

NEW ZEALAND MISSION to the UNITED NATIONS



Te Māngai o Aotearoa

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON THE MIDTERM REVIEW
OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

PLENARY STATEMENT

STATEMENT BY HER EXCELLENCY MS ROSEMARY BANKS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

18 SEPTEMBER 2006

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madame President,

Tena koutou katoa,

The theme of this year's General Assembly general debate, implementing a global partnership for development, is directly relevant to this Brussels Programme of Action five year review. The key to success in eradicating poverty in Least Developed Countries (LDC) is through global partnerships.

Through the seven commitments of the Brussels Programme of Action, least developed countries urged stronger action from themselves and from donors to focus on people-centred development, to promote good governance, to strengthen human and institutional capacities, to make globalisation and trade work for LDCs, and to protect the environment.

Only modest progress has been made in the past five years, and it is unacceptable that there is still so much poverty and hunger in least developed countries. We welcome this High Level Meeting as an opportunity to renew our commitments to supporting the least developed on their path toward sustainable growth.

The New Zealand Government, through its international aid and development agency NZAID, contributes approximately 29% on average of the ODA bilateral budget to Least Developed Countries. NZAID has a core focus on the Pacific, where five of our partners are LDCs; Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Kiribati.

New Zealand also has programmes in Cambodia, Lao and Timor Leste, as well as a modest regional programme that includes Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique.

LDCs face complex challenges and they are least likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The Secretary-General in his report identifies three particular obstacles to implementation by least developed countries of the Brussels Programme of Action – country ownership, capacity and resources.

NZAID has aimed to recognise the constraints of country ownership and capacity in its programmes for LDCs. We have done this by aligning as closely as possible with partner countries' systems, and by encouraging harmonisation with other donors, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

New Zealand has taken a leading role in helping to bring donors together in the education sector in the Pacific. A practical example of this is the joint project between New Zealand, the European Union and the Solomon Islands to cover three years of investment in the education sector.

An important principle of NZAID's engagement with LDCs is to build partner capacity, including in public sector management and governance.

We recognise, however, that the primary responsibility for development in LDCs rests with LDCs themselves. The voices of least developed country partners were heard at Cotonou recently. We need to listen to them. At Cotonou they asked for the increased support of countries like New Zealand to achieve the commitments of the BPOA.

We need to use all the mechanisms available to us to support LDCs' development, including committed action in international forums. The WTO is an excellent example. While LDCs are not themselves expected to make commitments in the Doha Round of trade negotiations, they have the potential to reap significant gains. But only if we as an international community are able to make progress towards an agreement that delivers improvements in market access and reduces the distortions prevailing in international markets. We must ensure when negotiations resume that the progress already made in the Doha Round is retained. New Zealand, for example, already provides duty-free and quota-free access for LDC products.

At country level we can provide increased support through our partnerships with governments, civil society and the private sector. We can also encourage UN agencies to focus more on least developed countries.

The least developed countries represent the economically poorest and weakest segment of the international community. Let us hope that in five years time we shall have some better results, and through our dialogue and sharing of experience, some deeper understandings of the responses that have been most successful in implementing the Brussels Programme of Action.

Tena kotou, Tena kotou, Tena kotou katoa

Thank you