

UN, World Bank leaders commend Jordan's refugee during discussion, held at the university's School of business

MMAN — UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Sunday commended Jordan's efforts in dealing with the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis, emphasising the role of young people in overcoming global challenges.

He made the remarks during an open discussion with University of Jordan students along with World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim and Jordan Strategy Forum Chairman Omar Razzaz met with university students in an open discussion.

The discussion, held at the university's faculty of business, aimed at discussing the challenges facing young Jordanians and bringing the world's attention to them.

"Young people often are told 'you are the leaders of tomorrow', but young people have already taken leadership of today. The Arab Spring took place in this region... A simple young man sparked the flames of [the] Arab Spring," Ban said.

He continued: "Jordan has been providing very good diplomatic initiatives and leaderships".

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

]"Some] 650,000 refugees means not only socioeconomic burdens; it has affected the fabrics of your community... Gratitude is no longer enough," Ban said .

Ban said the UN is working "with and for young people", through engaging them, providing them with proper tools to find jobs, and bringing them to the heart of global diplomacy .

"Look beyond your own group and your country. This [an] interconnected world. The national boundaries and passports do not carry much meaning," he urged, calling on young Jordanians to "have a strong and visionary commitment [to] the international community and humanity."

For his part, Razzaz said Jordan and the UN have handled crises well, and that the Kingdom received refugees from different parts of the world over the years.

"The UN has had a long history in Jordan... in dealing with refugees, wave after wave of refugees, starting with the Palestinian refugee issue to the Iraqis and now [with the Syrians]," he said, noting that after every crisis, "Jordan came out... stronger ."

The World Bank president said "the world owes a huge debt of gratitude to Jordan."

"What the Jordanians have done in welcoming the refugees is truly extraordinary... We hope to bring billions of dollars to Jordan, not only to help in dealing with refugees but to also help the future of Jordan," Kim added.

"We are here to make the future as bright as we possibly can".

The World Bank is currently working on two goals, Kim said, to end extreme poverty by 2030, and to boost shared prosperity.

He said the road towards economic prosperity is based on shunning racism and sexism.

Kim told The Jordan Times that the World Bank plans to provide Jordan with \$500 million in financial support to launch a special economic zone with the idea of creating an area for industries and jobs, for both Syrians and Jordanians.

The official added the economic zone will also ensure the jobs provided would continue after the return of the Syrian refugees .

“We are trying to use this money to create infrastructure that would lead to starting businesses and [creating] jobs. Some of the other projects would focus on education. We think that Jordan is ready to take the next step,” Kim added.