

Statement of MK Gilad Erdan
Israel Minister of Environmental Protection
to the Round Table on Waste and Chemicals
of the 19th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development
May 12, 2011
15:00-18:00

Mr. Chairperson, Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

We all know that humanity's consumption of resources and its generation of waste far exceed the earth's carrying capacity. We also know that waste contributes to climate change, causes pollution, consumes land resources, and impacts on human health. In the face of this reality, it is imperative that we find ways of doing **more** with less.

We recently launched a major waste revolution in Israel under the motto "From Nuisance to Resource." Our target is to reach zero landfilling by 2020 while reducing, reusing and recycling waste.

This new policy is backed up first of all by legislation, including a Packaging Law, financial incentives to local authorities and the private sector for separation of waste at source and material resource facilities, and large-scale education and information programs, including a mass media campaign to change the public's consumption level. We are convinced that this holistic approach will prevent pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while creating new energy sources and providing thousands of new jobs. Millions of dollars worth of raw materials which were once buried in Israel's landfills will now be recovered.

To promote our "zero landfilling" policy, the Ministry of Environmental Protection is working on several complementary levels. We are collecting a levy from landfill operators for every ton of waste which is landfilled and depositing the funds in a dedicated account, with the funds going back to local authorities and the private sector for

separation of waste at source programs and infrastructure, material recycling facilities, and education and information programs. We are establishing extended producer responsibility for the treatment of dedicated waste streams, including packaging, tires and beverage containers and, in the future, electronic waste. We are moving toward separation at source of clean organic waste, which makes up some 40% of the country's waste. We are prohibiting the landfilling of recyclable materials, including biodegradable organic material, tires, cardboard and paper. And, in recognition of the importance of introducing a new waste ethic, we are financially supporting local authorities in promoting educational activities which are targeted at waste reduction at source, separation at source, reuse and recycling, and launching programs aimed at changing behavioral norms.

Our transition to separation of waste at source represents a real revolution in Israel, and we are determined to take the necessary steps, at all levels, to ensure implementation. At the same time, we have begun to examine the sustainable materials management approach with the intention of moving from waste policies to "materials policies" which cover the full lifecycle of products. We will be glad to share the lessons we have learned and the experience we have accumulated with the world community.

Thank you.