

ISRAEL

66th SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Statement by
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Israel

Item 61: Palestinian People
Second Committee

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Mr. Chairman,

Israel is disappointed that the Second Committee has again wasted its valuable time on an issue with no relevance to its mandate. Rather than focusing attention on matters of global importance, the committee has capitulated to the hostile demands of certain member states whose sole mission is to disparage my country.

Mr. Chairman,

In this regard, the conclusions of this committee are as predictable as they are biased and irreparably flawed. This committee meets every year, and without fail, endorses an inflammatory resolution that bears the sole goal of condemning the State of Israel. Many of the very same Member States that pay lip service to the Palestinians with resolutions like this do absolutely nothing to improve life for the Palestinian people on the ground. It is no surprise then, that the Report produced pursuant to this one-sided resolution, is tainted with the same inherent failings and unsubstantiated allegations.

In contrast, Israel has shown its commitment to advancing the progress of Palestinian society with concrete actions on the ground, devoting significant resources to developing the Palestinian economy and infrastructure.

Mr. Chairman,

I don't intend to refute every misguided charge and allegation recklessly directed at Israel in this committee. This would be easy, but it would not advance any responsible and professional discourse in this committee. Instead, I would like to take this opportunity to address issues of development and progress – the issues that this committee was meant to discuss and advance.

Every member that has used the second committee as a forum to bash Israel has also benefited from Israel's contributions on the ground for the benefit of advancing the cause of sustainable development and cooperation among states.

Deep down, behind closed doors, every one of these member states knows that it prospers from Israel's state-of-the-art innovations and technological know-how, which were developed *specifically* to deal with matters at the heart of this committee's work. Israel's high tech industries and start-ups are responsible for countless technological innovations that are used throughout the developing and developed world. Any objective observer would see clearly that Israel is a country relentlessly devoted to achieving the Second Committee's goals.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel is a small country with a shortage of natural resources.

As a result, we have been compelled over the years to confront problems such as water scarcity and desertification by developing sophisticated agricultural techniques. Making optimal use of scarce water, harsh land and a limited labor force has led to revolutions in agricultural methods.

Israel has made the desert bloom. This is largely the result of research and investment in salt and drought-resistant plant species, animal husbandry for extreme climates, green and hot house technologies and advanced aquaculture.

Israel's agricultural technologies have been widely exported and are renowned around the world.

The country's vast experience in managing limited water resources has resulted in the development of innovative water technologies that have made Israel a world leader in all aspects of the water sector. Israel has developed sophisticated wastewater treatment systems that recycle treated wastewater for reuse in agriculture, reducing the stress on water resources. This expertise is now being exported around the world for the benefit of growing populations with scarce water and food resources. In the fields of afforestation and land reclamation Israel also serves as a model around the world.

Mr. Chairman,

These are the issues that should be the focus of this Committee.

The reality is that Israel shares the vital interests of our neighbors to preserve and protect our natural environment. Our joint interests call for close coordination and cooperation. Today these shared concerns are addressed through a variety of existing mechanisms, such as joint working groups and joint capacity development programs on the environment. Our collaboration focuses on fields such as agriculture and food security, afforestation, desalination, and water management. These efforts would be greatly enhanced if the Palestinian Authority proceeded with the numerous projects that have already been approved in past meetings of these working groups.

Related fields of Israeli-Palestinian cooperation include coordination in the establishment of energy infrastructure and joint agricultural projects promoted by Israel's international development organization, MASHAV. The wide range of existing Israeli-Palestinian cooperation in natural-resource related matters utterly contradicts the impressions conveyed in this debate.

It is a mystery why the supporters of this resolution conveniently ignore the numerous agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority that have already conferred jurisdiction of these issues to the Palestinian side. Today the Palestinian Authority declines to participate in existing programs. It begs the question: if not to better the environment and to use natural resources in a sustainable manner, what is the real motivation behind this resolution? The sponsors of this resolution would prefer to ignore the real issues before us in order to advance their own narrow political agendas. It is clear that this annual exercise of politicization does not improve the lives of Palestinians in any way, or help to create a better understanding or better partnerships between the parties in our region.

Mr. Chairman,

Let us hope that the time wasted on this discriminatory, one-sided resolution will be used in the future to promote issues that are genuinely worthy of the attention of this committee.

Thank you.