

## Brazilian President Discusses Palestinian-Israeli Peace with Jordan King

Contributed by Alexandre Rocha  
Friday, 24 October 2008

Jordan's King, Abdullah II, said this Thursday, October 23, during luncheon offered by Brazilian President, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, at the Brazilian foreign office (Itamaraty), that Brazil holds a position of international leadership and sets an example for the Arab countries to follow. "We regard Brazil as a leading country and a template," said the monarch.

Abdullah II asserted that even though this is his first visit to Brazil, he does not feel that if he is in an unknown place, as the country is internationally renowned in several areas, such as diplomacy, business and sports.

"Brazil provides an example of regional cooperation and peaceful coexistence. Its multicultural society is an example. Its Arab community is the largest in Latin America and one of the largest in the world. This conveys a message to my region," he stated.

Lula had said earlier that the Arab and Jewish communities sustain friendly relations in Brazil, and that he hopes this coexistence is reflected around the world one day. During a meeting behind closed doors of the two heads of state at Planalto Palace, the seat of the Brazilian government, the main topic was the peace process between Palestinians and Israelis, according to diplomatic sources that accompanied the meeting.

The two government representatives concluded that the country should play a more active role in negotiations, precisely due to its peaceful stance in the international realm, its championing of cooperation between developing countries, and the multi-racial and multi-ethnic features of its population.

In his address, the king underscored the fact that Brazil has always stood up for the rights of the Palestinian people. Abdullah II asserted that Jordan "ascribes great value to the partnership with Brazil" and praised the role of the Brazilian president in the first Summit of South American and Arab Countries (Aspa), held in Brasília in 2005.

Along the same lines, Lula claimed that the Jordanian king is admired as the leader of the main efforts for peace in the Middle East. "His dedication is a source of inspiration to all of those who believe in peace," said the president. "His coming to Brazil strengthens a political dialogue that cannot be postponed, between two countries committed to a future of peace and well-being in the Middle East," he stated.

The president also said that Brazil wants to count on Jordan as a "privileged interlocutor" in its quest for partners in the Arab world. He stated that in the next Aspa Summit, to be held in Doha, Qatar, in 2009, the two regions are going to take "new steps toward joining forces for a more fair and balanced international scenario."

Lula called attention to the participation of the Jordanian armed forces, which have the fifth largest number of troops in the UN peace mission in Haiti, led by Brazil. He also stated that developing countries can contribute "creatively and with solidarity" to the overcoming of international crises. The president spoke for the fight against hunger and poverty as a means for avoiding conflicts. In the face of the global economic crisis, the president also mentioned the need for reforming international financial organisations.

The luncheon was attended by ministers, politicians, diplomats and civil society representatives, such as the president at the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce , Antonio Sarkis Jr., and the Foreign Trade vice president at the organization, Salim Shahin.

## South American Tour

Before arriving in Brazil, the king was in Chile and Argentina. In a meeting with businessmen in Santiago, he said he hopes the Mercosur and his country may reach free trade, according to information disclosed by Jordanian news agency Petra. Chile is not a natural member of the Mercosur, but has an association agreement with the bloc.

Beside president Michelle Bachelet, Abdullah II said, according to Petra, that he plans to provide "incentives to South-South cooperation in all levels to open new areas for economic development, "collaborating for the development of the countries and for greater quality of life of the people.

On Tuesday, the King traveled to Argentina, where he met president Cristina Kirchner. According to Argentine news agency Télam, Argentina "actively and strongly" sponsored the signing of the framework agreement that resulted in talks between the Mercosur and Jordan.

On Friday, Abdullah II should be in São Paulo, where he is scheduled to open the Brazil-Jordan Business Forum alongside Brazilian authorities and the president at the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce, Antonio Sarkis Jr. The event is organized by the Arab Brazilian Chamber and by the Jordan Investment Board (JIB), the investment promotion agency of the Arab country.

"Trade relations between Brazil and Jordan are at their best moment, and the visit of the king represents an opportunity for both economies, which are complementary. For example, Brazil is a strong country in the agricultural sector, and Jordan is a great supplier of fertilizers," said Sarkis.

During the forum there will be a seminar about the economy and investment of Jordan and about the business roundtables. The king should come in the company of a delegation of businessmen in different sectors who are going to sit face-to-face with Brazilian businessmen. Over 400 companies from Brazil have registered to participate in the event.

The Jordanian chambers of Commerce and Industry are going to sign cooperation agreements with the Arab Brazilian

Chamber and with the National Confederation of Industries (CNI).

"Stronger action by businessmen is beginning. We are living a moment of growth in bilateral relations and both countries have excellent opportunities for investment in the field of tourism and in other areas," stated Sarkis.

Brazilian exports to Jordan generated US\$ 233.2 million between January and September, an increase of 8.4% over the same period last year. Imports of products from the Arab country totaled US\$ 10.9 million, growth of 142.6% over the first nine months of 2007.

In São Paulo, queen Rania is going to visit the Apprentice City-School project, which has the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Anba - [www.anba.com.br](http://www.anba.com.br)