

**New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations**



**Te Māngai o Aotearoa**

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**HIGH LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AS A  
CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY**

**THEMATIC PANEL**

**STATEMENT**

by

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

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Check against delivery

Co-chairs  
Distinguished Delegates

Today's task is to consider the way forward for achieving the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and new global biodiversity goals and targets.

The urgency of that task is clear.

The current global biodiversity target - achieving a significant reduction in the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010 - has not been met. The consequences of that collective failure are serious.

Biodiversity underpins the effective functioning of the ecosystems on which we depend for food, fresh water, health, protection from natural disasters and reducing the negative impacts of climate change.

On current trends, we are moving closer to a number of possible tipping points that will undermine our capacity to provide those essential services; so, New Zealand accepts the need for urgent action.

When resources are scarce, we recognise the need for well targeted, cost-effective and innovative solutions; so, in considering how to achieve the CBD's three objectives, we have identified four priorities:

- First, the importance of concluding current negotiations for a Protocol on "access and benefit-sharing" (ABS) to give effect to the CBD's third objective: *"the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources"*.

A practical and effective ABS Protocol would be an important incentive to achieving the CBD's two other objectives, *the conservation of biodiversity* and *the sustainable use its components*, especially for developing countries.

- Second, establishing at next month's Conference of the Parties to the CBD, new global biodiversity goals and targets that inspire action and are truly "SMART" – specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic and time-bound.
- Third, to provide better scientific information for policy and decision-making by progressing the possible establishment of an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).
- And fourth, given resource constraints, we must develop more practical, innovative and cost-effective solutions to build capacity.

To illustrate the fourth point, an exciting initiative took place in New Zealand in April - the type of activity that's necessary to deliver the CBD's objectives. Building on our close relationship with our Pacific neighbours, and drawing on our expertise, New Zealand hosted a workshop to explore how invasive alien species management techniques used in our region could be extended to other regions.

Invasive alien species are key factors in biodiversity loss and have a hugely negative impact on both environment and livelihoods, particularly affecting the poor.

This "*Helping Islands Adapt*" workshop focused on developing regional action plans for the Caribbean, Coral Triangle, Indian Ocean and Pacific, in response to threats to biodiversity posed by invasive alien species as a result of climate change. It was convened with the support of the CBD Secretariat, The Nature Conservancy and Global Island Partnership, and brought together heads of agencies and senior representatives from island states and territories and NGOs.

A clear objective was to produce action rather than words; so the workshop targeted agency heads of and senior representatives who were able to commit to the resolutions that were developed. By the end of the workshop, contacts and commitments had been established for strengthening coordination and integrated action through national, regional and global networks, partnerships and plans.

I am pleased to report that commitments made at the workshop have already been put in place, and were reported to the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice in Nairobi in May.

The four action priorities I outlined would make a real and practical difference to achieving the CBD's objectives; and I look forward to sharing views on these and other ways for achieving our common and urgent biodiversity goals.