# Wittenberg Declaration of the 2nd Forum of Economic Co-Operation

Building on the positive and encouraging outcomes of the first Jordanian-Israeli "Forum on Economic Co-Operation", held in Wittenberg last year, the second Forum of business people convened again in Wittenberg in June 2004. The Amman Center for Peace and Development, the Peres Center for Peace, and the Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics continued their cooperation in order to keep up the momentum and enhance the progress that has been achieved. This process has been and will be supported by DaimlerChrysler, whose representatives actively participated in the meetings.

The philosophy underlying these meetings draws on an economic approach to conflict resolution. The idea is that mutually beneficial trade and business relations can and will promote stability and peace. Successful international trade implies that people and goods cross regional borders, and at the same time it serves the mutual understanding of cultural diversity. There is a peace dividend. However, this peace dividend must be made visible. Peace is a public virtue, but in order to be sustainable, it must be "privatized": International trade agreements that favor export-oriented joint industrial production have helped to make the fruits of peace accessible to the people. Such initiatives should be encouraged.

After four days of lively and fruitful discussions, business delegations from Israel and Jordan reached a consensus and call upon their respective governments to give the economic relations between their countries a higher priority and a more substantial governmental support. The participants have addressed the following pressing problem that requires the involvement of the highest official levels.

The Jordan Valley / Jordan River Crossing Point should no longer be considered a minor crossing of secondary local significance. Instead, it is evolving into an important international border crossing – Israel's main gate eastwards and one of Jordan's main gates westwards. Thanks to international trade agreements, it has the potential of becoming a most important route for Jordan's exports to Europe and to the United States, as well as for transit trade via Israel and Jordan to the large Arab markets. Currently, however, it is a hindrance to what promises to become a very dynamic trade development. Therefore, the business sectors that work together urge the two governments to promote a dialogue that fosters a sound understanding of the importance of this border crossing and that is conducive to concrete practical steps towards realizing the potential benefits.

Facing a diversity of challenges between Israel and Jordan, the delegations believe that this problem is an important one and that it can be addressed immediately, serving as a catalyst for approaching other challenges. With regard to this border crossing, it can be made true that concrete win-win potentials pave the way to peace.

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