



Proactive Release

The following document has been proactively released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), on behalf of the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern:

Report on Overseas Travel: Prime Minister and Hon Nanaia Mahuta

The following documents have been included in this release:

- Title of paper:** Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern and Hon Nanaia Mahuta (CAB-22-SUB-0330).
- Title of minute:** Report on Overseas Travel: Prime Minister and Hon Nanaia Mahuta (CAB-22-MIN-0330 refers).

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Where this is the case, the relevant section of the Act that would apply has been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Key to redaction codes:

- Section 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand; and
- Section 6(b)(i), to protect the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the Government of any other country or any agency of such a Government.

~~[Restricted]~~

Office of the Prime Minister

Chair, Cabinet


Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern and Hon Nanaia Mahuta

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel with Minister Mahuta to Suva from 11 – 14 July to participate in the 51st Pacific Islands Forum.

Report

- 1 Minister Mahuta and I met with Pacific counterparts at the first in-person Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) since 2019, accompanied by a small delegation of officials. The visit was an important opportunity to proactively engage in Pacific regionalism; emphasise New Zealand's support for Micronesian members' continued participation in the Forum; support the adoption of the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*; and participate in discussions regarding regional security and architecture. Minister Mahuta and I had a number of bilateral meetings with partners, which reaffirmed New Zealand's strong relationship with its Pacific neighbours. Groundwork for the meeting had been laid the week prior, at the Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting, which Minister Sio attended.

Leaders' Meeting

- 2 s6(a), s6(b)(i)

- 3 During the meeting, Leaders launched the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*, the region's answer to the challenges of the moment, and in the future. The Strategy ensures social, cultural, environmental and economic integrity, sovereignty and security in order to protect the Blue Pacific. The Strategy also lays the foundation for engagement with other countries and organisations from outside the region and establishes the expectations that partners would engage with the region through the lens of the Strategy. To ensure effective delivery, we agreed to broaden the mandate of the review of regional architecture to include political settings; institutional processes; governance mechanisms; and engagements and partnerships.

4

s6(a)



5 Climate change was another strong focus of the meeting, and we reconfirmed that climate change remained the single greatest existential threat facing the Pacific, and that the region was “facing a Climate Emergency that threatens the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of its people and ecosystems.” My counterparts and I committed to working together at COP27 and welcomed the interest from Australia to host COP in 2024 together with the Pacific. Throughout these discussions, I raised the issue of the region’s reliance on fossil fuels for energy production and the need to transition to renewable energy. Leaders emphasised in the Communique the “the urgent requirement for decarbonisation of the energy sector towards renewable energy.”

6 In addition to the above, we also discussed nuclear issues; economic returns from fisheries; the Forum observer report on the New Caledonia referendum; and the Niue ocean initiative. Looking ahead, we agreed that the Cook Islands will host the PIF in 2023, Tonga will host in 2024, and the Solomon Islands in 2025.

Leaders’ Dialogue with Associate Members and Observers

7 My colleagues and I met with the Forum Observer Countries and Territories (American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Guam, Timor Leste, and Wallis and Futuna), alongside Forum Observer Organisations (United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asia Development Bank, and the Western and the Central Pacific Fisheries Commission).

8 The observers highlighted the impact of climate change and COVID-19 exacerbating existing social challenges and severely impacting economic growth and broader development. Geopolitical competition also featured, particularly the increasing political and economic uncertainty across the globe and in the region. Observer organisations registered the need for Pacific countries to consider economic reforms in order to access good finance options.

Leaders' Dialogue with Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) Agencies

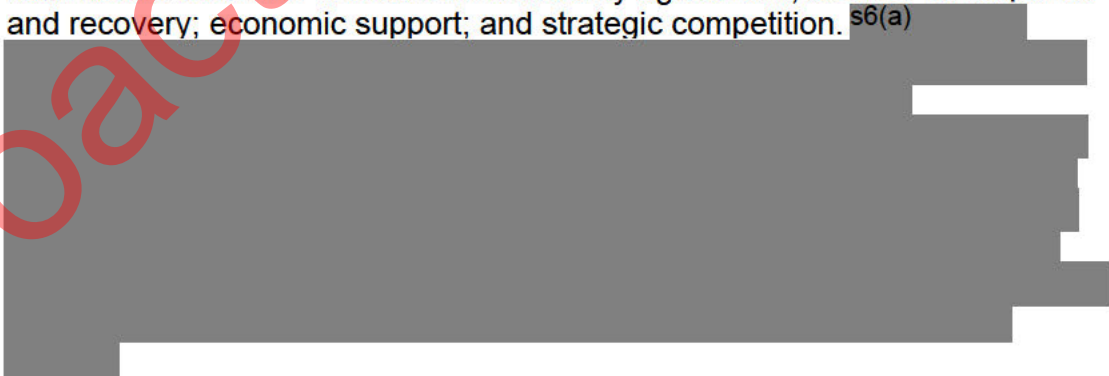
- 9 On 13 July, I attended a dialogue between Forum Leaders and the Heads of the main regional agencies. We primarily discussed their role in delivering on the 2050 Strategy. CROP Heads emphasised the need for effective resourcing monitoring and evaluation, with strong data and clear, measurable checkpoints. CROP Heads noted key opportunities and challenges, including ensuring effective climate financing, Pacific-led ocean science, digital transformation, and investing in Pacific peoples.

Forum Fisheries

- 10 Minister Mahuta attended a Special Ministerial meeting of the Pacific Island Parties to the US Tuna Treaty, which was held in the side-lines of the week. As part of the ongoing renegotiations, US Vice President Kamala Harris announced virtually that the US is requesting from Congress US\$60 million per year for the next 10 years as the US Government economic assistance provided alongside the US Tuna Treaty. This represents a tripling of current US Government economic assistance (from US\$21 million per year). The US announcement also covered the opening of new Embassies in Kiribati, Tonga and Samoa.

Bilateral meetings

- 11 Minister Mahuta and I met with Fiji Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama. This provided an opportunity to discuss bilateral issues, following on from the expanded Statement of Partnership, the Duavata Partnership: Aotearoa Whenua Manapori o Whiti Tauaki Mahitahi, signed by Minister Mahuta earlier in the year. We also canvassed how the Leaders' discussion was shaping up. In the meeting I signed the Suva Agreement.
- 12 I met with Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare on 13 July, along with our Foreign Ministers. We discussed bilateral and regional issues, such as the Solomon Islands-China security agreement; COVID-19 response and recovery; economic support; and strategic competition. ^{s6(a)}



- 13 Minister Mahuta and I also met with Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr. This was our first in-person meeting, and we covered a range of topics, including the Our Ocean Conference; climate change and energy resilience; perspectives on the Suva Agreement s6(a) and geopolitics. s6(a)
- 14 Minister Mahuta met with New Caledonia Member of Government Mickaël Forrest. s6(a), s6(b)(i) and the Ministers discussed topics for which close collaboration and visits could be useful.
- 15 The Forum also provided Minister Mahuta with the opportunity to meet with Vanuatu's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marc Ati, for the first time. s6(a), s6(b)(i) Minister Mahuta reflected that one of the biggest challenges was how to ensure the welfare and safety of ni-Vanuatu and other Pacific RSE workers during COVID-19. She also reaffirmed New Zealand's support for Vanuatu's landmark International Court of Justice case on climate harm.

Announcements and engagements

- 16 On 12 July I visited the Pacific Community Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT) to announce NZ\$10 million in new funding to support the Blue Pacific seed bank and genetic resources at the centre. I also toured the Centre and met with senior management. CePaCT plays a vital role in conserving the Pacific's plant genetic resources and works with Pacific farmers to ensure plant genetic diversity, and identify varieties that were most resilient to pests and diseases, drought, flooding and cyclones.
- 17 On 13 May, during a breakfast meeting with Fijian Ministers and officials, I announced NZ\$12.6 million to support the implementation of the Fiji Gender Action Programme - Marama Ni Viti. The Programme draws together support for a range of initiatives into one coordinated plan across relevant Fijian government agencies and NGOs. Reflecting gender equality as a central tenet of the Duavata Aotearoa New Zealand Fiji Partnership, the funding will go to the Ministry for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, as well as Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Women's Fund Fiji, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, and UN Women.
- 18 Both Minister Mahuta and I actively engaged in several side-line events. I participated in a Talanoa on Leadership and Pacific Regionalism, alongside Prime Minister Fiame Mata'afa of Samoa, President of the Federated States of Micronesia David Panuelo, and Tuvalu Foreign Minister Simon Kofe. Minister Mahuta was the keynote speaker at the Pacific Island Forum Civil Society Roundtable. Alongside Fiji Prime Minister Bainimarama, she also attended the launch of the Pacific Child website by the Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Development, an organisation that receives

New Zealand funding for its efforts in supporting child and youth development across the region.

Media

- 19 On 14 July I was interviewed by the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation and the Fiji Times. During these interviews, I discussed New Zealand's priorities for the PIF Leaders' Meeting and reinforced the strong bilateral relationship between New Zealand and Fiji.

Proactive release

- 20 This paper will be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO (18) 4 on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website. The paper will be subject to redaction as appropriate on the grounds set out under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern

Prime Minister



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Report on Overseas Travel: Prime Minister and Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Portfolio **Prime Minister**

On 22 August 2022, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Prime Minister submitted under CAB-22-SUB-0330, on her travel, together with Hon Nanaia Mahuta, from 11 to 14 July 2022, to Suva, Fiji, to participate in the 51st Pacific Islands Forum.

Rachel Hayward
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet