

US-Arab Tradeline



National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce
المجلس التجاري العربي الأمريكي

In This Issue:

Articles Page

Jordan's King Abdullah 1

From the President's Desk:

Jordan: Leading the Pack with Vision and Verve 2

NUSACC Honors Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham .. 3

Bahrain and U.S. Sign Free Trade Agreement 4

Yemen Gaining Ground in Search for Investment. 6

Roundtable at NUSACC Explores Reform & Terrorism in Saudi Arabia 7

Jordan's ICT Forum 8

Marketing ICT and Extending Jordan's REACH 8

The REACH Initiative: Why It Has Flourished in Jordan 9

int@j: Jordan's ICT Advocates ..10

Jordanian Educational Software Benefits New Jersey 10

Intel Corporation: Helping to Realize Jordan's Potential ... 11

Q&A with H.E. Karim Kawar, Jordan's Ambassador to the U.S. 12

World Economic Forum 2005 in Jordan13

American University to be Established in Aqaba 14

ProgressSoft: A Jordanian Success Story 14

Jordan: Key Business Contacts 15

NUSACC Welcomes New Senior Fellow Kevin Woelflein 16

NUSACC

1023 15th Street, NW

Fourth Floor

Washington, DC 20005

Tel: (202) 289-5920

Fax: (202) 289-5938

www.nusacc.org

E-mail: tradeline@nusacc.org

Volume XII, No. 7 • November/December 2004

Jordan's King Abdullah: Giving Voice to Arab Aspirations for Reform

The National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) is pleased to welcome H.M. King Abdullah bin Al-Hussein to the United States. King Abdullah II is a tireless advocate for reform – evolutionary rather than revolutionary – and Jordan has become a crucible for progressive change in the region. With this in mind, NUSACC is pleased to provide excerpts from a speech that H.M. King Abdullah delivered recently in Chicago, Illinois.



Today, countries large and small, rich and poor, are influencing where our global system is headed. As people's actions impact events, so do their ideas, aspirations, and relationships.

Reform is an essential part of my region's future, [yet] it must emerge from within our own societies. Leadership for such reform *has* emerged. In support of freedom and tolerance. In favor of transparent, responsive, accountable governance. For a civil society, where human rights, gender equality, and the rule of law are all respected.

And may I also say, these are the deepest values of Islam. They are the historic values that drove the ancient Arab world's humanism and its pioneering civic development. They are the values that, today, make millions of Muslims great citizens, here in America and around the world.

The equal dignity of all people; respect for reason and law; tolerance; personal responsibility: these and other principles can drive, and are driving, a new era of progress in the Middle East.

But we must not think only in terms of individual programs. There must also be a strong framework – a recovery plan that can give people, especially youth, a sense that they will share in the promise of our time. I'm talking about a Marshall Plan, as it were, for the recovery of the Middle East.

As most of you know, the original Marshall Plan reached out to the people of Europe at a time of tremendous scarcity and despair. It was a time when the forces of a closed world were actively trying to take

advantage of people's hopelessness and fear. But the Marshall Plan gave Europeans the support they needed to build strong, free societies.

What could be a better description of what is needed now for the Middle East?

Make no mistake: the Arab-Israeli conflict remains the central hurdle to peace and progress in my region, and in the world. While its violence and

despair continue, extremists will continue to spread their hatred and division. It is time to listen to the people, Israelis and Palestinians, who tell us so clearly: "Give us security, peace, and justice."



Jordan was the first Arab country to sign a Free Trade Agreement with the United States, and that agreement has already contributed significantly to economic growth and opportunity. In the economy, we have encouraged innovation, enterprise, and partnership with the private sector.

In education, our focus is on empowering youth. Today, whether in busy urban centers or remote desert communities, you will find students surfing the Internet. First-graders are learning English as a second language. University students are learning information technologies and the skills of critical thinking.

The American University of Jordan is one of the initiatives for which H.M. Queen Rania and I have great hope. This private, non-profit institution is scheduled to open in 2009. It will be partnered with leading U.S. institutions; it will be open to all students in the region; and it will adopt the standards of world-class scholarship: open inquiry, freedom of thought, and freedom of expression.

Great opportunities lie ahead. A world where all people share in the promise of human knowledge, participate in global prosperity and growth, and fulfill their human potential. This is our goal in Jordan, and this is Jordan's goal for the Middle East. ♦

For related articles on Jordan's economic reform and IT initiatives, see pages 8 – 15.



His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan

Courtesy of the Royal Court



NUSACC President David Hamod

Jordan: Leading the Pack with Vision and Verve

We have adopted a far-reaching plan that addresses the key areas of good governance, political freedoms, women's rights, judicial reform, economic reform, education reform, and the liberalization of the economy. We also are strongly committed to a key role by civil society. Our aim is to move towards a system that respects diversity and guarantees pluralism at all times so that democracy is not used by any who might opt to be subject to it once and then deny it to others.

H.M. King Abdullah II
Washington, D.C., May 6, 2004

No Head of State in the Arab world today is better positioned than H.M. King Abdullah of Jordan to bridge the yawning gap between East and West.

On the one hand, he is making the case to his people and the nations of the region that they must adopt unprecedented reforms if the Arab world is to safeguard its political and economic future in an increasingly globalized world.

On the other hand, in meetings with Administration officials, Members of Congress, and the U.S. business community, King Abdullah bravely carries to U.S. policymakers the Arab world's messages about terrorism, Islam, Palestine, and Iraq.

In both cases, it is a challenging and often thankless job.

King Abdullah is a regular visitor to the United States, yet his visit at this juncture carries a special significance because the Middle East is in an extraordinary period of transition:

- The Palestinian people are searching for new leadership after the passing of the PLO's larger-than-life Chairman, Yasser Arafat;
- Iraq is battling widespread violence as it lurches in fits and starts toward free and fair elections;
- The region has lost one of its most pivotal "wise men," H.H. Shaikh Zayed of the UAE, who historically played a central role in helping the Arab world to speak with one voice;
- Ariel Sharon's conflicted coalition in Israel is teetering on the edge of collapse, raising new fears about how deteriorating political conditions may stymie fragile new peace talks;
- George W. Bush, about to start his second term as President, brings a new foreign policy team to the equation – raising many questions about

how this new team will tackle such sensitive issues as U.S. security and democracy in the Middle East.

This is indeed a time of transition. And as with any transition, there are remarkable opportunities and risks on the line.

Jordan, of course, is no stranger to taking risks. With very few natural resources, Jordan has used the resourcefulness and determination of its people to survive in a very tough neighborhood. Jordan's extraordinary commitment to human resources has enabled the Hashemite Kingdom to blaze trails that few others in the region would even consider.

Jordan was the first nation in the Arab world to sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States, for example, nearly five years before the next signatory, Morocco (2004). As a result of Jordan's willingness to make sacrifices and take a chance on the FTA, it has enjoyed unprecedented access to the U.S. market.

In the same spirit, Jordan made a commitment in 1999 to launch the REACH Initiative in a bid to become a world-class player in the field of Information Technology. As articles in this issue of *U.S.-Arab Tradeline* make clear, Jordan has some remarkable home-grown success stories, in no small part as a result of close cooperation between Jordan's public and private sectors.

When it comes to bolstering its knowledge-based economy, Jordan is once again pulling out all the stops. The Hashemite Kingdom has placed itself at the nexus of technology and educational reform like no one else in the Arab world and, as a result, the people of Jordan are reaping benefits in the workplace and at home.

Jordan's willingness to go out on a limb is gaining currency, so to speak, and this is not lost on other nations in the region. Some of these countries will "draw even" with Jordan over time, of course. But for now, Jordan is enjoying the view at the head of the pack, and there's no looking back.

David Hamod
President

NUSACC Honors Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham

On September 29, in front of a crowd of some 200 corporate leaders and ambassadors, NUSACC presented a Lifetime Achievement Award to The Honorable Spencer Abraham, U.S. Secretary of Energy. In making this award, NUSACC's leadership celebrated the more than two decades of public service that Secretary Abraham has given to his community and the United States.

"NUSACC is truly proud of Spence and what he has achieved, and the honor that we bestow on him

"He knows that government must do what it can to create an economic climate that fosters investment in emerging technologies."

NUSACC's Chairman, Don DeMarino, about Secretary Abraham

today is a small token of our gratitude and pride," said Don DeMarino, NUSACC's Chairman. "He has never lost his appreciation for his roots, and that has served him well through every phase of his public life."

DeMarino continued, "Spence has a desire to bring new solutions to bear on old problems, and this sets him apart from many in government. He appreciates the risks involved in exploring new paths, and he is not afraid to take those risks. He understands the hurdles that entrepreneurs face, particularly small business

owners, and he assists them. And he knows that government must do what it can to create an economic climate that fosters investment in emerging technologies. For these reasons and more, we are privileged today to honor



Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham (center) receives a Lifetime Achievement Award from Dan DeMarino, NUSACC's chairman (left), and David Hamod, NUSACC's President and CEO (right).

Spencer Abraham, a genuine American success story."

In receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award, Secretary Abraham said, "It is seldom the case that one has the opportunity to be honored – particularly in this town! – so I want to say how grateful I am to receive this award. In addition to thanking NUSACC, I want to express my appreciation to the members of the ambassadorial community who came here today to share their goodwill."

In his concluding remarks, Secretary Abraham noted, "It is exciting to see organizations like the Chamber doing such a great job in tackling economic challenges and developing economic opportunities between the United States and the Arab world. It is also great to see increasing collaboration between the Chamber's small and large companies in pursuit of a higher quality of life – both in the United States and in the Middle East. I hope that through the continuing success of this organization we will see even more of that collaboration in the future. Keep up the good work!" ♦



Secretary Abraham receives a congratulatory handshake from Senator Chuck Hagel at an awards ceremony sponsored by the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce.



*U.S. Secretary of Energy
Spencer Abraham*

NUSACC would like to thank the following sponsors for their support of the awards ceremony:



ChevronTexaco



Kuwait Petroleum Corporation



Shell



Occidental Petroleum Corporation



US-Arab Tradeline

Design

Rick Clark Illustration & Design



"I would like to sincerely thank the co-secretariats of the US-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement Coalition, The Business Council for International Understanding, The National Foreign Trade Council, and the National US-Arab Chamber of Commerce for their tremendous efforts in support of this historic agreement; an agreement that strengthens and deepens the distinguished relationship between our two countries."

Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali Al-Khalifa, Bahrain's Ambassador to the U.S.

Bahrain and U.S. Sign Free Trade Agreement

On September 14, the United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that promises to give an important boost to trade and investment between the two long-time trade partners and allies.

Ambassador Robert Zoellick, U.S. Trade Representative, said that the new FTA will "enhance commercial relations with an economic leader in the Gulf and set the stage for improving trade relations and expanding openness with other countries in the region, creating prosperity, opportunity, and hope. This Free Trade Agreement is the next step for a nation on the move. Free trade negotiations often last more than a year, but Bahrain's decisive embrace of open trade and free markets paved the way for these negotiations to close in four months."

The Bahraini side was led by the Minister of Finance and National Economy, H.E. Abdulla Hassan Saif, who described the agreement as "the capstone of five millennia of trade and commerce."

The signing ceremony capped months of high-level negotiations between the two nations and ushered in the first such agreement with an Arabian Gulf nation. Before the FTA can take effect, however, it must still receive the official blessing of Congress, which is expected to take action in the early months of 2005. One Member of Congress recently described Congressional approval of the U.S.-Bahrain FTA as "as close to a slam-dunk as you can get."

"It is not without significance that Bahrain still finds itself as the most important gateway to the region sitting along the potentially crucial trade route between a resurgent Iraq and the great Indian-Pakistani subcontinent."

H.E Abdulla Hassan Saif
Minister of Finance and National Economy

The Bahrain Caucus on Capitol Hill has been led by Congressmen Paul Ryan (R-WI) and Jim Turner (D-TX), each of whom has been to Bahrain to gain a firsthand understanding of that Gulf Kingdom. Both Members of Congress attended the signing ceremony, which took place in the historic Indian Treaty Room

of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, where the UN Charter and the treaty establishing the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were signed.

Also attending the ceremony were members of the U.S.-Bahrain FTA Business Coalition, led by Alcoa and Citigroup and coordinated by NUSACC, the Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU), and the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC). The Business Coalition represents a broad range of industries including construction, energy, services, autos, pharmaceutical, information technology, and defense companies.

According to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), two-way trade between the two nations was nearly \$900 million in 2003. On the first day that the new FTA goes into effect, 100 percent of



While Minister Saif and Ambassador Zoellick sign the FTA, government leaders look on. Standing (from left) Representative Jim Turner; Representative Paul Ryan; Dr. Naser Al Balooshi, Bahrain's Economic Representative in the U.S.; H.E. Khalifa Al-Khalifa, Bahrain's Ambassador to the U.S.; Catherine Novelli, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative; the Honorable Ron Neumann, outgoing U.S. Ambassador to Bahrain.

consumer and industrial products and 81 percent of U.S. agricultural exports will be duty-free. Bahrain will open its services market wider than any previous FTA partner, streamline digital trade, protect intellectual property, facilitate government procurement, and provide for effective enforcement of labor and environmental laws.

In 2003, U.S. exports totaled more than half a billion dollars. This new trade opening will expand opportunities for exports of aircraft, machinery, vehicles, pharmaceutical and agricultural products such as meats, fruits and vegetables, cereals, and dairy products.

The FTA signing also fulfills an important recommendation of the 9/11 Commission Report, which noted:

The U.S. government has announced the goal of working toward a Middle East Free Trade

Area, or MEFTA, by 2013. The United States has been seeking comprehensive free trade agreements (FTAs) with the Middle Eastern nations most firmly on the path to reform. The U.S.-Israeli FTA was enacted in 1985, and Congress implemented an FTA with Jordan in 2001. Both agreements have expanded trade and investment, thereby supporting domestic economic reform. In 2004, new FTAs were signed with Morocco and Bahrain, and are awaiting Congressional approval. These models are drawing the interest of their neighbors. Muslim countries can become full participants in the rules-based global trading system, as the United States considers lowering the trade barriers with the poorest Arab nations.

Recommendation: A comprehensive U.S. strategy to counter terrorism should include economic policies that encourage development, more open societies, and opportunities for people to improve the lives of their families and to enhance prospects for their children's future.

The 9/11 Commission Report, pages 378-379

One week after the FTA was signed, the Bahrain Gateway held a luncheon with business leaders in New York City to commemorate the historic signing. A variety of government leaders addressed the crowd, including Minister Abdulla Saif of Bahrain and Assistant U.S.



Minister Saif (left) and Ambassador Zoellick (right) "shake on it."



Minister Saif (center), Catherine Novelli of USTR, and David Hamod of NUSACC visit at the Bahrain Gateway event in New York City.

Trade Representative Catherine Novelli. Three representatives of the private sector also served as guest speakers: Antranig Sarkissian, Vice President Group Marketing Executive at Citigroup; Tawfiq Al Moayyed, Deputy Chairman, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and David Hamod, President & CEO of NUSACC.

"Even in these times of instantaneous communications, Bahrain's unique combination of location and history permits easy access to clients and home offices. It is often said by senior financial officers that in Bahrain, one can do business with both Tokyo and New York during a full working day."

H.E Abdulla Hassan Saif
Minister of Finance and National Economy

In his remarks, Hamod described Bahrain as “the Little Engine That Can. Bahrain – with its resourcefulness, determination, and visionary leadership – takes on tough jobs and succeeds at them in ways that bigger engines can only dream about.”

In a recent statement, Hamod noted, “NUSACC is proud and grateful for the opportunity to support the FTA discussions between these two important allies.”

Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali Al-Khalifa, Bahrain's Ambassador to the United States, expressed his appreciation for the U.S.-Bahrain FTA Coalition this way: “I would like to sincerely thank the Secretariat of the US-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement Coalition – The Business Council for International Understanding, The National Foreign Trade Council, and the National US-Arab Chamber of Commerce – for its tremendous efforts in support of this historic agreement, an agreement that strengthens and deepens the distinguished relationship between our two countries.” ♦

"This FTA is a solid agreement. It sets the pace for the rest of the Gulf and is a strong model for the Arab world as a whole."

David Hamod
President & CEO of
NUSACC

Yemen Gaining Ground in Search for Investment

"Yemen today has undergone a transformation in recognition of the fact that the private sector role is essential for development."

On November 17, NUSACC and the Middle East Free Trade Agreement (MEFTA) Coalition co-hosted a roundtable discussion featuring H.E. Ahmed Sofan, Yemen's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation. Held at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative in conjunction with Yemen's Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) talks, the event was limited to 25 U.S. business leaders.



Yemen's Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Sofan (center) and USTR's Catherine Novelli (right) address business leaders at a roundtable discussion on Yemen.

Minister Sofan, who has helped to guide Yemen's development efforts for much of the past two decades, highlighted some of the positive trends taking place in his nation. The World Bank and Transparency International, he suggested, have both lauded steps taken by Yemen in recent years to encourage transparency and fight corruption.

In the same vein, the financial community is showing increasing confidence in Yemen's economic stability and financial institutions. Yemen has not defaulted on any loans, for example, and its debt-to-GDP ratio (27 percent) is the lowest in the region, Minister Sofan said. The nation's cash reserves are in good shape, he continued, and rating agencies recently upgraded Yemen's credit worthiness. In addition, the Export Import Bank of the United States has enhanced its presence and increased its credit line in Yemen.

On the security front, Minister Sofan said, Yemen has closely aligned its policies of fighting terrorism with those of the United States and the international community. He pointed out that since the bombing of the USS Cole by Yemeni extremists, there have been no instances of terrorism, and the Government of Yemen has cracked down on local groups involved in questionable activities.

In part because of this "get tough" approach, Minister Sofan suggested, there have been no kidnappings in Yemen since 2001.

Minister Sofan said that in the past, Yemen, like many developing nations, relied very heavily on the government to drive the economy. Yemen today, he said, has undergone a "transformation" in recognition of the fact that the "private sector role is essential for development." On average, he said, it now takes 96 days to establish a business in Yemen, and the government is working to reduce that number further.

The hydrocarbon sector holds "great promise," said Minister Sofan, noting that three-quarters (74 percent) of the hydrocarbon-rich areas are not yet part of any concessions.

Minister Sofan also touted the telecommunications sector, noting that a major new opportunity is "nearly ready to go." Yemen is actively seeking private investment in the telecom sector and, to this end, some 25 – 40 percent of the new venture's shares will be set aside for the public. Moreover, according to Minister Sofan, strict limits will be placed on the number of shares that can be owned or controlled by any one individual.

In some instances, the Government of Yemen is turning to outside consultants to provide expertise or advice that will serve the business community and investors. Minister Sofan admitted, for example, that there are some "holes to repair in Yemen's procurement practices." In response to such problems, the Government of Yemen is now following the World Bank's procurement procedures and Yemen recently hired Crown Agents to help plug these holes. In another example, the Government of Yemen asked Lloyds to look into the tenfold increase in rates of maritime freight insurance. Lloyds determined that Yemen is remarkably safe and secure and that the huge insurance increase is unfounded.

In concluding his remarks, Minister Sofan invited members of the U.S. business community to come to Yemen to see for themselves what steps the nation has taken to reform its economy, bring about political change, and stabilize its financial markets. The new level of transparency in business, he concluded, will "produce results that will raise your eyebrows!" ♦

For more information about specific projects in Yemen, click onto the Web sites of Yemen's General Investment Authority (www.giay.org) and the Aden Free Zone (www.aden-freezone.com).

Roundtable at NUSACC Explores Reform and Terrorism in Saudi Arabia

"Envision yourselves in a museum in front of an ancient tapestry that depicts a famous and mythical tale of love and pain. Being old, it has one small square inch at the bottom right-hand corner with frayed threads. Imagine that a camera zooms onto this square inch and projects it onto a screen the size of the original tapestry. And so, through the power of this medium, you have lost sight of the beautiful story of the tapestry and you see only the negative image of the minute, frayed fault."

On October 7, NUSACC and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) hosted a roundtable discussion on *Reform and Terrorism in Saudi Arabia*. Mr. Amr Khashoggi was the featured speaker for the event, which was held at NUSACC and attended by upwards of 50 public and private sector representatives. Khashoggi is CEO of the Amkest Group in Saudi Arabia and is a regular visitor to the United States.

Khashoggi talked about internal pressures for reform, with more than 60 percent of the population under the age of 20, and external pressures, including those from the United States and Europe. Khashoggi noted that



Amr Khashoggi, CEO of Amkest Group, addressed a full house at NUSACC.

many in the West seek to transform Saudi Arabia into the image of America and Europe. "I believe this is counter-productive," Khashoggi stated, "and it undermines the efforts of Saudis who want to move the country forward, yet not lose sight of the important role Islam and our historical traditions play in the development of the individual, the family, and society."

Khashoggi noted that steps have been taken toward reform in such areas as the media, labor, insurance, capital markets, and tourism. There are now greater opportunities for women in the workplace, he noted, and municipal elections are on track.

"Everyone recognizes that we must progress, and we must overcome the challenges facing our nation," Khashoggi stated. "We need to come up with internally developed solutions that are the result of national debate and that have gained what you in America would call

'buy in' from a highly conservative population. This debate will take time and must be based on open, transparent, and honest dialogue, and the extent of it will dictate the speed and pace of implementing reforms in Saudi Arabia."

On terrorism, Khashoggi noted that an environment conducive to reform can only be maintained once matters of terrorism and internal security have been adequately addressed.

He outlined steps that the Saudi government has taken to address terrorism, including:

- Improving coordination among security agencies;
- Freezing the assets of individuals and groups designated as supporter of terrorism;
- Instituting new banking policies and procedures;
- Monitoring financial transactions; and
- Instituting harsh penalties for money laundering and terrorism financing.

Khashoggi noted that Juan Zurate of the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Terror Financing said recently that the "targeted actions undertaken by the Kingdom have already produced tangible results, and the systematic changes made by the Kingdom could prove even more effective in defeating terrorist financing over the long term."

Khashoggi highlighted the fact that Saudi Arabia is the largest market for the U.S. in the Middle East, and Saudi private investment in the U.S. exceeds \$500 billion. "Saudi Arabia is ranked the 25th largest importer/exporter worldwide," he said, "and in 2002, trade between the Kingdom and the U.S. amounted to \$18 billion. U.S. companies are the largest foreign investors in the Kingdom, with over 280 Saudi-U.S. joint ventures."

The United States and Saudi Arabia "have been allies and friends for 50 years," Khashoggi observed. "The two countries fought Iraqi aggression together in the first Gulf War and continue to cooperate after the fall and capture of Saddam Hussein. The basis of our relationship is strategic cooperation, and we have a long history of successes."

Khashoggi expressed surprise at how little the Saudis and the Americans understand each other as people—even after all this time. "We need to reach out... to communicate with one another," he noted. "It's about bridging the gap of understanding, or bridging the gap of ignorance. We're not there yet. Still, small steps are being taken in that direction."

"Let me close by saying that Saudi Arabia and the U.S., despite what anyone might say, share many important values and respect and understand each other's differences. Let us not allow the likes of Osama Bin Laden to succeed in driving a wedge between our two nations." ♦



Amr Khashoggi takes questions about reform and terrorism in Saudi Arabia.

"Everyone
recognizes that we
must progress, and
we must overcome
the challenges
facing our nation."

Amr Khashoggi, CEO
Amkest Group of Saudi Arabia

Jordan ICT Forum: "A Global Meeting of the Minds in the Heart of Digital Arabia"

John Chambers of Cisco Systems Cites Explosion of ICT Use in the Arab World

"Technological development, legislative change, and expansion of the capabilities of human resources have all played a key role in convincing global and regional investors that investment opportunities are available in our dynamically growing market."

Dr. Fawaz Zu'bi, Jordan's Minister of Information and Communications Technology

Jordan recently staged its third Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Forum, a successor to Forums that the Hashemite Kingdom hosted in 2000 and 2002. The September 14 & 15 event, held on the shores of Jordan's Dead Sea, focused for the first time on the *regional* ICT sector with a view to consolidating the regional market, taking advantage of economies of scale, and promoting a more competitive investment climate in the Arab world.

"The Forum set the agenda for future development and growth of the region's ICT market through promoting a path of a regional cooperation and synergy," says Dr. Fawaz Zu'bi, Jordan's Minister of Information and Communications Technology. "Technological development, legislative change, and expansion of the capabilities of human resources have all played a key role in convincing global and regional investors that investment opportunities are available in our dynamically growing market."

As if to underscore this point, John Chambers, President and CEO of Cisco Systems, noted that there has been a 219 percent increase in Internet usage in the Middle East during the period 2000 – 2004. Regional leaders included Saudi Arabia (650 percent increase), Egypt (500 percent), Bahrain (389 percent), Qatar (320 percent), and Jordan (273 percent). Chambers stressed that future jobs will migrate to those nations with the best educated work forces, the most supportive governments, the most reliable infrastructures, and the most innovative programs.

Said Chambers: "The ICT market in this region is a dynamic and growing area, and I believe international enterprises recognize the value of the potential technology opportunities available. I truly believe Jordan can play a key role in shaping the region's critical technology infrastructure to create unprecedented growth, education, and productivity opportunities."

This year's Forum drew more than 600 delegates from around the world and featured 40 speakers, including H.M. King Abdullah II of Jordan. The Hashemite King touted the many advantages of Jordan as an ICT hub, but he admonished the Arab world against resting on its laurels. "As we move forward, the world moves faster," he said, noting that the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is responsible for just 1.5 percent of world exports and that only one out of three citizens in the region is able to find local employment.

Jordan used this year's Forum to launch the National ICT Policy and Strategy, inaugurate Jordan's National Broadband Network, draw attention to Jordan's e-Government program, announce the privatization of Jordan's postal service, and highlight an important new initiative to increase PC penetration and Internet uptake in Jordan.

At the Forum, the Information Technology Association of Jordan (int@j) announced that Jordan's ICT sector achieved 30 percent growth in revenues during the past year, with a particular increase in national exports.

According to Int@j, domestic revenues of the Kingdom's ICT sector topped \$226 million, achieving a growth of 20 percent compared to 2002. As for export revenues, they achieved 74 percent growth, reaching nearly \$70 million. Total revenues for the ICT sector hit \$295 million, achieving a 30 percent growth in comparison with 2002.

"Over the last few years, the ICT sector in Jordan has succeeded in positioning itself among the leading and fastest growing markets in the region; the results of our exports are further proof of the capabilities of this dynamic sector in sharing its expertise and solutions with regional and international markets," noted Marwan Juma, Chairman of int@j. "The development and the growth of the ICT sector has played a crucial role in creating new job opportunities and has been one of the key contributors in the growth of other sectors." ♦

Marketing ICT and Extending Jordan's REACH

Two years ago, Craig Barrett, President & CEO of Intel Corporation, noted that Jordan has "set a precedent for change in the Middle East region. It has demonstrated the achievements that can result from strong cooperation between the public and private sectors, particularly in the field of information and communications technology (ICT)."

This is high praise from one of the world's ICT pioneers. But it wasn't always this way. A decade ago, Jordan's Information Technology (IT) sector was virtually non-existent. Then came the REACH Initiative.

"For private firms, it was easy to blame government bureaucracy for lack of growth in the IT sector. We were given the opportunity to identify those obstacles and suggest solutions to overcome them," says Karim Kawar, Jordan's Ambassador to the United States, who was one of the driving forces behind the REACH initiative. "Some saw it as a major challenge, to get fierce competitors to sit in the same room and discuss the future of this nascent industry. Some of us saw it as a great opportunity!"

continued on next page

continued from previous page

In October 1999, Kawar and his colleagues in the Jordan Computer Society sent a report to H.M. King Abdullah II outlining an ambitious strategic plan that would turn Jordan into a regional ICT leader and internationally recognized exporter of ICT products and services. Within five years, the report noted, the fruits of the REACH Initiative would create 30,000 new jobs, attract \$150 million in foreign direct investment, and generate \$550 million in annual IT exports.

Today, five years after the launch of REACH, it is clear that the program has not hit all of its targets – in part because of recessions in the global ICT market, as well as violence in the Middle East. But the REACH Initiative has accomplished something that no one thought possible in the 1990s: It has developed an internationally competitive IT industry in Jordan – one that attracts foreign and local investment, generates high-value jobs, modernizes the nation's public and private sectors, and positions Jordan favorably in the world's increasingly important knowledge-based economy.

JORDAN ICT FORUM 2004

The REACH Initiative has also fostered unprecedented levels of cooperation between Jordan's government and the business community. According to REACH 4.0, the most recent report prepared by the Information Technology Association of Jordan (Int@j), "Public-private partnerships in Jordan have never been stronger or more dynamic, with the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (MoICT) working side by side with Jordan's IT industry association."

As a result, according to this same report, "REACH is now part of a truly national initiative for achieving e-readiness and beyond. The momentum that the launch of REACH first sparked has inspired a host of new initiatives designed to employ technology as a tool for bridging the digital divide and enhancing the lives of all Jordanians."

For more information about the REACH Initiative, check out its Web site at www.reach.jo. Of particular interest is the 2004 REACH 4.0 report, "An Updated Strategy and Action Plan for H.M. King Abdullah II." ♦

The REACH Initiative: Why It Has Flourished in Jordan

Jordan is on the cutting edge of ICT development in the Arab world. The centerpiece of this effort is the REACH Initiative, which has become a world-class program thanks to Jordan's visionary leadership and a remarkable partnership between that nation's public and private sectors.

Five years ago, the founders of REACH pinpointed the importance of developing a home-grown ICT industry in these terms:

"Rapid growth and accelerating innovation – central characteristics of the ICT industry – offer enormous opportunities. As with the Industrial Revolution before, the timing, positioning and actions of nations will determine those who will benefit from this Knowledge Revolution, and those who will be left behind. It creates a great sense of urgency, since delay will lead to incalculable opportunity costs, making catching-up ever more difficult."

The REACH Initiative, supported by USAID's Achievement of Market-Friendly Initiatives and Results (AMIR) Program, is a comprehensive framework that embraces actions in terms of:

- Regulatory Framework
- Enabling Environment (Infrastructure)
- Advancement Programs
- Capital & Finance
- Human Resource Development

Jordan is uniquely qualified to excel in Information and Communications Technologies for a variety of reasons:

Jordan's favorable location and position in the regional market. Its talented workforce, bilingual Arabic/English language capabilities, extensive relationships in the region, and time-zone local advantages, favorably position Jordan with respect to potential competitors.

Human-resource intensity. Software and IT services require skilled human capital. Jordan's well-educated workforce provides a comparative advantage for these activities. Students are enrolling in computer-related disciplines in record numbers, and there is a natural inclination and enthusiasm for developing IT skills that owes much to the country's relatively open intellectual environment.

Lack of distance or transportation constraints. Unlike manufacturing and tourism, which are affected by transportation mechanisms, software services are a "distance-less" industry. Its inputs and outputs are transmitted electronically, and there is relatively little fluctuation when it comes to disruptive external developments.

Low start-up capital requirements. This makes it easier and less risky for market entry by Jordanian firms, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). ♦

Jordan has "set a precedent for change in the Middle East region. It has demonstrated the achievements that can result from strong cooperation between the public and private sectors, particularly in the field of information and communications technology (ICT)."

Craig Barrett
President & CEO of Intel Corporation

"As with the Industrial Revolution before, the timing, positioning and actions of nations will determine those who will benefit from this Knowledge Revolution"

REACH Initiative



int@j is working to promote industry investment opportunities in Jordan, including Venture Capital (VC) prospects and Initial Public Offerings (IPOs)

int@j: Jordan's ICT Advocates

The Information Technology Association of Jordan (int@j), an outgrowth of the REACH Initiative, has become the premier advocacy group for expanding information and communications technology in Jordan. The mission of this non-profit association is to "represent, promote, and advance the Jordanian software and IT services industry in the global market."

int@j is working to fulfill its mission through the following objectives:

Advocate industry issues – represent ICT industry interests and lobby with government and international groups; propose national initiatives and conduct public relations efforts.

Promote industry investment opportunities in Jordan – promote Venture Capital (VC) and Initial Public Offerings (IPOs); form relationships with local export-oriented groups; represent the industry at conferences and trade shows; set up databases and publicize membership through web sites, newsletters, hyperlinks, promotional materials and advertising.

Provide industry research and market information – conduct market studies; disseminate local, regional and international opportunities; monitor market trends.

Effect standardization, certification and quality control in the ICT industry – promote certification bodies and their value; enforce an ICT industry code of ethics; standardize employment contracts and benefit packages.

Support human resource development – work with educational institutions to focus on critical skills; strengthen ties with local universities and collaborate with overseas universities; and initiate industry programs to benefit university students.

Advance industry intellectual property rights (IPR) – certify IPR compliance; update members in IPR law changes; and work toward local IPR regulations conducive to ICT industry growth.

Form international ICT industry alliances – actively seek alliances with global players; develop and attract venture capital funds; and disseminate success stories.

Manage industry stakeholder relations and resolve industry conflicts – build and reinforce bridges among association members and between association members and government, media, universities, NGOs and donors.

For more information, check out the int@j Web site at www.intaj.net ♦



Information Technology Association - Jordan

Jordanian Educational Software Benefits New Jersey

In one of the first instances of Jordanian information technology finding a niche in the U.S. market, the Integrated Technology Group (ITG) of Jordan has begun selling its "EduWave" software to school districts in New Jersey.

EduWave, an innovative K-12 instructional and electronic learning management solution, strengthens the ability of educators, students, and administrators to harness and enhance the learning experience of the Internet. In Jordan alone, EduWave serves over 3,000 schools, nearly 1.2 million students, over 50,000 teachers, and some 5,000 administrators. The Jordanian government has made the system its core national e-learning

platform, and other countries in the region are beginning to move in the same direction.

EduWave got its start in 1999 when ITG recognized the vast potential in the global e-learning industry and the critical need for learning management systems that were comprehensive enough to handle large-scale, countrywide deployments. The firm won its first major deal in 2003 when it contracted with Jordan's Ministry of Education to serve that nation's 3,200 public schools. A few months later, EduWave received the UN World Summit Award after being selected from over 800 products from 135 countries.

EduWave™
the Comprehensive e-Learning Platform



For more information on EduWave and other ITG products, please visit the company's website at www.itgsolutions.com. ♦



Intel Corporation: Helping to Realize Jordan's Potential

Intel Corporation, the world's largest chipmaker, has made significant investments in Jordan in recent years as a result of the Hashemite Kingdom's strong commitment to information technology (IT). Intel offers the latest technology solutions to multinational companies, local systems integrators, and independent software providers.

"Intel strongly believes in the need to spread the use of IT in cross-sections of society to help countries achieve a knowledge-based economy and compete at the global level," says Abdul Jarrar, Intel's Regional Government Affairs Manager for the Middle East, Turkey, and Africa. "In view of that, we support Jordan's IT initiatives and want to continue working with the Jordanian government to play a key role in enabling this transformation throughout the Kingdom."

Intel's first "Teach to the Future" program in the Middle East was established in Jordan in 2003. To date, more than 15,000 teachers in Jordan have been trained as part of this program, a worldwide effort to help both experienced teachers and pre-service teachers integrate technology into instruction. Participating teachers receive extensive instruction and resources to promote effective technology use in the classroom.

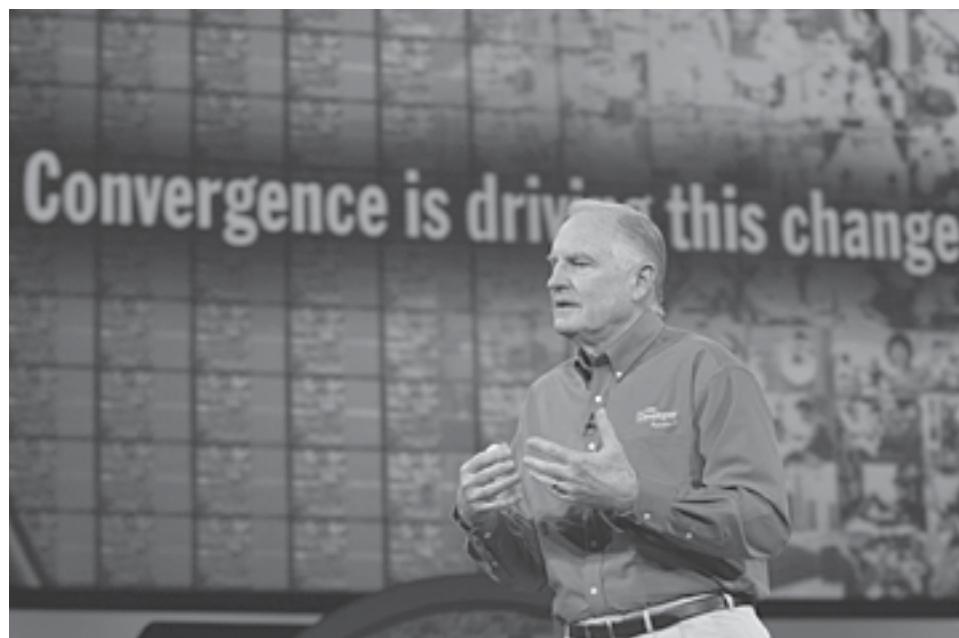
Launched in 2000, the "Teach to the Future" program has trained more than one million classroom teachers in 30 countries, and this number is expected to rise to two million teachers by the end of 2005.

Intel is also about to open the second Intel Computer Clubhouse in Jordan. At the Clubhouse, underserved youth have access to high-tech equipment and mentors in order to develop skills that encourage self-confidence and foster creativity and opportunities.

In 2002, when Intel CEO Craig Barrett gave the keynote address at the Jordan ICT Forum, Barrett inaugurated an Internet Laboratory (I-Lab) at the University of Jordan. The first I-Lab in the Arab world, it forms part of the University's King Abdullah II College of Information Technology.

The I-Lab provides an academic forum to test and

evaluate new entrepreneurial business models and their technical implementation with the assistance of Internet technologies and high-tech solutions. The I-Lab also provides a research and development environment for areas such as simulation, content translation and localization into the Arabic language, image processing,



Craig Barrett, CEO of Intel Corporation, during his keynote speech at IDF Spring 2004 in San Francisco.

voice recognition, and multimedia.

"We thank Intel Corporation for its contribution and the support of all involved," noted Dr. Ahmad Al Jaber, Dean of the Faculty of Information Technology at the College. "We want to create an incubator where academic staff can provide the support for start-up companies and innovative business and research ideas. We are really looking forward to a long, fruitful and continuous relationship with Intel."

Barrett concluded his 2002 visit on a cautionary note: "Jordan is taking the right steps towards creating its digital future, but long-term economic prosperity will require new approaches to business and technology innovation," he said in a speech to government and business leaders. "Jordan should accelerate its investment in the Internet, reduce taxes and tariffs on information technology (IT) products, foster entrepreneurs, protect intellectual property, and build a strong educational foundation that trains the workforce tomorrow."

"In the digital future, people will access the Web any time and any place with devices and infrastructure that offer both computing and communication capabilities," Barrett said at the time. "Countries that intend to successfully compete in tomorrow's global digital economy will move fast to invest in education and information technology and let both flourish." ♦



The *Teach to the Future* program has trained more than one million classroom teachers in 30 countries, and this number is expected to rise to two million teachers by the end of 2005.



H.E. Karim Kawar, Jordan's Ambassador to the United States

"Like his father, our monarch (H.M. King Abdullah) is a visionary leader who believes in change, in reform, and in a better future for each and every individual."

Q&A with H.E. Karim Kawar, Jordan's Ambassador to the United States

1) As the United States and Jordan prepare for the second term of President George W. Bush, how would you assess relations between our two nations? Where do we go from here?

Jordan enjoys excellent relations with the United States on all levels, including political, economic, cultural and educational. Jordan and the U.S. work together in the pursuit of peace, progress and prosperity in the region but also to build a better future for our two countries and our two peoples. We certainly look forward to continue working with the Bush Administration during the second term. H.M. King Abdullah will be visiting Washington in December to discuss pressing issues in the region, namely the peace process, the situation in Iraq, reform, as well as other bilateral matters.

2) What are the hallmarks of King Abdullah's leadership, and how does it differ from that of his father, King Hussein?

H.M. King Abdullah has certainly carried on H.M. the late King Hussein's legacy in Jordan and in the international arena. Like his father, our monarch is a visionary leader who believes in change, in reform, and in a better future for each and every individual. Like his father, King Abdullah II has faith in Jordan's most valuable resource: its human capital. Hence, he has spearheaded various initiatives to advance Jordan's society, modernize our social and economic system, and integrate Jordan as a knowledge economy and modern open society into the global arena.

Since King Abdullah's accession to the throne in 1999, Jordan has faced various challenges, internal and otherwise – from unemployment, to poverty, to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, to the war on terror, and to the war on Iraq. Those challenges were met with a forceful and far-reaching domestic agenda based on economic, social and political reform and a pragmatic and vigorous foreign policy in the pursuit of peace, stability, and economic prosperity. Moreover, King Abdullah has worked tirelessly to confront the threats of terrorism in Jordan and in the global arena, and to show the true face of Islam to the world.

3) The Social and Economic Transformation Program (SETP), established in 2002, places a heavy emphasis on developing Jordan's human resources. Is this program making a difference?

Certainly and impressively. Jordan's real GDP growth reached 7.2 percent in the first half of 2004, up from 3.2 percent in 2003 and 5 percent in 2002. Per capita income has also witnessed modest growth. The SETP is a homegrown program for social and economic reform that is supported by donor countries, including the United States. In 2002 and 2003, \$145.9 million was allocated for human resource development within the Social and

Economic Transformation Program (SETP).

One of the most important achievements is the extensive effort to computerize schools. To date, 500 schools – involving some 173,000 students – have been computerized, resulting in a decrease in the ratio of students-to-personal-computers from 42 to 21. Moreover, 32,000 teachers have been trained on ICDL, and an additional 2,070 schools now have Internet access. 200 kindergartens, 6 new schools, 374 additional classrooms, and 3 new educational directorates have also been established throughout Jordan, leading to the phasing-out of double shifts in most governorates.

Implementation of a quality control system has commenced and Education Reform for a Knowledge Economy (ERFKE) program has been launched. The EduWave initiative has also been launched, with the aim of incorporating ICT into every facet of life to promote education and the transformation of the educational system to be a driver of the economy. Moreover, 17 youth centers, 4 youth camps, and other investments have been channeled toward youth care to nurture knowledge-acquisition, confidence, teamwork, and entrepreneurship.

Vocational and technical training also ranks high on Jordan's reform agenda, as 14 new training centers have been established. Through the National Training Program, 8,000 people have received – or are still in the process of receiving – demand-driven training. Furthermore, laws that regulate the labor market have been amended to encourage private sector participation, while other investments have been channeled toward upgrading the capabilities of existing training centers.

4) You personally played an instrumental role in Jordan's positioning itself as a center for IT activity in the region. How does Jordan intend to maintain its comparative advantage in this sector?

In Jordan, our focus has been on building a competitive advantage rather than a comparative advantage. In the field of Information Technology, we are not competing with countries in the region, but with the world leaders. Our competitive advantage lies in our ability to supply knowledge workers through our higher education system, sustaining our open market policy, and growing the sophisticated demand from the local market. These are coupled with national and foreign investments that seek to capitalize on this advantage in the value-added products and services that Jordanian firms provide, thereby complementing the work carried out by multinational firms supplying customers in the region and around the world. In the long term, we will maintain our leadership position through a significant investment in R&D that will sustain our edge.

continued on next page

continued from previous page

5) The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the U.S. and Jordan is hailed as a major success story. What advice might Jordan give to other nations that are contemplating FTA's of their own?

Jordan, as you know, is the first Arab country to sign a Free Trade Agreement with the United States. The FTA certainly brought Jordan many advantages on the economic level. It not only boosted the level of trade between the two countries and ranked the U.S. as Jordan's number one trading partner, but it also instilled confidence in U.S. multinationals to invest in Jordan and through Jordan to the regional market. Jordan's trade with the U.S. increased from \$386 million in 2000 to \$1.15 billion in 2003. Moreover, trade with the most sophisticated consumer market in the world has helped our industries meet the highest standards of quality and delivery which, in turn, enables us to compete in other Western markets.

We certainly encourage other countries in the region to follow suit, such as Morocco and Bahrain, and we hope that we can capitalize on cumulating rules of origin to increase trade among the countries of the region.

6) How has strife in neighboring Iraq affected Jordan?

Jordan is one of Iraq's six neighbors. Iraq was Jordan's top trading partner before the war broke out in March 2003. The conflict has certainly had a negative impact on our economy. We depended heavily on Iraq for oil, and that was certainly disrupted during the war. Fortunately, and thanks to a vigorous economic plan, we have managed to pull through and advance even further this year. Trade with Iraq is currently gaining more momentum.

Jordan has become a safe haven and an operational base for U.S. and other foreign companies in Iraq.

Serving as a launching pad for all humanitarian and trade operations through the Gulf of Aqaba, Jordan is also a business gateway to Iraq. A number of Jordanian companies have won subcontracts in Iraq and are now helping in the reconstruction effort. Moreover, Jordan and Iraq have set up various partnerships on the business, governmental and civil society levels. As you may know, Jordan is also providing training for Iraqi security forces, journalists, judges, engineers and others.

7) In May 2005, Jordan will host the World Economic Forum meeting, "From Vision to Action: Identifying Solutions." What do you expect to be the highlights of this gathering?

The previous World Economic Forum meetings that were held on the shores of the Dead Sea (2003 and 2004) were very successful venues in which the challenges that the region faced were identified, discussed and debated by world leaders, academics, professionals, entrepreneurs and participating students. These meetings are extraordinary as they bring the issues of the region to the region in which representative delegates participate.

There was also a general consensus about the different ways and means in which those challenges should and would be met. We all shared a vision at the past two World Economic Forum meetings that looked to the future generations of the region as THE region's future, thereby highlighting the importance of reform, development and modernization. We recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to the problems we face, so we meet to exchange ideas and to agree to disagree and accept our differences. We hope this meeting will focus on putting into place plans of action through which our vision for the future and our rhetoric translates into deeds. ♦

"In the field of Information Technology, we are not competing with countries in the region, but with the world leaders."

Ambassador Karim Kawar

World Economic Forum 2005 in Jordan

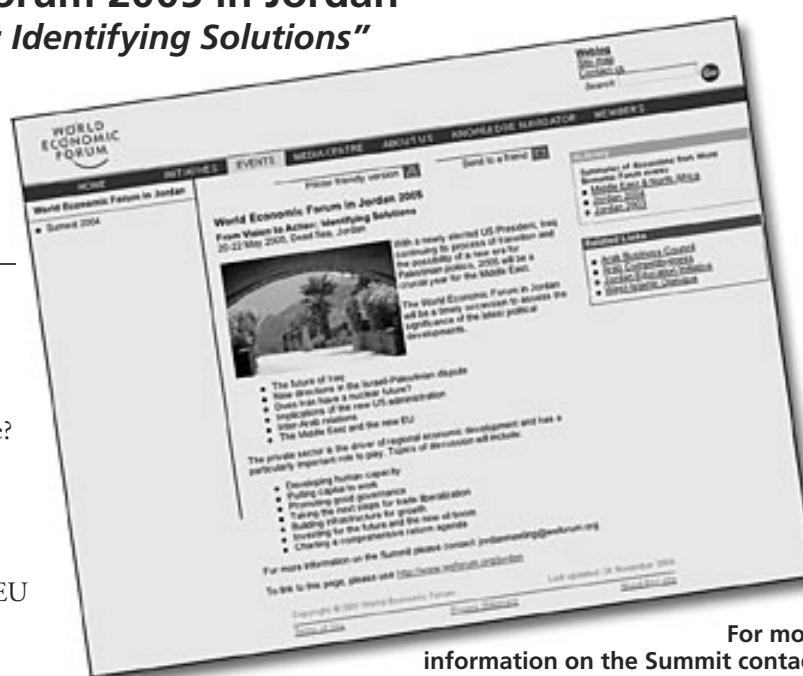
"From Vision to Action: Identifying Solutions"

Dead Sea, Jordan

20-22 May, 2005

Topics of discussion will include:

- The future of Iraq
- New directions in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute
- Does Iran have a nuclear future?
- Implications of the new US administration
- Inter-Arab relations
- The Middle East and the new EU



For more information on the Summit contact:
jordanmeeting@weforum.org

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

www.weforum.org/jordan



THE JORDAN TIMES

American University to be Set Up in Aqaba

By Dalya Dajani

AMMAN — The Kingdom is gearing up for the development of a new private, non-profit American university on Aqaba's southern shores, with a sister campus in Amman.

The Aqaba Development Corporation (ADC) and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ) signed an agreement this week for the university's construction on 250 dunums of land on the Red Sea coastal shore.

The agreement was signed between ASEZA Deputy Chief Commissioner and Chairman of the Board of ADC Imad Fakhoury and Safwan Masri, professor and vice dean at Columbia University's Business School on behalf of the university's fund.

Modeled on the American system of higher education, the university is expected to attract students from here and across the region. It is expected to cater to up to 6,000 students over the next 10 to 12 years with over 40 majors in schools for liberal arts and sciences, management, engineering, education and law. Around 2,500 of the total student capacity are expected to be studying in Aqaba.

Through its consortium of affiliations by academic programs, the university will also expose students to a rich platform of educational and cultural exchanges with top tier U.S. colleges.

"This project represents a model public-private partnership, and we are delighted to provide significant support for the creation of this important new American university," said Fakhoury.

According to Fakhoury, the university, which is scheduled for completion in 2009, is also expected to

play a significant role in the development of Aqaba, particularly in meeting ASEZ's long-term development plans.

"The establishment of this campus represents a key building-bloc in the ASEZ master plan and a strategic enabler within the comprehensive long-term plan of ASEZA and its development arm, ADC, to transform Aqaba into a leading business and leisure destination on the Red Sea," said Fakhoury.

"The population of faculty, staff and students will both contribute to and benefit from the diverse and vital community we plan to foster in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone," he added.

Home to some 60,000 Jordanians, Aqaba, Jordan's sole port city, was transformed into a special economic zone in 2001. It has since witnessed a rapid increase in infrastructure and commercial development that has transformed the area into a breeding ground for investment.

Such investment in the southern region falls in line with the vision of His Majesty King Abdullah for the creation of a knowledge-based economy for the future of Jordan and the region.

During a visit with the Economic Club of Chicago and the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations in June, King Abdullah described the university as one that would "adopt the standards of world-class scholarship, open inquiry, freedom of thought and expression."

Reprinted with permission from
Jordan Times, November 29, 2004

ProgressSoft: A Jordanian Success Story

Jordan's heavy emphasis on Information Technology is giving rise to a variety of world-class Jordanian IT companies. One home-grown success story that is not new to Jordan is ProgressSoft, established in 1989 and Jordan's first software development company.

According to Michael Wakileh, Chief Executive Officer of ProgressSoft, the firm's solutions are "completely and independently developed in Jordan by Jordanian software engineers and designers. The software meets the latest technological advances in software development and is built according to international standards."

The ProgressSoft track record is impressive by any standard:

- ProgressSoft introduced the first signature



ProgressSoft
www.progresssoft.com

verification system in the region.

- ProgressSoft solutions are distributed and installed in 19 countries worldwide, including England, Germany, Canada,

and the United States.

- ProgressSoft has become a technology partner to America's Hewlett Packard, which is now marketing ProgressSoft's electronic check clearing solution around the globe.
- ProgressSoft is the first company worldwide to establish an Electronic "Image-Based" Check Clearing Solution. The software was first introduced by ProgressSoft in 1996 and will be

continued on next page

continued from previous page

implemented in the United States in keeping with the Check21 Act, which became effective on October 28, 2004.

According to Wakileh, ProgressSoft is currently doing live presentations of its pioneering product for such U.S. banks as Bank of America, Bank of New York, JP Morgan Chase, Citibank, The Federal Reserve and the Clearing House of New York – CHIPS. In addition, a pilot project for the electronic check clearing solution will be implemented by ProgressSoft in SWIFT (New York). The firm was awarded the Electronic Check Clearing Project by the Central Bank of Jordan in June 2004.

ProgressSoft is a regular visitor to such international fairs as Sibos and CeBIT. Sibos 2004, the world's premier financial event, was held in Atlanta, Georgia this year, where ProgressSoft demonstrated its revolutionary electronic check clearing solution to U.S. clearing houses, U.S. banks, and banking firms from all around the globe.

In Wakileh's words, "Jordan's main treasure is the highly intellectual human resource. With His Majesty's vision to employ this treasure in professional software development and IT services, Jordan is becoming a software development hub, hosting outstanding software development companies which offer professional software solutions to countries all around the globe." ♦

ProgressSoft solutions are distributed and installed in 19 countries worldwide, including England, Germany, Canada, and the United States.

JORDAN: Key Business Contacts

Embassy of Jordan, Washington DC
Economic and Commerce Bureau (ECB)
Mr. Maher Matalka, Director
3504 International Drive, NW, Washington, DC 20008
Tel: 202-362-4436
Fax: 202-244-0239
www.jordanembassyus.org

Embassy of the United States in Amman
Mr. Richard Eason, Economic Counselor
P.O. Box 354, Amman-11118, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-592-0101
Fax: +962-6-592-7653
EasonRM@state.gov

Information Technology Association of Jordan (Int@j)
Mr. Bilal Abuzeid, Acting CEO
P.O. Box 2383, Amman-11953, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-515-2322
Fax: +962-6-515-2344
www.intaj.net

Jordan American Business Association (JABA)
Ms. Rose Al Issi, CEO
P.O. Box 840817, Amman-11184, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-565-1860
Fax: +962-6-565-1862
www.jaba.org.jo

Jordan Dead Sea Products Manufacturers Association
Mr. Sami Bakir, Executive Coordinator
P.O. Box 9504, Amman-11191, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-533-7748
Fax: +962-6-533-7748
www.deadseajordan.com

Jordan Export Development & Commercial Centers Corporation (JEDCO)
Mr. Salah Ghunaim, Acting Director General
P.O. Box 7704, Amman-11118, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-560-3507
Fax: +962-6-568-4568
www.jedco.gov.jo

Jordan Foreign Trade Policy Department
Ms. Maha Ali, Director
P.O. Box 2019, Amman-11195, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-560-7191
Fax: +962-6-560-7640
www.jftp.gov.jo

Jordan Investment Board (JIB)
Ms. Reem Badran, Director General
P.O. Box 893, Amman-11821, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-553-9370
Fax: +962-6-560-8416
www.jib.com.jo

Jordan Stone & Tile Exporters Association (JOSTONE)
Mr. Rasmi Hamzeh, CEO
P.O. Box 41865, Amman-11194, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-565-0939
Fax: +962-6-568-4266
www.jostone.com

Jordan Telecommunications Regulatory Commission
Ms. Muna Nijem, Commissioner
P.O. Box 850967, Amman-11185, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-586-2020
Fax: +962-6-586-3641
www.trc.gov.jo

Jordan-US Business Partnership (JUSBP)
Mr. Nayef Stetieh, Vice President
P.O. Box 941865, Amman-11194, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-566-9135
Fax: +962-6-568-4266
www.jusbp.org

Jordanian Association of Manufacturers of Pharmaceutical & Medical Supplies (JAPM)
Ms. Hanan Sboul, Secretary General
P.O. Box 941247, Amman-11194, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-560-5634
Fax: +962-6-569-1116
www.japm.com

The Executive Privatization Commission
Mr. Adel Al-Kodah, Chairman
P.O. Box 941536, Amman-11194, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-567-0556
Fax: +962-6-462-6254
www.epc.gov.jo

The Institute of Management Consultants of Jordan (IMC)
Ms. Salwa Bamieh, Chairman
P.O. Box 926550, Amman-11110, Jordan
Tel: +962-6-553-0856
Fax: +962-6-553-0858
www.imc.com.jo

US Jordan Business Alliance
Ms. Marjorie Adams, President
1725 I Street, NW Suite 300, Washington, DC 20006
Tel: 202.349.3792
Fax: 202.349.3915
www.usjba.org

NUSACC Welcomes New Senior Fellow Kevin Woelflein

The National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) has just named its first Senior Fellow, Kevin Woelflein, who brings a wealth of expertise in international banking.

Until recently, Woelflein served in Iraq as the Coalition Provisional Authority's Senior Advisor on banking issues. In that capacity, he played an instrumental role in creating the Private Bankers of Iraq (PBI), a professional association representing Iraq's 19 private banks.

Prior to his tenure in Iraq, Woelflein served in senior positions at a number of banks, including The First National Bank of Chicago and American Security Bank in Washington, D.C.

Upon joining NUSACC, Woelflein said, "I want to express my appreciation for the opportunity to be associated with NUSACC. NUSACC's business objectives are important to the development of private sector business between the United States and the Arab world. I feel that my experience, especially my recent tenure in Iraq, will help NUSACC to achieve its objectives."

Since his arrival at NUSACC, Woelflein has given speeches and participated in panel discussions in a number of forums, including the annual meeting in Chicago of the Trade Conference of the Bankers Association for Finance and Trade, a conference hosted by the *Middle East Economic Digest* in Dubai, a Department of Commerce briefing on the banking situation



Kevin Woelflein (left) joined other bankers and economists in briefing 40 Iraqi government officials undergoing training at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

in Iraq, and a roundtable discussion jointly organized by the Coalition for Employment Through Exports (CEE), the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC), and NUSACC.

Woelflein says there is good news to relate about the



Kevin Woelflein speaks at the Metropolitan Club at a luncheon co-hosted by CEE, NFTC and NUSACC.

progress of the banking sector in Iraq. Among the points that he has made in recent weeks:

- Numerous international foreign banks are taking active steps to establish their presence in Iraq, including HSBC, NBK, Standard Chartered, Export & Finance Bank, The Arab Bank, and Arab Banking Corporation.
- The Central Bank of Iraq has established much higher than minimum capital requirements for new Iraqi investor groups planning to form seven new private banks. This is intended to ensure that Iraq's private banks will be well capitalized. The result is that the potential loan funds from private banks may be increased by about \$750 million in the near future.
- New bank licensing by the Central Bank of Iraq includes three banks to be headquartered in the Kurdish region in northern Iraq. Thus, bank licensing will be one of the first important economic developments to help integrate the Kurdish Area into Federal Iraq.
- The private banks have organized themselves into a professional association in order to serve as a single voice on issues affecting private banks, to promote the concept of bank accounts for Iraqis, and to link the Iraqi association to all bankers associations worldwide. The private banks have also been active in establishing the Iraq Commercial Banking Center, a facility to provide training for bank staff.

NUSACC's leadership is pleased and proud to welcome Kevin Woelflein to NUSACC! ♦

NATIONAL US-ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

National Headquarters:
1023 15th Street, NW
Fourth Floor
Washington, DC 20005
Tel: (202) 289-5920
Fax: (202) 289-5938

1330 Post Oak Boulevard
Suite 1600, Office 1644
Houston, TX 77056
Tel: (713) 963-4620
Fax: (713) 963-4609

8929 South Sepulveda
Boulevard, Suite 310
Los Angeles, CA 90045
Tel: (310) 646-1499
Fax: (310) 646-2462

420 Lexington Avenue
Suite 2034
New York, NY 10170
Tel: (212) 986-8024
Fax: (212) 986-0216

