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**Statement by the
Chairperson of the Executive Board of UNESCO
H.E. Ambassador Michael WORBS
in tribute to the Memory of
Shimon Peres
Ninth President of the State of Israel**

UNESCO, 7 October 2016

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, before beginning the work of our session, I would like to pay tribute to the memory of the late Mr Shimon Peres, the 9th President of the State of Israel – but most of all, a long-time supporter of the ideals of UNESCO. As you know, he passed away on 28 September 2016.

He is the only person in the history of his nation to have held the office of both Prime Minister and President.

A fervent believer in peace, reconciliation and dialogue amongst peoples of the Middle East, his efforts in achieving peace with neighbours in the region, led him to be co-laureate of the UNESCO's Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize in 1993 with Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, and awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the following year.

As an internationally-recognized statesman, he fought strongly against antisemitism and spoke both at home and abroad about the need to continue to remember why such a fight is so important. He did this with conviction and compassion in memory of his own grandfather who was murdered during the Holocaust.

During his long tenure in Government, he successfully transformed his country into a start-up nation and technology powerhouse. Promoting the need for scientific research and study in Israel, he assured further development of his country through Research and Development.

In 1996, he created the Peres Center for Peace, which is focused on promoting lasting peace and advancement in the Middle East by fostering tolerance, economic & technological development, innovation, cooperation & well-being in the region. Together with UNESCO, joint projects were developed in areas such as peace education, multiculturalism, intercultural understanding, and sustainable development.

Today we mourn his loss, but his legacy shall be remembered for ever.