

NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT

World Summit on Food Security

Delivered by Hon David Carter, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Biosecurity

Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates.

I wish to be frank. Very simply we have failed to meet the aspirations set by the World Food Summit in 1996. Rather than reducing, the number of hungry and malnourished has increased, to around one billion people.

In the face of such a collective failure, we have no alternative but to confront this situation with an intensified political commitment, new thinking, new approaches and a new resolve to make a significant and enduring impact.

The **Declaration** that we adopted at the start of this meeting provides guidance. We must now deliver.

At the international level, we see some positive signs. The leadership of the UN High Level Task Force has provided a comprehensive and coherent agenda. The clear position of the G8 has helped cement food security as an important issue on the international agenda.

However, hard questions need to continue to be asked about the performance of the FAO in the context of food security, and how its efficiency and effectiveness can be improved. The reform process that is underway is a positive step but its implementation must continue at pace. If it does not, then the credibility of the FAO will be called into question.

During this Summit there have been many calls for increased aid flows to overcome poverty and hunger. By all means it is critical that those with plenty support those without.

But we cannot donate development.

Sustainable, long-term increases in the living standards of the poor and hungry can only come when national governments and local communities take ownership of their own development processes.

Trade

Mr Chair, the Declaration very sensibly draws attention to the role that **trade** can play in reducing poverty and alleviating hunger. However, this focus could be even greater.

It is only common sense that food should be produced in the areas that are best suited to doing so, by those that are more efficient at doing so.

It is deeply regrettable that collectively we have not yet been able to complete the **Doha** Round, to so address the distortions that penalise efficient producers and impair the opportunities for farmers in developing countries to lift themselves out of poverty and to make their contribution to alleviation of hunger. It is incumbent on all WTO members to pursue a successful and rapid conclusion to the Doha Round.

It is also deeply worrying to New Zealand that in some quarters the food security crisis is being used as an excuse for increased trade protectionism. An open and free international trade system that allows food to be produced in the most efficient location is an essential requirement if the current food security challenge is to be addressed.

Climate Change

Since the 1996 World Food Summit we have all become acutely aware of the challenges imposed by **climate change**, and the need to protect the natural resource base for agriculture. Addressing these issues is fundamental to maintaining an agricultural sector that will feed the growing global population.

The Summit Declaration urges that we “proactively face the challenges of climate change to food security” and that we “promote research for food and agriculture, including research to adapt to and mitigate climate change”.

Mr Chair, New Zealand accepts that challenge. In recent months New Zealand has committed significant resources to lead the development of a "Global Alliance" on agricultural greenhouse gas mitigation research.

This Global Alliance will enhance collaborative research on agricultural emissions reductions. It will deepen and broaden existing networks of research and build new ones. It will increase support and resources for agricultural emissions research, and enhance the development and application of agricultural mitigation technology.

Its overall aim is to enable the developed and developing world to produce more food with lower greenhouse gas emissions, ensuring food security for the future.

Conclusion

Mr Chair, the Declaration adopted here this week is a declaration of confidence that the problem of hunger can be overcome.

It is our responsibility to current and future generations to ensure that that confidence is not misplaced. Our failure to do so in recent years is acutely disappointing and something that we must all take some blame for.

It is our duty to ensure that these mistakes are not repeated and that an effective international and national response to the food security crisis is implemented.

Thank you.

(722 words)