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JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE BILATERAL PERMANENT WORKING COMMISSION BETWEEN THE HOLY SEE AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The Bilateral Permanent Working Commission between the Holy See and the State of Israel has held a Plenary meeting at the Vatican today, Wednesday 28 May 2008, for the purpose of advancing the negotiations pursuant to Article 10 § 2 of the *Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel* (30 December 1993).

The Delegation of the Holy See was led by Monsignor Pietro Parolin, Under-Secretary for Relations with States at the Secretariat of State, and was composed also of the following Members:

- H.E. Archbishop Antonio Maria Vegliò, Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches;
- H.E. Archbishop Antonio Franco, Apostolic Nuncio in Israel, Chairman of the Commission at the "Working Level";
- H.E. Bishop Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo;

- Msgr. Maher 'Abboud, Archimandrite;
- Msgr. Franco Coppola, Secretariat of State;
- Father David-Maria A. Jaeger, OFM, Legal Adviser;
- Mr. Henry Amoroso, Second Legal Adviser;
- Father Giovanni Caputa, SDB, Secretary.

The Delegation of the State of Israel was led by Mr. Aaron Abramovich, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was composed also of the following Members:

- Mr. Mordechai Lewy, Ambassador of the State of Israel to the Holy See;
- Mr. Shmuel Ben-Shmuel, Head of World Jewish Affairs and Interreligious Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Oded Brook, Senior Deputy Director of the Ministry of Finance;
- Mr. Moshe Golan, Director, Civil Affairs, State Attorney's Office;
- Adv. Ronen Gil-Or, MFA, Director General Law Department;
- Mr. Bahij Mansour, Director of Department Religious Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Adv. Yael Weiner, Director, International Civil Affairs, Ministry of Justice;
- Mr. Eliav Benjamin, Advisor of the Director General.

The work of this Plenary meeting of the Commission took place in a climate of great cordiality and good will, and accomplished significant progress towards the shared goal, both substantively, and in terms of putting in place procedures to improve desired effectiveness of the on-going negotiations.

The next meeting of the Plenary will take place during the first half of December this year, in Israel, and in the meantime the Commission will continue upon its task at the "working level".

Vatican City, 28 May 2008, 23 Iyar 5768.

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