

Statement by Ms. Ms. Shuli Davidovich, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations (24 April 2012)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this session.

My delegation would also like to extend our appreciation to the acting Under-Secretary-General for his statement and his work on behalf of the United Nations system. Similarly, I wish to congratulate the entire DPI team for their professionalism and dedication.

In this regard, we welcome the reports of the Secretary-General, entitled "Activities of the Department of Public Information," which highlight key advancements made by the Department to promote the work of the United Nations around the world.

Mr. Chairman,

The advent of new technologies has transformed the communications landscape, facilitating the rapid dissemination of information. We continue to witness how new tools and platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, are empowering individuals to communicate more freely and openly than ever before.

Israel welcomes the DPI's open minded and modern approach in embracing new communications tools and technologies to reach new global audiences, particularly young people. My delegation also applauds the DPI's constructive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders — and its continuing efforts to advance innovative partnerships and programs.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel is honored to be an active partner with the DPI, holding functions and events that seek to inform, educate, and inspire. Two weeks ago, Israel partnered with the DPI to commemorate the fourth annual World Autism Awareness Day.

Together we hosted an event which featured a presentation by Ms. Shai Ginot, an Israeli photographer and mother of an Autistic Child. Her presentation highlighted the challenges of raising an Autistic Child, and lent a powerful voice to those families coping with Autism.

Last Thursday, my government commemorated the 50th anniversary of the trial of Adolf Eichmann in conjunction with DPI. The event included an exhibition in the UN lobby curated by Yad Vashem, as well as a roundtable discussion with Minister Yossi Peled and Noble laureate Sir Elie Wiesel, among other speakers. This event was attended by over 500 people, while the exhibit remains open for viewing.

The observance of the trial's anniversary not only honors the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust, it also helps the United Nations to transmit critical lessons about the dangers of hatred, racism, and xenophobia to future generations.

I am also proud to announce a new Holocaust Studies Scholarship Program sponsored by the State of Israel for educators around the globe. As part of this program, scholarships will be awarded to 30 educators from universities which are part the United Nations Academic Impact initiative. The scholarship recipients will complete a week-long seminar at Yad Vashem, the world center for documentation, research, education and commemoration of the Holocaust.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel is encouraged by the wide range of work that the Holocaust Outreach Program continues to perform. Recently, the Program held events which highlight the impact that the Nuremberg and Eichmann trials had on accountability in the 21st century.

With the support of the UN's Holocaust Program, there has been an expansion of the scope of remembrance activities that are carried out in UN Information Centers around the world — and significant growth in the audiences that are reached. This year the outreach program focused on the theme of "Children and the Holocaust" and included young students in the annual memorial ceremony. We were also pleased to note that the Holocaust Program brought 400 high school students to the New York Headquarters to launch an online program that enables them to search and learn from Holocaust survivor testimony.

Such efforts become even more critical as time distances us from the horrors of the Holocaust. A child born today will likely not be able to meet a Holocaust survivor or hear the first-hand stories of those who survived during the darkest hours of humanity.

We also continue to witness a disturbing proliferation of individuals and organizations that deny the Holocaust — among them the head of a UN member state. The DPI can play a critical role in pushing back against these dangerous tides.

Mr. Chairman,

In light of these challenges, Israel would like to express its deep appreciation to the DPI for its ongoing work related to Holocaust remembrance and education. My Mission remains confident that the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Program will continue to enjoy appropriate resources that would enable it to enhance the scope of its activities.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel remains concerned about the Palestinian Information Program. Based upon an anti-Israel General Assembly resolution, this information program has offered a narrative of our region that is biased and misleading since its inception.

Given the one-sided mandate that established this program, Israeli government officials will continue to be obliged not to attend or participate in these seminars until a more even-handed approach is adopted.

I wish to reiterate that Israel would be willing to engage in the formulation of a more constructive and balanced resolution to mandate future activities. Such a resolution must be aimed at the promotion of peace education, tolerance, mutual understanding, and the prevention of incitement.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel is proud to have served as a member of the Committee on Information. We remain committed to the productive and cooperative work of the DPI and a positive outcome to our deliberations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.