



## **National Forum for Youth and Culture: Jordan Youth**

### **4th South Youth Forum**

## **"Jordanian Youth Agenda for the 2007 Elections"**

**Aqaba 3 – 5/5/2007**

The NFYC and Konrad Adenauer Foundation organized the 4<sup>th</sup> South Forum at Al-Hussein Camps – Aqaba as a youth-led workshop over the period 3 – 5/5/2007 in cooperation with, and co-sponsored by the Euro-Arab Insurance Company. The Forum aimed at enhancing the participation of young Jordanian in the upcoming municipal and parliamentary elections, by introducing them to the duties of the members of a municipal council and member of the parliament. The participants of the forum discussed and agreed on a set of characteristics that should be present in any candidate for them to vote for. They also determined what an electoral program should include to reflect Jordanian youth needs.

The South Forum comes as a continuation of the work done during the North Forum held at Jordan University of Science and Technology 1 – 3/3/2007, and as follow up to the discussions held last year regarding the Elections and Political Parties Laws. Both events also included training on advocacy skills.

- **Venue:**
  - Al-Hussein Camps – Aqaba.
- **Organizers:**
  - Konrad Adenauer Foundation
  - National Forum for Youth and Culture
- **When:**
  - 3 – 5/5/2007
- **Participants:**
  - 85 young man and woman residing or studying in the south region.

**Program:**

## Day One:

Time	Event
11:00 – 13:00	Participants registration
13:00 – 15:00	Lunch break
15:00 – 15:30	Program and methodology Participants' expectations
15:30 – 16:00	Introducing NFYC
16:00 – 18:00	What are the duties of parliamentarians? What are the duties of the members of a municipal council?
18:00 – 19:00	Coffee break
19:00 – 20:00	Opening ceremony: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech by NFYC president</li> <li>• Speech by KAS</li> <li>• Speech by the Director of Aqaba Youth Directorate</li> <li>• Speech by the Governor of Aqaba</li> </ul>
20:30	Dinner

## Day Two:

Time	Event
8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast
9:00 – 9:15	Energizers
9:15 – 10:30	What are the characteristics of the ideal candidate? Who are we voting for?
10:30 – 11:00	Presentation of groups' work
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 12:30	What do we want from our candidates?
12:30 – 14:00	Jum'a prayers and lunch break
14:00 – 14:15	Energizers
14:15 – 15:30	What do we want from our candidates?
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 – 18:30	Presentation of groups' work
19:00 – 23:30	Departure to Aqaba city Dinner and free time (sponsored by the Euro-Arab Insurance company)

## Day Three:

Time	Event
8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast
9:00 – 9:15	Energizers
9:15 – 12:15	Advocacy training
12:15 – 12:30	Coffee break
12:30 – 13:30	Presentation of the agenda for the south region
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch break
14:30	Closing ceremony and departure

## **Results:**

Over the first day of the forum, the participating youth discussed the duties of both, members of the parliament and members of the municipal councils. They agreed upon the following:

### Duties of Members of the Municipal Councils

are to

- Increase the general awareness regarding the role of the municipality in providing services and resolving the problems of the residents, in addition to establishing centers in the different parts of the municipality to specialize in providing services.
- Implement artistic and cultural events within the boundaries of the municipality, in addition to establishing public libraries, to enhance the general knowledge of the residents.
- Provide services to all residents on equal basis, without neglecting remote areas.
- Take part in making decisions regarding the municipality, together with other governmental organizations,.
- Assign recreational areas accessible by all factions of the society, including the establishment of youth clubs, and special facilities for families and tourists.
- Take actions assuring the preservation of the environment, including the cleanness of public parks, playgrounds, and the streets, in addition to combating rodents and insects, moreover sanitizing water tanks and taps made for public use. He should also focus on solid waste management.
- Market the municipal area to attract development investments and provide jobs for the youth.
- Register buildings within the municipality boundaries for urban planning and organization.
- Determine the municipal budget, and allocate proper sources of funding.
- Follow-up on residents' problems and provide solutions.

The participating youth voted on the duties to determine their level of importance; providing public services came in the first rank with 29.73% of the votes, followed by cooperation with other governmental institutions in the municipal boundaries to achieve development, and to develop the tourism sector in the municipality, both tasks share the second place.

The participating youth agreed on the following

### Duties of the Parliamentarians:

They are to

- Control and audit the work of the government and its finances.
- Enhance the role of youth in monitoring and decision-making process, and the establishment of special committees concerned with work, health, and public needs.
- Actively participate in the legislative process, and coordination with the Upper House/Senators to pass legislations.
- Work on eradicating masked unemployment.
- Work on combating terrorism.

- Provide services to the citizens, not provided otherwise by any other institutions.
- Cooperate and encourage youth oriented institutions.
- Enhance communication between the people and the government.
- Approve the State Annual Budget in compliance with the needs of the state and the citizens.
- Monitor government performance and its compliance with legislations, and uncover any acts of corruption.
- Participate in granting or withholding confidence to new governments.
- Spread political and cultural awareness.

The voting on the importance of the duties resulted in a shared first rank with 25% of the votes for 'control and audit of the government work', and 'spread of political and cultural awareness'. 'Serving as the connection between the decision makers and the people' came in second place, and 'providing services for the citizens' in place three.

During the opening ceremony in the evening of the first day, HE, the Governor of Aqaba addressed the young participants with regards to the electoral process and its importance in bringing the views of the people to the decision makers, he also discussed His Majesty King Abdullah II. 's personal interest in this democratic process and the participation of all sectors of society in it, with special emphasis on youth participation. The participants also listened to the Director of Aqaba Youth Directorate who explained the role of the Higher Council for Youth in providing services and facilities to help build the capacity of the Jordanian youth, in order for them to tackle current and future development issues. Mrs. Martha Sara elaborated on the vision of Konrad Adenauer Foundation in supporting the youth movement in Jordan, stating that the foundation has been one of the consistent sponsors of NFYC, explaining the aim of the foundation as to achieve political development and human rights in Jordan and the region. Where as the president of NFYC, Mr. Anas Alabbadi, talked about the role of the youth expected by His Majesty the King, as he regarded them as the Agents of Change, Mr. Alabbadi pointed the aim of NFYC as to guide young Jordanians into assuming this role by providing them with safe and proper space to communicate their views and express their visions for the future.

#### Municipality Candidates

During the second day of the forum, the participants worked together on determining the characteristics they expect to see in a candidate for the two public offices under discussion. They agreed on the following essential characteristics for those running for leading a municipal council. Youth found that for them it is important that any candidate should:

- Hold an undergraduate degree in engineering.
- Possess a strong, and influential leader personality.
- Be honest.
- Be a resident of the municipal area he/she runs for.
- Be dedicate to his work, and combat corruption.
- Be ambitious.
- Aim at serving the public.
- Support youth.
- Hold the Jordanian citizenship.

And for those running for the membership of the municipal councils:

- Be disciplined
- Possess a strong leadership personality.
- Be loyal to the area.
- Hold secondary certificate, at least.
- Possess strategic planning visions.
- Be at least 25 years old.
- Believe in the rule of law, to assure fair distribution of services to all residents of the municipality.
- Hold the Jordanian citizenship.

Supporting youth was ranked first with the highest percentage of votes at 23.44%, followed by being familiar with the area with 11 votes, and in third place came the dedication to his work with 9 votes.

#### Parliamentary Candidates

The participants defined a member of the parliament to be the representative of the people to the parliament who is elected in a direct manner, and is a part of the legislative process as he/she passes legislations in addition to other service duties.

The following characteristics they are looking in a candidate to represent them in parliament:

- Be educated and informed.
- Possess at least 5 years experience in voluntary work.
- Believe in transparency, credibility and accountability.
- Be familiar with the Jordanian constitution and legislations.
- Be a member of one of the Jordanian political parties.
- Be an initiator.
- Be more concerned about public interest than his own interest.
- Have lived in Jordan for 5 years at least prior to the round of elections he is running for.
- Acknowledge social and cultural differences when dealing with the public through his discourse.
- Possess the necessary skills, expertise, and tools to represent the people.
- Be ambitious and bold.
- Be at least 25 years old.
- Be cooperative and humble when dealing with others.
- Possess communication and leadership skills.

Loyalty to Jordan and the region he/she represents came in first place with 25.77% of the votes, followed by high level of education of the candidate with 9 votes, and the third place was shared by transparency and credibility, and to be at least 25 years old, with 7 votes each.

In later sessions, the participating youth defined the electoral program to be a set of realistic goals, ideas, and projects adopted by a candidate to fulfill the needs of the people and the country, they added that a candidate should include his/her C.V. in the electoral program.

The participants determined the following to be essentials in an electoral program of a municipal candidate:

- Work on enhancing the awareness on the work done by the municipal council.
- Work on developing the area and creating job opportunities attracting investments according to the needs of the area.
- Establishing youth clubs, centers, play grounds and parks.
- Include all rural areas of the municipality in health insurance.
- Allocate grazing areas distant from residential and tourist areas.
- Enhance the role of the local youth in the development process of the area with special concern to the tourism section.
- Enhance the role of women in cultural centers and community services, with no consideration to academic level.
- Assign one day a week to listen to suggestions and complaints from the residents, and establish a complaints center with a hotline.
- Establish marketplaces with consideration to the environment and public health, and easy accessibility by the residents.
- Preserve the environment and the general appearance of the area.
- Increase the general awareness and implement cultural seminars for the residents.

The voting resulted in ranking 'Enhancing the role of youth' in first place with 24.22%, followed by 'Attracting investments and providing job opportunities' in second place with 29 votes, and Establishment of recreational facilities came in third with 17 votes.

The youth have agreed on the following to be essential in the electoral program of a parliament candidate:

- Work on complying national legislations with international treaties, especially with concern domestic violence and violence against women.
- Provide solutions for unemployment.
- Pass legislations to enhance the role of youth in the Jordanian political parties.
- Pressure the Ministry of Education to improve their services, and establish proper schools in highly populated areas.
- Work on removing taxes on imported medications, not manufactured in Jordan.
- Reduce taxes and amending its laws to correspond with the monthly income of citizens.
- Combat administrative corruption.
- Provide solutions for the university students' transportation problem.
- Discuss current national and regional issues.
- Produce a time bounded development plan.
- Encourage awareness programs in different development areas.
- Encourage the establishment of youth centers, to foster youth ideas and views.
- Amend legislation governing the work of NGO's in Jordan (Law of 1966).
- Establish a youth committee in each governorate to work on developing the tourism sector.
- Take into consideration people with special needs and work on the adaptation of public facilities to facilitate their daily life.

- Enhance the role of youth in the political life.
- Production of an action plan to improve the livelihood of the citizens.
- Controlling government performance, discussing government programs with citizens, and enhancing government control over all departments.
- Supporting charities.
- Supporting cultural and artistic movements.
- Encourage the eradication of illiteracy.
- Introduction of a youth quota in the parliament, similar to that for the women.
- Providing support for youth in all aspects.
- Facilitating conflict resolution between the government and the professional association.
- Amending socially harming legislations such the Honor Crimes Law.
- Solving Public Transportation problems.

The voting resulted in ranking Support for youth in all aspects in the first place with 19.77% of the votes, followed by Solving public transportation problems with 16 votes, and in the third place came Control over the performance of the government with 14 votes.

In the evening, the participants were transported to Aqaba City, where they had dinner at the Captain's Restaurant sponsored by the Euro-Arab Insurance Company as a contribution to support the work of the civil society in Jordan, and to provide support for the youth movement in Jordan.

The third day included training on advocacy. This training was led by Mahmoud Hishmeh who introduced the concept of advocacy to the participants, and its importance in achieving their goals. Then he spoke about some traditional ways of gaining support /advocacy. However, he indicated that the process of advocacy is a result of hard work and creativity. He clarified when working on advocacy all elements and factors of the surrounding environment must be studied thoroughly. That can be achieved by producing the so called "Power Map" which helps revealing those opposing the target, then trying to gain their support.

The 4<sup>th</sup> South Youth Forum concluded in a closing ceremony where the plans for continuing this work were highlighted.