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Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for participating in the 13th WJC Plenary Assembly, held in Jerusalem this week. The attendance of over 600 participants, from more than 60 countries was indeed a major expression of solidarity with Israel from the world Jewish community, particularly at this time.

We now have a newly elected executive of officers and a newly revised constitution and so now we are ready to focus our efforts entirely on addressing the substantive issues which are of concern to our communities.

We heard from President Peres, Prime Minister Olmert, Foreign Minister Livni, Minister Barak, Minister Herzog, Likud Chairman Netanyahu and Mayor Barkat of the difficulties Israel is currently facing. Doing what we can do to support Israel, throughout the Diaspora, remains our highest priority. We stand by Israel.

We heard from Ambassadors Eran, Halevy & Lubrani about the threat that is Iran, and we remain committed to working with the international community to stop that threat.

We heard from you about your concerns for the Durban II conference, and will be spending the next 3 months working intensively with all of our communities, in a coordinated fashion, to try to minimise the repercussions of that meeting. We also shall be making representations to the Holy See concerning the revocation of the excommunication of Bishop Williamson by Pope Benedict XVI.

We would appreciate hearing your comments, criticisms or suggestions about the meeting. I recognise the fact that there was a very full programme and not sufficient time to allow for full discussion between the delegates on many issues that are of concern to us. However we felt that it was important, at this juncture, to give priority to the speakers from the government of Israel. The transcripts of all speeches, copies of presentations and documents, and video clips from the meeting will all be available on our website in a few days time.

Hearing the Hatikva sung by hundreds of delegates from around the world in the Hall of Remembrance at Yad Vashem, on international Holocaust Memorial Day, was a moving reminder both of the significance of the work that we are doing and of the unity of the Jewish communities worldwide. I am looking forward to working with you all over the months and years ahead. There is much important work to be done.

With best wishes,

Yours,

Ronald S. Lauder
President