

**ADDRESS BY HIS MAJESTY
KING ABDULLAH II IBN AL HUSSEIN**

KEYNOTE SPEECH BY
HIS MAJESTY KING ABDULLAH II
OPENING SESSION
27TH ANNUAL MEETING AND BUSINESS FORUM
EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
DEAD SEA, JORDAN
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In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Compassionate,

Mr President, [Sir Suma Chakrabarti]
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Jordan, a warm welcome to you all. It is a great pleasure to help open the first EBRD Annual Meeting in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. Thank you for joining us.

My friends,

Energising our economies—the theme of this meeting—begins with investment.

It begins with investment in innovation, and 21st-century thinking; to adopt and adapt green practices; reimagine solutions; help economies leapfrog technology stages; and move directly to new capabilities.

It begins with investment in private-sector growth and opportunity; to support entrepreneurs; create jobs; raise incomes; and expand development to all.

And it begins with investment in the pillars of stability and moderation; standing up for our world's shared interest in coexistence, harmony, and cooperation; partnering with countries that are doing the right thing; helping a new generation of stakeholders, who can sustain peace and inclusive development long into the future.

All of us know the challenges facing this region and our world. All of us must respond. I can say that Jordan will continue to play a major role in the global effort to end the serious crises that endanger our region and world.

But make no mistake about it: humanity's shared future depends on more than meeting challenges. Playing defence is never enough to get ahead.

The people of our countries deserve high goals and strong action—not just ending crises, but building the conditions for peace; not just tackling environmental dangers, but creating a green and healthy world; not just meeting economic needs, but expanding prosperity, and ensuring it is accessible, inclusive, and real.

This is Jordan's path. Our highest priority, my highest priority, is a better life for our people. For decades, Jordanians in government, business, education, and civil society have worked together for consensus-driven change, change that will last.

Our economic programme rests, first, on our greatest national asset, the talented, aspiring Jordanian people, the vast majority of whom are young. We see inclusion, gender equality, and the entrepreneurial spirit as vital to our development. National investments in education aim at equipping our young men and women with the right tools to compete on a global level. This investment in our youth, together with our strong encouragement for innovation, has helped Jordan become a pioneering regional leader in ICT, start-ups, and the creative industries.

A second great asset is Jordan's geo-strategic, gateway position connecting Asia, Europe, and Africa. Multiple free-trade agreements give our private sector and its partners access to more than a billion consumers worldwide, including 350 million people right here in the MENA region. Our investment in port facilities and other infrastructure supports global, regional and national opportunities.

Today, Jordan's forward-looking economic growth plan focuses on high-value-added sectors across the country. We have identified close to \$15 billion in public-private partnership opportunities, in fields as diverse as renewable energy, ICT, infrastructure, construction, healthcare, tourism and financial services. Whether it is free-trade-access manufacturing, or green- economy projects, or professional services, or an entirely new opportunity that you create: Jordan is open for business.

Have we reached our goals as fast as we can? I won't be satisfied until we see better living conditions in every community. But I would say we are going in the right direction. One clear indicator is the fact that over the last ten years, Jordan has continued to move forward, even while coping with external challenges, ranging from global financial and energy crises, to regional turmoil, to the Syrian refugee crisis, with its enormous burden on our people and treasury.

Jordan's resilience is sustained and energised by a heritage of consensus-building, and national unity, and strong values of moderation, tolerance, and mutual respect. Our history has led us to turn challenges into opportunities, and turn opportunities into more opportunities. This is the path to our future, and the hope for our region as well.

Of course, no country today moves ahead in isolation. EBRD has been a true

partner in Jordan's economic journey, investing in economic growth and private-sector participation, and providing critical assistance for our refugee response plan.

Sir Suma [Chakrabarti], my friend, let me commend your leadership and vision, taking EBRD to new heights, and expanding the Bank's commitment to our region.

Indeed, this year, Jordan and EBRD will move forward with dynamic new initiatives, in green development, a one-stop innovation hub, and more. Our Investment Climate and Governance Initiative will nurture the environment for business growth. For these and many other partnerships, we thank the Bank, and all who support its important global role.

My friends,

Joint enterprises thrive when partners invest their hearts and talents and resources into success. And we who are here today are partners in a great enterprise indeed: to energise economies that are at the centre of global prosperity and peace.

Today, there are tremendous opportunities to help our countries and peoples. With our partnerships, with our investments, we can be confident of success.

Thank you.

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