



**United Nations
Secretary-General**

New York

29 September 2016

Secretary-General's remarks at Ceremony to Honour the Memory for His Excellency Shimon Peres, 9th President and Former Prime Minister of the State of Israel [as delivered]

I join with you today in sorrow for the loss of Shimon Peres, and gratitude for a life so extraordinarily lived.

Throughout my tenure as Secretary-General, I had the privilege to benefit from his wisdom. He was a constant source of optimism and hope, and inspiration.

Like so many millions, I deeply admired and respected his leadership and many decades of service for his beloved country, Israel, and for the cause of peace throughout the Middle East.

We often met in times of great challenge. In one especially poignant visit, I met him in Israel on July 23, 2014, just one day before he stepped down as President.

Regardless of the difficulties, he was always a voice of calm and reason.

And as a leading global statesman, he was a welcome and frequent visitor to the United Nations.

In addressing the General Assembly, he once directed his remarks to all the people of the holy land: "We read our holy books in different languages," he said, "yet we pray to the same heavens. The descendants of Abraham should behave like a family – with tolerance and solidarity."

That simple message has never been more important in the region and in our world. That clear-eyed perspective – of reaching across the table, of compromising with your neighbor, of finding common ground for the greater good – has never been more needed. That kind of leadership is one that we long for – and one that we will surely miss.

With his passing, let his dedication to peace inspire us to realize the dream of justice, security and dignity for Israelis, for Palestinians and for our world.

Thank you.