

Statement of Dr. Yossi Inbar
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to the Round Table on Sustainable Consumption and Production
of the 18th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development
May 2010

Madam Co- Chair, Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen;

~~It is my honor and pleasure to take part in this round table on sustainable consumption and production, a significant subject that ranks high among the priorities of the international community.~~

Following Prof. von Weizacker's comments I would like to elaborate on Israel's' experience in water management. Since the establishment of our state, 62 years ago, we are facing a chronic water shortage. As a result we have become world leaders in water technologies. Just to name a few: drip irrigation, desalination of marginal & sea water & treatment of waste water to a level which enables us to reuse them in agriculture for all crops. Currently we are reusing >70% of our wastewater in agriculture. Our efficient agriculture results in the highest yield per unit of water & land. We are ready to share our experience & knowledge with all of you.

In 2003, the Government of Israel began enacting a comprehensive policy related to the principles of sustainable development. Since that landmark event, we have taken major strides forward, yet we also recognize that

much remains to be done. We remain committed to shrinking the gaps between rhetoric and reality by introducing the best available technologies to our industries, implementing integrated pollution prevention and control programs, and most importantly, raising awareness of sustainable consumption and production practices.

In December 2009, a Green Government initiative was approved by our cabinet. The decision mandated the government to lead by example on the issue of sustainable development. As such, the government set measurable targets to reduce paper, electricity, disposable beverage containers consumption. At the same time, the decision gives preference in government tenders for vehicle purchasing to low polluting, low fuel consuming vehicles. This reinforces an earlier government decision on green procurement, which calls for the incorporation of environmental criteria into the public procurement of several products and services. These government decisions are expected to encourage environmentally friendly production by manufacturers, to create a market for green products, to conserve natural and energy resources and prevent pollution, and to increase public awareness of the importance of sustainable consumption.

In parallel to “greening” our government, we are making major efforts to green our schools, from kindergartens to universities. In this regard, we have a positive effect on the next generation of Israelis through curricula that teach students about sustainable development and the environment, as well as programs that encourage concrete action on behalf of the environment and the community, especially in terms of conservation of resources and minimization of waste. Side by side with these efforts, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, local governments and “green

organizations” are raising public awareness of sustainable lifestyle patterns which will permeate all sectors of society.

It is my hope that we will emerge from this round table as agents of change for sustainable consumption and production practices in our respective countries and around the world.

Thank you.