



מדינת ישראל

STATE OF ISRAEL

Minister of Education

Jerusalem, March 2007

From: Yuli Tamir

Dear: Participants of The London Symposium on Israeli Arabs

In Israel today, we face numerous domestic challenges. Foremost amongst these is the nature of the relations between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority - an issue encapsulated in the report and follow-up report of Judge Theodore Or.

Israeli leaders have long understood the importance of creating an equal and inclusive society. Israel's founders declared their commitment to these values in the State's historical declaration of independence:

[The State of Israel] will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex... We appeal ... to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the building of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

Fulfilling that commitment has not always proven easy and more needs to be done and is being done by the Government in which I serve.

Beyond Israel's borders, The North American Inter-Agency Taskforce on Israeli Arab issues has led the way in bringing these issues to the forefront of American Jewry.

I am now gratified that this issue has been brought to the attention of European Jewish communities through the efforts of the ad hoc Foundations Forum comprising The Pears Foundation, The Marc Rich Foundation, The Sacta-Rashi Foundation and The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies and supported by the Rayne Trust.

Enlightened and progressive initiatives such as this demonstrate the commitment and concern that many Jewish people around the world share with the inhabitants of the State of Israel to create a just, stable and democratic country.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yuli Tamir', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Yuli Tamir