

Proactive Release

Date: 6 December 2022

The following Cabinet papers and related Cabinet minutes have been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

| Title | Reference |
|---|--------------|
| Report on Overseas Travel: MFA's Visit to PNG, 5-7 September 2022 | PR 2022 0451 |

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 sections of the Act that would apply have 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:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis; and
- 9(2)(b)(i): to protect a trade secret.



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: Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Portfolio Foreign Affairs

On 25 October 2022, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Nanaia Mahuta under CAB-22-SUB-0451 on her travel, from 5 to 8 September 2022, to Papua New Guinea for a bilateral visit.

Rachel Hayward
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

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of Foreign Affairs

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Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Cabinet

Report to Cabinet: Minister of Foreign Affairs' Visit to Papua New Guinea: 5-7 September 2022

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Papua New Guinea over 5-7 September 2022.

Report

- 2 My visit to Papua New Guinea from 5-7 September 2022 was Aotearoa New Zealand's first ministerial engagement with the new government following Papua New Guinea's elections in July 2022. It built off the Joint Statement of Partnership signed by Prime Ministers Ardern and James Marape in July 2021 and a visit to Aotearoa New Zealand by Prime Minister Marape in 2020.
- 3 A bridge between the Pacific and Asia, Papua New Guinea represents the Pacific's largest country by population, economy and landmass. s6(a)
Our bilateral relationship is a long-standing one and is continued today through our partnering in areas like energy, agriculture and defence as well as shared memberships of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Pacific Islands Forum. Establishing strong connections with Papua New Guinea is important to Aotearoa New Zealand's interests in supporting a peaceful, prosperous and resilient region.
- 4 The objectives for my visit were to:
 - 4.1 build personal relationships with key leaders following the national election, reinforcing Aotearoa New Zealand's role as a values-based, trusted partner;
 - 4.2 highlight our support for the realisation of Papua New Guinea's development goals and reiterate our commitment to Papua New Guinea's economic recovery from COVID-19;
 - 4.3 share views on key geostrategic issues and discuss regional and international priorities, s6(a)
 - 4.4 s6(a)
- 5 The official programme included Foreign Minister Consultations with Minister Justin Tkatchenko, a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister James Marape, as well as opportunities to meet a number of other ministers. I led a roundtable discussion with women leaders, and announced a regional investment in sexual and reproductive health and rights. In the Highlands region I visited development projects focused on

health delivery and agriculture, as well as meeting with organisations supporting peace-building in the Highlands region.

- 6 Detailed reporting has been produced by the diplomatic post in Port Moresby and circulated through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade's formal message system.

Strengthening the bilateral relationship

- 7 The timing of my trip allowed me to engage with a newly elected Government, which saw James Marape re-elected as Prime Minister on a five year term and Justin Tkachenko appointed Foreign Minister. My visit was warmly received with the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and others¹ generous in the time they gave to meeting with me over a number of engagements. s6(a)

- 8 I held Foreign Minister Consultations with Minister Tkachenko, where we covered a range of bilateral, regional and global issues. Papua New Guinea was looking for areas it could learn from others: s6(a)

- 9 Foreign Minister Consultations on a more regular basis. We undertook to hold s6(a), s6(b)(i)

Trade and growing the economy a focus for Papua New Guinea...

- 10 Off the back of COVID-19 disruptions and long-standing economic challenges, including a decline in its extractive industries, Prime Minister Marape reiterated that the key focus for his new Government is creating an economic base to enable Papua New Guinea to become self-sufficient. Agriculture was part of that base, which was reflected in his appointments of Ministers for Coffee, Livestock and Oil Palm, and a Vice Minister for Copra and his desire to sell more fresh produce (including coffee and cocoa) to New Zealand and other markets.

- 11 We also discussed the opportunities of labour mobility programmes, with Foreign Minister Tkatchenko noting that young Papua New Guineans could contribute to both our economies while learning useful skills. s6(a), s9(2)(b)(i)

¹ Minister Maru (International Trade and Investment), Minister Tsiamalili Jnr (Internal Security), Minister Polye (Higher Education), and Minister Leonard (Tourism, Arts & Culture).

s6(a), s9(2)(b)(i)

...while navigating regional geo-strategic challenges

12 s6(a)

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

desire to refresh a security agreement with Australia, an undertaking previously agreed by Australia and Papua New Guinea in the Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership signed in 2020. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

13 Focusing on the region, I emphasised that existing regional security arrangements anchored the region (the Boe and Biketawa declarations) and promoted turning to Pacific neighbours first on security matters. Recognising its role in providing regional leadership, Prime Minister Marape noted he had attended the Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting even during its elections as a way of demonstrating Papua New Guinea's support for the Pacific Islands Forum. It also continued to maintain a Police presence in Solomon Islands.

Women and human rights

14 Throughout my Pacific travel I have particularly looked to learn more about the challenges faced by women and girls in each country I visit. This continued in Papua New Guinea, where notably, two women were successful in the recent election in security seats after no women were elected in 2017. I met both women MPs (Rufina Peter, Kessy Sawang) during the course of my visit and joined a roundtable of prominent women leaders where we discussed the contributions women made to the economy and the practical needs for women's political participation.

15 s6(a), s6(b)(i)

During a visit to Marie Stopes (which has the mission statement 'Children by Choice not Chance'), I announced a NZ\$30 million multi-country investment in sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Pacific.

Regional visit: Mt Hagen

16 A highlight of my visit was travelling beyond Port Moresby, to the Highlands region of Mt Hagen. There I learnt more about our development work, which is aligned with Papua New Guinea's own development goals in the areas of energy, agriculture, fresh produce markets, gender and health. My key engagements were:

16.1 visiting a remote rural community in Jiwaka Province with Mission Aviation Fellowship and viewing the small remote health clinic and engaging with the community. New Zealand has funded Mission Aviation Fellowship over a number of years, including throughout the pandemic, to transport supplies and medical staff to remote communities;

- 16.2 visiting Hilans Fres, a successful agricultural enterprise, which New Zealand supported for a number of years and is now self-sustaining; and,
- 16.3 meeting with the United Nations and the International Committee for the Red Cross to hear about the challenges in addressing tribal violence and supporting peacebuilding in the Highlands.

Proactive Release

- 17 This paper will be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO(18)4 on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website. Proactive release is subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

The Minister of Foreign Affairs recommends that Cabinet:

- 1 note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Minita Take Aorere / Minister of Foreign Affairs

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of Foreign Affairs