

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



## **Te Māngai o Aotearoa**

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

#### **Agenda item 20: Sustainable Development**

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

**8 November 2012**

*Check against delivery*



2012 has been already been a big year for sustainable development, with so much of the first half of the year spent on preparations for, and then attendance at, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

While the Rio+20 Outcome Document is not perfect, New Zealand was pleased that many of its priorities were addressed in the final text. We had, for example, identified the sustainable management, conservation, and protection of our oceans as an area for more ambitious collective action. This in turn contributes to improved food security, livelihoods, economic opportunity, conservation, climate change resilience and natural disaster risk reduction. So, in our view, the text on oceans and fisheries represents real progress. And, although we would have preferred stronger language, we were also pleased with the reference to fossil fuel subsidy reform. We see subsidy reform as playing an important role in freeing up resources to meet the challenge of financing sustainable development and eradicating poverty.

However, discussions on these issues did not end at Rio. In many respects Rio was just the beginning. The Outcome Document establishes some processes with ambitious timetables, such as the working groups on sustainable development goals, and on sustainable development financing strategy, both of which will contribute to the post 2015 UN development agenda. And an important part of the post-Rio work will also be done in this Committee –in fact Rio has set us quite a work programme, starting now.

Last year most of the resolutions in this cluster were procedural in nature in anticipation of the Rio discussions. This year it will be important to have substantive resolutions that build on what was agreed at Rio, taking us forward from the June decisions. In this process, we should not lose sight of the overarching objective – what we seek to achieve is sustainable development; which, in our very strongly held view means development that integrates all three dimensions - economic, social, and environmental.

For New Zealand one of Rio's key decisions was to hold the third international conference on small island developing states in 2014. We are pleased that this very significant summit will be held in Samoa, one of our close Pacific neighbours. This Committee will decide the key modalities for that Conference. For New Zealand, it will be important to ensure that the Cook Islands and Niue, two very small Pacific countries who are not UN members, be allowed to participate in this Conference as states. As this Committee is well aware, they were excluded from participation as states in Rio in 2012, even though they had been eligible to do so in that same city in 1992, in Johannesburg in 2002 and in Mauritius in 2005. That must not be allowed to happen again. This will be a Conference about their future. It must include them. And, in a wider context, I also serve notice that, we will, as necessary, continue to raise this issue in relation to other conference modalities resolutions.

Renewable energy is another priority for New Zealand in this International Year of Sustainable Energy for All. As of 2010, 74 percent of our domestic electricity was generated from renewable sources; and New Zealand is on track to meet the Government's target of 90 percent renewable electricity generation by 2025. Energy is also an increasingly important focus in our development programme, as we are

acutely conscious of the high cost of using imported diesel to generate electricity. We are supporting solar power projects in Tokelau (moving from total dependency on imported diesel to 90 percent solar by the end of this year), the Cook Islands (whose main island will be 50 percent solar by 2015) and Tonga, and also geothermal power development in Indonesia. New Zealand has nearly a century of experience in developing and using renewable energy, making full use of its hydro, wind and geothermal resources. In fact, the world's very first commercial geothermal power station was opened in Wairakei more than 50 years ago. We are ready, willing and able to share that expertise with others, particularly with developing countries.

New Zealand recognises the important progress made in Durban last year on the global response to climate change. We are committed to working constructively with all Parties at this year's Doha meeting to conclude this phase of our work, making the transition to the implementation phase and beginning work on the new instrument under the Durban Platform.

The second Rio+20 theme, the institutional framework for sustainable development, must also be addressed in our work, particularly in the UNEP resolution. New Zealand said at Rio that we believe that form should follow function –that the institutional reforms should be practical, achievable, and effective. This is now also the challenge as we operationalise the Rio decisions.

Mr Chairman –

We must now seize the opportunities presented by Rio. New Zealand is only too aware that many of the challenges our planet faces require global solutions; so we looking forward, with anticipation, and with determination, to our collective work in this cluster. Rio was the mandate; ours is the task.