

JORDAN

Jordan's Foreign Minister Speaks of Arab Reform at the Woodrow Wilson Center

The issue of Arab reform has taken center stage today in the ongoing debate in the Arab world. Many countries in the region feel the need to adopt new policies towards positive and progressive change. Upon his visit to Washington, Jordan's Foreign Minister, Marwan Muasher stressed that reform is a homegrown effort that has to emanate from the region and thus should not be imposed from the outside. He maintained that the Arab world needs to have ownership of the ongoing reform process in the region. Speaking at the Woodrow Wilson

International Center for Scholars, Muasher said that imposing a one-size fits all blueprint for reform on Arab countries would "hurt the genuine efforts of reformers in the region."

Muasher also underscored the importance of the international community's role to support the Arab world in its reform efforts, "rather than suggest a blueprint for democracy," adding that there are genuine efforts today in Jordan and the region to commit to a "set of principles" related to women's rights, freedom of expression, good governance, judicial reform, educational reform and other areas. He said that this statement of principles is being discussed across the region and will hopefully be adopted by all Arab countries, which in turn needs the backing of the international community.

In reference to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the process of reform, he asserted that while this conflict cannot be used as "an



Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Marwan Muasher at the Woodrow Wilson Center

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Jordan Leads in Educational Reform

Jordan is truly setting a model in its forward strategy of educational reform. Given that almost fifty percent of the population is below the age of 18, the Jordanian government has introduced various projects aimed to expand access to education, enhance the teaching process and to integrate the Information Technology sector into Jordan's educational system.

To this effect, the Jordan Education Initiative (JEI) has been the talk of the day at the World Economic Forum's meeting in Davos, Switzerland last January. The JEI was officially launched back in June 2003 at the WEF's extraordinary meeting at the Dead Sea,

as a pilot project that will steer Jordan to compete and thrive in a technology-dominated twenty first century.

“By Empowering our youth through this education initiative, Jordan and its World Economic Forum partners can create a dynamic and practical model of public-private partnership in the area of ICT that can ignite the engines of growth for future generations in Jordan and the region.”

- HM King Abdullah

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This public-private partnership between WEF members and organizations and the Jordanian government will be 'a key catalyst for social and economic development' in Jordan and across the Middle East as well.

"By Empowering our youth through this education initiative, Jordan and its World Economic Forum partners can create a dynamic and practical model of public-private partnership in the area of ICT that can ignite the engines of growth for future generations in Jordan and the region," said His Majesty King Abdullah.

The project plans to transform 100 'discovery' schools into model facilities where technology is at the service of learning and teaching. Education Minister Khalid Touqan indicated that since its inception, around 111 teachers were trained on the use of technology and e-curricula in the classroom. Around six schools currently partake in the first part of the discovery school project, which in turn aims to introduce a new math-focused e-learning curricula. The project will later serve Jordan's 3000 public schools.

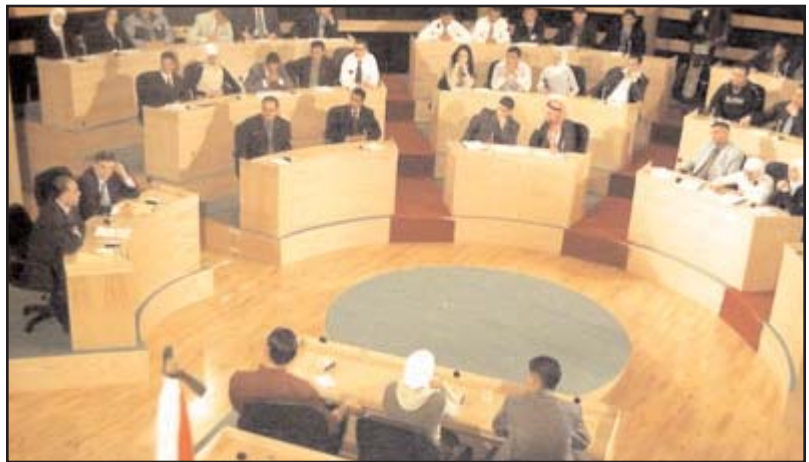


**JORDAN
EDUCATION
INITIATIVE**

The Jordan Education Initiative is in line with the wider five-year educational scheme, launched last year, to invigorate the educational system in the country to meet the needs of a knowledge-based economy. The major components of the \$300 million project include the adjustment of educational policies through government

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**The Youth Parliament:
Jordan's Future Parliamentarians**




A new project has kicked off to incorporate the Jordanian youth in their country's political, social and economic life. The Youth Parliament program stands as a unique and remarkable plan to establish youth parliaments in each of Jordan's twelve administrative districts and another on the national level; the Higher Youth Council (HYC).

The parliaments currently in the making will include members aged 18-24, according to HYC Secretary General Sari Hamdan.

Earlier in December 2003, the Aqaba Governorate was chosen for the pilot project of this ambitious venture. The process of elections will begin at the grassroots level, at youth centers in the country. Subsequently, members of each center will elect administrative bodies in their respective districts and in the next stage each district's youth parliament will be elected from members of these bodies. In the last stage, elections will take place at the national level to elect members of the Higher Youth Council from the youth parliamentarians in the districts.

Jordan's Television (JTV) started to broadcast the Youth Parliament program March 1st 2004. The sessions will be moderated by members of the Youth Parliament comprised of a president, deputies, and other student members. Each session will conclude with recommendations and a resolution on a specific matter.

The program is part of an overall strategy for the youth of Jordan in line with HM King Abdullah's vision for the younger generation and its role in public life. The strategy was designed with the assistance of international expert, various NGOs and the ministries of education and higher education. The council has also signed an agreement with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) through which a national conference will be established to address the challenges facing the youth of Jordan and possible solutions to these problems. 

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excuse" for not moving forward on reform, it remains a central issue that has to be addressed and resolved. He said: "movement on reform in isolation of movement on the Arab-Israeli conflict will lead to the wrong results...we need to move on the two together in parallel."

Muasher also referred to the Jordanian government's time-bound, far reaching plan which attests to Jordan's proactive role to push the reform process forward on the political, economic and social fronts. His Majesty King Abdullah had entrusted the government of Prime Minister Faisal Al Fayez back in October 2003 to implement an extensive program of political reform as its first priority.

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US Senate Staff Visits Jordan

The Embassy of Jordan, in coordination with the US Senate, organized the first Senate staff visit to Jordan in January 2004. The visit included various components that highlighted different economic, political and cultural issues in Jordan and the region. The staffers met with Their Majesties King Abdullah II and Queen Rania Al Abdullah, and they were also briefed on Jordan's pressing political issues on the domestic, regional and international levels in their meetings with Jordan's Foreign Minister Marwan Muasher, as well as with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

On the economic front, the staffers had the opportunity to visit the

Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZs) and experience first hand the components of the Jordan-US Free Trade Agreement which has resulted in an increase in Jordan's exports to the US in the past four years.

Jordan's Minister of Planning, Dr. Bassem Awadallah also discussed Jordan's economic reform agenda, the effect of the war on Iraq on Jordan's economy as well as Jordan's role in the reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

The staffers also visited the training facilities for Iraqi security personnel, the Baqaa refugee Camp and toured the historic and archeological sites of Jordan including Petra, the Dead Sea, the River Jordan and Aqaba.

The staffers represented the offices of the following US Senators: Senator Jay Rockefeller, Senator John



Senate Staff visit Petra

Sununu, Senator Tim Johnson, Senator Conrad Burns, Senator Richard Durbin, Senator Robert Byrd, Senator Michael Enzi, Senator Saxby Chambliss, Senator Norm Coleman, and Senator Chuck Hagel.



Jordan to Host International Water Demand Management Conference

Under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah II and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation in Jordan, in cooperation with the United States Agency for International

Development, Jordan will hold the International Water Demand Management Conference from May 30 to June 30, 2004. The conference aims to provide a forum for regional and international practitioners and experts in water issues to share concepts, research, technologies, and experiences on the most efficient use of water in the domestic,

industrial, and agricultural sectors.


The conference also targets water consumers, specifically industry and commercial agencies such as hotels, hospitals and farmers with sessions on new conservation technology reducing cost and water expenditure. The conference will be comprised of keynote speakers, workshops, courses and will provide a venue for joint ventures in water conservation technology and innovation.

Jordan's Minister of Water and Irrigation Dr. Hazim El-Naser, who will be chairing the conference, underscored the importance of this forum calling it a "landmark event for water management" given the global phenomenon of "water scarcity and water shortages."

Dr. El-Naser added that Jordan is "an appropriate venue" for the International Water Demand Management Conference especially

given its underlying water-scarcity, and also praised the Jordanian government's "forward thinking" and eagerness to adopt water efficiency measures to remedy Jordan's water problem.

More than 1000 participants from all over the world will attend the International Water Demand Management Conference at the Dead Sea. This conference will also provide all participants with a splendid opportunity to tour Jordan and "experience one of the most unique spots on earth, where the first documented irrigation system can still be seen, and where the lowest point on earth at the Dead Sea lies."

The sponsors of the conference include The American Water Works Association, The California Urban Water Conservation Council, International Water Association, International Water Resources Association, The Irrigation Association, The National Drought Mitigation Center, The International Development Research Center (IDRC), and The Academy for Educational Development, USAID and Jordan's Ministry of Water and Irrigation. 



Eleanor Clift at the Embassy of Jordan: How American Women Won the Vote

The Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Mrs. Coach Kathy Kemper, founder of The Institute for Education, hosted the celebrated and renowned author and journalist Eleanor Clift at the Embassy's Cultural Series February 9th, 2004. The distinguished Diane Rehm, of National Public Radio's Diane Rehm Show introduced Clift and spoke of her great achievements as a woman writer, marking her latest book, *Founding Sisters*, as a great historical venture highlighting the struggle for women's suffrage in the United States.

Clift spoke to the Embassy's guests about the *Founding Sisters* and their painful yet enlightening journey to make their voices heard, to guarantee their right to vote and to lay the foundation of the women's social movement in the United States. Clift traces their struggle from the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention in 1848, to their encounter with President Wilson's opposition to their movement, culminating in the 19th amendment in 1920, which granted women the right to vote. Clift paints this evolution by describ-



Ambassador Karim Kawar with Eleanor Clift

ing the challenges these courageous women faced, inside and outside the household, where they felt imprisoned and sequestered from social, economic and political life.

"As a journalist who specializes in women and politics, I thought I knew a lot about the struggles of women in this country for equality. But I had no idea that winning the right to vote took more than seven decades and that women were jailed and held in unspeakable conditions by the same government that took America to war in Europe to spread democracy," Clift told the crowd.

Clift kept the audience engrossed in this marvelous tale with her eloquent account of her experience writing this book. She later showed a sneak preview of the HBO film, "Iron Jawed Angels," which highlights various parts of her book. The film, starring Hilary Swank, aired February 15th. Clift said that the HBO movie "brings to life many of the scenes (she) wrote about in her book, and serves as a timely reminder in an election year of how hard the Founding Sisters fought for the vote." ☞

the highest in the Arab world, standing at 91.3% overall, 95.9% amongst males and 86.3% amongst females (2003 est.).

The UNESCO's 'Education for All' report has recently highlighted Jordan's achievements in the educational field ranking it number eighteen (18) out of 94 countries in providing equal learning opportunities to male and female students. ☞

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and administrative reform, the improvement of school environments and changes educational programs in order to incorporate the utilization of IT and telecommunications.

Reaping the Benefits

Jordan's literacy rate is amongst

Father Gavin Unveils 'Jerusalem Rediscovered' at the Embassy's Cultural Series

The Embassy hosted Father C.E. Gavin, renowned author and historian and former curator of the Harvard Semitic Museum, as the guest speaker in the Ambassador's Cultural Series March 8th. Father Gavin's presentation, full of mystique and wonder, opened a window of insight to a lost history of the Holy City, Jerusalem, a history that expands our image of the beautiful ancient city.

The mysterious story is of an influential photographer, M.J. Diness, in the 1840's who, being the first Jerusalemite to have learned photography and set up a photo-studio in Jerusalem, allowed the world to see the Holy City through a new and different perspective than they had before.

Prior to the invention of photography, most art—in mosaics, stained glass, tapestries, and carvings—had focused on Jerusalem and what had transpired there, but in ways more revelatory of the artist's fantasy and piety than the actual appearance of the Holy City and its surroundings.

Diness presented a realistic image of the splendiferous Holy City and enabled people to gaze into its streets directly and to linger on the Mount of Olives from a distance.

The mystery lies not in the photographs, but rather in the fact that this great photographer seemed to completely vanish at some point with nearly no record of his life or his pho-

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To this end, a series of measures were undertaken including the abolishment of the ministry of information, the creation of a new ministry for political development, educational and judicial reforms, as well as amendments to several laws regarding women's rights and freedom of expression. ☞

Father Gavin
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tographs. About a hundred and twenty year later, his prints were finally found...in Minnesota, of all places!

Father Gavin's presentation of the mystery and its answers made for an interesting night of insight into part of the ancient city's past that was only recently discovered. ☞

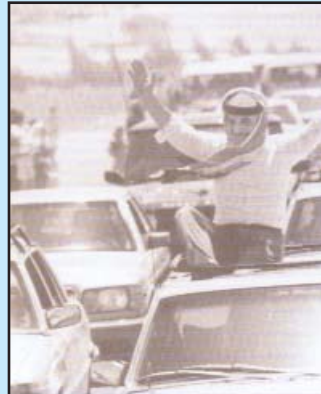
**UPCOMING
EVENTS in JORDAN
2004**

April 19 - 21, 2004
Second Industrial Exhibition for Reconstruction of Iraq
Amman Trade Center
Amman International Motor Show
Tel: (962) 6 560 5791

April 19 - 22, 2004
Horizons Exhibition for Pharmaceutical Industries & Hospital Equipment
Expo Sun
Amman International Motor Show
Tel: (962) 6 562 6013
e-mail: info@exposun.com

July 8 - 17, 2004
Amman Summer Shopping Exhibition
International Promoters Company
Amman International Motor Show
Tel: (962) 6 553 7083

**Royal Automobile Museum in Jordan
Launches its Website**



“ *The attraction does not lie so much in the car itself. Rather in the man who chose it and drove it, in the events it witnessed and the places it was steered towards.* ”

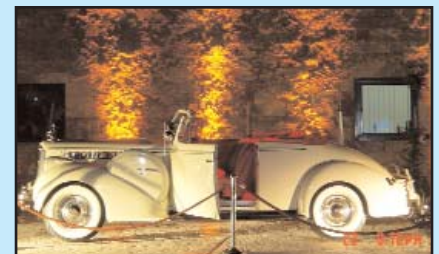
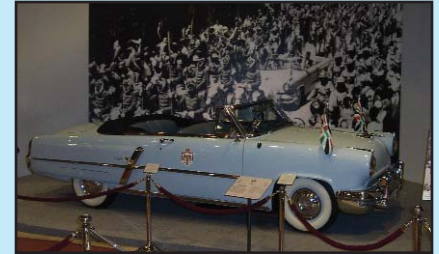
AMMAN - The Royal Automobile Museum in Jordan launched its website on January 15th, detailing the history of each of the 70 cars on display at the museum, officially inaugurated last June 2003.

The website offers information in Arabic and English. Over 55,000 people have visited the museum since it opened its doors seven months ago, including school children, residents, Arab and foreign tourists, as well as official delegations.

The Museum also completed a multimedia room seating 60 viewers, as well as a library with a diversified selection of automotive and historical books.

Furthermore, the Gift Shop featuring miniature car models, museum watches, t-shirts, mugs, and other memorabilia, as well as books about the late King Hussein, has recently opened.

The museum is open daily from 10:00 am till 7:00 pm except Tuesdays, make sure you visit when in Jordan!!! ☞



www.royalautomuseum.jo

King Hussein Park - P.O. Box 2003 Amman, 11953 Jordan - (962 - 6) 541 - 1392

Jordan's Royal Film Commission North America Sets Up Office at the Embassy of Jordan in Washington, D.C.

The Royal Film Commission (RFC) was established in July 2003 with the mandate to set up, structure and promote a film, television and multi-media industry in Jordan. Managed by a nine-member Board of Commissioners and chaired by HRH Prince Ali bin Al-Hussein, the RFC is a governmental organization with administrative and financial autonomy. Executive Commissioners and Managing Director Samer Mouasher is an avid movie enthusiast with extensive production and location management expertise.

The RFC has started establishing, with a goal of developing, a network of contacts through which it aims to

develop a globally competitive film industry in the Kingdom both for the local and international markets. Among its numerous activities, the RFC is currently building a comprehensive database of Jordanian talent, skills and facilities in order to fulfill the mandated mission of creating opportunities in this industry for students and seasoned film industry professionals alike.

Our website is currently under construction, but if you are involved in the film, television or multi-media industry and would like to

learn more about the RFC, please contact us via email at info@film.jo. Phone contact information: Amman - 464-2266/ Washington - (202) 966-2664 ext. 140. [CS](#)



The ROYAL FILM COMMISSION
JORDAN

UPCOMING EVENTS in JORDAN 2004

August 2 - 8, 2004

Second Exhibition for Jordanian Industries

Expo Rama
Amman International Motor Show
Fax: (962) 6 462 5200

August 28 - 31, 2004

Second Exhibition for Housing & Investment

Hashem Event
Fax: (962) 6 582 4569

September 2 - 5, 2004

Jordanian Arabic Health Exhibition 2004

Shraim International Center
Zara Expo
Tel: (962) 6 562 7765

September 20 - 29, 2004

Arab International Comprehensive Exhibition

Jordan Iris
Amman International Show
Tel: (962) 6 562 7200

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