

THE PRESIDENT

Message of the President of the State of Israel, Mr. Shimon Peres
to the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora
on the occasion of the Jewish New Year 5772
September 2011

Hopefully, the coming New Year will herald the realization of our aspirations for peace, greater security and economic growth, as we continue to strive to safeguard the future of the Jewish people and strengthen the ties between Israel and our Jewish brethren in the Diaspora.

Dramatic changes have swept across our region in the past year, changing the face of the Middle East forever. It has been generated by a young generation that bravely fought to free themselves of the shackles of the oppressive regimes that governed them, putting their lives at risk as they resolutely demanded their basic rights for freedom, democracy, dignity and jobs. Until the dust settles, it is hard to forecast what lies ahead, but along with the risks, the coming year could offer tremendous opportunities and possibilities, and we must have the courage and foresight to seize this window of opportunity to secure a better future. A trend towards democracy and freedom in the region will benefit Israel as well, and we shall closely watch its progress.

Changes have also occurred in Israel. The grassroots social justice movement that has sprouted up across the country has demonstrated that the people of Israel are engaged and socially aware, denoting a spirit of solidarity for each other and their society. They are prepared to fight for a better future for themselves and their children, and it has been an uplifting experience to witness the sight of hundreds of thousands of people peacefully raising their voice in unison for their rights. Here too an opportunity for change exists and must not be wasted.

Jews in Israel and Jews in the Diaspora share a common bond and destiny; they are responsible for one another. These bonds must never weaken, but always strengthen, and to this end educating Jewish youth about Israel, while cultivating their engagement to Israel, is of paramount importance. No less important is the education of Israeli youth about their brothers and sisters in the Diaspora, making it clear to young and old, in Israel and abroad, that Israel belongs to all of the Jewish people, and that a strong Israel – Diaspora relationship constitutes the bridge that connects us. Together we can develop a vision for the future of the Jewish people based on the Jewish values of Tikun Olam and peace.

The coming year will be a critical period for Israel, the entire region, and the world, with complex challenges ahead. Standing united while facing existential threats will give us the strength to prevail. But it will also be a period of opportunities, and I hope we shall take advantage of these opportunities to create a year of promise, growth, and security.

As we look towards a better tomorrow, from Jerusalem I extend my warm and best wishes to the Jewish people around the world for a year of peace, joy, good health and prosperity.

Shana Tova,

Shimon Peres