Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to warmly congratulate you on your election as the Chairperson of the Second Committee. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau, and assure our whole-hearted support for the fulfillment of your important responsibilities.

The Second Committee has some of the world's most important and pressing issues at the core of its work. We face a complex challenge in this forum: creating hope and opportunity today without compromising the future of the next generations. This requires constant reinforcement of what was universally recognized in Rio—the inseparable link that connects the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

Mr. Chairman,

Our efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals are as important as ever. We must be ambitious and focused on the work we have set out to complete by 2015.

The Special Meeting on accelerating progress towards the MDGs convened by the PGA a few weeks ago gave us the opportunity to exchange views on how we can take the lessons learned from the MDGs, and apply them as we begin to discuss what comes after 2015.

It is clear that our world is very different today than it was 13 years ago. While many of the principles outlined in the Millennium Declaration remain relevant, we have seen profound transformations in our global context. New economic powers have emerged, new technologies are completely changing the way we live and new demographic patterns are heightening pressures on the planet. The private sector, philanthropic foundations, and civil society are increasingly woven into global affairs.

By integrating these new complexities, which present both challenges and opportunities, the post-2015 development agenda will be a major opportunity to mobilize the world around a framework that has the potential to catalyze real action on development priorities.

Mr. Chairman,

As the Secretary General states in his latest report on MDGs: "Sustainable development must become our global guiding principle and operational standard."

Israel strongly believes that a transition to sustainable development does not mean a diminished commitment to ending poverty—poverty eradication must remain our overarching goal. As the Secretary General's High Level Panel urges—we cannot leave anyone behind.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel has demonstrated its commitment to eradicating poverty in the context of sustainable development with concrete actions by MASHAV, our International Agency for Development Cooperation

In a framework of bilateral and triangular partnerships, MASHAV is sharing innovative solutions with countries around the world. It has brought more than a quarter of a million professionals from across the globe to take courses, learn from experts and see sustainable development in action. Our experience has proven that when you provide the right tools and opportunities, the results can be astounding.

Education is fundamental to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In 2008, MASHAV partnered with the Millennium Cities Initiative in Kumasi, Ghana, to develop a system of early childhood education for all public schools in Kumasi and its surrounding areas.
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MASHAV has shared Israel’s drip irrigation technology with communities across West Africa with impressive results. Farmers have been able to transition from subsistence farming to commercial farming. They are producing higher yields of improved quality vegetables and fruits year round, and require less labor for irrigation and weeding. This technology has tripled the income of households, many of them headed by women.

Israel is also closely engaged in reducing child mortality and improving maternal health in Africa. In Ghana, MASHAV established the first two Mother and Baby Units with all the necessary equipment to care for high risk and moderately sick newborns and their mothers.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel has placed women and young people at the core of its development cooperation policies.

Gender inequality remains one of the main obstacles to achieving sustainable development. Sexual and reproductive health is key to reaching our goals in sustainable development.

But promoting women’s health is not enough—we must ensure that their sexual and reproductive rights are fully respected. Women must be empowered to make decisions about how many children they will have and when they will have them. This is more than a goal - it is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development.

In November 2013, Israel’s Mount Carmel Training Centre will host, together with UNDP and UN Women, the 28th International Women Leaders Conference and will focus on ensuring the centrality of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the post-2015 development agenda.

We must also find ways to harness the talent and energy of young people. Youth comprise nearly 30 per cent of the world’s population. Their involvement in the decision-making and implementation processes is critical because it affects their lives today and has implications for their futures. Each nation should seek to empower young people and encourage them to have their voices heard. This is a central focus of Israel’s efforts to promote entrepreneurship at the UN and around the world. In Latin America alone, MASHAV has taught entrepreneurial skills to over 22,000 young people, in cooperation with the Young Americas Business Trust.

Mr. Chairman,

We are aware of the magnitude of the challenges before us. As we look towards 2015 and beyond, we must recognize that the only way to deliver lasting progress for everyone is by working together.

If we are committed, daring, and ambitious then we can ensure the planet we leave for our children will be more secure, more prosperous and more peaceful.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.