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**Address by:**

**Ambassador Makram M. Queisi**

**Head of the delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**

**16<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council**

**Helsinki, 4-5 December 2008**

**Mr. Chairman**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Distinguished Colleagues and Friends,**

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

Our meeting today, comes at a critical time where re-invigorated South-North dialogue is needed more than ever. What makes this attainable, is that our long term interests are compatible, even common; we all seek justice, peace and security. That is why we have to be sensitive to each other's needs, to insure that a regional security process is established and developed through co-operation and transparency.

We are ready to intensify our cooperation with the OSCE on political and security matters, and welcome dialogue on common concerns at the regional, sub-regional or bilateral levels.

**Excellencies,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The turbulent situation in our region compels us to increase our political and security cooperation against all the threats that challenge us in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Nowadays, we are surrounded by a number of crises, and inflammatory situations; in Palestine, Iraq as well as the issues of extremism, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Failing to collectively encounter such challenges and threats in an intensive and comprehensive manner will inevitably usher in crises that will further undermine peace, stability and security in the region.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We firmly believe that the core issue the Middle East is the Arab-Israeli conflict and Israel's continued occupation of Arab territories and the absence of a peaceful resolution to the Palestinian question. Without addressing these issues and in particular the Palestinian question, facing other problems and associated crises in the region will continue to escape us and conditions conducive to violence, extremism and radicalization will only be fomented at the expense of weakening proponents of peace, dialogue, cooperation, moderation and cohesion.

This conflict has consumed immense energies and rendered development and reform efforts secondary to the efforts of settling the conflict and stabilizing the region. A successful and Peaceful negotiated outcome to this conflict that would bring into existence an independent, viable and territorially contiguous Palestinian State along the pre 1967 border that lives side by side in Peace with Israel and the attainment of a Comprehensive Arab-Israeli Peace on the basis of the Arab Peace initiative will allow us to focus on human and economic development in the region.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

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. Therefore, Jordan calls for the establishment of a WMD free Zone in the Middle East. We believe that all countries in our region without exception should commit to the objective of rendering the Middle East a WMD free zone. The acquisition of WMD weather nuclear, biological or chemical by any country in the region, will trigger an arms race that in turn could lead to the use of such weapons. The International Community has to exert every effort it has, to help solve this issue, and to rid our region of these weapons.

On the other hand, the rights of states to acquire nuclear technology and energy for peaceful use, and in accordance with the International doctrines and safeguards of the IAEA, must be respected. These states should be assisted in seeking alternative energy resources including nuclear energy.

**Distinguished Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Jordan, its citizens, officials and interests, has been a target of terrorism due to its principled position and efforts in rejection and combating all forms of terrorism.

Jordan has been steadfast in denouncing all forms of terrorism and condemning all terrorist acts wherever they occur. We strongly condemn the recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai and offer our deepest sympathies to the people of India.

Jordan stresses the need to confront all ill-motivated attempts aiming at connecting Islam, or any other religion, with terrorism. In this regard, Jordan maintains that terrorism is a global phenomenon without nationality and expresses 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.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me here, to conclude by expressing on behalf of the Jordanian government, our satisfaction for hosting the 2008 OSCE-Mediterranean Conference last October in Amman, which addressed some of our aspirations for the continued development of the OSCE's initiatives towards the region.

It also represented an important forum for partners on both sides of the Mediterranean, to promote a better understanding of the other, their needs, limitations, and concerns, in order to realize the full potential of our partnership.

Finally, let me say that we highly value the participation of the Palestinian National Authority in our Conference, which took place for the first time and upon Jordan's invitation. We believe that the Palestinians' engagements in such fora would further advance prospects of peace in the Middle East. Indeed, they are part of our neighborhood and their participation would bring added value to our collective efforts towards achieving peace, security and stability in the Mediterranean basin. We encourage future hosts of the Mediterranean Conference to follow Jordan's suit, and we strongly support the Palestinian application to join our constructive partnership.

In closing, I would like to wish the incoming Greek Chairmanship all the success and assure them of Jordan's cooperation and support.

Thank you very much.