

# **Ninth President's Speech at the launch of the Israeli Innovation Center July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

President of the State of Israel, Mr. Reuven (Rubi) Rivlin,  
Prime Minister of the State of Israel, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, and Mrs.  
Netanyahu,  
Mayor of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Mr. Ron Huldai,

Dear Partners, Friends, and Distinguished Guests,

The State of Israel is the result of a miracle. It is the fruit of a vision.

It is the yearning of a small people to build a great nation.

There is no other nation in history that, with such a small space and population, also had to overcome destruction and the Holocaust.

To gather the exiles, to create new life out of death, to resurrect an ancient language.

To stand, the few against the many, through seven wars and cruel terrorist attacks.

We had no natural resources. We had small numbers and few friends, but we believed in our vision for rebirth. We created a new Genesis.

The vision was exhilarating, and reality was bleak.

I accompanied Ben-Gurion when he went to welcome the new immigrants, among them, survivors from the flames. I worked with him to obtain weapons for defense.

In the absence of resources from the earth, we found the greatest treasure of all. It is hidden within human beings. It is our human capital, which is richer than all the treasures that come from the ground.

This is what allowed us to reinvent our land, to turn the swamps in the north and the deserts in the south into a blooming oasis.

We overcame this stubborn land and, for the first time in history, created new agriculture through high-tech science.

From a nation lacking security, we created a strong army, became a powerhouse for science and technology, and are now on the cutting edge of military and social developments alike.

A nation embodying the Startup Nation.

Our human capital has enabled us to establish an independent and innovative nation, and to continue building a new future. A nation that places "Tikkun Olam" first, as a core priority.

And, instead of being a nation in need of assistance, we are able to provide aid to others in need.

We taught our sons and daughters to carry courage in their hearts and innovation in their minds, and to develop agriculture and develop strong security.

No other nation in the world has done such an amazing job.

The Innovation Center that will be established here will showcase our national pride and will advance peace between people. It will highlight inventions already created as well as those yet to be developed in fields such as science, technology, medicine and healthcare, agriculture, and industry.

It will present how to become a Startup Nation.

This Center will, of course, showcase achievements of the past, but its primary focus will be on the path to the future.

We will prove that innovation has no limits and no barriers. Innovation enables dialogue between nations and between people.

Here we will emphasize that we can promote peace from childhood, and we will spark the imagination of every boy and girl and enrich their dreams.

Dear Friends,

All my life I have worked to ensure that Israel's future is based on science and technology as well as on an unwavering moral commitment. They called me a dreamer.

But today, when I look at Israel, we all can see clearly that the greater the dream, the more spectacular the results.

I am proud of our young people. They have created a new reality. They are gifted with independence, creativity, and Israeli chutzpah. They overcame the obstacles along the way and answered every challenge that appeared.

Who would have believed that the entire world would one day use Israeli navigation software in their daily lives?

Who would have believed that this stubborn and infertile land would produce an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables, and that Israel would become self sufficient in water?

Who would have believed that millions of people would utilize an Israeli developed stent implanted in damaged heart arteries allowing sick patients to breathe? Who would have predicted that we could give paralyzed individuals the ability to walk through robotic legs that were created in Israel?

Before we knew how to build a bicycle, we had developed advanced defense systems.

And when they refused to sell us planes, we decided to try and produce our own manned and unmanned aircrafts. This allowed us to establish the world's best air force.

Our innovative spirit has been recognized the world over, and of course, my heart swells with pride when I see how many nations turn to the tiny State of Israel to learn from our bold innovations, to learn how to turn the impossible into the possible.

The Innovation Center will enable all young people – Jews, Muslims and Christians –to engage in science and technology equally, even though they may be different from one another.

The Innovation Center will prove that, through believing with all of your heart and working hard, even a country small in size (like Israel) can be a nation great in value.

The next generation carries the torch of technology, as well as the weight of our moral responsibility. Because technology without moral responsibility can destroy the world! And morality without innovation will leave the world hungry.

Our nation's identity, the ten commandments, was designed to instill in us the values of pursuing justice, seeking peace, and ensuring that each and every person has the equal right to be different.

It is imperative that we use innovation for the sake of both the economy and bettering society. For the sake of the human spirit. For the sake of healing the sick and strengthening the weak. For the sake of peace.

In the age of the Internet, we can and must bring the unobtainable close. We can prepare the way for peace and demonstrate its importance with cooperation that also leads to scientific benefits.

Peace, innovation and science must become common ideals. It should not only be Israel that enjoys the fruits of innovation, but the entire region. I implore our neighbors - Let us cooperate and create a startup region. Let's adopt the path of peace and innovation, always preferable to war and pain.

President of Israel, Prime Minister, Dear Guests,

I see our young generation. I am convinced that, within each one of them, lies the potential to be a scientist or entrepreneur. We must ensure that we never lose faith in a better future, a better world.

Finally, I have one small request –

Israel is a dream that came true.  
Permit me to continue to dream.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.