



# **Post-2015 Development Agenda National Consultations in Jordan**

## **Messages for the Future We Want**

Priorities emerging from the national consultations on the  
post-2015 development agenda in Jordan



**OCTOBER, 2013**

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR  
AMMAN - JORDAN**

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The UNCT wishes to thank people from more than 190 organizations that mobilized energies across the country, and the online community for the interest and enthusiasm demonstrated. This journey would not have been possible without the great support extended to the UN team by all individuals and organizations.

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# Foreword

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Initiated in October 2012 and completed in May 2013, the national consultations for the post-2015 development agenda are part of a wider and global process of reflection on “the world people want”. The definition of the post-2015 development framework is an historical opportunity for the citizens of the world to influence their future.

For Jordan, the consultations have come at a critical juncture. While the country is steadily progressing towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is also faced by emerging challenges that are having consequences on its sustainable human development prospects.

Since March 2011, the large influx of Syrian refugees in Jordan has placed an increasingly heavy burden - both centrally and at the governorate level - on the already-strained natural and financial resources, service delivery systems and labor market. The impact of the Syrian crisis is severe and has been negatively felt in different sectors, creating new socio-economic imbalances and disparities.

Despite this challenging context, the national post-2015 consultations were met with great enthusiasm, vibrant participation and a strong sense of ownership. Stakeholders, particularly youth and women, appreciated the concrete opportunity offered to express their views in a frank and transparent environment, on issues very relevant to their lives. The UNCT reached out to listen to the voices of those who are not usually heard, an approach which ultimately proved to be extremely rewarding.

Messages garnered from the stakeholders pointed at concerns pertaining to the specific Jordanian context, while at the same time maintaining close relevance to more global themes. Some emerging messages confirmed citizens’ apprehension for the uncertain path of a rapidly changing development landscape, and the effects of neighboring countries’ continued insecurity.

To a large extent, the trends and priorities highlighted in this report are already being addressed by national institutions and programmes as well as through other multi-stakeholders initiatives. These key national efforts and their positive achievements are fully acknowledged and widely commended. If anything, the messages from the consultations provide one more confirmation of the critical importance of working together and a renewed sense of urgency. They constitute a compelling “reminder” of the relevance of the areas for change and tell us that even more intensified efforts should be collectively deployed, if the country’s sustainable human development is to be more effectively supported.

The consultations conveyed a mix of priorities, confirming the critical importance of addressing the interconnectedness of thematic areas, with strong linkages among sectors. “The urgency of improving quality education to establish robust ties with the labor market”, and “the strong link between poverty reduction, inequalities and environmental protection” were often referred to. This suggests that strategies should go beyond stand-alone or sectoral initiatives, “break siloes” and look at holistic approaches.

The broad and inclusive mobilization of diverse groups and their extensive involvement in the consultations - 2,500 people in all governorates, in urban and rural settings, equally addressing men and women, youth and media professionals, government and civil society, private sector and academia - represent a key added value of the post-2015 national dialogue.

The most debated themes during consultations were **education, employment, environment and health**. Various stakeholders identified similar priorities for the future, generally acknowledging the same basic concerns, and agreed on the analysis of the existing societal barriers to development. Some variations were noted in the solutions suggested, and on the emphasis on how and which development partner should bear prime responsibilities. In line with the features of a predominantly young and dynamic society, youth called for innovative responses to a rapidly evolving set of challenges.

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**Unemployment** emerged as a major concern for young people who perceived the labor market as difficult to access. Ensuring a sustained development of quality **education** was also mentioned as a decisive factor to better employment opportunities.

The consultations revealed that **responsive governance** is a pre-condition to promote sustainable development and a lasting social peace, to address inequalities and eradicate poverty. People's expectations on systemic reforms include measures to continue to counter corruption, and robust actions to reduce unemployment. Civil society identified "**inclusiveness**" in health, education, employment and governance, as well as the importance of **civic engagement**, as essential aspects to advance the cause of democratic and social reforms. Young people also indicated the importance of **Human Rights** and the promotion of democracy and rule of law as milestones for enabling genuine participation in public life and safeguarding freedom of expression.

Equally prevalent was **environmental protection** and the effective management of vital and strategic natural resources which should hold a primary place in development policies. Water scarcity was recognized as alarming, while biodiversity protection, the adoption of effective policies to control desertification and the promotion of green economy are imperative measures to be implemented.

**Overcoming inequalities** and **combating poverty** remain priorities requiring a collective effort. Persisting stereotypes and cultural attitudes are among the main causes of economic and social disparities, especially when it comes to women, persons living with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. Geographical gaps have a multiplier effect on gender inequalities; dedicated policies and programmes targeting rural areas and disadvantaged peripheries should address the persisting asymmetric access to basic quality services and the job market. In parallel, **women's participation** and representation in the political, economic and social arenas should be continuously nurtured and expanded. Safeguarding **citizens' wellbeing** was reconfirmed as of critical importance and should be at the core of the future development agenda. Concrete measures to improve the access and quality of the **healthcare** system and to promote and to enhance **food security**, nutrition and a healthier lifestyle were pointed out.

Several governorates, particularly in the north, were recognized as being disproportionately impacted by the growing refugee influx from Syria, and therefore, ensuring **regional stability** was reiterated as the overarching national priority, especially among the most affected communities. Partners called upon the international community and regional actors to play a more effective role in promoting peace and security.

"**Messages for the future we want**" is the reader-friendly version of the final national consultations' internal report that the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) prepared in May 2013. Its objective is to provide all stakeholders and colleagues, as well as the broader audience, with a concise "picture" capturing the main features of the post-2015 national consultations in Jordan and the main priorities that emerged during the process.

I wish to take this opportunity, on my own behalf, as the UN Resident Coordinator and on behalf of the entire UNCT in Jordan, to express our most profound appreciation and gratitude to all those who actively contributed to the successful roll out of the post-2015 national consultations. The strong engagement of partners, stakeholders, government entities and individuals provided insightful perspectives, innovative ideas, and invaluable support throughout the process: all of which are critical inputs that ensured the relevance and the depth of the final outcomes.

Thank you!

*Costanza Farina*  
*UN Resident Coordinator, Jordan*

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*"Through this exercise, the United Nations was determined to tap into the spirit of the first words of its founding Charter: "We the Peoples",*

*Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General, United Nations  
(from the UNDG report: "A Million Voices: The World We Want", 2013)*

## 1. What is the Post-2015 Development Agenda?

The Millennium Declaration, endorsed in 2000 by Member States, defined the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a common set of targets for the development community to be achieved by 2015. The MDGs deadline of 2015 is fast approaching, with around 800 days left. This recognition triggered the United Nations (UN) and its partners worldwide to accelerate action to achieve the goals that are not yet attained, and also underscored the urgency of designing a post-2015 development framework that would not only build on the MDG successes, but also address their weaknesses, while at the same time meeting new global challenges. To this end, the 2010 MDG Summit requested the UN Secretary-General to initiate consultations that would shape the future global development agenda. Similarly, the 2012 Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development recommended carrying out an inclusive process to develop a set of sustainable development goals. The two processes will be linked and ultimately will converge in one global post-2015 development agenda, placing poverty eradication and sustainable development at its core.



The dialogue for the formulation of the post-2015 agenda is led by UN Member States. The UN facilitates this global conversation and supports Member States by providing evidence-based inputs, analytical thinking, and reporting on field experiences. In September 2011, the UN Secretary-General established the UN System Task Team, consisting of senior technical experts from more than 60 UN bodies and other international organizations. Their primary objective was to coordinate system-wide preparations for a post-2015 agenda. Similarly, a High-Level Panel of 27 Eminent Persons was established in July 2012 to advise him on the global development framework beyond 2015. This panel was co-chaired by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom. Her Majesty Queen Rania

Al Abdullah of Jordan was also a distinguished Member of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons. The final High-Level Panel report “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development”, was released on 30 May 2013.

It is recognized that the post-2015 development agenda should build on a strong “people-centered” approach to address the critical challenges of our time, and to ensure global ownership. In this context, the UN Development Group (UNDG) mobilized key players, and an unprecedented participatory and bottom-up process has been launched, which involves constituencies and groups around the globe.

-  **Inequalities**
-  **Food security and Nutrition**
-  **Governance**
-  **Growth and Employment**
-  **Conflict and Fragility**
-  **Health**
-  **Education**
-  **Environmental sustainability**
-  **Population Dynamics**
-  **Water**
-  **Energy**

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are widely engaged at all levels to contribute and influence the creation of a post-2015 development framework. Inputs on four key components - vision, purpose, principles and criteria - are being synthesized using the existing Beyond 2015 website for live drafting. This is a global campaign that brings together more than 570 civil society organizations in over 95 countries.

The Regional Economic Commissions have also initiated inclusive sub-regional and regional multi-stakeholder consultations, which led to the launch of the report “A Regional Perspective on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda”. Through Regional Coordination Mechanisms, Post-Rio+20 Regional Meetings, as well as other fora, the Regional Commissions are engaging a wide

range of stakeholders aiming at building convergence between post-2015 and Post-Rio+20 discussions.

Over the course of 2012 and in early 2013, 11 global thematic consultations were held on: **Conflict and Fragility; Education; Energy; Environmental Sustainability; Food Security; Governance; Growth and Employment; Water; Health; Inequalities; and Population Dynamics.** These consultations, which were jointly organized by UN agencies and co-hosted by one or more governments, involved an online exchange, calls for contributions and papers, preparatory meetings and a global high-level meeting to endorse the outcomes. To facilitate this process, the **WorldWeWant2015** platform was launched on 31 July 2012 as the repository of the 11 multi-stakeholder thematic consultations and of the national dialogues. It also hosts a lively and active exchange of civil society opinions and experiences.

In addition to the thematic consultations, **MY World**, a global survey, which asks people to select six out of 16 possible priorities they think would make the most difference to their lives was launched in 2013. The survey, running until 2015, was developed by the UN with support of over 230 partners. The survey identifies priorities

expressed by people living in poverty through research and polling exercises, as well as by referring to MDGs and issues of sustainability, security, governance and transparency.

Across the globe, over 88 national dialogues have been completed. These national consultations, led by UNDG in close cooperation with UN Country Teams and Resident Coordinators, involved representatives from governments, civil society, the private sector, media, universities and think tanks, and equally amplified the voices of groups that have limited access to policy discussions at national/global level.

The results and analysis from the UNDG consultations and the outcomes of other processes, will feed into and influence the negotiations at Member States level over the next two years.

*As of September 2013, the UN has globally engaged more than 1 million people across all countries and from all backgrounds. Modern communications technology, the mobilization of UN agencies and the exceptional enthusiasm of countless volunteers made this unique endeavor possible (from the UNDG report “A Million Voices: The World We Want”, 2013)*



***“The Post-2015 Development Framework is likely to have the best development impact if it emerges from an inclusive, open and transparent process with multi-stakeholder participation.”***

**UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon**





## 2. The Post-2015 National Consultations in Jordan

Jordan is one of the 88+ countries which carried out national consultations worldwide. 10 countries from the Arab region were selected to run the post-2015 national consultations: Jordan, Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Algeria, Yemen, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon. The Jordanian national consultations have been a lead contributor to the first preliminary report of the UN Development Group (UNDG) issued in March 2013 and entitled “The Global Conversation Begins – Emerging Views For a New Development Agenda”, and also to the UNDG Global report “A million voices: The World We Want”, launched by the UN Secretary-General and UNDG Chair on 9 September 2013. The Global Report constitutes a milestone in the dialogues to shape the post-2015 development agenda. Its findings have contributed to the UN Secretary-General’s report to the 68th session of the General Assembly in September 2013.

### Objectives and guiding principles

Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, the UN Country Team (UNCT) has been tasked to facilitate the post-2015 national consultations. With 15 UN agencies taking part in this comprehensive exercise, a dedicated coordination mechanism was set up at the outset to guide joint planning and implementation. The national consultations have been carried out as an open dialogue among all stakeholders and have been driven by the question “**What world do you want?**”

Inclusiveness has been the key principle of the initiative. Marked by a bottom-up and transparent approach, efforts were created to reach out to rural areas and all governorates. Special attention was paid to ensure gender balance in participation, and the involvement of disadvantaged groups, including persons living with disabilities. Youth and civil society were also extensively consulted. Inputs and ideas, views and concerns will contribute to build a shared global vision on “**The World We Want**”, with clear recommendations and key messages reflecting people’s views.

### The Target Audience

The response and participation in the national dialogue has been characterized not only by great enthusiasm, but crucially, a strong sense of ownership by all parties involved. Key recommendations and “messages” emerged, representing the opportunity for the UNCT to open new

windows of dialogue with non-traditional partners. Hopefully this will lead to further venues for cooperation. Stakeholders included relevant Jordanian organizations, Government representatives, NGOs, civil society and community based organizations (CBOs), women’s and social movements, youth and children, persons living with disabilities, the private sector, vulnerable people and minorities, universities, academia, and media professionals.



### The Journey

The consultations were articulated through dedicated discussions, policy dialogues, town hall meetings, e-consultations, etc. 40 different events were completed from October 2012 to May 2013, each to feed into the 11 global themes.

2,500 people from over 190 organizations, including 20 women NGOs/CBOs, directly participated in this dialogue. Among those: 55% were male, 46% under the age of 24, 58% were from Amman, 42% from other governorates, including rural areas.

Sample case initiatives: under the patronage of HRH Princess Basma bint Talal (UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) organized a national youth consultation led by the Youth Peer Education network (Y-PEER). The UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) organized joint discussions on growth and employment with key institutions, entrepreneurs, trade unions and

think tanks. This included collaboration with the Talal Abu Ghazaleh Organization, the Economic and Social Council, and with academia.



Ruwwad, a local NGO partner, has been pivotal in reaching out to disadvantaged urban communities. Their vibrant network of volunteers and students across the country was accessed by UN Volunteers and others: Irbid youth volunteers, university students, and the HU-Greener environmental NGO have played an active role in the process. The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has also brought together Palestinian students from several schools and vocational training centers.

The World Health Organization (WHO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, and UN-HABITAT have all contributed within their respective mandated areas by including special discussions through their ongoing programming, or organizing dedicated events in cooperation with stakeholders and experts. One of the most prominent seminars was a national consultation on quality education and employment led by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which was held at Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah presence and under her patronage.

Throughout the consultations, a unique and comprehensive communication and outreach strategy saw the launch of the UN Jordan on Twitter and Facebook for the first time. Over 10,000 people contributed on social media (Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube). As of 5 October 2013, a total of over 7,500 “Likes” had been received on Facebook, the majority of which were within the age group of 18 – 24 (48% female), and over 1,500 people followed the UN Jordan Twitter account.

The online strategy included the continued promotion of Jordan consultations on the WorldWeWant2015 platform, and of the MY World survey. A custom tailored online



Office to target Jordanian youth. It was widely circulated through UN Social Media accounts and shared with volunteers and students’ associations.

## The Partnerships forged

Strategic partnerships have been established throughout the national consultations, most of which have proven critical in the expansion of the dialogue across all aspects of the Jordanian society. UN Women, the Jordanian National Commission for Women and the Sisterhood Is Global Institute (SIGI) in particular, have contributed to the creation of major events that have gathered women organizations, NGOs and CBOs from all governorates and rural areas, to prepare a subject specific report highlighting civil society’s views. The cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation has also been a key part in the engagement of the government on different technical sectors. Specific sessions with line Ministries and other public institutions were organized, and contributed to foster fruitful exchanges among institutions.

As a special feature of the consultations, considerable attention was paid to creating synergies with the Office of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah in her capacity as a Member of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons. Their direct collaboration with the Resident Coordinator’s Office was of significant value.

As part of the outreach strategy, several prominent Jordanian personalities shared their own views on the priorities for the post-2015 agenda. The interviews were uploaded on the UN Jordan You Tube channel and on other virtual platforms. The inspiring contributions came from:

HRH Prince Raad Bin Zeid, President of the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons living with Disabilities (HCD);  
H.E Mr. Taher Al Masri, Speaker of the Senate;  
Mr. Ahmed Al Hindawi, UN Secretary General Envoy on Youth;  
Ms. Alia H. Zureikat, Director of Communication and International Relations Department, HCD;

Ms Samar Dudin, Regional Director for Ruwwad Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development;  
Mr. Saed Karajah, Senior Partner at Karajah & Associates Law, and social activist;  
Mr. Kamel Al Asmar, entrepreneur, founder of Nakhweh and CEO of Ideation Box,  
Ms. Aroub Soubouh, Media Specialist, Human Rights activist.

Thanks to the collaboration with the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons living with Disabilities, some interviews have also been translated into sign language.

## Regional initiatives organized in Jordan

A two-day regional workshop was held in Amman on 3-4 March 2013 under the Patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah. The workshop was hosted by the UN Foundation (UNF), in partnership with the King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAJD), and in cooperation with the University of Jordan's Centre for Strategic Studies and the Columbia University Middle East Research Centre (CUMERC). The outcomes of the workshop were submitted to the Secretary-General's Post-2015 High Level Panel. A second regional consultation, organized by the Regional UNDG for Arab States, entitled "Arab Development Forum – Priorities for the Post-2015 Agenda", took place in

Amman on 10-11 April 2013, also under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah. The Forum provided an opportunity for participants from civil society, academia, the private sector, as well as parliamentarians from across the region to identify priorities and challenges and to generate new ideas towards global visions on the post-2015 development agenda. It addressed several issues that are of importance to the region, including poverty reduction, growth and employment, political inclusion, quality of health and education, and environment. The report is available at <http://www.arabpost2015.org/>

On 23 May 2013, the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply of Jordan held the Regional Preparatory Meeting Persistent Challenges to Sustained Prosperity in the Arab Region in Amman, that fed into the High-level Conference of Middle-Income Countries (MICs) Challenges to Sustainable Development and International Cooperation in Middle-Income Countries: The Role of Networks for Prosperity (San José, Costa Rica, 12-14 June 2013). The Preparatory Meeting was an opportunity to elaborate on MICs challenges and priorities from an Arab regional perspective, looking at issues of growth, environment, green industry, and sustainable development, towards shaping the post-2015 agenda.



*"Today, we have new opportunities and new challenges. Challenges such as the quality of our education, the global economic crises, high costs of living, increased rates of unemployment, conflicts and lack of security. All these challenges not only impede the process of development, but also cause it to deteriorate"*

**Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, Regional Workshop, 3-4 March 2013**





## 3. Results of the Consultations

The messages from this national dialogue have been clustered in four “**areas for change**”. Each of the four areas has interconnected outcomes that focus on the highlighted problematic issues and on the emergence of key concerns that need to be addressed.

### AREA OF CHANGE 1:



*Strengthen the link between education and the labor market, and support entrepreneurship to reduce unemployment and ensuring decent work*



#### Strategic messages

- The urgency of improving **quality education** and expand access to secondary educational levels; to establish robust linkages with the labor market for qualified youth employment, and to advance towards a more informed society.
- A new mindset to **reduce youth unemployment** and fulfill youth expectations towards decent jobs as part of a broader approach to revitalize economic growth.

#### Trends and emerging issues

Unemployment is currently high among the youth. Recent data shows an unemployment rate of 30.1% among 20-24 years old; for female graduates unemployment stands at 68.4%<sup>1</sup>. This trend creates mounting anxiety of young graduates who attempt to enter the labor market. According to a joint UNDP and ILO report<sup>2</sup>, about 600,000 young Jordanians are working abroad, and 35% of youth would like to emigrate permanently. The reasons behind this loss of intellectual capital seems to be mainly related to structural aspects in the domestic economy, where challenges in investment and entrepreneurship do not sufficiently stimulate business and job creation.

Major progress has been made by Jordan towards achieving MDG 2 (achieve universal primary education), but the focus should now be on quality. Many students consulted believed that the education system should be more inspiring and provide more adequate to access the labor market in both secondary and higher education. Furthermore, while 60% of the national labor work force has completed secondary education (or lower), only 38.3% represents university graduates<sup>3</sup>. Also, despite the substantive development of Vocational Training Centers, a decline actually occurred.



There is an urgency to respond to the challenge of youth unemployment, as a precondition to poverty eradication, sustainable development and lasting peace. Young people voiced their concerns regarding a protracted period from education to employment into a profession most likely unrelated to their education. Low salaries are seen as factors that trigger the migration of qualified professionals away from Jordan.

According to stakeholders, Jordan's economy strives to gain traction in the face of regional instability, which is

<sup>1</sup> Department of Statistics, latest news and indicators, 12.8%. The Unemployment Rate during the First Quarter of 2013, 8 April 2013, [http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos\\_home\\_e/main/archive/Unemp/2013/1st\\_Q.pdf](http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_e/main/archive/Unemp/2013/1st_Q.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> ILO Regional Office for the Arab States and UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, Rethinking Economic Growth: towards productive and inclusive Arab societies, 2012, p. 75 (<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/img/reports/report.pdf>) ;

<sup>3</sup> Nader Mryyan, Demographics, Labor force participation and unemployment in Jordan, Working paper series, Economic Research Forum, Egypt, 2012

deeply affecting the national trade, and strong global headwinds; reduced foreign investments and lack of comprehensive sectoral investment policies contribute to the economic stagnation.

## Priorities

Education - and a better quality of education - is considered the fundamental basis for a stable society and its powerful engine. Quality education is vital to overcome the challenge of unemployment, as it can ensure that the youth are readily equipped with necessary skills. The need for the national education system to encompass innovative learning approaches has emerged as a top priority. Reconsidering the teaching content in order to integrate appropriate skills to better access the job market<sup>4</sup> will allow both education and employment to flourish. The disparity between private and public schools was also viewed as a main issue among students. Civil Society organizations highlighted the essential role played by teachers and education providers. Strengthening teachers' qualifications was seen as a key element to the improvement of quality education. Merit-based teachers' selection and retention strategies should be developed by public institutions, as well as pre-service teachers' preparation and in-service training that take into consideration life-long learning and sustainability. Quality education also relies on establishing a conducive learning environment, as suitable learning spaces make a fundamental difference to students' performance.

Sustaining and accelerating MDGs progress in the field of education is seen to be essential by the government. Consultations with lead officials' ministries underscored the need to revisit curricula and revamp vocational training to include the specific skills needed in the current employment sector. Similarly, the expansion of apprenticeship and



internship opportunities is a key endeavor. In partnership with the private sector, special programmes should be implemented to better link employers with educational institutions.

For the national economy, a holistic approach involving institutions, policymakers, and other forces within the society is required if development, growth and new jobs are to be promoted. As entrepreneurs and trade unions representatives suggested, a sound environment for business through dedicated policies (taxation, fiscal, etc.) would boost entrepreneurship and promote domestic and foreign investments. Similarly, start-ups, microfinance schemes for young entrepreneurs, and opportunities within the green economy should be encouraged. Youth job satisfaction should be pursued by increasing benefits and providing social insurance at any employment level to ensure decent work opportunities. Regional cooperation in the economic sector, and exchanges of know-how in key productive areas (especially in water management), are also priorities stressed by the private sector and trade unions.



***"Seeking a job is an arduous journey into the impossible"***

**Young male participant, Employment workshop, Amman, 18 Dec 2012**



***"It is clear that the more educated the young person is, the less chances sometimes he/she gets to access decent job opportunities and this is the dilemma that we should find a way to deal with"***

**Ahmad Hindawi, UN Secretary General Envoy on Youth, Amman, 5 Feb 2013**



<sup>4</sup> Such as media and information-technology skills, leadership and analytical skills, core transversal life skills-entrepreneurship, civic participation, etc.

## AREA OF CHANGE 2:



*Combat stereotypes to ensure gender equality and decrease geographical disparities; reduce poverty and ensure equal access to social services*



### Strategic messages

- **Overcome inequalities and combat poverty and invisible barriers** such as persisting stereotypes and cultural attitudes, which are considered the main causes of economic and social inequalities, when it comes to women, persons living with disabilities, and vulnerable groups.
- Safeguard the **wellbeing of citizens**, through concrete measures to ameliorate the access and quality of the **healthcare system**, and promote comprehensive approaches to enhance **food security**, nutrition and healthier lifestyle.
- Create a more conducive environment for **women participation** and representation in the political, economic and social arenas, with a special focus on the development of adequate policies and legislation.

### Trends and emerging issues

With its status as a middle income country, and despite major efforts exerted to address the roots of poverty, Jordan's absolute poverty rate reached 14.4% in 2010, representing the percentage of the population living under the absolute poverty line<sup>5</sup>. Poverty incidence is higher in rural areas with 16.8% (95,266 households or 698,132 individuals), while 13.9% of poor are settled in urban areas (23,279 households or 178,458 individuals)<sup>6</sup>. An unequal distributions of services and resources throughout the country was identified a key cause. Women, marginalized/vulnerable groups and persons living with disabilities are the most affected. Both barriers and inequalities faced by these groups in access to services often result in them not being able to fully integrate in the social dynamics and productive sectors.

Vulnerabilities in both rural areas and communities at risk are deepened by a generally poor awareness on diseases and reproductive health, as well as the unequal access to, and quality of, health services and medical and paramedical staff throughout the country. Despite major progress in MDGs 4 and 5 (reduce child mortality and improve maternal health, respectively), several gaps still persist. The impacts of food security are unequally felt across Jordanian population, with certain areas and population groups more vulnerable than others. With over 90% of cereals consumed in Jordan imported, retail prices are exposed to



the undependability of international rates.

Jordan still faces considerable challenges in reducing the gender gap. In 2013 only 12% of seats in Parliament were held by women. The female participation in the labor market is among the lowest worldwide<sup>7</sup>. Although the majority of women complete (and excel in) the school cycle, only a limited number below the age of 20 actually join the work force, due to economic, social and cultural barriers. Gender based violence is also seen by many stakeholders as a societal issue that often finds tacit cultural acceptance.

<sup>5</sup> Human Development Report 2013

<sup>6</sup> Jordan Poverty Reduction Strategy 2013

<sup>7</sup> ILO Regional Office for the Arab States and UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, Rethinking Economic Growth: towards productive and inclusive Arab societies, 2012, Chapter 2, section The labor force participation rate: not that low except for women, p. 50 (<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/img/reports/report.pdf>)



## Priorities

To effectively mitigate economic inequalities and geographical disparities, CSOs affirmed that government and public institutions should be more responsive to the needs of people living in disadvantaged areas. During consultations in governorates other than Amman, people suggested that public institutions should take concrete steps to guarantee affordable welfare system and subsidies, invest in housing facilities, ensure quality services (health and education), and promote investment and economic activities in the decentralized areas. For communities at risk, an equitable distribution of resources is necessary to ensure social equity.

All aspects of society should endeavor to combat stereotypes and promote gender equality and women's empowerment. A strong role should be played by the active engagement of educational, religious and social institutions. Measures should include a mandated quota system to increase women's representation in public institutions, programmes to expand women's economic participation, as well as family friendly employment policies responsive to maternity requirements and women's needs. Stakeholders agreed that the national legislation on the rights of women and of persons living with disabilities should be revisited to be fully aligned with Jordan commitments to international charters and treaties. The same can be applied to certain policies, which should adopt principles of social justice and equal opportunities, as means to avoid overt discrimination. Public institutions are also expected to partner with the private sector to open up job opportunities for persons living with disabilities.



Public institutions should place additional efforts on the monitoring of malnutrition and other diseases, as well as on a holistic improvement of the public healthcare system. Consultations revealed a demand to address existing gaps in maternal and neonatal care, and the need for youth-friendly health services and counseling centers, particularly on issues concerning marriage and reproductive health. Wider awareness should also be raised on risks related to drug and tobacco consumption. Similarly, a healthier lifestyle should be encouraged through a balanced diet and regular exercise. Marginalized groups suggested expanding health insurance coverage and improving tools and legislation related to medical sectors and professionals' accountability. During some thematic consultations, people also stressed the need to enhance quality control on food products (at all levels of the production cycle), and to sustain the agricultural sector to mitigate prices fluctuation of local food items.



*"We have presented a list of demands to former MPs, including female deputies, but we will do so again since we trust that our demands will be adopted and debated under the Dome."*

H.E. Asma Khader, Secretary General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women, Consultation with CSOs, Irbid, 19 Feb 2013



*"Development cannot be completely and comprehensively inclusive unless the persons living with disabilities are accounted for"*

Interview with Ms. Alia Zureikat, Director, Communication and International Relations, Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities (HCD), March 2013



## AREA OF CHANGE 3:



*Enhance accountability, respect Human Rights and contribute to regional stability*



### Strategic messages

- **Strengthen responsive governance** to enhance responsibility and set appropriate accountability systems in institutions; make efforts to improve and sustain transparency in the decision making process.
- **Civic engagement** as a critical factor to advance in the path of democratic and social reforms, also making use of social media to achieve broader youth participation.
- Foster the commitment for the respect of **Human Rights** within the adherence to international conventions; set effective measures to ensure the fulfillment of obligations.
- Call upon the international community and regional players to fulfill an effective role in the promotion of **peace and stability** in the region; enhance regional cooperation and bilateral ties among Arab countries.

### Trends and emerging issues

Jordan's political and social arenas have recently been characterized by an intense debate on institutional reforms, culminating with the adoption of the new electoral law and parliamentary elections (Jan 2013). Similarly, other critical steps have also taken place in recent months to advance a comprehensive national agenda for reform. People's expectations on systemic reforms include further measures to counter corruption, and robust actions to reduce unemployment. Several stakeholders stated that persisting favoritism and forms of corruption generate a perception of inefficiency of the public and private sphere among citizens. The phenomenon of "Wasta" (nepotism and cronyism) and other practices are perceived as one of the causes of the lack of transparency across sectors.

The so-called "Arab Spring" that has marked the region over the past two years has seen young people publicly declare their own right to be more actively involved in the country's process of democratic and social transformations. 60% of Jordan's population is under the age of 30, and youth's limited participation in national decision making has so far resulted in feeble civic engagement.

Young people indicated the importance of human rights and rule of law as milestones for enabling participation in public life and for sustaining freedom of expression.



Jordan's reservations on specific provisions of some International Conventions, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), are seen as limitations to benefit from the full potential offered by those conventions.

Conflicts and instability in the neighboring countries, particularly the effects of the Syrian conflict, are true concerns and are viewed as potentially destabilizing factors for national security. The flow of refugees fleeing violence is placing an immense pressure on national scarce resources and livelihoods. It is also believed that support from the international community is far from adequate.

## Priorities

Youth in Jordan are keen to play a more prominent role in the social and political arena, also through social media and volunteerism; and traditional media should support the youth call for a positive change of society. Efforts to counter corruption and promote transparency and accountability in decision making should be intensified.

The dedication and determination of youth to strengthen their own culture of citizenship, “shared values” and to promote awareness of citizens’ rights and duties are sharp reminders of the importance of their contributions. CSOs often referred to the effectiveness of local communities’ engagement in advancing in the path towards democratic and social reforms. According to the online community and the media professionals, a more conducive environment for journalists to perform their duties should be ensured, so that the active interaction of citizens with media could take place. This could include setting up an efficient system

to support the media “watchdog” role. Responsive governance is linked to a stronger commitment towards respecting Human Rights. Many women and persons living with disabilities referred to the necessity of strengthening monitoring systems to ensure the fulfillment of international obligations. Palestinian students from the UNRWA camps were also consulted, and mainly conveyed the need to address their challenges in terms of job opportunities. On a global perspective, they stated that the fight against poverty and the commitment to end violence against women and children should be priorities worldwide.

Beyond the national level, young people consider that only through fostering the regional dialogue and adopting common and coherent positions among Arab States can governments actively promote democracy. For CSOs, major efforts should be made to support countries in political transition, and increased regional cooperation would help to cope with the negative consequences of conflicts and fragilities.

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***“The so- called Arab Spring was a result of the fact that young people were not heard enough”***

**Male participant, National Forum with CSOs, Amman, 2 March 2013**

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***“I hope that one day I will be able to get my views and ideas across to decision makers”***

**Young participant, Focus group discussion with youth, Nov 2012**

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***“Hosting the Syrian refugees constitutes a new economic burden and puts considerable pressure on the limited resources of the state. In spite of these difficulties and growing financial pressure on education, health, infrastructure, and labor markets in the Kingdom, we will continue to provide help and assistance to them”***

**Consultation with CSOs, Irbid, 19 Feb 2013**

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## AREA OF CHANGE 4:



*Enhance awareness on environment, promote renewable energy and address water scarcity*



### Strategic messages

- Place **environmental sustainability** and the effective management of strategic and vital resources (including water access and energy independence) at the core of growth policies and development strategies.

### Trends and emerging issues

Jordan is being increasingly impacted by the noticeable effects of climate change and other environmental challenges. Like other countries in the region, it has taken action through policies and plans that address risks and adapt to adverse trends. As a semi-arid country with approximately only 7% arable land, Jordan's current expansion of urban areas represent a threat to sustainable development and to key productive sectors, such as agriculture. Despite several programmes encouraging the use of alternative sources, renewable energies account for just 1.8% of the national energy supply. A transition is seen as essential to move towards greener energy resources that would reduce the energy supplies high cost and limit the dependency on overseas supplies. Jordan ranks as the fourth most water scarce country in the world, with aquifer and groundwater wells being progressively depleted at untenable rates. Insufficient water treatment and sanitation services, as well as an increasing pressure on natural resources are exacerbated by the steadily rising population. Similarly, gaps persist in communities' awareness of disaster risks, in a country presenting several geological and hydro-meteorological vulnerabilities.

### Priorities

Integrated management of natural resources, and actions to cope with the effects of climate change emerged as a cross-cutting issue that impacts all development sectors. Volunteers stressed the urgency for public institutions to be more committed in raising people's awareness on environmental sustainability, effective use of water and recycling.

Private sector representatives also believed that the national industrial capacity should invest more in new



technologies and green economy, as innovative ways to create green jobs. Given the current high cost of processing renewable technologies, academia and think-tanks experts identified key viable approaches. These included:

- Private sector investments on renewable energies - and especially solar energy - should be supported with incentives;
- Research and development should be enhanced in partnership with universities to make new and cleaner technologies' costs more affordable;
- Widespread efforts should also encourage domestic use of alternative energies and the benefits of "green buildings".

Government and public institutions identified the promotion of policies towards enhanced technologies for surface water utilization and sea water desalinization as essential. They also highlighted the need to improve the water sector management. Academia and think-tanks discussed the need for better water harvesting, specifically through improved technologies for water collection, storage distribution, and a gradual shift to low water-demanding crops.

Key environmental actors should be strongly engaged in monitoring desertification and protecting biodiversity, while strict controls should apply on the use of pesticides and fertilizers.

Strengthening the communities' resilience to disasters is another vitally important issue. The main priorities are the effective implementation of international protocols and the improvement of coordination mechanisms at national and local level. Public institutions agreed that Disaster Risk

Reduction has to be pursued through policies and capacity development of key actors, as well as instruments such as early warning systems and disaster databases. Due to the urban expansion, a new mindset for city planning is perceived as essential. Policy makers should also adhere to gender-responsive and child-friendly urban design frameworks, infrastructures for persons living with disabilities, as well as a clean and safe and cost effective public transportation system.

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*“Not only would the green economy be an important tool to protect the environment, but it can also lead to the creation of many green jobs”*

Meeting with government, Amman, 16 Dec 2012

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*“If nobody knows what environmental sustainability is, how can we ensure it?”*

Male participant, Disaster Risk Reduction workshop, Aqaba, 19 Dec 2012

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## 4. How can we build on the consultations?

The post-2015 consultations have brought together views from both stakeholders and individual citizens; views that express a broad spectrum of issues of significance for the development agenda of Jordan, the Arab region, and the broader global context. Throughout the process, the UN and partners realized the importance of open dialogue and building on the momentum created by the consultations. UN and stakeholders' engagement in the initiative will continue at the same three levels of discussion that have characterized the post-2015 process: global, national, and regional.

Member States will ultimately play the leading role in the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda, and in the related negotiations, which will run until 2015. Through this broad multi-stakeholder dialogue, the UN provides Member States with critical inputs. The MY World survey will continue to be a key instrument to interact with citizens around the globe, assessing people's priorities for a better world. Efforts at all levels will be made to expand the outreach until late 2015.

CSOs will continue to be widely engaged at all levels and will prepare a summary of major initiatives gathering inputs from the civil society all over the world, targeting advocacy windows and ongoing intergovernmental processes. In the Arab region, the coalition of CSOs established for post-2015, led by Karama-Jordan, agreed to sustaining the dialogue and to build on the existing regional network and cooperation among actors of the region.

The UN Country Team in Jordan and stakeholders will expand the dialogue across the society on the post-2015 development agenda by capitalizing on the resources and partnerships established throughout the process so far. Social Media will also continue playing a major role. A strategic approach to target youth and disseminate the MY World survey has been developed. Virtual platforms are being used to inform the public of global, regional and national events. Several initiatives are being launched through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts, the YouTube channel, the WorldWeWant2015 page and the



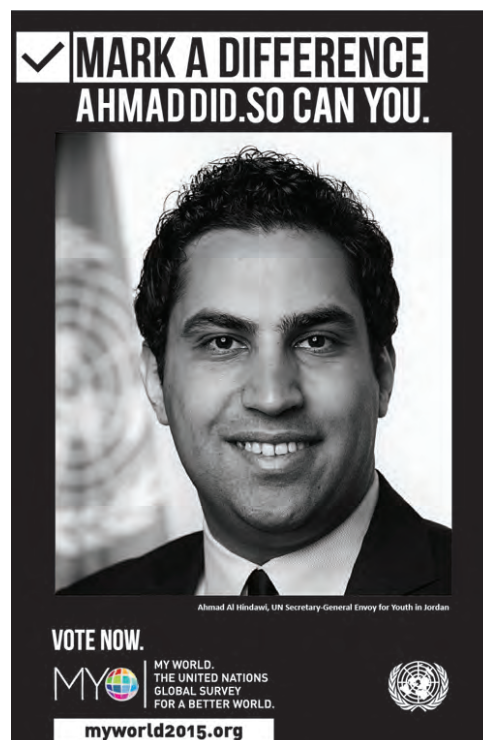
UN website. To facilitate harmonization of the outcomes of the national dialogue with the UN Jordan long-term development commitments, linkages to the ongoing UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2013-2017 have been established. Sectoral analytical papers were prepared for the benefit of the UNDAF working groups focused on systemic reform, environment, youth, and social equity.

In parallel, the Jordanian National CSOs Coalition involved in the consultations agreed, along with representatives of various development and women CSOs, to launch the Jordanian Forum for Development, with Sisterhood Is Global Institute (SIGI) as its umbrella organization. This forum could offer an additional venue to keep the dialogue open and strengthen coordination among concerned parties.

## 5. Special Focus: the “Mark A Difference” Campaign

To include the largest number of people in this dialogue, the United Nations globally launched the “Mark A Difference” campaign, aimed to promote the ‘MY World’ survey. This campaign started in Jordan in May 2013 under the leadership of the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator. Individuals are requested to select 6 out of 16 possible issues that they personally think would make the most difference to their lives, and those of their family.

With around 23,000 ballots by mid-October 2013, Jordan has collected more votes than any other country in the Arab Region. The goal is to reach 50,000 votes by end of the year, a challenging but achievable task. The campaign is assisted by a wide array of partners, including local organizations, media outlets and private companies. To reach out to local communities and rural areas, 40 partner grassroots organizations have greatly assisted in the dissemination of the survey, using their own projects and activities as a catalyst. The campaign is also promoted on UN social media, web and newspapers, broadcasted through radio spots and via 25,000 SMS. Between 2-8 September, UN Jordan and partners participated in the global “social media rally” aimed at reaching **one million votes** during the UN General Assembly in September 2013.



Preliminary results from Jordan show that the first priority identified by voters is **better job opportunities**. This is followed by **better education, honest and responsive government and better healthcare**. Not surprisingly, these results seem to confirm the consultations main findings and the key messages presented in this report. A wide consensus around critical priorities appears to have been reached at this stage.

Compared with the global results of the MY World survey, the order of the same four priority concerns is slightly different. At the global level, better education and better healthcare received the highest number of votes, followed by better job opportunities and honest and responsive government. This confirms that the existing MDGs continue to have universal importance, and that there is an unfinished agenda that the next global agreement will have to address.

Youth are the biggest factor for the success of this campaign.



Building on the enthusiasm showed by the youth during the post-2015 national consultations, the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Team decided to take their passion further, and engage youth directly in raising awareness on the campaign on a national level. Around 200 “Mark A Difference” volunteers (aged between 13-30 and mainly ‘recruited’ through a call on Facebook) assist the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in the dissemination of the survey in their communities across Jordan.

The volunteers’ unfaltering engagement has led to recognition. On 25 September in New York the “Mark A Difference” volunteers and the Office of the UN Resident Coordi-

nator in Jordan were announced as the winners of the “**MY World outreach award for the Arab States Region**”, under the Millennium Campaign initiative aimed at acknowledging the key contributions of “MY World” partners globally.

In addition to the “Mark A Difference” volunteers, 200 more volunteers from the following organizations are also cooperating in the outreach to local communities: Queen Zein Al Sharaf Institute for Development (ZENID), Jordan River Foundation (JRF), Irbid Youth Volunteers, Family Kitchen, Eye on The Future, X-Feer, Tkiyet Um Ali, Super Volunteers, Ja3amiati, All Jordan Youth Commission - Irbid, Sisterhood is Global Institute, Nashama Al Aqaba, King Hussein Foundation, LOYAC, Y-Peer and the Peace Corps.



*“Of course I want to vote, but I also would like to help the United Nations make other Jordanians vote”*

Khalid, Mark A Difference volunteer, July 2013



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**Technical content:**

© Mr. Giordano Segneri (lead)

© Ms. Marta Garbarino

© Mr. Alberto Natta

**External editing:**

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