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Address by:

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Head of the delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

**15th OSCE Ministerial Council
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Mr. Chairman

Excellencies,

Distinguished Colleagues and Friends,

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

We meet at a critical time for the great civilizations of Europe and the Middle East. It is clearer than ever that our future is shared ... that countries and communities do not stand in isolation ... that prosperity, security, and progress, depend on cooperation. But in recent years, our closeness has also put a focus on our differences. Crises have challenged the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims here in Europe and around the world. People are asking: How do we live with one another? How do we build trust?

Leaders and societies must respond. And answering these questions is especially important for our youth. The children of the 21st century are beginning to fill our schools. They are the targets of those who seek to recruit a new generation to extremism, fear, and suspicion. It is up to us to

send a different message, a message of strength and confidence in our values and shared humanity.

This is especially important in the dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims, between Med Countries, and those of NATO, OSCE and the EU alike. Distortions - from whatever source, for whatever motive - must never be allowed to mask the reality of the values and goals we share. The links begin in ancient history, and are rooted in the monotheistic heritage of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Each honor has a deeply familiar principle. Indeed, everyone in our area, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, will recognize it in the words of the Prophet Muhammad - peace and blessings be upon him. He said: *By Him in whose Hand is my life, none of you believes until he [or she] loves for their brother, what they love for themselves.* This is the golden Rule of our responsibility for others.

The fact is that the ideals of tolerance, fraternity, and humanity are shared by cultures and religions around the world. Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, values human rights and liberties; requires respect and tolerance for other religions. It abhors wanton violence, especially when it is committed in the name of religion.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The situation in our region implies on us to increase our political and security cooperation against all the threats that poison our atmosphere in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Failing to encounter these threats,

collectively and comprehensively, will bring about crises that will further undermine peace, stability and security in the region.

The security and stability concerns start at the two fold challenges of gaining a sustained development and facing the repercussions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict which is the core issue of the region. This conflict has consumed immense energies in the region and has rendered development efforts secondary to the efforts of settling the conflict and stabilizing the region.

If we are to put an end to this conflict, it will allow us to shed focus on human and economic development in the region. The mood in the region will differ regarding attitudes and stands of relations with the world, we will also sustain more external and internal openness, modernity and optimism.

Nowadays, we are surrounded by a number of crises, and inflammatory situations in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq as well as the issues of extremism, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

This trend, which tries to undermine moderates in the region, who believe in peace as a strategic choice for stability and prosperity, is growing as a result of the lack of progress in the Middle East Peace Process. The prospects in such a public mood are not promising. Wars may occur somewhere else in the region if we fail to address and solve the Arab – Israeli conflict once and for all.

The Lebanese crisis showed that the core problem in the Middle East is the Israeli occupation of the Arab lands. Without addressing this issue and in particular the occupation of the Palestinian lands, hardline factions will emerge elsewhere and we will continue to face similar situations.

There is an international momentum building now to move ahead with the peace process. The International Community should seize this opportunity and shoulder its responsibilities to help the Palestinians and Israelis resume negotiations on the basis of the relevant UN resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Road Map and President Bush's vision.

Jordan reiterates its deep conviction that the cause of peace, security and stability in the Middle East and in the world will only be served by reaching a negotiated solution that leads to the establishment of the Palestinian state and addresses Israel's security concerns. We urge all our friends in the international community to exert serious and sustained efforts to attain that.

H.M the King Abdullah said "It is high time to return to the root causes of the conflict and the core issue, which is the Palestinian issue — without a just solution that restores Palestinian rights and ensures the establishment of a viable Palestinian state on Palestinian land, people of the region will not enjoy security and stability." H.M The King added "The only lasting peace is one that all sides are convinced of and believe in, and one that follows negotiations and international agreements."

Distinguished Colleagues,

Jordan's national interest is tied to the stability of Iraq, and Jordan will continue to exert all possible efforts to build a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship with Iraq.

Jordan supports the ongoing democratic political process in Iraq and stresses the importance of its continuation with the participation of all segments of the Iraqi society.

However, the current situation in Iraq is a source of instability and concern to our region. The circle of violence hinders the Iraqi government from controlling the situation, which may develop into a real civilian war. This implies on us to join efforts to help the Iraqis to reconcile and maintain their security and territorial integrity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Jordan has declared its categorical condemnation of terrorism and stressed its support for the international effort against this scourge. In the same vein, Jordan 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.

Terrorism will exploit the absence of justice and political, economic and social imbalances to advance its goals. Therefore, addressing the main causes of despair, frustration and sense of injustice in a serious manner is perhaps the most effective way to confront terrorism and preempt its potential appeal and support.

Excellencies,

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. We have always been calling for a Middle East free of Weapons of Mass Destruction. But the situation in the region is becoming ever worse as a result of the attempts to obtain these weapons. This situation may spur other countries in our region to look for gaining such lethal weapons. That means there will be a possibility to use these weapons in any future regional conflicts.

The International Community has to exert every effort it has to help solve this issue, and to rid our region of WMDs. This issue should not be tolerated, but the right of states to have nuclear technology for peaceful use must be respected according to the International doctrines.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Jordan has undertaken a major effort to implement a far reaching program of

political reform and empowerment. The vision is to develop Jordan as a modern, tolerant and open society, and to establish the country as a successful, moderate, home grown and tolerant state model. This political reform and further democratization process is based on the following main pillars; reforming the political parties' law and the elections' law, consolidating an independent judicial system, developing free media, empowering women and youth, implementing educational reform to encourage independent and critical thinking and promoting a participative civic society.

Thank you very much.