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Check Against Delivery

Statement by
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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your wise stewardship of our work during the course of the last week. I also wish to thank yesterday's and today's panellists for their informative statements. In this light, allow me to share some brief remarks in line with those presentations.

The severe challenges facing Africa today are well known to us all. Hence, and in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals, Israel has refocused its development cooperation. MASHAV – the Centre for International Cooperation – Israel's development arm, takes an integrated and sustainable approach, focusing on food security, water safety and sanitation, healthcare, economic growth, community building, the empowerment of women and education. These programmes are based on a “train-the-trainers approach” to institutional and human capacity building, as well as strengthening extension services, and increasing partnership between government, private sector, civil society and NGOs, and academia.

With regard to agriculture, Israel has pioneered a technical support programme for small holders and commercial farmers, cooperative members, and water user groups, as well as dairy herd improvement, small scale irrigation and water management, horticulture crop production, soil conservation, and biotechnology, in several African communities. TIPA, one particular programme, is a small-scale horticultural production package based on low pressure drip irrigation, a mix

of annual and tree crops, and an operating system which allows the farmer to irrigate according to scientific principles. The programme embodies the nexus of development principles, efficiency-profitability-environmental friendliness, mentioned yesterday in the panels.

With regard to health prevention, Israel has introduced a national concept known as “Tipat Chalav”, literally “a drop of milk”, in the Millennium Village in Kumasi, based on simple public health, family orientation, and clinics on the community level that has proven success in strengthening preventative care. Similarly, empowering resident doctors with additional skill, training, and technology, where relevant, can help them provide better healthcare. Simple solutions are often the most effective ones.

Concerning climate change, throughout the years, severe water shortage and drought in Israel has impressed upon us the need to address the effects of desertification, which also have severe implications for Africa, particularly in terms of its adverse impact on poverty and hunger. This past December, Israel, in cooperation with DESA and UNCCD, hosted a week-long workshop for policy-makers on desertification and land management. The program was found very effective and we are planning to move forward with it. These activities are part of Israel’s contribution towards addressing the threats posed by climate change – a challenge that unites us all.

MASHAV's priorities emphasize working together with UN organizations, aid agencies, civil society and the private sector to further national capacities. As no one country or aid organization can single-handedly tackle the causes leading to extreme poverty, the donor community must coordinate efforts and combine resources. Israel is in the process of establishing a partnership with UNDP on a development programme in Africa, to advance the achievement of the MDG's and bettering our world.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, Israel's development work in Africa is guided by the same moral commitment undertaken by Foreign Minister Golda Meir during her first visit to Africa fifty years ago, in 1958. Since then, Israeli development experts have come from all facets of society—farmers, nurses, doctors, educators, social workers, technicians, as well as university professors—all dedicated to working towards finding solutions to the development challenges facing Africa.

I would like to conclude with an open invitation to all of you to join us on Monday, May 12th at 18:15, in Conference Room 2, to a side event we are hosting together with IFAD, the WWC, ICID, FAO and Winrock International titled “The Role of Water in Addressing the Challenges of Poverty Alleviation and Food Security.”

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.