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Preamble and Declaration

Statement by Kushla Munro, Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

(check against delivery)

Thank you,

Let me begin, Mr Co-facilitators, by expressing Australia's deep appreciation for your continued hard work and leadership. The revised draft outcome document provides a sound basis for our continued discussion.

We have six areas of comment on the draft preamble and declaration. In the spirit of cooperation and with an eye to the timely conclusion of discussions by 31 July, we have been restrained in our comments at this stage.

First — and as befitting its transformative power — **gender equality and women's empowerment should be strengthened in the text.**

Australia aligns itself with the joint statement on gender equality delivered by Costa Rica on behalf of a diverse group of 31 countries. To be more specific, gender equality should be woven across the narrative of the five P's in the preamble. Further, in paragraph 19 of the declaration we should more clearly commit to end inequality, gender-based discrimination and violence and realise the human rights of women and girls. In the same manner, we should also strengthen paragraph 18 and commit to ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms are enjoyed by all without discrimination on *any* grounds.

The inclusion of paragraph 38 on the family is not appropriate, and we do not see value in its addition and propose its deletion.

Second, we believe that the new agenda more effectively incorporates the needs and priorities of people with disabilities. People with disabilities make up 15 per cent of the world's population and are disproportionately represented in all the bottom economic and social indicators on which data is collected.

We therefore request that a specific reference to people with disabilities be included in the preamble, specifically under People following "including children" as they too need special efforts to enable them to participate in development.

Third, we agree with the opening remarks made by you, Mr Co-Facilitator, that now as we approach our final lap, it is not the time to reopen agreement previously reached on language and principles, and we should not forget the circumstances or context within which these commitments were made.

We recall that the principle of common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR) was formulated in a specific historical environmental context and is but one of 27 principles in Rio. Further, and as we and others have said over the past two years, it does not apply across the post-2015 agenda. We regret that some have worked hard to instil an interpretation of CBDR that divides countries into two camps based on the state of the world more than twenty years ago. This binary divide is outdated and the language unnecessarily divides us instead of bringing us together towards a common purpose.

The idea of ‘shared responsibility’ eloquently captures the spirit of Global Partnership we are forging through this agenda and should not just be retained but strengthened in the declaration. ‘Shared responsibility’ recognises that all parties need to contribute to the success of this agenda, in line with their evolving capabilities. **We underscore that this is not a new ethic in development.** Instead it is one of the fundamental values we all collectively agreed in the Millennium Declaration and it is fundamental to how progress will be achieved in this agenda.

Fourth, we **welcome the endorsement of the Addis agreement in paragraph 33.**

Addis was the product of extensive consultation, expert advice and evidence. It represents a balanced consensus on the comprehensive package of financial and non-financial means necessary to realise our collective ambition for the post-2015 agenda.

Fifth, references **to revitalising the Global Partnership should be strengthened** as this will be critical to mobilising new and additional resourcing and implementing the new agenda.

In this regard, we note the inconsistency between the first paragraph of the preamble and paragraph 6 of the declaration. The latter’s call to action — namely that the new agenda ‘*will be implemented by all of us acting in genuine and lasting partnership*’ — better captures the spirit of partnership and we ask that it be brought forward into the preamble.

In making the Global Partnership work, we must also speak to development effectiveness and its underpinning principles; principles that have been successively reaffirmed over the last decade.

Without coordination among all actors, without national ownership, transparency and mutual accountability, we will see fragmentation and wasted effort. We propose inserting text along the following lines into paragraph 40:

Through the Global Partnership, we undertake to strengthen international development cooperation and maximise its effectiveness, impact and results. We will work in the spirit of global solidarity and shared responsibility, recognising that different partners have complementary resources, ingenuity and knowledge. The Global Partnership will promote mutual accountability, country ownership, transparency and the use of country systems.

Sixth, the text should clearly reflect that each country has primary ownership, leadership and responsibility for its own development.

Countries are best placed to understand what works, to tailor responses to national circumstances and priorities, and to coordinate efforts of development partners. Drawing on previously agreed language from the SAMOA Pathway, Istanbul Program of Action, Addis and Rio+20, paragraph 32 of the declaration should be amended as follows:

'The new agenda deals also with the means and revitalised Global Partnership required for implementation of the goals and targets. We recognise that each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development and that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasised. At the same time, we recognise that these will require the mobilisation and effective use of financial resources'

And lastly, as stated at our last session, Australia does not support the language on foreign occupation in the declaration of the post-2015 agenda.