

**STATEMENT BY ISRAEL**

MADE 16 JUNE 2004

**AT THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE  
ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Eleventh Session**

**São Paulo, Brazil  
13-18 June 2004**

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**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
AMBASSADOR ISAAC LEVANON,  
HEAD OF THE ISRAELI DELEGATION**

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Mr. Secretary-General, Honorable Ministers, Heads of Delegation, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to take part in UNCTAD's eleventh quadrennial conference. As member of the Trade and Development Board, Israel has long been an active participant in this important organization and has much to offer in the field of technical assistance and technology transfer, especially considering its own development history.

As a small country with limited natural resources, Israel could easily be described as a developing nation at the onset of statehood as we were only able to supply part of the food required by a growing population. Striving for self-sufficiency, we adhered to the sayings of our forefathers - "He who tills the land shall be satisfied with bread." (PROVERBS 12:11)

But, we weren't satisfied with bread alone, or oranges for that matter, which for decades was the mainstay of our exports and foreign trade.

Thanks to a skilled workforce and creative ingenuity to adapt to our adverse conditions, we have developed a vibrant economy and within a short period of time made the transition from a largely collective economic system based mainly on agricultural products to a liberalized marketplace trading a wide variety of manufactured goods and services.

Today, Israel is recognized as a technologically advanced economy and enjoys a reputation as a world leader in the fields of medical equipment, telecommunication systems, computer software, as well as solar energy, optics, and bio- and agro-technological products.

This quantum leap in economic progress is the reverberation of clear policies of government support and encouragement of industrial research and development followed by a framework of support for marketing these hi-tech products.

Throughout our transformation from an economy based on citrus to one based on microchips, we have never lost sight of what has contributed most to our success - investment in human resources and capacity building.

Our belief is that capacity-building activities are the preferable way to achieve maximum impact in development. Education leads to empowerment - the surest guarantee of sustainable growth.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the current political situation, Israel remains committed to capacity building and developing partnerships in the region and elsewhere, and to continue to search for common ground through technical and development cooperation.

As participating creditors in the World Bank and IMF's Heavily Indebt Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, we seek to find ways to reduce the debt of some of the world's least developed countries. We have also contributed to the last three replenishments of the International Development Association (IDA), lending our hand in efforts to assist States in the critical fields of public health, HIV control and education.

But our greatest strength lies in directly sharing with the world the know-how and technologies, which provided for the basis of Israel's own rapid development.

As UNCTAD celebrates its fortieth anniversary, we in Israel are also celebrating four decades of commitment to working with developing countries in achieving economic growth.

Through Israel's Center for International Cooperation - MASHAV, as the Center is more commonly known by its Hebrew acronym - we have trained thousands of professionals from all over the world, particularly from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in a variety of disciplines, including agriculture, education, economic and social development, rural and urban development, medicine and public health, and science and technology.

In fact, I would not be surprised if some in this room have at one point in their careers participated in one of the many diverse technical courses we offer each year, both in Israel and abroad.

The skills learned in the classroom and in the field have proven to last a lifetime as graduates quickly apply newly learned knowledge in their

**respective fields and in their respective countries. Many have gone on to serve in key positions within their governments and local organizations, enabling them to further disseminate the skills they gained from this unique experience.**

**We have helped to develop irrigation and fanning projects in Africa and Asia. Built emergency and trauma centers in the Maghreb and South America. And set up on-the-site eye camps for blindness prevention and treatment in Africa and Oceania.**

**Just think of the potential individuals can contribute to their communities after operations are performed on many who did not believe they would ever see again.**

**Through a concerted international effort we can reach millions of people who have been excluded from the development process, helping them become part of the economic, political and cultural life of their own societies**

**For more than forty years, we have consistently put Israel's own creative solutions at the disposal of the developing world so that together we can help alleviate poverty, secure food, and further prosperity.**

**The formalization of these priorities in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has only caused us to redouble our longstanding efforts to put Israeli solutions at the service of the developing world in order to further these aims.**

**UNCTAD is the appropriate forum to reiterate Israel's readiness to share the expertise we have accumulated. Geographical borders should not stop us from extending our hand in partnership wherever Israel's experience is relevant.**

**Thank you.**