



THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

*Speech of H.E the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates
Mr.Nasser Judeh at “the Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation
– Supporting Stability in the Region”.*

Berlin 28th October, 2014

Mr. Chairman

Your Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen

Allow me first to extend my thanks and appreciation to the Federal Republic of Germany and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier in particular for his initiative to convene this important conference in support of refugees and host countries.

Our meeting today comes as the crisis in Syria has been raging for more than three and a half years with no end in sight. It has also evolved and taken more extreme and sectarian nature and has led to a massive humanitarian spill over into neighboring countries.

Similar to past examples of protracted conflicts with humanitarian and refugee consequences, the term “fatigue” begins to flout, and particularly “donor fatigue”. But allow me today to introduce two different forms of fatigue that we are having in Jordan and let me begin with “host country fatigue”:

Jordan today is hosting around 1.5 million Syrians, more than 600 thousand of whom have arrived since the beginning of the conflict and

less than % 9 of the total number resides in refugee camps. The sheer population increase, by any standard, is beyond the means, or capacity, of any country regardless of economic strength.

The shock to our education system as a result of absorbing more than 140 thousand Syrian students has shelved our development and educational reform plans and shifted the focus towards dealing with overcrowding of classrooms and running double shifts in some schools.

Our health services also suffered an equal shock as the number of Syrian refugees seeking treatment in public hospitals has increased by nearly %250, and the number requiring surgical operations in government hospitals has increased by nearly %600.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen

In the fourth poorest country in water resources, a rise in water demand to %16 for 2014 is an existential matter in the long run as this non-renewable resource is being depleted at this high rate as a result of hosting Syrian refugees and the gap between available resources and

demand is widening significantly. Furthermore the pressures on water and waste water treatment infrastructure have reached unprecedented and unbearable levels.

In addition to these three fundamental sectors, the impact is across the board on the country's economy, government services, infrastructure, security, and resources and we are approaching a "host country fatigue" in which the limits of our ability to address the needs of Syrian refugees is being reached.

But there is an even more severe form of fatigue, and that is "host community fatigue", resulting from the impact of hosting refugees on the daily lives and livelihood of Jordanians. As the numbers increase to unimaginable levels, the competition over space, service, jobs, or opportunity begins to create friction.

When rents in certain areas in Jordan increase by %300 as a result of the Syrian refugees, the burdens on the local community becomes unbearable. Similarly, the increase in classroom overcrowding to %41 of schools and bed occupancy rates to %95 in hospitals in the north of Jordan provides a clear signal that the ability to share has reached its limits.

More seriously, the competition over job opportunities, as Syrians have not only taken 130 thousand jobs this year, but are beginning to replace Jordanians in the labor market thus planting the seeds of tension between the host community and refugees.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen

It was the Jordanian host community in the first phases of the crisis that catered and addressed the needs of Syrians as they began to arrive in Jordan in 2011, and it is this same community today that risks being plunged into poverty as a consequence of their initial welcome and hospitality.

Until a political solution for the Syrian crisis is realized, one that fulfills the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, restores peace and security to Syria, and provides the conducive environment for the return of refugees to their homes, there is an urgent need for a more robust international response in support of host countries, to preempt the host country and the host community fatigues, and if Jordan is to continue to

do this on behalf of the international community, then the international community has to help Jordan carry this huge burden.

Jordan's has issued National Resilience Plan 2014-2016 that stipulates the need for \$4.45 Billion for sustaining the resilience for this period. A response that is designed to only cope with the impact of the Syrian influx is not enough, but should be designed to recover and ultimately to strengthen and sustain the capacities and enhance the resilience to absorb future shocks, as we are all aware of the protracted nature of this crisis, and its potential.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen

Jordan had, and upon directions from His Majesty King Abdullah II, will continue to, open its doors for its fellow brethren in their moment of distress, fulfilling a longstanding tradition since its establishment.

Jordanians have shared their dwellings, schools, hospitals, and the little water that they have, with their Syrian brothers and sisters, but the enormity of the numbers, and the little that is available is questioning a

heritage of hospitality that is the main source of Jordanian national pride.

Yes, Jordan is a middle income country, but with this influx that is beyond the abilities of countries with major economies, and with international support that is far short from addressing the impact, I present to this conference the question of for how long can Jordan sustain itself as a middle income country?

We appreciate all the support, and good will, from our friends in the international community, and we have worked closely with the UN community and INGOs to make do with what is available, but the limits of our abilities have been reached, and we need support with new mechanisms as we are fatigued.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen

Our meeting today is addressing the consequences of the political impasse in the Syrian crisis, and unless this impasse is overcome we all know that we will be meeting again, in the near future, to discuss an even worse humanitarian situation, both in Syria and in host countries.

Since the end of the Geneva negotiations earlier this year, the humanitarian situation in Syria has worsened, the influx into neighboring countries has continued, but most dangerously the despair amongst Syrians began to settle, and it is against this background that we meet today, the background of Syrians losing hope in the future.

The humanitarian situation inside Syria must be relieved, needs of refugees must be addressed, and host countries must be supported, but the highest priority must remain to revive a political horizon and re-launch a political process that will culminate in a political solution that will stop the bloodshed, stop starvation, and stop destruction, and this conference today, should convey a united stance on the urgent need to revive the political horizon, and begin to discuss more permanent and comprehensive approaches to the Syrian crisis.