



World Bank Group President Praises Lebanon and Jordan for Hosting Syrian Refugees and Calls on Global Community to Do More

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On his last day in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim visited the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan to bring global attention to the plight of the refugees and the impact of the Syrian crisis on neighboring countries. Kim urged the international community to recognize the enormous role that Lebanon and Jordan are playing in absorbing the huge influx of refugees and to step up the aid effort to match the severity of the crisis.

"The countries neighboring Syria, Jordan and Lebanon in particular, have assumed the responsibility of maintaining regional stability by taking in close to two million refugees, said Kim outside the Zaatari refugee camp. "The international community must step in and do its part. Along with drawing attention to immediate needs, Kim used the opportunity of his three-day visit to map out a vision of the regions immense potential and the steps required to realize it. In a speech a day earlier in the Lebanese capital, Beirut, Kim stressed that the region was at a crossroads and that it was time to rally around a plan to rebuild and lay the foundations for a more just and prosperous future, even in the face of the humanitarian crisis. The World Bank Group, he added, would commit the full range of its resources in support of the effort.

"For Syria, and for Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Iraq, this process of preparing for peace will not be easy, said Kim before an audience of university students and policymakers. "But this war will end. We need now to put together the development plans for the day when Syrias guns fall silent and when an internationally recognized government ensures peace and stability.

During a visit that included stops in Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Jordan, the World Bank Group President carried his message of preparing for peace to political leaders, civil society and the private sector. In Saudi Arabia, Kim met with government officials and Arab Development Funds to strengthen partnerships and scale up support to countries in transition. Kim expressed strong appreciation for the close collaboration with Saudi Arabia in support of Yemen during its transition process. Saudi Arabia has contributed US\$3.25 billion to neighboring Yemen to help develop its economy which included a US\$1 billion deposit to the Central Bank of Yemen.

While in Lebanon, the World Bank Group President visited a local public school in Beirut for a firsthand experience of the strain on education services arising from the Syrian children refugees. The increased demands on the school system have raised costs and impacted the quality of education. In meetings with political leaders, Kim reaffirmed the Banks commitment to Lebanons long term development goals, while simultaneously garnering support from the international community to strengthen the ability of the countrys communities and institutions to withstand the shocks emanating from the Syrian crisis. In a separate meeting with the donor community, Kim urged representatives to contribute quickly and generously to a World Bank Multi-Donor Trust Fund set up for Lebanon.

In meetings with King Abdullah II of Jordan and a range of political leaders, the World Bank Group President delivered a similar message of dual assistance to cope with the Syrian crisis and establish the conditions for inclusive growth. "We are working closer than ever with the United Nations on complementing immediate humanitarian assistance with long term development support, said Kim "Additional support for Jordan and Lebanon is critical so that they are resilient enough to cope with circumstances while staying focused on creating the right environment for the region to realize its immense potential.

Kim was accompanied on his trip by Inger Andersen, World Bank Regional Vice President for MENA and Mouayed Makhoulf, the International Finance Corporations Regional Director for MENA.

The World Bank Groups (IBRD, IDA, IFC, MIGA) active portfolio in the MENA region, currently at US\$16 billion, has been growing steadily over the last few years. New World Bank Group commitments for fiscal year 2014 are close to US\$5 billion.

World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kims visit to Jordan is part of a three-country trip to the Middle East which included stops in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

About the World Bank Group

The World Bank Group plays a key role in the global effort to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity. It consists of five institutions: the World Bank, including the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA); the International Finance Corporation (IFC); the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA); and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). Working together in more than 100 countries, these institutions provide financing, advice, and other solutions that enable countries to address the most urgent challenges of development. For more information, please visit www.worldbank.org , www.miga.org , and ifc.org.

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