



UN High-Level Political Forum 2023
New Zealand General Debate Statement

19 July 2023

As we pass the midpoint for the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, Aotearoa New Zealand remains committed to the High-Level Political Forum as an opportunity for us all to take stock, learn from each other, and most importantly, recommit to the pursuit of the shared horizon that is the 2030 Agenda.

With just seven years left to achieve the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda, we are reminded of the precariousness of our world and our ability to address the challenges facing people and the planet. The only way to realise the 2030 Agenda is through collective, concerted, and coordinated action, yet we are often stymied by our national interests. And no one should be left behind.

The path is charted, the horizon is clear, the Agenda is our framework for “free[ing] the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet”. We must act swiftly and decisively – words alone can no longer be evidence of our commitment to the SDGs.

One of the key characteristics of the 2030 Agenda is its universality. It is a transformational approach for *all* countries. For that reason each and every country should and must chart their own course toward realising the Agenda. Our context in Aotearoa New Zealand is informed by the interconnectedness of our region, the Pacific. What happens domestically often resonates regionally and vice versa. We are partnering with and supporting Pacific countries to meet their resilience challenges and to reach their intergenerational goals. Against a background of intensifying discussions around reform of international financial

institutions and development effectiveness, we must ensure that these conversations centre and hold space for the voices of those most impacted.

Turning to the five SDGs under review for 2023,

- Sustainable Development Goal 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation

Access to clean water is a human right and is increasingly imperilled due to climate change impacts. While we are fortunate to have an abundance of water, Aotearoa New Zealand continues to work to improve secure access to clean water and sanitation. Across the Pacific, we have a series of programmes that invest in providing secure access to safe drinking water, and working to provide communities with infrastructure that enables effective sanitation. Women and children are especially vulnerable when access to water and sanitation is inadequate.

- Sustainable Development Goal 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy

Aotearoa New Zealand strongly supports SDG7. 82 percent of our electricity generation is renewable. We aim to reach 100% by 2030. Aotearoa New Zealand's International Development Cooperation supports our partners' energy priorities, with a particular focus on climate change mitigation and improving climate resilience and climate change adaptation. Aotearoa New Zealand also seeks to mobilise high-quality finance needed to support our development partners' transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, while ensuring this transformation is fair, equitable and inclusive, and safeguards the most vulnerable.

- Sustainable Development Goal 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Industry development in Aotearoa New Zealand is focussed on transforming sectors of the economy with significant potential to contribute to a high productivity, high wage and low

emissions economy. Māori Treaty partners, businesses and workers are involved with setting a long-term vision for this transformative change.

In the Pacific, our support for agriculture, tourism and digital infrastructure requires consideration for sustainability, value add and building capability.

For example niche food manufacturing offers opportunities for farmers and agribusinesses to compete on quality, branding and sustainability rather than just price.

In **tourism**, our future focus is on sustainable tourism, building sector capability and destination differentiation to tap into higher value visitors.

We are investing in **digital** infrastructure in the Pacific region to improve internet connectivity and speed and reduce costs.

Access to affordable finance is a key constraint across all industries, particularly for medium and small medium enterprises in Small Island Developing States. We are supporting a range of initiatives to crowd in private finance in the Pacific, including with regional and international organisations.

Industry, innovation and infrastructure investments all need to ensure that they are inclusive and benefit marginalised groups.

- Sustainable Development Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

Governments around the world are reassessing what is needed to enhance cities and communities to meet major social, environmental, climatic, economic and cultural challenges. In Aotearoa New Zealand 72 percent of the population live in urban areas. Challenges for us include ensuring sufficient affordable housing, addressing congestion, rapid technology change, reducing pollution and shifting demographics. Our partners in Asia and the Pacific face similar challenges, although these are often magnified where

there are large megacities or rapid shifts in migration from rural to urban areas. We can share experiences and best practice to learn from each other to ensure our cities and communities are sustainable, safe, healthy and comfortable for all.

- Sustainable Development Goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals

The 2030 Agenda will not be achieved in isolation, but rather through collective effort and action. All countries have a part to play in realising these aims. The common phrase used to encapsulate this idea is “if you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together”. So is this true for the 2030 Agenda.

It is important to remember that each and every country is at its own point in the journey toward 2030. Action and support must always have at the centre, the voices of those most affected. We do not see it as our role to tell our development partners what to do. Rather we listen to them and take their lead.

At a practical level we need to ensure that investments to achieve the SDGs are effective, and lead to positive change. In order to know this we need to collect good data and be transparent about how our investments are allocated and spent.

Goal 17 is a reminder that what we do here today reverberates across our shared stewardship of this planet and of each other. So as we reaffirm ourselves of the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda let us do in a spirit of one mind, one heart, one horizon.

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Thank you.