Eradication of Poverty and other development issues
Item 23
Statement delivered by
Ambassador Giora Becher
Permanent Mission of Israel to the UN

Thank you, Mr. President.

Jewish Tradition teaches that if all the world's troubles were placed on a scale – with poverty on one side and every other hardship on the other - poverty would outweigh all the rest.

There is a strong consensus across the international community about the critical importance of poverty eradication. The deliberations in this committee should help strengthen this consensus, and provide direction to the vast number of stakeholders engaged in the fight against poverty.

Together, we met the Millennium Development Goal to “halve the proportion of the world population” living in extreme poverty by 2015. And we did it five years early.

Together we have eradicated smallpox and we have made significant progress in combatting HIV/AIDS. Together, we have helped educate millions of young people. Together we’ve provided humanitarian aid to people on every continent following hurricanes, earthquakes, famines, floods, tsunamis, and other disasters.

Working in partnership, we have done what the United Nations was created to do.

But our work is far from over. Across the globe, there are still over 2 billion people living on less than $2 per day. This simply isn't acceptable.

For many millions of people, the same story is played out day in and day. It’s the story of a farmer with a small plot of land. She has no option but to travel many miles to buy seeds or sell her produce. With no other employment options, this farmer can't produce or buy enough food to meet the needs of her family. Decent healthcare and schooling for her children are beyond her means. So the cycle of poverty is passed from generation to generation.

Mr. President,

Israel is committed to breaking the cycle of poverty. Through MASHAV, Israel’s Agency for International Cooperation, we are sharing our solutions with the world.

Every day, 30,000 children die from easily preventable diseases. Not long ago, MASHAV sent an obstetrics and gynecology expert, Dr. Hanna Shapira, along with a medical crew
to Vanuatu in response to high stillbirth and maternal mortality rates facing the small island nation.

Even after the team concluded their mission, Dr. Shapira continued her work roaming between the islands on a light plane and small motor boat armed with a portable, battery-operated ultrasound machine.

Simple technologies like this ultrasound machine offer the opportunity for billions of people to leapfrog into the 21st century.

Consider the farmer I described earlier. Imagine if she had a cell phone to check prices at other markets. She could negotiate a better deal rather than accepting whatever price is offered at the nearest market. She could also check when a drought or flood is coming and know whether it was worth the 8 hour walk to market.

Mr. President,

There is no limit to the potential for technology to overcome poverty. Israeli researchers and scientists are eager to share their technological innovations in every field, be it healthcare, education, clean water or agriculture.

One of the greatest challenges facing many developing countries is arid growing conditions. An Israeli irrigation company introduced low-pressure, low-cost drip irrigation systems for subsistence farmers, providing them with enough water to raise crops year round.
In the Kenyan village of Kitui, farmers began using this irrigation system instead of hauling water from wells. They saw a 140 percent increase in harvested yield and a 200 percent increase in income.

Since Israel is 60 percent desert, necessity drove us to look for ways to increase the quality and size of our crops while decreasing water consumption. An Israeli company has developed a drought-tolerant gene. It can be inserted into market-ready vegetable seeds, without genetically modifying them making them safe to eat.

Israeli innovation isn’t just transforming plants, they are transforming entire industries.
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Mr. President,

Empowering women is a prerequisite to eradicating poverty in the context of sustainable development. Women in the developing world remain less likely than men to have access to medical care, property ownership, credit and financial schemes and employment. All this while women are the main axis through which families grow, kids get their education and have a chance of growing their opportunities and in the long-run enhancing the over-all social cohesion.

Israel's development work places a special emphasis on women. When a woman is empowered economically, she reinvests 90% of her earnings in her family, and the positive effects ripple cross an entire community. We therefore must ensure that they are given the tools to be able to prosper, and that includes giving them the ability to make their own decision about their own reproduction.

Mr. President,

Israel will continue to share our advancements and innovations to help break the cycle of poverty. We must put people at the center of global policies. Together, let us pledge to improve the health of every family, every community, and every nation. Together we can lay the foundation for a more secure, more prosperous and more peaceful planet.

Thank you Mr. President.