

FOURTH UNECE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETING ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

GENEVA, 1-2 December 2009

Agenda item 7. Waste

Intervention by Israel¹

Chairperson, Distinguished delegates and participants

The problems associated with waste disposal and treatment in Israel are an outcome of the country's unique conditions: a high rate of population growth – higher than other developed countries, rising standards of living and consumption patterns, accelerated building and industrial activity and one of the highest population densities in the developed world.

Due to land scarcity in Israel, the capacity of existing landfills will soon be exhausted. Moreover, landfills "consume" valuable land and are associated with both direct and indirect environmental and economic costs. Therefore, efforts are focusing on introducing alternatives to landfilling: source reduction, reuse, recycling, anaerobic digestion, composting, drop off centers and waste to energy plants.

The ultimate goal is to reduce the total quantity of waste that the country generates, in general, and the quantity reaching landfills, in particular, and to increase waste recovery and recycling. The target is to reach a 50% recovery rate for municipal solid waste in the year 2015.

In 2006, a Sustainable Solid Waste Management Masterplan was approved by the National Building and Planning Board and by the Government. The plan presents a comprehensive framework for environmentally sound management of solid waste, and outlines the steps necessary to achieve the goals of solid waste management in Israel. The policy is based on three strategic priorities (in descending order):

- Reduction at Source: for example, the Ministry of Environment Protection is examining methods for reducing packaging waste, through 'extended producer responsibility', and in addition allocates financial aid from a dedicated fund to projects of solid and hazardous waste reduction at source.
- Recovery: including reuse, recycling, composting and waste to energy. Reduction of landfilling is pursued through the imposition of a landfill levy. The money from this levy is allocated to local authorities and private companies for the construction of recycling and other facilities aimed at reducing the amount of waste ending up in landfills. Investments are expected to grow as a result of packaging legislation.
- Landfilling: ad the last option for dealing with waste which could not be recovered.

¹ The text is presented as received from the author.