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**REMARKS AT CEREMONY**  
**OF THE ISRAELI MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON**  
**INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY**

27 January 2010

Ambassador Yossi Gal, Deputy Director Mekel, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very honoured to be speaking here in Israel as the representative of the United Nations at this official ceremony organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to mark International Holocaust Remembrance day.

I wish to read the Secretary-General's global message on this day, before adding a few brief words of my own.

Here is the Secretary-General's message:

*Today we remember the millions of victims of the Nazis -- nearly one third of the Jewish people and countless other minorities -- who suffered atrocious acts of discrimination, deprivation, cruelty and murder.*

*New initiatives in Holocaust remembrance and education have given us an authentic basis for hope. That hope is the theme of this year's observance.*

*But we can and must do more if we are to make that hope a reality.*

*We must continue to examine why the world failed to prevent the Holocaust and other atrocities since. That way, we will be better armed to defeat anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance.*

*We must continue to teach our children the lessons of history's darkest chapters. That will help them do a better job than their elders in building a world of peaceful coexistence.*

*We must combat Holocaust denial, and speak out in the face of bigotry and hatred.*

*And we must uphold the standards and laws that the United Nations has put in place to protect people and fight impunity for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.*

*Our world continues to be plagued by ruthless violence, utter disregard for human rights, and the targeting of people solely for who they are.*

*On this fourth International Day of Commemoration, let us remember the victims of the Holocaust by reaffirming our faith in the dignity and*

*equal rights of all members of the human family. And let us pledge to work together to turn today's hope into tomorrow's better future.*

This ends the Secretary-General's message. Allow me to add a few words of my own.

As a boy growing up in Holland, my mother told me how her family hid Jews from the Nazis in their home in the south of the country not far from Eindhoven. I could only imagine the feelings of those being hunted down, hiding out fearing for their lives. Some who were sheltered were lucky and survived, but the overwhelming numbers of Jews in my own country – 100,000 out of a population of 140,000 – perished.

One of them was Anne Frank, whose diary had such a profound effect on me as a boy, as it does on anyone who reads it. I was reminded of it again recently with the death just two weeks ago of Mies Giep, the last of those alive who protected Anne. Giep was honoured here in Jerusalem at Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. Her actions are a testament to her courage and to her humanity, and a reminder of those who risked their lives to protect the Jews. But above all else, Anne Frank's diary speaks for the millions who were cruelly silenced, reminding of us all of how much was brutally and mercilessly destroyed in the Holocaust.

Sixty-five years after the liberation of Auschwitz, as the survivors of the Holocaust diminish in number every year, Anne Frank's testimony as well as those of others who endured the horrors of the Nazis are more important than ever. We at the United Nations must be vigilant in guarding the past,

keeping alive what happened, resolutely combating Holocaust denial, and learning its lessons. The vote of the UN General Assembly five years ago designating this day as International Day of Commemoration of the Holocaust is crucial in ensuring that these efforts grow stronger with time. So is the vote of the UN General Assembly three years ago condemning without reservation any Holocaust denial and calling on all States unreservedly to reject this – an injunction that has, appallingly, been ignored by some who have used the UN podium to deny the Holocaust, while threatening the existence of the State of Israel. The Secretary-General has repeatedly condemned this. The fact of the matter is that throughout Europe, nearly 6 million Jews were murdered, out of a pre-war population of just under 10 million.

Around the world today, at least 30 United Nations offices are holding Holocaust memorial events. I want to thank the Israeli Government and Yad Vashem for their support to the ongoing United Nations Outreach Programme. Today in New York, the Secretary-General will participate in the opening of an important exhibit sponsored by Yad Vashem, entitled “Architecture of Murder: The Auschwitz-Birkenau Blueprints”.

These events remind us of one other important thing too. The State of Israel and the United Nations, while both were ideas that pre-dated the horrors of the Second World War, arose from the ashes of the Holocaust. The United Nations Charter determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sprang from the same source. Israel’s own declaration of independence cites the United Nations seven times. Israel’s permanent and legitimate place among the

family of nations is not conditional, and is of central importance both to Israel and to the United Nations itself. For a people whose deliverance emerged from the horrors of genocide, and who continue to face dangers and insecurities, I know how much Israelis yearn for peace.

On this Day of Commemoration in Israel, I reaffirm the UN's remembrance of the Holocaust as well as the tragedies of genocide and atrocities since. The Holocaust stands as a terrible reminder of evil. We must not forget, we must remember, and we must work to ensure that it is never repeated.