



## Media Release

## 4 November 2011

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **UNESCO PALESTINE VOTE IS A SETBACK FOR PEACE**

Philip Chester, President of the Zionist Federation of Australia expressed his disappointment at UNESCO's vote to include the Palestinian Authority as a full member.

At the same time, Mr Chester commended the Australian delegation to the UNESCO General Assembly which voted against the proposal. Along with the US, Canada and Germany, Australia was one of only 14 nations to do so. "Australia has once again demonstrated that its votes are determined on strong principle. In this vote, Australia made a strong statement that it opposes using UNESCO as a back door way for the Palestinians to try to achieve support for their statehood bid without returning to the negotiating table."

"Far from being a peace building and progressive move, the outcome of the vote undermines the genuine attempts to achieve a peaceful resolution to the Palestinian/ Israeli conflict" he noted. "Such a resolution can only be achieved out of a process which is negotiated, not politically imposed. The decision can only have been made with an agenda of propagandising the issue. It will not assist the Palestinian people in achieving independence and it will work against all those nations who until now have benefited from the work of UNESCO, whose resources may now be slashed by 25%."

"The implications of this decision may potentially result in UNESCO re-classifying historical and religious sites that were always acknowledged to be intrinsically Jewish as Palestinian Arab. This proposal is a disingenuous attempt to use a scientific, cultural and economic forum solely for Palestinian political ends to obtain statehood without negotiations."

"As Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu has stated on many occasions, including his recent invitation to Mahmoud Abbas in New York, Israel remains ready and willing to return to the negotiating table and resume the process to bring peace to the Israeli and Palestinian people. The process will not be easy, nor will it necessarily be quick, but it is nevertheless the only way forward." Mr Chester concluded.

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**Further information:**

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