

**Statement made by Mr. Itzhak Ben-David,  
Deputy Director General,  
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development,  
State of Israel**

- Honourable FAO D.G. Jose Graziano Da Silva
- Honourable Chairperson of the Independent Council of  
FAO
- Distinguished Heads of States, Ministers of Agriculture,  
Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the State of Israel, and its Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Uri Ariel, I would like to congratulate Director General José Graziano Da Silva for his re-election and to express our gratitude and appreciation for his valuable achievements during his first term in office.

The State of Israel is a small country, mostly arid or semi-arid, where each drop of water counts and every little piece of fertile land matters. Nevertheless, Israel has experienced since its establishment a remarkable process of agricultural development, against all odds and despite

of adverse natural conditions, resulting in achieving a modern and vibrant agriculture sector. Materializing thus the profound meaning of the proverb "Necessity is the mother of all inventions". The agricultural sector has benefitted from high-level investment in research and development, well-development education systems and high performing extension services.

Basic terms which over the years became quite commonly used, applied, and attributed to Israeli innovativeness - like drip and micro irrigation, fertigation, efficient management of limited natural resources of land and water, world records of milk production per cow especially in arid areas, fresh crops production such as cherry tomatoes, advanced post-harvest technologies – are just few examples of Israel's agricultural sector's achievements.

Israel has been committed over the years to adhere to severe sustainable approaches while shaping and designing its agricultural policies. Ladies and gentlemen, we have been encouraged by FAO to focus during this

General Debate on the issue of "**Breaking the Cycle of Rural Poverty and Hunger by Strengthening Rural Resilience**", through empowerment of two components:

1. Social Protection
2. Sustainable Agricultural Development.

Within this framework I would like to quote the FAO Economist, **Mr. Jacob Scoet**, who referred in October 2014 to the ***State of Food and Agriculture 2014*** and to the ***Family Farming Year 2014***. He informed that about 90% of all farms, some 500 million of them all over the world, are family farms that produce most of the food and occupy most of the arable land worldwide. No doubt on that they are really a key factor for achieving food security, for pursuing rural development and for contributing to poverty alleviation. Therefore, sustainability of agriculture production needs to focus on these principals in order to meet the challenges of the future.

Introducing innovation to this sector is essential. It is about doing things differently and in a better way by applying, on a permanent basis, new practices and technologies as well as by introducing new varieties - and much more. These ongoing processes may have a great impact on the productivity and income of the farmers. Most of the family farms are small and reach only a low level of productivity, so any positive change would significantly affect global production volume. Moreover, higher investments of governments and International Organizations in research and extension services as well as further encouragement of social workers in local communities to combine efforts in a participatory process of development, may make the significant change we are all aspiring to.

The State of Israel for more than 6 decades has been taking an active role, together with the international community, in supporting developing countries worldwide, especially small holder farms, through technical assistance and capacity building in a variety of sectors.

The Israeli Agency for International Cooperation – MASHAV, at the Ministry of Foreign affairs, assisted by several affiliated professional bodies, provides knowledge and knowhow in agricultural production, post-harvest technologies, rural development as well as women's empowerment, rural leadership inter alia. In recent years, we have witnessed a growing contribution to those activities by Israeli agro technology companies under a PPP model of activity.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our world is facing increasing natural and man-made obstacles that might endanger its capacities to provide enough food for future generations! Innovation and sustainability, in our views, are the key elements for responding to all these challenges.

The State of Israel is committed to be at the forefront of the world efforts to overcome these challenges, availing our unique experience and knowhow for the benefit of all.

The State of Israel will continue to join forces with the FAO and the International Community by intensifying the

endeavor to achieve food security, poverty alleviation and hunger eradication.

Thank you