ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

_____

Check Against Delivery

_____

Statement by

Mr. Michael Zaide, Planning Division, Water Authority of Israel

"Water"

16th Session of the

Commission on Sustainable Development

United Nations, New York

12 May 2008

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

Drought and water shortage have been a part of our region for ages.
One would think that in the 21st century there would no longer be problems of water and sanitation, as we possess the technology to produce and treat water, as well as irrigate efficiently. However, despite the existence of such technology, Israel is still challenged by situations of water shortage and improper sanitation level in some places.

In addressing these challenges, Israel has developed innovative and effective mechanisms to make headway towards sustainable water and sanitation systems.

Please allow me to share with you some observations, based on the Israeli experience, that have improved the prospects for achieving water and sanitation sustainability:

1. Acknowledgement by decision makers that natural water is scarce and there is a need to prioritize it. Hopefully, such acknowledgement will lead to appropriate legislation and allocation of financial resources. Drought should be defined and quantified and, when appropriate, declared by the responsible authorities.
2. Sustainable development needs to be the outcome of national strategic planning for water and sanitation. Each country and each region should prepare its own sustainable national master plan for water and sanitation. The pillars of such a plan should be: defining goals, adopting a sustainable approach, involving stakeholders, and

describing what actions need to be taken. The strategic plan should be followed by an action plan that includes decisions that should be taken, a timetable for implementation, and a budget for development and regulation concepts. Israel is in the process of preparing both such plans.

3. All plans should include monitoring measures and decision support systems embedded within the master plan that will be able to support amendments in the different stages of planning.
4. Raising the readiness for climate change by increasing the standards of water supply reliability and/or by taking into consideration the "uncertainty factor". Israel has incorporated climate change readiness in its water national master plan.
5. Use of advanced technology must take place with intensive capacity building and education.
6. Nature and environment should be defined like any other consumer and as a legitimate sector that gets its own sustainable quota of water, both in terms of quantity and quality. The Israeli WA cooperates with the different representatives of environment concerning the agreed allocation.
7. Reclamation of high quality effluents for agriculture use is essential in places of water shortage. This potential is generally untapped. Agriculture in Israel is heading towards massive reliance on high-quality effluents. By 2010, 50% of agriculture will be based on reused water.
8. Water conservation measures and water-sensitive planning should be adopted. Continuing education and public advocacy will ensure long term results.
9. Regulation should be a major tool for institutions to manage water. Israel has changed tariff mechanisms in the last few years to the

sectors of agriculture and domestic use in order to achieve more efficient use of its natural resources.

10. Water regulation responsibilities should be merged as much as possible under centralized authority or under highly coordinated inter-ministerial governance. The Israeli WA was established in 2007 in order to improve the IWRM.

Adoption of such a holistic approach will help to mitigate the effects of drought and climate change, and achieve sustainability in water and sanitation.

Thank you!