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Mark Hyman, pictured, is the co-Chairman of the South African Friends of Israel (SAFI) and was the conference convener. He delivered a rousing closing speech to the plenary of the organisation's fourth annual's Israel Advocacy Conference –

appropriate as the day was marked by one rousing event after the other and left delegates inspired, empowered and exhausted after ten hours of non-stop action. Here is the full text of that speech...



Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, Shalom Umvorach
Sanibonani Manene Namanenekazi

Another incredibly successful Advocacy seminar; another notch in our belt; proof positive of the power of dialogue, the power of negotiation, the power of communication, the power of education – and the power of a shared goal, a shared vision, a shared belief.

The Chief Rabbi Dr Rabbi Warren Goldstein, Mr Ben Swartz the Chairman of the South African Zionist Federation and Co Chairman of South African Friends of Israel, honoured guests, dignitaries, delegates and all of our friends of Israel who have come here today with the hunger to learn about the experiences

of the Holy land of Israel and who joined us with a thirst for knowledge which was undoubtedly quenched by our esteemed keynote speakers.

All of us here today have shared a unique experience, one that has enriched and elevated us, which has given us hope and courage, and which has helped clarify the way forward for our beloved Israel, surrounded as she currently is by so much hostility, antagonism, attempts to delegitimise, demonise and discredit her despite the incalculable benefits she has brought to mankind in the fields of medicine, agriculture, technology and a host of others.

The Middle East is a cauldron of fire and brimstone, of conflict and terror, of brutality and bestiality, of hopelessness, despair and death. There are millions who have been displaced, thousands who have been tortured, murdered, beheaded by those without conscience or

belief. But in the middle of this devastation is the only country that offers sanctuary and comfort to the Christian population, the only country where human rights are practised and where women and children are respected.

Your presence here bears witness to that, and we thank you for your faith and your dedication, for your time and your courage, for your unwavering recognition of rightness and justice, for your ideals and convictions.

We, the representatives of SAFI and the SAZF, extend our very grateful thanks to all those who ensured the success of the event – and there are many of them.

Ambassador of Israel to SA, His Excellency Arthur Lenk, and Deputy Ambassador Michael Freeman both of whose passion for Israel comes across loud and clear in everything you say.

Our superb guest speakers (X, x and x), each of whom has your own unique story to tell, and each of whom enthused the audience with the word pictures you painted in such glowing terms.

- Mr Winton Steward who is an internationally acclaimed Pro Israel campus activist.
- Mr Ze'ev Ben Shachar who is the Director of Israel Education at the highly prestigious Jerusalem University.
- Mr Shazar Azani who is the Executive Director of the of "Stand With Us".

The three of you have delivered sterling orations today all of which have left us with greater tools to be advocates for Israel than when we came in and have fanned the flames of our passion for Israel. It is because of people like you, men of great wisdom that the Jewish state continues to flourish. You are all here today because you believe in the beauty and the benefits of a close relationship for the African continent with Israel. You acknowledge that there is so much that can be done to help us all not just as South Africans but as a global community if we simply have the courage to stand on the side of truth, the side of G-d and the side of His holy land of Israel. For the most inspiring messages of hope and truth that you have given us we truly thank you.

I would also like to extend a thank you to all of our workshop coordinators and educators:

- Olga Meshoe – Our Lion of the North – our Lady Liberty – COO of DEISI International
- Mr Riad Hassoun – Notable Pro Israel Lecturer and prominent member of the Zionist-Druze Association. Riad is also the former city manager of Daliat El Carmel Municipality.
- Dr Lydia Meshoe – Wife of MP Reverend Kenneth Meshoe and Co-Founder of the Hope of Glory Tabernacle church.
- Mr Chris Eden – The National director of Bridges for peace an organization dedicated to the support of Christians who stand with Israel and who continue to build relationships between Christians and Jews in Israel and around the world.

We thank you all for your time, tireless efforts and dedication to coming to the aid of Israel and for educating us all today.

All of you conduct yourselves as ambassadors of peace, love, truth and are an affirmation of G-ds will.

Your talks were not just genuine and heart-warming but also highly informative.

Through your words we were able to walk with you on your journeys, visit faraway places and have taken away with us a once in a lifetime experience.

We would also like to thank Mighty Jamie our Master of ceremonies who as his name suggests is a force to be reckoned with on the debating circuit especially when it comes to upholding the good name of a democratic society such as Israel.

Mighty is a very close friend to us all and a man of true integrity and ingrained goodness.

And I would like to thank the Professional Staff, Nicci Raz the National Director of the South African Zionist Federation as well as her dedicated team of staff: Gavi Sacks, Froma Sacks, Lisa Peretz, Miriam Garb, Benji Shulman, David Lichtenstein, Ronli Dorfman and Joshua Trapido who have all put in a lot of hard work and organization so that we could have this event today.

It was The Philosopher and scholar Herbert Spencer who once said

“The great aim of education is not knowledge but action”.

In other words, what we have learned today is of no use if we have gained a wealth of information only to not share it with the rest world.

It is our duty as good, honest and hardworking people to spread the message of today which is one of Peace, Tolerance, Ingenuity and unity and coexistence of all races, religions and creeds which exist in the only democracy in the Middle East region.

The land of Eretz Yisrael.

The people that we have interacted with today have come here on a very special mission of good faith to help us become more effective advocates for Israel and to put us in touch with the organizations that can aid us in that mission.

They have come to help us because they believe in us.

They believe that within our country we can take back the narrative of what it means to be proud of Israel, of the importance of going to see Israel for yourselves and not rely solely on mainstream media and hate groups for biased half-truths and misinformation.

Each one of us today arrived here as lumps of clay.

We leave here today moulded by knowledge and forged in the fires of truth and we are ready to make a difference.

More than 450 years before the birth of Christ, Confucius said:

“Engikuzwayo, ngiyakukhohla; engikubonayo, ngiyakukhumbula; engikwenzayo, ngiyakuqonda.”

Masibambisane. Sesizwile ukuthi kumele senzeni. Sibonile okumele sikwenze nokuthi singakufeza kanjani.

Manje sekuyisikhathi sokukwenza, futhi, uma siyimbumba, singakwenza kuphumelele.”

“What I hear, I forget; what I see, I remember; what I do, I understand.

‘Let’s do it together.

We’ve heard what we have to do.

We have seen what we need to do and how we can achieve it.

Now is the time to do it, and, together, we can do it.

“Let’s turn from spectators into participants.”

To all of our Friends who have joined us today that we know and those that we have not met yet we say to you:

Ikhandlela elilodwa lingakhanyisa indlu yonke.

Umngani weqiniso ukhanyisa impilo yakho yonke.

Ngibonga amalambu obungani bakho akhanya bha.

A single candle can illuminate an entire room. A true friend lights up an entire lifetime. Thank you for the bright lights of your friendship.

The lasting message of today’s seminar that we must all take away with us, the abiding memory of today, is one of unity, of how we all came together with purpose and determination to make a difference, to bring creativity to our task, to encourage one another to take the road less travelled and continue our journey with steadfast determination and resolution to predict a positive ending. We have it within all of us to grow and develop even more, to influence more people, to widen the circle of those who share our convictions.

May we all be blessed to reap the fruits of our labours.

God Bless You All.