

Dr. Rima Khalaf's speech in the opening session of the AMR,

Amman 26 Nov 2012

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Your Excellency Dr. Jaffar Hassan, Minister of Planning, Jordan

Excellencies,

Colleagues from our Sister UN organizations,

Good afternoon to you all and welcome to our preparatory meeting for the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review on Science, Technology, Innovation and Culture for Sustainable Development. We are gathered here today to deliberate all these issues and agree on a set of priorities for the Arab Region, which is well placed to reap the benefits of science and technology given its rich endowment in natural, financial and human resources. It is also in this region that today the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP 18) starts its two weeks long deliberations in Doha.

Technology is widely acknowledged as the most effective tool to increase productivity and sustain human development while preserving the environment and ensuring the efficient management of resources.

As you know, "*Technology is the practical application of knowledge.*" It is the useful deployment of acquired knowledge to produce optimal outcomes. Areas of

development are infinite and interrelated. The knowledge space is so vast and covers a multitude of substantive, managerial, scientific and cultural endeavors.

Colleagues,

The United Nations has always been a global player in promoting technology for development. In his report to the Sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly on the “*Options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies*,” the Secretary-General of the United Nations renewed the commitment of the United Nations to this end.

Science and Technology was also a prominent topic in Agenda 21. Four chapters were dedicated to it.

Ten years later, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) contained numerous references to science and technology.

The World Summit on the Information Society (2003 and 2005) adopted principles and an action plan to bring 50 per cent of the world’s population online by 2015.

In 2010, the “UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals” resolved to *“promote the development and dissemination of appropriate, affordable and sustainable technology and the transfer of such technologies on mutually agreed terms”*.

And most recently, the outcome document of Rio +20, contained twelve paragraphs focusing on science and technology for sustainable development.

This global commitment is further confirmed in the many resolutions adopted by ECOSOC, the Regional Commissions and specialized UN agencies. These resolutions constitute a strong legislative mandate for concrete joint programmes and activities that are guided by three main principles:

- 1- Humanity commands a great pool of knowledge and ideas to solve the most challenging problems;
- 2- Global technology progress is a catalyst for changing consumption patterns towards more sustainability;
- 3- Free and open-source collaborations and solutions are the most viable platform for innovation.

In this second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where knowledge determines the fortunes of nations, the Arab region will have to rely on technology for future socio-economic progress. Technology has a critical role to play in maintaining

*sovereignty, quality of life, productivity, sustainability, and decent employment, in short, the survival and prosperity of present and future generations.*

In the current Arab socio-political transition, regional priorities should be derived taking into consideration the following:

1. Technology, especially home grown, along with selected transferred technologies, are needed to increase economic productivity.
2. Increased productivity should lead to higher wages and improved quality of life.
3. Harnessing local knowledge and technology, and its wide multiplier effects, will create dignified jobs for the majority of “*out of school and out of job*” Arab youth.
4. Islands of competence dispersed in the Arab world must work together and build productive partnerships to address local sustainability challenges and become islands of excellence and innovation.
5. Technology is global and available for all through the touch pad of mobile devices and computing tablets. Open knowledge sources and innovation products and services can be channeled properly for socio-economic gains.
6. The connected and technology savvy young population have the chance to leap-frog into deploying and developing technology tools in all aspects of daily life.

7. Technology partnerships in the Arab region are lucrative problem solving business ventures.

Colleagues,

I am confident that your deliberations this afternoon will succeed in setting the priorities for this region for presentation to the rest of the world in the Annual Ministerial Review.

Thank you!