The Position of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Toward the Priorities of Programme of Action on Population and Development after 2014

Before

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Mr. Chairman, Ambassador Benedicte Frankinet

At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you and members of the Council on your election to the presidency of the forty-eighth session of the Commission on Population and Development. I would also like to thank the members of the Commission for the Forty-eighth Council for their efforts in the area of population and development.

After twenty years on the programme of action of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994, and more than twenty years on the Conference on Environment and Development in Rio De Janeiro in 1992, Jordan looks forward with interest to the work currently under way to establish a global development agenda for the period beyond 2015 and to set global objectives for sustainable development as well as international funding mechanisms to achieve the goals.

Mr. President,

It is obvious for all of us that our countries are suffering from the negative impacts resulting from the consequences of the global financial crisis and recession that affected all countries of the world, developed and developing, but its impact was more severe and profound on the developing countries in particular, making it difficult for these countries to sustain the levels of development and maintain the gains achieved in the past two decades.

The severity of this impact has increased in some middle-income and least developed countries as a result of increased security instability in many of these countries and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people
from their homes to the neighboring states, which exacerbated the poor economic and social conditions of the host countries and increased the pressure on their infrastructure and natural resources, that are already scarce. Financial resources have also declined due to shrinking foreign direct investment flows and official development assistance below the required international levels and increasing deficits in the balance of trade and public budget in many countries. In addition, the global debt problem has been exacerbated and became a heavy burden in many developing countries.

Mr. President,

Jordan has been and remains among the countries that have confirmed their commitment to and ownership of the results of international conferences on population and development as well as sustainable development; which had been also incorporated in national development plans and programs. The most recent one is Jordan 2025 vision which represents a comprehensive development framework for Jordan to achieve the objectives of sustainable development in its three dimensions, economic, social and environmental by 2025.

Within the framework of national commitment and action toward the programme of action of the Cairo 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, Jordan has developed national policies, strategies and plans such as the Policy Document on Demographic Opportunity for 2009 and 2015 and the National Reproductive Health and Family Planning Strategy for 2003-2017; in addition to the inclusion of population issues in the national development plans of the Kingdom. These efforts were reflected in the improved development indicators of Jordan.

However, sustaining these achievements is now adversely affected by the continued influx of forced immigrants, particularly the Syrians, as a result of the internal situation in Syria in the past four years and the political instability in the surrounding Arab region. These events have harmed Jordan development efforts, cost Jordan unforeseen expenditures and increased pressure on its infrastructure and public facilities and services. Since 2011,
Jordan has received and is still receiving large waves of forced immigrants from Syria, their number is estimated of 1.4 million persons by the end of March 2015, of whom (627,295 persons) are registered as refugees by the UNHCR. It is expected that more Syrians will continue to come to Jordan as a result of continued internal unrest in Syria.

The Syrian situation has imposed a new demographic reality on Jordan by having a significant impact on its population age-sex structure. Syrians, who are mostly children and women, currently constitute more than 20 percent of Jordan’s total population. These changes in turn have negatively affected the national population policies, in addition to the large financial costs which have affected and continue to influence Jordan development programs. The annual costs of hosting the Syrian refugees are estimated of 2.99 billion dollars at the end of February, 2015 according to Jordan Response Plan to this crisis. In the contrary, the overall international aid pledged to Jordan for hosting those refugees did not exceed 5.6% of their actual cost.  

Therefore, we want to emphasize the need for the international community to meet its commitments and support Jordan to bear the additional burdens that have resulted from hosting such large numbers of Syrian refugees. Jordan could not renounce its humanitarian responsibilities, but at the same time cannot continue to disregard the calls of its citizens that these duties have begun to threaten its national security, development projects and economic, political and social stability.

Mr. President,

I would like to summarize some of the challenges and priorities in the area of population and development that are the results of a number of national deliberations and reports. The continued growth in youth size in Jordan at a rate exceeding the economic growth rate will result in declining access to job opportunities in the future and

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1 Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan Response Plan 2015.
threaten the prospects of Jordan’s benefits from the peak of its demographic opportunity by 2030, due to stable fertility levels and the continuation of immigrants’ influx into Jordan, mainly from Syria.

Therefore, we want to emphasize the need for paying attention to the health, education and economic services provided to the youth and to facilitate their access to employment, utilize their potential and provide funding opportunities for their own projects in order to reduce unemployment, which had averaged 12% in 2014. Such high unemployment can have negative social consequences. It is also imperative to strengthen the link between education outputs and labor market needs, improve the quality of education, build skills, develop technical and vocational training and ensure decent work by providing supportive social security services as well as increasing youth political and civil participation.

Mr. President,

Jordan renews its commitment to respecting reproductive rights through hard work on strengthening comprehensive reproductive health programs and providing services and information of high quality, especially to the marginalized groups. Jordan seeks to lower fertility rates which is still high, reduce maternal and neonatal mortality rate, and promote programs and means for reducing gender-based violence.

Mr. President,

We underline the importance of continuing efforts to promote gender equality, empower women and ensure their full participation as well as the need for supportive legislation and policies for women. In addition, there is a need to take all measures that enhance the role of civil society institutions and private sector to become partners with the government in achieving sustainable development. The female labor force participation rate was only 12.6% in 2014 despite high female educational levels. This adversely affects Jordanian women’s empowerment which is also coupled with low political participation and poor access to and control over resources.

Mr. President,
Jordan stresses the importance of giving more attention and care to the elderly and to understanding their needs, given the expected rise in their proportion in the future, through the implementation of programs geared to this age group through effective legislations that can promote their rights and provide them with social and health care services and the infrastructure that is responsive to their needs.

We also emphasize the need for further efforts to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities to achieve decent and sustainable life based on the principle of active participation through the adoption of policies that can ensure their full integration in society.

Mr. President,

We emphasize the importance of continuing to take the appropriate measures to address the environmental challenges of water resources scarcity, lack of energy sources, climate changes, desertification, land degradation, drought and waste management; as well as addressing the negative impacts of these challenges on food security and spread of epidemics. As Jordan is looking forward to the future, we stress the need for international support to sustainable development choices in several areas such as renewable energy, water treatment and desalination and efficient use of energy, as well as strengthening efforts to combat climate change.

Mr. President,

We in Jordan believe that progress in development at the global and national level is the result of applying a holistic rights-based approach that takes into account the overall development priorities beyond 2015 and the international and regional review of the implementation of programme of action of the International Conference on Population and Development. We also reemphasize our commitment to accelerate progress in the context of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Cairo Declaration in 2013, and stress the importance of considering people the core of the Sustainable Development agenda beyond the year 2015 and the importance of
governments’ implementation of supportive strategies and plans, monitoring progress at the global, regional and national level and providing the necessary technical and financial support to countries.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, we reaffirm that good governance is a prerequisite for promoting sustainable development and social security and for addressing inequality and eradicating poverty.

At the end we call upon the international community and regional actors to play a more active role in promoting peace and security in the Arab Region to maintain the development gains.

Thanks for Listening.