



# UJRC Update

A Newsletter Published by Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center  
Covering its Activities and Programs



Issue No. 3: December 2006

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## A Report on Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center activities during 2006

**Summary:** UJRC organised 36 varied activities in 2006. Activities included seminars, workshops, conferences and training courses, and were held over the span of 47 days out of 242 working days in 2006. Total number of participants reached 1616, of which 349 were main speakers and presenters of working papers. 70 participated at these activities from outside Jordan.

UJRC activities gained wide attention from the media. Size of press coverage reached 57,171 cm<sup>2</sup>, the equivalent of 32 newspaper pages.

The Center's activities included:

- **The New Jordan Forum:** a discussion platform that hosts prominent figures from Jordan and abroad, to discuss significant pressing issues. The Forum conducted 12 activities throughout the year.
  - 17 contributors (main speakers) took part in the dialogue sessions and seminars.
  - 355 attendees participated in these seminars (See table 1).



Palestinian legislative elections



Political developments in Palestine on the eve of the upcoming Palestinian dialogue on 23/5/2006



Israeli elections and prospects of political parties



The Egyptian political scene on the eve of presidential elections



Latest developments on the Egyptian scene



Prospects in Iraq: from the viewpoint of Sheikh Hussein Mu'ayad



**Table (1)**  
**Activities of the New Jordan Forum in 2006**

No.	Activity	Date	Venue	Number of Speakers	Attendance	Press Coverage cm <sup>2</sup>
1	Open meeting with Mazen Al Maaithah on the occasion of holding the General Conference of Labour Unions in Jordan	16/1	UJRC meeting hall	1	18	1005
2	An open meeting on the occasion of the visit made by the national partisan and union delegation to Syria	23/1	UJRC meeting hall	1	22	774
3	Seminar: the Palestinian legislative elections and its local and regional impacts	30/1	Crowne Plaza Hotel	3	75	1856
4	Seminar: the upcoming Israeli elections and developments on the political parties' scene in Israel	15/2	Marmara Hotel	3	28	1539
5	Debate Session: The Palestinian legislative elections: an analytical study of the democratic process and its outcomes	20/2	Marmara Hotel	2	26	885
6	Seminar: the Egyptian political scene on the eve of the presidential and parliamentary elections	1/3	Crowne Plaza Hotel	1	73	556
7	Seminar: Iraq facing a US or an Iranian occupation	3/5	UJRC meeting hall	1	23	1637
8	Debate Session: Latest developments on the Egyptian scene	10/5	UJRC meeting hall	1	14	105
9	Debate Session: Political developments in Palestine on the eve of the next Palestinian Dialogue on 23/5/2006	15/5	UJRC meeting hall	1	17	-
10	Debate Session: Political and military developments in the Horn of Africa	18/7	UJRC meeting hall	1	18	110
11	Debate Session: The Jordanian partisan delegation's visit to Syria	12/9	UJRC meeting hall	1	23	-
12	Seminar: Options to end the current Palestinian Crisis	21/12	UJRC meeting hall	1	20	693
<b>Total</b>				<b>17</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>8565*</b>

\* The equivalent of 4.8 newspaper pages

■ **The Jordanian Forum for Economic Development:** this forum represents the economic platform at UJRC and organises debates on economic and developmental issues. The Forum held 6 activities (4 in Amman and 2 abroad, in Istanbul and Beirut).



Seminar on corruption in banking practices



The fifth MENA Development Forum (MDF5)



Towards a public consensus on taxation policies

There were 88 speakers contributing to these events, where total number of participants reached 511 (see table 2).

**Table (2)**

**Activities of the Jordanian Forum for Economic Development in 2006**

No.	Activity	Date	Venue	Number of Speakers	Attendance	Coverage cm <sup>2</sup>
1	Workshop: Strengthening corporate social responsibility in the business sector of the MENA region	23-24/2	Istanbul	9	17	
2	Debate Session: Corruption in the banking sector and the required policies and procedures to counter it	28/2	Crowne Plaza Hotel	1	72	2280
3	Workshop: Strengthening corporate citizenship in the business sector across the MENA region	22-23/3	Meridien Hotel	20	68	2166
4	The 5 <sup>th</sup> MENA Development Forum (MDF5)	6-9/4	Beirut	20	75	
5	Workshop: Towards a public consensus on taxation policies	8/11	Crowne Plaza Hotel	10	79	2639
6	Workshop: Towards a societal dialogue on the 2007 national budget	26/12	Holiday Inn Hotel	11	70	2098
<b>Total</b>				<b>71</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>11283*</b>

\* The equivalent of 6.3 newspaper pages

■ **Civil Society and Democratic Development Program:** This is the Center's longest running program (since 1993), which monitors the developments in the civil society in Jordan and the Arab world. The Program examines the civil society's structure, internal relations, external environment and the level of cooperation and interaction among its



Launching the Directory of Civil Society Organisations



Study days for leaders of civil society organisations

organisations. The Program also seeks to develop leadership and corporate potentials in the civil society, enforce its political empowerment and increase the level of its commitment to human rights and democracy.

The Program organised 7 activities, during which 22 contributors submitted presentations and worksheets, and the overall number of participants exceeded 200 (see Table 3).

**Table (3)**

**Activities of the Civil Society and Democratic Development Program/ 2006**

No.	Activity	Date	Venue	Number of Speakers	Attendance	Press Coverage cm <sup>2</sup>
1	Launching ceremony of Jordan's Civil Society Organisations Directory	10/7	Kempenski Hotel	4	100	1650
2	Meeting of Jordan's civil society organisations' representatives to discuss the situation in Lebanon	25/7	UJRC meeting hall	6	15	453
3	1 <sup>st</sup> Study Day for leaders of civil society organisations	1/8	Marmara Hotel	4	41	1253
4	A demonstration to support Lebanon organised in cooperation with civil society organisations	3/8	In front of the Lebanese Embassy		600	1431
5	2 <sup>nd</sup> Study Day for leaders of civil society organisations	23/8	Al Safsaf Center, Naour	5	49	1664
6	3 <sup>rd</sup> Study Day for leaders of civil society organisations	18/9	Marmara Hotel	7	38	3568
7	4 <sup>th</sup> Study Day for leaders of civil society organisations	15/11	Marmara Hotel	6	57	2281
<b>Total</b>				<b>32</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>11300*</b>

\* The equivalent of 6.3 newspaper pages

■ **Social and Oral History Program:** This program was founded in 1996 and is concerned with writing the history of Jordan from the perspective of socially active entities, such as civil society organisations, social and political movements, cultural groups, nongovernmental organisations such as municipalities, the media and independent press. The Program is concerned with the oral history of women's movements, and held a seminar on oral history and women's movements in Jordan in August 2005. In 2006, the Program organised the first training course on the techniques and skills of oral history. The training course lasted for 5 days (February 3-7, 2006), hosted 8 regional expert contributors, and was offered to 40 Jordanian trainees.



Oral history and women's studies seminar



■ **Electoral and Parliamentary Studies Program:** This Program is concerned with reviewing Jordanian elections and developing analytical methodologies as well as programs that examine the parliament, analyse its structure and assess its effectiveness and role in enhancing democracy and good governance, in addition to encouraging political, social and economic reforms.

One of the two main activities organised by the program in 2006 was a seminar held in cooperation with DRI under the title “The Electoral Framework in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Prospects for the 2007 Elections”. This one-day seminar was held at the Crowne Plaza hotel on December 5, 2006, and was preceded by a series of interviews with representatives of political parties, the government, the media as well as human rights and civil society organisations. The Program was followed by a joint study prepared by the DRI and Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center, addressing the legislative framework of the parliamentary and municipal elections in Jordan. Seven speakers and contributors took part in this event, whereas the overall number of participants reached 86.

The second activity was a working meeting of experts and regional figures discussing the Political Parties Laws in the Arab states and the role played by Arab parliaments to amend such laws. The 2-day meeting was held in conjunction with the UNDP’s Parliamentary Reform Initiative at the Intercontinental Hotel, on December 18 and 19, 2006.

■ **Other activities of the Center (aside from its regularly ongoing programs)**

• **A Seminar on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: from Barcelona to the European Neighbourhood Policy**

The seminar was held for two days from 4 to 5 March 2006 with 17 expert contributors from Jordan, Europe and the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, in addition to 129 participants from Jordan representing civil society, private sector, business organisations as well as the government.



The Euro-Med Partnership: from Barcelona to the ENP

• **The Democratic Trend Unity Conference ... Opportunities and Challenges:**

This one-day conference was held on July 16, 2006, in collaboration with Al-Quds Center for Political Studies. The Conference set out to encourage the unity of the Jordanian democratic trend. The number of contributors in this event reached 60, whereas the total number of attending participants was 131.

• **The Founding Meeting of the Arab World Monitor for Elections:**

This meeting was held along the course of two days, on June 21 and 22, 2006, at Marmara Hotel in Amman. The event was held within the framework of the Arab Civil Network for Democratic Reform. The meeting was organised by the Civic Forum Institute in Palestine, in collaboration with UJRC. Twenty representatives of Arab civil society organisations from 10 Arab states took part in the meeting, which concluded by announcing an Arab Network for Elections entitled “The Arab World Monitor for Elections”, the enactment of an Arab code of ethics for elections, in addition to a future work plan.



Founding meeting of the Arab world monitor for elections

• **A Regional Workshop on Arab Youth and Political Participation:** this workshop lasted for 3 days, from 27 to 29 July 2006, in Amman and was organised by the Jordanian Commission for Democratic Culture and Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center. It was held within the framework of the Arab Civil Network for Democratic Reform. Contributions were presented by 14 organisations from 8 countries in the region, and the total number of participants from Jordan and other countries reached 60.

**• Preliminary Meetings of the Content Committee, a subsidiary of the Jordanian Preparatory Committee of the Civil Conference parallel to the Forum for the Future:**

The Committee held four working meetings on August 31, September 9, and October 2 and 28, in order to identify terms of reference for the papers presented at the Civil Conference held on November 27 and 28, 2006, at the Regency Palace Hotel in Amman. A total of 18-20 representatives of the Jordanian civil society took part in the four meetings.



Demonstration by civil society organisations to support Lebanon

**• A meeting of civil society organisations to support the people of Lebanon against the Israeli aggression** and establishing a forum for Jordan's civil society organisations on July 25, 2006.

**• A protest to support the people of Lebanon and condemn the Israeli aggression:** This protest was organised in the evening of August 3, 2006, in cooperation with a number of Jordanian civil society organisations, in front of the Lebanese embassy in Amman with 600 protesters.

**UJRC broad regional participations**

The above activities also hosted 64 speakers and participants from Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Morocco, Yemen, Algeria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Eritrea, in addition to participants from Belgium, Spain, Malta, Turkey, Britain, Germany and the USA.

**An initiative role in establishing networks and organising joint activities:**

During 2006, the Center actively participated in establishing national and regional networks, and implemented a large number of joint activities in conjunction with national and regional organisations.

- Upon an initiative by UJRC, the founding meeting of the Arab Civil Network for Democratic Reform was held at the Dead Sea on February 18 and 19, 2006, with the participation of 18 Arab organisations from 8 different Arab states. At the meeting, the UJRC Director General was elected as the general coordinator for the Network.
- The Center participated in launching the Jordanian Forum for Civil Society Organisations, which was founded in the wake of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon in July 2006. A total of 22 Jordanian organisations and distinguished figures signed the statements issued by the Forum.
- UJRC participated with the Civic Forum Institute (Palestine) in hosting the first meeting of the Arab World Monitor for Elections on June 21 and 22, 2006. This Monitor summoned 20 representatives of Arab civil society organisations in 10 countries.
- UJRC collaborated with the Jordanian Commission for Democratic Culture in hosting a workshop entitled "Arab Youth and Political Participation", from 27 to 29 July 2006, with the participation of 9 Arab countries. UJRC contributed to launching AYDI; a new Arab youth network.
- UJRC participated, from 8 to 10 December 2006, in hosting the initiative of Panorama Center (Palestine) to establish an Arab Program to support and promote democracy. This is a regional network that embraces ten organisations, and focuses on disseminating and strengthening democracy.
- Finally, the Center took part in holding the Civil Conference of the Forum for the Future held in Amman from 27 to 28 November 2006, with 250 participants representing civil society organisations from countries in the region. UJRC also presented the closing statement of the conference during the ministerial meeting of the Forum for the Future that was held at the Dead Sea on November 30 and December 1, 2006.



Civic Conference parallel to the Forum for the Future



## UJRC Publications in 2006

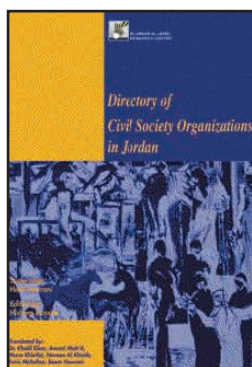
During 2006, the Center published 9 directories, books, and reports, namely, *Directory of Civil Society Organisations in Jordan* in Arabic and English; *The Dual Financial Crisis*; *The Informal Sector in Jordan*; *Memoirs of Ismael Aridah, a Jordanian Patriot in the great Syrian revolution*; *The Euro-Med Partnership ... from Barcelona to the ENP*; *Evaluation Report of CSR in the Business Sector of the MENA region*; *Towards a Public Consensus on Taxation Policies*; *Study Days for Jordanian civil society leaders and activists*.

In addition, the Center published issues no. 34 to 40 of its "Civil Society Issues" magazine, that comprises 36 pages. Also published were issues no. 13 to 18 of the Economic Policy Dialogue Series, a newsletter which comprises 12 pages.

### First: Directories, Books, and Reports:

#### 1- Directory of Civil Society Organisations in Jordan:

A group work supervised by Hani Hourani and edited by Hussein Abu Rumman.



This is the second directory issued by the Center since 2000, with the support of Friedrich Ebert Foundation of Germany. The Directory includes a general introduction that embraces the current status of civil society and the challenges facing it. The Directory also introduces 14 categories of civil society organisations in Jordan and provides detailed information on 245 organisations. The 508-page Directory in A4 size also offers contact information of 1827 different organisations and committees.

#### 2- Directory of Civil Society Organisations in Jordan: (English Edition)

Editor: Hisham Qassim, Translators: Dr. Khalil Elian, Amani Mohammad, Muna Khleifat, Neveen Al Khatib, Faris Mahafza and Reem Hourani. This English edition comprises 568 pages of A4 size.

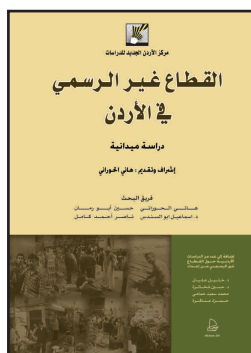
#### 3- The Dual Financial Crisis, by Dr. Mohammad Saeed Al Nabulsi

This book represents a testament of Jordan's financial, monetary and banking crisis from 1988 to 1991, and offers a view of the causes that led to the collapse of the Jordanian Dinar and Petra Bank amid the crisis. The writer is a well-known economist and a former minister of economy. From the perspective of the Governor of the Central Bank of Jordan, the writer was able to examine this crisis, its background and the procedures taken to address it. The book is 296 medium-size pages.



#### 4- The Informal Sector in Jordan

Group work by: Hani Hourani, Dr. Saeed Abu Sundus, Hussein Abu Rumman, Nasser Ahmad Kamel.

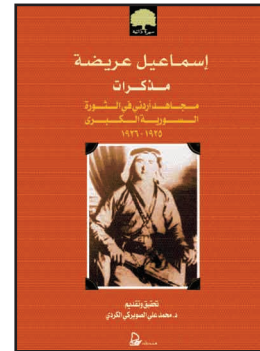


This book presents the findings of a survey of the informal sector conducted by UJRC in 2004, and includes analysis of many workers from different governorates of Jordan. This study aimed at identifying the structure and characteristics of the informal sector and the elements affecting its growth and expansion as well as offering a general database. In addition, the 200-page book includes a number of working papers on the informal sector by Dr. Khalil Elian, Dr. Hussein Shakhathreh, Mohammad Saeed Hammami, and Hamza Anakrah. It also provides a summary in English.



### 5- Memoirs of Ismael Aridah: A Jordanian patriot in the great Syrian revolution

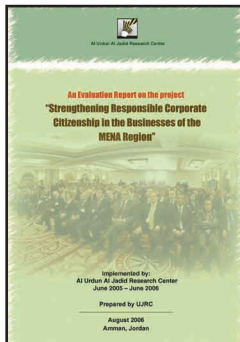
This book portrays the memoirs of the Jordanian patriot, Ismail Aridah. Aridah overviews the Great Syrian Revolution discourse throughout 1925-1927, as an eye witness of its battles and a patriot who took part in its confrontations in different areas in Syria. The book also presents the Jordanian official and public stance on the Great Syrian Revolution, which was supportive in money, weaponry, and humans. This reflects the concrete relation between the peoples of both countries. This book is documented by Dr. Mohammad Ali Suweiry Kurdi, and falls in 144 pages.



### 6- The European-Mediterranean Partnership: from Barcelona to the European Neighbourhood Policy

This book covers the proceedings of the seminar held by UJRC on the Euro-Med Partnership, in March 2006. The book assesses the Partnership after ten years of its launching, and analyses social, cultural, economic, political and security dimensions of the Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy. Also provided is a detailed annex that contains articles that were published on the Euro-Med Partnership in Al Dustour newspaper, simultaneously with the holding of the seminar. This book is in English and Arabic, and is 240 pages.

### 7- An Evaluation Report on the Project “Strengthening Corporate Social Responsibility in the Businesses of the MENA Region”



UJRC published this report on the project that was implemented over the course of 2005 and 2006, with the support of the World Bank and other partners in the MENA Development Forum. The report is 24 A4 pages and is published in English. It provides a summary of the project, including its background, objectives and activities. The report focuses on the case studies that were conducted in seven countries in the region (Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates and Palestine), and the five regional workshops that were implemented within the course of the project.

The report also includes an evaluation of the project, discussing its impacts, and sheds light on UJRC future plans on promoting corporate social responsibility in the businesses of the region. The report was prepared by Dr. May Al-Taher, the project manager at UJRC.

### 8- Workshop proceedings booklet “Towards a Public Consensus on Taxation Policies”



This booklet summarises the proceedings of the workshop held by the Jordanian Forum for Economic Development on taxation policies in Jordan. It includes the working papers presented at the workshop, in addition to the opening speeches and briefs of the speakers. The booklet also contains summaries of the workshop’s conclusions and recommendations, topic press coverage, and the participants’ evaluation of the dialogue. It was issued in Arabic, with English summaries of the papers, recommendations and evaluation. The booklet falls in 75 pages, and was prepared by Dr. May Al-Taher.

### 9- Study Days for Leaders and Activists of Civil Society Organisations in Jordan

This report is the first in a series of reports that will cover the workshops held by UJRC within the Civil Society and Democratic Development program. The implemented project aims at building the capacities of leaders and activists of civil society organisations, and strengthening

their role in the reform and decision making process. This report, which falls in 40 A4 pages, covers the proceedings of three workshops on: the status of civil society in Jordan as perceived by an opinion poll on its leaders; civil society participation in identifying national priorities; and mechanisms of civil society influencing of the decision making process.

**Second: Civil Society Issues magazine**

Following are the published editions of the Civil Society Issues magazine:



**- Issue No. 34, January 2006**

The foreword to this issue was entitled “In 2005, the Advancement of Reform in the Region while Jordan Stands Still”, and the issue’s topic looked into the subject of oral history...history of the people.

**- Issue No. 35, February 2006**

This issue presented an introduction entitled “A Smooth Transition of Power in Kuwait”, and discussed the political scene pertaining to the National Kurdish Movement in an interview with Salah Bader Aldin.

**- Issue No. 36, April 2006**

The introduction was entitled “The Role of Research Centers in the Change and Reform Process”. The issue also covered the Israeli and the Palestinian legislative elections.

**- Double Issue No. 37 – 38, May/ June 2006**

The introduction was entitled “A Forty Year Anniversary of the Social Associations and Committees Code”. The issue also analysed the Egyptian scene on the eve of presidential and parliamentary elections.

**- Double Issue No. 39 – 40 July/ August 2006**

The introduction was entitled “Lebanon under Fire and Siege Once Again”, and the issue also discussed the unity of the Jordanian Democratic Trend.

**Third: Economic Policy Dialogue:**

The “Economic Policy Dialogue” is a 12-page economic periodical published by the Jordanian Forum for Economic Development”. Seven issues were published in 2006, encompassing the following subjects:



**- Issues No. 12 and 13**

Published in English and in Arabic respectively, these two issues covered the first regional workshop on Corporate Social Responsibility held in Rabat, Morocco in December 2005. The issues also included summaries of country case studies on corporate social responsibility in five countries in the region, namely, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

**- Issue No. 14**

Published in Arabic and covered the seminar organised by the Forum on "Corruption in the Banking Sector and the Required Policies and Procedures to Counter It". This seminar hosted Dr. Mohammad Saeed Al Nabulsi to speak on the topic. The issue also included discussions and contributions by the audience in the workshop.

**- Issues No. 15 and 16**

Published in English and in Arabic respectively, these two issues covered the second regional workshop on corporate social responsibility held in Istanbul, Turkey, in February 2006, in addition to the third workshop held in Amman, Jordan, in March 2006. The issues also covered an outline of two case studies on corporate social responsibility in Morocco and Palestine.

**- Issue No. 17**

Issued in English, and includes a full coverage of the corporate social responsibility workshop held by UJRC within the framework of the Fifth MENA Development Forum in Beirut in April 2005. The issue also includes the final results and findings of the social responsibility project conducted by UJRC over the span of one whole year.

**- Issue No. 18**

Issued in Arabic and addresses the Center's new project to enhance corporate social responsibility in the business sector in Jordan. The issue also includes a lecture by Dr. Mahmoud Ababneh on corporate governance, and includes the main outcomes of the corporate social responsibility project.

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**UJRC activities in November and December 2006**

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**Workshop: Towards a Public Consensus on Taxation Policies**

The Jordanian Forum for Economic Development at Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center organised a workshop entitled "Towards a Public Consensus on Taxation Policies", on Wednesday, November 8, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

The workshop aimed at holding a free discussion on tax policies and their role in supporting the economic reform process and improving economic growth rates. The workshop examined the formal vision of tax policies, regulations, philosophy and objectives, and discussed the socio-economic standards that govern tax policies, as well as the mechanisms of formulating tax regulations and the parties involved in enacting such regulations. Moreover, the workshop aimed at shedding light on tax burdens on the citizen and the efficiency of services offered by the government in return for such burdens. Participants in the workshop included representatives of concerned governmental institutions, members of Parliament, and representatives of economic and social entities, namely, companies, banks, business associations, civil society organisations and professional associations.

The workshop was held as a general session throughout. However, the second session was

held in small working groups, each discussing one or more tax laws. Among the laws discussed were the sales tax, income tax, customs duties, in addition to a number of other taxes.

### **Seminar: The Electoral Framework in Jordan: Prospects for the 2007 Elections, December 2006**



The electoral framework in Jordan: prospects for the 2007 elections

Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center in collaboration with the German network “Democracy Reporting International”, held a specialised workshop entitled “The Electoral Framework in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: Prospects for the 2007 Elections”, at the Crowne Plaza hotel. This workshop launched the first national debate on the Electoral Law in preparation for the 2007 parliamentary elections.

The first session of the 3-session workshop was entitled “The Legal Framework of the 2007 Elections”.

The session was chaired by Hani Hourani, the Director General of the Center, whereas the main contribution was made by UK expert, Richard Chambers. The second session was entitled “The Political and Electoral Climate of 2007”, and was chaired by HE Shaher Bak, a former minister and the Chairman of the National Center for Human Rights. The session included two presentations; the first by Hussein Abu Rumman, expert researcher in Jordanian affairs, and the second by German expert Michaela Kofner. The third session was entitled “The General Framework of Procedures: lessons learned from the administering of elections, campaigns, electoral oversight, and media coverage. The session was chaired by Dr. Ibtisam Al Atiyyat from the United Nations University. Main contributions were presented by a number of participants including Michel Mier Reisnd, German expert and director of the DRI network, who talked about electoral oversight. Furthermore, Richard Chambers discussed the management of elections and procedural complaints, Michaela Kofner talked about election campaigns and the media, whereas Hussein Abu Rumman discussed the Jordanian women’s political participation.

### **A Regional Meeting: the Political Parties Laws in the Arab States and the role of Parliament in their reform**

Upon invitation by the UNDP initiative for Parliamentary Development in the Arab Region, and in cooperation with UJRC, the Arab Working Group held a workshop entitled “The Parliament and Reforming the Political Parties Law”, on 18 and 19 December, 2006, in Amman, Jordan.

At its first session, the workshop touched upon the role of the Political Parties Law in the development and democratisation of the Arab political life. Dr. Nadeer Al Momani from Mohammad V University in Morocco presented a paper on the status of the Political Parties Law in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco. Commenting on this paper was the Lebanese expert on Arab affairs, Dr. Raghid Al Saleh, Director of the Social Sciences Studies and Research Center in Mohammad V University of Morocco.

At the second session, the workshop reviewed case studies on the Political Parties Laws in Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt. These studies were presented by Dr. Fadia Kewan, the President of the Institute of Political Science in Lebanon, and Hussein Abu Rumman, the executive director at Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center, as well as Dr. Waheed Abdul Majeed, the vice President of Al Ahram Center for Strategic and Political Studies in Egypt.

The workshop also looked at women’s role in political parties from international and regional perspectives, through a working paper presented by Dr. Amal Sabbagh, the former General Secretary of the National Committee of Women’s Affairs in Jordan, and another paper by Ms. Rima Habash, a specialist in governance management in the Arab countries within the



Elections laws in Arab countries and the role of parliaments in reform

framework of the UNDP in Beirut.

The fourth session included a discussion on the changes that Political Parties Laws can make to the role of women in politics. This was in light of two case studies concerning Morocco and Algeria, presented by each of Dr. Nasser Al Jabi, Social Science Professor at the University of Algeria, and Ms. Fatemah Mustaghfer, a member of the Moroccan parliament.

At the fifth session, Ms. Abla Abu Olba from the Jordanian Democratic People's Party, Dr. Fadia Kewan and Dr. Salwa Jumaah, member of the Egyptian parliament and professor of political science at Cairo University, presented contributions concerning the political status of women in their respective countries.

A roundtable was also held within the framework of this workshop. It was devoted to discussing the parliament's means and tools to revive the partisan life and enhance women's status in political parties through legislations. Four key contributions were made by each of Mr. Bassam Haddadin, member of the Jordanian parliament, Mr. Mohammad Balegi, Member of the Moroccan Parliament, Dr. Nasser Al Jabi and Dr. Fadia Kewan.

The workshop's closing session was chaired jointly by Dr. Salim Naser, the chief consultant of UNDP's governance management in the Arab countries in Beirut, and Hani Hourani, UJRC Director General. Discussed was the future agenda for the regional working group on Political Parties Laws, particularly those pertaining to the standards required for such laws, in addition to the relationship between the Political Parties Laws, Electoral Laws, and the internal regulations of Political Parties.

### **Workshop: Options to end the Current Palestinian Crisis**



Options to resolve the Palestinian crisis

The New Jordan Forum organised a discussion session entitled "Options to End the Current Palestinian Crisis". Speaking on this session was Dr. Taleb Awad, lecturer at Birzeit University and Secretary General of the Civil Committee for the Palestinian Electoral Oversight. He stated: "After over 19 months of national dialogue, the national unity government never materialised, as each side, particularly Hamas, was insisting on its position. The Palestinian leader elected by the people was facing a number of certain options to stop the current crisis, including dissolving the current government and designating another person

pursuant to Article 45 of the Basic Law which stipulates that "The President of the National Authority shall select the Prime Minister who shall be designated to form a government, and the President may either remove the Prime Minister or accept his resignation, and may ask the Prime Minister to call for a meeting of the cabinet or call for a referendum on early elections." In the event that Hamas agrees to enter early presidential and legislative elections directly, a referendum shall not be required".

### **Seminar: Towards a Societal Dialogue on the 2007 National Budget**

UJRC organised a workshop under the title "Towards a Societal Dialogue on the 2007 National Budget" in collaboration with the State University of New York/ Jordan, on December 26, 2006. The opening speech delivered by Hani Hourani provided that the national budget constitutes one of the most important tools affecting the economic and social life of countries.



He indicated that the national budget interprets the developmental objectives of countries and contributes to motivating economic growth. The speech further stated that for a country like Jordan, where the government remains one of the main employers of the labour force, the national budget largely contributes to generate income for a major segment of the workforce and redistributes national income. Therefore, preparing the national budget should not remain restricted to decision makers in the government. Moreover, national budget assessment and monitoring is a critical matter that should not be dealt with in parliamentary discussions only. Accordingly, various parties must be involved in preparing the national budget, influencing its components and monitoring its implementation. Such parties include representatives of civil society organisations, political parties, an independent press, as well as other stakeholders.

The first session discussed the national budget as a financial policy tool. Speakers in this session were Suleiman Hafeth, former Minister of Finance, and Ibrahim Dweiri, former Director General of the Department of National Budget. The second session looked into common characteristics of Jordanian national budgets. Speakers in the session included Chairman of the Privatisation Committee and former Minister of Finance, Dr. Mohammad Abu Hammour, and Head of the Economics Department at University of Jordan, Dr. Bashir Zoubi. At the third session, Dr. Fahed Fanek, the economic expert and CEO of the Jordanian Press Association/ Al Rai, and Dr. Ibrahim Seif, the researcher at the Center of Strategic Studies at University of Jordan, presented their views and analyses of the 2007 national budget. Moreover, Senator May Abu Samen, the Secretary General of the Jordanian National Committee for Women, talked about gender mainstreaming in the national budget.



Towards a societal dialogue on the 2007 national budget

The final session was chaired by the prominent economic expert and former Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Jawad Anani, who discussed with the participants channels of societal influence in preparing the budget.

The workshop made a number of recommendations pertaining particularly to activating the civil society's role in influencing economic decision-making and assessing the state's national budget. The seminar recommended calling on the government to secure national sources in order to solve the fuel crisis and ensure self-dependency by 2010.

## Upcoming activities of UJRC in January and February 2007

### January 2007

#### **Dialogue session “The Arab Elite and the Contemporary Cultural and Political Dilemma”/ January 13**

The New Jordan Forum at UJRC will organise a dialogue session with Dr. Saad Eldin Ibrahim; the prominent Egyptian sociologist and lecturer at the American University of Cairo, and the director of Ibn Khaldoun Center. The seminar will address the Arab elite and the existing cultural and political dilemma, and will be held at the Crowne Plaza hotel on January 13. The lecturer is on a visit to a number of countries in the region, accompanied by 25 of his students.

#### **Workshop “The Civil Society and Building Coalitions, Networks and Umbrellas”/ January 24**

UJRC will hold this workshop on Wednesday, January 24, at Marmara hotel. This workshop is the fifth within the project “Study Days for Civil Society Organisations”. The workshop aims at building the knowledge of civil society leaders on mechanisms and advantages of forming networks and umbrellas between civil society organisations.

**February 2007****Conference “The Outcomes of Reform in the Arab World”/ February 17-18**

UJRC will hold this conference within the activities of the Arab Civil Network for Democratic Reform. The conference will implement an analytical and critical assessment of the reform process in the Arab world. It will look at internal and external driving forces for reforms, and the overlapping of different types of political, economic, social and cultural reforms. Also examined will be partnerships between the main players of reform: governments, civil societies and private sector. The conference attempts to review and modify the reform agenda in the Arab world, to encompass areas of local governance, developing civil society, and reforming professional and labour movements.

**Workshop “Improving the Legislative Climate of Civil Society Organisations”/ February 21**

This will mark the sixth workshop that UJRC is holding within the project “Study Days for Civil Society Organisations”. The workshop will take place on Wednesday, February 21, at Zarqa’a, with the collaboration of a number of its civil society organisations. The workshop will discuss the efforts pursued to formulate a general law on civil society organisations, the essence of such a law, and how appropriate it is to the needs of concerned organisations.

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