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Check Against Delivery

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Statement by

**H.E. Ms. Gila Gamliel**

**Minister of Environmental Protection**

**Israel**

17 July 2020

Madam President,

The SDGs are a major accomplishment of the multilateral system. The Goals reflect the aspirations and priorities of Member States, and draw on the collective knowledge of civil society, the business sector and academia.

Now, just as we enter the Decade of Action for SDG implementation, the world has been gripped by a health crisis not seen for a century, challenging the progress already made. Many countries are in crisis mode; some are even retreating inward. This would be a mistake.

COVID-19 is another reminder of the need for international cooperation. The same, if not greater, cooperation is also needed in the face

of two other previous and ongoing global disasters: climate change and biodiversity loss

As Israel's Minister of the Environment, I am committed to maintaining this momentum.

The scale of world-wide investments in recovery was unimaginable just six months ago. Especially now – when we are drafting our recovery and stimulus packages, we must remember that **transformative changes** in climate and biodiversity loss policies bring greater economic, social and environmental benefits in the long term. These investments should prioritize jobs in the renewable energy sector, green building and waste reduction, while infrastructure projects should include public transportation, e-mobility, and carbon-capture facilities. Support to industry and

business should be linked to GHG reductions. And building and construction projects can be designed to use materials efficiently and to protect and restore open spaces and ecosystems.

One such example is my recent decision to work towards closing polluting industries in the city of Haifa so as to reduce risk, improve health and encourage urban development including more accessible and community-based urban nature sites. These provide health and social benefits as well as refuge areas for threatened and endangered species.

We have been closely following the EU's impressive Green Deal, and have put forward our own plan to recover from COVID 19.

This is a first step on the road to an **Israeli Green Deal**.

Madam President,

While Israel is confronting the COVID-19 crisis at home, we continue to look outward. Over 70 Israeli companies have joined the global effort to combat COVID-19. Our global vision also extends to environmental issues. In this regard, I would like to mention "Desertech", a center in southern Israel that is focused on the development of desert-related technologies, and is building on Israel's strengths in the field of water technologies, resource-efficient agriculture and climate adapted building.

Madam President,

The policy steps we take now will shape societies for years to come and our planet - forever.

Thank you.