

Proactive Release

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The following Cabinet paper has been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Title	Reference
Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta	CAB-23-MIN-0431
Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta – East Asia Summit, Jakarta, 6-8 September 2023	



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Portfolio **Foreign Affairs**

On 18 September 2023, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Nanaia Mahuta under CAB-23-SUB-0431 on her travel, from 6 to 8 September 2023, to Jakarta, Indonesia to attend the East Asia Summit.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively Released
by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

~~In Confidence~~

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta – East Asia Summit, Jakarta, 6-8 September 2023

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Jakarta, Indonesia from 6 to 8 September 2023 to represent Aotearoa New Zealand at the East Asia Summit.

Report

- 1 The focus of my visit was to attend the East Asia Summit (EAS) on behalf of the Prime Minister, which was hosted by Indonesia in Jakarta on 7 September. The annual EAS, convened by the Chair of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is attended by the 10 ASEAN Member States as well as Australia, China, India, Japan, Aotearoa New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the United States. It is considered to be the region's premier leaders' forum for addressing strategic challenges, particularly in our wider home region of the Indo-Pacific.
- 2 This year, the tone around the EAS table was relatively subdued, particularly given the long list of tricky issues dominating the regional agenda: the ongoing illegal war in Ukraine, escalating provocations from North Korea, and the lack of progress on Myanmar-related issues. While a number of attendees were represented at Leader-level, others were represented by alternates, such as US Vice-President Harris, China's Premier Li, and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov. Ahead of the Summit, ASEAN Leaders issued a statement on the implementation of the Five Point Consensus (ASEAN's five step process to resolving Myanmar crisis). More generally, the EAS and other informal engagements in the margins underlined and supported ASEAN's central role in the Indo-Pacific at a time of significant geopolitical challenges ahead of other multilateral meetings (the G20 and APEC). Relevant for Pacific engagement was the ASEAN Secretariat signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).
- 3 My attendance at the EAS was an important opportunity to firmly state Aotearoa New Zealand's positions on critical regional and global issues. In my intervention, I was able to strongly register positions on issues such as Russia's ongoing illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, Myanmar (as noted above), South China Sea, DPRK, Taiwan Strait tensions, and human rights issues in the region. I also noted the importance of openly and frankly discussing issues to find areas of convergence and alignment for the future of our immediate and wider region. I underscored the importance of ASEAN as a partner in progressing peace, stability and prosperity of the wider Indo-Pacific region, and the importance of the region to recognise the link between economic growth and environmental resilience.

- 4 I also was able to meet bilaterally with the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres in the margins of the EAS. The Secretary-General noted our “excellent relationship” and expressed his appreciation of Aotearoa New Zealand’s role in multilateral diplomacy, especially in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, the fight against climate change and support for Small Island Developing States. We also touched briefly on issues concerning Myanmar.
- 5 I also had brief informal pull-aside meetings with Prime Minister Mark Brown of the Cook Islands, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão of Timor Leste.
- 6 My participation in the EAS delivered on the following objectives:
 - 6.1 Maintaining Aotearoa New Zealand’s profile and influence in a competitive geopolitical environment, through attending the EAS at a senior political level;
 - 6.2 Re-emphasising Aotearoa New Zealand’s positions on the core issues affecting the rules-based order and strategic environment in our region;
 - 6.3 Demonstrating Aotearoa New Zealand’s value as an engaged and constructive partner to ASEAN, that engages with respect, reliability and in support of ASEAN centrality.

Proactive release

- 7 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

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Minister of Foreign Affairs / Minita Take Aorere