



New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Te Māngai o Aotearoa

High-Level Political Forum on
Sustainable Development general
debate: "Ensuring that no one is left
behind"

New Zealand statement

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New Zealand welcomes this, the first High Level Political Forum since the adoption of Agenda 2030.

We see this as a useful opportunity for us all to take stock of where we are at, and to learn from each other on how we can use the Sustainable Development Goals to make a tangible difference.

Together, we have 14 years to achieve a very ambitious agenda – it is time for action, and implementation.

We commend the 22 countries, including Samoa from our own region, which have set the ball rolling – and are here to provide preliminary reports on their approach.

New Zealand, like many, is going through its own process to work out how we can use the agenda to make a real difference.

We know that achieving the SDGs will require a cross-Government effort - and so we have set up a cross-government interagency mechanism to support decisions on where New Zealand's efforts can have the greatest impact.

New Zealand recognises that the Sustainable Development Goals are indivisible. However, as echoed repeatedly through the Secretary General's report, countries need to prioritise the Agenda according to their domestic circumstances and needs.

As a small state, we know that focus and prioritisation are crucial.

The Sustainable Development Goals provide an important frame of reference for policy development. A combination of domestic action, international leadership on global policy issues, and supporting countries through the New Zealand Aid Programme and other international cooperation instruments, will enable New Zealand to contribute to achievement of the SDGs.

At the UN meeting on Implementation of the SDGs here in New York on 21 April, New Zealand Minister for Climate Change Issues, Paula Bennett, identified issues that are of greatest importance to New Zealanders, and where the New Zealand Government is focussing its work.

At the global level, New Zealand will continue our leadership on issues *and actions* such as:

- elimination of fisheries subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, along with practical support to improve returns from sustainable fishing practices, particularly in the Pacific;
- eliminating inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies, along with improving access to renewable energy in the Pacific, and beyond;
- promoting an open, rules-based trading system under the World Trade Organisation, along with supporting regulatory reform and SME development in partner countries;
- advocating for small island developing states, and delivering our commitments on implementation of the SAMOA Pathway for Small Island Developing States.

Through our increasing aid investments, the New Zealand Aid Programme is well-positioned to support our partners' achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through its focus on sustainable economic development, and complementary investments in education, health, governance and resilience.

We will work with partner countries to support priority targets in the areas where New Zealand can be most effective. We will also play our part as a member of the Pacific Islands Forum to ensure an efficient and effective contribution at the regional level from the Forum Secretariat and related agencies.

We also know that we cannot achieve the agenda through government actions alone.

Already a number of NGOs and businesses in New Zealand are considering how their work helps, and are engaging productively with government agencies.

Through a joined up approach, New Zealand will continue to prioritise efforts to meet the high level of ambition set out in the SDGs.

Thank you.