

**SPEECH BY H.E. JUDGE ROSALYN HIGGINS,  
PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE,**

**At the unveiling of a mosaic donated by Jordan**

**26 June 2007**

Ambassador Al-Hassan,

Mr. Abu-Shattal,

Mr. Harahsheh,

Mr. Suliaman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Court, I thank you for this wonderful mosaic of Al Khazneh (“the Treasury”), which is given by the Government of Jordan to commemorate the visit of Their Majesties, King Abdullah II and Queen Rania last October.

We all recollect the solemn sitting held in honour of Their Majesties’ visit. The judges of the International Court, the Diplomatic Corps and representatives of the Dutch authorities and other international institutions located in The Hague gathered in the Great Hall of Justice to welcome Their Majesties.

It was a very special occasion. As I said in my speech, the presence of Their Majesties

“bears witness to your country’s attachment to the cause of international law and to the supreme values of peace and justice. This visit also reflects your personal commitment to justice, freedom and mutual understanding among nations.”

That personal commitment was expressed in the splendid speech delivered by His Majesty, King Abdullah II. He described the vital importance to our efforts of “a practising, just international legal order” in addressing “the global impact of regional conflict, the worldwide reach of economic shocks and trends, the interregional flows of people and ideas, and the whole-earth reality of environmental problems and health concerns”. His Majesty’s deep commitment to justice is also seen at the national level — just this month he stressed that developing the judiciary is a top national priority for Jordan and “the key factor in entrenching principles of justice and equality”.

We were all impressed with His Majesty’s wise words during the Solemn Sitting and his constant search for a fair peace for all in the Middle East.

The generous gift of the Government of Jordan of this mosaic not only reminds us of the visit of Their Majesties, but also forms a symbolic link between a State which plays a critical role as a regional and global peacemaker, and the International Court of Justice, an institution dedicated to guarding the respect for international law and promoting peaceful relations between States.

As we have heard from the Ambassador, the mosaic depicts the Treasury, one of the most elaborate buildings in the city of Petra in Jordan. I understand that this mosaic was created by a Jordanian artist who is trying to revive the craft of mosaic-making. I am sure that this mosaic — a modern rendering of a cultural treasure using ancient techniques — will inspire us, as we pass it on

our way to the Deliberation Room. It is in that room that the judges of the International Court, coming from around the globe and representing the principal legal systems of the world, gather to discuss and debate the case under consideration by the Court. It is our most private space where each judge may speak in total independence and with total freedom.

This mosaic is also a reminder of the long-standing support given by Jordan to the International Court of Justice. Jordan is a party to various international conventions which provide for the referral to the International Court of disputes relating to their interpretation and application. These conventions cover a variety of subject-matter and seek to address the global problems which His Majesty alluded to in October, including terrorism, corruption, and genocide. Jordan is of course also associated with the International Court through the presence on the Bench of Vice-President Awn Shawkat Al-Khasawneh. The Vice-President came to the Court after a prestigious career in the Jordanian diplomatic service, including substantial experience with various United Nations bodies, including the International Law Commission and the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. He was also Chairman of the Jordanian National Group on the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law for eight years. His humane approach to the application of law is appreciated by all of his colleagues.

I am pleased to see this fine mosaic taking a prominent place at the International Court of Justice. Every time Members of the Court meet for deliberations, we will be reminded of the visit of Their Majesties, King Abdullah II and Queen Rania, and of the warm relationship between Jordan and the Court.

I now invite everyone to enjoy the reception, which includes sweetmeats generously provided by His Excellency, Ambassador Al-Hassan.

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