



**Declarations of the Task Force
For International Cooperation on Holocaust
Education, Remembrance, and Research**

Presented to the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets by
Germany, Israel,
Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States,
Washington, DC, December 3, 1998

Education, Remembrance and Research

The international community's recent attention to the long-neglected issues of Holocaust-era assets has prompted a number of countries to look more closely at both their own roles and the broader history of this tragic period. While differing enormously in content and intensity, these developments are encouraging, useful, and necessary. Holocaust education, remembrance, and research strengthen humanity's ability to absorb and learn from the dark lessons of the past, so that we can ensure that similar horrors are never again repeated.

As the international community continues to focus on the Holocaust-era assets issues at the 1998 Washington Conference and beyond, the priority and urgency for international attention must also encompass Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. Efforts and resources in this direction should be expanded to reinforce the historic meaning and enduring lessons of the Holocaust ("Shoah") and to combat its denial.

To address this imperative, we are committing our countries to encourage parents, teachers, and civic, political, and religious leaders to undertake with renewed vigor and attention Holocaust education, remembrance, and research, with a special focus on our own countries' histories. We will strengthen our existing programs or launch new ones to advance this common objective.

We pledge our commitment to this endeavor and have joined together to develop an unprecedented diplomatic cooperation in this field, in a spirit of partnership, humanity, and justice. We call on the other nations participating in the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets to also take steps to strengthen existing Holocaust education, remembrance, and research efforts, and to undertake new ones where necessary. We invite nations to work with the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust

Education, Remembrance, and Research to pursue these common goals.

As this century comes to a close, our determination never to forget is a key to realizing progress for mankind. The healing of the world (in Hebrew, *tikun olam*) is a solemn duty of all who cherish freedom and human dignity. We hope our efforts to deepen Holocaust education, remembrance, and research will help to fulfill that responsibility as we begin a new millennium.

Archival Openness and Access

The recent opening of archives bearing on the Holocaust ("Shoah"), in particular those related to Nazi-looted gold and other confiscated assets has made possible important new historical research on these complex issues. As a result, the international community's understanding of this tragic period in the history of the 20th century is being strengthened substantially as scholars gain access to millions of pages of documents for the first time.

The presentations made to the December 1997 London Nazi Gold Conference and subsequent work on the part of historical commissions in many nations demonstrate that although much progress has been made, there is still more work to be done in bringing the full historical record to light. The governments comprising the International Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research agree on the importance on encouraging all archives, both public and private, to make their holdings more widely accessible. This will facilitate further research and encourage greater understanding of the Holocaust and its historical context.

The Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets provides an ideal opportunity for all participating governments to join us in endorsing the importance of full archival openness, and in undertaking to work toward the goal of making all documentation bearing on the Holocaust and the fate of Nazi-confiscated assets available to researchers. The adoption of December 31, 1999, as a target date to meet this goal will reinforce the commitment of humanity to learn from the history of this century as we enter a new millennium.

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