

HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by

Mrs. Galit COHEN

Deputy Director General, Ministry of Environmental Protection

Review of SDG implementation

SDG 15- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests and combat desertification

United Nations

13 July 2018

Mr. President,

Providing the highest value to life on land makes the interactions between the different ecosystems and society not only *possible*, but also *necessary*. The protection of life on land and biodiversity is a priority in our national agenda.

From the planting and maintenance of forests, to the rehabilitation of aquatic habitats and river restoration, Israel's Ministry of Environmental Protection works with the Nature and Parks Authority, and other government bodies and NGOs to promote regulations and projects for the protection of Israel's ecosystem.

Every year, new areas of nature reserves, parks and forests are declared 'protected areas', in which the sites are preserved in a sustainable way, allowing biodiversity to thrive as invasive alien species are treated and eradicated. These 'protected areas' now comprise 30% of the country.

Israel works to face the challenges to ecosystem services presented by industrialization, population growth and housing development. One field in which Israel has been particularly engaged is the integration of ecosystem protection within our national housing plan. The Ministry of Environmental Protection developed the "Healthy Environment Plan", which implements services that conserve ecosystems and their biodiversity in the planning of housing and related infrastructure until 2040. In addition, our achievements are notable in preventing desertification and monitoring freshwater habitats.

Israel works on all fronts to transform the 2030 Agenda from wishful words to real results. These efforts are possible thanks to a holistic and multifaceted approach in regards to all of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Israel is committed to providing and communicating the value of ecosystems to all stakeholders, including public and private sector and civil society. By protecting our ecosystems, we protect both our environment and our society.

Thank you.