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Report on Projects & Project Management in Jordan

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World Economic Forum on the Middle East Held at 300 meters Below Sea Level

On May 17th, World Economic Forum concluded with hope for a better future for the Middle East region and the whole world. By the Dead Sea in Jordan, 1,400 leaders from 85 countries in attendance discussed peace initiative, economic crisis, and new economic initiatives, among other subjects as they participated for three days in the World Economic Forum on the Middle East.

This is the fifth time in the last seven years, that the Jordan Valley, home of the Dead Sea, well known as a tourist attraction and a natural wonder, hosts the World Economic Forum on the Middle East.

This year, the focus of most discussions was the challenges of the world economic crisis and how to deal with it, as well as the Middle East peace process and the urgency to reach a just peace settlement to the Israeli – Palestinian conflict.

On Friday May 15th, Jordan's King Abdullah opened the Forum by calling on Israel to join Arab states in committing to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Middle East leaders place resolving Israeli-Palestinian conflict at core of a new security arrangement.

Other highlights from the first day included a $10 million fund donation by Abraaj Capital, a Dubai based equity group, towards the education of more than 1,200

Palestinian children and youth who lost their parents during the Israeli attack on Gaza in December and January.

(photo: Jordan's King Abdullah II addressed the World Economic Forum meeting in Shuneh on the shores of the Dead Sea on May 15, 2009. The king called for the Middle East to become an economic "powerhouse" that could help reshape the global economy after the credit crunch. Photo courtesy of Wall Street Journal and Getty Images)

Among the key participants this year was Massachusetts US Senator John F. Kerry, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Senator Kerry stressed the importance of seizing the opportunity to encourage peaceful resolutions to world problems away from extremism and violence.

During the conference, Middle East business and government leaders stressed that reforms are the key to weathering the global economic crisis in the region. Mr. Rashid, Egypt's Minister of Trade and Industry said that "The real big story is reform, change and managing the transition," Other panelists in the Saturday's session focused on the measures needed in the region to make economies more resilient and better positioned for future growth.

Innovation in technology was raised as an opportunity for the region to deal with the current global crisis. At a panel discussion on the subject, participants saw opportunities through technology to deal with other global pressing issues including energy and the environment. However, there was consensus that improvements in quality of education is a prerequisite for these opportunities to materialize.

On the third day, the forum activities were concluded. Mr. Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, praised meeting hosts, King Abdullah and Queen Rania of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for "their commitment, engagement and dedication" to development in the region. He also announced that Morocco will host the next regional meeting in Marrakech from 22-24 October 2010.

Also known as "Davos" Forum after the Swiss city where it was originated, the forum has become part of an almost annual tradition for Jordanians to welcome world leaders in the serene settings of the Jordan Valley region.

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