

National statement COP18/CMP8 - New Zealand
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Delivered by

His Excellency the Honourable Simon Bridges

Minister of Consumer Affairs

Associate Minister for Climate Change Issues

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Mr President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

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

Mr President, New Zealand remains resolutely committed to playing a constructive role in tackling climate change.

We accepted a responsibility target under the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period. New Zealand is on track to meet that commitment.

We have recently announced that our next commitment, in the transition period to 2020, will be under the UN Framework Convention. In our clear view, this is both a principled and strategic decision.

A Kyoto Protocol covering less than 15 per cent of global emissions is not - and never can be - an effective response to meet our two degree goal. It is our past, for some it is our present, but it is not our future.

Durban shaped, and Doha will set in train the transition to 2020. One component is the second Kyoto commitment period. Another is the full gamut of actions being taken by those who have tabled Convention pledges. Action during the transition is vital.

You can be assured that New Zealand's mitigation efforts will continue post-2012. We'll set a firm target for the transition, and intend to apply the broad framework of Kyoto rules in giving an international account of our progress against this target. We will formally confirm our approach next year, once we know the outcomes from Doha.

In addition to being principled, our action is strategic, because New Zealand will start a process of transitioning key elements of the

architecture created under the Protocol into the broader UN Framework. While the Kyoto Protocol is not the future - there will be no third commitment period - it is an important foundation for our efforts to tackle climate change.

The future for climate change is in the Durban Platform. The new legal agreement must fundamentally be about participation and creating an enabling environment for action by all. If we get this right, then we create the necessary conditions for a more ambitious and environmentally effective outcome.

New Zealand is, by any standards, a small developed country with the emissions profile of a developing country, yet we remain determined to do our fair share in addressing climate change. We're also working to extend global emissions reductions beyond our own footprint.

In June last year we formalised the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases with a Charter signed in Rome. To date, we have welcomed 32 other countries into this initiative, which addresses the crucial question of how we feed a growing global population without adding to emissions. We remain committed to working with others to solve this issue.

Our work also extends to the reform of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. We continue to work hard to raise the profile of this issue, and were pleased it was picked up in Rio this year. It's wrong that we're working to cut fossil fuel emissions on one hand, but then subsidising their production and use on the other. If ever there were low hanging fruit, then this is a vital piece.

We also take seriously our responsibility to assist our Pacific Island neighbours, who are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. We have focused our fast-start finance on the Pacific, and we are committed to continuing these climate finance flows next year and beyond.

Our finance for the Pacific includes a major focus on renewable energy and we congratulate Pacific countries for their efforts in this area. As one example, New Zealand and Tokelau have worked together to convert the electricity supply of its three atolls from almost 100 per cent reliance on imported diesel to 100 per cent solar - a world first.

In Doha, we must be determined to succeed collectively - not only to define the longer-term - but to continue to act and implement what we've already set in train in the here and now.

Tackling climate change requires the commitment and action of all Parties. Only with such a comprehensive agreement will we be able to make a real difference.

As we say in New Zealand's indigenous language of Maori: Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa. Thank you.