

Israel is in a unique position in the international development arena: It began as a developing country, and continued to be so for many years after its establishment as a state in 1948. Many of us remember the austerity measures of the 1950s and the early 60s - the shortage of basic commodities and food rationing.

At the same time, Israel received generous assistance from a few friendly countries, and from Jewish communities in the Diaspora. The fact that we were able to overcome severe challenges and build a strong society with an advanced economy was, for us, the first lesson regarding the importance of sharing with other developing and newly independent countries. This tradition was bequeathed to us by the founders of the State of Israel. MASHAV – Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation, is honored to continue this tradition over 50 years later.

Recently I accompanied Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Avigdor Liberman in his historic visit to Africa. The minister visited Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda, where he met with foreign leaders; signed political, economic and development cooperation agreements and inaugurated joint projects between Israel and the African host countries. FM Liberman stated that he had the opportunity to witness the great esteem with which MASHAV is held and its important contribution to the people of Africa as they deal with developmental challenges.



Signing cooperation agreement with The Economic Community of West African States – ECOWAS: (from left to right) Ambassador Yaacov Revach, Director Africa Division, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs; FM Avigdor Liberman; Ambassador Haim Divon; and Vice President of the ECOWAS Commission, Mr. Jean de Dieu Somda



Distributing Israeli-made agricultural equipment in Kenya:
(from left to right) Ambassador Haim Divon, Head of MASHAV; Israel Ambassador to Kenya, Yaacov Keidar; Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman; Mr. David Stower, Director General, Ministry of Water and Irrigation; Prof. Jacqueline Oduol, Secretary of Children Affairs, Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Development

Since its inception, MASHAV's work has been guided by the basic approach that development work is organic in nature. It is impossible to concentrate efforts in one area, such as food security, without providing proper attention to health care, community building and education. Only through a sustainable and comprehensive development program can measured results be obtained and the desired impact can be felt by those who need assistance the most.

A single individual can change an institution, a community, policy, and reality. This is our inspiration. Israel could have chosen not to be involved in the field of international development cooperation in light of its own difficulties. But that was never the case. We are proud that in spite of our own challenges we did not spare any effort in sharing what was relevant to our own development experience for the benefit of others.

There is no single approach to overcoming the immense development challenges before us. We take pride in what our small nation has contributed throughout the decades, and we will continue to contribute towards the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals. We remind ourselves that emerging from the past is a journey, not a destination. And achievements along this journey – be them small or large – help us touch the lives of millions of people around the globe.

Development is a partnership that requires the commitment of all.

Sincerely,

HAIM DIVON

Head of MASHAV
Israel's Agency for International
Development Cooperation