

WATEC - ISRAEL 2007: FOCUSING ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES SECTOR

"Environmentally sound technologies protect the environment, are less polluting, use all resources in a more sustainable manner, recycle more of their wastes and products, and handle residual wastes in a more acceptable manner than the technologies for which they were substitutes... Environmentally sound technologies are not just individual technologies, but total systems which include know-how, procedures, goods and services, and equipment as well as organisational and managerial procedures".

Chapter 34 of Agenda 21

WATEC-ISRAEL 2007, Ministry of Environmental Protection pavilion/
Photo: Alex Kaplan



In the global search for more sustainable forms of development, environmental technologies play a crucial role. It is no wonder, therefore, that some 30,000 participants from Israel and abroad flocked to Tel Aviv's Exhibition Gardens at the end of October 2007 to take part in WATEC - Israel 2007, Israel's International Water Technologies and Environmental Control Exhibition and Conference.

The three-day event attracted exhibitors and visitors from companies, organizations, voluntary and public bodies, entrepreneurs and investors worldwide. A total of 250 companies presented their water and environmental technologies, as well as a wide range of innovative solutions for addressing such critical problems as global warming, air pollution, water contamination and water

scarcity, hazardous waste and more. Their solutions, ranging from seawater desalination to solar energy, from water filtration to low-volume irrigation systems, from monitoring systems to recycling options, elicited major interest from some 100 business delegations that came to Israel especially to take part in the event. Visitors included the CEOs of the water divisions of some of the world's



**Environmental Protection Minister
Gideon Ezra on the WATEC
International Conference**



Gideon Ezra/Photo: Alex Kaplan

"We, at the Ministry of Environmental Protection, are convinced that economic progress and environmental protection are closely linked. We are certain that the development and implementation of environmental technologies is a "win-win" situation:

it will catalyze the development of an industry with significant export potential, it will ensure a cleaner environment in Israel and quality of life to its residents, and it will promote regional and international cooperation for the improvement of the environment. It will have an impact not only on our own generation but on generations to come...

Environmental problems know no borders. Similarly, technological solutions to environmental problems cross national borders, offering countries the possibility of overcoming such problems as growing waste quantities, inadequate water supplies, polluting industrial effluents and global warming.

WATEC 2007 offers just the right opportunity to do this. I believe that the state-of-the-art technologies which are exhibited here today will be a driving force of the global economy and the global environment in years to come. It is my hope that this year's exhibition and conferences will promote international cooperation and facilitate the transformation of environmental challenges into environmental opportunities"

Excerpts from the welcoming address of Environmental Protection Minister Gideon Ezra at the opening ceremony of the WATEC International Conference

foremost companies including General Electric, USA, Siemens AG, Germany and Veolia, France.

Focusing on the Water Sector

It is estimated that about 2 billion people around the world either lack access to sufficient quantities of water, or are supplied with water unfit for drinking. This shortage is expected to worsen in the near future due to the rise in the world's population and to the anticipated impacts of global warming. Yet growing environmental awareness coupled with new awareness of the impacts of global warming is beginning to make a difference. It is catalyzing the development of new technologies for alleviating these problems.

Israel is not a stranger to the problems of water scarcity. However, the very scarcity of water resources in Israel proved to be the impetus for the development of cutting edge technologies in the water sector. Israel is widely recognized as a center of expertise on water conservation and reuse of treated effluents in agriculture, has developed one of the most productive and efficient agricultural systems in the world and has reached one of the highest wastewater recycling rates in the world - nearly 70%.

The water industry - the fifth among global industrial sectors - shows a 10% annual growth rate and the world global market already stands at more than \$450 billion. In this ever-growing sector, Israel has already emerged as world leader in the development and marketing of drip irrigation systems, seawater desalination and water reclamation. According to figures released by the Israel Export and International Cooperation Institute, Israel's water sector is composed of 270 companies, including 60 start-ups and 8,000 employees with specialties in desalination, irrigation systems,

purification technology and management of water sources.

And that's not all. This field is expected to grow substantially in future years, due, in no small measure to a new national program formulated by the government in 2005. Dubbed NEWTech (Novel Efficient Water Technologies), the program aims at doubling the value of exports of Israel's water technology products and solutions, attracting overseas investments and promoting research and development with international partners.

WATEC 2007 and the Ministry of Environmental Protection

The Ministry of Environmental Protection played a key role in WATEC 2007 - as an active member of the steering committee, as an exhibitor and as the organizer of more than a dozen environmental conferences within the framework of the exhibition.

Environmental Protection Minister Gideon Ezra hosted the environmental ministers of several countries, while the booth of the Ministry of Environmental Protection provided visitors with information on a wide range of environmental topics. Senior staff members of the ministry were on hand to answer the public's questions and requests for information and tens of thousands of information sheets and bulletins were distributed within the course of just three days.



On the last day of the exhibition, November 1, 2007, the Ministry of Environmental Protection hosted a series of professional environmental conferences on such subjects as the landfill levy and its significance, reduction of hazardous waste in industry, reduction of air pollution from transportation in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area, accreditation of green college campuses and more.

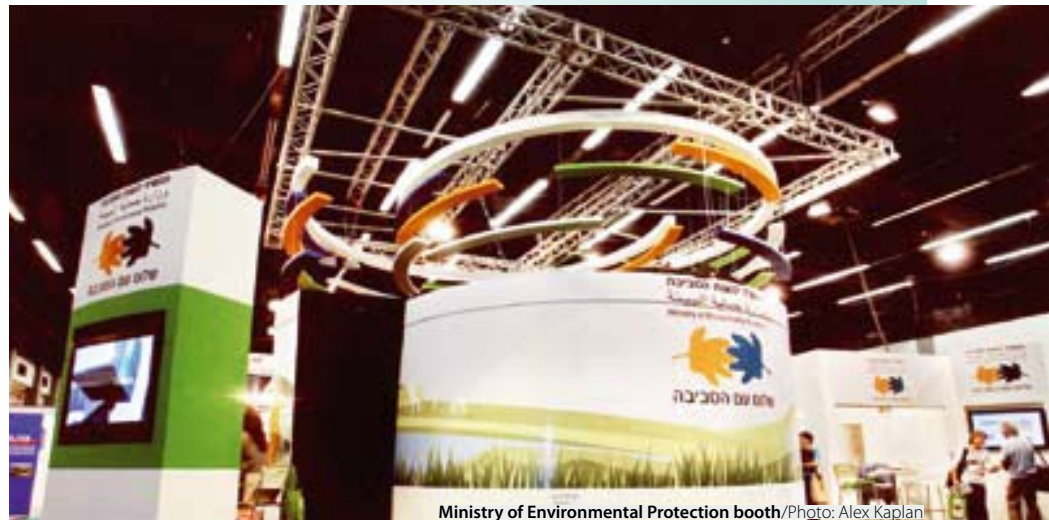
Turning Challenges into Opportunities

Developing clean technologies is no longer an option; it is an imperative. The recently organized WATEC 2007 exhibition underlined the growing importance of environmental technologies in reducing critical pressures on the environment, promoting cleaner production, reducing the consumption of energy and natural resources, and minimizing emissions and waste. Israel, as a key player in the hi-tech industry, with innovative technologies, highly skilled human resources and extensive experience, hopes to meet the challenges ahead and to make important inroads in a wide range of state-of-the-art technologies relevant to the Israeli and international environmental industries.

According to its organizers, WATEC 2007 will reinforce Israel's position as the "Silicon Valley" of the global water and environmental technologies market. In the words of Booky Oren, Chairman of WATEC 2007, "Israel is poised to play a major role in supplying the world with cutting-edge water and environmental solutions." In a global environmental technologies market that is worth more than \$600 million today, there is no doubt that environmental technologies are good for the environment and good for business.

WATEC 2007 – Facts and Figures

- 30,000 visitors, of which 2,500 were from abroad
- 100 business delegations
- 35 ministers and deputy ministers
- 250 lecturers in conferences from more than 90 countries
- 250 companies, of which 130 were water companies and 120 environmental technology companies
- International conferences with 1400 participants
- 13 environmental events organized by the Ministry of Environmental Protection including conferences and award ceremonies, with some 1700 participants.
- 21 information sheets on environmental subjects and an English Bulletin on the environment.



Ministry of Environmental Protection booth/Photo: Alex Kaplan



Alex Kaplan on WATEC 2007

The size of this year's exhibition and conference and the number of participants it drew, especially from abroad, are the best proof that Israel has much to contribute in the fields of water and the environment. For the Ministry of Environmental Protection, WATEC 2007 provided a unique platform in which to present its widespread activities on behalf of the environment, every day of the year, and reveal its future plans to wide audiences through conferences on an extensive range of topics. The Ministry of Environmental Protection is gratified by the results of the conference and the positive feedback from the participants. It hopes that when the next exhibition comes around, in 2009, the environmental component of the exhibition, including such subjects as recycling and energy, will play a more central part in the proceedings.

For further information on Israel's Environmental Technologies, please visit the Israel Export and International Cooperation Institute - Environmental Technologies: <http://www.export.gov.il/Eng/SubIndex.asp?CategoryID=179>

