

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Check Against Delivery

Statement by
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Israel

“Land”

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Chairperson, Distinguished delegates and participants,

The issue of efficient use of limited land resources is a crucial issue for small countries. Population growth, rising income levels, increased floor-space per person, and rapidly rising car ownership rates are imposing severe pressure on urban and rural development, particularly in the central area and along the coastal strip of Israel.

A main theme of Israel's land use planning policy is to concentrate residential development in urban areas, built at a high density that can enable efficient operation of public transport. Recent trends of public preference for low density development in rural areas, which depend on private car use, are regarded as unsustainable. Planning authorities give preference to urban development which is adjacent to existing urban areas and which can benefit from existing infrastructure and public services. Urban redevelopment has faced multiple difficulties but has been achieved by the encouragement of small scale private initiatives rather than by major public projects.

Efficient infrastructure is a key issue of land management. Roads and railways, ports and airports, power stations and fuel storage tank farms not only require allocation of space, but they also cause loss of land through fragmentation and through imposing limits on the use of land in the buffer zones around them. Efforts are being made to locate infrastructures along common corridors and expand existing sites and alignments in order to creating new alignments and, where possible, give preference to underground locations.

The protection of ecological systems and the availability of attractive landscapes, green lungs and recreation areas will only be possible if the expected doubling of the built-up area by 2020 will be largely concentrated in urban areas. The crucial issue for land management is therefore the quality of life in the urban environment.

Thank you.