

Welcoming address of the President of the Senate of the States General, Mrs. Ankie Broekers-Knol, on the occasion of the visit of His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan on Wednesday 21 March 2018

Your Majesty,

On behalf of the States General of the Kingdom of The Netherlands, I am honoured to welcome you here in the Senate of The Netherlands.

I also speak on behalf of my colleague of the House of Representatives, Ms. Khadija Arib, when I say that it is a great privilege to receive you here for the second time, after your earlier visit in 2006. We feel very fortunate that you found the time to visit us and speak with members of our Parliament again twelve years since. This underlines the good and long standing relationship between our two Kingdoms and is proof of the intention to further build on this relationship in the future.

Your Majesty,

Constitutionally speaking, both our countries have a lot in common. Both our countries are a constitutional monarchy. Both our countries can be proud of their well-liked Kings supported by Queen Rania and Queen Maxima respectively. And both our countries have a bicameral parliament with a Senate and a House of Representatives. As a President of parliament, I can only emphasize the importance of a strong parliament and I look forward to also strengthen the relationship with the Jordanian parliament.

Your Majesty

When we look back at those twelve years since your last visit to our parliament, we see that many things have changed. With regard to the Middle East region, nobody would have expected Syria to end up in the devastating civil war that is still going on. Nobody ever heard of the word 'ISIS' or 'Daesh' back in 2006.

The war in Syria has developed into an extremely complicated tangle of multiple actors, shifting coalitions and hidden interests. A geopolitical catastrophe that cost and still costs the lives of so many innocent. The cruel images of the many victims, of the ruined cities and of the tremendous flows of refugees remind us of the incredible value and importance of peace and stability.

The position of Jordan in the region, a country surrounded by conflict and terrorism, dealing with millions of refugees, is not to be envied, to say the least. Internationally there is great respect for the way your country is

dealing with the terribly difficult situation. Thanks to the relentless efforts of your country and your personal commitment and dedication your country remains a stable factor in a turbulent area. At the same time, we fully realise that the financial and economic strains on your country are enormous.

Your Majesty,

The challenges of war, terrorism and instability make us once again realise the importance of cooperation among international partners. Because only together we can handle these challenges. And next to all the horrific events caused by the Syrian war, I can say that there is at least one positive side effect: the long standing partnership between our two Kingdoms has intensified.

Both our countries contribute to the international coalition to fight against the common enemy ISIS. Your country showed true partnership by offering our F-16 fighter aircrafts the opportunity to operate from the Jordanian airbase Al-Azraq. Both our countries cooperate to stand up to 21st century terrorism as members of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum. And both our countries are committed to solve the challenges that come with the huge flows of refugees, for example through the Jordan-EU migration compact. At the same time we fully realise that the greatest burden lies with your country.

Your Majesty,

As I said, only together we can stand up to the challenges that face us in the world of today. That is why your visit to our country is so important: to expand our cooperation, to increase our mutual understanding and to explore and enhance the possibilities to extend our relationship, with a focus on business and economy.

I hope that both our countries can continue to work together to achieve peace and security, to strengthen democracy and the rule of law and to bring well-being and prosperity for those who need it.

Your Majesty,

It is a great honour to have you here with us. Allow me to give the floor to you. Thank you.