



B'NAI B'RITH WORLD CENTER - JERUSALEM

At the meeting's opening session, WZO Chairman Avraham Duvdevani said: "Zionism Began as a dream, and we are still in the midst of that dream. The establishment of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel is the realization of a dream."

He noted that Theodor Herzl emphasized the need to recruit the young forces among the Jewish People on the side of his movement, adding: "All of the great things achieved by the Zionist Movement in settlement, defense of the state, Aliya and the supremacy of the Hebrew language were achieved by young people. Contemporary Zionism is an open book and it is our right and obligation to write its next chapters. Zionism is necessary in order to rekindle among the youth the ancient longing for the Land of Israel and to provide the sense that they are partners to paving the road back to our country. 65 years is only the beginning."

ZGC President Helena Glazer expressed concern that the Zionist movement is losing its connection to large portions of Jewish youth and called for the development of young leadership.

At a festive opening session at the Knesset, House speaker Yuli Edelstein said that today, Zionism is not limited to living in Israel and that ways need to be found to draw close even those who have left Israel. "The risk of assimilation is high, so what is the point of rejecting them?" he asked.

He called on the WZO to develop common, contemporary Zionist content, for Israelis and Diaspora Jews.

"Our future is in Zionism (Tziyonut) and not in cynicism (Tziniyut)", he concluded. Speaking on "France – A Window of Opportunity", Dr. Dov Maimon, a Senior Fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute in Jerusalem said that the crisis among French Jewry offers an opportunity to the WZO to take action in order to direct them to Israel.

The elements of the crisis include: extended economic crisis, demographic changes, taxation policies that engenders emigration, crisis of governance and decline in personal security.

He called on the WZO to make extraordinary efforts to access Jews in France and assist in their successful absorption when they arrive. Otherwise, most will leave for other Diaspora communities and those who remain will assimilate.

At its final business session, the ZGC held a debate on a number of heavily contested resolutions, passing resolutions on: recognition for all major religious streams, adoption of the Sharansky proposal pertaining to the Women of the Wall, calling on the government of Israel to adopt a program to fight racism, and support for civil marriage in Israel.