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Réunion du Conseil au Niveau des Ministres

4-5 Juin 2008

Point 3

Orientations stratégiques de l'OCDE: Rapport du Secrétaire général

ISRAEL

Déclaration

M. Ronnie BAR-ON

Ministre des finances

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Meeting of the Council at Ministerial Level

4-5 June 2008

Item 3

OECD Strategic Orientations: Report By The Secretary-General

ISRAEL

Statement

Mr. Ronnie BAR-ON

Minister of finance

Chairperson,

Dear Colleagues,

Please allow me to take this opportunity to thank you, the OECD member countries, the Secretary General and the Secretariat, for your decision to invite Israel to begin accession procedures and for our first invitation to participate in the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting here in the beautiful "City of Lights." For Israel, **joining the OECD is an economic strategic goal.**

Membership in the Organization signifies a strong message, **emphasizing a long term commitment** by the Israeli government **to adapt the highest possible international standards.**

We are doing our utmost, **in an efficient and professional manner** to consolidate our governmental and non-governmental bodies, to advance Israel's accession process and to promote OECD policies.

Allow me to say a few words about Innovation Strategy.

Israel's innovation system is a key driver of economic growth and competitiveness.

Over the years, close cooperation has been developed between Israeli medical research institutions and industry **which bridge the gap between basic and applied science.**

Bridging this gap constitutes – in my view - one of the main interests of the OECD Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy, and in particular the Working Party on Biotechnology.

Israel is a semi-arid country suffering from scarce water resources which stimulate innovative technologies in the following areas: water management and treatment practices, developing new technologies to combat desertification, and irrigation systems which provide massive savings in water consumption.

The agricultural sector today is based almost entirely on science-linked technology, with **government agencies, academic institutions, industry and cooperative bodies working together to seek solutions to problems such as those being addressed by the OECD Committee for Agriculture.**

A significant government R&D initiative includes the amendment of the Israeli law on R&D which **allows overseas transfers of know-how** resulting from public funded research, as well as **the creation of biotechnology and nanotechnology funds.**

Israel is promoting and previously signed R&D co-operation agreements with foreign countries and major multinational companies, which will assist in building stronger links between innovative partners, while integrating research, higher education and industry.

Finally, Israel acknowledges the potential for mutual benefit derived from its cooperation with the OECD.

Israel's participation in OECD activities reflects not only its ability to comply with the obligations of membership but also its willingness and capacity in making significant contribution to OECD works of Committees and Working Parties.

Thank you,