

~~Revised Version~~

Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

EDD

Country statement: Australia

Australia welcomes the opportunity to participate in this inaugural Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, noting that it is the first of a series of annual meetings that will feed regional priorities and perspectives to a high-level global United Nations forum that will monitor and guide the post-2015 development agenda.

It is vital to reflect on the development experience and priorities of countries from our diverse ESCAP region. We have listened with interest to the views of others, and find many points of commonality, including for example the point made by the Philippines on the value of civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) as an input to planning development strategies and monitoring progress.

However, we are not all going to agree with each other all the time. For example, some have suggested that the concept of 'common but differentiated responsibility' (CBDR) is relevant to discussions on the SDGs. That is not Australia's view – nor is it the view of many other countries as expressed in the SDGs Open Working Group. In fact we need to underline that, as defined in Rio principle 7, CBDR applies specifically to global environmental degradation. It is not an overarching principle of the Sustainable Development Goals.

There is no doubt that the Millennium Development Goals have demonstrated the importance of economic growth in reducing poverty. This new SDG agenda, therefore, needs to:

- acknowledge the drivers of economic growth - including trade liberalisation, women's economic empowerment, and good governance;
- promote investment – for example in infrastructure and energy;
- support trade and market access; and
- reflect the vital role of the private sector.

These are essential avenues for creating economic opportunities and reducing poverty. At the same time, this new SDG agenda must take forward the unfinished business of the MDGs and focus also on other critical determinants of development, including health, education, gender, food security and water.

We value the opportunities that this APFSD is providing to deepen our collective understanding of the issues. Australia is committed to working constructively with all stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, as we step through the global processes necessary to develop the sustainable development agenda. In essence, Australia seeks a post-2015 outcome that can rally international development efforts around a simple and compelling agenda – an agenda that focusses global efforts on sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.