



**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (Rio+20)**

NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT

**Delivered by the Honourable Amy Adams
Minister for the Environment**

Wednesday 20 June 2012

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

I am honoured to represent New Zealand, and to amplify the voices of the Pacific as New Zealand is current Pacific Islands Forum chair.

New Zealand has come to Rio with a hope – that in reaffirming and renewing the world's commitment to sustainable development we will address the future of the planet and aspirations of future generations.

A healthy environment is essential for maintaining human life and livelihoods and for healthy economies that are sustainable into the future.

New Zealand is very conscious that resource use must be based on sustainability.

Good science is essential to quality policy decision making.

Best outcomes emerge when governments engage civil society.

In New Zealand the Treaty of Waitangi has created a special partnership between the government and Maori.

Looking beyond our shores, New Zealand's development assistance is directed to support sustainable development, in order to reduce poverty and contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world.

New Zealand sees a green economy as a driver of economic, environmental and social development. We are as focussed on how we grow, as how much we grow.

We recognise that there is no one size fits all solution. Green economy policies need to take into account different national circumstances.

More than 30% of New Zealand's land area and some 8% of our territorial seas are in reserves. Most of our energy is from renewable sources. New Zealand has a world leading fisheries management system. New Zealand's emissions trading scheme is one of the first in the world.

Internationally, New Zealand launched the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases, to help ensure agriculture could play a vital role in food security, poverty eradication and growth, without increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

New Zealand continues to promote the removal of trade distorting and environmentally harmful subsidies, whether these are for agriculture, fisheries or fossil fuels.

In looking at the green economy, New Zealand has focussed on areas that we believe can deliver real and substantial economic, social and environmental global benefits.

New Zealand has looked to Rio+20 to commit to phase out, over the medium term, inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, while mitigating adverse impacts on vulnerable groups.

The scale of subsidies for fossil fuels is massive. Estimates suggest that the total cost is between US\$400-600 billion a year.

Money spent on fossil fuels is money that could be spent on other sustainable development priorities. Some countries spend more on fossil fuel subsidies than they do on health or education.

Phasing out fossil fuel subsidies would deliver benefits for a greener economy and the climate.

New Zealand identified the sustainable management, conservation and protection of our oceans as an area for more ambitious collective action.

Fisheries support 170 million jobs and more than 1.5 billion people rely on marine resources for their protein intake.

Landlocked countries too are reliant on the oceans because of the impact of oceans on the global climate and because of the role they play in global trade.

New Zealand is particularly concerned about harmful fisheries subsidies which make a significant contribution to the worsening state of global fish stocks. Subsidies create overcapacity, undermine fisheries management decisions and can contribute to illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.

New Zealand is delighted at the commitment at Rio+20 to eliminate harmful subsidies in the fisheries sector. We have worked hard to address these harmful subsidies in the World Trade Organisation, but states need not wait for an outcome in Geneva. We are pleased to see Rio encourage states to eliminate these subsidies right now.

We draw attention to the 2011 call of Pacific Forum Leaders, including New Zealand, for Rio+20 to recognise the significant global value and contribution of the Pacific Ocean to sustainable development, acknowledging the stewardship of Pacific Island countries.

Pacific Leaders urged the international community to work towards integrated oceans management, using the Pacific Oceanscape as a model.

Leaders urged the realisation of international goals that contribute to the health and vitality of the ocean environment, including through the global network of marine protected areas agreed at Rio+10.

Leaders also highlighted threats to the ocean environment, including from ocean acidification, pollution and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Finally, to ensure that Rio+20 included strong outcomes on the conservation and sustainable management of marine ecosystems and resources, Leaders called for the maximisation of returns from the conservation and sustainable management of ocean resources.

New Zealand sees ensuring small island developing states enjoy a greater share of their marine resources as a priority. They are amongst the most fragile economies in the world. Collectively we must do all we can to support their efforts to strengthen their resilience. We are pleased to see commitments on these issues at Rio+20.

New Zealand is supporting sustainable development in the Pacific, Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean through programmes focused on investing in economic development, promoting human development, improving resilience and responding to disaster, and building safe and secure communities.

New Zealand's assistance has a particular focus on sustainable economic development.

Programmes include funding for a wide range of activities in support of agriculture, fisheries, tourism, transport services and renewable energy objectives. Activities are developed in close partnership with our developing country partners.

Examples include the substantial support provided for strengthened fisheries management across the Pacific region, for a major solar power project in Tonga and geothermal power in Indonesia and dairy and horticulture initiatives in Africa and Latin America.

Turning to the second theme of the conference, the institutional framework for sustainable development, we believe that form should follow function.

New Zealand believes reforms should be practical, achievable and effective, improve delivery on the ground and support national strategies, institutions and systems to achieve the development goals of the country concerned.

New Zealand has welcomed the initiative to develop sustainable development goals.

However, development of these goals should not undermine continuing international effort to achieve the millennium development goals.

New Zealand stands ready to participate in any process to develop these goals.

I am proud that so many committed New Zealanders have made the long trip to Rio to participate in this meeting in their own right.

There are issues on which the international community has found it hard to agree.

But what we have in common, what we all agree on, is the importance of a renewed commitment to sustainable development and the future of the planet.

That is the over-arching goal to which I, the New Zealand government, and New Zealanders, are committed.
