

[As delivered]

STATEMENT

by

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New Zealand

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Dear Guests,

It is great to have the opportunity to address this 39th session of FAO.

I'd first like to acknowledge Samoan Minister Le Mamea Ropati who is doing an outstanding job chairing the conference.

I attended a wonderful dinner on Saturday night with the South Pacific countries. This proved to be a valuable opportunity for us to share ideas and engage socially over some lovely Italian food and beverage.

I acknowledge that FAO is increasing its focus on small island states and the unique challenges that we all face. New Zealand endorses this approach.

I'd like to take the opportunity to congratulate Director-General Graziano da Silva on his re-election.

New Zealand looks forward to continuing working with you and we support your focus on driving efficiencies, and consolidating on the gains you have made over the last four years. We also support your focus on decentralisation and on the regions.

FAO is strongest when it focuses its limited resources into areas where it has a strong comparative advantage like international standards development for food safety in Codex.

Sound international standards - those of the IPPC - are needed to help protect agriculture from unwanted pests and diseases and maintain important international access to markets.

New Zealand is an isolated island state with a unique biodiversity. We understand the importance of a strong biosecurity system more than most, and I have made biosecurity my

number one priority as Minister.

There are many challenges for FAO to grapple with.

One of those is the sustainable management of global fisheries and the elimination of illegal fishing which must remain a key priority for all of us.

Another issue is ensuring we have global food supply to meet the needs of an ever growing population.

We support the strategic framework on food security to ensure that people around the world have access to safe and nutritious food.

New Zealand is trying to do its part. We feed around 40 million people.

We became a global food producer in 1882 with the first ever shipment of frozen sheep carcasses to the United Kingdom. We now export quality food products to around 130 countries (many are represented in the room today).

But we are still a relatively small player on the international stage producing 1% of world beef production, 3% of dairy and 6% of world sheep meat production.

There has been much talk in Milan and here at this Conference about the hundreds of millions of people who don't have enough food. This has been a challenging global issue for many years.

The solution is not just about awareness and collaboration amongst the 194 FAO member nations. We really need to drive for results through sound agriculture policies and more open trade.

Short sighted protectionist policies can hurt the very people these interventions seek to help. This is done by locking local producers into unprofitable and eventually unsustainable production.

New Zealand abolished agriculture subsidies in the early 1980s. While initially painful, it was ultimately the best decision for our farmers.

Our farmers had to look for new markets and adopt new innovation inside the farm gate. We now produce food far more efficiently than we did 30 years ago.

For example, in the 1980s we had around 70 million sheep. We now have around 30 million sheep - less than half our 1980s flock - and yet we can still produce the same amount of sheep meat.

There are many challenges facing farmers around the world, these include the impact of climate change and the need to make efficient use of the world's limited natural resources.

New Zealand has been at the forefront of efforts to find ways of increasing agricultural production without increasing greenhouse gas emissions. New Zealand was instrumental in promoting the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases, and it is proud that 45 countries have now committed to the GRA.

It is my belief that we can all learn from each other and together we can secure more sustainable food for future generations to enjoy.