

NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL STATEMENT

Hon Tim Groser, Minister for Climate Change Issues

Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would first like to acknowledge the Government and the people of Poland, and thank them for generously hosting our discussions over these two weeks.

Amidst all the complexities of the scientific and political debate about the right way to meet the challenge from anthropogenic greenhouse warming, certain rather large realities impose themselves on that debate:

- First, the very recent Working Group 1 report on the science, comprising arguably the most important component of the IPCC's Fifth Assessment, could not be clearer: "Warming of the climate system is unequivocal....It is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th Century".
- Second, only a global response can deal with this challenge. The first response - the commitments of a limited group of countries which ratified the Kyoto Protocol - was just that: a first response. With the vast bulk of global emissions - now approaching 90 per cent - taking place outside the Kyoto Protocol, far wider participation in mitigation efforts is essential.
- Third, all countries participating in this complex negotiation have policy objectives other than climate change. Developing countries, even those emerging economies that have made huge progress in lifting hundreds of millions of people from absolute poverty, need to be sure that the commitments they undertake in the post-Kyoto future will not undermine the continued success of their development strategies. Equally, there are many developed countries - though my country is not one of them - that face formidable challenges with double digit unemployment and debt to GDP ratios around 100 per cent or greater. Policy prescriptions for climate change action that airbrush these realities out of the equation will not take us forward.
- Fourth, it is entirely legitimate for us to develop proposals across a suite of issues in this negotiation particularly with respect to adaptation, but at least in our view, there cannot be a serious debate about the pre-eminent importance of mitigation. It is, after all, the central objective of the Convention and everything comes back to it. A solid, long term agreement consistent with the broad mandate set at Durban for these negotiations will give everyone, no matter what their national circumstances, the confidence to take actions to meet this long-term challenge.

In the meantime, New Zealand is taking action. We are very confident that when the final data is available, we will have met our commitment under the Kyoto Protocol for the first Commitment Period 2008-12. For the period to 2012 to 2020, we have an unconditional, economy-wide 2020 responsibility target of 5 per cent below our 1990 emissions. We have taken this target under the Framework Convention, but will apply Kyoto Protocol rules to ensure our actions are transparent and have integrity.

In addition to our unilateral unconditional offer, we are keeping our conditional offer to do more - between minus 10 to minus 20 per cent reduction below 1990 emissions - on the table.

Our actions are not limited just to taking responsibility for our own emissions. In 2010, at the FAO Annual Ministerial Meeting, we formalised the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases. Its objective is to find ways to grow more food for a growing world population, without growing greenhouse gases which already comprise around 14 per cent of global emissions. The Alliance now has 40 member countries from all parts of the world, and is growing.

New Zealand formed the Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidies Reform to support the G20 intention to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. With something in the range of US\$400-\$700 billion spent globally each year, removing these subsidies could lead to as much as a 13 per cent reduction in global CO2 emissions – while at the same time delivering social and economic co-benefits.

Our place in the Pacific is important to us. More than half of New Zealand's \$90 million fast-start finance was spent in our neighbourhood on resilience-building and renewable energy projects. A notable success was support for Tokelau to reach over 90 per cent renewable energy. The Pacific Energy Summit we co-hosted with the European Union this year mobilised more than half a billion dollars for other sustainable energy projects in the Pacific.

In the UNFCCC, our eye is now firmly on the prize of the 2015 agreement, the landing zone for which is starting to emerge. Mr President, our delegation will work constructively with you and all other delegations to ensure that the Warsaw meeting will be a success and an important step towards a comprehensive legally binding agreement with participation and commitments commensurate with the scale of the problem.

Thank you.