

## PROFILE OF JORDAN

When Jordan was created in 1920 under the imperial policy pursued by Britain in the Middle East following the First World War, there was cause to question the viability of this new state of less than a half million inhabitants, consisting mainly of desert.

Sixty years later, with a population of 3 million, Jordan is a dynamic, well-organized state.

- Favoured by effective management and by the pragmatism of the Jordanians, remarkable economic progress has been made in spite of the country's very limited natural resources.
- The country's people are among the best educated in the Middle East, and its three universities attest to the high priority given to education.
- Jordan's moderate, pro-Western orientation has never been called into question. It is one of the most open societies in the Middle East from a political and social viewpoint, as witnessed by the relatively large measure of free expression accorded to the Jordanian Parliament.
- Its leaders have never departed from their courageous and constructive approach to the problems of the country and the region.

Jordan's brief history has nonetheless been a lively one, shaped considerably by the wars that have set Arabs against Israelis since the creation of Israel in 1948. As a result of these wars, Jordan has become a place of refuge for nearly 2 million Palestinians, a fact which has had a significant impact on the country. Jordan is still the only Arab state that has granted citizenship to its Palestinian population.

This immigration has made Jordan a key player in any attempt to settle the Palestinian question, particularly since Jordan administered the West Bank from 1948 until the Israeli occupation in 1967.

The country does not have any oil reserves, but its economy has benefited from the spinoffs created by the boom of the 1960s and the prosperity that it brought Arab countries. Jordan receives considerable economic assistance every year from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, money is also sent back by Jordanians working there, and these countries provide important markets for Jordanian exports.

Because the Jordanian economy is heavily integrated with those of the other countries in the region, it is not surprising that Jordan's economic growth rate, which was about