

EDITORIAL

Despite the efforts of Israel's policy-makers to cause housing prices to drop by freeing national land, the measures adopted to date have not brought about the hoped-for results.

Coming quickly on the heels of one another, the recommendations and decisions of the bodies involved are generally not translated into practice, due to their impromptu nature.

They are marred by a lack of foresight, as well as a tendency to convert land into a ready commodity for the discharge of banking debts, or to use it as a catch-all remedy for a variety of ills plaguing Israel's economy.

Instead of concentrating on finding a solution to a single problem, and on learning from experience, decisions are made on different components of the land-management regime.

Fourteen resolutions have been passed on the rezoning of agricultural land; nevertheless, not even the latter two — No. 666 and No. 667, which had been termed "final" — have led to the desired outcome.

Meanwhile, a decision has been taken regarding the annual land-leasing fees that may well lead to their elimination, though they are one of the basic principles behind Israel's land policy.

Similarly, decisions on unplanned land allocation are tabled in haste and lack depth or proper information.

Such decisions run contrary to the principles of land policy by which Israel's Land Administration is bound.

On the other hand, time does not stand still and the ideology of national ownership over land, formulated by the Jewish National Fund, is rapidly approaching its centennial.

This ideology found two historic expressions in our time: the Covenant signed between JNF and the Government of Israel in November 1961, and the Government decision adopted by the Israel Lands Council in May 1965.

More than a generation has passed since the adoption of that decision on the principles of Israel's land policy, and this would seem to be the proper time to take an in-depth look at its stipulations and aims, in order to draw the necessary conclusions and effect change and amendment, if need be.

Such an examination must be undertaken by the Israel Lands Council, which would do well to enlist the help of top consultants from the academic field, and the sooner, the better.

Prof. Elisha Efrat, who opens this issue with an article entitled **Towards Changes in Israel's Land Policy**, analyzes the positions of both the agricultural sector and the official establishment on the rights to new land values deriving from rezoning for non-agricultural purposes. The author explains the reasoning of both parties and concludes