

# Proactive Release

Date: 6 September 2023

The following Cabinet paper has been proactively released by the Minister for Trade & Export Growth

<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Damien O'Connor	CAB-23-MIN-0380
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# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Damien O'Connor

Portfolio                      Trade and Export Growth

On 21 August 2023, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Damien O'Connor under CAB-23-SUB-0380 on his travel, from 3 to 11 June 2023, to:

- 1        London, United Kingdom to attend the Commonwealth Trade Ministers' Meeting;
- 2        Paris, France to be the Vice-Chair of the OECD Ministerial Conference meeting.

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively Released by the Minister for Trade and Export Growth

~~[Restricted]~~

Office of the Minister for Trade and Export Growth

Chair, Cabinet

## **Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Damien O'Connor**

1 I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to the United Kingdom and France from 3-11 June 2023.

### **Report**

2 The focus of my visit was to attend the Commonwealth Trade Ministers' Meeting (CTMM) in London, United Kingdom, and vice-chair the OECD Ministerial Conference Meeting (MCM) in Paris, France. I also conducted meetings related to the New Zealand – United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement in London and undertook a range of bilateral meetings with counterpart Ministers.

3 My travel was an opportunity to advance a range of New Zealand's core trade interests, as outlined to the Prime Minister in the prioritisation exercise earlier this year. This included work to support the implementation of the NZ-UK Free Trade Agreement; uphold rules-based international trading systems including through the World Trade Organisation (WTO), CTMM and OECD; and improve on existing trade agreements such as the Digital Economic Partnership Agreement (DEPA).

4 The plenary discussions at the CTMM in London focused on deepening Commonwealth trade and investment; promoting inclusive and sustainable trade; and support for the multilateral trading system. I presented a summary report-back from New Zealand, as convenor of the Commonwealth WTO Caucus, on the 4<sup>th</sup> caucus meeting, which was held in March this year. The meeting, which was well attended by 51 of the 54, also provided valuable opportunity to build relationships with the diverse Commonwealth membership, including African, Caribbean, South Asian and Pacific counterparts.

5 An Outcome Statement was adopted, which highlighted the group's commitment to supporting the multilateral trading system, deepening Commonwealth trade and investment, supporting inclusive and sustainable trade, and fostering the digital transition. Ministers also reached agreement in principle on a separate Commonwealth statement in support of the multilateral trading system, which will be presented at the WTO's 13<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in February 2024.

6 My time in London also enabled time for a short bilateral programme, covering both my Trade and Export Growth and Agriculture portfolios. The focus of this programme was to provide support for the implementation and utilisation of the NZ-UK Free Trade Agreement, which entered into force on 31 May. I held an inaugural meeting with the UK Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Thérèse Coffey, which traversed a range of issues, including New Zealand's work to



price agriculture emissions, 'environmental premiums' in supermarkets, digital trade, the Pacific and Northern Ireland. I met with Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Kemi Badenoch, to celebrate the entry into force of the NZ-UK FTA, during the Paris leg of my visit.

7 Alongside my Ministerial counterparts, I met with Conservative Party Chair and former Trade Minister, Greg Hands, as well as my counterparts from the United Kingdom Labour Shadow Cabinet: Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade Nick Thomas-Symonds; and Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Jim McMahon.

8 As part of my promotion of the NZ-UK Free Trade Agreement I met with John Lewis & Partners and Waitrose & Partners to hear about their ethics and sustainability programme, which includes a partnership with NZTE on a 'Made with Care' campaign due to launch in September.

9 In Paris I was Vice Chair of the OECD's flagship event, the Meeting of the Council at Ministerial level (MCM), alongside fellow Vice Chair Costa Rica and Chair United Kingdom. Through my role as Vice Chair, I was able to shape discussions across a number of issues relating to economic resilience and the digital-climate change intersection. I used this role to highlight New Zealand's inclusive Trade for All agenda and ambitious climate change goals, and advocated for the increased visibility of issues affecting the Pacific.

10 The MCM advanced a number of issues of significance to New Zealand, with a strong focus on economic resilience, gender, and engagement with the Indo-Pacific region. The meeting sessions included discussions on the OECD's economic outlook; the impacts of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine; policies for stronger, inclusive growth; global partnerships; and the role of technology and innovation in supporting the transition to net-zero.

11 The meeting's deliverables included the adoption of the 2023 Ministerial Council Statement '*Securing a Resilient Future: Shared Values and Global Partnerships*', OECD Strategies on Trade, and Gender Equality, an Indo-Pacific Strategic Framework, and the launch of an OECD Country Programme for Ukraine. During the meeting's session on Ukraine I announced New Zealand's contribution to this programme.

12 The OECD MCM provided the opportunity to meet with a range of Ministerial counterparts in bilateral and small group meetings. I attended a WTO Mini Ministerial meeting, hosted by Australia, and a meeting of the Ottawa Group, hosted by Canada, to underpin New Zealand's unwavering support for the multilateral trading system. I was also pleased to meet with my counterparts from Singapore, Chile and Korea to celebrate the successful accession of Korea to the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA), following more than two years of negotiations. Formal bilateral meetings with the United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Business and Trade Kemi Badenoch and Costa Rica's Foreign Trade Minister Manuel Tovar, and pull-asides with counterparts from the European Union, Sweden and Romania, allowed me to further advance New Zealand's trade interests.

### **Proactive release**

15 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**

16 I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Damien O'Connor

Minister for Trade and Export Growth

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