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HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF JEWS FROM EGYPT

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H.E. Koichiro Matsuura
Director-General UNESCO
Place de Fontenoy
Paris 75007 FRANCE

Subject: To retrieve copies of the civil and religious registers and archives of our community.

June 4, 2008

Dear Mr. Director-General,

The Historical Society of Jews From Egypt (HSJE) is an organization representing a worldwide Diaspora of Jews exiled from Egypt since the 1950's, now numbering close to half a million individuals.

We have noted the communiqué of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre questioning the worthiness of Egyptian Culture Minister, Farouk Hosni, as a candidate for the next Director-General of your eminent organization.

We feel that this has provided Mr. Hosni a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate his generosity to civilization and to cultures, as also his rejection of anti-Semitism.

Our registries and archives held in Cairo and Alexandria represent our history and acknowledge our identity as Jews originally from Egypt. All of our attempts over the past decade; to get access from the Egyptian authorities to photocopy these documents, have failed.

We therefore request that UNESCO take custody of this "intangible heritage" of the Jews from Egypt, by negotiating with Mr. Hosni on our behalf to photocopy our registers and archives in Egypt and then to hold these copies under UNESCO World Heritage protection.

We are confident that in this manner, Minister Hosni will prove his good faith by responding to our call as Jews from Egypt and simultaneously show his commitment to the principles of UNESCO.

We understand Mr. Hosni is due to visit France mid-June and would appreciate, Mr.Director-General, your efforts in resolving this matter by obtaining his formal agreement to our prompt access.

Respectfully yours;

Desire L. Sakkal

CC: Minister of Culture, Mr. Farouk Hosni, Cairo, Egypt