



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.AustraliaUN.org

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SIDS Session

Statement by the Australian Delegation

(Check against delivery)

Madam Chair and distinguished delegates

Australia has always recognised the opportunity to discuss implementation of sustainable development goals in small island developing states (SIDS) as an important and integral part of the Commission's proceedings. With much of the populations in SIDS reliant on agriculture, forestry and fisheries as a primary source of livelihood and food, Australia strongly encourages the Commission to reflect solutions for SIDS in the outcomes of CSD17.

We listened closely to the interventions of the distinguished representatives of Grenada and Tonga on behalf of SIDS and Pacific SIDS respectively.

Australia has a longstanding commitment to partnerships with SIDS in the Pacific. Under the new initiative, Pacific Partnerships for Development, partner countries can expect to benefit from greater long-term predictability of Australia's overseas development assistance. These Partnerships commit Australia and our partners to making faster progress towards the Millennium Development Goals through mutual respect and responsibility, based on best practice aid delivery to

improve governance, increase investment in economic infrastructure and to achieve better health, education and social outcomes.

Through the Port Moresby Declaration of March 2008, Australia has also committed to work to increase its cooperation with other donor countries and organisations, and international financial institutions across the region. This commitment recognises that aid is most effective when partner countries lead development efforts and donors coordinate their assistance to work through partner systems. As a signatory of the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* and the *Accra Agenda for Action*, Australia is firmly committed to integrating these approaches to aid delivery with our Pacific neighbours.

Australia is already implementing this approach by providing assistance to enhance food security in the region. For example, the Australian Government is working with donors and regional organisations, via a World Bank convened working group, to address the impacts of rising food and fuel prices on Pacific island countries. Further, Australia is supporting the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI). This is a new partnership among the governments of Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands (known as the CT6). It builds stronger political will and commitment for concerted action amongst these countries to conserve marine biodiversity and effectively manage their marine resources to ensure sustainable industries and food security in a changing environment.

Adapting to the effects of climate change is another critical issue that Australia is working with Pacific SIDS to address. As noted at CSD 16, climate change is the significant cross-cutting issue for Pacific SIDS. Pacific Island Countries will be a priority focus under the Australian Government's \$150 million, three-year commitment to climate change adaptation. Measures such as this will build upon existing support, including the long-running Pacific Sea Level and Climate Monitoring Project and other practical assistance to build resilience to climate change by improving water resource management, increasing water storage capacity, diversifying crops and replanting mangroves.

Australia is also investing in the Pacific Land Program to assist countries that wish to improve their land tenure systems and supports Pacific regional organisations, including the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Pacific Regional Environment Program.

In these and other ways, Australia will continue to engage and assist small island developing states, especially in the Pacific. We will continue to draw on our experiences and technical capacities to assist in implementation of solutions to the unique challenges small island developing states face on sustainable development.

Thank you Madam Chair.