

## Israeli Humanitarian Aid

Israel views humanitarian aid as an integral part of its role in the international arena. The activities of MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development and Cooperation, are focusing on areas in which Israel has a comparative advantage and/or accumulated expertise. MASHAV believes that Israel's greatest possible contribution can be made in fields where it has expertise directly relevant to emerging nations.

Due to Israel's own successful experience of rapid development, the list of such fields is particularly extensive, including: irrigation, desert agriculture and combat of desertification, water management, early childhood education, community development, emergency and disaster medicine, refugee absorption, employment programs, etc.

Israel's efforts formally began in 1958, with the establishment of MASHAV, the Center for International Cooperation, following the first visit of then Foreign Minister Golda Meir to Africa. Since then, MASHAV has been invited to many developing countries where it has helped alleviate hunger, disease and poverty.

In the 1970s, Israel broadened its humanitarian aid agenda by granting safe haven to refugees and foreign nationals in distress – from Vietnam, Bosnia and Kosovo.

Since the 1980s, Israel has also provided humanitarian aid in the wake of natural disasters and terrorist attacks beyond its borders.

In all, over 140 countries/authorities have benefited from the State of Israel's international humanitarian aid.

In the mid-1990s, having provided emergency aid to disaster victims in Argentina, Armenia, Russia, Rwanda, Bosnia and other nations, the need arose for Israel to establish a permanent humanitarian and emergency aid unit.

Such unit was formally established in July 1995 jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Israel Defense Forces formally. The unit has carried out operations in Kenya, Albania, Macedonia, Mexico, Afghanistan, Poland, Congo, Vietnam, etc.

### >> For Additional Reading:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Humanitarian Aid

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/HumanitarianAid/Worldwide/>

Aid to Haiti, field hospital set up – January 2010

Aid team in Philippines – October 2009

Humanitarian and medical aid to the Democratic Republic of the Congo – Nov 2008

Israel flies in relief volunteers to Myanmar – May 2008

Israeli aid arrives in Sri Lanka and Indonesia – January 2005