

Omert speech on July 13, 2008

The Honorable President of France, Chairman of the Mediterranean Union Summit,  
The Honorable President of Egypt, Co-Chairman of the Mediterranean Union Summit,  
Leaders of the Mediterranean Countries,  
Leaders of the European Countries,  
Distinguished Guests,

Honorable Chairmen,

I came here today, to Paris - the capital of France, from Jerusalem - the capital of the State of Israel, in order to take part in the vision of courageous men. On behalf of the people of Israel, I would like to express our tremendous appreciation for your hard work and your sincere efforts to realize the vision of regional cooperation - a vision of hope, a vision of peace and closeness among the peoples of the Mediterranean.

Members of the Summit,

According to Jewish tradition, and for many generations, we believe in a value called tikkun olam, or repairing the world. This means that each and every one of us is responsible not only for ourselves, but also for repairing the world and solving its crises.

The global crises in the fields of energy, the climate and food threaten us all. However, in addition to these, the Middle East faces additional problems such as water scarcity and an expansion of its deserts. Israel, like its neighbors, which must deal with these challenges on a daily basis, encouraged the finest Israeli researchers to conduct intensive research & development in the field of water technology.

Thanks to this experience, Israel currently has unique experience in managing a limited water economy, reclamation of sewage for agricultural irrigation, desalinization, and in advanced agricultural irrigation technologies. The State of Israel is successful in reusing sewage at the highest rate in the world - 75%.

We pay special attention to desalination technologies, and by 2012, approximately two-thirds of the amount of water for domestic use (600 million cubic meters) will be derived from desalination. In Israel, the largest, most advanced and cheapest reverse osmosis desalination plant in the world operates, and in one year an additional plant will be