UN Jordan in the News
Monthly Press Clippings

February 2017

This document is produced by the Office of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator
Amman, Jordan
www.un.org.jo
UNDP-JEFE sign vocational training partnership for employment in Zarqa


The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a partnership agreement with Jordan Education for Employment (JEFE) to launch a demand-driven vocational training programme in Zarqa, targeting 240 Jordanian youth, of which 50 per cent at least are women.

In a statement released Wednesday, the UNDP said that the agreement is part of its ongoing efforts to mitigate the impact of the Syrian crisis on vulnerable Jordanian host communities.

JEFE will train the selected beneficiaries on high-demand vocational sectors as well as entrepreneurial skills. 90 beneficiaries out of the total 240 will receive access to financial support from UNDP and additional training to establish their microbusinesses while the rest will be provided with employment opportunities in the labour market, the statement added.

The project will provide a short-term income support for the beneficiaries while they gain new skills that are responsive to the demand of the labour market.

Jordan participating as observer in Astana peace talks on Syria


Jordan has participated as an observer in a technical meeting in Kazakhstan's capital Astana to discuss in detail the implementation of the Syrian ceasefire agreement, the government said Monday.

The meeting was held at the expert level, with Jordan taking part upon an invitation from Russia, Minister of State for Media Affairs Mohammad Momani told The Jordan Times.

"We support the process as a credible effort to establish a comprehensive cessation of hostilities and a step towards resuming political talks under UN leadership, and with the participation of all concerned countries to reach a political solution on the basis of UN Resolution No. 2254 and the Geneva process that would end the suffering of Syrians and be accepted by them," Momani said. Experts from Russia, Turkey, Iran and the UN held a technical meeting in Astana to discuss the situation of the Syria ceasefire agreement, Kazakhstan's foreign ministry said on Monday, as quoted by Reuters.

A ministry spokesperson said the agenda included reviewing the implementation of the cessation of hostilities, discussing a proposal from the Syrian armed opposition regarding the ceasefire and determining options on how to implement it, according to Reuters.

Fighting and air strikes have plagued the ceasefire agreement between the government and rebel groups since it took effect in late December, with the combatants accusing each other of violations, the agency said, adding that the ministry gave no information about the line-up of the delegations, who were meeting behind closed doors.

After the talks, the Russian negotiator, chief command official Stanislav Gadzhimagomedov, said the sides had also discussed ways to prevent provocations and securing humanitarian access, the news agency reported.
Army receives vehicles from Japan government
Published on 6 February 2017 in the Jordan Times: http://bit.ly/2kCb9qH

The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) on Monday received several vehicles as a grant from the Japanese government.

Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Shuichi Sakurai said his government last year presented $5.17 million for the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to implement the “Improving Safety and Security to Respond to the Syrian Refugee Crisis” project.

Brig. Gen. Nasser Athamneh, chief of staff for strategic planning and defence resources at JAF, highlighted the “deep-rooted” relations between Amman and Tokyo, and expressed gratitude to Japan and UNOPS for the assistance, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Photo credit: Al Rai Newspaper

Army chief meets UN humanitarian envoy
Published on 6 February 2017 in the Jordan Times: http://bit.ly/2kC7w4e


Discussions covered the latest regional and international developments, in addition to the challenges brought on by the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Photo credit: Petra News Agency

Election commission chief meets media representatives

Independent Election Commission (IEC) President Khaled Kalaldeh on Monday underlined the important role of the media in raising the awareness on elections and developing its processes.

During a meeting with media representatives, as part of IEC preparations to hold municipal and governorate council elections this summer, Kalaldeh said the relations between the IEC and media outlets is complementary, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The meeting is one of a series that the IEC, in cooperation with UNDP, is holding to discuss draft executive regulations of the elections.
Fakhoury discusses refugee response with UK minister

Published on 6 February 2017 in the Jordan Times: http://bit.ly/2kglSGw

Planning and International Cooperation Minister Imad Fakhoury met on Monday with UK Secretary of State for International Development Priti Patel, according to a statement from the ministry.

Fakhoury and Patel discussed the European initiative to hold an international conference in Brussels in April to bolster support for countries hosting refugees, as well as strategies to realise pledges made at the London donor conference held in February 2016.

They also discussed following up on the London and Helsinki conferences on supporting Syrian refugees and the region, in addition to the Humanitarian Response Plan for Syria 2017 and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2017-2018.

Fakhoury outlined the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) 2017-2019 and means to increase international support for it, including the EU-Jordan Compact, urging the international community to honour pledges made during London’s conference by increasing aid for 2017 and the coming years.

Jordan hosts over 1.3 million Syrians, according to the latest population census. The UNHCR says 655,895 Syrians in Jordan are registered with it as refugees.

The minister reiterated that only 54 per cent of the total required aid to support the JRP projects and programmes during 2016 was provided, although this represented an increase compared to previous years, when only a third was provided. The funding shortfall, however, stands at 45 per cent, said Fakhoury, stressing the importance of supporting Jordan to sustain its role in providing services to both refugee and host communities.

He highlighted the need for cooperation to encourage UK and EU investment in Jordan, which will benefit from recent trade agreements.

As well as other free trade agreements between the Kingdom and several other countries, a recent agreement simplified the rules of origin for Jordanian products in the EU markets.

Fakhoury also stressed the importance of providing technical support to existing industrial investments in Jordan, facilitating their connection with the EU private sector.

For her part, Patel praised the pivotal role of Jordan in serving refugees on behalf of the world through a holistic approach to the crisis.

She stressed the UK’s keenness to continue supporting Jordan to implement its economic correction programmes and the JRP 2017-2019.
‘Water scarcity, urban expansion among challenges to Kingdom’s food security’


Jordan imports food products worth $3.8 billion annually, in addition to wheat products not included in this amount, a senior official said on Monday.

Hayel Obeidat, director of the Jordan Food and Drug Administration (JFDA), said that despite large imports of food products, the administration is focused on food safety and has recently increased its inspection campaigns.

In 2016, he noted, 4,000 tonnes of food products were destroyed during the 185,000 inspection campaigns conducted. In addition, some 2,400 people were referred to court for food safety violations.

Obeidat made the remarks at the opening of the “Food Security in Jordan” conference, co-organised by the University of Jordan’s Centre for Strategic Studies and the JFDA.

Speaking at the conference, Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah said the government is giving special attention to the country’s food security.

He added that there are several current and future challenges related to food security in Jordan, including water scarcity, urban expansion and loss of agricultural land, as well as population growth. These reasons, he explained, have increased the need to import food.

As a result of these challenges, according to the minister, who was deputising for Prime Minister Hani Mulki, the government has adopted several policies and strategies that seek to enhance food security in the Kingdom.

One of these policies, Qudah added, is to expand loan programmes to the agricultural sector.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has also implemented several projects in Jordan with the aim of reducing food loss and enhancing food security. Last month, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO concluded a project in which more than 250 workers in food cultivation, handling and retailing in Jordan were trained to reduce food wastage throughout the supply chain. In a previous interview with The Jordan Times, FAO Representative to Jordan Nasredin Hag Elamin said realising food security is challenging, as the Kingdom is suffering from an extreme scarcity of both water and land. The Kingdom, he noted, needs a long-term strategy to deal with this challenge.

Jordan is located in an arid zone and subject to recurrent droughts, in addition to the impact of climate change. “Even the frost here has become more recurrent,” the UN official added. As a result, Hag Elamin explained, Jordan is becoming increasingly dependent on food imports, with almost 80 per cent of the country’s food needs and 90 per cent of cereals imported. Other challenges, according to the FAO representative, are also emerging, such as population growth due to the refugee crisis.

With the Syrian refugee influx to the Kingdom, water consumption has increased by 20 per cent in general and 40 per cent in the northern governorates in particular. In addition, this crisis has led to a hike in food prices. “This is an emerging challenge, but it is a long-term one,” Hag Elamin noted.

According to the 2015 Global Food Security Index, Jordan was ranked 55th among 109 countries in terms of food security. Regionally, it came in eighth place among 12 countries covered by the index. According to FAO, the Near East and North Africa region faces unprecedented challenges to food security and nutrition, especially in countries facing conflict.
900 teachers teach 22 thousand students in Zaatari camp schools

Approximately 22 thousand students have enrolled in schools in Zaatari refugee camp after the preparations have been finalized by the Directorate of Education in the Northern Badya.

The number of students is broken down on 12 educational facilities supervised by 900 teachers.

The education manager Fayez Jouwead said the Education Directorate is in the process of preparing new schools inside the camp indicating that the expansions in schools inside the camp has helped parents encourage their children to go to school and reduce the number of children dropping out.

He added that the directorate is following a remedial education programme for children who have missed out on education between the ages 9 and 12.

The Communications and Media Manager in UNICEF indicated that the agency is implementing “back to school” campaigns which aim at encouraging children to enroll in school. He added that specialized teams visit families and parents in their homes in Zaatari to convince them to enroll their children in the schools, indicating that UNICEF also utilizes different media outlets for the campaign, including field visits, awareness raising campaigns and mentoring. He added that UNICEF provides students will all the educational supplies, noting that the agency is working on establishing schools in the camp to address parents excuses for not sending their children to school because the schools are too far.

Model United Nations club conference continues its activities

For the third consecutive year, the Model United Nations Club continues its activities during its fifth conference at Princess Sumaya University for Technology. The conference aims to develop dialogue methods, improve leadership skills among young people and develop their skills on formulating constructive criticism.

The Deputy Chairman of the university, Dr. Abdullah Al Zoubi expresses the university’s keenness on preparing a cultured generation which is able to engage with the local and international community and have a role in decision-making and solving issues in their communities. Moreover, he presented the university’s efforts in advancing the telecommunication information sector in the Kingdom through scientifically and technically qualified graduates who posses the knowledge and skills that qualify them to work anywhere in the world. He pointed out that the university is (ABET) accredited in four majors and AACSB accredited.

From her side, the UNDP Country Director, Sarah Olivella stressed the role of youth in creating change for their future and the placements of their proposals on the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, to form an action plan to eradicate poverty, achieve prosperity which aims at enhancing peace and freedom for all, indicating the need for youth’s innovation and energy to lead the change on the global level. She made reference to the Security Council Resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security, which was under the auspices of Jordan and HRH the Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah II, which represents an unprecedented recognition for the urgent need to engage youth in peace building, addressing extremism as they are key partners in the global efforts to counter violent extremism and promote peace.
Second school opens for Syrian refugees in Rukban camp

Published on 12 February 2017 in Al Ghad Newspaper in Arabic: http://bit.ly/2kfYiNP

After the establishment of Al Khalidi school – the first school in Rukban camp last year, Al Najat elementary school comes as the second school in the camp, in an effort to continue the education of children stranded in the desert land between the Jordanian and Syrian borders where basic living conditions do not exist.

The two schools started receiving children a few days ago with the beginning of the second semester despite the tough conditions which Syrian refugees are facing, and the humanitarian aid delivered by international organizations. This comes as a results of the determination of parents and children to resume their education at a time where thousands of children who are deprived from their right to learn.

The head of the Syrian tribal council, Ali Al Mathoud Al Jasem, said that this school is an addition to Al Khalidi school and other tents which are educating children in the camp and receive hundreds of children. He indicated that Al Najat school has resumed educating children despite the limited resources. He also indicated that the school is an initiative from the population of the camp who come from two villages, and supervised by teachers who were educated in the same villages. He requested the international community to provide humanitarian aid to the children and provide them with educational material to establish schools which can accommodate the large number of children in the camp.

A source said from inside the camp that children are deprived from their basic rights of education, healthcare, food and safe spaces due to the armed conflicts which are taking place inside and around the camp. The source added that the parent’s determination in providing education for their children despite the tough conditions lead to the establishment of the school.

A refugee in the camp, Ahmad Al Jaber said that there are hundreds of educated people in the camp who can fulfill their duties in educating children, indicating that the positive initiatives which are being done in the camp by the people have already positively impacted the way children cope with the living conditions. He also indicated that the dream of returning to their cities is not far, if there is an educated and aware generation which is able to rebuild the destroyed buildings, culture and education in Syria, stressing the importance of the aid coming from the international community.

UNHCR High Commissioner, Filippo Grande, highlighted during his second visit to Jordan that the situation in Rukban is the responsibility of the international community, since the area is outside of the Jordanian borders, stressing that Jordan has been very cooperative in finding solutions for the stranded civilians and stressing the need for finding a balanced solution between the requirements and the humanitarian needs.
UNICEF adopts a new holistic approach to support vulnerable children
Published on 12 February 2017 in Al Ghad Newspaper in Arabic: http://bit.ly/2lxmlrS

UNCIEF Representative in Jordan, Robert Jenkins, announced the change in UNICEF’s work approach in the Kingdom and transformation to a new holistic approach which focuses on the most vulnerable people.

During an informal meeting with some press outlets, Jenkins said that the agency will be working with the National Aid Fund during the coming period to reach the most vulnerable children who are in need. He added that during the past five years the focus was on addressing the Syria crisis, especially that 50% of the Syrian refugees in Jordan are vulnerable children, clarifying that the need now is to address the needs of all target groups in a holistic manner to strengthen social cohesion among the different nationalities and between boys and girls. He clarified that while there are many vulnerable children due to the crisis, there are other vulnerable children due to poverty, disability, violence and other factors.

The new curriculum focuses on the establishment of a national social protection system extended to all children in Jordan, in addition to focusing on enhancing the government’s systems on all levels. Jenkins highlighted that during the coming period, a detailed report will be launched about the status of children in Jordan, indicating that the report is being prepared in partnership with the National Council from Family Affairs and will be used as a tool to identify the needs of children.

According to a presentation by the Media Specialist in the agency, Samir Badran, the main challenges faced by the children in the Kingdom are the increased violence in schools and homes which impact children, lack of education in kindergartens, water scarcity, acceleration in the growth of the population and expansion of the cities which negatively impacts water resources. The presentation indicated that Jordan is transforming from being the fourth water scarce country in Jordan before the Syria crisis to the second water scarce country due to the increase in the population.

The presentation also indicated the increase in number of vulnerable people due to the lack of property, displacement and limited livelihood opportunities, reduced subsidies and limited access to services (food, housing, health and education), pointing out that the causes of these factors are dropping out of school, child labour and early marriage.

Badran indicated that the new approach will focus on topics related to reduced violence against children, enhanced quality of education, increase in vocational and life training opportunities and the establishment of a positive development environment, indicating that 60% of children at the age of 5 are enrolled in kindergartens while the agency strives to reach 100%. Badran also spoke about the cash support programme for the most vulnerable children registered with UNHCR, which targets 55,000 children and their families in the host communities. The programme provides 20 Jordanian Dinars to each child on monthly basis, and aims at enabling families to cover their children’s basic needs, it also aims at decreasing the family’s dependence on negative coping strategies which impact children such as taking children out of schools, child labour and limited food consumption.

With regards to Syrian children, Badran highlighted that there are 1.3 million Syrians in Jordan out of which 655 thousand refugees registered with UNHCR – more than half are children. He indicated that in the school year 2015 – 2016 63% of Syrian children in Jordan were enrolled in official education.
World Radio Day highlights enduring importance of radio in the digital age


World Radio Day is celebrated every year on February 13.

To some, radio may seem like a dated medium — with Internet penetration rates rising every year and the use of smartphones increasing, it may seem that radio had its heyday in the analogue era.

However, radio is still an important low-cost medium and a powerful communication tool.

Globally, radio still reaches more people than smartphones and TV.

Radio is uniquely positioned to bring communities together and promote positive dialogue, including discussion on issues of local concern.

It is still the primary method to reach people without access to the Internet, and it is specifically suited to reach remote communities and vulnerable people, including those that are illiterate, disabled, the youth, women and the poor.

In Jordan, radio can offer a platform for citizens far from the capital of Amman to intervene in public debate, irrespective of their educational level and economic status.

In Maan, for example, the radio station Sawt Al Janub runs the only FM frequency in the governorate, broadcasting from one radio tower out of Hussein Bin Talal University.

The small team of reporters, students and volunteers is dedicated to stories that are of interest to the Maan community.

On a recent visit to the radio station, they were preparing reports related to the decrease in university enrolment numbers and the increase in the price of local goods.

While household ownership of conventional radio receivers has been falling in Jordan (and elsewhere), this fall is largely due to platform convergence.

Jordanians still listen to the radio, but in new ways, primarily online and while on the go.

Under the framework of the EU-funded and UNESCO Amman Office-implemented “Support to media in Jordan” project, UNESCO has been actively supporting new and emerging community radio initiatives, as well as already established radio stations, working with them to improve programming, institutional strengthening and management.

And in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the focus on promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs), which specifically include a target on public access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms (SDG16.10), it is ever more crucial to continue supporting these important initiatives.

On World Radio Day, we celebrate radio as the powerful medium that it is, and we encourage all media players, including commercial and community radio alike, to promote access to information, freedom of expression and gender equality over the airwaves and in their communities.

The writer is associate project officer, UNESCO Amman Office. She contributed this article to The Jordan Times.
Jordan secures 60% of required funds under 2016 refugee response plan

Jordan has secured 60 per cent of the funding required under the 2016 Jordan Response Plan (JRP) to the Syrian crisis, double what was obtained in each of the previous three years, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Imad Fakhoury said on Monday. Actual contracted funding, as additional grants, to JRP reached approximately 60 per cent of required funding needs for 2016, “an improved response compared to one-third funding rates in previous years,” Fakhoury said, adding that in 2015, Jordan secured 36 per cent of the appeal value. In addition to grants the Kingdom received under the JRP, concessional financing extended to Jordan in 2016 in the context of the London conference reached $923.6 million (contracted loans), of which $834.6 million is for budget support and $89 million for development projects, according to the minister.

At a joint press conference with the ambassadors of donor countries to announce progress after one year since the London conference that took place last February, and prior to this year’s conference that will be hosted by the EU in Brussels in the spring, the minister said in spite of this increased level of support, fiscal, economic and social challenges remain. “It is therefore critical to sustain the momentum in 2017 to address needs in the 2017 JRP, thus, maintaining basic services for Syrians and host communities, sustaining development gains, and supporting Jordan’s resilience and stability,” Fakhoury added. However, he said, while the Kingdom appreciates the support committed so far, moving forward, the pressure remains on the delivery of $1 billion ambitiously outlined in the Jordan Compact to support the implementation of the Ministry of Education’s plan to accelerate access of refugees to quality formal education. “Our focus in 2017 should be to do more on school construction and refurbishment, classroom additions and teacher training, among other efforts,” Fakhoury said, adding that some sectors are saturated and need more support, foremost of which is the education sector. Thus, he noted, building and rehabilitating schools in Jordan is a priority. According to the minister, of the $333 million pledged for education last year, almost 50 per cent has been funded. Fakhoury also noted that the Jordan-EU simplified rules of origin deal was one of the successes achieved as an outcome of the London conference. With support from the UK and USAID, he noted, Jordan is conducting a pilot project to identify 20 export-ready companies to be matched with potential buyers and distributers in the EU. “We look forward to working together to scale up this support in the near future, creating tailor-made technical assistance to help local industries meet European standards and requirements in order to export to the EU,” the minister explained. So far, six companies are qualified to export to Europe under the Jordan-EU agreement on simplified rules of origin.

Speaking at the press conference, British Ambassador to Jordan Edward Oakden said the London conference in 2016 led to a doubling of international support to the JRP, reaching unprecedented levels. Last year, UK’s support to Jordan reached $250 million. On education, Oakden said, UK support has helped train 2,700 teachers and provided maintenance to 320 schools across the country in 2016. “We’re supporting vital services, like the provision of 30 additional rubbish trucks in Amman to help manage increased levels of waste,” the ambassador said, adding that in the economic field, the UK supports initiatives that help young people find jobs, like renewable engineering skills for students from Maan, where over 80 per cent of participants are now employed.

EU Ambassador to Jordan Andrea Matteo Fontana said the EU and its member states have delivered on the ambitious pledges made in London one year ago. “Almost $1.5 billion has been committed to Jordan in 2016, of which more than $1.1 billion in grants, mainly for humanitarian assistance, education, municipal services, water and sanitation and livelihoods,” Fontana said. The envoy added that the funding far exceeded the pledge of $1.027 billion made at London by the international community. “The commitments of the EU and its member states totalled 76 per cent of the pledges made by the international community at the London conference.”
Meanwhile, Sissel Breie, the Norwegian ambassador to the Kingdom, said Oslo pledged close to $1.2 billion for Syria and neighbouring countries at the London conference. “We disbursed more than $310 million last year. Approximately $35 million went to Jordan as direct support,” Breie added.

German Ambassador to Jordan Birgitta Siefker-Eberle underlined that Germany pledged $2.5 billion for the region at the London conference, out of which $1.3 billion was allotted for 2016.

To Jordan, Siefker-Eberle said, her country committed $525 million in 2016, “which is more than double the amount Jordan received, in average, during the preceding years”.

In addition, the ambassador added that her country is extending support to build 13 schools this year, and to rehabilitate others.

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator David McLachlan-Karr, said that following the London conference, Jordan took a courageous political decision to open the labour market for Syrians.

The UN official also described the JRP as a model that will continue to offer a future of hope for Syrians and Jordanians alike.

McLachlan-Karr said that the cash transfers and food vouchers given to Syrian refugees injected $300 million in Jordan’s economy last year.

Meanwhile, Fakhoury said, the JRP marked a shift in funding channelled to address the Syrian crisis, noting that in the beginning, 30 per cent of the funds were directed to host communities, which has been increased to 50 per cent recently.

This year, the EU will host an international conference in Brussels on the future of Syria and the region.

**Brazilians hope to nurture football among refugees, underprivileged in Jordan**


Professional football training could be the best way for young refugees and underprivileged Jordanians to hone lifelong skills and values, according to a representative of a Brazilian sporting organisation.

Harnessing young people's enthusiasm for football and sports in general is a useful and interesting way to offer opportunities for personal and professional growth, said Rubem Cesar Fernandes, executive director of Viva Rio, a Brazilian NGO focusing on development through innovative projects.

Viva Rio has established the Black Pearls Academy, a high-performance football training centre for young athletes from refugee and underprivileged communities in Brazil and Haiti.

Fernandes started a visit to Jordan last week in order to explore the possibility of providing quality, professional training to young Syrian athletes in the Zaatari Refugee Camp, with the chance of expanding the programme to Amman and a larger segment of citizens, as well as Palestinian and Iraqi refugees, he told The Jordan Times on Monday.
Fernandes spoke of the universality of the "beautiful game", because "it is expressive of many values and virtues that are important in modern life, such as teamwork, fair play and competitiveness through capacity, not violence." "We thought of coming to Jordan because of the presence of many refugees from countries like Syria, Palestine and Iraq," he said, highlighting Jordan's peacefulness and belief in dialogue and negotiation as a point of similarity with Brazil's foreign policy.

Fernandes added that his country is also more inclined to peace than war, with a foreign policy that depends on soft power.

"Football is something that is very expressive of Brazil's peacefulness," he noted, adding that the skills of diplomacy and negotiation apply to playing football in the same way that they apply to politics.

"Each football game is an act of negotiation," Fernandes said, explaining that athletes undergoing professional training come to practise discipline, patience, fair play and dealing with tensions rationally.

The organisation's plan, which is supported by the Brazilian Football Confederation and the Brazilian foreign ministry, is to start in the Zaatari Refugee Camp, some 80km northeast of Amman, where Brazilian football experts can share their knowledge in coaching and organising football.

The camp is currently home to 79,614 Syrians, the majority of whom are women and children, according to the UNHCR.

The intended programme will involve professionals in the fields of physical education, coaching, health, physiotherapy, psychology and organising matches and tournaments.

These experts will seek out the most talented footballers and bring them to Brazil, opening for them the possibility of a future in football.

Those selected for the intense training programme will receive high-performance training, in addition to secure housing, school classes and a balanced diet.

The very best athletes will have the chance to play internationally; those who are good can play in football teams in Jordan; while those who do not make it into the first two categories will have learned some important life-skills, Fernandes said.

"By the end of the year I hope… [that we will] look for partnerships that will allow us to function in Amman," he noted. During his visit to Jordan, Fernandes met with officials at the Asian Football Development Association, the Jordan Olympic Committee, the Amman Football Academy and the UNHCR.

Responding to a question on whether the intended training programme will include young female athletes, Fernandes said FIFA supports further involvement of women players in order to create pressure to organise more and more women teams all over the world, including Jordan.

Brazilian coach and former footballer Zico, retired Brazilian footballer Roberto Carlos, and the Brazil women's team forward Marta are supporting the Viva Rio initiative, according to Fernandes.
UN Women lauds food security project funded by Japan

UN Women and FAO organised an award ceremony on Monday recognising the work of community based organisations in Hobras village in Irbid, some 80km north of Amman, in the implementation of the project "Promoting Rural Women’s Food Security in Jordan", according to a UN Women statement.

Under the $1.26 million grant, funded by the Japanese government, the project aims at supporting vulnerable Jordanians and Syrian refugees living in rural areas of Jordan’s host communities to meet their food security needs, while also bolstering the role and conditions of women working in the agricultural sector, the statement said.

A total of 555 women were trained on farming and using agricultural tools to sustain the food security of their families, benefiting 1,520 households (876 Jordanians, 644 Syrian refugees).

Interior minister discusses Syrian crisis with UNHCR envoy

Interior Minister Ghaleb Zu’bi on Monday discussed the repercussions of the Syrian crisis on the Kingdom with UNHCR Representative to Jordan Stefano Severe, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. During the meeting, Zu’bi voiced his ministry’s commitment to cooperate with the UN agency.

He said that Jordan supports a political solution to stop the bloodshed and preserve the unity of the Syrian people. At the end of the meeting, Zu’bi and Severe agreed to continue coordination on all refugee-related issues and to cooperate continuously to minimise challenges facing host communities.

Also on Monday, Zu’bi met with MP Yihya Saud (Amman, 2nd District), who chairs the Lower House Palestine Committee, to discuss issues related to Gazans living in the Kingdom, especially regarding the issuing of passports to them. During the meeting, Saud called for revoking the decision to increase passport renewal fees.

New UNRWA microfinance branch opened

UNRWA on Monday inaugurated the newest branch of its microfinance programme in Irbid's Husn, according to a statement released by the agency.

The new branch was opened in Husn to provide improved microfinance and microcredit services to Palestinian refugees in the area, who previously had to travel to the branch in Irbid, some 80km north of Amman, to access these services, requiring them to incur high transportation costs, the statement said. The branch was inaugurated by UNRWA Deputy Commissioner General Sandra Mitchell.

Officials from the Jordanian Department of Palestinian Affairs, staff from the agency’s Department of Microfinance and community members attended the event.

The new branch in Husn, which is the eighth in Jordan, is expected to provide an additional 2,000 loans each year, with a total value of approximately $1.6 million (JD1.13 million) in the first year, with the number of active clients expected to reach 1,000 by the end of 2017, according to the statement.
UNICEF meeting addresses challenges facing vulnerable children

Published on 15 February 2017 the Jordan Times: http://bit.ly/2kMtKQh

While Jordan has achieved significant socio-economic growth, multiple factors — including the global economic downturn, instability in neighbouring countries and the influx of refugees — are beginning to strain basic public services and further marginalise children from disadvantaged sections of society, a UNICEF statement released on Wednesday said.

A meeting organised by UNICEF brought together officials from the government, donor countries and institutions and civil society partners to discuss strategies to address challenges and scale up equitable access to basic social services for all vulnerable children in Jordan, the statement said.

UNICEF presented the current situation of vulnerable children in Jordan from various aspects including gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and place of birth, as well as children with disabilities.

Jordan reaffirms support for peace efforts in Syria

Published on 19 February 2017 the Jordan Times: http://bit.ly/2lXgs7J

Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi has reaffirmed Jordan’s commitment to finding a solution to the Syrian crisis in talks in Germany, while urging the international community to support the Kingdom as a host of refugees.

Speaking at the Munich Security Conference on Saturday, the minister said that supporting Jordan, which hosts 1.3 million Syrian nationals, to cover the health, education and development needs of refugees is an investment in a safer future for the region, Europe and the world.

While in Munich, he also met with the UN Secretary General António Guterres, Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit and the UN Special Envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Safadi also held meetings with his French, Spanish and Norwegian counterparts Jean-Marc Ayrault, Alfonso María Dastis and Borge Brende.

During the meetings, Safadi focused on the Palestinian issue as the Middle East’s core cause, reaffirming the pressing need for resolving it in a manner that would restore the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, particularly regarding the establishment of their own independent state on their national soil.

He also discussed the Syrian crisis and the need to find a political solution, based on the Geneva conferences, starting with a sustained ceasefire.

At his meeting with Ayrault and Dastis, Safadi discussed means to enhance bilateral relations, the burdens shouldered by Jordan as a result of hosting Syrian refugees as well as the need to restart peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis.

Safadi and Aboul Gheit discussed preparations for the Arab summit, to be hosted by Amman next month, which will be attended by Guterres.

On Friday, Safadi spoke at a meeting on the sidelines of the G-20 in Bonn, which brought together representatives of countries with “similar views on Syria”.

Children and women are seen in Aleppo, Syria, on Saturday (Anadolu Agency photo)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Press Clippings</th>
<th>February 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He noted that Jordan participated in the Astana talks as an observer, stressing that Amman supports all efforts to achieve a comprehensive ceasefire in Syria, especially in the southern region.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The G-20, called by Germany and France, was also attended by US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safadi also expressed hope that the Astana talks will constitute a first step towards re-launching peace talks in line with the Geneva communiqué, Petra reported on Friday.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The minister stressed the importance of ending the Syrian crisis through a solution that is accepted by all Syrians.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safadi reiterated Jordan’s support to all efforts to reach a political solution to end the suffering of the Syrian people, calling for the resumption of political negotiations under the UN’s leadership and with the participation of all stakeholders with the aim of reaching a solution based on international laws and resolutions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also in Bonn on Friday, Safadi met his British counterpart Boris Johnson to discuss bilateral relations and ways to increase cooperation to deal with common challenges and regional issues, Petra added.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both officials stressed the need for cooperation and coordination in the war against terrorism and extremism in order to achieve stability in the region.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separately, Safadi met with Turkey’s Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and discussed regional developments, especially regarding the Syrian crisis, in addition to bilateral ties.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They highlighted the mutual benefit to both countries of developing bilateral cooperation and continuing coordination and consultation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both ministers discussed boosting economic cooperation, especially through investment, tourism and trade.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efforts to reach a political solution to the Syrian crisis and anti-terror cooperation were also discussed, according to Petra.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Workshop on determining indicators for priority natural hazards concludes**


The National Consultation Workshop for determining the indicators for the priority natural hazards in the kingdom concluded today at the Dead Sea. The priority hazards had been agreed upon as outcomes of the first national workshop which was held on 22 and 23 November, 2016 in Amman for potential members of the National Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Platform. This national consultation workshop was organized at Crowne Plaza Hotel on 14 and 15 February 2017 by the National Centre for Security and Crisis Management and the General Directorate of the Jordan Civil Defence in cooperation with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), GoAL WASH programme, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The workshop identified the risk indicators for five priority hazards based on the assessment of each risk exposure, vulnerability and coping capacity at the individual and institutional level, using OCHA’s INfoRM index.

Participants at the workshop consisted of relevant members of the National Risk Assessment Team, including the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, and Water and Irrigation, Earthquake Observatory, Jordan Water Authority, Royal Scientific Society, Royal Geographic Centre, Department of Meteorology, Al Al-Bayt University, Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, Petra Tourism Development Authority, and Department of Statistics.
In addition, the Coordinator of the National Palestinian Technical Team for Disaster Risk Management, Dr. Mohammad Odeh, participated at the workshop to exchange expertise and knowledge in the area of disaster risk management governance for the benefit of the national risk assessment teams in both countries.

In his opening remarks, Assistant Civil Defence Director Brigadier General-Staff Marwan Bader Smei'at welcomed the participants from the national and international institutions and stressed the importance of this national effort that seeks to lay the foundation for implementing a comprehensive risk assessment at the national level.

Smei'at also stressed the need for all specialized national institutions to participate and concert their efforts in this process.

On her part, Head of OCHA Jordan office Sarah Muscroft commended the national ownership and leadership demonstrated by all relevant institutions and through the effective participatory approach in data exchange on disaster risk reduction (DRR) to improve preparedness and response plans for any potential future risks. Muscroft also commended the collective and coordinated efforts of the UN agencies that support national DRR efforts.

Governance and DRR Specialist at UNDP Diana Jreisat, presented the activities and projects implemented by the programme over the past years in the area of DRR in partnership with all national institutions. On her part, Mrs. Tamara Nanitashvili, Food Security and Nutrition Officer at FAO, stressed that DRR represents a corporate priority under FAO's Strategic Framework 2010-2019 and presented the key findings of a nation-wide DRR assessment for livelihoods in the kingdom. Head of Operations at the National Centre for Security and Crisis Management Hussam S'oub, concluded the opening session and stressed the importance of integrating national DRR efforts under the umbrella of the National DRR Platform and emphasizing the need for participants to actively engage in the workshop consultations.

This workshop falls within the on-going national efforts to implement a comprehensive risk assessment in Jordan under the technical leadership of the General Directorate of the Jordan Civil Defence and the overarching stewardship of the National Centre for Security and Crisis Management. The comprehensive risk assessment project is supported by OCHA and UNDP in cooperation with the international community.

**UNDP signs 9 grant agreements with NGOs**


The UNDP on Wednesday signed nine grant agreements with non-governmental associations concerned with protecting national resources in the Kingdom at a total value of $525,000, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. Six agreements out of nine are funded by the Global Environment Facility and three by the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, all signed by UNDP Jordan Country Director Sara Ferrer Olivella, according to Petra.

Six agreements are worth $225,000 and include environmental development projects in the field of boosting renewable energy management, ecotourism, protection of national forests and sustainable agriculture. The other three agreements worth $300,000 aim at helping communities hosting refugees in Irbid, Ajloun, Jerash, Mafraq and Zarqa governorates.

**Chief Islamic justice meets with UNHCR envoy**


Chief Islamic Justice Abdul Karim Khasawneh on Wednesday met with UNHCR Representative to Jordan Stefano Severe, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Talks covered cooperation in providing services for refugees. Severe commended the Chief Islamic Justice Department’s endeavours to help Syrian refugees, citing the establishing of two Sharia court offices at the Zaatari and Azraq camps.
Training for media managers beings

Following the “successful” start of a training programme for mid-career journalists, a new course for media managers and leaders began Sunday in Amman, according to a UNESCO statement.

Under the framework of the EU funded and UNESCO Amman Office implemented “Support to Media in Jordan” Project, CFI, the media cooperation agency at the French government, began a training programme for media managers at the SAE Institute.

Four “master classes” in February, March and April will train approximately 35 media leaders on how to organise a “360 degree newsroom” and measure multimedia audiences. The courses will also offer tools for digital innovation and supporting effective change management in the newsroom, the statement said.

Ministry accepts refugee children in second school semester
Published on 27 February 2017 in the Jordan Times: http://bit.ly/2m1f975

The Ministry of Education continues to accept new students this second semester, therefore enabling thousands of out-of-school children to enrol in public schools, stated a UNICEF statement issued on Monday.

The ministry — in partnership with the UN agency, and with support from Canada, the EU, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, the UK, and the US — is aiming to reach as many students as possible to enroll them in the public education system.

“The Ministry of Education is deeply committed to providing education to all children, including Syrians and other vulnerable children in Jordan,” Education Minister Omar Razzaz said.

Razzaz highlighted that the ministry had started double shifts in 200 public schools and had introduced the “Catch-up Programme” with collaboration and support of UNICEF and partner governments.

UNICEF has established an in-house “education call centre” to provide immediate guidance and support to families in registering their children.

“We warmly applaud the continued efforts of the government of Jordan towards its commitment made at last February's Syrian conference in London where it pledged to educate every child in Jordan in the 2016-2017 school year,” said UNICEF Representative Robert Jenkins. “UNICEF stands by the Ministry of Education and its partners in doing all we can to achieve the goal of having every child in Jordan going to school,” he added in the statement.

To accommodate as many children as possible, the ministry has opened afternoon shifts in an additional 102 schools, bringing the total to 200 public schools operating in double shifts. The ministry’s “Catch-up Programme” has also started, enabling children aged 9 to 12 years who have missed more than three years of schooling, to enrol for “fast track” learning programme where they will get tested and join the age-appropriate class in the formal education system. Children above 12 years of age can also enroll in the “Non-Formal Education Programme”. Out-of-school children who have enrolled during this second round of registration for the 2016-2017 academic year will have the opportunity to attend summer school in order to make up for missing the first semester.

This second wave of school registration backed by the “Learning for All” campaign will continue to allow sufficient time for as many out-of-school children as possible to register in school.

The campaign’s second wave, which kicked off in late January 2017, is focused on raising public awareness and mobilising over 200,000 community members including families, parents and children — especially those hardest to reach — to enroll children in formal education, according to the statement.
De Mistura acquaints FM on outcome of Syria peace talks
Published on 27 February 2017 in the Jordan Times: http://bit.ly/2mFgRb4

UN Special Envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura on Monday acquainted Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi with the outcomes of the ongoing Syrian peace negotiations in Geneva.

During the meeting, which was held on the sidelines of the 34th conference of the UN Human Rights Council, Safadi stressed Jordan's support for all efforts aimed at reaching a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis, which should end the suffering of Syrians and realise their aspirations of security and stability.

Safadi also met separately with his Tunisian, Iraqi and Dutch counterparts Khemaies Jhinaoui, Ibrahim Al Jaafari and Bert Koenders, respectively, as well as UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi and President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Peter Maurer, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Safadi’s encounters with his peers mainly addressed bilateral relations between the Kingdom and their respective countries, war against terrorism and regional developments, along with means to develop Jordan’s cooperation with the international organisations.

During the meeting with Jaafari, Safadi reiterated that Iraq’s security and political stability are crucial for the entire region’s security.

He also renewed the Kingdom’s support for Iraq in its war against terrorism and willingness to help Baghdad reach nationalconciliation under a political process that achieves justice and equality for all the components of the Iraqi people.

Roundtable discussion held on media self-regulation

Senior members of the Jordanian media, government and civil society participated on Monday in a roundtable discussion on media self-regulation, according to a statement released by UNESCO.

The meeting took place under the framework of the EU funded and UNESCO Amman Office implemented “Support to Media in Jordan” project, as part of the project component on self-regulation that is implemented by Fojo Media Institute.

The discussion is a follow-up to the media self-regulation study tour that took place last December, when a Jordanian delegation of media, government and civil society professionals visited Sweden, Denmark and the UK.

The discussion is meant to bring the same group together in Jordan to reflect on the lessons learned during the study tour and to discuss a way forward for self-regulation in Jordan, the statement said.