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- Joint Release -

Press Release

"The Return of the Scientists": Over 100 Researchers Previously Employed at Academic Institutions Overseas were Hired by Israeli Universities this Year

Data of the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) of the Council for Higher Education indicate that during the 2008-2009 academic year, research universities in Israel hired 104 "returning scientists" formerly employed by academic institutions around the world. These are professors and researchers who began their careers at higher-education institutions in Israel, and chose to leave the country for job offers from the world's leading institutions. All of the returning academics were hired for newly budgeted positions and assigned ranks based on their experience, from Lecturer to Full Professor.

Within the budget agreement between the Ministry of Finance and the PBC, NIS 95 million were allocated in 2009 to "hiring packages" for returning scientists, construction of laboratories, and improvement of research infrastructures at the hiring institutions. In accordance with the budget agreement, the PBC and the Ministry of Finance are formulating criteria for the distribution of the designated budget among the various educational institutions. Following the final formulation of the criteria, the budgets will be transferred to the universities by the PBC.

PBC data indicate that some of the returning researchers are young Ph.D. recipients with 4-6 years' experience in a wide range of research fields, from nanotechnology, biology, chemistry, and physics to liberal arts and social sciences such as education, history, and law.

Other scientists who have elected to return to work at Israeli universities are senior academics returning after long periods – 10 to 25 years – of academic work overseas, and are now being hired at the rank of Associate Professor. These Israeli scientists are leaders in their fields who have held high ranks and positions at prestigious institutions such as Stanford University in California, Oxford University in England, the top American universities MIT and NYU, and the NIH. Others are returning to Israel from leading European institutions such as the University of Geneva, the ETH research institute in Switzerland, and the King's Royal computer sciences school in London.

Minister of Finance **Roni Bar-On** commented, "We welcome the return of Israelis to Israel. Higher education is a long-term growth driver. I am happy to discover that many researchers have chosen to return, and I hope that more academics will choose to do the same. We have also implemented a tax program to ease the return of returning residents and encourage immigration. These measures reinforce the educational system and our knowledge-intensive market, and allow scientists to return to Israel and enjoy stable employment."

PBC chairman Prof. **Shlomo Grossman** commented, "The global economic crisis has created a window of opportunity for Israel to regain our best and brightest who had left academic institutions here and held key positions in leading universities and research institutions around the world in recent years. The return of young, experienced scientists will significantly strengthen Israeli academia."