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NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT FOR 40TH FAO CONFERENCE

**Statement by His Excellency Patrick John Rata, Ambassador and
Permanent Representative of New Zealand to FAO**

Agenda Item 9 – Review of the State of Food and Agriculture, and with reference to the theme of the Conference – “Climate change, agriculture and food security”

Thank you very much Mr Chair and greetings to everybody present this afternoon.

The overall challenge is clear. We must produce significantly more food than we do currently to feed a fast growing global population, and we must do so in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and that minimises production of greenhouse gases.

Agriculture plays a vital role in New Zealand’s economy: it accounts for 10% of our GDP and half of our export revenue. We are a country of 4.5 million people and we produce enough food to feed about 40 million people.

We export 85% of our product and we are the 12th largest agricultural exporter in the world. Having said that, we are still a small player in production terms: for example, we produce only around 3% of the world’s milk.

We are an ambitious country and we believe agriculture can do better, both economically and environmentally. New Zealand is committed to finding innovative ways to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that come from producing food while at the same time maintaining our ability to supply a growing global demand and help address food security imperatives.

New Zealand has an unusual greenhouse gas profile for a developed country, with agriculture making up about half of our total emissions. This is due both to our large agricultural sector but also the fact that New Zealand has already transitioned to clean energy sources.

Mr Vice-Chair,

Reflecting the important role that agriculture will play in meeting obligations under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, New Zealand provides leadership in the Global Research

Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases (the GRA), formed to increase international collaboration in research, development, and the extension of technology to improve agricultural productivity whilst reducing emissions. The GRA now has 48 member countries and partnerships with over a dozen organisations including FAO.

Through the GRA, New Zealand has invested more than 33 million dollars in collaborative research and capability development since 2010 – connecting New Zealand’s scientific expertise to more than 60 other countries. We intend to continue this investment and, together with our partners, and hope to expand the GRA’s membership so that even more countries are collaborating on research to tackle this global challenge.

New Zealand has helped to organise a side-event on Partnerships for Climate Action in the Agricultural Sectors in conjunction with the GRA, FAO and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, which will be held on this coming Thursday coinciding with the launch of the FAO’s Climate Change Strategy – please come along if you can.

In addition to tackling greenhouse gas emissions in our domestic agriculture sector, New Zealand provides significant climate change support to Small Island Developing States.

At COP21 New Zealand announced we would provide up to NZ\$200 million in climate-related support over four years (2015-2019), most of which will benefit Pacific Island countries. We are delivering on this commitment: providing approximately \$44.6 million in climate-related support in the financial year ending June 2016.

Our co-hosting of Pacific Energy Conferences with the EU has enabled us to mobilise finance at scale. Combined, our 2013 and 2016 events mobilised over \$2 billion in finance for renewable energy projects in the Pacific.

Mr Chair,

New Zealand welcomes the work FAO has done to develop its Climate Change Strategy. The goals of FAO are to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, reduce rural poverty, and make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable. It is clear that major transformation of agriculture and food systems globally is required to achieve these goals in light of climate change.

As developing countries start to implement their commitments under the Paris Agreement, they will require assistance to transform their food and agricultural systems. Collaborative partnerships with organisations such as the GRA, the NDC-Partnership and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition are central to supporting countries to access new knowledge and

innovative technologies that not only mitigate the impacts of climate change, but facilitate sustainable resource use and improved productivity.

New Zealand also wishes to emphasise the increasingly important role that trade will play in climate adaptation by transferring food from food surplus regions to food deficit regions and by allowing food production to occur in regions where it can be carried out most efficiently. Trade restrictions need to be minimised and infrastructure needs to be improved to ensure this can occur.

The role of global standards in areas such as food safety is critical for enabling trade, and New Zealand very much supports the central role played by FAO in this regard as host of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the International Plant Protection Commission.

Mr Chair, finally, the world is facing unprecedented challenges at the nexus of climate change, agriculture and food security. These are truly global challenges that require us to work collectively in a spirit of collaboration and partnership to tackle. New Zealand looks forward to continuing our work with FAO and with the other countries in this room to address these challenges.

Thank you.