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Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for convening this meeting and his important message this morning. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your leadership of this Assembly.

Just over eight years ago, the United Nations embarked on an enormous challenge: to tackle some of the world's most significant problems related to hunger, poverty, education, equality, and others. The Millennium Development Goals were not a mere declaration. They are expressions of our common humanity, our common vision for a better world. They provide a clear roadmap to help those most in need.

While the challenges may seem daunting, I am reminded of a statement by Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion. "In order to be a realist," he said, "you must believe in miracles."

We should be genuinely proud of some of the miracles we have achieved, including important increases in AIDS treatment, agricultural productivity, rates of school enrolment, and access to clean water and sanitation.

However, as we survey the progress, the results are mixed and significant challenges remain. Not a single African country is likely to achieve all the MDG's as issues such as malnourishment, sanitation, and maternal morbidity remain as significant obstacles. We will also need to continue to support principles of good governance, transparency, human rights, and equality, as such values would help us achieve the MDGs in a more effective manner.

We have just witnessed here in New York the High-Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs and we look forward to the meeting in Doha for the Conference on Financing for Development (FFD) later this year.

But as we chart the way forward, it is easy to let our discussion become an academic exercise. The number of children suffering from malnutrition halfway around the globe remains just that: a number. The percentage of women who face abuse and discriminatory practices remain a mere proportion. So rather than rattle off numbers which are deeply alarming in their own right, I implore us to think in very real human terms. We are talking about mothers who want to care for their children, fathers who want to provide for their families, children who seek a proper education.

We must keep these individuals in mind as we seek political commitments that will achieve concrete, constructive results. We must remain focused on action. For in the end, it is actions that speak louder than any words we utter here today.

Mr. Chairman,

In Israel, we are very familiar with the challenges of development as we ourselves transformed Israeli society from a developing country into a modern success story. Today we feel privileged that Israel offers its expertise to help others on the path of development.

Israel's International Cooperation Program — MASHAV — offers Israeli know-how in order to make a difference. Founded in 1958, MASHAV began as a modest program focused on grassroots-level human capacity building in Africa. I have personally witnessed it blossom into an extensive program that promotes sustainable development, food production, public health programs, and equality throughout the developing world, in particular the African continent.

In the area of food security, Israel initiated a small-scale drip irrigation system that extends the advantages of sophisticated, water-saving technologies to traditional farmers. The venture — called TIPAT, the Technological Innovation for Poverty Alleviation — offers the potential of self-sufficiency to those who normally struggle to survive.

Another simple, yet powerful program is titled Farmers for the Future. The program exposes school-age children to modern agricultural techniques and helps to educate and create a new generation of young farmers with the skills to develop sustainable, market-oriented farming techniques.

In the area of public health, Israel developed the TIPAT CHALAV concept — which appropriately means ‘drop of milk’ in Hebrew — that offers community-based pre-natal and healthy-baby clinics. The TIPAT CHALAV model is currently being implemented in Kumasi, Ghana, and this will have a dramatic impact on rates of infant mortality.

Israel is in the process of creating lasting international partnerships that focus on implanting the MDGs. For example, just a few months ago, Israel has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNDP Africa in the field of food security and agriculture. Israel is pleased to be launching a Framework Agreement with UNDP, as well. Israel is in the process of joining the OECD — and we are proud that Israel is ready, willing, and able to shoulder additional responsibility to address the world's most pressing needs.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel understands that there is no single approach to overcoming the immense challenges before us. But we are proud that our small nation can offer so much to those in need. We remind ourselves that emerging from the past is a journey, not a destination. And achievements along this journey – be them small or large – help us touch the lives of

millions of people around the globe. Development is a partnership that requires the commitment of all.

And in the words of Israel's founding father David Ben-Gurion, I am a realist, as well as an optimist — I believe we can achieve the miracles laid out in the Millennium Development Goals.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.