

Talking Points for H.E. Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh's Remarks at the Dinner of the CSU Board

My Dear Friends and Colleagues

It is a real pleasure for me to be with you again on this auspicious occasion when we meet to take stock and chart our future course.

I would like to start by commending you and thanking you all for the highly successful event organized by the CSU at the United Nations, in collaboration with UN-Habitat and other partners, on the role of portals in advancing sustainable and inclusive urbanization. Your commitment, dedication and leadership and your contributions to the discussions have been indispensable for the success of our initiatives.

As in the case of the previous event on the theme of how refugees can be integrated in urban settings, which I had recommended, the discussions on the role of urban portals demonstrated the value of looking at urbanization from a new, different and innovative perspective. The publication on the event contributes significantly and substantively to the global debate on urbanization and identifies practical and positive ways in which cities can develop and use portals as hubs for economic growth. Sustainability and poverty reduction. I congratulate you once again on your success.

Let me turn now to the future.

The world community is at a critical point in moving on to the implementation phase of both the New Urban Agenda and the broader and truly universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda clearly recognizes that one of the keys to success in implementing the very

ambitious SDGs is to avoid the silos approach and to integrate the inter-linked dimensions of the various Goals. The CSU event on refugees and urbanization was a very good example of integrating seemingly disparate dimensions and thus gaining new insights and identifying new ways of doing things.

We all know that urbanization is a very complex process that touches upon almost all facets of human life and well-being. Urban development depends on the movement of people, across vast spaces. It is therefore a natural and dynamic force for human development.

Having just participated in the General Assembly of UNWTO as Special Ambassador for the United Nations International Year for Sustainable Tourism and Development, I can say to you that Tourism is an equally dynamic and major force for human development across the globe. Indeed, tourism is the second largest sector of the world economy accounting for over 10 percent of world GNP or 1.7trillion dollars in 2016, 30 percent of world exports in services, and one out of every 11 jobs amounting to some three hundred million jobs world-wide.

It is also evident that tourism and urban development are intimately connected. Any city or town can hardly afford to neglect the role tourism can play in its economy and its development.

It seems logical therefore for us to consider how smart and sustainable tourism can drive smart and sustainable urbanization, with technology and innovation playing an integrating role.

I would like you to consider this as the theme for the next major event to be organized by the CSU.

I thank you.