

# **New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations**



## **Te Māngai o Aotearoa**

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### **High Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals**

#### **Round table No 3: Environmental Sustainability**

**Statement by  
Hon Phil Goff  
Minister of Trade and Disarmament and Arms Control**

**25 September 2008**

**Check against delivery**

There is a saying in Maori, the language of the indigenous people of New Zealand;

Manaaki Whenua, Manaaki Tangata, Haere whakamua

*Care for the land, Care for the people, Go forward.*

People, development and the environment are inseparable.

New Zealand is committed to the Millennium Development Goals and to doing all we can to reduce poverty and inequality. We share the Millennium vision for a sustainable world.

Millennium Development Goal 7 recognises that environmental protection is fundamental to development.

Like others, we are concerned that while progress has been made toward attaining some of the MDG targets, significant shortfalls are projected.

In New Zealand we are very conscious that the Pacific – more specifically, Melanesia - is the second area of the world after Africa which is most likely to fall short of MDG targets.

Regional analysis shows that Pacific countries are likely to experience increasing levels of vulnerability through degradation of their natural resource base, long term environmental change, and increased risk of natural disasters into the future.

On many islands problems of access to fresh drinking water and waste management are becoming increasingly severe.

Since the MDGs were adopted, new evidence has also emerged on the risks posed by climate change.

It is now recognized that the negative impacts of climate change will disproportionately affect poor people and undermine the achievement of the MDG targets on environmental sustainability, poverty and health.

Our near neighbours in Pacific Island countries have low levels of emissions but very high levels of vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

New Zealand is responding to these problems in our region through our development assistance programmes.

Over the next seven years New Zealand will provide over \$2 billion in development assistance to the region, with priority given to countries most at risk of not meeting the MDGs.

We are currently consulting with Pacific partners on the focus of our regional environmental development assistance through to 2015.

This programme, totalling up to NZ\$50m, is planned to concentrate on facilitating access to water and sanitation, and integrating environment into national planning.

Combined with our support for strengthening disaster management and response, this holds potential to also help deliver on climate change adaptation.

An example of our current work in this area is our assistance to the Government of Kiribati to strengthen coastal defences, protect its freshwater and storm-proof its hospital.

New Zealand is also a supporter of the Global Environment Facility in the region, including the Small Grants Programme which helps communities work to improve local resource management and therefore improve local livelihoods.

New Zealand is looking forward to working with others to organise, evaluate and coordinate clean energy technology development programmes in the Pacific.

We are also working to secure long-term benefits from conservation and sustainable management of the region's fisheries resources.

#### New Zealand commitment to environmental sustainability

New Zealand as a nation has made a commitment to environmental sustainability at home as well as through our development partnerships. My government wants New Zealand to become a world leader of innovative responses to environmental issues. We are striving to become the first country to be truly sustainable across our economy, society, environment and way of life.

We hosted World Environment Day this year to highlight the responsibility that we all share for securing the world's wellbeing for generations to come.

Domestically we are introducing an emissions trading scheme which covers all sectors of the economy – agriculture, forestry, transport and energy - and all gases covered by the Kyoto Protocol.

New Zealand will be the first country in the world to include agricultural emissions in an emissions trading scheme.

Returning to the challenge of meeting the MDGs, can I take this opportunity to welcome the new target of universal access to reproductive health under MDG5.

Finally, New Zealand sees the value of continuing to monitor global progress toward achievement of all the MDGs. For this reason we welcome the Secretary General's proposal for a review conference in 2010.