



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement on behalf of CANZ

1 July 2008

Delivered by H.E. the Hon Robert Hill
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

(Check against delivery)

It is my pleasure to speak today on behalf of the **CANZ Group**, namely the delegations of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

CANZ welcomes the holding this week of the Economic and Social Council's High-level Segment, which is the product of our common and concerted efforts since 2005 towards ensuring a **more effective and relevant ECOSOC**. The year has been an important one for the Council, dealing as it has with the economic causes and impacts of price spikes for energy and food, as well as the impacts of climate change. The Council should continue to address the most pressing issues, adding value where it can, and avoiding duplication of effort with other specialist forums.

Key to our efforts will be to advance agreement on the focus of our **forward agenda**. We welcome the suggestions by the Secretary-General on forward themes for the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and thematic debates, and would encourage Member States to consider their adoption as soon as possible.

Mr President

The focus of this year's **Annual Ministerial Review** could not be more pertinent. It is clear that progress towards achieving our goals for sustainable development has been mixed, particularly when it comes to integrating environmental sustainability as a key element of policy-making. While we have negotiated a vast number and wide variety of multilateral agreements, air pollution, deforestation, the widespread loss of biodiversity and overexploitation of marine resources continue to jeopardise livelihoods, particularly for the poor, and those of future generations.

There can be no doubt that **climate change** is now one of the key issues at the top of the international political agenda, and represents an enormous challenge for the international community. The Bali Action Plan has set the framework for reaching a new global climate agreement by the end of 2009, and we welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to the process.

Negotiations will now focus on meaningful emissions reduction obligations, assistance to be provided to help poorer countries adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change, and mechanisms for addressing technology transfer, deforestation and the development of private investment flows and robust carbon markets. CANZ will continue to play a key role through the UNFCCC, cognisant that our response to climate change can have positive co-benefits for other key environmental challenges. For example, climate mitigation and adaptation efforts will also help address desertification, air pollution, access to freshwater and stresses on important marine resources.

Our efforts need to be underpinned by a common understanding of our respective goals and objectives, and a resolute purpose to ensure responsible and transparent governance over the regulation and use of natural resources. Against this backdrop, we welcome and congratulate those countries who have made national **voluntary presentations** during the AMR – CANZ sees these presentations as one of the bright stars of the newly configured ECOSOC.

Mr President, the first fully fledged **Development Cooperation Forum (DCF)** also has particular significance in a year where we are reviewing the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus. The success of the DCF will be key to making ECOSOC a relevant forum for future discussions on development cooperation.

While we recognize the need to step up our efforts to reduce poverty and better align development cooperation with the goals we have set for ourselves, the Secretary-General's report tends to focus on the negative aspects of progress thus far. We agree that there is much progress yet to be made towards achieving the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**, but we should also recognise some of the successes.

For example, since 2002, we have seen record levels of economic growth in much of the developing world, with some making significant progress in reducing poverty and meeting the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. And there is now ample evidence that, as a result of improvements to the investment and business environments in developing countries, private investors are now the largest contributors of new investments in the developing world.

But Mr President, some of these gains will be compromised if we do not turn our attention quickly towards new and emerging challenges. This week's **thematic debate** provides an important opportunity to take stock of our response to food insecurity, bearing in mind our common objective of achieving the MDGs. CANZ is particularly concerned by the crisis facing vulnerable households and food import-dependent LDCs, most critically in sub-Saharan Africa and in some small island developing states, including in the Pacific.

It is now clear that rises in food prices have multiple and complex drivers, and so strategic and coordinated responses are crucial, tailored where possible to the specific market constraints faced by individual countries.

At the macro level, the draft UN Comprehensive Framework for Action and the World Bank's ten-point plan for its New Deal for Global Food Policy provide the broad direction for our response. As confirmed at the recent **FAO High-Level Conference on Food Security** in Rome, we need to address both the short-term impacts and root causes of food insecurity.

Recognising that our first priority must be to assist the poor and vulnerable in developing countries threatened with greater poverty and malnutrition, CANZ Governments have made significant contributions to the World Food Programme's emergency appeal. Looking forward, we must canvass options and initiatives for boosting agricultural productivity and research, reducing vulnerability, and liberalising international trade in food and agricultural products. A successful conclusion this year of the Doha Round of trade negotiations would be a significant step in the right direction by encouraging greater trade and production of agricultural goods, particularly in developing countries. CANZ will work bilaterally, regionally, multilaterally and in concert with the **Secretary-General's Taskforce on the Global Food Security Crisis** to realise these objectives.

Mr President

Development is a multifaceted and wide-ranging process, in which the different elements are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Naturally, the eradication of poverty, achieving gender equality, and environmental sustainability are key areas of focus for our development assistance efforts, including through the targeted delivery of aid, on-the-ground programmes and technical assistance, as well as appropriate debt relief. Our assistance is driven by the underlying premise that sustainable and broad-based economic growth, founded on sound macroeconomic policies and the contribution of a dynamic private sector, is crucial for driving poverty reduction, and must be underpinned by peace, security and stable and effective government.

Donors and recipient governments, international agencies, civil society and the private sector must all work together over the next seven years to realise the goals we set for ourselves in 2000. CANZ is fully committed to playing its part.