

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



## **Te Māngai o Aotearoa**

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**ECOSOC**

**SPECIAL MEETING ON THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS**

**STATEMENT BY**

**THE NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

**H.E. MS ROSEMARY BANKS**

**21 May 2008**

**Check against delivery**

Mr President

New Zealand welcomes this special meeting on global food security. The soaring and volatile global food prices have serious implications for a world already failing to ensure that its most vulnerable people, particularly women and children, have access to sufficient healthy food.

While analyses vary on the outlook for food prices, there is a broad consensus that many of the drivers of the current increase are set to continue, keeping food prices high.

As a global community, we need to respond to this multifaceted problem at several levels. First to provide immediate food security for those already dependent on humanitarian aid and those suffering from chronic and structural hunger.

At the same time there is an urgent need for medium and longer term investment in agriculture, especially in countries most affected.

New Zealand sees both tariff reductions and continued reform of agricultural markets as a essential elements of a long term solution. Export restrictions which lower supply on international markets may be counter-productive and exacerbate supply problems.

By contrast, lowering import tariffs can improve access conditions for traders and this step is more likely to increase supply and lower domestic prices. For these reasons, New Zealand sees a successful and rapid conclusion to the WTO Doha round as more urgent than ever. A sound outcome would help reduce overall market distortion in agriculture and provide fairer opportunities for developing countries.

New Zealand welcomes the leadership shown by the Secretary-General in calling together a task force of United Nations and other multilateral agencies to coordinate a global framework for action.

We thank you, Mr President, for organising this special session of ECOSOC. It has in our view been useful to have this opportunity to share views on the causes of the current food security situation, and on options for ways to address this.

We look forward to the FAO High Level Conference on World Food Security and over the coming weeks will be examining how New Zealand can best contribute to an action plan to address the food security challenge.