

School of Business

The University of Jordan
Amman, Jordan, 27 March 2016
Dear students,

Asalam Aleykum.

Thank you for your warm welcome.

I'm very pleased to be here today at the University of Jordan; the oldest school of higher education in the country.

This university has played its part in making Jordan into the country it is today. It has educated many of your top politicians, businessmen and leaders from all sectors of society. Some of them are even working for me!

Jordan is an indispensable stopping point in all my travels to the Middle East. I am here once again to acknowledge this country's admirable commitment to our common humanity, in a very troubled region, at a very troubled time.

Thanks to strong institutions like this university, I am confident that Jordan will continue to play a principled role in the region and the world.

Thank you once again for your solidarity towards refugees, and particularly the hundreds of thousands of women, children and men who have fled the conflict in Syria over the past five years.

The international community understands that gratitude is no longer enough. You need our concrete support, for your education and health systems, your social services and your infrastructure.

I am here in Jordan with President Kim of the World Bank to acknowledge the serious challenges you face, to bring this to the world's attention, and to discuss how the United Nations, the World Bank and the international community as a whole can support you better.

Dear young people,

Despite the conflicts in this region, and the social and economic problems they have created, I remain optimistic about the future.

That is partly because the vast majority of young people around the world, including in this region, long for peace and security and are committed to human rights.

Young people are not just the leaders of tomorrow; they are the leaders of today. And you are part of the biggest generation of young people in history.

In many western countries, the median age is over 40. But throughout the Arab world, the median age is under 30. Here in Jordan, it is 22.

That is what demographers call a 'youth bulge'.

Young men and women like you are bringing new energy, creativity and dynamism to labour markets, to schools, to universities like this one, to government, and - I hope - to diplomacy and international relations.

The United Nations is working with you and for you to provide opportunities for a better future on three fronts.

The first is through engaging with young people. In my ten years as Secretary-General, I have made cooperation with young people a priority for the entire United Nations system. An

unprecedented number of United Nations programmes and initiatives are now directed at young men and women.

I appointed your compatriot, Ahmad Alhendawi, as the first Youth Envoy of the Secretary-General in the history of the United Nations.

Ahmad is bringing the perspective of young people – the perspective of a man born and brought up in your second city of Zarqa – to bear on the most intractable problems in the world, from global healthcare to job creation and the prevention of violent extremism.

Second, we are providing global tools to help young people find decent jobs.

Young people around the world were crucial in designing the Sustainable Development Goals, the targets for global development agreed by all countries last year. The goals focus on your priority issues: quality education; empowering women and girls; ensuring decent work for all.

All countries have pledged to bring this agenda to life. Young people must lead the way.

You have most to gain from this safer, more stable and more prosperous future.

We need to reach out to specific groups, including young people with disabilities and young women, and empower them to become job creators.

Third, we are bringing young people right to the heart of global diplomacy.

Just four months ago, the Security Council passed a landmark resolution on Youth, Peace and Security.

This initiative too was spearheaded by a young Jordanian: your Crown Prince, who at 21 years old was the youngest person ever to chair the Security Council.

Dear young people,

I hope this has given you some idea of how the international community is determined to work with and for you.

I will close by asking you to work with and for the international community.

Look beyond your own group, country and region.

Be a global citizen.

Unless we raise our eyes above the horizon and take action now, we are facing a climate catastrophe.

Unless we reduce inequalities between and within countries, we will face more wars, in this region and beyond.

So please challenge your leaders, your friends, your colleagues – and even yourselves.

Inspire those around you to care about the world we share.

Thank you. Shukran Jazeelan.

Statements on 27 March 201