

ADDRESS OF ISRAEL'S AMBASSADOR TO THE OSCE

MR. ZVI HEIFETZ

OSCE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

5-6 DECEMBER, KIEV

MR. CHAIRMAN IN OFFICE
EXCELLENCIES
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL'S MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, I WISH TO THANK THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UKRAINE FOR ITS GENEROSITY IN HOSTING THIS YEAR'S OSCE MINISTERIAL.

ALLOW ME TO EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO THE UKRAINIAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND HIS TEAM IN VIENNA, HEADED BY AMBASSADOR IHOR PROKOPCHUK, FOR CHAIRING THE OSCE SO SUCCESSFULLY THIS YEAR.

I ALSO WISH TO EXTEND OUR DEEPEST APPRECIATION TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL, TO THE OSCE SECRETARIAT, AND TO THE SWISS CHAIR OF THE CONTACT GROUP FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF COOPERATION WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS.

ISRAEL'S COMMITMENT TO THE SHARED VISION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE OSCE, AS REFLECTED IN THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, AND TO THE GOAL OF A COOPERATIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY CONCEPT REMAINS STEADFAST AND UNWAVERING.

WE CONGRATULATE THE OSCE ON LAUNCHING THE HELSINKI PLUS 40 PROCESS TOWARDS A SECURITY COMMUNITY.

AND AS A PARTNER COUNTRY WITH MUCH EXPERIENCE GIVEN OUR GEOPOLITICAL REALITY, ISRAEL IS POISED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS INITIATIVE.

WE WISH THE INCOMING SWISS AND SERBIAN CHAIRMANSHIPS EVERY SUCCESS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO TAKE THE HELSINKI PLUS 40 PROCESS FORWARD.

IN 2013, WE HAVE ACTIVELY SOUGHT TO DEEPEN OUR INVOLVEMENT ACROSS THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF SECURITY ON ISSUES INCLUDING ANTI-TERRORISM, CYBER SECURITY, HUMAN TRAFFICKING, PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, AS WELL AS THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN.

I WISH TO NOTE THE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THE 2013 MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE IN MONACO ON "*ENHANCING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE*", WHICH REFLECTED THE RESULT-ORIENTED AND DEMAND-DRIVEN APPROACH ADOPTED IN THE "VILNIUS DECISION". MOREOVER, THE CONFERENCE DEALT WITH CURRENT AND CONCRETE ISSUES FACING THE PARTNERS AND PARTICIPATING STATES ALIKE.

OSCE'S BROAD AND INCLUSIVE MODEL OF SECURITY COOPERATION AND THE FACT THAT THE SECURITY OF THE OSCE AREA IS "INEXTRICABLY LINKED" TO THAT OF ITS NEIGHBORING REGIONS, AFFORDS ISRAEL THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO STAND WITH OUR FIVE PARTNERS - IN THE SPIRIT OF DIALOGUE AND GOOD WILL - AND STRIVE TOGETHER TO IDENTIFY CONCRETE AVENUES OF COOPERATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR SHARED REGION.

DESIGNED TO ENSURE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY IN OUR REGION, ISRAEL SUPPORTS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "VALENCIA INITIATIVE" AND TO WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY ON THE RESOLUTION WE INITIATED LAST YEAR IN MONACO ON "WATER MANAGEMENT, DESERTIFICATION AND TECHNOLOGIES". BY SHARING OUR KNOW-HOW AND TECHNOLOGIES THEREIN LIES THE PROMISE AND HOPE TO SUCCESSFULLY OVERCOME SUCH DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES FACING THE MENA COUNTRIES. ISRAEL ACKNOWLEDGES WITH GRATITUDE THE EFFORTS OF THE OSCE IN PROMOTING PRACTICAL COOPERATION WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS AND FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE EXPERIENCES WITH PARTICIPATING STATES. WE ARE FULLY ALIGNED WITH BOTH PARTNER AND PARTICIPATING STATES IN SUPPORTING THE RECENT "TRACK TWO" INITIATIVE, DESIGNED TO CREATE AN INTERACTION BETWEEN ACADEMIA, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THINK TANKS ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN.

EQUALLY SIGNIFICANT IS THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF ODIHR (OH DEAR) IN PROVIDING A MUCH NEEDED PLATFORM FOR A SUBSTANTIVE DIALOGUE AND SHARING OF GOOD PRACTICES ON SOME OF THE ROUGHEST CHALLENGES FACING THE 21ST CENTURY – PEACE, SECURITY AND FREEDOM.

SPECIFICALLY, ISRAEL COMMENDS THE TIRELESS AND EVER VIGILANT WORK BEING DONE IN COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM ACROSS THE OSCE REGION.

WE WISH TO NOTE THE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHAIRPERSON- IN-OFFICE. THERE CAN BE NO PROMISE OF SECURITY WHERE OLD AND NEW HATREDS ARE ALLOWED TO FLOURISH, AND WHERE INTOLERANCE AND HATE CRIMES ARE IGNORED, DENIED OR GO UNPUNISHED.

WHEN SO MUCH OF THE WORLD IS IN TURBULANCE AND UNMOORED, ISRAEL ASPIRES TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, TO UPHOLD THE RULE OF LAW, DEMOCRATIC IDEALS, AND TO SAFEGUARD THE OVERALL SECURITY AND INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES OF ITS PEOPLE.

THE GREATEST THREAT TO PEACE AND SECURITY IN OUR REGION IS IRAN'S PURSUIT OF ITS NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM. FOR DECADES WE HAVE BEEN STRUGGLING AGAINST THIS REGIME THAT CALLS FOR OUR DESTRUCTION. NEVER AGAIN WILL THE JEWISH PEOPLE BE HELPLESS IN THE FACE OF THE THREAT OF ANNIHILATION. WE HAVE NOT COME NEARLY FOUR MILLENIA IN OUR ODYSSEY TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL TO HAVE THE LIKES OF THE AYATOLLAHS THREATEN OUR HISTORIC AND NATIONAL RIGHTS TO OUR COUNTRY.

ISRAEL WOULD WELCOME A GENUINE DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION THAT FULLY DISMANTLES IRAN'S CAPACITY TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

WE CONTINUE TO SEEK AN HISTORIC PEACE WITH OUR PALESTINIAN NEIGHBORS. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT SUFFICIENT TIME IS DEVOTED TO THE DIPLOMATIC PROCESS

BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS LEADING TO A TWO STATE SOLUTION FOR TWO PEOPLES. FOR PEACE TO BE ACHIEVED, ISRAEL'S SECURITY NEEDS MUST BE MET. THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE MUST FINALLY RECOGNIZE THE JEWISH STATE AND THE RIGHTS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN THE STATE OF ISRAEL. ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN INTERESTS WILL ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS. AS ISRAEL'S PRIME MINISTER, BENJAMIN NETANYAHU, STATED MANY TIMES – "WE ARE PREPARED TO MAKE AN HISTORIC COMPROMISE FOR A GENUINE AND ENDURING PEACE". WE ASK THE SAME OF THE PALESTINIANS – RISE TO THE OCCASION AS DID THE LATE PRESIDENT SADAT OF EGYPT AND THE LATE KING HUSSEIN OF JORDAN.

THE DISCUSSION ON THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR COOPERATION IS, THEREFORE, PREMATURE.

THE HOPE FOR PEACE IS ONE WE ALL SHARE. IN ISRAEL, WE GREET ONE ANOTHER WITH THE WORD "SHALOM" - "SALAM". LET THE TEACHING OF THE TORAH

בקש שלום ורדפהו

"SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT"

GUIDE US ALL IN 2014.

THANK YOU.