

Tim Groser

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New Zealand Commits to UN Framework Convention

The Government has decided that from 1 January 2013 New Zealand will be aligning its climate change efforts with developed and developing countries which collectively are responsible for 85% of global emissions. This includes the United States, Japan, China, India, Canada, Brazil, Russia and many other major economies, Climate Change Minister Tim Groser says.

In the transition period 2013 to 2020, developed countries have the option of signing up to a Second Commitment Period (CP2) under the Kyoto Protocol or taking their pledges under the Convention Framework. The Government has decided that New Zealand will take its next commitment under the Convention Framework.

“I want to emphasise that NZ stands 100% behind its existing Kyoto Protocol Commitment. We are on track to achieving our target – indeed we are forecasting a projected surplus of 23.1 million tonnes. Furthermore, we will remain full members of the Kyoto Protocol. There is no question of withdrawing. The issue was always different: where would we take our next commitment – under the Kyoto Protocol or under the Convention with the large majority of economies? We have decided that it is New Zealand’s best interests to do the latter.

“It is our intention to apply the broad Kyoto Framework of rules to our next commitment. This will ensure that at least New Zealand has started a process of carrying forward the structure created under the Kyoto Framework into the broader Convention Framework. This had been a point of principle of some importance to many developing countries. It would also mean that there would be no changes in domestic policy settings which had been modelled on the Kyoto Protocol rules.”

Mr Groser says that Cabinet was well aware that the Australian Government has reached a different view of what is in Australia’s interests. He had been in frequent contact with the key Australian ministers on this matter.

“Australia currently has a different set of domestic policies in place, at least until 2015, when the fixed price regime is intended to be replaced by an emissions trading scheme. We will continue to work closely with our Australian colleagues on climate change matters.”

The next decision will be to set a formal target for NZ’s future emissions track through to 2020 to sit alongside our conditional offer to reduce emissions between minus 10% and minus 20% below 1990 levels. “Cabinet has agreed in principle to set that target once we know exactly what the final rules will be on some crucial technical issues, including access to international carbon markets.”