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**Javier SOLANA,
EU High Representative for the CFSP,
met with Yossi BEILIN and Yasser ABED RABBO,
leaders of the "Geneva Initiative"**

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), met today with Yasser ABED RABBO, member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and former Minister of Information of the Palestinian Authority, and with Yossi BEILIN, member of the Knesset and former Minister of Justice of Israel, both current leaders of the "Geneva Initiative" for peace in the Middle East. On the occasion, Mr Solana made the following statement:

"I want to commend both Yossi Beilin and Yasser Abed Rabbo for this important initiative for peace in the Middle East. I welcome all civil society initiatives of this nature and I am convinced that the Agreement they signed in Geneva last December will bring new impetus to the Middle East Peace Process."

The "Geneva Initiative", promoted simultaneously by Israelis and Palestinians, has led to a very intense, healthy and timely debate on both sides about the many issues related to the current conflict. This has helped to press forward possible answers for achieving peace in the region.

The European Union remains firmly committed to the solutions laid out in the Quartet's Road Map. The efforts of all those involved in the "Geneva Initiative" are an important complement to the formal negotiations."

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The "Geneva Agreement" is the result of a civil society initiative by Israeli and Palestinian people, whose discussions have been sponsored by Switzerland for the past two years. The final plan, developed by a committed group of individuals and organisations, was unveiled and signed in Geneva on 1 December 2003.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:
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