



New Zealand Ministry of
Foreign Affairs and Trade
Manatū Aorere

12 September 2024

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OIA 29599

We refer to your email of 6 August 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

"Please supply all formal briefings provided for and all formal reports arising from, a meeting between the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rt Hon Winston Peters, and the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Charlot Salwai, held in Wellington on 5 August 2024."

On 15 August 2024 you agreed to refine your request to be for:

"Please supply the Visit Overview Brief and Meeting Brief provided to support a meeting between the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rt Hon Winston Peters, and the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Charlot Salwai, held in Wellington on 5 August 2024."

The information relevant to your request is attached. Some information is withheld under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy; and
- 9(2)(f)(iv): to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, we have identified no public interest in releasing the information that would override the reasons for withholding it.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website: www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Corbett
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Meeting Brief: Charlot Salwai Tabimasmās [*‘SHAR-low’ SAL-why*], Vanuatu Prime Minister

Time and date: Monday 5 August 2024, 3:00 – 4:00 pm



A francophone, educated in New Caledonia, and current Chair of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), ^{s6(a)}

You last met PM Salwai in July, on the margins of PALM10 in Tokyo.



Hon. Rick Mahe [*‘Rick’ MA-hay*] is Vanuatu’s Minister of Lands and Natural resources. ^{s6(a)}

. First appointed Minister in 2023, he has held three portfolios over this time: Health, Internal Affairs (which includes the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme and policing) and now Lands and Natural Resources. He has a business background (shipping). ^{s6(a)}

This is Mahe’s first official visit to New Zealand; ^{s9(2)(a)}

Key objectives

- ^{s6(a)}
- Preview the upcoming Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Foreign Ministers’ and Leaders’ meetings, ^{s6(a)}
- ^{s9(2)(f)(iv)}

Discussion points

- ^{s6(a)}
- ^{s6(a)}

- s9(2)(f)(iv)

Background

1. s6(a)

2. s9(2)(f)(iv)

3. s6(a)

4. s6(a)

s9(2)(f)(iv)

s6(a)

5. s9(2)(f)(iv)

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6. Vanuatu is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters and climate change. It experiences severe cyclones, drought, as well as periodic volcanic eruptions. In 2023 it was hit by three significant cyclones (Category 4 or 5), including two within one week in March. New Zealand provided relief supplies and disaster management experts to help Vanuatu in responding to cyclones.

*New Zealand High Commission in Port Vila / Pacific Melanesia and Micronesia Division
July 2024*

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Visit Overview Brief: Vanuatu Prime Minister Hon. Charlot Salwai



Hon. Charlot Salwai [*'SHAR-low' SAL-why*] ^{s6(a)}

Salwai is a Chief from the island of Pentecost. ^{s6(a)}
He is a French speaker ^{s6(a)}



Hon. Rick Mahe [*'Rick' MA-hay*] is Vanuatu's Minister of Lands and Natural resources. ^{s6(a)}

. First appointed Minister in 2023, he has held three portfolios over this time: Health, Internal Affairs (which includes the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme and policing) and now Lands and Natural Resources. He has a business background (shipping). ^{s6(a)}

This is Mahe's first official visit to New Zealand; ^{s9(2)(a)}

The Prime Minister and Minister will be accompanied by their wives Justine Salwai and Patricia Mahe.

Visit objectives

^{s6(a)}

- ^{s6(a)}

- ^{s6(a)}

;

- Reinforcing our strong people-to-people connections, Pacific/cultural affinities and shared values; and

- ^{s6(a)}

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Visit components

- PM Salwai and delegation will call on PM Luxon, s6(a)
- The delegation will also call on Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Foreign Affairs Peters. PM Salwai and Minister Peters last met in the margins of the Japanese-hosted Pacific Leaders Meeting (PALM10) on 17 July in Tokyo.
- PM Luxon will host a dinner for the delegation in Wellington and a second dinner with other Ministers will also be held in Auckland.
- s6(a)
- The delegation will visit Fisheries New Zealand to discuss ongoing bilateral cooperation and New Zealand's EEZ management.
- They will meet with ni-Vanuatu working in the Marlborough region under the RSE scheme, alongside some of their employers.
- The delegation will meet with Royal New Zealand Navy officers who recently completed an Unexploded Ordinance (UXO) removal operation in Port Vila Harbour.
- The programme includes a visit to Puro New Zealand, an innovative New Zealand business in an industry of interest to Vanuatu (organic medical cannabis).
- The delegation will visit Ngati Whatua Orakei in Auckland.

Bilateral relationship background

s6(a)

Vanuatu's economy and New Zealand's development assistance

2. s6(a)

3. s6(a)

4. s6(a)

5. s6(a)

New Zealand's bilateral development assistance to Vanuatu in the last triennium (2021-24) was NZ\$103 million – one of our largest. It is a broad programme, including energy and water, tourism, education, security and governance. s6(a)

6. Vanuatu was the first country to engage in RSE. Today Vanuatu is the single largest contributor of workers to New Zealand's RSE scheme with over 6,000 ni-Vanuatu workers per year working in mostly the horticulture industry (40% of our RSE workforce).

s6(a)

7. Vanuatu recently held its first referendum (since independence in 1980) which approved constitutional changes designed to strengthen the political party system and reduce the floor-crossing by individual MPs s6(a)

New Zealand is supporting Vanuatu-led reforms to its electoral systems and provided support to the referendum – through an arrangement with the UN Development Programme.

s6(a)

8. In July, Vanuatu released its first comprehensive foreign policy paper. The document formally confirmed Vanuatu's long-stated "friends to all, enemies to none" and non-aligned positioning, and prioritised addressing the existential threat of climate change s6(a)

the policy included "human rights, democracy, and the rule of law" as underpinning values. It formally confirmed Vanuatu's view that New Zealand has "consistently been a highly-valued diplomatic, economic, development, and security partner".

9. The document described "geopolitical uncertainty" in the region as testing the robustness and resilience of Vanuatu's long-held foreign policy positions and relationships. However, it also reiterated Vanuatu's view that competition in the Pacific provides an opportunity to leverage "our new-found strategic relevance into tangible development gains for our people".

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10. s6(a)

11. s6(a)

12. Internationally, Vanuatu is playing a leading role on pushing for ambitious climate and environmental action, including at the International Court of Justice. s6(a)

New Zealand High Commission, Port Vila / Pacific Melanesia and Micronesia Division

July 2024

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