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Address by:

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**Head of Delegation and Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom
of Jordan to the OSCE**

**18th OSCE Ministerial Council
Vinius, 6-7 December 2011**

Mr. Chairman
Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues and Friends,

Allow me on behalf of my delegation to extend our appreciation to the Government and people of Lithuania for the warm hospitality and the excellent organization of this meeting. I am sure that under the Lithuanian chairmanship, more foundation blocks were added to our partnership.

Let me also welcome, Ireland, the incoming chair of our organization and assure them of our cooperation and support.

Jordan attaches great importance to its partnership with the OSCE. We also attend and actively participate in activities and events that the OSCE conducts, especially in the context of the OSCE-Mediterranean partnership. Jordan hosted two OSCE seminars as well as the 2008 OSCE-Mediterranean Conference. We are committed to continue and expand this cooperation. We are ready to intensify our cooperation with the OSCE on political and security matters, and welcome dialogue on common concerns at the regional, sub-regional or bilateral levels.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,

The recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa have reaffirmed the pressing need for a sincere reform process to address all the intractable challenges and problems that have overwhelmed the region over the years. It is imperative to face these challenges with a fresh thinking and a firm determination in a manner that fully respects the will and choice of the peoples of the region.

For the reform process to succeed, it is crucial to uphold the rule of law; to enhance good governance; to ensure accountability; and to fight corruption and impunity. This will not only improve the overall situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms but it will also help achieving stability, political as well as economic and social development.

My delegation renews its assertion that reform measures are guarantors of stability and prosperity, and reaffirms the importance of context-specific approaches, as each country has its own experience in reform and transitional processes.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,

The reform process did not start in Jordan as a reaction to what is happening in the region. On the contrary, His Majesty the King's reform vision started ten years ago. His Majesty the King has made it clear that progress toward democracy, pluralism, economic prosperity and freedom of expression, speech and thought in Jordan is irreversible.

In keeping with Jordan's reform vision, a Royal Committee was established to review the constitution and propose amendments to the parliament. These amendments were approved by the parliament following an intensive and inclusive debate with NGO's, civil society, and community leaders. The new amendments include:

1. The establishment of a constitutional court to monitor the constitutionality of laws and regulations. The court replaces a high tribunal for the interpretation of such laws that was headed by the speaker of the Senate.

2. The establishment of an independent commission to oversee elections instead of the Ministry of Interior that has previously been in charge of the electoral process. All electoral contestations will be referred to the judiciary instead of parliament.
3. The enhancement of civil liberties, including the criminalization of any infringement on rights and public freedoms or on the sanctity of Jordanians' private life; prohibition of torture in any form; and a declaration that all forms of communication between citizens shall be treated as secret and not subject to censorship, suspension, or confiscation except by judicial order.
4. The limitation of the government's ability to issue temporary laws during the absence of parliament.
5. The limitation of the State Security Court's jurisdiction to cases of high treason, espionage, and terrorism, with citizens being otherwise tried in civilian courts; this includes ministers, who were previously tried by a parliamentary high tribunal.
6. The limitation of the government's ability to dissolve parliament without having to resign itself.
7. Criminalizing torture in the constitution. This was one of the UN Special Rapporteur recommendations after his visit to Jordan in 2007.

In this connection, I would like to seize this opportunity to thank the EU and the USA for the commitment shown during the EU-US summit by, I quote, "pledging to support the democratic transitions underway, as well as broader political and economic reform in the region, including the constitutional reforms in Jordan and Morocco", end of quote.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Colleagues,

Jordan's main priority is to achieve peace, security and stability in the Middle East. The Arab-Israeli conflict, which is the core issue in the Middle East, has consumed immense energies and rendered development and reform efforts secondary to the efforts of settling the conflict and stabilizing the region. In this regard, progress towards a just, lasting, and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should remain a priority for the international community and the current political instability in many Arab countries should not overshadow the urgency of the situation in the occupied Palestinian Territories.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Colleagues,

The concept of comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security, as enshrined in the OSCE fundamental documents cannot be realized unless the OSCE makes a stronger expression of political will to confront security challenges beyond the region from Vancouver to Vladivostok, for it has been often asserted in the OSCE literature that security in Europe has a global character, and therefore, enhancing the security and stability of this region has become integral to promoting those of the OSCE countries.

Given the magnitude of security threats in the Middle East, which is undoubtedly affecting security in the Euro-Atlantic and the Eurasian regions, cooperation in Security affairs between the OSCE and its Mediterranean partners appears to be insufficient. Restoring trust and confidence, one of the pillars of the Corfu Process, is much needed in the region. These should be the first step in attempts to overcome existing tensions, to be followed by concrete work towards developing confidence into cooperation.

The OSCE, due to its multidimensional approach to common, comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security, and its partnership scheme; provides the appropriate forum for

a genuine dialogue on security in the Mediterranean. As a Mediterranean partner for cooperation, Jordan attaches great value to the partnership with the OSCE and holds that it could potentially yield progress if effectively reinforced. An integral part of this is broadening the Mediterranean partnership, namely; granting the Palestinian National Authority a Mediterranean partner status at the OSCE, as this would constitute an important confidence building measure in the region. Such a decision would enable the OSCE to play a greater and much needed role in the region, as it is going through complex and dramatic events.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Colleagues,

We all face the same challenges and threats. Terrorism, transnational organized crime, intolerance, migration, global warming and energy security, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; represent a priority to all of us and pose the same threat on the Participating States and Mediterranean Partners alike.

Terrorism and the various terror groups and organizations pose a serious threat to global security. Jordan, its citizens, officials and interests, has been a target of terrorism due to its principled position and efforts in rejection and combating all forms of terrorism.

Jordan has declared its categorical condemnation of terrorism and stressed its support for the international efforts against this scourge. In the same vein, Jordan believes that terrorism is a global phenomenon without nationality and expressed its resolve to safeguard the sanctity of the Islamic faith from any abuse or distortion caused by terrorism or terrorists, insisting that terrorists must be deprived of any opportunity to hijack religion and misuse it to serve their purposes or advance their agenda. In particular, terrorists must be barred from provoking a confrontation between Islam and the rest of the world. In this regard, On November 9th ' 2004, His Majesty King Abdullah II launched the Amman Message which seeks to reveal a message of tolerance and humanity; it opposes extremism, exaggeration, and fanaticism.

Jordan stresses the need to confront all ill-motivated attempts aiming at connecting Islam, or any other religion, with terrorism.

The Amman Message emphasize that Islam's principles provide common ground among different faiths and peoples. The origin of divine religions is one, and Muslims believe in all messengers of God; denying the message of any of them is a deviation from Islam. The Amman Message reiterates the fact that Islam remains a religion of moderation and tolerance that does not condone assaulting civilians or causing damage in its name.

In order to promote mutual understanding and reaffirm the values of diversity, and as a concrete step in enhancing interfaith dialogue, which lasts beyond that of the related seminars and conferences, Jordan has proposed "A Scholar Exchange Programme" with the OSCE Participating States within the framework of the Human Dimension. This programme will offer scholars an opportunity to study at The World Islamic Sciences and Education University, a prestigious higher education institution, through scholarships offered by the Government of Jordan, and giving them therefore an opportunity to be introduced to Islamic culture, traditions, doctrines, and ways of life. The other side of this programme will have a number of Religious scholars from Jordan placed in relevant institutions in Participating States; in order to grant them also a chance of exposure to the societies and values of other states.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Colleagues,

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has been posing a real threat to the stability of our region for a long period of time. Therefore, Jordan calls for the establishment of a WMD free Zone in the Middle East. We believe that all countries in our region without exception should commit to the objective of rendering the Middle East a WMD free zone. The acquisition of WMD whether nuclear, biological or chemical by any country in the region will trigger an arms race that in turn could lead to the use of such weapons. The International Community has to exert every effort it has to help solve this issue, and to rid our region of these weapons.

On the other hand, the rights of states to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes must be respected according to the International doctrines and safeguards of the IAEA. Countries that respect the IAEA safeguards should be assisted in seeking alternative energy resources such as nuclear energy.

Finally Mr. Chairman, let me reaffirm Jordan's commitment to its partnership with the OSCE and its readiness to intensify cooperation with the organization.

Thank you Chairman.