

New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations



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PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Statement by

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Check against delivery

New Zealand is looking forward to Rio+20 as an opportunity to re-energise and realise our common objective of sustainable development. For us, an ideal outcome would be a renewed political commitment to sustainable development, underpinned by agreement on focused forward looking actions. We must not only bank the achievements made since the first Rio Conference under each pillar of sustainable development, but also update and strengthen them to reflect today's reality and look towards to a more sustainable future for us all.

We have been asked to consider today the structure and format of the zero draft document. There are a number of possible precedents, some of which are long and detailed. Time is not in abundance to complete our work. New Zealand values quality over quantity. We need a document that will inspire us all, one that is tightly focussed on future action and concrete outcomes. In that regard, we should be ambitious yet pragmatic. We should be clear in our vision, yet take into account the multitude of different circumstances. Our blueprint for the future needs to be challenging yet attainable.

This week we have heard much about creating Sustainable Development Goals, a proposal that has potential to capture the imagination at Rio. New Zealand is open to constructive dialogue on coverage, content and measurability of possible SDGs. Like others, we would see this as a separate process from achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which should remain a key priority.

New Zealand's submission focused on areas where we see potential to make real and substantial differences.

We mentioned yesterday, in the statement given on behalf of Pacific Islands Forum members, some specific concrete outcomes that we are seeking relating to oceans. Priorities for New Zealand are commitments relating to:

- **Integrated sustainable oceans management:** the Pacific Oceanscape provides a possible model for an integrated approach to sustainable development of oceans and fisheries as it covers legal and governance issues, science and capability building aspects, local, national and regional resource management, engagement with stakeholders and processes for dealing with emerging issues;
- **Effective fisheries management,** including within Exclusive Economic Zones is crucial. Ensuring small island developing states are able to generate greater returns from the sustainable management of their fisheries resources is a key to achieving development goals in the Pacific region;
- **Continuation of the Regular Process for the Global Assessment of the Marine Environment, including socio-economic aspects:** sustainable oceans protection and management should be based on sound information and science. We seek collective commitment to further regular assessments of the marine environment, once the first assessment is completed in 2014;
- **Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing:** States should reaffirm their commitment to effective implementation of current mechanisms, mechanisms including port and flag state measures and catch certification processes. Further assessment of whether additional measures are required could be considered;

- **Taking concrete steps towards elimination of harmful fisheries subsidies:** Subsidies contribute to overfishing and overcapacity: in some cases subsidies are being provided to vessels which have a history of illegal fishing, as well as for activities affecting fish stocks which are already overfished. Given the worsening state of global fish stocks, fisheries subsidy reform needs urgent attention;
- **Creating a global network of marine protected areas,** providing for regeneration and protection of biodiversity, as agreed in Johannesburg.
- **Phasing out, over the medium term, inefficient fossil fuel subsidies** that encourage wasteful consumption and undermine sustainable development, while mitigating adverse impacts on vulnerable groups;
- **Improving access to clean, reliable, and affordable energy,** particularly renewable energy; and
- **Creating a framework supportive of sustainable agriculture and wise management of water resources.**

To underpin these outcomes, the institutional framework for sustainable development must become more effective and efficient. We first need a common understanding about what we want reforms to achieve. Institutional structures should not be an end in themselves but should facilitate the achievement of objectives that the international community sets. Form must therefore follow function. Perhaps the zero draft could begin by identifying the elements where there is common ground in the submissions rather than suggesting a particular structure at the outset.

For instance, before supporting the creation of new structures New Zealand would want to be sure that they would result in improved policy coherence and implementation of sustainable development objectives. We would also want to avoid the short-comings of the current international environmental governance framework which are well known. Change –whatever form it takes- should not provide an opportunity to shelter continuing poor coordination, communication and out-dated processes. And whatever structures we have must represent good value for money. All stakeholders, and particularly the institutions involved, should prepare themselves to work in new and innovative ways to support sustainable development.

We look forward to working together on these issues over coming months, and to a successful conference in Rio.