



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:

Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2020

**President Nez and First Lady meet with Israel
Ministry of Foreign Affairs during cultural exchange visit**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and First Lady Phefelia Nez with Director of the U.S. Consulates Department Itai Bardov, Deputy Director of the U.S. Consulates Department Revital Malca, and Gil Haskel who serves as the Deputy Director General for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Head of MASHAV – Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation in Jerusalem, Israel on Feb. 6, 2020.

JERUSALEM, Israel – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and First Lady Phefelia Nez met with officials with the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem, Israel on Thursday, during a self-funded cultural exchange trip to learn more about the government of Israel’s vision and efforts toward economic, infrastructure, and agricultural development that may help the administration’s efforts to build a stronger Navajo Nation.

For the last several months, President Nez, First Lady Nez, and a small group of Navajo citizens worked together with faith-based organizations to fundraise and plan for the week-long trip.

Thursday's meeting was held with Director of the U.S. Consulates Department Itai Bardov, Deputy Director of the U.S. Consulates Department Revital Malca, and Gil Haskel who serves as the Deputy Director General for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Head of MASHAV – Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation.

"The country of Israel had made substantial advances in technology that have helped in the development of their capital infrastructure, tourism industry, agricultural production, and their overall economy. This visit presents a great opportunity to learn more about their strategies that have made many of their ventures successful, and hopefully to help us apply those teachings to help the Navajo Nation expand tourism, develop energy, strengthen the economy, and increase agricultural production," said President Nez.



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and First Lady Phefelia Nez with Jewish Agency's Goodwill Ambassador Dvora Ganani-Elad in Jerusalem, Israel on Feb. 6, 2020.

During the meeting, President Nez stated that the Navajo Nation is the largest land base indigenous nation in the United States with many untapped resources that can transform the Navajo Nation into an industry leader in many ways.

"I believe we have similar resources as Israel in terms of land, workforce, and the ingenuity of our people. I've said before that the Navajo Nation is a sleeping giant in terms of our economic potential. We need to improve our coordination and unify our efforts to move forward in building industries that create long-term benefits for our Navajo people," added President Nez, who also noted that the land base of the Navajo Nation is over three times the size of Israel — at 27,000 square-miles and 8,000 square miles respectively.

First Lady Nez also met with the Jewish Agency's Goodwill Ambassador Dvora Ganani-Elad, to discuss potential partnerships between the Office of the First Lady and Second Lady and the Jewish Agency's non-profit sector to help address social welfare issues and to provide educational outreach on the Navajo Nation.

In regards to their faith, President Nez and the First Lady recognize that their faith has served as the foundation for their family and their service to the Navajo people. The visit to Israel is a great opportunity to strengthen their understanding and faith.

###

For the latest news from the Office of the President and Vice President, please visit <http://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/> or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.