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February 9, 2010

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.

The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to you today as Coordinating Council members of *Generations of the Shoah International (GSI)*. We are a U.S.-based organization of survivors and descendants of the Holocaust whose membership includes tens of thousands of second and third generation children of Shoah survivors - the largest survivor family organization in the world.

During your recent moving remarks on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, you echoed Elie Wiesel's words: "Memory has become the sacred duty of all people of good will." Every Yom Hashoah, we renew our pledge to our parents and grandparents to take on that sacred duty in a very special way. We do this by speaking up when injustice occurs, by sharing our families' stories, by advocating for our parents' well-being in their declining years, and by being key stakeholders in preserving and passing on the legacy of what our people endured.

As you also pointed out in your beautiful tribute, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum plays a central role in the work of preserving memory in the United States and around the world. It is a place we visit with our parents – a place they see as a home to their memories -- and it is a place to which we have contributed our precious family documents, our financial support and our time. It is also a place we hope to help guide and influence as it enters into a world with achingly few first-hand witnesses – our parents – and a world with a burgeoning treasure trove of documentation emerging from archives and files that hold astonishing links to the past. We are eager and willing to help set the direction of this remarkable Museum as it continues its work in this very different world.

As you appoint new representatives to the US Holocaust Memorial Council to replace those whose terms are ending, we respectfully ask that you choose a significant number of second and third generation representatives to have seats at that table. Our voices have not been meaningfully represented until now. Those descendants of the Shoah need to be from among those who are significantly involved in this work in their communities, knowledgeable of the issues, and have made substantive contributions to legacy and memory preservation on behalf of survivors.

We are proud to have a President in the White House who has already stood at Buchenwald, who speaks of the acts of kindness and resistance by those imprisoned at Auschwitz, and who understands that the survivors' children, grandchildren and the state of Israel are all rebukes to the hatred of the perpetrators. We would be happy to be of assistance in creating criteria that would assure that these appointments truly represent the best interests of preserving the memory, legacy and history of the Shoah. We can be reached at GSI@genshoah.org, or please contact

Esther Finder at xxx-xxx-xxxx or Annette Bar-Cohen at xxx-xxx-xxxx. You may also contact any of the Coordinating Council members listed below.

Most respectfully,

The Members of the Coordinating Council, *Generations of the Shoah International (GSI)*:

Esther Toporek Finder, President, *The Generation After*, Washington, DC (MD and VA)
Member of the Maryland Holocaust Center Task Force
Member of the US Delegation to the Holocaust Era Assets Conference, Prague, June 2009

Anat Bar-Cohen, Executive Board Member, *The Generation After*, Washington, DC (MD and VA)

Klara Firestone, President, *Second Generation Los Angeles*
Board Member, **Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust**

Sandy Hoffman, President, *Generation After* Milwaukee, WI
Co-Chair, Nathan & Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center Operations Committee
Co-Chair, Yom Hashoah Planning Committee

Dina Cohen, Chair, *Generations of the Shoah-New Jersey*
Member, **New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education**

Barbara Wind, Director, **Holocaust Council of MetroWest, UJCNJ**, New Jersey
Founder of **Global Association of Holocaust and Genocide Educators (GAHGE)**
Co-founder **Council of Holocaust Educators (CHE)**

Bonnie Stein, President, *Generations After* at the Florida Holocaust Museum, St. Petersburg, FL

Ken Engel, Past President, *CHAIM (Children of Holocaust-Survivors Association in Minnesota)*

Pepi Nichols, Past President, *Second Generation of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Houston*

Charles Silow, President, *CHAIM (Children of Holocaust-Survivors Association in Michigan)*

Daniel Brooks, Coordinator, *3GNY* (A NYC-based Group for Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors)

Doris Schwarz-Lisenbee, Ph.D., Co-Chair, *Second Generation Holocaust Survivor Association of Silicon Valley* (affiliated with **Silicon Valley Holocaust Survivor Groups, San Jose, California**)