

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Speech of
Mr. Taher Masri
President of the Senate
Jordan

for

16th EURASIAN ECONOMIC SUMMIT

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Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me considerable pleasure to make the opening remarks for the Economy Session of the 16th Eurasian Economic Summit. I thank our hosts for the warm introduction.

The economic portfolio in any government is today—and indeed has been for some time now—one of the most challenging and important for any country. Global, regional and local forces have focused the minds of citizens on economic matters, in particular over the five years since the global economic crisis that exploded in 2008. In the difficult years since, ordinary citizens have been battered by global forces. They have been impacted by inflation in the prices of foodstuffs and in the prices of fuels and their derivatives, aggravating poverty and hunger. In many markets, they have seen the prices of their assets decline, hurting

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middle class families who have done their best to save for their children's education and for their own retirement and who thought they had accumulated a comfortable nest egg for the future. They have been impacted by currency instability, as exemplified by the continued challenges experienced by the Euro zone countries and its impact on the Euro as a currency, something of particular concern to all of us here given the significant proximity and importance of Europe to all of us.

Countries have reacted to these challenges differently, depending on the strength of their economic and fiscal strength and their local political and social considerations. Those countries with lower debt burdens have had more flexibility in managing these challenges and stimulating their economies. And here, I might add, that those who have advocated and carried out responsible fiscal policies in the past decades have been vindicated in a very real manner, giving these governments policy

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between the politician and technocrat is an age-old problem for which a balance is difficult to achieve. It is pointless to have the optimal technical solution to a problem if it causes a social upheaval!]

Today I hope we will discuss amongst each other various aspects of the above challenges I have outlined and in particular the differing responses of countries to these challenges. It will be useful for us to share our experiences and to understand which policies work and which are best avoided.

But I do not want to primarily focus on economic challenges, especially because we are here in Istanbul in the economic heart of Turkey, one of the most extraordinary economic success stories of recent times. In the decades-long trend of globalization, there have been winners and losers. Those who have adapted to the demands and competitive pressures of globalization have

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been the winners; Turkey certainly falls in this category. Many of us are proud to learn from the Turkish example.

It is not Turkey alone among those gathered here that have done well with globalization. When the pluses of globalization are tallied, many countries represented here will be on the winning side, having primed their economies to compete globally. For emerging and developing economies, the IMF estimates that annual GDP growth over the past 10 years has averaged 6.4%; by contrast, the major advanced economies have seen only 1.3% estimated growth over that period. The trend is set to continue, with the IMF estimating that the GDP average annual growth rate between 2013 and 2017 will be 6% for the emerging and developing economies and 2.2% for the major advanced economies. Developing Asia alone will grow at 7.5%

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during this time. Clearly, there are many winners from globalization in Asia and in other emerging economies.

My own country, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has also tackled the challenges of globalization head on. We have followed a policy of openness by signing free trade agreements that open up to our companies over 1 billion consumers in the US, Europe, and the Arab World. But it is a double - edged sword because these agreements also bring into our markets foreign competition. Our exports have increased significantly due to these trade agreements, but have also been more recently impacted by our proximity to Europe as a major market for our goods. Globalization has brought its benefits and challenges.

I hope that throughout this summit we will get to hear from our colleagues how their countries have tackled not just the economic atmosphere of the past few years but also how they

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have managed to thrive in the age of globalization. Let our next days be about sharing the successes so we can replicate them in our own countries. Because, as I said at the beginning of my speech, there has rarely been a time when the average citizen has been so focused on economic matters.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen and I hope that you enjoy this summit.

Taher. Masri
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