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Statement by
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Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you for convening this session during this crucial period. 2015 is a critical year for the future of sustainable development. In the coming weeks we will finalize a universal agenda that will shape the future of the world for the next 15 years.

We in Israel believe that this agenda cannot be successful without full gender equality and the participation of half of the world's population. It is time to put gender divides behind us and move ahead toward a world where all people are truly equal.

Next week, leaders from all around the world will meet in Addis Ababa to agree on an action program for financing the new development agenda.

In September, we will all celebrate the adoption of historic and transformative commitments, aimed to create hope and opportunity for those living today, and to ensure a better future for our children- a future in which no one is left behind.

Mr. President,

President Dwight Eisenhower declared that, "The world must learn to work together, or...it will not work at all."

We are all here today to roll up our sleeves, and work together to make the planet we leave to our children more sustainable, prosperous and peaceful.

While we all share the vision of a sustainable world, we also share the challenge of making this vision a reality. In order to forge new paths towards our common future, we must forge new tools to implement our sustainable development goals and targets, and to measure, monitor, and follow up on our progress in a complex and fast-paced world.

We must know where we are, and how far we have come, in order to know how much further we still need to go. As Lord Kelvin, the distinguished British physicist who invented a new temperature scale once said, "To measure is to know. If you cannot measure it you cannot improve it."

I'm sure you are all familiar with the Israeli navigation app- Waze. It constantly takes in new information to assess your current position, in order to evaluate the best way to reach your destination.

Like Waze, we must have at our disposal the most effective measurement tools to enable us to recalculate our route on the go, so that we can reach our destination- the full implementation of the new development agenda- in the most efficient way.

Where there is a will, there is a waze.

Mr. President,

The Bible tells us, “man does not live by bread alone”. An increase in the *quantity* of goods and services must be matched by an improvement of the *quality* of peoples’ lives. A country’s GDP alone cannot tell us all we need to know about what is important in human life. Areas such as health, education, personal security, employment, housing , and air quality are essential, and must be taken into account for a true representation of social progress, human development, and natural capital.

Since 2012, Israel has done pioneering work with the OECD to launch a pilot program to develop new and innovative ways to measure well-being and sustainability on a national level. By utilizing cutting edge indicators such as land use, life expectancy, the value of mineral stocks, air quality, labor force participation rate, election turnout, and others, the Israeli approach quantifies human and social capital, in addition to economic and natural resources.

Of course, numbers are not ends in themselves. We have to ensure that the data can be converted from theoretical analysis to practical policy. The new Israeli initiative seeks to utilize the data in the most effective way to enable the government to improve the lives of the people. The process we have developed encourages a future oriented view of development to ensure that politicians do not neglect the impact of present policy on future generations.

For this work, the OECD has recognized Israel as a global pioneer in linking sustainable development and well-being to the policy-making process.

Mr. President,

As we are speaking about sustainable development in this forum, let me affirm Israel’s commitment to assist fellow nations and to share its expertise. Ever since its days as a developing country, Israel has reached out to other countries to cooperate with them based on the lessons we have learned.

Beyond training and capacity building, we have developed the ability to act quickly in cases of emergency- even half way around the world. Just recently, Israel sent search and rescue teams to Nepal following the devastating earthquake. Israel set up field hospitals, with top trauma specialists and cutting edge medical technology, treating 1600 patients, saving dozens of lives, and even delivering babies.

Our work in Nepal did not end with the return of the delegation to Israel. We are committed to helping Nepal rebuild its infrastructure, and get back on its feet.

Israel's humanitarian response to the disaster in Nepal was truly disproportionate. Israel is a small country, yet its delegation to Nepal was the second largest delegation on the ground. This demonstrates Israel's commitment to universal values, in the spirit of our people and our country.

As we look forward to the work that is ahead of us, we have to remember that our approach to sustainable development must be people-centered. People should be our starting point, our motivation, and our inspiration to work together to make this world better for all—where not a single person is left behind and where every human being can live with dignity.

Mr. President,

God created the world in seven days. One may say it was not less complicated than negotiations on the new development agenda, which surely took us more than 700 days. However, as our former president Shimon Peres has said, "people who don't fantasize don't do fantastic things".

Israel is a country that does fantastic things, and we will continue to fantasize with you, and work together to make sure that this vision will become a reality.

Thank you.