

# UJRC Monthly Update



## Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center Newsletter

Issue # 2: October 2006

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**Summary:** The number of participants at Al Urdun Al Jadid (New Jordan) Research Center's activities during the third quarter of 2006 exceeded 470 attendees, of which over 100 contributed actively in the discussions, by presenting papers, forwarding interventions, etc. These events gained wide attention from the media, with a coverage by the Jordanian newspapers that exceeded 11,725 cm<sup>2</sup>, the equivalent of 5-6 pages of newspaper size.

In total, UJRC successfully managed to accomplish a total of 24 activities throughout the first nine months of the year. The total number of participants reached 1114; of which 200 prepared working papers and submitted interventions. Executing these events occupied 34 full working days at UJRC. Media coverage on UJRC activities reached 43,786 cm<sup>2</sup>, the equivalent of 24.5 pages of newspaper size.

### Activities implemented by UJRC during the third quarter of 2006

UJRC succeeded in implementing nine key activities during the past 3 months. Following is a brief description of each.

- Al Urdun Al Jadid (New Jordan) Research Center organized a joint reception on the occasion of launching the second edition of "The Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan", which was published with the cooperation of the German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. The event was held at the Kempinski Hotel in Amman, on July 10, 2006. Tens of leaders and representatives of Civil Society Organizations, media and universities attended the ceremony.
- UJRC held, with the cooperation of Al-Quds Center for Political Studies, a conference entitled "The Jordanian Democratic Trend Unity ... Opportunities and Challenges", at the Palmyra Hotel in Amman, on July 16, 2006. The event was attended by 120 leading figures and political activists from different organizations and democratic groups.
- Being the coordinator of the Arab Civil Society Network for Democratic Reform, UJRC held the regional workshop that was organized by the Jordanian Commission for Democratic Culture entitled "Arab Youth and Political Participation". This was held at the Arena Hotel in Amman, on July 27 – 29, with the participation of youth representatives from several Arab countries. The Center was chosen to be a member of the steering committee of an Arab Youth Network that was derived from the meet-





society (find a more detailed piece in the coming few pages).

ing. UJRC also participated actively in setting a future work plan for the Network.

- The Center hosted several meetings for Civil Society Organizations' representatives, to condemn the Israeli aggression on Lebanon. Being the coordinator of the Civil Society Organizations Forum, the Center called for and organized a sit-in with other organizations in front of the Lebanese Embassy in Amman, on Thursday evening, August 3, 2006. Hundreds of Civil Society Organizations activists along with their families dynamically participated at that sit-in. The Forum also published and disseminated many supporting statements on the occasion.

- The New Jordan Forum hosted Dr. Hazem Qashou' on September 13, 2006, to speak on the Jordanian delegation that had visited Syria recently. He gave a presentation on the aims behind the visit and the main outcomes derived. A number of leaders and activists of Jordanian parties and media persons participated in the discussion session. Mr. Hamadeh Faraneh, the journalist and former MP, chaired the session.

- The Center recently launched the Study Days project for Leaders of Civil Society Organizations. UJRC held the first Study Day workshop at Marmara Hotel/ Amman, on August 1, 2006; the second and third Study Days were held on August 23 and September 18, 2006, at Al-Safsaf Center and Marmara Hotel respectively. These workshops were attended by leaders of different sectors and groups of civil

### The Center's Activities in September 2006:

#### Third Study Day on "Civil Society Mechanisms of Influencing the Decision-Making Process and Public Policies in Jordan"

On Monday September 18, 2006, Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center held a one-day study workshop on "Civil Society Mechanisms of Influencing the Decision-Making Process and Public Policies in Jordan". Held at Marmara Hotel in Amman, this marked the third workshop in a series of Training Days that UJRC is organizing within the project: "Strengthening the Leadership Capabilities of Jordanian Civil Society Organizations", with the cooperation of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Amman.

The working agenda began with a speech delivered by Mr. Hussein Abu Rumman, UJRC Executive Director, where he reviewed the aims of conducting these study days for the leaders and figures of civil society.

Dr. Mustafa Shneikat, a member of the Jordanian Parliament and a member of the Jordanian Left Democratic Party chaired the First Session of the workshop that was devoted to tackling "Mechanisms of Influencing the Decision-Making Process: Theoretical Framework". Dr. Ibrahim Badran, Philadelphia University, presented the main working paper.

The second session overviewed certain experiences that are relevant to influencing decision-making, and was chaired and run by Dr. Odeh Qawas, member of the Jordanian Parliament. In this session, Ms. Lamees Nasser, chairperson of the Humanitarian Forum for Women's Rights, presented a working paper on "The Advocacy Campaign for Endorsing CEDAW in Parliament and Publishing it in the Official Gazette". Four interventions were presented, each of which shed light on a story of success, as an example of CSOs' efforts in influencing decision-making processes. These interventions included: Ms. May Abul Samen, Senator and Secretary General of the Jordanian National Forum for Women, who talked about the role of Women Movements in endorsing the Quota system for women in parliament and municipality councils; Mr. Mohammed Khreisat, member of the executive committee of the General Association for Labour Unions in Jordan, who spoke about issuing and raising the minimum wage; Ms. Salwa Kheiry, vice-chairman of the Jordanian Environment Society, who talked about the successes of the Society in protecting the environment.

Finally, Mr. Akef Ma'aytah, a legal consultant in the Center for Family Protection and Counseling, spoke about amending item no. 340 in the law of penalties, related to honour crimes.

### **A Dialogue Session on the Outcomes of the Jordanian Parties Delegation to Syria**

The New Jordan Forum organized a discussion seminar at UJRC on September 13, 2006, entitled "The outcomes of the Jordanian Parties Delegation to Syria". Dr. Hazem Qashou', secretary general of Al Resala party, spoke in the session about the visit that 3 parties had held earlier in the month to Syria.



He clarified the objectives of the visit, whilst stressing the aim of deepening the communications and ties between Jordanian parties and Syrian parties, and between the peoples of both countries. Qashou' stated that the parties' delegation had met during the visit with: the assistant Secretary General of the national Baa'th party, Mohammad Saeed Bukhtian; the assistant Secretary General of the pan-Arab Baa'th party, Abdullah Ahmar; the vice-chairman of the National Progressive Front, Suleiman Qaddah; the head of Parliament; and the Prime Minister.

Twenty-two political and media figures attended this dialogue session.

### **UJRC actively participating in preparing for the non-governmental concurrent conference to the Forum for the Future**

Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center was selected, in addition to eight other Jordanian civil society organizations, to be a member of the Preparatory Committee for the concurrent conference that is to be held for the Forum for the Future. This selection took place at the meeting that joined representatives of a number of Jordanian civil society organizations, with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Planning.

UJRC was asked to be the head of the Content Committee, which is one of the three head committees operating under the Preparatory Committee. The other two committees are the Media Committee, which is headed by the Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists, and the Organizing Committee, which is headed by Adalah Center for Human Rights.

It is worth mentioning that the Forum for the Future was established in June 2004 as a product of the joint efforts of the G8 countries and seven countries in the MENA region, in addition to Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Sea Island Summit had launched a partnership initiative for promoting development and building a common future with the governments and peoples of the MENA region. The Group of Eight had expressed at this summit its commitment to support reforms in the region. The Arab countries responded by issuing a number of documents and statements on the matter, such as: the Arab summit Declaration of Tunis, the Alexandria Declaration, Sana'a Statement, and the Declaration of Arab Business Associations. Civil society organizations from the Middle East and North Africa had participated in preparing for the Forum's announcement, by holding two meetings in Beirut and New York in 2004.

The Forum for the Future was established, hence marking a key means of cooperation between the two groups. It meets periodically, and summons representatives of Governments, civil society and private sector, through meetings that precede or run parallel to the official governmental meeting. Outcomes and recommendations of those periodic meetings on different topics on the discussion agenda are then presented to the governmental meeting.

The first conference for the Forum for the Future was held in Morocco, in 2004, followed by the second that was held in Bahrain in 2005. The next conference will be held in Jordan in late November 2006. The Forum will discuss a number of key issues related to the reform process in the region, through seven main themes: Transparency and Corruption, the Legal Environment and Civil Society, Rule of Law, Political Collectivism and the Electoral Process, Economic and Political Empowerment of Women, Economic and Political Empowerment of Youth, and Independent Media.

### **UJRC launches its new website in September**

UJRC is proud to announce the activating of its new website [www.ujrc-jordan.org](http://www.ujrc-jordan.org). A unique and

updated version, the website serves as an informative piece on UJRC's mission, goals, staff and memberships. It documents the activities implemented at UJRC since its establishment, and highlights the objectives of its program areas. The website keeps record of UJRC's most recent publications, magazines and newsletters, and allows e-subscription. Also included is a gallery, which portrays photos of different events and activities implemented by UJRC. The website is user-friendly, and allows easy access and interaction by the user.

## New Publications by Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center

### A double edition of "Civil Society Issues" magazine

A double edition of the "Civil Society Issues" magazine was recently published. It included a special dossier on the conference "The Jordanian Democratic Trend Unity ... Challenges and Opportunities", which was organized by Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center and Al Quds Center for Political Studies. The dossier included working papers and interventions that were presented at the conference, which summoned more than 120 figures including leaders of civil society organizations, members of Parliament, political activists, academics, and media persons.

The edition commenced with an introductory article by the Editor in Chief, on the Israeli aggression against Lebanon with American backing and support, and Lebanon's return to siege once again.

In Free Thoughts section, the issue included an article by Mr. Hussein Abu Rumman entitled: "Political development and breaking the vicious circle", and another article by Mr. Wasef Tbeishat entitled: "The solution is thinking; not blasphemy".

The Country Affairs section overviewed the reactions of civil society organizations to the Israeli aggression on Lebanon. It also included the Launching Ceremony of the Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan.

Moreover, the Arab Affairs section covered the launching of the Arab World Forum for Elections. This was initiated by the Arab Civil Network for Democratic Reform, and with the participation of more than 18 Arab organizations. Also covered was the seminar on: "Iraq ... between two occupations", which was held at UJRC, and presented mainly by Ayatullah Sheikh Hussein Al Mouayad.

In Flashes on Civil Society Organizations, the issue included a portrayal of the Sisterhood is Global Institute. The three constant sections contained an overview of the publications that arrived to UJRC library; the echo of civil society organizations in Jordan; and voices of civil society regionally and internationally.

It is worth mentioning that the Civil Society Issues is a specialized magazine that is published on a monthly basis. It consists of 48 pages, and is edited by Mr. Hani Hourani, UJRC Director General.



### Publishing the UJRC brochure: Program Areas

On the occasion of celebrating the 16th year of establishing UJRC, an informative brochure of eight A4 pages has recently been published in English. The brochure overlooks the most important programs, and begins by an introduction of the Center, followed by Civil Society and Democratic Development; Human Rights; Jordan's Environmental Watch Program; The Jordanian Forum for Economic Development; Jordan's Oral and Social History, Women Studies, Socio-Political Studies, Electoral and Parliamentary Studies, and the New Jordan Forum.



### New Issue of the "Economic Policy Dialogue" Newsletter

The Jordanian Forum for Economic Development, the economic podium at UJRC, has recently published issue no. 18 of its regular newsletter, "Economic Policy Dialogue".

This issue, which was published in Arabic, tackled the new project UJRC will be implementing within the course of 2006-2007, on strengthening corporate governance and social responsibility in the business sector in Jordan. It also sum-

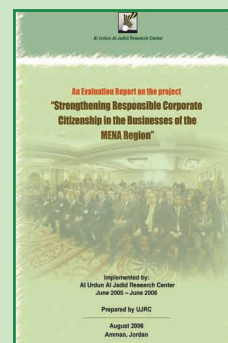


marized the main outcomes of the project and the workshops on CSR in the MENA region, whilst highlighting UJRC workshop on CSR within the MDF5 conference in Beirut, April 7-9, 2006. This EPD issue published a paper that was contributed by Dr. Mahmoud Ababneh, Director of Companies Control Department, entitled: "Observing the performance of Companies and the Implementation of Corporate Governance."

### **UJRC publishes an Evaluation Report on the project: "Strengthening Corporate Citizenship in the Businesses of the MENA Region"**

UJRC has recently published an evaluation report on the project "Corporate Citizenship in the Businesses of the MENA Region". This project has been operating throughout 2005 and 2006, with the cooperation of the World Bank and other MDF partners.

The report falls in 24 A4 pages and is published in English. It is composed of five sections: 1) A summary of the project, including its background, goals and activities. 2) A description of the project's main activities, with a special focus on the Case Studies that were prepared on seven countries of the region (Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates and Palestine), and the five regional workshops that were held within the project. 3) An evaluation of the project workshops, case studies, publications and outcomes. 4) The project impact on the local Jordanian level and on the regional level. 5) UJRC follow-up and future outlook, which overviews UJRC perception of continuing its efforts to enhance Corporate Social Responsibility in the region, through building alliances and networks of activists in this field. The report was written by Dr. May Al-Taher, the programs director at UJRC.



## **Upcoming activities of AI Urdun Al Jadid Research Center**

### **November 2006**

#### **Workshop "Towards a Public Consensus on Taxation Policies in Jordan", November 8, 2006**

The Jordanian Forum for Economic Development is organizing a workshop entitled: "Towards a Public Consensus on Taxation Policies in Jordan", on Wednesday, November 8, 2006, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Amman. The workshop aims at crystallizing the understanding between different economic sectors, social communities, Government and Parliament on different tax policies and regulations adopted in Jordan, whilst seeking to achieve equity on the one hand, maximize the government budget on the other, in addition to cutting tax evasions.

#### **Workshop "Organizing Advocacy Campaigns aiming at gaining the Parliament's support", November 15, 2006**

Within the framework of the project "Study Days for Civil Society Leaders" AI Urdun Al Jadid Research Center is holding the fourth workshop entitled: "Organizing Advocacy Campaigns aimed at the gaining the Parliament's support: the Law of Parties as a case study", on Wednesday, November 15, 2006, at Marmara Hotel in Amman. The workshop aims at building the capacities of Civil Society leaders and Political Parties to influence the Parliament and gain support for their demands and cases.

#### **"The Civil Society Conference concurrent to the Forum for the Future", November 27 & 28**

AI Urdun Al Jadid research Center is participating along with a number of civil society organizations, in holding the "Civil Society Organizations concurrent conference to the Forum for the Future", which is organized by the Group of Eight industrial countries (G8) and the governments of the region on the ministerial level, on November 27 and 28, 2006.

150 leaders and activists from the MENA region will be participating at this conference.

## **December 2006**

### **Workshop: Assessing the National and Local Elections Framework in Jordan, December 5**

A team made up of European election experts, members of International Democracy Reporting (Berlin) and Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center will prepare an evaluation study on the framework of Parliamentary and Municipality Elections in Jordan. This will take place between mid-November throughout early December 2006. The outcomes of the research prepared by the team will be presented for discussion at a specialized workshop on Tuesday, December 5, 2006 in Amman. Experts, academics, members of Parliament and researchers will be taking part.

### **Workshop: The parliament and Amending the Law of Parties, December 18 & 19**

UJRC, together with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)/ the Parliamentary Development Initiative in the Arab Region, is organizing a workshop on the Parliament and amending the laws of political parties, on Tuesday and Wednesday, December 18-19, 2006. Participants would include members of Parliament, political parties' leaders and experts from Morocco, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Palestine.

The workshop aims at exchanging Parliamentary experiences in developing and amending laws of parties in the Arab World.

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