Ofir:

Dear partners – welcome to our latest update. Personal, direct, and as live as it gets!

Ronnie:

This year the OR movement created something totally amazing out of nowhere. Something that is capturing minds and hearts across Israel, among politicians and on the street: The Israel 2048 Vision for a Shared Future.

[…]

Ofir:

Let’s recap. Israel 2048 was born due to the recognition that Israel’s population is set to double itself. If we stick to a business as usual approach, we’ll have 17 million residents three decades from now. 13 million of these residents will live in worsening congestion that will only exacerbate the problems we already face today: the high cost of living, a shortage of affordable housing, and a huge gap in public infrastructures.

[…]

Ronnie:

Worse still, the proportion of underprivileged populations in the Negev and Galilee will be as high as 80%, stalling any prospects for economic development, proper use of the resources and opportunities in these areas, and real growth. Is that how we want Israel to look a century after its establishment?

Ofir:

So we prepared a plan for the next chapter in the story of building Israel. This is a paradigm-changing vision. Instead of a state with a single center with the socioeconomic profile of a third world country, we’ll turn Israel into a country with three distinct and sustainable centers that is a great place to live in.

[…]

Ronnie:

We began our journey a year ago by setting ourselves the goal of finding one hundred partners who will help us make our vision come true. The partners include the leaders of the most important bodies in Israel, from the government and from the business and social sectors. Even in our wildest dreams, we never imagined that a year later we’d have a list of over 350 partners – and the list is still growing.

[…]

Ofir:

The activities of the Group of One Hundred are led by the Council of One Hundred – a small steering committee including leaders of major Israeli bodies: the Student Union, the Association of Builders of the Land, the Negev Council, and others.

[…]

Ronnie:

We held national get-togethers with hundreds of participants, including senior economic leaders, as well as local meetings of the Negev Partners and Galilee Partners groups that selected the regional initiatives and growth engines that combine to form the overall plan.

[…]

Ofir:

As anyone involved with Israel knows, this was a stormy year and the government has been more or less paralyzed. Despite this, we managed to sidestep politics and create a unifying common denominator around our vision. The five largest political parties have all adopted the vision and included it in their platforms, including the Kahol Lavan party. We maintain strategic cooperation with MK Nir Barkat from the Likud and with the Growing Israel initiative (due to lack of time I’d end here), which together with Professor Michael Porter of Harvard published the nine future economic engines of Israel, to be integrated in the 2028 vision.

[…]

Ronnie:

We raised new proposals that are awaiting discussion by the government and we worked to make sure that the government ministries keep their promises. Examples include moving the IDF’s intelligence and computer units to the south; establishing transportation infrastructures between the cities of the Negev and Galilee; and deciding on a location for a new international airport in the Negev. We also persuaded government ministries to launch innovative joint initiatives in the field, with an emphasis on the development towns and populations that always get left behind.

[…]

Ofir:

Our focal point all along the way has been the national compass that guides us as we make the vision come true: the future map of Israel and how we get there. Our strategic team has laid the foundations for a Laboratory for Israel-s Future – a research and know-how center that is translating our vision into practical steps and creating governmental, business, and social initiatives. The Laboratory will work alongside the Israeli government over the coming years, studying benchmarks from around the world, and guiding Israel’s work plans. It will also measure the plan’s progress by using the 2048 Index, which will be presented at an annual public conference.

[…]

Ronnie:

The media in Israel love the plan. Over a single year dozens of articles about the OR movement and the Israel 2048 initiative appeared on news websites, in the leading newspapers, and on radio and television programs. We’re delighted to see that there’s a trend now in Israel to discuss long-term visions and programs. The Students Union has its Israel 2050 initiative, Nir Barkat is leading the Growing Israel plan, the Jewish National Fund has launched an Israel 2040 program, and there’s the Israel 2100 plan.

[…]

Ofir:

The peak moment in our efforts to raise awareness was undoubtedly the special supplement published by the Yediot Acharonot group for the 2048 Initiative. The supplement was distributed to half a million homes in June and marked the public launch of the 2048 Vision.

[…]

Ronnie:

But we’re not interested in credit and headlines. We’re interested in every citizen who is open to abandoning the old-fashioned stereotypes about the Negev and Galilee and to learning about a different reality, rich and diverse, that offers endless opportunities. To this end, the OR movement is running the Negev Gate visitors center in the Old City of Beersheva and the Negev and Galilee Information Center. These are the only centers of their kind in Israel, and they are welcoming tens of thousands of visitors a year.

[…]

Ofir:

We must add that alongside our top-down activities, we are also working hard at the grassroots level: establishing new communities – including Kasif, a modern Haredi city, a Bedouin community for members of different tribes, the community of Hiran, and the community of Daniel, which will be established in cooperation with the Alei Negev movement. For the first time in Israel, and perhaps in the world, Daniel will be a community planned and built for abled and differently-abled populations.

[…]

Ronnie:

Our flagship Equal Cities project began to operate this year in four cities: Dimona and Ofakim in the Negev, and Kiryat Shmona and Akko in the north. Equal Cities is a joint initiative of the OR movement together with the Ministry of housing and the Ministry for Social Equality. The long-term vision is to take what used to be called the “development towns” and turn them into attractive cities offering diverse opportunities for housing, employment, culture, education, and communal life. The cities will become magnets for newcomers and key engines for growth in the Negev and Galilee.

[…]

Ofir:

This is just a small taste of the main projects the OR movement has initiated. We aren’t alone – our partners, donors, families, staff, and volunteers are all what makes us tick. We invite everyone to join in and take part in this vital work for Israel’s future.

[…]

Ofir:

[Straight to camera:] We’d like to take this opportunity to wish everyone celebrating Shanah Tovah, a happy New Year and happy festivals. Thank you again to each and every one of you for sharing our vision and for your support, your hugs, your partnership, and your support. We need you – now more than ever.

Ronnie: Together – let’s keep building a nation!