



Situation of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

"Changing Population Age Structures and Sustainable Development Goals"

In Front of the 50<sup>th</sup> Session of UN Commission on Population and Development.

New York, 3-7 April 2017

**Mr. President**

At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you and members of the council on your election to presidency of the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the commission on population and development. I would like also to thank HE Ambassador/ Alia Ahmed Al Thani and the members of the 50<sup>th</sup> Commission Council for their efforts in the area of population and development.

**Mr. President**

Humanity is at the core of sustainable development where we seek to improve welfare of current and future generations. Demographic changes influence and are influenced by countries' capability to achieve economic, social and environmental sustainable development. As you know, achieving sustainable development is linked by essence to the population element of development and particularly the population age structure. Indeed, our countries' population capability is fundamental to achieve these comprehensive goals; such as, alleviating poverty, achieving food security, reaching universal access to services of clean energy and saving drinking water, fighting diseases, confronting climate change, providing decent work opportunities, achieving social justice and ensuring suitable work location and equitable role for all females in our communities. This also entails making the most of tremendous youth power through modern technology and innovation, and providing a friendly environment for the elderly and the disabled.

**Mr. President**

The position of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to achieve the welfare for its citizens has been shaped by the elements of Jordan Vision 2025 that highlighted the importance of linking the aspect of demographic transition to development issues when it comes to raising the population's living standards. Thereupon, Jordan Vision 2025 is in harmony with the sustainable development goals and "Demographic Opportunity Policies" document that stipulates set of the related policies in order to reap the fruits of the Demographic Opportunity by benefiting from the demographic transition in the population age structure.

The population projections and estimates in Jordan refer to expected increase in the working-age group; especially, youth. Therefore, the policy makers are incited to develop and implement policies and programs that aim at investing in youth, to enhance their role in the country's development and expand their role in everything related to their lives, aspirations and ambitions. In this regard, the Jordanian community is in dire and urgent need for a youth labor force that has the capability to work independently, has innovative skills, demonstrate a strong desire to work and can face high level of competitiveness. This also includes supporting the establishment of micro, small and medium enterprises that are proved to create most job opportunities and strongly contribute to productivity increase. Moreover, it is important to find interventions to benefit from youth energies and increase their involvement in the political and civil society arenas in order to prevent extremist groups from dragging

them to other adverse trends and consequently protecting the youth from the terrorist and extremist behaviors and the other negative social behaviors.

**Mr. President**

In order to achieve the Demographic Transition; health services, and reproductive and sexual health programs should be enhanced throughout the lifecycle; especially for the female adolescents and youth in order to ensure that everyone enjoys healthy lifestyle.

In this regard, we cannot address the sustainable development agenda without promoting gender equity, enabling women, ensuring their full participation through supportive legislations and policies. Here is a need to take all means and measures that enhance the role of the civil society institutions and the private sector to become partners with the government in achieving sustainable development; especially, under the declined rates of the female labor force participation in Jordan that did not exceed 13% in 2016, in spite of their high educational level. This adversely affects Jordanian women's employment as well as their low political participation and poor access to and control over resources. Therefore, Jordan adopts policies addressing obstacles to women participation in the labor market such as the adoption of different work systems including the flexible and part-time work systems to increase women participation in the labor market.

**Mr. President**

Jordan has taken important steps to enhance the participation of all community segments in decision making processes related to development, notably through the elections of local and municipal councils, which will be performed for the first time in Jordan in the last third of this year. These elections are made according to the constitutional entitlement entered into force after adoption of the decentralization law, which is the first of its kind in Jordan. It is hoped that such law fosters equal development among all regions in Jordan and across all social categories. Consequently, the population dimension will play growing role not only at the national level, but also at the local levels.

**Mr. President**

Nobody can disregard the humanitarian role played by Jordan in accommodating large numbers of Syrian refugees during the last six years, despite the lack of the resources and an international support that is still less the what is required. There are around (1.3) million Syrian refugees representing sixth of the population in Jordan, including a majority of families, which – in turn – leads to a high increase in the population growth rates in Jordan, influencing the population age structure and the demographic transition process, and generating many challenges. The most important challenge is the delayed achievement of the expected Demographic Opportunity as result of the difference between the fertility and mortality patterns of the Syrians, and the patterns prevailing among the Jordanians; as the occurrence

of the Demographic Opportunity is mainly correlated to achieving specific total fertility rate. The data refers to the high fertility rate among Syrian refugees, which will increase the total fertility rates in Jordan. Furthermore, the presence of large numbers of Syrian refugees creates a pressure on Jordan natural resources, which are originally scarce, such as water, agricultural lands, environment, energy and social services such as education, health, population and municipal services especially in the regions with high density of refugees, more than 90% out of Syrians reside outside the camps, within the hosting communities.

**Mr. President**

Syrian refugees also represent huge numbers of new entrants to the Jordanian labor especially in the informal sector, which creates a continuous pressure on the work opportunities available for Jordanians and leads to increasing challenges in the Jordanian Labor Market. Despite such challenges, we have to look positivity at the professional skills and experiences possessed by the Syrian labor force, to optimize their presence and benefits the Jordanians by transferring these experiences and skills..

On the other hand, the Syrian refugees' presence on the Jordanian territory caused negative social influences linked to the Syrian culture, customs and traditions including very high rates of child marriage, undocumented births and child labor. Therefore, we want to emphasize the need for the international community to play its role in supporting the efforts exerted by Jordan in hosting the refugees by supporting the Jordanian response plan for the Syrian crisis 2017-2019.

**Mr. President**

Along with the rest of the world, Jordan made its decision to achieve the sustainable development agenda including the seventeen goals and one hundred sixty nine targets by 2030 and developed a road map to merge these goals within the national strategies and plans based on a participatory approach. Jordan can achieve this, if all international cooperation mechanisms mentioned in the International Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 are activated with giving further attention to the seventeenth goal, which is the main method for achieving these goals and ensuring the sustainable development fruits are shared among our peoples.

**Thank you for your kind attention.**