

# Proactive Release

1 August 2023

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

<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<b><i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta</i></b>	CAB-23-MIN-0252
<b><i>Report to Cabinet: Minister of Foreign Affairs’ Visit to Sāmoa, 19-22 April 2023</i></b>	

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 OIA). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the OIA 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 OIA redaction codes:

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



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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*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.*

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta

**Portfolio**                      **Foreign Affairs**

On 19 June 2023, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Nanaia Mahuta under CAB-23-SUB-0252 on her travel from 19 to 22 April 2023, to Samoa for a bilateral visit.

Diana Hawker  
for Secretary of the Cabinet

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**[ RESTRICTED ]**

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Cabinet

**Report to Cabinet: Minister of Foreign Affairs' Visit to Sāmoa, 19-22 April 2023**

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Sāmoa.
- 2 I undertook my first official visit to Samoa from 19-22 April 2023, complementing earlier visits to Sāmoa in 2022 by former Prime Minister Ardern and the Governor General. My visit underscored the importance of Aotearoa New Zealand's bilateral relationship during the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Sāmoa's independence and 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- 3 Originally conceived as an overlapping visit with the United Kingdom's Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Rt. Hon. James Cleverly, the belated cancellation of the Secretary's visit due to a rapidly deteriorating security situation in Sudan meant my visit was bilaterally oriented throughout.
- 4 Accordingly the visit focused on Aotearoa New Zealand's ongoing support for Sāmoa's post-COVID socio-economic recovery including our willingness to help address long-term issues such as the existential threats of climate change.
- 5 My visit highlighted the warm friendship that exists between Aotearoa New Zealand and Sāmoa, and the value of regular visits, face-to-face engagement and genuine discourse. It confirmed that Aotearoa New Zealand is genuinely viewed as a preferred partner and our International Development Cooperation support to the economic and health sectors is relevant and aligned with Sāmoa's development objectives.

*A traditional welcome*

- 6 My programme commenced with a visit to Poutasi village on the southwest coast of Upolu in the constituency of Falealili for a traditional 'ava ceremony hosted by the village council led by Meleisea Leasiolagi Dr Malama Meleisea, one of Poutasi's two paramount chiefs or matai sa'o. A former Director of the National University of Samoa Centre of Samoan Studies, Meleisea has a long history of engagement with Aotearoa New Zealand, as a founding member of the University of Canterbury Macmillan Brown Centre of Pacific Studies and a director at the Centre of Pacific Studies at University of Auckland. Also present was the Minister of Communications, Information and Technology, Hon. Toelupe Poumulinuku Onesemo, who is the local MP. Poutasi has deep ties with Aotearoa New Zealand as a result of the exceptional work of the Poutasi Development Trust which has supported workers to participate in the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme, since its inception. The district and surrounding region was devastated by the 2009 Tsunami. It has managed to recover well with support from Aotearoa New Zealand and astute investment of remittances earned through participation in the RSE scheme.



- 7 The visit to Poutasi was spirited, warm and culturally embracing. Poutasi orators spoke of ancestral links between Sāmoa and Aotearoa, notably through ties to the Takitimu waka and Savaii. During my visit to Poutasi, I announced a small contribution from the New Zealand High Commission Fund towards the development of a pre-school for the district. I visited the district hospital and heard of the valuable support Aotearoa New Zealand has provided, including during the measles epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic, and the realities of running a small rural hospital in Sāmoa. I finished the visit with a meeting with the Poutasi Women's Committee where I was welcomed and farewelled with dancing and singing.

*Supporting economic and health resilience in Samoa*

- 8 I visited sites in Apia highlighting New Zealand's contribution to health resilience in Sāmoa. The National University of Samoa's (NUS) first female Vice-Chancellor, Tuifuisa'a Associate Professor, Patila Amosa, hosted me for a tour of the facilities that will be used for the teaching of the Aotearoa New Zealand-supported Bachelor of Health Science degree programme. The programme will support Sāmoa to build a locally trained health workforce to address key local issues including nutrition and public health. I visited the Aotearoa New Zealand-supported medical laboratory at Tupua Tamesese Meaole (TTM) Hospital to view equipment that had been provided during and after the measles epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic. I also met staff from the Wellington-based Pacific Pathology Training Centre who were undertaking an audit of the laboratory and providing specialist training.
- 9 I visited the site of the Savalalo market to deliver on a promise made by former Prime Minister Ardern on her visit to Apia in August 2022 to co-fund the rebuild of the iconic landmark as our 60th anniversary gift to Sāmoa. The market had been a favourite of tourists and locals alike before it burnt down in 2017. I was hosted by Minister of Public Enterprises, Leatinuu Wayne Fong Soialo, leaders from Samoa Land Corporation (SLC) and stall holders that will populate the market once complete. The SLC CEO Ulugia Petelo Kavesi explained the design, but also noted that the cost estimates for the build had risen due to inflationary pressures <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup> however no formal request for additional funding has been made at this point. SLC is contributing SAT\$10 million to the project.
- 10 After visiting the site, I jointly signed the grant funding arrangement of NZ\$12 million with Minister of Finance Mulipola Anarosa Ale Molio'o, and signed a NZ\$7 million disbursement of funding under the Joint Policy Action Matrix for the financial year 2022/23. These initiatives support Samoa's economic resilience and efforts to return the economy to positive growth after three years of recession. The new market will provide space for small local stallholders, most of whom are women, to safely sell their wares. It ties in with other projects including the Apia Waterfront Development project and the M4C Markets for Change project delivered by UN Women. Sāmoa hopes to have it completed ahead of CHOGM 2024.

*CHOGM venues in need of some work*

- 11 Sāmoa's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Assistant CEO with responsibility for CHOGM Justin Lima provided a briefing on current plans for CHOGM venues. <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup>

Lima noted that while some sites such as the worship centre and Lava hotel are new and suitable, the remainder of the sites will require various degrees of refurbishment, or



Sāmoa will seek to use marquees to expand their capacity. The provision of a conference ship to supplement accommodation on land remains a key component of Samoa's planning for CHOGM. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

*Secretary Cleverly cancels visit*

- 12 During the afternoon of the first day of the programme, the delegation was advised that UK Foreign Secretary Cleverly could no longer make the visit to Sāmoa due to the deteriorating security situation in Sudan. We were understanding of the risks that Secretary Cleverly had to address, including the welfare and evacuation of UK and Commonwealth citizens trapped in Khartoum, and pursued an altered programme for the second day of the visit that included the UK High Commissioner to Sāmoa H.E. David Ward and the UK High Commissioner to Aotearoa New Zealand, H.E. Iona Thomas.

*Dinner with Prime Minister Fiame*

- 13 Prime Minister Fiame and I held a private dinner hosted by New Zealand High Commissioner Trevor Matheson on 20 April. We were joined by Acting CEO of Sāmoa's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Constance Tafua-Rivers Lesa, Assistant CEO of Samoa's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade with responsibility for CHOGM, Justin Lima, and Pou Tikenga Charlie Rahiri.

- 14 We held a warm and wide-ranging discussion on issues across the spectrum, <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup>

- 15 <sup>s6(a)</sup>

*Welcome by the Head of State and former Head of State*

- 16 The second day of the official visit began with a courtesy call on O le Ao o le Malo/Head of State, His Highness Tuimaleali'ifano Va'aletō'a Sualauvi II, and his Good Lady Masiōfo Faamausili Leinafo Tuimaleali'ifano. We held a wide-ranging discussion that covered CHOGM, RSE, New Zealand's support for Sāmoa, NUS and USP, democracy in the Pacific, language revitalisation and the coronation of King Charles. Noting His Highness had graciously received the New Zealand Governor General to Sāmoa in September 2022, I said that I would arrange an invite for the Head of State to make a reciprocal state visit as Guest of Government to Aotearoa New Zealand following the October 2023 general election.

- 17 Separate from the official programme, I enjoyed the opportunity of sharing a meal and exchanging cultural perspectives with the former Head of State Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi Tupua and former Good Lady Masioto Filifilia Imo at their residence.

*A formal Sāmoan welcome at the New Zealand High Commission*

- 18 High Commission staff welcomed me to the chancery with a Sāmoan welcome or faa'feiloai including prayer, singing and oratory. I responded in kind commenting on my connections to Sāmoa through the waka Tākitimu. I thanked staff for their dedication to duty during the COVID-19 pandemic and expressed warm appreciation for the excellent arrangements made for her visit.

*Celebrating SPREP's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary*

- 19 With climate change an existential threat to Sāmoa and the Pacific in general, I paid a visit to SPREP and the Pacific Climate Change Centre. SPREP celebrates its 30th anniversary this year under the theme "A sustainable, transformative and resilient SPREP for a Blue Pacific". Director General Sefanaia Nawadra provided an impressive overview of SPREP's activities over the years and highlighted engagement with Aotearoa New Zealand.

*Official lunch*

- 20 The official programme finished with an official lunch hosted in my honour by Prime Minister Fiame at Vila Vailima. The site was chosen due to its significance to the UK as the home of the legendary author Robert Louis Stevenson, to Aotearoa New Zealand as the residence of the New Zealand Governor ahead of independence in 1962 including the place of signing of the Treaty of Friendship, and to Sāmoa as the former home of the Head of State. Prime Minister Fiame made brief remarks which graciously acknowledged the support provided by Aotearoa New Zealand highlighted during my visit and our place as a trusted partner. Prime Minister Fiame also reaffirmed the message that Sāmoa will be seeking support from partners to host a successful CHOGM in 2024.

**Proactive release**

- 21 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.

**Recommendation**

- 22 I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

**RESTRICTED**

Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
**Minita Take Aorere / Minister of Foreign Affairs**

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