

# 2003 QUADRENNIAL

## Gathering at a Time of Crisis

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Since its inception in 1967, the Quadrennial gathering of Jewish communal professionals has always focused on the crucial issues of the time. When we look back to the Jewish condition of our previous Quadrennial in 1998, the contrast is startling and sobering.

The major concern then was rethinking the Diaspora's relationship to an Israel that was moving from its vulnerable pioneering days to economic and military self-sufficiency. There were no Jews to rescue, Argentine Jewry was a strong force, and anti-Semitism was not considered of sufficient concern to warrant any place on the program.

What a changed situation we face today, with Israel's very existence challenged, terrorism as a global menace, Argentine Jewry on the brink of collapse and many Diaspora communities threatened.

Our Quadrennial theme reflects all of these concerns: "Professional Leadership Responds to Crises in Israel and Jewish Communities World-wide." Our goal is to bring together hundreds of professional from all over the world to analyze key issues, share experiences and develop a global approach in designing cooperative programs to meet the growing challenges.

Our inspiring keynote speaker, Dr. David Hartman, a renowned philosopher and Judaic scholar, will set the tone and framework. Plenaries and Forums will deal with how we can most effectively address the crisis in Israel, find solutions for Jewish communities at risk, deepen our connections to a changing European Jewry, handle the threat of terrorism, and manage the demands of competing priorities between current crises and building for the future.

Discussions will take place in both formal

and informal settings, with an emphasis on strengthening the bonds among participants.

As a result of consultations with colleagues from many countries, we have expanded the Professional Track component into fifty sessions for nine tracks, covering a broad variety of community activities. The focus is on thinking "out of the box," going beyond disciplines, functional fields and traditional venues for services.

The track on Aging will address the growing needs of elderly, ethical issues in "End of Life" care, integration of services and inter-generational relations.

Other tracks will focus on building resilient communities, providing social services and effective Jewish education amid social, economic and security crises . . . and the opportunity this provides for professional community growth. Reflecting the current situation, another track will deal with the impact of trauma on clients and on helpers. Other tracks will address Women's Issues, Poverty, Professional Leadership Development, and Working with Holocaust Survivors.

We are again linking the Quadrennial to the General Assembly to benefit from the double exposure and to partake in cosponsored Shabbat activities—religious services, cultural events, learning sessions and Jerusalem walks.

During this time of crisis, it is more important than ever that professionals band and bond together to express our solidarity, to recognize our interdependence that crosses geographic and religious boundaries, and to demonstrate that professionals have a special leadership role to play.

We look forward to welcoming you at the 2003 Quadrennial in Jerusalem.

*Shalom U'lehitraot.*