

**Statement of MK Gilad Erdan
Israel's Minister of Environmental Protection
High-Level Segment of the 19th Session of the
Commission on Sustainable Development
Multi-stakeholder dialogue
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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Allow me to commend you for your successful stewardship of this session.

I also wish to express my appreciation to Undersecretary General Sha for his statement — and thank the rest of today's distinguished speakers for their insights.

I am honored to address this Commission as we affirm the pressing need to strengthen the environmental pillar of sustainable development.

We once believed that the earth's resources were endless, and that its capacity to absorb waste and pollution was infinite. Today, we know that this is not the case.

We have gathered here with a view to promoting more sustainable consumption and production patterns, as well as more sustainable waste, transport, chemicals and mining management.

How can we achieve these goals? The harsh reality of declining resources should guide our response. Simply put, we must do more with less.

Mr. Chair,

Our vision for a sustainable future must be firmly based in developing a green economy — based on dematerialization, eco-efficiency, and eco-innovation.

Using waste as a resource and reducing the environmental impact of the consumption and production of goods and services can help to achieve the objective of a triple bottom line.

We can improve our economies by encouraging innovative eco-technologies and eco-industries; improve our quality of life by reducing pollutants and promoting human welfare; and improve our environment by respecting the earth's natural carrying capacity.

As governments, it is our responsibility to decouple the destructive link between economic growth and environmental degradation using regulation, enforcement, planning, economic instruments and education. At the same time, we must catalyze greater demand for

environmentally friendly and resource-efficient products, safer chemicals, and better transportation.

I concur with the views expressed by Professor Stiglitz in his recent article, which promoted the perspective that the social unrest we are witnessing around the world will eventually reach more developed economies as well. This will occur because of the deepening gaps between wealthy and impoverished populations. Therefore, we must reevaluate the current indicators of growth and offer alternatives to GDP. Such indicators go beyond GDP to measure the true effect of economic growth, including the environmental and social impacts of our activities. This will ensure that we progress on a path toward sustainable development, providing particular support to those populations that are most vulnerable.

In Israel, the scarcity of water, land and other natural resources has served as an impetus to develop cutting-edge technologies in a wide variety of fields, including water management, seawater desalination, desert agriculture, and solar energy. Israelis are well acquainted with the challenge of doing more with less – and my Country remains ready and willing to share the expertise that we have accumulated.

Israel is now using this knowledge to move forward a number of initiatives, including a comprehensive waste management program, a green building initiative, green procurement programs, and a government-led publicity campaign to facilitate changes in consumption patterns.

Mr. Chair,

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend an invitation to all delegations to a high-level working breakfast that Israel will be hosting on the last day of the Commission, May 13th. This breakfast will provide an opportunity for exchanging views and best practices on using mass media to promote more sustainable consumption patterns.

Mr. Chair,

These are challenging times for us all. Yet, in the midst of the crises facing us, there is hope that governments, civil society, and the private sector will join together in ushering in a green economic revolution. We cannot afford to miss this unique opportunity. Our common future depends on it.

Mr. Chair,

Finally, as Israel's Minister of Environmental Protection, I came to New York to speak on behalf of my country – a member of this Commission – only on the issues of sustainable development.

However, I cannot stay silent as representatives of the Arab Group use this professional forum to launch false accusations against my Country for their own cynical political purposes.

First, let me state clearly that Jews have been living in Jerusalem continuously for thousands of years.

Second, any dispute about territory in Jerusalem or anywhere else between us and the Palestinians can only be resolved through direct negotiations.

However, the Palestinians refuse to negotiate with us and instead continue to seek unilateral initiatives in international fora.

Finally, recent events in Middle Eastern countries – driven by economic conditions – again reveal that Israel is an island of stability, human rights, and economic opportunity for all its citizens, Arabs and Jews alike.

Thank you.