



## State of Israel

### ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

IPM CSD -17

Drought and Desertification

The delegation of the State of Israel

"The Way Forward"

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Madame Chair,

Regarding the critical, interrelated, and thematic issues of drought and desertification, Israel's approach is a practical one based on the country's own accumulated experience managing limited natural resources, particularly in arid and semi-arid conditions.

The State of Israel has worked on the issues of sustainable land management, as well as initiated public policies designed to restore, develop, and manage its dry lands. Some 240 million trees have been planted, almost all in semi-arid and dry sub-humid regions. Agriculture has been successfully introduced into arid areas that had previously been deemed unfit for cultivation. Regulations were introduced to control grazing and ensure effective water management. Agricultural development has been based upon innovative and creative ways of "living with the desert." In essence, Israel has turned the natural disadvantages associated with heat and water scarcity into an advantage.

With the vast majority of the country defined as dry lands, it was essential that new approaches be explored for utilizing the soil in order to support a robust economy and a growing population. An ambitious research and development program combined with an effective extension network have produced many breakthroughs.

Technology has played a key role in expanding the economy in the dry land regions, such as the invention of drip irrigation systems, the recycling and treatment of waste and marginal water for production, and open space land development.

Other initiatives have included the development of salt and drought resistant plants and the establishment of alternative livelihoods ranging from fish and algae farming to desert ecotourism.

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Economic development is balanced against conservation of the unique and fragile desert ecosystems. These innovations will increasingly be called upon to address the growing challenges associated with adapting to the threat of global warming and the anticipated impacts of climate change.

Madame Chair,

In this context, Israel wishes to propose that SCD-17 will address policy and adopt practical action-oriented measures, including:

- To encourage and support networking and sharing of best practices research and technologies among countries, regional institutions and relevant stakeholders involved in desertification and drought related issues.
  - To design new initiatives to support national strategies and cross-cutting issues on combating desertification and dry land development.
  - Field demonstration and project development activities on the country and regional levels to introduce efficient irrigation, crop diversification, improved production practices, and market-driven production designed for semi-arid and drought conditions, including projects conducted in partnership with international development agencies focused on the Middle East and Africa.
  - Improving rain-fed agricultural practices aimed at increasing agricultural production in semi-arid regions by introducing water harvesting, small micro-irrigation technologies combined with crop diversification, improved production practices, and human capacity building.
  - Activities to combat climate change that combine methodological assessments with applied irrigation and production practices, including programs aimed at field-level application for improved water utilization and production practices.
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Madame Chair,

In this context, Israel is committed to sharing its scientific know-how, technology, and technical capacity-building programs with partner governments, international development agencies, research institutions, civil society, and the private sector. In particular, Israel wishes to share this wealth of knowledge with countries facing similar arid and semi-arid climates and environmental conditions.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

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