

OECD MEETING OF AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS | THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2022
ISRAEL STATEMENT FOR PLENARY SESSION I *Minister Oded Forer*

Thank you Distinguished Chairpersons for giving me the floor.

At the outset, the Government of Israel would like to thank the OECD for convening this important meeting.

Dear Chairpersons, Distinguished colleagues,
I think I will not be far from the truth if I say that we are standing at one of the most important crossroads in modern times.

The food systems' "triple challenge" know no national boundaries, and soon we can expect increasing conflicts over resources. Therefore, regardless of the efforts to reduce pollution, we must understand that we have reached the point where we must learn to live in a constantly changing climate. We must do it now, collectively.

When Israel was established, our seminal ethos was "Making the desert bloom". Our reality forced us to use our limited national resources including the unforgiving desert soil, never been cultivated before, to ensure a high degree of self-supply.

The good news is that we have succeeded, and turned our threats into opportunities. By doing this, we have proved that it is possible. Israeli agriculture has become a wonder in the eyes of many - and today we know how to make the desert bloom, exploit the maximum out of every drop of fresh water, and benefit from the resources of the sea.

Let me tell you one of our secrets - We highly value agricultural research. From an early stage, it was clear to us that science and knowledge pave the way for sustainable crops in an unforgiving land. We have also excellent farmers, who are willing to participate in experimenting with new and innovative tools. Therefore, we already have today a long history of success in growing food in arid conditions and the desert, and in producing food and other commodities from the sea.

Dear Chairpersons,
The current global crisis is an opportunity to harness governments to join hands, as well as for experts and researchers to collaborate internationally among themselves and alongside private enterprises.

It is time for us as decision-makers to look for a joint solution-oriented vision that will enable us to address the major challenges we now face, reflected in the rising prices

of basic food products, along with the rising commodity and transportation prices, as well as the rising production costs of fertilizers, pesticides and water.

Distinguished Chairpersons,

Global agriculture has undergone multiple revolutions in history. Today we must immediately advance a technical revolution that will allow humanity to grow the needed food with sustainable methods.

To advance the necessary solutions, we must join hands. We must find the relative advantages of every nation .We have to share knowledge and explore together.

Israel has a solid and stable knowledge base to solve many of these challenges. Our research and development centers provide enormous practical knowledge in agriculture in challenging conditions. We have succeeded where many others have failed and found creative solutions to water and resource shortages.

As part of our heritage of Tikon Olam, we are ready to share our agriculture's groundbreaking innovations, technologies, experiences and knowledge- achieved on our own formerly unforgiving soil.

Thank you Chairpersons.