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Statement submitted by Innovation: Africa, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



Statement

Bringing Israeli innovation to African villages

As we enter what has been declared the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, we at Innovation: Africa are grateful for the emphasis and resources that are now being directed towards an end to energy poverty.

In the past five years, we have powered 63 rural schools, orphanages, medical clinics and water pumping systems in East Africa with solar technology. Energy is not a goal in itself, but rather an empowering tool for those trying to serve their own communities. It enables doctors to treat patients at night, it powers refrigerators to store life-saving medicines and vaccines, it provides students and teachers with light for evening study and improved educational tools, it gives communities a means to pump clean water located deep below ground. Energy is a cross-sectoral solution that is an integral component to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

One of the greatest challenges in rural energy development is monitoring and sustainability. Using micro-business solutions and cutting edge remote monitoring technologies from Israel, we have found that small-scale solar projects for public facilities can be not only affordable, but sustainable and scalable as well.

With \$1.7 million, we have completed 63 rural solar energy projects serving nearly half a million people. That's less than \$4 per person.

Every one of these solar powered facilities has a solar business that generates enough income to fund its own maintenance over time. Furthermore, remote monitoring allows us to prevent problems with our systems before they start and enables our technicians to perform remote diagnostics, saving us the cost of sending technicians into the field.

This is a model that works. It allows us to improve rural health care, maternity services, vaccine access and education. We can pump clean water, which not only fights water-borne disease, but also promotes gender equality, food security and economic development.

As we all do our best in the days leading up to 2015, and as we plan for the new post-2015 framework, it is our hope that the public and private sectors continue to make new funding opportunities available to those working in the renewable energy sector. We, collectively, have the power to make great strides towards our pre- and post-2015 development goals if only we invest in the energy needed to make them possible.
