

General statement by  
Ms. Mazal Kenförd

MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation

Thank you, Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to convey our wishes for a very successful meeting of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. President,

Sustainable development can only be achieved if we focus our work on the empowerment of women. The Secretary General's report goes into great detail about this matter. For this and other reasons, women's empowerment should become an ever-present priority.

Israel, like many other countries, continues to examine new ideas as we implement policies designed to facilitate the advancement of women, gender equality, growth and development.

As such, MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, directs its programs and projects to advance these issues and to contribute to the advancement of the MDG's. Allow me to share some of these projects with you.

More than a billion people live in absolute poverty, a disproportionate number of whom are women. Generations of discriminatory practices — including low investment in female education and health, restricted access to services and assets, as well as legal and regulatory barriers — have all marginalized women's position in society and their opportunities to participate in socio-economic development.

Capacity-building in the fields of micro-entrepreneurship and provision of support are seen as major tools in tackling the cycle of poverty. Within the framework of our international cooperation program, Israel conducts training activities towards women's empowerment both in Israel and in the developing world. We are currently in cooperation with UNECE on a project that fosters entrepreneurship for women from Central Asia and the Caucasus regions. Such programs will help create economic opportunities for women, as well as job creation.

In Latin, Central America and the Caribbean, Israel is taking the multiplier effect to new levels through a partnership between MASHAV and YABT (Young Americas Business Trust) in the Organization of American States. The project, named "Business Link," has led to over 20,000 beneficiaries to date from 29 countries in the region, including indigenous women.

Israel recognizes that sustained growth and progress will only be achieved through ensuring quality education for all children. As such, we are currently exploring a partnership with UNESCO in its Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Moreover, in 2011, Israel will hold its biennial Women Leaders' Conference in cooperation with UNESCO, on the topic of Women Education Training Science and Technology. The conference will highlight the necessity of encouraging girls in secondary school to pursue scientific and technological training.

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Along with economic training, education and poverty reduction, another essential element of sustainable development that requires our attention is that of health and its impact on women. The devastation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its disproportionate effect on women is an important example in this regard.

Given this challenge, MASHAV teamed up with UNAIDS to offer international training workshops on "Women, Girls, Gender and AIDS." Such training explores the feminization of HIV/AIDS so that participants learn how to address the specific needs of women and girls. By empowering women in this matter, we also hope to reduce maternal mortality and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Mr. President,

In the Secretary General's Report entitled "Keeping the Promise," we are reminded of the critical need to maintain gender parity when addressing the MDGs. We recognize the urgent necessity to continue actions to promote greater coherence on these issues. In the spirit of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, Israel is committed to addressing these challenges and we look forward to working with all interested partners to achieve sustainable development.

Thank you.