

Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development in Israel:
Government Decision no. 246
14 May 2003

Be it hereby decided:

1. The policy of the Government of Israel shall be based on the principles of sustainable development practice, that combine a dynamic economy, wise use of natural resources, protection of ecosystems, and the granting of equality of opportunity to all, in order to respond to the needs of the present and future generations, both as a followup to Government decision no. 2426 of August 4, 2002, and in the spirit of the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in August-September 2002.
2. The Government will promote the Plan of Implementation accepted by general agreement at the World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002, based on the 1992 Program of Action (Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro - Agenda 21), and shall implement its various components in Israel, in accordance with conditions in Israel and the economic ability to finance activities resulting from the plan.
3. In the spirit of the Plan of Implementation, every government Ministry shall draft a Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development that shall include among others an action plan, means of implementation, sources of funding within its own budget, measurable goals, and target dates by which they should be met. The plan shall include means of identifying activities that are incompatible with the principles of sustainable development.
4. The Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development shall relate to the period up until 2020, will be submitted to the Government by the end of 2003, and shall be updated every three years. The plan shall be presented to the public during its drafting. When completed, the plan shall be submitted to the Government by the ministers and shall be made available to the public.
5. The Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development shall relate to the following tasks, which ministers will be responsible for carrying out, as well as to the budgets at the disposal of each Ministry, with respect to an economic evaluation of the benefit of the plan to the national economy:

Minister of National Infrastructure

Energy production and consumption

- Taking measures to improve efficiency and exploitation of various energy sources to reduce energy demand and to promote energy conservation in both the public and private sectors
- Beginning in 2007, producing at least 2% of electricity production from renewable energy sources. As stated in Government decision no. 44, the Ministry shall take steps toward the integration of solar energy in new construction and as far as possible, conversion to solar energy in existing construction / activity
- Regulating entry of electricity from renewable sources into the national transmission grid according to conditions that encourage decentralization of electricity production and reduce transmission distances
- Encouraging research and development on the subject of renewable energy in order to achieve the goals set by the Government

- Taking into account external environmental, and social costs when evaluating infrastructure projects

Water and wastewater management

- Taking steps to promote water conservation in the urban sector
- Ensuring water supply and wastewater treatment and their appropriate use in various sectors
- Setting standards for regular water supply for the preservation of landscape and nature values
- Initiating action to improve the quality of treated effluent and prevent the infiltration of wastewater into the environment
- Ensuring the capacity for water supply to meet the needs of Israel's development in terms of acceptable quantity, reliability, and quality
- Treatment of wastewater to acceptable quality levels, and reuse of most of Israel's wastewater for agricultural, urban, industrial, and environmental uses at a quality level that will prevent risk to people, nature, aquifers, the soil, and crops
- Taking steps toward preservation of Israel's main natural sources of drinking water. Removal of pollutants that exist in water sources (from both natural and anthropogenic sources), prevention of saline accumulation in water sources, and improvement of the quality of water supplied for all purposes
- Internalization of practices for water conservation and prevention of water wastage, and making these a way of life
- Supplying water to the environment according to pre-determined criteria
- Water management based on existing needs

Minister of Industry, Trade and Labor

- Promoting efficient use of raw materials, water, energy, and land in the business sector
- Promoting production practices and requiring that Israeli products meet the environmental conditions and standards shared by the international market
- Promotion of and aid to Israeli technology that applies sustainable development principles and is appropriate for implementation in Israel and other countries
- The inclusion of environmental and social considerations in the consolidation of trade agreements and their implementation
- The promotion of research and development of Israeli technologies that are suited to the application of sustainable development through legislation that encourages R & D in industry
- Promotion of clean manufacturing practices and support for the Cleaner Production Center
- Promoting research and development of technologies appropriate for implementation of sustainable development in Israel and for marketing to other countries

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development

- Taking steps to reduce the use of, and to promote the wise and supervised use of chemicals for fertilization and pest control while specifying indices and targets for implementation and reduction
- Taking steps to expedite the transition to irrigation using wastewater at quality levels that will not harm the environment
- Using means to encourage agriculture which conserves resources
- Encouraging organic agriculture
- Granting incentives within water management reform for maintaining open space in order to preserve rural landscapes
- Using water-conservation measures and developing agriculture that is suited to the resources available

Minister of the Interior

- Publication of guidelines for refusing approval of plans for additional dwellings and development in areas not served by a wastewater collection and treatment system, with the exception of extraordinary situations, where approval will only be granted by the Minister him/herself in consultation with the Minister of the Environment
- Investigating the possibility of integrating the principles of “green building” as regulations under the Planning and Building Law
- Granting incentives to promote the implementation of sustainable development principles in local government activity and setting standards for their implementation
- Ensuring sound planning practices, including public participation in planning as required by law

Minister of Foreign Affairs

- Promoting the ratification of international treaties on the environment and sustainable development
- Advancing the possibility of including sustainable development in Israel’s foreign aid program
- Promoting the marketing of Israeli technology in the spheres of the environment and sustainable development, including water conservation, reducing the use of chemicals, renewable energy, and minimizing damage to the ozone layer
- Promoting and creating international cooperation on the exchange of knowledge and tools in the field of sustainable development, and raising funds through such international cooperation
- Promoting collaboration with various UN agencies in order to obtain financing for projects designed to implement principles of sustainable development
- Integration of sustainable development principles into regional development plans, relations with Arab countries, and cooperation with the Palestinian Authority
- The integration of sustainable development principles into international bilateral treaties

Minister of Internal Security

- Progress in enforcement of environmental regulations by the police in cooperation with the Minister of the Environment

Minister of Labor and Social Welfare

- Granting high priority to the issue of poverty and the advancement of weak sectors of the population with respect to welfare and their integration into the labor market
- Raising public awareness of manufacturing processes of products and services, including by means of a “social seal of approval”, and encouraging businesses to meet the standards of this seal
- Promoting community involvement in sustainable development at the local level
- Stepping up enforcement of legislation granting equal opportunity in employment to the entire population

Minister of Justice

- Aid in promoting environmental legislation and all other legislation aimed at promoting sustainable development, including environmental impact statements and the implications of sustainable development in relevant legislation
- Assimilation of considerations of environmental protection and promotion of sustainable development in legislation in specific spheres

Minister of Finance

- Investigating the possibility of eliminating subsidies and incentives for activities that do not conform to the principles of sustainable development, including incentives for activities involving the unmonitored use of water, energy, land, raw materials, and use of private vehicles
- Investigating methods for determining fees for the use of natural resources for which there is no market price, including calculating the costs of environmental damage, and developing mechanisms for the collection of such fees
- Investigating the possibility of giving preference to “green purchasing” by means of environmental requirements to be included in tenders issued by the Accountant General
- Investigating the possibility of requiring publicly owned companies to submit annual economic-environmental-social reports to the Finance Ministry, to be reviewed by the Securities and Exchange Commission and released to the public

Minister of Housing and Construction

- Promoting the implementation of principles of green building in public construction projects
- Promoting the planning and building of projects based on sustainable development considerations
- Implementing energy- and water-saving measures in plans and construction tenders

Minister of Transportation

- Accelerating and expediting the development process of Israel Railways and other infrastructure for public transportation that implements principles of sustainable development
- Promoting the use of clean fuels, including liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and natural gas in all types of transportation
- Promoting accessibility of transportation that enables equality to the entire population
- Encouraging non-motorized transportation systems

Minister of Education, Culture, and Sports

- Implementation of principles of sustainable development and promotion of environmental education in natural sciences and social sciences curricula and activities in educational institutions
- Introducing training programs on the subject of sustainable development in academic institutions in relevant disciplines such as economics, health sciences, industry, and management

Minister of Health

- Informing the public and publishing notices warning of health dangers caused by environmental hazards
- Establishing equality of availability of health services as far as possible to the entire population
- Promoting epidemiological research on diseases caused by pollution, and publishing recommendations for their prevention
- Determining quality indices for drinking water in such a way that will not harm future generations, and carrying out monitoring of the drinking water supply for the whole population.

Minister of the Environment

- Taking steps toward halting the loss of biodiversity and toward rehabilitation of ecosystems harmed by human activity
- Formulation of methods, in consultation with the Finance Ministry, for incorporating external environmental costs in the evaluation of state-funded projects
- Taking action to conserve flora and fauna, and maintain acceptable environmental conditions, including with regard to air and water quality; noise levels; radiation; and exposure to and disposal of hazardous materials,

Minister of Defense

- Implementing ISO 14000 in IDF bases

Minister of Tourism

- Promoting environmentally sensitive planning and development of tourist facilities, including preserving sensitive landscapes; preserving water quality; protecting flora and fauna; and efficient and wise use of natural resources, by means of (among others) directing tourism to non-sensitive sites:

- A. Determining and evaluating carrying capacity for tourist attractions and sites
 - B. Reviving and rehabilitating tourist areas such as city centers, streams, reclaimed quarries, and so forth
 - C. Formulation and adoption of green building principles in the management of tourism projects
- Preservation of social and cultural heritage, including historical landmarks, traditional industries and cultures, and so forth
 - Planning and development of employment and business opportunities, with the involvement of local residents, and finding a balance between their aspirations and environmental protection
 - Educating residents and those involved in the tourism industry toward awareness of the importance of sustainable development as manifested in preserving the environment, tradition, and natural resources for future generations, by, among others:
 - A. Formulating relevant curricula for schools in consultation with the Education Ministry
 - B. Formulating an eco-tourism agreement
6. The Director General of each Ministry shall be responsible for the implementation of this decision in his or her Ministry, and shall appoint a senior officer who shall be responsible for the formulation and implementation of the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development of the Ministry.
 7. Every Minister whose jurisdiction includes a statutory agency or public company shall ensure that a Strategic Plan is drafted in the relevant department, whether derived from the Ministerial plan or drafted independently.
 8. The Director General of the Ministry of the Environment shall form a task force that includes the Directors General of all Ministries; representatives of the business community; environmental and social non-governmental organizations; local government; and academia, as determined by the Minister of the Environment. The function of the task force shall be, among others, to oversee the drafting of the Strategic Plans and to propose principles and ways of consolidating a joint strategy regarding issues relevant to more than one Ministry or sector.
 9. The Director General of the Ministry of the Environment shall establish a professional unit to assist in drafting the Strategic Plans, training staff, and gathering relevant professional material used to identify common / problematic inter-ministerial or inter-sectoral issues and proposing ways to deal with them.
 10. The Minister of the Environment shall submit a bi-annual report to the Government on the progress of implementation of this decision.

Submitted by: the Minister of the Environment

Explanatory Notes to the Government Decision

In Government Decision no. 2426 of August 4, 2002, the Minister of the Environment was required to report to the Government on the conclusions of the World Summit in Johannesburg and their manner of adoption by Government policy.

At the World Summit in Johannesburg in August 2002, a document named the Plan of Implementation was accepted by all of the participating countries. The objective of the document was to promote implementation of the principles of sustainable development adopted at the previous summit in 1992, known as Agenda 21, or the agenda for the 21st century. The principles therein are based on a combination of economic progress, fair social practices and preservation of the environment. The many heads of state in attendance at the summit emphasized the urgency of guiding development in all countries toward a path of sustainable development. Many of the activities that took place at the summit and its accompanying events presented ways of achieving this goal.

At the Johannesburg summit, Israel was part of the developed countries group and was required to prove that it was complying with the Johannesburg agenda. Israel's admission, for example, into the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) will be reviewed, among other criteria, on the basis of its degree of compliance with OECD policy regarding sustainable development.

Israel's main path to economic development lies in hi-tech industries, along with advancing innovative technologies. This path supports sustainable development, and opens up an opportunity for Israel to be one of the leading countries in harnessing information and technology for sustainable development. It is therefore incumbent upon Israel to advance the Plan of Implementation defined at the Johannesburg Summit, and to act toward its implementation in government ministries, local government, the community, and throughout the private sector.

The proposed process for adoption of the policy of sustainable development in Israel is similar to that followed in Canada. Beginning in 1995, the Canadian government began drafting a strategy for sustainable development, and today Canada is a world leader in this field.

Each Ministry shall draft its own strategy as part of an ongoing process that is constantly being updated. The integration of sustainable development is undertaken gradually, within the decision-making mechanisms of each Ministry. During the drafting of the strategy, each Ministry or government agency shall identify which of its current activities promote sustainable development. These activities should be reinforced and granted priority in the allocation of resources from the respective Ministry. In addition, each Ministry shall identify barriers to promoting sustainable development that exist in the Ministry, or are caused by other actors, and that should be removed. Moreover, it is incumbent upon each Ministry to identify areas which have to date been neglected and require further action.

The Strategic Plan of each Ministry shall be submitted to the Government and shall be made available to the general public. Consolidating the Strategic Plan is not a one-time process, but rather an ongoing process that is designed to result in steady progress in each Ministry. To assist in achieving that aim, the following professional documents shall be placed at the disposal of each Ministry:

1. A proposed format for a Strategy for Sustainable Development in Israel
2. Identification of responsibilities related to the Plan of Implementation, on internal issues (paper prepared by the Environment Ministry) and on international issues (paper prepared by the Foreign Ministry)
3. The business side of sustainable development relevant to promoting sustainable development in the private sector
4. A report of sectoral-based target group discussions on subjects of sustainable development: industry, energy, agriculture, tourism, transportation, the urban sector, biodiversity, social aspects

The Ministry of the Environment together with professional assistance will assist Ministries in preparing the Strategic Plans, in training staff, and in consolidating action plans for individual Ministries.