

Australia Statement: Durban High Level Session

Madam President, distinguished delegates.

Addressing climate change is a global effort, dependent on the work done at home by each one of the countries in this room.

Australia comes to these negotiations playing its full and fair part.

After two decades of debate, Australia's Parliament has legislated an historic economic and environmental reform.

From 1 July 2012, Australia will implement an emissions trading scheme.

Our new laws will cut pollution, drive energy efficiency and ignite renewable energy opportunities.

They will harness the power of the market, at home and internationally, to deliver abatement at the lowest cost.

This means Australia will do as we say: we will meet the emission reduction targets we have pledged, and continue to reduce emissions over the long-term.

Indeed, Australia's legislation includes a new long-term target to cut Australia's emissions by 80 per cent by 2050.

So we will play our part in the global response to climate change. But this global response must be environmentally effective for all our futures.

The future of the Kyoto Protocol is the focus of some debate here in Durban.

Australia's position remains unchanged - we will be part of a second commitment period only if it is a part of a wider agreement covering all major emitters.

We have this approach because we are committed to an environmentally effective outcome.

The reality is that a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol may only cover 15 per cent of global emissions. A more comprehensive agreement is fundamental for environmental effectiveness.

The Durban outcome must put us on that path.

Madam President

Australia has heard the calls for help to meet the challenge of adapting to climate change.

That is why Australia promised \$599 million in new and additional fast-start financing, more than half of which is directed at adaptation.

Australia is delivering this funding on time and in full.

Today I am able to announce details of Australia's fast-start allocation of \$25 million to help African nations adapt to climate change.

This will help better manage water resources, boost food security, and climate-proof agriculture.

And Australia is committing a further \$99 million to help small island developing states in the Pacific and the Caribbean to adapt to climate change - supporting robust and relevant climate science to plan for possible impacts and helping them access climate finance.

On financing, as on mitigation, Australia is doing what we said we would do.

Madam President

Last year in Cancun all countries agreed the goal of holding global warming to below two degrees Celsius.

Ninety countries - including all major emitters - have made mitigation pledges to back that commitment. These pledges are not yet enough to reach our goal, but they are a strong foundation.

Australia wants to build on this foundation a new, truly comprehensive climate change regime.

Australia believes that such a regime should be in place as soon as possible.

In the meantime we must continue to put in place some of the key building blocks of that regime:

- The Green Climate Fund.
- The mechanisms to advise developing countries how to adapt to climate change and tap into the technology they need to grow cleanly.
- The transparency rules that will give us all confidence that countries are implementing what they pledged, and allow us to compare effort.
- The improved international carbon market mechanisms that will allow the world to reduce pollution at least cost.

Madam President

We want to see progress on these important issues here in Durban. Australia will continue to play its part.