

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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**Statement by**  
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“Report on Intersessional Events Organized by Israel”

During the 16th Session of the Commission on Sustainable  
Development

United Nations, New York  
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am pleased to report on two inter-sessional events organized by Israel in contribution to the 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

The first was an international conference on Water Technologies & Environmental Control, known as WATEC, organized in October 2007. The Israeli government attached great importance to this event. Three cabinet Ministers addressed the opening of WATEC, and a large number of ministers from both developed and developing countries, as well as CEOs of global water and environmental services companies, spoke at WATEC.

In addition, the event attracted leading scientists and researchers from across the globe, many who are at the frontline of pioneering water treatment, purification and supply technologies that have the potential to benefit millions of people in water-stressed countries. Many of these water technology pioneers are dedicating themselves to developing water efficiency technologies and water technologies in agriculture in order to help launch a new green revolution in Africa. Representatives of the venture capital funds also participated in WATEC, creating opportunities for public-private partnerships.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel organized WATEC out an awareness that today over 2 billion people around the world either lack access to sufficient quantities of water, or are supplied with water unfit for drinking. This shortage will exacerbate in the near future due to the rise of world's population and to the changing precipitation and water flows among the world's regions as a result of climate change.

To effectively meet the water supply challenge, the public and private sectors need to work together in partnership, in jointly developing new water supply technologies and in investing in water infrastructure. Speakers at WATEC highlighted this and other key points in their presentations from different perspectives, drawing on their specific local, national, regional and global experiences. They further showcased the successes of their international collaborative efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

In this regard, I am particularly pleased to report that the Center for International Cooperation of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MASHAV) convened a special session at WATEC addressing the sustainability challenges from both OECD and developing countries perspectives. Participants from Asia, Africa and Latin America exchanged views on water-related global challenges and shared their thoughts on the way forward. We are pleased that the CSD Secretariat made a presentation on mobilizing common resources to meet water challenges through sustainable development partnerships.

Israeli experts will have further opportunities to share the outcomes of WATEC, as well as our water expertise, during the review of CSD water and sanitation decisions in the coming week.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me briefly report on another event Israel organized in support of the thematic discussions of CSD-16.

An international capacity building workshop entitled “Combating Desertification and Promoting Sustainable Development in Dry Land Areas” was held in Israel in December 2007, in partnership with the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). This workshop was designed as a follow-up program to Israel's side event at the eighth session of the UNCCD Conference of Parties (Madrid, September 2007) and to pave the way for further cooperation between countries in light of the International Beijing Conference on Combating Desertification (January 2008).

The workshop was designed to collaborate with countries in support of their national goals in addressing the challenges of desertification, and to share experiences, know-how and technologies to manage those processes that prevent the impact of desertification, while focusing on sustainable development of dry lands.

The countries represented identified possible actions and different solutions including establishing desertification monitoring mechanisms, the use of technologies such as "GIS" and “remote sensing”, technologies for efficient water use; watershed management; afforestation; and capacity building to strengthen policy and the management of natural resources.

I also wish to note that this unique workshop brought together for the first time all the professional and academic institutes in Israel dealing with desertification.

Mr. Chairman,

Participants at the workshop highlighted one key point that could help guide our discussions at CSD this week – that is, no one country can fight the onslaught of desertification, alone. We must work together to find adequate and adaptable solutions. Israel is ready to work with our partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and with organizations in the UN system. Israel is fully committed to the global efforts to combat desertification in accordance with the goals of the UNCCD.

Thank you.