

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF JORDAN

**Extracts Address by
Professor Khaled Toukan**

Minister of Education of Jordan

**on the occasion of the ground-breaking ceremony
for the SESAME Centre
Allan, Jordan, 6 January 2003**

It has been two and a half years since the 3rd session of the International Interim Council of SESAME held in Amman in June 2000 under the patronage of H.M. King Abdullah II and in the presence of the Director-General of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), Mr Matsuura. During that Council meeting, the decision to choose Jordan as the site for SESAME was taken. The decision has proved to be the right one.

Our meeting today as we celebrate the ground-breaking ceremony for the building complex to house SESAME is testimony to this fact.

Since June 2000, there have been many cornerstones. To cite a few: Resolution 31 C/19 taken by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 31st session supporting the establishment of SESAME under the auspices of UNESCO; the endorsement of this recommendation by the 164th session of UNESCO's Executive Board held in May 2002; the German Government's official agreement to donate the BESSY I equipment to the SESAME project; and the dismantling of the machine and its shipment to Jordan where it is now being kept at the Al-Zarqa Free Zone awaiting installation.

We are meeting today in this hall on a positive note to send a message of peace, harmony and prosperity to this troubled region and the world at large. The good spirit of you all, your enlightened vision and determination will soon give light to SESAME, a light that will shine as a ray of hope, a sign of goodwill and prosperity. We are already witnessing the fruits of this endeavour through several workshops that have already been held with the participation of scientists from different countries of the region and the international community at large, the most recent being that held in October 2002 at Al-Balqa' Applied University entitled "The Asian Science Seminar on Synchrotron Radiation Science" organized and sponsored by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and the High Energy Accelerators Research Organization in Japan.

All of these activities will definitely set the ground for a sound scientific base in this region and enhance its capacity to venture into high technology projects in the future. Indeed, for Jordan this initiative is in line with the national efforts championed by H.M. King Abdullah II to move the country forward into the information age and establish Jordan as the IT hub of the region of the Middle East.

Special gratitude goes to all who have contributed to the success we are celebrating today, particularly to H.M. King Abdullah II who has persistently supported SESAME.

Special gratitude also goes to the Government of Jordan headed by H.E. Eng. Ali Abu Al-Ragheb for having agreed to bear the cost of constructing the building through its National Economic and Social Reform Program.

Director-General Matsuura is also to be thanked for his interventions to maintain the momentum of SESAME, for mobilizing UNESCO's resources during the last three years, for stepping in whenever problems were encountered and for circumventing them.

Professor Herwig Schopper's tireless efforts in managing the project and his masterful skills in conducting the meetings of the International Interim Council have been crucial for achieving progress for SESAME, and this, too, has been greatly appreciated.

Special thanks are also due to the Government of Jordan and Al-Balqa' Applied University, in particular to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Al-Balqa' University Prince Ghazi Bin Muhammad, for constructing the SESAME building and expediting all issues relevant to SESAME.

Finally, thanks go to the German Government for its generous donation of the BESSY I equipment without which all of this would not have been possible.

It is a happy day for Jordan, the Middle East and UNESCO and may God bless you all.