

61<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**Statement by**  
**Ambassador Dan Gillerman**  
**Permanent Representative**

During the informal thematic debate entitled  
“Climate Change as a Global Challenge”

(United Nations, New York, 2 August 2007)

Madame President,

At the outset, allow me to thank you for convening this important thematic debate on “Climate Change as a Global Challenge,” and congratulate you, in particular, on your leadership of this Assembly.

The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports show that climate change is already having economic and social impacts in certain regions, particularly among developing countries, and environmental impacts on most ecosystems. However, the same reports show that the problems can be addressed, economically affordable mitigation solutions do exist, and the coping capacity of communities likely to be affected can be raised. The economic necessity of dealing with climate change cannot be understated, as the costs of inaction far outweigh the costs of prevention.

Madame President,

As a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change since 1996 and to the Kyoto Protocol since 2004, Israel shares the world’s concern with climate change and is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, on a voluntary basis.

According to current estimates, climate change could cause significant impacts in Israel over the coming century. International and local experts see the likelihood of an increase in extreme climatic events, including more intense and longer spells of high summer temperatures, concentrated precipitation patterns causing more frequent flooding and longer dry periods. A rise in sea level, coupled with more frequent storm events, will cause more intense coastal erosion. The resulting effects will have a significant impact on water supply and agriculture. They are also likely to generate higher demands for electricity supply for climate control in buildings.

The very scarcity of natural resources has catalyzed Israel in the past to seek and to implement cutting edge technologies in such fields as water conservation, water treatment, recycling and reuse, seawater desalination, desert agriculture, desertification, and afforestation. Nowadays, Israel is widely recognized as a leading centre of expertise on water conservation and re-use of treated effluents in agriculture. It now intends to widen its activities in 'clean-tech', expanding its role in renewable energy and energy efficiency and conservation.

Private investment funds and government support are now focusing on promoting technological solutions, important not only for the local market but also to bring benefit to other countries and areas around the world. In Israel, partnerships are emerging between government, private businesses, and academia to prepare the agriculture sector for improving adaptability and sustainable development. Later this year, Israel will host an international exhibition on water and environmental technologies called WATEC 2007, which will bring together all stakeholders to discuss emerging technologies and strategies.

Madame President,

Israel was a pioneer and remains a leader in the use of solar collectors for domestic water heating. Domestic regulations require all new buildings to be equipped with solar collectors for water heating. Israel has one of the highest rates of domestic solar water heating worldwide, used in about 75 percent of households. Israeli companies are also leaders in solar and geothermal energy production technologies worldwide. The Israel Standards Institute together with the Ministry of Environmental Protection has issued a Standard for Green Building which is now being adopted by private and public developers and intends to make some of its requirements mandatory for all new buildings. Climate control, heating and lighting in buildings and built up areas, is a crucial on the international agenda and may be highly cost effective and relevant to all countries.

Additionally, major investments are now being made in Israel to improve public transport facilities, which hopefully will enable improved accessibility together with lower increases in energy demands for private car usage. Sustainable transportation is a central issue to sustainable cities, not only for reducing greenhouse gas emissions but also for creating a healthier urban environment.

Israel is an active member of the international community on issues of sustainable development, and we believe that joint efforts are the right way forward. In the spirit of cooperation we want to promote partnerships within the United Nations system and other international bodies using the knowledge that has been accumulated on issues of water, agriculture, land management and afforestation to work together with those that share similar challenges. Israel recently signed a memorandum of understanding with UNEP, and looks forward to seeing other significant partnerships materialize.

Israel stands ready to share its expertise and experience with its neighbors in order to assure a better, safer, and cleaner region for all our children and grandchildren.

Madame President,

Israel looks forward to the high-level event in New York hosted by the Secretary-General next month and the upcoming meeting of UNFCCC in Bali, Indonesia at the end of the year. The opportunity to exchange views and harness political will of all countries and stakeholders in a multilateral process, remains the best way to collectively build the next steps in the global response to climate change.

Thank You, Madame President.