Under the Patronage of Eng. Atef Al Tarawneh, President of the House of Representatives

On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the ACHRS
And the Closing of the Project, “Supporting the political dialogue between civil society and the Jordanian Parliament”

The Closing Ceremony

Speech of Mrs. Layla Hamarneh
Executive Director of the Women Arab Organization (WAO)

Amman, Monday, 3/2/2020
His Excellency Dr. Nassar Al-Qaisi, First Deputy of the Speaker of the House on behalf of the President of the Parliament, Patron of the Ceremony.

Dear friend, Dr. Nizam Assaf

Dear Friends…..Ladies and Gentlemen,

Perhaps the celebration of the twentieth Anniversary of the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, invites us to think: Where does the fledgling Jordanian human rights’ movement come from? The Center was among the first ones to specialize on human rights studies and pave the way to provide for generations of young men and women with knowledge and skills dealing with human rights issues.

Since 1993, when the World Conference on Human Rights was held in Vienna, the human rights movement has flourished globally. Attention has gradually shifted to all parts of the world, and this interest has moved to Jordan. After these years, we are witnessing the growth of one of the most important social movements in our country.

Attention was accompanied by human rights issues, such as the gradual recognition of women's rights as an integral part of human rights, in response to the main slogan of the "Vienna" conference in 1993. Today, we can assert that we are reaping the fruits of the local struggle based on international conventions, albeit partially and in a simple way. The Women's Association – that I represent at this pulpit today – has not only implemented a constructive cooperation with the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies in forming the "Jordanian Network for Human Rights"; but it also has been registered in the new registry of the Ministry of Social Development, under the item "Human Rights", in the field of "Women's Rights".

We, the feminist movement which is committed to the recognition of equal rights for women as human rights, are based on the demand to abolish the distinction between Jordanian men and Jordanian women and establish a gendered human rights perspective that achieves justice and equality of rights.

Hence, we commend the role that the Amman Center has played during its struggle with us over the past 20 years of continuous activity, in the defense of democracy, social justice and human rights.

In our society, we have seen how hundreds of young women and men, who have turned into leaders in the defense of human rights, have been prepared and empowered. Now we are witnessing how they, in turn, became trainers for other young men and women from local communities to teach them the knowledge and skills to defend the rights of citizenship, by calling for changing discriminatory laws.
and practices and moving to democratic societies. The active civil society movement in our country and the activists' movement in the human rights' field exist mainly thanks to the giving and continuous activity of the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies.

To complete the picture of the momentum of Enlightening life with rights, especially those related to women's rights, we refer to several similar celebrations, including:

- The Celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Fourth and Last International Conference of Women, held in Beijing in 1995.

- The Celebration of the 20th anniversary of the issuance of Security Council Resolution 1325 on resisting violence against women in conflict areas.

- The Celebration of the 05th anniversary of the adoption of the sustainable development goals, among them the 05th goal on equality and women's empowerment.

Such festivals give an opportunity for civil society organizations to highlight their distinctive role in spreading awareness, building capacity, conducting studies and producing educational and documentary films, so that active participation in development, sustainability and human rights – particularly women and democratic rights – become rights for all citizens, and not luxury.

Today, we have an opportunity to demonstrate how we were able to work jointly with the Amman Center to create a Jordanian human rights network. The creative and networking-based approach explained our success in creating and sustaining this partnership, just as the Amman Center have lasted for 20 years and the Arab Women Association have lasted for 50 years. We hope that without narrowing our sustainability, we will have the opportunity to consolidate the joint work that has become a milestone in developing human rights work in Jordan.

We, the Amman Center, and other components of civil society, need support to bypass the restrictions that are taking over us. We want to see steps like the ones that took place at the beginning of this year with regard to speeding up project approvals. However, we still demand scrutiny to be carried out after the projects are implemented and approvals not to be given before the projects are actually set up, as is currently done. The human rights civil society is particularly subjected to systematic campaigns of distortion and narrowing, which impedes the march of human rights, women's rights, development, social justice and equality.

I wish the Amman Center more prosperity and progress.