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## **DONORS PLEDGE \$30BN FOR IRAQ'S POST-ISIL RECONSTRUCTION**

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International donors have pledged tens of billions of dollars to help Iraq rebuild after a four-year war against ISIL has left large swathes of the country in ruins.

Iraq received \$30bn in pledges to fund its reconstruction efforts, the government of Kuwait confirmed on Wednesday after the conclusion of a three-day, donor conference in its capital.

Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Turkey were among several countries promising to offer loans and direct investments to help rebuild the country.

But Ibrahim al-Jaafari, Iraq's foreign minister, said later on Wednesday that the funds fall short of what is needed.

The country's Minister of Planning Qusai Abdelfattah said earlier this week that Iraq needs an estimated \$88.2bn to achieve its goals, \$22bn of which is needed "immediately".

Despite this, Antonio Guterres, secretary general of the United Nations, which was one of the summit's co-organisers, called the conference in Kuwait City "an enormous success".

### Major donors

The conference - organised by Kuwait, Iraq, the European Union, the UN and the World Bank - sought funding from state and non-state actors, as well as private investors.

The goal was to help rebuild Iraq's destroyed homes, schools and hospitals, as well as revive its demolished infrastructure and economy following the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and

the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) armed group.

The emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, pledged \$2bn in loans and investments.

Saudi Arabia said it would provide \$1.5bn, Qatar pledged \$1bn and Turkey vowed to give Iraq \$5bn in financial support.

The promises come as various non-governmental organisations also pledged \$330m during the first day of the summit, which was attended by a total of 67 states and non-state actors.

Corruption has been a major concern in Iraq's quest to raise funds, however.

Last year, the country ranked 166 out of 176 nations that were found to be corrupt, according to the annual Corruption Perceptions Index released by advocacy group Transparency International.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi had previously vowed that his government would work towards combatting corruption and bureaucracy in the country.

Elizabeth Dickinson, a senior analyst at the International Crisis Group, said ahead of the summit that Iraq "has gone to great lengths" to reassure potential donors that their investments will be "as well spent as possible".

"An initial test for donors and investors might be to watch how many of these promised reforms and oversight mechanisms get enacted and implemented" by the Iraqi government, Dickinson tweeted.

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