

Interactive Session with Ms Orit Noked, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development, Israel and the Accompanying Business Delegation

May 03, 2011, New Delhi

Address of Hon'ble Minister Orit Noked

Honorable Minister of Agriculture,
Dear Representatives of Companies from India and from Israel,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Guests,

I am honored to open this seminar, which is a rare opportunity for a meeting aimed at creating business cooperation the advancement of which will contribute to economic growth in agriculture and in the agricultural technology industries of the two sides.

For us Israelis who come from a country of 7 point 5 million inhabitants and an area of 22 thousand square kilometers, India is a huge and fascinating country with a wide variety of landscapes, climatic zones and kinds of agriculture. India's farmers and leaders are diligent and desire to improve their living conditions and economy and open the gates of the country in friendship for cooperation with other countries around the world, including Israel.

India's agriculture still represents an important portion of the national economy and rate of employment. Your agriculture produces - rice, grains, legumes, spices, vegetables and fruits, milk, and more. India will undoubtedly continue its effort to invest in developing the economy and small and medium businesses with the aim of raising the standard of living in the rural sector, also.

As for Israel: Since its establishment in 1948 and until the present - for over sixty years - the country has moved forward from a developing economy and traditional agriculture to a modern economy rich in technologies and an advanced and efficient agriculture, all of this despite difficult climatic conditions and lack of water. The weight of agriculture shrunk and represents less than 2 percent of the GNP and less than 3 percent of the work force. Nevertheless, our agriculture supplies food to the population, and even exports about a quarter of the output. Likewise, an industry of agricultural technologies has developed for more efficient production and which reduces the rate of labor. The value of the export of these technologies is equal to the value of the export of fresh and processed products from Israel.

Our agriculture is a laboratory of development for the agricultural technology industry, but this industry knows how to adapt itself also to the conditions and special circumstances around the world, including those in your country. The dairy herd in Israel is excellent and modern, and in its wake a dairy products industry has developed, two fields which you want to develop in your country. We grow an abundance of vegetables and fruits, both in greenhouses and in open fields, while exploiting irrigation equipment and fertilizer, automation and control, and so forth. The livestock branches, and especially dairy farming, in Israel are efficient and

modern. We are also self-sufficient in poultry meat and eggs. At the same time, we have companies which produce equipment and structures for the poultry industry. I could continue and cite more examples but I do not want to tire you out.

In conclusion, I wish first of all to turn to the representatives of the Israeli companies: Please become acquainted with the desires and needs of your colleagues from India and make adjustments for the most suitable solutions.

Second, I ask the representatives of the companies from India: Please examine carefully the wealth our representatives are able to offer, you can adopt and implement them in the local agriculture. Please maintain contact with the Israeli representatives also after they return to Israel. Perhaps some of you will have the opportunity to come to Israel and see firsthand what is relevant and what is suitable.

Third, I turn to my colleague from India, the Minister of Agriculture, let us both mobilize ourselves, each one in his respective country, in order to try and ease as much as possible on our businessmen, in opening barriers, easing of regulations, identifying lines of credit and finance, preventing double taxation and so forth so that both distinguished groups gathered here will be able to realize cooperation for the development and prosperity on both sides.

Good luck in the seminar and all the best.