

# **Impediments to environmental conflict resolution by planning authorities in Israel**

**Valerie Brachya**

**Deputy Director General for Policy and  
Planning, Ministry of Environment**

**Eran Feitelson**

**Professor, Geography Department, Hebrew  
University**

# Promotion of Mediation in Planning Authorities

## General

- Overloaded law courts
- Institutionalization of mediation
- Promotion of dialogue
- Promotion of participatory democracy

## Planning system

- Multiple conflicts
- Increasing NGO objections
- Legalisation of conflicts
- Proposals for mediation in planning
- Training in mediation for planners

# What is preventing environmental conflict resolution in Israel?

- Analysis of several case studies
- Identification of stakeholders
- Identification of the issues discussed and those which were not included in discussions
- Identification of agreements and problems in their implementation

# LPG storage at Rishon Letzion

## Proposal:

- Storage of 12,000 tons LPG at a new site to serve the central region
- Closure of the existing 3,000 tons storage site in north Tel Aviv
- Selection of new site within the building restrictions of the existing sewage treatment facility
- Location of new site south of the residential areas of Rishon Letzion

## Stakeholders:

- Gas companies
- Ministry of infrastructure
- Municipality
- Residents
- Members of parliament (residents)

# LPG storage at Rishon Letzion

## Issues not discussed

- Payment of rates to Rishon
- Reduce LPG storage requirements
- LPG supply system with no central storage
- National policy for concentrating risk activities at joint sites

## Issues discussed

- Decrease haulage distances
- Separate storage sites from residential areas
- Compensation for damage to city's image
- Compensation for loss of property values
- Release land for property development in North Tel Aviv

# Eilat Fishponds

## Stakeholders

- Fishbreeding companies
- Research institute
- Arava settlements
- Ministry of infrastructure
- Ministry of agriculture
- Ministry of environment
- Eilat municipality
- NGO's

## Proposal

- Directive for removal of existing fishponds
- Transfer of fishponds to inland location
- Protection of coral reefs from effects of increased nutrients

# Eilat Fishponds

## Issues not discussed

- Possibility of future fishponds in Jordan
- International concern over risks to coral reefs
- Sources of finance for transfer of fishponds
- Economic instruments for removing profits of non-compliance
- Differential approach to the 2 fishbreeding companies

## Issued discussed

- Main source of income for 5 settlements
- Precautionary principle
- Government support of research
- Tourist image of Eilat
- Profits from non-compliance
- Expert opinions on the likely damage to coral reefs

# Section 18 of Trans Israel Highway

## Stakeholders

- Highway company
- Ministry of transport
- Car owners
- NGO's
- JNF forest authority
- Nature authority
- Local authorities

## Proposal

- Continuation north of trans Israel highway
- Wadi Ara bypass
- Construction through undisturbed rural area
- High landscape and ecological values
- Multiple stream crossings
- Barrier to wildlife



# Section 18 Trans Israel Highway

## Issues not discussed

- Alignment proposed by green lobby in 2000 but rejected by government
- Change composition of committee to exclude representative of highway company

## Issues discussed

- Access from periphery to centre of country
- Loss of open space and its economic value
- Fragmentation of agricultural land and habitats
- Risk of groundwater pollution
- Barrier to wildlife
- Tunnel alternative

# Western expansion of Jerusalem

## Stakeholders

- Jerusalem municipality
- Israel Lands Authority
- Jerusalem development authority
- Nature Authority
- Green NGO's
- Regional Planning Authority
- Nature and Parks Board

## Proposal

- Expansion westward to maintain Jewish majority of residents
- Addition of 2 large neighbourhoods
- Addition of urban bypass
- Addition of area for employment opportunities
- Reclamation of disused quarry at Castel

# Western expansion of Jerusalem

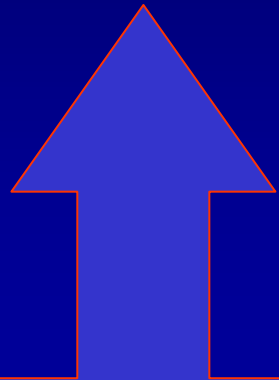
## Failure of Agreement

- Municipality and Lands Authority promoted development within the proposed green belt
- Reduction of green belt by Regional Planner's approval of cumulative building proposals
- Green belt not included in new Regional masterplan
- New information on availability of residential development areas within Jerusalem

## Agreement

- Approval of western expansion, with exclusion of highly sensitive areas
- Cancellation of proposed national park at Heret
- Addition of metropolitan park at Arazim valley
- Promotion of new national park to create green belt

# Discussions moved to other Fora

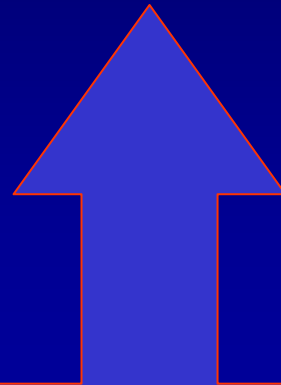


## Media

•Polarise conflict to create a narrative

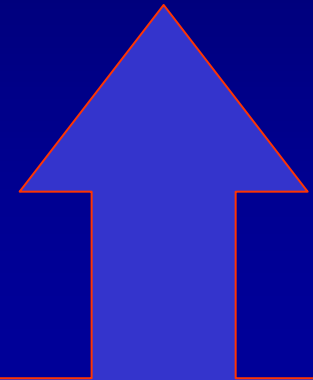
- Sympathy to objectors and NGO's
- Widen social

Aspects of conflict



## Political

- Lack of long term obligation
- Simplistic
- Populistic
- Power driven
- Media image
- Fast results



## Legal

- Setting norms
- Consistency
- Rigid processes
- Setting precedents
- Delays and costs

# Conflicts in the eyes of stakeholders

## Developers

- Delays
- Damage to image
- Unfavourable media coverage
- Unplanned expenses
- Loss of investors
- Access to decisionmakers
- Finance available

## NGO's

- Way to gain power
- Media coverage essential
- Image of credibility
- Need to show results
- Need access to information and finance for activities

# Attempts at reaching agreements

## Agreements

- Nahal Zalmon national park
- Western expansion of Jerusalem

## Public Hearings

- Expansion of Ashdod port
- Expansion of Haifa port
- Dead Sea Works industrial area
- Sde Barir phosphate field

# Impediments to conflict resolution

- No institutionalized form of mediation. Cases are by chance
- Planning authorities ignore results of mediation
- Authorities do not relate to main issues, particularly economic ones
- No attempts to “increase the pie”, particularly by economic measures
- Agreements not honoured
- Few attempts to reach agreements early in the process

# Claims by planning authorities against mediation

- Conflicts can be resolved by the tools available in the planning system with no need to involve other tools, such as economic
- The planner is “above” the conflict (comes from the UN)
- Planning authorities hear the claims from all sides but are not interested in generating dialogue between parties
- Planning authorities do not need to take into account agreements made in other frameworks outside the planning system