistan Ministry of Higher Education**

**Title: How to build knowledge society in Iraq**

**Abstract:**

Knowledge is a social institution, a social activity, as well as the product of that social activity. Three styles of knowledge co-exist in the transitional societies of the third world in general. The first are initiation societies - where power is conferred on the initiated. The second are learned societies (or academies) - which handle science and technologies. The third are industrial societies - whose enterprises apply the technologies in order to improve humankind's material and cultural condition. The initiation, learned and industrial societies were developed in a pre-modern, pre-industrial context which was monarchic, sacred, and anti-democratic or endowed with a tribal democracy. A gradual opening can be seen in the passage of initiation societies (where power is the perquisite of the initiated) towards learned societies and then, later, to industrial ones. Here, the problem is whether and how to bring into play a fourth style of society - cognitive society - which requires relatively advanced conditions of democracy.

The emerging knowledge society presents a set of new priorities for countries and governments, a new challenges and opportunities for society as a whole. With between 70 and 80% of economic growth now estimated to be due to new and better knowledge. Iraq future prosperity is critically dependant on policies that foster the continuous generation of knowledge and pursuit of learning.

The global influence of information and communication technologies is transforming our economy and society. But these technologies do not produce new ideas. All knowledge and learning ultimately depends on people. Our approach must therefore to be one that put people at the center.

Three challenges must be addressed in building the foundation for Iraq's future economic and social prosperity:

- Developing broadband networking connectivity as a key 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure.
- Fostering a climate of innovation, building on world class research and an advanced science and technology base.
- Investing in people and skills to promote a culture of lifelong learning.

In Iraq, we are losing ground on our leading competitors, the levels of investment in research and development are almost nil and the gap to leading countries is large. Iraq lagging too in term of participation in adult education and training and acceptance the lifelong learning challenge.

**Knowledge** has always been a factor of production, and a driver of economic and social development. Earlier economies depended, for example, on knowledge about how to farm, how to build and how to manufacture. However, the capacity to direct, store and transmit large quantities of information cheaply has increased at amazing rate over recent years to the extent that it has become the predominant factor in the creation of wealth. By working on Science and Technology issues, we can achieve a lot. Leading countries have technology and we have manpower, so we have two main aspects for our achievement. Therefore, we are required to setup a program for what the near future shall carry regarding Iraq-Leading countries relations.