



## **NEW ZEALAND**

### **Submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the *Dialogue on Land and Climate Change Adaptation Related Matters***

**October 2020**

1. New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to submit its views relevant to the dialogue on the relationship between land and climate change adaptation related matters (“Dialogue”), not intervening in other processes under the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, including those carried out under the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (paragraph 32 of decision 1/CP.25 refer).

#### **Context**

1. New Zealand is cognizant that due to the current COVID-19 impacts and measures globally, the Dialogue must be postponed. We warmly welcome the idea of it being conducted virtually.

2. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is unequivocal in underscoring the role of land in the climate system in the Special Report on Climate Change and Land.<sup>1</sup> Land provides the fundamental basis for human livelihoods and well-being, as well as the supply of food, fresh water and multiple other ecosystem services. Land both absorbs and emits greenhouse gas, and it plays a key role in the exchange of energy, water and aerosols between the land surface and atmosphere.

3. Climate change can have a multitude of interrelated impacts on land. It exacerbates land degradation, particularly in low-lying coastal areas, river deltas, drylands and in permafrost areas. We are experiencing this globally through events such as increased rainfall intensity, flooding, drought frequency and severity, heat stress and coastal erosion.

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<sup>1</sup> [Climate Change and Land, an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems.](#)

4. Changes in land conditions can also impact on global and regional climates. At the regional scale, changes to land conditions can affect temperature and rainfall in regions as far as hundreds of kilometres away. For example, drier soil conditions resulting from climate change can increase the severity of heat waves, while wetter soil conditions can cause the opposite effect.<sup>2</sup>

5. As stated by the IPCC, many land-related responses that contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation can also combat desertification and land degradation and enhance food security. A wide spectrum of these responses has been identified. There are response options with immediate impacts including the conservation of high-carbon ecosystems such as forests. There are also options which provide multiple ecosystem services and functions but take more time to deliver including the reclamation of degraded soils.

6. With the global population set to reach over nine billion in 2050, we will see increasing demand for nutritious food and more emphasis on ensuring food security. Land will continue to play a pivotal role. Food security globally has been impacted as a result of global warming, for instance through changing precipitation patterns, and greater frequency of some extreme events. Furthermore, climate change is projected to further reduce food supply stability as the magnitude and frequency of extreme weather events disrupting food supply chains increases. Recent measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 have also disrupted food supply chains, which will likely have lasting effects as the world recovers.

7. Adaptation and enhanced resilience to extreme events that impact food systems can be supported by agriculture diversification, establishing the right trees and forests in the right places, expansion of market access, and preparation for increasing supply chain disruption. New Zealand advocates for policies which incentivise sustainable land management for climate change adaptation, including improved market access, empowering women and indigenous peoples, reforming subsidies and supporting and enabling trade system.<sup>3</sup>

### **Land and Climate Change Adaptation Related Matters in the UNFCCC**

8. New Zealand is of the view that the Parties to the UNFCCC already recognise the importance of land in the climate system. The UNFCCC has established valuable fora for Parties to discuss matters related to land and adaptation. Work has been mandated through the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, and other bodies established under them.

9. The Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture, which was established by the Conference of the Parties at its 23<sup>rd</sup> session has enabled Parties to address issues related to agriculture through workshops

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<sup>2</sup> [Climate Change and Land, an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Several OECD reports outline the potential harmful negative impacts of trade distorting subsidies, including the 2020 report “The Economic and Environmental Impacts of Climate Change and Trade Liberalisation on the Agricultural Sector”.

and expert meetings. The Koronivia road map included a workshop in June 2019 on *Methods and approaches for assessing adaptation, adaptation co-benefits and resilience*.<sup>4</sup> This workshop facilitated a valuable exchange on the methods and approaches for assessing adaptation and resilience in agriculture; adaptation co-benefits; work undertaken by financial entities; and cross-cutting perspectives of farmers, youth, local communities and indigenous people.<sup>5</sup>

10. Parties in the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture have also agreed one additional workshop to the original roadmap to focus on sustainable land and water management, and strategies and modalities to scale up implementation of best practices, innovations and technologies that increase resilience and sustainable production.<sup>6</sup> This was due to take place in March 2020, but was postponed due to COVID-19 measures. New Zealand advocated strongly for this additional workshop and has contributed funding to the UNFCCC for its undertaking.

11. COP25 featured a number of forest related events, notably the high-level UN Leadership Dialogue on Turning the Tide on Deforestation organized as a first follow-up dialogue for the call for joint UN action, with seven Heads of UN agencies committing to the common goal of helping countries reduce deforestation and improve forest management. New Zealand actively participated in these dialogues, including providing information about how we have included forestry in our [Nationally Determined Contribution](#) and Emissions Trading Scheme as ways to encourage afforestation and discourage deforestation.

### **New Zealand views on the Dialogue**

12. New Zealand is committed to playing its part in the global response to climate change and transitioning to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy. The primary sector (agricultural, horticultural, forestry, mining and fishing industries) accounts for just over half of New Zealand's total export earnings. It has played a crucial role in supporting the New Zealand's economic resilience throughout our response to COVID-19. Therefore, land is a crucial factor in the prosperity of our trade-reliant economy. The Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry sector is also important in contributing to New Zealand's emission removals, in 2018, the sector offset 30 percent of New Zealand's gross emissions.<sup>7</sup> For these reasons and more, New Zealand places great importance on how we manage land and adapt to the increasing impacts from climate change.

13. New Zealand has a land area of approximately 270,000 square kilometres. The combination of a low population density, a long coastline (approximately 19,800 kilometres), varied landscape and economy reliant on primary production, make New Zealand highly vulnerable to the risks associated with extreme weather, sea-level rise and shift in climatic conditions. We can expect these changes to

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<sup>4</sup> [Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture roadmap](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Workshop report FCCC/SB/2019/1](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Draft conclusions from SB50 FCCC/SB/2019/L.2](#)

<sup>7</sup> [New Zealand's Greenhouse Gas Inventory 1990-2018](#)

have severe effects on land and human systems. These effects include challenges to productive systems, and pressure on indigenous ecosystems through changing biosecurity threats and increased vulnerability to erosion, sedimentation of waterways, and wildfires through increased risk of rainfall and drought events.<sup>8</sup>

14. New Zealand prioritises adaptation to climate change together with mitigation. In August 2020, the Government published New Zealand's first [National Climate Change Risk Assessment](#). This assessment provides an overview of how New Zealand may be affected by climate change. As part of this assessment, a framework has been established which will enable a broad range of risks and opportunities to be systematically compared in terms of their nature, severity and urgency.<sup>9</sup>

15. In 2019, New Zealand passed the Zero Carbon Act, which provides a framework by which New Zealand can develop and implement clear and stable climate change policies. The Act created split targets for greenhouse gases and biogenic methane. The Act sets a long-term emissions reduction targets to reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases except biogenic methane to net zero by 2050. The Act sets a target to reduce gross biogenic methane emissions by 10% by 2030 and 24-47% by 2050. These targets reflect the call in the IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C that "limiting warming to 1.5°C implies reaching net zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions globally around 2050 and concurrent deep reductions in emissions of non-CO<sub>2</sub> forcers, particularly methane".<sup>10</sup>

16. In late 2019, the Government, primary sector, and Māori established a partnership programme, He Waka Eke Noa<sup>11</sup> to work towards achieving greenhouse gas reductions from our agricultural sectors. In 2020, New Zealand also made a number of reforms to the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme to improve its effectiveness to drive greenhouse gas reductions, including improving its ability to encourage afforestation and recognise the benefits of permanent forest establishment.

17. The Zero Carbon Act includes a mandate for the Climate Change Commission to carry out National Climate Change Risk Assessments every six years. In response to this risk assessment, the Act requires that the Minister for Climate Change prepares a National Adaptation Plan which sets out the Government's objectives for adapting to effects of climate change; the Government's strategies, policies, and proposals for meeting those objectives; the timeframes for implementation; how the actions in the plan will address the risks found in the risk assessment; and the measures and indicators that will enable regular monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of the strategies, policies, and proposals.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> [New Zealand's Environmental Reporting Series: Our land 2018. Ministry for the Environment & Stats NZ \(2018\).](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Arotakenga Huringa Āhuarangi: A Framework for the National Climate Change Risk Assessment for Aotearoa New Zealand](#)

<sup>10</sup> Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 °C: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

<sup>11</sup> Te Reo Māori translation for "We are all in this together".

<sup>12</sup> [Zero Carbon Act 2019, Section 5ZS](#)

18. We hope the Dialogue will highlight the ways in which the UNFCCC has addressed issues relating to land and climate change adaptation, and how Parties can benefit from this. We suggest a focus on two to three key questions. These questions might include:

- How can the existing work between various fora under the UNFCCC on land and climate change adaptation related matters be consolidated to provide Parties with coherent information and options for implementation?
- What technical support can the UNFCCC's constituted and subsidiary bodies contribute to Parties' efforts to plan and increase their resilience to the current and projected impacts of climate change on land?
- How can the UNFCCC facilitate and support the inclusion of land and adaptation measures in Parties' Nationally Determined Contributions?

19. New Zealand suggests consideration be given to basing the Dialogue on expert panel presentations, and to including presentations on the status of existing work on land and climate change adaptation related matters under the UNFCCC, with a view to identifying any remaining gaps. New Zealand is of the view that the Dialogue is an opportunity to take stock on where current discussions are, and the direction they are likely to head.