

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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Statement by

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"The Way Forward"

During the High-Level Segment of the 16th Session of the  
Commission on Sustainable Development  
Review Session

United Nations, New York  
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Mr. Chairman,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished delegates,

It is my honor and pleasure to represent the State of Israel at this important international gathering of the 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development focusing on the themes of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land, Drought, Desertification, Africa, and the water review.

At the outset, allow me to convey our heartfelt sympathy to the peoples of China and Myanmar in the wake of the tragic natural disaster they face.

The State of Israel assigns great importance to the work of the CSD and to the Commission's role in leading the international community on policy formulation and implementation of actions, and is proud to be a member of CSD's Bureau. Israel's delegation reiterates its commitment to the principles of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg "Plan of Implementation."

Mr. Chairman,

During the past week, the commission held interactive deliberations on these important themes. The high level segment, titled "The Way Forward", is an opportunity for us to further assess these issues in order to provide guidance in these focal areas during the policy year. In this context, please allow me to make the following brief comments.

Israel believes that agriculture development has a key role to play in enhancing sustainable development, improving livelihoods and stimulating economic growth in rural areas.

The enhancement of agriculture development has the potential to more comprehensively alleviate poverty, improve food security, and provide increased rural income and economic growth, thus facilitating the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

In the development of its rural regions, Israel's agriculture sector has dealt with the challenges of arid and semi-arid conditions, which necessitated an integrated and innovative development approach. Some of the methods adopted also contribute to the global effort to respond to climate change, including at the level of the small farmer.

We are also concerned by the global food crisis, but believe that a way forward can be to invest in research and development of new varieties of inedible bio-fuel crops that are also suitable for marginal soils and water.

Mr. Chairman,

With agriculture as the largest consumer of global water, efficient water management takes priority. Irrigation technologies, soil conservation practices, and the adoption of more friendly production systems are just some of the methods Israel employs towards water sustainability.

Currently, Israel's water consumption for agriculture is based 50% on the use of treated wastewater and other marginal water resources. At the same time, water efficiency per unit of water has increased.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel believes that education and capacity building are vital in ensuring long-term development results. For example, the culture of water conservation must become a "way of life" to us all.

With reference to dry land productivity and desertification, Israel has taken a number of countermeasures in addressing this global problem. Israel is deeply involved in the United Nations "convention on desertification" (UNCCD) and proposes to look into areas of synergies between the three Rio Conventions.

Mr. Chairman,

This year, Israel's international cooperation program marks the fiftieth anniversary of an active and diversified bilateral and multilateral international technical cooperation program, which includes human capacity building, and transfer of know-how and appropriate technologies. Israel reaffirms its interest in joining hands with the international community, and is committed to sharing its own experiences and lessons learned with developing countries.

Being in the Middle East, we focus on our immediate neighboring countries, including our Palestinian neighbors. We support Africa and the Green Revolution in Africa, as well as the Small Island Developing States, and the countries of the Pacific Islands.

In this context, Israel initiated a Resolution in the General Assembly on "Agricultural Technology for Development," calling on governments to make their knowledge and know-how in the field of agricultural technologies more accessible.

Mr. Chairman,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished delegates,

The State of Israel now celebrates 60 years of Independence. It has "carved on its flag" the commitment to share its know how, knowledge, and experience with partners facing similar development constraints and challenges.

It is no coincidence that the Hebrew word for charity – צדקה – is the same word for justice. Caring and giving is our obligation and duty. Through it, we promote justice and equality - the very goals of development. This is Israel's core approach to development and international cooperation.

On behalf of the state of Israel and my delegation, I wish to affirm our commitment to joining the international community in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and working through partnership and solidarity to further enhance global development efforts.

Thank You, Mr. Chairman.