



**CONVENTION ON  
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WORKSHOP ON INCENTIVE MEASURES FOR  
THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE  
USE OF THE COMPONENTS OF  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
Montreal, 10 – 12 October 2001

**STATEMENT FROM NEW ZEALAND TO THE WORKSHOP ON INCENTIVE  
MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE  
COMPONENTS OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

*Submission by New Zealand*

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

1. At the request of the Government of New Zealand, the Executive Secretary is circulating herewith, for the information of participants in the Workshop on Incentive Measures for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Components of Biological Diversity, a document submitted by that Government entitled “Statement from New Zealand to the Workshop on Incentive Measures for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Components of Biological Diversity”.
2. The document is being circulated in the language and the form in which it was submitted.

## **Statement from New Zealand**

**to**

### **The Workshop on Incentive Measures for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Components of Biological Diversity**

While New Zealand generally supports the work of the Convention on the important issue of incentives, we remain concerned that the framework for reviewing incentive proposals will be fundamentally flawed if it is based on assumption that humans are motivated primarily by the possibility of personal gain or loss. This assumption ignores valuable opportunities to create incentives that encourage people to develop a conservation ethic, and to participate in conservation efforts even if that participation has a personal cost. This concern has been reflected in our interventions on the issue at meetings of the Convention, and was the reason why we submitted our case study.

Our experience has been that people's willingness to support the protection and sustainable use of biological diversity is ultimately influenced by their cultural and/or ethical belief systems. Because of this, we have found that the most successful incentive regimes:

1. reinforce "good beliefs";
2. encourage people to develop new good beliefs; and
3. remove the barriers that prevent people from acting on those beliefs.

#### *Beliefs as primary motivators*

Our experience has been that most people will try to do what they believe to be "right", i.e. whatever is consistent with their personal belief system and/or the norms of the society in which they live. For example, New Zealand gardeners may remove ginger plants from their gardens because they believe that ginger is a serious weed that endangers native plant reserves. In removing the plant, the gardener inevitably incurs some costs. The tangible costs are the time, effort, and possibly money, spent to remove and destroy the plants. There may also be intangible costs such as the loss of a plant that the gardener is fond of. In this example, the gardener is not motivated by the threat of punishment or the offer of any financial rewards. Instead, they are motivated to act, and willing to bear some cost, out of a sense of moral duty or greater good.

#### *Analysis of effects*

We have found that the best incentives develop and build on such good beliefs. Therefore, we believe that the Workshop's analysis of proposed incentives should be based on the

effect that such incentives are likely to have on people's beliefs. Organising them in other ways, for example according to whether they are regulatory or economic in nature, obscures their real effect. In our experience, the effect of incentives can be analysed in terms of the following objectives:

1. *To articulate and enforce societal norms.* Regulations can impose societal norms on individuals whose personal belief systems are contrary to that norm. In addition, publicity, education and other non-regulatory mechanisms can reinforce the societal norms.
2. *To remove conflicting or perverse societal signals.* Society may send signals through non-economic mechanisms, such as education systems, national policies and planning rules, encouraging, for example, the retention of natural vegetation remnants on private farmland, but send conflicting economic signals, such as subsidies for land clearance. The perverse nature of the subsidy needs to be recognised and addressed.
3. *To persuade individuals to modify their personal beliefs to fit with the societal norm.* The most common mechanisms for this objective are education, publicity, and social pressure.
4. *To remove barriers to compliance with personal beliefs or societal norms.* Even if societal norms are clearly and consistently articulated, there may be barriers that discourage individuals from acting on those norms. Those barriers might include lack of resources, lack of knowledge, lack of techniques, etc. For example:
  - a farmer may not have sufficient land and income to be able to both retain natural vegetation and feed his family;
  - a New Zealand fisherman may harvest endangered whitebait (juvenile galaxid) species because information on how to recognise and avoid these species is not available, or because he simply does not know that the whitebait fishery includes many species, some of which are endangered;
  - a landowner may wish to retain native parrots in the area, but feel obliged to shoot them because there is no other practical way to defend his fruit crops.
5. *To facilitate compliant behaviour.* incentives may facilitate compliant behaviour. For example, New Zealand landowners who decide to retain natural vegetation on their land are able to seek legal protection for these areas through "covenants" or "kawenata" registered on the land title and binding on future owners of the land. The costs of registering these protective covenants are generally met by the Crown or a private trust. Another example is the enhanced provision of access to technology and information.
6. *To reward compliant behaviour.* Incentives may also reward good behaviour. These might include public recognition (e.g. annual conservation awards), increased market share (e.g. through certification and associated preferential marketing systems), and economic benefits (e.g. tax relief).

In addition to adopting the above framework for understanding and assessing proposed incentives we call on the Workshop to avoid including material which implies that people are driven primarily by their personal economic wellbeing. Our experience shows that this is often not the case.

While we recognise that each community represented by the Parties has its own belief systems, which must be taken into account, we believe that if the Parties can build and foster widely accepted societal norms that are in accordance with the intent of the Convention, and at the same time remove the perverse forces preventing compliance with those norms, we will have largely solved the implementation problem.