



PRIME MINISTER

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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20)

RIO CENTRO, RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

21 JUNE 2012

Your Excellency, President Rousseff, President of the
conference,

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon,

Madam/Mr Vice President, Friends.

**In the twenty years since the first Earth Summit, the
world's great environmental challenges have grown.**

Biodiversity is being lost.

Many oceans and forests are threatened.

Carbon emissions and other pollutants have grown dramatically.

But in the same twenty years, the strength of the world's peoples to meet those challenges has grown too.

The global economy is twice as large as it was in 1992.

Economic growth has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty – building new lives of hope and building the capacity for communities to protect their natural heritage.

New technologies have emerged – and continue to emerge – driving green growth and clean energy use.

And even through difficult days, international determination for shared action towards shared goals has endured.

World leaders and their peoples have united in the past to achieve great environmental goals.

We can do it again.

That is why Australia believes that this Conference must agree to develop and then work towards a set of Sustainable Development Goals.

Everyone here knows that collective action is hard – and global collective action even harder.

Because through global collective action we seek complex change, with imperfect knowledge, through difficult actions.

Everyone here also knows that setting goals is important.

Because when we set goals, we put before ourselves a task which is practical and empirical.

To allocate resources with rigour – to define progress through a measure of our outcomes, not of our efforts or intentions.

And even when we set ambitious goals, which stretch our resources and test our resolve, we bring a precision and clarity to our work together – and in doing so we set the firmest possible basis for long-term success.

The Millennium Development Goals have transformed global thought and action against extreme poverty.

While much remains to do, it also true that much has been done.

Including being on track to halve the number of people living in poverty by 2015.

Yesterday I was delighted to accept an invitation from the UN Secretary General to co-chair the Millennium Development Goals Advocates.

And through this role Australia will do its part in the vital ongoing task of pursuing the MDGs.

Our own aid program is set to increase sixty per cent in the next five years.

This is an act of a generous people – but undoubtedly it is one prompted by a determined global project.

And we believe global thought and action against environmental challenges can be similarly transformed.

Friends

Sustainable Development Goals are not the only important objective we will discuss here.

The world needs new models of clean growth.

This must be grounded in an acceptance of this vital fact: that a growing global economy also consumes more energy.

Innovative new mechanisms like the Global Green Growth Institute, launched yesterday as an international organisation, can help.

Australia is playing our part, adopting market-based mechanisms like carbon pricing and investment for renewable energy technologies.

And as an island continent we understand the world needs a new focus on the health of our oceans and on the 'blue economy' they underpin.

Australia welcomes the resolve expressed here at Rio +20 to step up our efforts for our oceans.

Australia is pleased to see recognition in this conference of the need for greater action to conserve the high seas and their resources.

We hope that all states will act urgently on this global issue by developing a strengthened oceans governance regime under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, including for the establishment of marine protected areas.

We welcome agreement to take action to eliminate fisheries subsidies that contribute to over-fishing.

And to address the affects of climate change on our oceans, including acidification.

Again, Australia is playing our part.

Supporting collective action to restore depleted fish stocks, conserve marine ecosystems and improve the science of ocean management.

With additional funding of \$8 million to the Coral Triangle Initiative and up to \$25 million to the Pacific Oceanscape Framework.

And establishing a national network of marine reserves, placing some three million square kilometres under conservation management.

Women must be able to fully participate in and benefit from sustainable development.

I welcome warmly the Summit's affirmation of the vital role of women in all areas of sustainable development.

I was proud to be one of the Leaders supporting the Call to Action on Women earlier today.

Friends, with unity we can achieve change and that unity must embrace the world's women and all of our people.

And the world must listen to the knowledge of indigenous people and work with them as custodians of their lands and waters.

Yesterday Australia launched the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Land and Sea Managers Network, a forum that will help us listen and learn.

Friends

Rio+20 has brought us together for the third time in 20 years.

We are – each of us – greatly privileged to be present here today.

Let us greet this privilege with passion *and* perspective.

We are not here this week just to talk to each other.

We're here to decide, to agree – and then to act.