



Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply

Speech for

H.E. Eng. Maha Ali

Secretary General

G8 Deauville Partnership Investment Conference

***Opportunities and Overcoming Challenges in
Arab Countries in Transition***

London, 16/9/2013

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning to you all.

It gives me and my delegation great pleasure to be here today amongst the distinguished delegates of the Deauville Partnership countries and esteemed participants.

Allow me at the beginning to extend Jordan's appreciation to the UK presidency for hosting this important conference, which provides a great opportunity to share new initiatives and efforts among the Deauville partnership countries towards stronger governance, deeper economic and social inclusion, more job creation and more involvement of the private sector.

Jordan had the honor to host and co-chair the meeting of the Deauville Partnership pillar on Trade, Investment and Integration at the Dead Sea back in April 2012. The meeting resulted in a statement by the Deauville Partnership and Arab countries in Transition on “Open International Investment”, through which partner countries signaled their continuous support for creating and maintaining an environment for investment characterized by transparency, non-discrimination, and the rule of law.

I also would like to recognize and extend, on behalf of the Government of Jordan, our sincere appreciation to donor countries and international financial institutions for their continuous support to Jordan's efforts in attaining macroeconomic stability and promoting economic growth.

We are keen to continue to work jointly with partner countries and financial institutions to advance the Deauville Partnership to meet its

objectives as well as priorities and needs of individual countries to further contribute to the prosperity and welfare for our people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to share with you and highlight some of the latest economic developments in Jordan.

Jordan has succeeded in achieving remarkable progress over the past decade, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdulla II. Extensive reforms of the economic, legal, judicial and administrative environments have been undertaken, with a large focus on business activities.

We strongly believe that economic reform is a continuous process. Recent reforms have focused on improving investment environment and promoting private sector development.

A new Investment Law is currently under discussion by the Parliament. It aims at facilitating investment entry and operations as a key step towards raising Jordan's competitiveness levels. Specifically, the law's objective is to provide private investors with the necessary ease of business as well as granting transparent and unified incentives for economic activities that bring value to the local economy.

This is expected to contribute to SME development, create employment opportunities for Jordanians and place the country's production and services into the international value chain. The new law is geared towards competitiveness as a driver of development.

A Public Private Partnership (PPP) Law and a Restructuring and Bankruptcy Law were also drafted. The PPP law aims to attract the private sector to partner with the government in implementing infrastructure and development projects. The Bankruptcy law intends to improve the business environment and govern business restructuring, liquidation and insolvency.

Moreover, the Government is keen to ensure the integration of the Jordanian economy in the global market, through continuing economic reforms, trade liberalization and capitalizing on trade and investment opportunities worldwide. Continuous reforms have led to a network of free trade agreements that provide preferential access for products manufactured in Jordan to enter the markets of the MENA region as well as major economic blocks worldwide such as the US, Canada, and the EU.

The outcomes of such policies have been manifested by achieving average annual real growth rate of 5% in GDP in the past decade. Our Nominal GDP and the National Income per capita have more than tripled, and national exports grew by 5 times since 2000. Additionally, FDIs continued to flow despite the recent developments in the region.

Although regional developments along with the repercussions of the global financial crisis, and the rise in food and energy prices, had an unprecedented impact on the state finances; the government succeeded in stabilizing the national economy. Trade deficit marked an improvement of 2.7% during the first half of the current year, inflation reached reasonable rates, foreign reserves significantly increased, and investments registered under the Investment Promotion Law increased during the first half to reach (1) billion USD with an increase of 43% compared to last year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, Jordan is supported by a modern and well-connected infrastructure, a highly trained and competitive labor force, an efficient banking system, robust telecommunication networks, a vibrant IT sector, and special economic zones that accommodate basic infrastructure networks for a wide variety of manufacturing activities.

Our national railway plan aims at creating a transportation network that links Jordan to Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Syria in addition to Turkey and Europe. This is in addition to ongoing and future infrastructure development projects such as the Red Dead Canal, water desalination projects and the upgrading of the port of Aqaba.

Our latest plans also include establishing an "Industrial Estate" in each governorate aiming at enhancing economic development in the governorates and rural areas, creating jobs and reducing poverty.

Moreover, the Government is also implementing a National Plan for the years 2013-2016. The Plan identifies priorities, executive programs and capital investment projects covering various economic, social and services sectors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Jordan is stable, forward-looking and open for business. The key to Jordan's success in regional and global integration lies in our highly diversified and dynamic economy. We accommodate a plethora of strong and vibrant sectors, which create a wide variety of business opportunities offered; information and communication technology, healthcare, education, renewable energy, tourism, manufacturing, and services.

We are keen to further enhance the competitiveness of our industrial and services sectors through various means including upgrading the technology component of the sectors and increasing their local value added with particular focus on SME's; promoting innovation and entrepreneurship; and improving SME's access to finance.

Our business environment and economic policies welcome global business. We are presently in the final stages of the adherence to the OECD Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises. The adherence will support Jordan's domestic reforms to further enhance the investment environment. And I am pleased to report that we are in the process of establishing a National Focal Point responsible for promoting OECD guidelines.

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We look forward to a successful partnership with the Deauville partners. Our message to you today is simply that there are enormous opportunities in Jordan, and it is the right time for international investors to capture such opportunities and join us in a promising partnership and prosperous future.

Thank you.