

Proactive Release

14 November 2023

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

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta</i>	CAB-23-MIN-0449
<i>Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta</i>	

Proactively Released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Portfolio **Foreign Affairs**

On 2 October 2023, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Nanaia Mahuta under CAB-23-SUB-0449 on her travel, from 13 to 16 September 2023, to Suva, Fiji, to participate in the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

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~~In Confidence~~

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Suva, Fiji from 13 September to 16 September to participate in the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

Report

- 1 I was pleased to represent Aotearoa New Zealand at the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FFMM) in Suva, Fiji on 15 September to *talanoa* and build consensus on shared opportunities and challenges facing our region.
- 2 The Pacific Islands Forum is the pre-eminent Pacific-led regional mechanism, and a core platform for the 18 Pacific Island country members. The FFMM is part of a suite of meetings that contribute to the agenda for the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting – hosted this year by the Cook Islands in Rarotonga – from 6-10 November.
- 3 Last year, Forum Leaders agreed the **2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent** – the Forum's 'North Star'. One of the key focuses this year for the Forum's work programme is how each member implements the strategy. There has been significant progress made and work remains on track to present an Implementation Plan for Leaders' endorsement in November.
- 4 The meeting was an important opportunity for PIF Foreign Ministers to coordinate and prepare for the UN General Assembly in New York, the US-Pacific Summit in Washington DC and the PIF Leaders' Meeting. Forum members agreed that there was a need for Forum architecture and processes to emphasise PIF Centrality in engagement with partners from outside the region. These partnerships needed to be conducted in a manner that was Pacific-led and served the needs and interests of Forum Members first and foremost.
- 5 Members also discussed how the region can work together to ensure their rights, statehood, and the protection of persons are not undermined by climate change-induced sea level rise.
- 6 On Japan's release of treated water from the Fukushima Nuclear power plant into the Pacific, countries re-emphasised the collective Forum position, and the importance of continued Forum unity on the matter. This was reflected in a ministerial statement on the issue which was released by the Forum Secretariat. Forum members recognised the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as the authority on nuclear safety. Members stated a commitment to continuing the dialogue with the Government of Japan and

welcomed the IAEA's proposal for an annual dialogue mechanism on the ongoing monitoring of the release. Forum members emphasised the need to build regional scientific capacity and monitoring capabilities to assess the health of the Pacific maritime ecosystem. It was recommended that this issue be embedded in the Pacific Islands Leaders' Meeting (PALM) agenda, and in ongoing independent monitoring by the IAEA. Members agreed that there would be further discussion on the release at the Forum Leaders' meeting.

- 7 As always, Aotearoa New Zealand's overarching aim for the Forum meeting was to ensure we were collectively working towards a peaceful, stable, prosperous, and resilient Pacific region.

Bilateral Engagements

- 8 During my visit to Suva, I had the opportunity to join Lynda Tabuya, Fiji's Minister for Women, Children, and Poverty Alleviation for a visit to the Adi Cakobau School for girls. We discussed indigenous and women's leadership with the students.
- 9 I also held meetings with my counterparts from the Cook Islands, Tuvalu, and Solomon Islands to deepen our important partnerships and discuss regional issues.
- 10 In my bilateral meeting with the Cook Islands' Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mark Brown, we discussed how we could continue to work together on climate finance and infrastructure. We also discussed the regional outlook, PIF cooperation with ASEAN, and the Cook Islands' preparations for hosting the PIF Leaders' Week.
- 11 In my meeting with Tuvalu's Foreign Minister Panapasi Nelesone and Finance Minister Seve Paeniu, we reflected on how we can support Tuvalu's priorities for climate resilience, as one of the nations at the forefront of the region's experience with the impacts of climate change.
- 12 In the margins of the FFMM, I met with Solomon Islands' Foreign Minister Jeremiah Manele. We discussed our enduring partnership and issues facing our region. In particular, we affirmed the importance of working together to respond to shared challenges including regional security, and the shifting geostrategic environment.

Proactive release

- 13 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

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