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SAUDI-U.S. RELATIONS

King Abdullah attends UN interfaith dialogue conference

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz attended a United Nations high-level interfaith conference in New York from November 12-13. The meeting was a continuation of the global dialogue process initiated by Saudi Arabia earlier this year.

During his speech to the General Assembly, King Abdullah called for a rejection of the violence engendered by intolerance. "We state with a unified voice that religions through which Almighty God sought to bring happiness to mankind should not be turned into instruments to cause misery," he declared. "We will continue what we have commenced, extending our hand to all those advocating peace, justice and tolerance."

Representatives of more than 75 countries participated in the two-day conference, including kings, emirs, heads of government and heads of international bodies.

Closing the conference, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon read the final communiqué issued by the participants. The text condemned the use of religion to justify the killing of innocents. It affirmed that all religions advocate peace, justice and equality and, therefore, cannot support terrorism, violence or coercion. While acknowledging that difficult works lies ahead, Ban touted the conference as "an important step forward."

During his stay in New York, King Abdullah met with several prominent figures, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, former President Bill Clinton and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. On November 13, King Abdullah met with U.S. President George W. Bush. During their discussion, the president underscored the importance of Saudi-U.S. relations, recognizing that the Kingdom has a pivotal role to play in resolving Middle East issues.

King Abdullah participates in G-20 conference

King Abdullah traveled from New York to Washington on November 14 to participate in the G-20's Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy.

In his statement to the Summit on Saturday, King Abdullah called for greater international cooperation to counter the global financial crisis and stressed the importance of proper economic regulation. "This crisis revealed that undisciplined globalization and inadequate control of the financial sectors contributed to its rapid spread around the globe," the King stated. "Markets cannot regulate themselves. Therefore, there is an urgent need to strengthen monitoring agencies and systems for the financial sectors."

King Abdullah urged the world leaders to continue their assistance to the developing world, and reiterated Saudi Arabia's commitment to aiding poor nations.

King Abdullah also highlighted Saudi Arabia's unique contribution to world financial stability. "Saudi Arabia is aware of the pivotal and critical role it plays in the global economy and in ensuring the stability of the international oil market," he said. "Saudi Arabia has made many sacrifices, including maintaining costly additional productive capacity amounting to about 2 million barrels per day, seeking to promote global economic growth in a manner that serves the interest of all parties."

FOREIGN AID

Saudi Arabia offers 200 tons of dates to Sudan

Saudi Arabia delivered 200 tons of dates to Sudan on November 13, upon the directive of King Abdullah. The Saudi ambassador in Khartoum, Mohammed bin Abbas Al-Kilabi, said the assistance confirms the Kingdom's commitment to maintaining brotherly relations with Sudan.

