

ISRAEL

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Check Against Delivery

Statement by
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Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.

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Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to thank you for your wise and able stewardship of our work during this session of the Economic and Social Council.

Israel congratulates and welcomes the first biennial Development Cooperation Forum, as well as the second Annual Ministerial Review. The DCF and AMR are important and constructive new components of ECOSOC, and have become valuable forums for dialoging on development. As such, my delegation continues to fully support the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 (2006), which sought to enhance and strengthen the work of the ECOSOC.

The international community faces many pressing challenges in the realm of economic and social development, including the global food crisis, a volatile global economy, and rising oil prices. At the same time, climate change, deforestation, desertification, and environmental degradation continue to intensify at a faster rate than the global efforts to stem them. These threats to sustainable development demand the highest level of determination and cooperation. Hence, strengthening the mandate of the Economic and Social Council was not only timely, but also a crucial aspect of fulfilling our work.

Mr. President,

ECOSOC must demonstrate its commitment to holistically address the global food crisis. The special meeting convened on the issue, participation in the recent summit in Rome, and the task force established by the Secretary-General, are indeed positive steps forward. Yet maintaining an output that meets the global demand remains a challenge. Hence, my delegation suggests an increased focus on agriculture and the development of technology and know-how for the benefit of developed and developing countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa.

In this context, I wish to briefly reference the adoption of the resolution on "Agricultural Technology for Development" during this session of the General Assembly, which calls on Member States to develop and share agricultural technology and local know-how with developing countries. This resolution is also a footstep towards addressing the global food crisis and climate change, which, we must acknowledge, presents challenges and opportunities. Similarly, during the recent session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, where Israel served as a vice-chair, my delegation sought to highlight the importance of and linkage between agriculture and technology towards achieving the MDG's.

As evidenced from this debate, rural development has also emerged as a vital area of focus, as it can both feed the hungry and provide for the impoverished. However, as noted, trends in agricultural production are troubling. Though progress has been achieved in yield productivity, many countries lack the necessary resources and infrastructure to put these initiatives into practice. Moreover, the availability of arable land continues to

dwindle. As a result of global warming, the world's agricultural gross domestic product is estimated to decrease 16 percent by 2020.

Although my statement focuses on rural development and agriculture – in line with recent challenges and the theme of the thematic discussion – Israel believes that we cannot ignore the broader context of development. Recognizing that these issues are linked and mutually reinforcing – just as the MDG's are interlinked – Israel's Centre for International Cooperation, MASHAV, conducts programs in various fields, including education, health, and gender issues.

Recently, Israel hosted a special meeting on the Green Revolution in Africa, which also marked the signing of an MoU between UNDP Africa and MASHAV in the field of agriculture, with a focus on Africa. A thriving technology sector and vast R&D infrastructure has positioned Israel as a lucrative and substantial partner. Israeli innovation, experience, and know-how are already being used in Africa and many other regions, and can help stimulate significant gains and contribute to the global efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Mr. President,

We, Member States, conduct meetings, forge agreements, and establish protocols on sustainable development. It is time, however, to concentrate our focus upon implementation. Though economic growth and social development are on the upswing, a heavy scale-up is needed to bring many areas in the development agenda in line with and on pace to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, especially in light of the challenges just mentioned. This is our collective responsibility – developed and developing countries alike.

In the past two days, the DCF has touched on many important issues, among them financing for development, aid effectiveness, national ownership, commitments, accountability, governance, efficiency, and others. These issues are complicated, and at times arguments can be fervent and positions polarized. Israel believes that the only way to deal with these issues effectively is through partnership. We must share trust, work together, and involve all stakeholders.

For its part, Israel pledges to continue to do its own share in promoting sustainable development, and looks forward to strengthening existing collaboration and creating new partnerships with the international community.

Thank you, Mr. President.