

Yuli Edelstein

Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs

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Good Morning. I do have to say on behalf of my Government that we are proud to host the summer plenary session of ITF. I think that this year- the year that marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of ITF is symbolic not only in terms of what we call a round date but rather in terms of the understanding of the division. And I will even have to say unfortunately division of those who were behind the creation of ITF proved to be true. It was I guess very difficult to imagine that some forty/fifty years ago that Holocaust denial and attempts to say there were different tragedies in human history and attempts to compare different things to the Holocaust would become not just part of the rhetoric's of some Neo Nazi groups that would be totally marginal in their countries of origin. But I wouldn't still god forbid say become a legitimate attitude but a widely spread one shall we say. Hence, and I will quote the paragraphs accepted in Stockholm:

"Ten years ago are more relevant than ever. The unprecedented character and magnitude of the Holocaust which was planned and carried out by the Nazis fundamentally challenged the foundations of civilization. We pledge to strengthen our efforts to promote education, remembrance and research about the Holocaust as well as to share a commitment to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and to honor those who stood against it. With humanity still scarred by genocide, ethnic cleansing, racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia the international community shares a solemn responsibility to fight those evils."

I think now 10 years later when we say that ITF is definitely fighting those evils with 27 countries being full members and with many others hopefully joining in the near future as full members I think that the issue of Holocaust education, remembering the Holocaust, and no less important, paying honor and paying tribute to victims and survivors of the Holocaust is something that ITF is doing on a daily basis and I, you know what, here I hesitate because the logical continuation would be 'and I want to thank you for that' but I think that is totally improper. I think the people sitting around this table and this room in general and people who were behind the creation of ITF were doing that not in order to be thanked by Israel, by the Israeli government or by the Jewish people. They were doing that and they are doing that because they understand that the Holocaust is not a private Jewish issue. As some say with a slightly cynical attitude 'it always starts with the Jews, it never ends with the Jews.'

And I think that people who are fighting the evils of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, racism today are doing that not for the Jewish people but for humanity. They are not doing that for the state of Israel they are doing that for the sake of their own countries; Hence, I think that we have to notice that except for the classical Holocaust denial we should be very careful not to turn the lessons of the Holocaust or the Holocaust education into pure history lessons. People who may be well educated about the exact dates and figures, people who may remember very well who Adolph Eichmann was upon exiting the room of the Holocaust education lesson very nonchalantly look at even political leaders to say nothing about journalists to say nothing about public figures who once again very nonchalantly deny the very right of the State of Israel to exist, are trying to purchase nuclear weapons openly saying that the first obvious goal of the usage of these weapons will be the State of Israel and I won't add the proper words but 'those Zionists.' I don't want to even quote their language. So I think it's no less to ask of all of us not just to learn and teach history but also to look around and say 'what is it that we are doing today that will never ever allow those terrible historic episodes to repeat themselves?' And I think that speaking of the challenges of ITF, it's not just about bringing in a couple of more members and it's not about improving the level of teachers in different educational systems in different countries. It's also about thinking on daily basis what is it in the Holocaust education, Holocaust remembrance that is relevant to all of us as human beings and the citizens of this planet and how we make sure that the lessons are learned not just by memorizing once again facts and figures but also by paying serious attention to the moral and historic lessons of the Holocaust.

I will still say thank you but not to those who were the founders of all the active participants. I will say thank you first of all to the executive secretary Katherine for everything that you are doing on a daily basis for this important international body to go on. I will say definitely thank you to our Chairman, my colleague, Mr. Dan Tichon, the former speaker of the Knesset, for taking upon himself the not easy task of chairing ITF and pushing forward the chairs project and I sincerely hope that your chairs project that of distant learning, will be a successful and important contribution to ITF. I will thank our academic advisor, Professor Dina Porat, who is advising not only ITF but our Ministry that is in charge of combating anti-Semitism and in charge of some other issues on a daily basis.

I want to just express hope that by the same talking, people around this table and this room are devoted to the issue of Holocaust lessons, and Holocaust remembrance and paying tribute to Holocaust survivors and victims. More and more people around the world will on the level of education take care of it. It will inevitably, when those educated grow up and become prominent figures in their societies, reflect on the public level, on the level of legislation, on the level of attitudes and policies of their respective governments. And I sincerely hope that by doing all these things, I won't exaggerate, we will be making our world better. Thank you so much.