

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



## **Te Māngai o Aotearoa**

600 THIRD AVENUE 14<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10016-1901, USA  
TELEPHONE (212) 826 1960 FACSIMILE (212) 758 0827 HOMEPAGE: <http://www.nzembassy.com/newyork>

---

### **Second Committee of the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly**

#### **Agenda item 26: Agriculture Development and Food Security**

**Statement by  
HE Jim McLay  
Permanent Representative  
New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations**

**5 November 2012**

*Check against delivery*

Mr Chairman -

Understandably, New Zealand takes a great interest in ~~international~~ efforts to address agricultural development and improve food security. We strongly agree that there is an urgent need to step up efforts at all levels. This includes regional initiatives such as those in ASEAN countries as Thailand has described. The recent UN Conference for Sustainable Development (Rio +20) reaffirmed commitments to enhance food security and access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food for present and future generations. In that regard New Zealand welcomes the Secretary General's Zero Hunger Challenge as a vision for a future free of hunger.

Mr Chairman

Over more than 160 years my country's prosperity has been built by the hard work of our farmers: Most of our exports are, and will remain, in the agricultural sector. We are therefore acutely aware of both the opportunities and the challenges associated with agricultural development, and were pleased with the commitments made at Rio to increase global sustainable agricultural production and productivity, ~~and identified key areas for investment and support.~~ As in recent Second Committee resolutions, Rio also acknowledged the importance of empowering rural women as critical agents for enhancing agricultural and rural development and food security and nutrition. Like the G77 and China, we consider that closing the gender gap in access to productive resources should be a high priority.

It is widely accepted that **climate change** will be a major issue for the agricultural sector, with small-holder farmers in developing countries being particularly affected. Climate change also impacts our oceans and the availability of fish stocks, on which many people depend, both for their food and their livelihoods. Using innovation and technology alongside local knowledge, it is possible to increase both productivity and production in an environmentally sustainable manner. The challenge is to continue to work to identify climate resilient agricultural production systems which ensure food security and protect the environment. That must become a global priority

We regard investment in agricultural research on **climate-related adaptation** as a priority, and we recognise the importance of adaptation programmes, particularly in developing countries. New Zealand has been instrumental in setting up the **Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases** to explore how food production can be increased without increasing greenhouse gas emissions, and we encourage other countries to engage in this initiative. No country will willingly reverse a trend of increased agricultural production – so we have to find other ways of reducing emissions from agriculture.

We strongly support recent comments by the Director General of the FAO on the role **agricultural cooperatives** can play in increasing the income and productivity of smallholder farmers. New Zealand farmers have long recognised the value of co-operatives. Cooperatives are a serious business model; they can be very large scale. New Zealand is the world's largest dairy exporter, accounting for 40 percent

of the global trade in butter, milk powder and cheese, and that pre-eminent position is supported and sustained by our dairy industry cooperatives.

New Zealand also has a long-standing record of successfully **sharing our agricultural expertise**, and has recently been looking at how we can be even more innovative in doing that; including how we might get the private sector more closely involved in agriculture development programmes. And we've been exploring new partnerships with governments beyond our 'traditional' partners – including in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

However, Mr Chairman, growth in food production alone will not meet increasing global demand. Equally important is an **open and transparent trading system**, which enhances rural livelihoods and gives developing countries access to regional and international markets. The further liberalisation of agricultural trade under the WTO's Doha Round remains a top priority for New Zealand, not least the removal of agricultural subsidies which distort markets, incentivise unsustainable means of production and, as a result, discourage investment in agriculture in those countries that most need to enhance their food production. The phased reduction of tariffs, and agreed disciplines against protectionist measures which contribute to excessive price volatility in the global market, would provide a sound basis to move towards a more food-secure, more stable global economy. While progress has been slow, we encourage WTO members to work towards a comprehensive outcome on agriculture. Although there was no mention of the WTO agriculture negotiations in the final Rio Outcome Document, we were, at least, pleased at the commitment made to eliminate harmful subsidies in the fisheries sector.

We look forward to this year's discussions. We must use this as an opportunity to start considering how agricultural development and food security should be addressed, as indeed they must be, in the context of both the proposed sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda more generally.

You will, Mr Chairman, find New Zealand to be a willing and constructive partner in pursuing all those objectives.