

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Check Against Delivery

Statement by

“Agriculture”

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Mr. Chairman,

Water scarcity is one of the main limiting factors in Israeli agriculture. The country depends on irrigation in order to increase its agricultural production. About 50 percent of the land is irrigated. 1,129 million cubic meters (MCM) of water are used by agriculture per year (which constitutes about 50 percent of the total water use), composed of about 30 percent treated wastewater (TWW), mainly for drip irrigation of orchards and non-edible crops. Another 16 percent is saline water.

Similar constraints are common around the world. Agriculture is by far the biggest consumer of global water supplies (70 percent) and proper irrigation is crucial to the world's food production. The efficient use and improvement of irrigation and fertilization systems and management are a prerequisite for increasing sustainable crop production.

TWW reclamation is a way to provide a renewable water source, "new water", which has different characteristics than potable water, such as plant nutrients, organics compounds and others that can change fertilizer use by providing an important source of production growth.

The CSD-13 emphasized the need for increased investments in water and sanitation recognizing that provision of sustained water and sanitation services can contribute to sustainable development including economic growth, improved health, and reduced poverty. TWW reclamation systems could be a solution for big metropolitan areas with intensive wastewater treatment plants, and big farms with advanced irrigation systems, as well as for family farms with extensive wastewater treatment plants and simple irrigation systems.

Synergy could be achieved between potable water supply, sanitation and TWW reclamation.

Investment in TWW reclamation in agriculture means investment in health, sanitation and environment, obtaining a "new" water source and resulting in a win-win situation.

However, since we deal here with a "new" water source, in order to use it successfully and in a sustainable manner, the circle of investment in research, technology, capacity building, extension and monitoring is needed. Therefore, we suggest incorporating in the report a recommendation on the development of wastewater treatment systems, reclamation systems and efficient irrigation systems that will include capacity building, research and extension in order to combat drought and poverty through improving agriculture production.

Israel has extensive knowledge in these subjects and a willingness to share its information and technology on these subjects.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.