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**Javier SOLANA,
EU High Representative for the CFSP,
says peace is the only way out of the problems facing the Middle East**

Javier SOLANA, European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), visited Jerusalem on Tuesday, 20 and Wednesday, 21 October 2009 during a tour of the Middle East from 19 to 21 October which also included Ramallah.

In Jerusalem, Mr SOLANA met President Shimon PERES, Prime Minister Benjamin NETANYAHU, Foreign Minister Avigdor LIBERMAN and Defence Minister Ehud BARAK and discussed with them the continued efforts of the international community towards a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On Tuesday, Mr SOLANA attended the second Israeli Presidential Conference and participated in the session "Turning Crisis into Opportunity". In his address, the High Representative called for peace as the only solution to the problems of the Middle East, which was largely excluded from globalization. He pointed out that 60 per cent of its population was under the age of 25. This represented a huge potential and could be "*an endless source of progress and dynamism*" if those young people received an education, were connected to the modern world and were offered prospects and jobs. If not, he warned, "*the danger of those young men and women being attracted to extremism is real*".

Mr SOLANA called for a comprehensive approach to the region, embracing all the relevant players and stressed that "*peace is the only way out*" of the region's problems. He repeated his hopes of seeing a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and he called for every possible effort to be made in that direction. He stressed the EU's continuing engagement as a partner for peace in the region and said that, if the parties reached an agreement, the EU would step up its engagement.

The High Representative told his audience that the Israel was "*closer to the European Union than any other country in the world outside Europe*", with deep and close cultural, historical and trade ties and active participation in all its programmes.

In his speech, Mr SOLANA also talked of the crucial challenges facing the world today and the power shifts from governments to civil society and from the West to emerging powers. He pointed to the widening gap between the industrialized countries and the others and to the unprecedented levels of migration to which this would lead. He stressed that international decision-making fora could no longer exclude the emerging powers such as China and India.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

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