

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all here today to this important conference that brings together the OSCE participating countries and their Mediterranean partners to discuss “Common Security in the Mediterranean Region, Challenges and Opportunities”.

I want to start by thanking my great friend Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the Serbian OSCE Presidency, and the OSCE Secretary General for their efforts and for directing their respective teams to work closely with their Jordanian counterparts in organizing this event.

Let me begin by stressing the significance of this year’s Conference, which is held for the first time at this high level of representation, and which coincides with the 40th anniversary of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, and also marks twenty years and more of cooperation between the OSCE and its Mediterranean partners.

This is not the first time that Jordan hosts the OSCE–Mediterranean conference, yet, since the last time we did - in 2008- our part of the world has witnessed vast and rapid changes, and the nature of the challenges we are facing today on the political, security, and economic levels, and more, have become more complex and as always interconnected.

As we are all aware, one of the most important developments we witnessed, in the past few years, was the so called "Arab Spring" that swept through MENA, and left in its wake violence instability and in many cases a political vacuum. Today our region is plagued with protracted conflicts that were left to fester

and become so dangerous that our collective security is being tested.

When it comes to the growing threats of radicalization, terrorism, and extremism, we are on the frontline, as those threats respect no borders. And when it comes to accepting, hosting, and dealing with refugees and alleviating their suffering it is our collective responsibility as an international community. And in the context that global challenges require global solutions, we meet here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our meeting today is indeed timely, as we are reaching a consensus that it is time to address the root causes of the region's problems rather than their symptoms. We all agree that the answer to the crises that we are witnessing today is through comprehensive political solutions capable of filling vacuums, countering the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism, and restoring stability and security to the region and beyond.

Without addressing the root causes of the region's conflicts we are opening the window wide for agenda driven approaches - guided by sectarianism, militarization, extremism, and radicalism - to hijack the region, and to create an environment for terrorist groups and extremism to grow, and expand and that is what we have seen when it comes to Daesh, the last year and half.

In order to succeed, efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism and to address the humanitarian tragedy, need to go in tandem with prospects for a better future. And as His Majesty said at the Leaders' Summit on Countering Daesh and Violent Extremism in New York, *"it is only by stabilizing the entire*

region, giving people hope instead of fear and destruction that we will truly address the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism and other challenges, including the outpouring of refugees”.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am so happy to see that several of my colleagues and distinguished participants present here today. The regional problems are becoming global and affecting our security. The main source of tension in our region, and a root cause to many of its problems, is the prolonged Palestinian-Israeli conflict. We are meeting here today, on the shored of the Dead Sea in Jordan less than 40 Kilometers away from Jerusalem, a city that should represent peace for all believers. The recent escalations by Israeli authorities, in Jerusalem, especially at Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, and tragic civilian death on both sides, stokes a religious war that holds dangerous repercussions for all of us, and is infuriating the emotions of more than 1.5 billion Muslims all over the world and many around the world.

Decade after decade, in this region, we have all seen that an escalation in Jerusalem generates a spark that is capable of igniting the powder keg and the region. And without a comprehensive and just solution, we will remain encircled by this vicious circle of violence, and the outbreak of violence will end up with a political vacuum, and the political vacuum will end with violence.

The only way forward is through realizing the Two-State solution, establishing a sovereign, independent, and contiguous Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the lines

of 4 June 1967, based on a time-framed and serious negotiations that addresses the permanent solution issues, and security for all people and nations in this region. Taking into consideration that Jordan is a stakeholder, not just an observe or mediator. Jordan hosts the largest number of Palestinian refugees. We have a historic role in Jerusalem, given the role of His Majesty King Abdullah II as the custodian of the Holy Muslim and Christian sites in Jerusalem. No water, border, or security solutions can take place without Jordan, and Jordan's national interest in this respect is emphasized.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Later today one of our conference's sessions will address "Violent Extremism and Radicalization that lead to Terrorism". In this context allow me to quote His Majesty by saying that the fight against terrorism is *"not a single country's problem, it is not a local or regional problem; it is our collective problem" ... "We are certain that there is no alternative to a comprehensive approach, and close coordination amongst all stakeholders, that considers the threat of various terrorist groups across the wider region"*.

Jordan believes that the fight against terrorism is first and foremost our struggle as Muslims in order to defend and show the true nature of our religion, and not allow anybody to hijack our religion, as they do. The war on terrorism can only be won on the ideological front. It's a battle of ideas; yes there is military side, but it's a battle of ideas.

To face extremism and radicalization, Jordan spearheaded several initiatives to promote tolerance and interfaith dialogue.

As reflected in the “Amman Message”, and “A Common Word”, and, the “Global Interfaith Harmony Week” adopted by the UNGA. Most recently His Majesty, in his address to the 70th annual session of the UNGA, presented seven steps as a road map for all of us, as individuals and leaders, to amplify the voice of moderation, to act upon our beliefs, enhance human to human interaction, and strengthen interfaith tolerance, and beyond that acceptance.

Two months ago, under the patronage and participation of HRH Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, we hosted a “Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security” that came in translation of the notion that was presented in April by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince at the UNSC during Jordan’s presidency. The Forum, produced the “Amman Youth Declaration”, that represents a common vision and roadmap towards a strengthened policy framework to support young people in transforming conflict, preventing and countering violence, and building peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Political economic depravation leads to despair, and despair leads to extremism, and in countries where the youth represents a majority, and without real programs for youngsters, then we have a real problem.

Excellencies,

For the fifth year, the noise of the military machine in Syria is louder than the calls for a political solution.

Jordan’s position from day one is that there is no solution to the crisis in Syria other than the political solution. A comprehensive solution, based on the Geneva I communiqué, that helps transit

Syrians to a better future, where Syrians from all backgrounds take part in building their country.

I want to reiterate that there is no humanitarian solution to the political crisis in Syria, there is only a political solution that will end the humanitarian suffering.

In the past few months we all witnessed this humanitarian crisis entering a new phase which I call “the overflow of the spillover”, because we the country surrounding have taken the front of this spillover, where the tidal wave of Syrian refugees that have overwhelmed Syria’s neighbors, and my country Jordan in particular, over the past years, have begun to overflow elsewhere.

From the beginning of the Syrian crisis Jordan was clear on the need to have a three level approach: support and stabilize the population inside Syria, support refugees in host countries, and support host communities through developmental support. Addressing these levels effectively should have managed the humanitarian crisis until a lasting solution to the crisis is achieved.

We are very very proud of our heritage of being the haven for our neighbors and those in need in their moments of distress; Jordanians today are sharing their limited resources with around 1.4 million Syrians, representing 21% of Jordan’s population, only 9% live inside refugee camps, the rest are in town villages, and hosting communities.

In the presence of distinguished representatives of international organizations, I would like to stress the fact that there is no space for fatigue when it comes to supporting refugees. I know that countries suffer from donor fatigue, refugee fatigue, but this

is a global and international issue as I said, if we will refer to it in the singular, one international community. We should draw attention to the horrific images of Syrian refugees drawn on the beaches in Europe, we should bring attention to millions of refugees in Syria's neighboring countries, awaiting for the international community and organizations to stand up to their responsibilities.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Jordan fully supports the Iraqi government in its efforts and fight against terrorism, and as the military operations against terrorists are progressing, it is essential that concrete steps towards national reconciliation and the reversal of the sectarian dynamics, be concurrent with the military and stabilization efforts, as national reconciliation is the cornerstone for the sustainability of the efforts to eradicate terrorism, and in particular eradication of Daesh.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

History proved that the security of the countries of the Mediterranean region is interrelated, and what affects us in this region, in one way or another, affects our European neighbors. The Mediterranean does not divide us, Mediterranean unites us. And not to forget that with the revolutions in communication and information technology, regional challenges are becoming more and more global.

We stand today more than ever assured that the security in Europe "is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean area" as the Helsinki Final Act states, therefore, I believe that it

is time we build on the base, laid by the Helsinki Final Act, to achieve a better future for our region and the world.

Our conference, addresses the most pressing challenges that we face today. Countering radicalism and terrorism, supporting refugees, as well as promoting tolerance and dialogue, are all themes that can trigger conflicts or can be a meeting point for us to stand up to the challenge.

Let us utilize this Conference to turn the challenges that we face into opportunities, by building on our common goals and denominators, and advancing our mutual interests. We could start by building on our common goal of promoting tolerance and dialogue in the face of extremism and radicalism, and by exploring further cooperation potentials through advancing the economic dimension of our partnership.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I invite you all to consider this Conference as a launching pad for a process to establish a more structured cooperation between the OSCE countries and their Mediterranean partners, and let me express Jordan readiness to work with the OSCE on devising practical means and measures to take the OSCE –Mediterranean partnership to a new level.

Welcome again to Jordan and I wish you fruitful and constructive meetings and a productive exchange of ideas.