

The Second Jordan National TEMPUS Day

THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

PRINCESS SUMAYA UNIVERSITY FOR TECHNOLOGY

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OPENING SPEECH

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Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research

Honored and Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am extremely pleased to be with you today to welcome all of you to this important event, the Second Jordan National Tempus Day. Your participation signifies the increasing interest in higher education and scientific research in Jordan as a major core element of national economic development. Your involvement also reflects your genuine interest in and desire to establish and strengthen progressive cooperation and partnership between Jordanian institutions of higher education and their European counterparts.

The Government of Jordan places a primary emphasis on effective partnership initiatives between national institutions and those in European countries and many other countries around the world. The Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, which established an association between the European Economic Community States and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was signed in 1997 and activated on May 1st 2002. In 2005, the parties agreed to an EU-Jordan Action Plan to implement the Agreement through the development of definite and discrete steps towards the attainment of its objectives. The Action Plan has determined priorities in

science and technology research, development, education and training within the context of the modern world of information and communications technologies. The Plan aims to lead and support the reform and upgrading of the education and training systems in higher education, within the framework of the national strategy, to prepare Jordanian university and college graduates to meet the demands of the global market economy through convergence of standards and practices with established European Union norms. Specifically, some of the action items are:

- Enhancing the capacity of institutions and organizations to ensure quality, and quality assurance, for programs in education and training
- Reform of the education system in accordance and alignment with the agreed principles of the Bologna Process
- Foster the development of human resources and human capital through reform processes outlined by the TEMPUS III Program
- Encourage participation in the Erasmus Mundus Program
- Develop and implement a strengthened vocational training program
- Increase the involvement of civil society stakeholders and societal partners in higher education and technical and vocational education reforms.

Moreover, implementation of the Action Plan requires the enhanced cooperation in education and training through:

- Establishment of a policy dialogue between EU and Jordanian leaders in policy development and strategic planning

- Increasing professional communication between Jordanian education institutions through links within the European Union Community
- Exploration of the potential for further cooperation in the areas technical and vocational education in schools, colleges and universities through an extension of the TEMPUS Program.

With regard to science and technology research and development, the EU–Jordan Action Plan supports an accelerated process for the integration of Jordan into the European Research Area and the Community Framework Program. Key actions in these areas include:

- Implementation of the Science and Technology Agreement
- Creation of a sound policy base for scientific research and development
- Support for Jordan’s participation in the 6th Community R and D Framework Program and in other EU scientific meetings and activities
- Institute a network of national contact points for 6th Community Framework Program and connect all Research, Technological Development and Demonstration (RTD) Operators
- Organize the EU–Jordan cooperation process for RTD
- Develop and expand mutually compatible information systems.

The Action Plan will also support the development of scientific and technological capacity through a focus on the used of RTD results by the Industrial and SME Sector and will promote the integration of Jordan into

high-level scientific exchanges. Some of the activities that will help to achieve these goals are:

- Reinforcement of human resources as well as the material and institutional means to improve the capacities of the RTD operators
- Organization of concerted interaction between the scientific partners and the end-user in industries and SMEs through public-private partnerships
- Encourage Jordan's participation in the international Marie Curie Scholarship Program and explore appropriate mechanisms for real benefits to be accrued on the return of Scholarship recipients
- Promote exchange of personnel in the joint projects and the participation of Jordanian scientists in international scientific debates and discussions
- Enhance EU support for the establishment of an international scientific research centre for SESAME in Jordan

Furthermore, the Action Plan includes intentions for significant progress to be made in the development and use of information and communications technology applications. Notably:

- Elaboration of a national policy for the development of regulatory, economic, technological and social perspectives of ICT, including advanced services
- Increased support from the EU in training and in cooperation for regional e-strategies

- Encouragement of broadband connectivity to schools, community colleges and universities in order to expand internet penetration in Jordan.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The EU–Jordan Action Plan will guide future collaboration and joint initiatives between the EU and Jordan. The aspirations of the Plan are very important for our academic community in Jordan and our honored guests from the Union who are with us today to understand the Plan imperatives in order to advance the causes of education, training, research and development in Jordan and for all of us to begin the process of forging strategic partnerships between Jordanian and European higher education institutions. You are the leaders who can influence and make change. The Action Plan provides the necessary framework within the appropriate environment, but it is only through the application of your creativity, commitment and effort that we will achieve the outcomes, and the successes, that we all desire.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for being here today and participating in this exciting and important event. I offer you my best wishes for a most stimulating, enjoyable and successful time at this 2nd Jordan TEMPUS day.

Thank you