

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

**Statement by
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During the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting
15th Commission on Sustainable Development

Agenda Item 2a: Policy options and possible actions to
expedite implementation
Energy for Sustainable Development (E/CN.17/2007/2)

(United Nations, New York, 27 February 2007)

Check Against Delivery

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We welcome the report of the Secretary General of the UN on "Policy options and possible actions to expedite implementation: Energy for Sustainable Development", included in document E/CN.17/2007/2.

A few remarks concerning this report:

In regard to small-scale suppliers of energy services (No.11), a successful example is a large PV project, started in 2005, aimed at electrifying a Bedouin village in the Negev desert. The village of Drijat, home to about hundred families, is 6 km from the nearest grid. Electricity was supplied by old and inefficient diesel generators, which only worked a few hours a day. In the first phase of the project, stand-alone PV systems were provided to 20 homes, 6 lighting poles, a school and a mosque. The home systems provide about 1000 watts of peak power each, with batteries storing 14 kilowatts (enough for 2-3 days of consumption). The total cost of the first phase was 300,000 USD.

To assist in overcoming energy shortages (No.14, 21), let us note that many countries possess significant resources of oil shale. The potential is enormous. The reserves of oil shale in the world are estimated to be about 10^{13} tons, containing more than 1.6 trillion barrels of oil. Due to the size of the occurrences, even "small" deposits can be huge in relation to the energy needs of the country concerned.

In Israel, extensive research, development and demonstration work on oil shale utilization was carried

out between 1982 and 2000. A techno-economical evaluation completed in 2000 showed that a barrel of synthetic oil from Israeli oil shale (which is particularly lean) would cost about 27 USD. Because of very low oil prices then, the project was terminated.

With increasing numbers of countries experiencing declines in conventional oil production, and in view of the recent strong increase in oil prices, shale oil production, in an environmentally acceptable manner, should be seriously considered.

There is no doubt that international support can and should play an important role in promoting access to energy by assisting developing countries (No.16).

A positive example of this is the Euro-Mediterranean Energy Partnership for the years 2007-2012, under the auspices of the European Union. The aim of this initiative is a genuine Euro-Mediterranean energy policy based on sustainable development (i.e., the equally balanced objectives of security of supply, competitiveness and transparency of markets) and on protection of the environment.

Israel believes that international technical assistance is very important to assess and advise on opportunities to improve energy efficiency in all sectors (No.17).

Four times in the last twelve years, Israel has hosted an international energy course on Management of Energy Utilization and Conservation, aimed at developing countries. The course was directed toward engineers, scientists and other professionals in government services (central and local), research institutes and private

organizations. It was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Centre for International Cooperation – MASHAV) and the Ministry of National Infrastructures. We are willing to continue this initiative.

We also think that switching fuel from coal to natural gas could result in both improved energy efficiency and climate change benefits (No.20). A switch from heavy fuel oil to natural gas for electricity production is presently underway in Israel. In the last two years, natural gas consumption for the generation of electricity increased from 0 to 18 per cent. A law mandating an extensive reform of the electricity economy has been approved by the Knesset (Israel's Parliament).

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, Israel agrees with the policy options and possible actions that are listed in Chapter V of the above mentioned report (No.47). In the area of energy for sustainable development, international cooperation is essential.

We encourage the promotion/implementation/expedition of practical initiatives with measurable deliverables.