
Israel. Rubinstein (Ambassador to the FAO). "Eradicating hunger and food insecurity is the gateway to peace"

"It's not enough to produce food, it is also important to guarantee that food systems be sustainable and offer healthy diets accessible to all. It is a matter of adopting innovative solutions that can transform the way we produce and consume food for the wellbeing of our communities and of our planet, thus strengthening the capacity to recover and long term sustainability."



on 16 October 2020, World Food Day and the date marking the establishment of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), reaffirming her country's commitment in the fight against hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. This commitment was strengthened last July when Israel became a member of the FAO 'executive' council, with a three-year mandate, and when the ambassador was appointed, as of January this year, to head the organisation's European Group, with a six-month mandate. **Ambassador Rubinstein, what is Israel's contribution to the fight against hunger and food insecurity?** In keeping with the guidelines and objectives set by the FAO, we are making a significant contribution especially in increasing water supply, in desalination and in agriculture. Israel is known for being at the forefront of scientific research and technological innovation in agriculture, with technologies to tackle water shortage in particular. We seek to transmit our know-how to other countries by providing technical training to local FAO staff. For example, a few months ago, we assisted African countries struggling with the locust invasion that is destroying their crops. We sent a team of experts, aircraft and drones to support response efforts by local FAO staff. Knowledge sharing in agriculture is important. This is our commitment carried out also thanks to our diplomatic representations in many developing countries, from Latin America to Asia. Extending our agricultural know-how to these countries also means transferring it to the regions where they are located, whether in Asia or Africa. **Israel is a member of the Italian government-proposed and FAO-led Food Coalition, a global alliance aimed at achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals and uniting against the COVID-19 pandemic, causing not only a global health emergency but also a global crisis with catastrophic effects...** My country is enthusiastic about participating in the global effort to deliver the projects that will help us find the best solutions to the food challenges facing humanity, exacerbated today by the COVID-19 pandemic. One key step is to reduce, or preferably eliminate, food waste via state-to-state collaboration, sharing know-how and technology to ensure food for all. The words and appeals of Pope Francis echoed in his messages and encyclicals *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli tutti* - to end poverty in all its forms, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture - are there to guide us. *Providing food is a gateway to peace and to making the world a better place in which to live. People have the right to food and dignity. Eradicating food insecurity and hunger also means reducing tensions and conflicts between nations.*



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I wish to begin by recalling that Israel signed peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan some time back. Desert covers more than half of Israel, like the Negev, where temperatures can soar to 45 °C in summer. This is land without water, which means that we have the same weather conditions as African or Gulf countries. It's the same natural environment, so we are perfectly aware of what these countries need. It will be therefore important to enter into bilateral and trilateral relations in order to pool efforts and know-how to improve living conditions, and especially today as we are grappling with the Coronavirus pandemic. We believe in this approach: helping each other and sharing water management and agricultural know-how is necessary as well as urgent. **What is the state of relations with the Palestinians in this field?** While we currently have no peace treaty

with the Palestinians, we share the same destiny.

Today we are confronted by the Coronavirus. The distance between Israel and Palestine is not exactly a 'distance', as there are Palestinians living in Jerusalem, so there is no real border. For example, Palestinians have asked Israel for access to vaccinations against COVID-19. And we will do it. We will do it because it's the same land, because the Palestinians work in Israel, Israelis travel to Palestine or to locations in the Palestinian Territories. If Israel is vaccinated and the Palestinian authorities, the Palestinian people, are not vaccinated, the virus will continue to circulate. It's the same destiny. We share our know-how also with the Palestinian authorities, as well as with Egypt and Jordan. I wish to add that as part of the COVID-19 emergency response, Israel is committed to providing emergency supplies (protective devices and medical equipment) to many world countries. This includes Italy: we helped Lombardy's health care workers respond to the epidemic at the peak of the crisis.

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