



## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT**

Ya'akov Almor

Tel: +972-53-522685

E-mail: mrktdrct@netvision.net.il

### **Former WFDB president Moshe Schnitzer to be awarded Israel's highest civilian honor**

ANTWERP, BELGIUM, March 12, 2004 — Moshe Schnitzer, who served four terms as president of the World Federation of Diamond Bourses in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, has been named a recipient of the Israel Prize for his life's achievements. It is the highest civilian honor bestowed by the Israeli government upon one of its citizens. He will receive it at a state ceremony to be held on Israel's Independence Day in May.

The announcement that Schnitzer had been selected by a special committee to receive the award was made by Limor Livnat, Israel's Minister of Education, Culture and Sport.

In making its recommendation, the committee stated: "Moshe Schnitzer is known as one of the giants of today's world diamond industry.... Through his work, Mr. Schnitzer turned the state of Israel into a leader in the international diamond sector, contributing to the strengthening of Israel's economy and creating jobs for ten thousands of workers. For many years, the diamond industry and trade has been one of Israel's major export sectors. Mr. Schnitzer established the Israel Diamond Exchange and served many years as its president, as well as president of the World Federation of Diamond Bourses. Mr. Schnitzer did not limit himself only to activities in the diamond industry and trade but also was active in other economic sectors, as well as in social and cultural and academic areas. He was the driving force behind the establishment of the [Harry Oppenheimer] Diamond Museum, and he also authored a book on the diamond industry. Taking all these achievements into account, the jury saw Mr. Schnitzer eligible to receive the Israel Prize for Life Achievement, on account of his special contribution to the society and state of Israel."

Schnitzer was born in Chernowich, Romania and immigrated to Israel in 1934. He began to work as a diamond cutter in 1942 and in 1947 he was active in uniting the bodies that jointly established the Israel Diamond Exchange. In 1965 he was the first diamantaire to be cited as an Outstanding Diamond Exporter by Israel's Ministry of Industry and Trade. He served as president of the Israel Diamond Exchange from 1967 to 1993. From 1968 to 1972 he was president of the World Federation of Diamond Bourses. He was elected for a second term as WFDB president in 1978 and in 1982 became lifetime honorary president of the organization. He retired last year as chairman of the Israel Diamond Institute, which was the last public position he still held after more than 50 years in the service of Israeli and world diamond sectors.

Commenting on the announcement, WFDB President Shmuel Schnitzer, who is the son of Moshe Schnitzer, stated: "We are all very moved by this honor, and of course proud of my father, who undoubtedly was of most important architects of the modern diamond industry. He has left his mark not only on the State of Israel, but on the entire business worldwide."

\* \* \* \* \*