[Transcription] Good morning. I am not an official representative of Palestine, but I would say that it was an honor to be joining the official Palestinian delegation to this conference. I may respond to our friend Gidon by asking another question: what has Palestine brought in to this conference and what messages are we taking home?

The question was on the process: before coming here, Palestine was very well prepared for this. What adds to this event here is that Palestine has come a long was on water sector reform. To respond to your question on the Council: the outcome of the 5-year reform was a new water law, as well as the establishment of the Water Regulatory Council, and a national water company. At the same time, Palestine has prepared a number of strategies, which make it easier to compare the outcomes and recommendations of this plan to the national strategies and to see if they are in harmony and how to proceed after that.

Thirdly, Palestine came here with a very strong governmental delegation and for the first time I can say that the three countries have shown interest in the level of the delegations that they came with. The office delegation from Palestine came from over 5 governmental institutions, and that shows exactly to Jordan and Israel how interested Palestine is in this conference, its recommendations, and its outcomes.

On the Council itself: as I said, as a result of a long reform process, Palestine has created the Water Regulatory Council. The Cabinet issued a decree and I was fortunate to be its CEO. The Council is mandated to look into all matters related to water production, water transportation, distribution, and consumption, aiming at efficient and equitable water and wastewater services at affordable prices to all Palestinians. The mandate given to us included licensing of service providers in terms of water and wastewater, it includes approval of water prices, establishing an incentive program for service providers, establishment of a complaint system, putting in place individual targets and benchmarks for service providers, and monitoring of the water quality and efficiency of service providers. This is a huge task and we have just completed our roadmap and are looking forward to cooperation with everyone in this room and other experiences in the world to look into their experience and benefit to make real progress in the regulation of Palestinian water.

What is the message that we are leaving with? Looking at the interesting speech of His excellency the deputy minister of Agriculture, there were certain sentences stand out and I believe that it’s important to remember them. First of all, we respect the assumptions of the master plan, meaning that the basis is in harmony with the Palestinian policies and expectations. Therefore, the start of this master plan was the right one. Second, it was said that we do have national strategies and plans, and the proposed interventions meet these plans and priorities. This is another very positive area. And it was said that there are a number of initiatives that can be implemented as of tomorrow. That is also very positive. It was said that a number of initiatives in the study area represent priorities to Palestine and there was a request by developmental partners to pay close attention to these areas and the
interventions. A key issue is that development is a catalyst for peace, which is very encouraging. Therefore, whatever investment developmental partners can make in this area, that is a step forward towards peace.

The conclusion is that we, in the government of Palestine, will look into the outcomes and recommendations of this plan and conference. That is an important issue to build on. Where do we go from here? I would say that not only to Palestine by to the three countries. There are in fact a number of areas we can start at as of tomorrow, if not today. And the plan itself, at the communities level, at the government level, is not only important to Palestine, but to all three countries. At the community and governmental level, this plan is still a framework and each country should start as soon as possible to put in place the proposed interventions into priority areas. That is not the work of an NGO if it meets the national plans and strategies, which means that each government should create a national committee to look into these priorities and the feasibility of each priority to move them into an action plan. Once developmental partners come in, everybody is ready for implementation, which can start as of tomorrow.

At the governmental level, it was said, that all three governments will look into the recommendations of this conference, which is very positive because everyone has the right to compare them to their own national strategies and interests. The outcomes really meet to some extent the national strategies and plans. At the level of our local authorities, we would appreciate if they could start, in Palestine, Jordan, and Israel, at least a localized protection plan that comes from what they know of their own areas. Added up, these could make up an overall protection plan, which would depend on small initiatives that do not require input from developmental partners. Each of us could start his own localized protection plan for his area. Even if it was so small, it would help to come up with an overall protection plan. At the same time for the communities and governments, everybody has said that such initiatives bring in trust, confidence, and are a bridge for peace. We need to continue looking for such initiatives, but without expecting any political outcome or gain. If we look into initiatives and we expect media or political gain, this is not an initiative and it won’t be designed for the sake of the Jordan Valley area, but for the sake of the media and we are not looking for this. It was very useful and constructive and I believe that the homework that we should take home is a duty and responsibility and obligation for all of us. Thank you for the chance to speak to you.