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Abu-Ghazaleh Inaugurates a Discussion Session on USAID's Role in the Development of Economy and Education in Jordan



AMMAN – February 17, 2016 - Under the patronage of HE Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, chairman of Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization (TAG-Org) and with the attendance of high-profile economic and education leaders in Jordan, the Economic Policy Development Forum hosted Dr. Jim Barnhart, USAID Mission Director for Jordan in a discussion session held at Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Knowledge Forum.

Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh expressed gratitude to Dr. Barnhart, and stressed on the important role played by the USAID in supporting and developing economic and education sectors over the years in Jordan.

Dr. Barnhart thanked Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh for the invitation, and noted that the partnership between the US and Jordan has existed for more

than six decades, and that the USAID programs provided by the US have been in Jordan since 1957.

He stated that Jordan is the second largest country, after Afghanistan, that benefits from assistance provided by the USAID. He added that there are programs that cover green energy, Information and Communications Technology, tourism, financial reforms, and most notably education, which includes creativity, higher education, and teacher training. He also noted that the USAID focuses on the areas of the south and Maan in particular.

Dr. Barnhart added that Jordan is currently facing a new crisis, the presence of the Syrian refugees that exhausted Jordan's various sectors and resources which made it necessary to implement new developing programs, such as the contribution in increasing the number of classrooms in order to accommodate refugee students.

He also reviewed various programs provided by the USAID which include family health, encouraging women to participate in the labor market, providing training on leadership to reach top positions for women in public sector, education through practice, developing the capacity of teachers, and cooperating with the Vocational Training Corporation to train workforce.

He stated that the USAID previously

made mistakes by focusing on supply rather than demand with respect to developing youth capacity, but now it has changed its working pattern, and is currently seeking to work with a number of Chambers of Commerce in the Kingdom in order to link job seekers with available opportunities.

He added that tourism is one of the main sectors that contributes in the gross national income, therefore USAID, is cooperating with marketing companies to work on developing tourism and promoting touristic sites, beside working on SMEs issues, and linking companies with potential markets.

With respect to Maan, Dr. Barnhart stated that the USAID is focusing on training, and cooperating with vocational training centers in the fields of solar energy and loan financing for small enterprises.

He noted that the work of the USAID has a significant impact on Jordan, and has made some reforms pointing out the impact of the economic crisis of 2008 on Jordan, and the refugees' crisis that followed. He made it clear that the USAID's main goal is to work in the field of development.

During the session, participants called for focusing on programs that help Jordan achieve sustainable economic sufficiency.

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EBRD President visits Gaziantep



Sir Suma Chakrabarti, President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), has visited Gaziantep in the south-east of Turkey, one of the regions most affected by the refugee crisis, to assess on the ground how the Bank can respond to the needs of refugee-hosting communities.

The visit was part of President Chakrabarti's three-day stay in Turkey, the Bank's top investment destination, from 16 to 18 February. The trip also includes meetings with the government in Ankara and Sir Suma's participation at the FT-EBRD Central Asia Investment Forum in Istanbul alongside Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Şimşek.

In Gaziantep, where the EBRD has had an office since 2014, the President met mayor Fatma Şahin to discuss the challenges posed to local labour markets, social cohesion and public services by the continuous inflow of refugees. Currently, refugees account

for about 17 per cent of the 1.5 million-strong population of the city.

Sir Suma also met with the President of Gaziantep's Chamber of Commerce, Eyüp Bartık, to discuss the role of the private sector in delivering investments that secure lasting and sustainable results for both refugees and their hosts.

Later, he discussed the role that private sector schools could play in helping to educate and integrate children from Syria, in a meeting with Gökhan Gündoğdu, the owner and CEO of the privately run Gündoğdu Colleges based in Adana, another major city in south-eastern Turkey.

In addition, President Chakrabarti visited a municipal vocational training centre in Gaziantep and a similar educational facility within the Islahiye refugee camp, some 90 km west of Gaziantep, where he discussed the

prospects for refugees to participate in the labour force.

Sir Suma welcomed the Turkish authorities' decision to issue work permits to refugees, helping to fend off the expansion of a damaging shadow economy.

He said: "It is crucial to create economic opportunities for refugees and the host population and to make the host economies more robust and resilient in the longer term."

"Working closely with the authorities, the private sector and donors, the EBRD will apply its tried and tested financial instruments to further strengthen the Turkish economy and help it cope with current challenges."

On 3 February the EBRD announced a plan in response to the refugee crisis to finance up to €500 million of new transactions in refugee-hosting countries, subject to mobilising an additional €400 million in grants

from donors.

In Turkey, the Bank is developing a pipeline of projects including financing for small and medium-sized enterprises and investments in municipal services. It is also supporting policies to help promote an environment where refugees can make an active and positive contribution to local economies.

The EBRD is an important investor in Turkey, with €1.9 billion invested in 2015 alone.

The Bank operates from offices in Istanbul, Ankara and Gaziantep and to date has invested over €7 billion through 180 projects in infrastructure, energy, agribusiness, industry and finance. It has also mobilised about €16 billion for these ventures from other sources of financing.

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Chinese Ambassador Visits TAG-Confucius and TAG-Visa



AMMAN – February 25, 2016 - The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Amman organized a visit to Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Confucius Institute (TAG-Confucius) and Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Chinese Visa Section (TAG-Visa) for a delegation headed by HE Mr. Pan Weifang, the new Chinese ambassador to Jordan, Cultural Attaché Mr. Nee Jaw, political attaché and a host of guests.

Vice Chairman of TAG Board and Executive Director Mr. Luay Abu-Ghazaleh, Director of Institute Mr. Araz Mahsrjian, Visa Director Mr. Ashraf Al-Husseini, Dean of Institute Mr. Yang Song Fang and the teaching and administrative staff of

the Institute welcomed the Chinese Ambassador and the accompanying delegation..

The Chinese Ambassador expressed his pride of the cooperation that ties the Chinese Embassy to Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization (TAG-Org); pointing out that the Embassy supports the Institute in all educational and cultural fields.

Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh also expressed his happiness of this visit and the support provided by the Chinese Embassy in Amman; pointing out that the Organization will increase the levels of the cooperation in various possible areas.

The Ambassador and the

delegation highlighted the content of the Library at TAG-Confucius which helps spread awareness about the Chinese language and culture among students.

Throughout his tour, the Ambassador visited the classrooms of both age groups; adults and children. He also admired the advanced level of the Institute's students.

During the Visa Section tour, he highlighted the mechanism of its work and the organization and the coordination with clients.

TAG – Confucius was established in September 2008 with the aim of introducing Chinese language and culture and achieving a mutual understanding between Arab and Chinese cultures. This unique initiative is based on a cooperation agreement between TAG-Org and Confucius Institute in China.

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EBRD helps create opportunities for young people in partnership with European Training Foundation



Education and the dissemination of knowledge are essential for social progress and economic prosperity. Equal opportunities allow societies and individuals to prosper by broadening the talent pool that drives economic progress.

As technology advances rapidly and business needs become more sophisticated, the workforce must match this accelerating pace.

Accounting for 9 out of 10 jobs, the private sector is the backbone of a flourishing economy, driving growth and prosperity. But where there is a mismatch between skills and needs of employers, the EBRD can help to narrow the gap with targeted programmes.

It focuses on support for young people, especially young women, whose integration into the workforce is not only good for the economy but also essential for social cohesion and sustainable transition.

At the same time, the EBRD helps its clients to address key business challenges such as a lack of access to suitably qualified entry-level staff, high training costs and low staff retention.

This unique, private sector-led approach to inclusion leverages the EBRD's strong expertise in this sector. It initiates and strengthens direct engagement between interested clients and central and regional educational institutions to improve learning

outcomes, set skills standards based on employer needs and develop effective apprenticeship models.

The EBRD has invested just under €1.76 billion in 46 projects supporting inclusion outcomes over the past two years, in sectors ranging from manufacturing and retail to tourism, agribusiness, financial institutions and power and energy.

90 more projects are already under development for 2016 and beyond. These will create access to skills and jobs for young people, women and populations in less advanced regions.

Overcoming skill mismatches is essential to tackling unemployment, especially among young people. While unemployment is a problem for many economies, it is especially pressing in Turkey, the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) region and the Western Balkans – three core regions of EBRD investment.

Despite steady growth in Turkey, over 35 percent of young people in the country are not in education, employment or training (NEET). At the same time, a significant number of job openings cannot be filled.

In Turkey, over 30 percent of EBRD investments already support inclusion outcomes. On this basis, the EBRD has developed a policy dialogue programme that brings together private sector employers and educational institutions.

The programme seeks to support the Turkish government's reform agenda for vocational education and promotes inclusion for youth and women by strengthening private sector input into education policy and the setting of standards.

To boost this engagement on inclusion policy, the EBRD has established a strategic partnership with the European Training Foundation (ETF), the EU's agency for vocational education and training policy engagement in EU neighbourhood and accession countries.

This partnership will complement the Bank's private sector focus and the ETF's significant policy expertise to help young people gain relevant skills to access jobs.

The EBRD and ETF identified three priorities:

- 1) The development of technical and vocational education and training skills standards, as well as the geographic expansion of facilities for testing vocational skills, as part of Turkey's National Qualifications Framework and reform and in order to reach out to youth and women
- 2) Increasing the availability of high-quality work-based opportunities for learning, including apprenticeships
- 3) Supporting youth employment through career guidance with private sector involvement and implementation of the youth guarantee.

This partnership is due to be expanded in the Western Balkans and the SEMED region. This includes projects in retail, such as the Mall of Arabia in Egypt, where the EBRD works with 25 retail

developers to develop bespoke training that targets business needs and equips young people with the necessary skills, or Ayla in Jordan, where the ETF partnership is helping to improve skills in the tourism industry.

The EBRD is also applying its expertise in response to the current refugee crisis. It is supporting refugee-hosting communities with skills verification and also fostering private sector engagement in the development of skills standards and work-based learning. In addition, the EBRD will provide training in financial literacy to refugee communities and support financial institutions as they expand the services they offer to refugees.

With more than 50 per cent of signed inclusion projects supported by technical cooperation activities, donor support is essential to the success of the EBRD's work on inclusion.

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Egypt Offers Humanitarian Aid to Ethiopia's Drought Victims

Egypt has offered urgent food aid to help 100,000 drought victims in eastern Ethiopia via the World Food Program.

The Egyptian aid is aimed at alleviating the suffering of the victims in Ethiopia, Secretary General of the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development Hazem Fahmy said in statements.

"The move conveys a message of support and solidarity from Cairo to Ethiopia," he added.

Director of the World Food Program office in Addis Ababa John Aylieff hailed the Egyptian aid, which was delivered at a highly sensitive time after the international community failed to offer adequate financial resources to provide emergency food aid to about 7.6 million Ethiopians.

For his part, the chairman of Ethiopia's Disaster Commission thanked the government and people of Egypt for the move that would give wider horizons for bilateral relations.

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Abu-Ghazaleh Patronizes USAID Takamol – Gender Program’s Initiative



AMMAN - March 2, 2016 - In cooperation with the USAID Takamol- Gender program, HE Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh sponsored a poetry initiative launched by Takamol program and addressed gender issues, titled "Elma7ki Ma3 Takamol" spoken word poetry show.

The activity that was held at Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Knowledge Forum (TAGKF) aimed at raising youth's awareness of gender issues through spoken poetry.

Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh expressed thanks for being invited to sponsor the event. He also thanked all those in charge of the activity for caring about developing youth's talents. He addressed youth stating that life

is full of pain and suffering, and that by facing and overcoming challenges, we open opportunities for innovation and development, making ourselves influential in the community. He stressed that suffer leads to knowledge and success.

Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh stated that in this knowledge era, everyone can equally access the Internet; therefore, youth should grab this opportunity for making knowledge and innovation.

For her part, Ms. Nermeen Murad, Chief of Party USAID Takamol - Gender program expressed thanks to Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh for hosting the event at TAGKF and for giving youth

the opportunity to benefit from it.

She stated that Takamol began to focus on the issue of "Gender" few years ago, and that the integration of youth with the gender issue has always presented a challenge. She added that youth are the hope of tomorrow, and the challenge today is how to enable them and give them the opportunity to express themselves.

Mr. Fadi Daoud, director of "Youth Forum for Policy Development", one of the Economic Policy Development Forum initiatives welcomed the attendees, and the USAID and Takamol - Gender representatives. He also thanked Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh for sponsoring the event and offering his full support to the initiative, noting that this initiative would not have seen the light without harnessing all TAG-Org's resources for the benefit of the youth and the service of the nation.

It is worth mentioning that "Youth Forum for Policy Development" is one of the Economic Policies Development Forum's initiatives. It was launched in August 2015 to coincide with the

celebration of World Youth Day. Since its foundation, the Forum has been based on the principle of "youth have the main role in driving the economic wheel". Youth's contribution in the Forum is by being the engine of the Forum's works; they work under the guidance and advice of its experienced members. The Youth Forum for Policy Development represents a platform for youth to enable them to meet and deliver their views and thoughts.

USAID Takamol-Gender Program is a program funded by the USAID. It aims at promoting the gender equality principles at the levels of: policies, legislation, laws, systems, local and national initiatives, and individual and community practices, in all sectors including education and health. It coordinates and cooperates with strategic partners including ministers, the Jordanian National Committee for Women Affairs, centers for women research and studies at the Jordanian universities, civil society organizations, and media.

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Business Opportunities

Country	Funding Agency	Project	Deadline
Montenegro	UNDP - United Nations Development Programme	UNDP - United Nations Development Programme	14 March 2016
Azerbaijan	ADB - Asian Development Bank	ADB - Asian Development Bank	18 March 2016
Nigeria	WB - World Bank	Electricity & Gas Improvement Project (NEGIP)	21 March 2016
Kyrgyz Republic	ADB - Asian Development Bank	Toktogul Rehabilitation Phase 2 Project	23 March 2016
Ukraine	EBRD - European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (CSO-LA), Egypt	20 April 2016