

NEW ZEALAND**Aupito William Sio**, Temporary Alternate Governor

Tēnā koutou Honourable Governors and President Asakawa.

It is my great pleasure to make these remarks to you in person, as we gather together for the first time since the Annual Meeting in Fiji in 2019.

We meet at a time of multiplying crises, with rapidly growing food insecurity, as well as an energy crisis, driven by the supply chain shocks from the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The economic effects of the pandemic continue to linger, the impacts of the climate crisis are becoming more visible every day, and geopolitical tensions are becoming a stronger headwind to collective action and multilateral solutions. The ADB's mission to build cooperation and integration across our region has never been more important, and the Asian Development Fund must continue to play an essential role.

President Asakawa, we welcome the major programme of reforms that you have initiated to ensure that the Bank can deliver on Strategy 2030's vision. We support transformation within the Bank and scaling up support to address the climate crisis and we look forward to partnering with ADB as we deliver our own scaled up grant-based climate finance of NZ\$1.3 billion to 2025.

A long standing priority of Aotearoa New Zealand is for the ADB to improve how it delivers – less bureaucracy, more flexibility, and tailored ways of working that are fit for purpose, particularly for smaller members. This is where we see the greatest value to be achieved in the Organisational Review, alongside a stronger focus on digital transformation. We call on ADB to deliver, with urgency, on an ambitious modernisation of its ways of working in the next few years.

Mr. Chairman, the coming years will continue to be very challenging for our members. The recent G20 Expert Panel Review of MDBs' Capital Adequacy Frameworks offers a number of recommendations to unlock greater levels of vital development finance. While it will ultimately be for us as shareholders to collectively respond to these recommendations, management is best placed to advise on each of the recommendations during the upcoming capital adequacy framework review.

Finally, Aotearoa New Zealand strongly welcomes the second report to the Board of Governors on gender diversity at the ADB Board of Directors and thanks Directors for their continued commitment to addressing this issue. As the report notes, it is the collective responsibility of the current Board and the membership, represented by Governors, to consider the report's useful insights into the underlying reasons why there continues to be such an imbalance and offers practical actions a range of stakeholders could take.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.