

Proactive Release

Published on or before: 23 September 2024

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: Rt Hon Winston Peters – June 2024</i>	CAB-24-MIN-0299
<i>Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – June 2024</i>	

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- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy; and
- 9(2)(j): to avoid prejudice to negotiations.



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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.

Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters - June 2024

Portfolio **Foreign Affairs**

On 12 August 2024, Cabinet **noted** the report from Rt Hon Winston Peters under CAB-24-SUB-0299 on his travel, from 4 to 14 June 2024, to Viet Nam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Timor-Leste to undertake bilateral engagements.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters - June 2024

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Viet Nam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste from 4 to 14 June 2024. An extra day of calls was added in the Philippines, which meant moving the Timor-Leste programme by 24 hours and arriving back to New Zealand a day later than originally planned.

Visit to Viet Nam

2. We travelled to Viet Nam from 4 to 6 June. Our main priorities were to capitalise on the momentum arising from the Vietnamese Prime Minister's visit to New Zealand in March 2024 and to advance our ambition to further elevate our bilateral Strategic Partnership.

3. Our meeting with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Son was warm and productive. Discussions reaffirmed an appetite on both sides for elevating the relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP),^{s6(a)}

4. ^{s6(b)(i)}

^{s6(a)}

5. On trade and economic cooperation, we raised long-standing market access requests for New Zealand honey and venison.^{s6(a), s6(b)(i)}

Viet Nam asked in return that we consider accelerating work to grant access for Vietnamese lychees and logan fruits. Officials have been tasked to investigate this.

6. Our interactions with Vietnamese leadership showed a genuine warmth for New Zealand. Discussions focused on the importance of cooperating on regional, multilateral and international matters, and supporting regional institutions including ASEAN and the Pacific Islands Forum. ^{s6(a)}

Visit to Malaysia

7. Our visit to Malaysia from 6 to 8 June was anchored by the inaugural Foreign Ministers Meeting (FMM) under our Strategic Partnership, signed in 2023. We also met with Malaysian leadership including Prime Minister Anwar, Deputy Prime Minister Fadillah, and the Leader of the opposition. Malaysia's leaders were clear that the bilateral relationship was in good shape, but welcomed greater New Zealand engagement, including on trade.

8. Discussion topics in the FMM were broad. We agreed to promote increased bilateral trade flows, notably New Zealand's fresh milk and beef exports, as well as a request to look at market access for pineapples to New Zealand. ^{s6(a)}

9. Our meeting with Prime Minister Anwar was warm and engaging. We discussed the Malaysian economy, energy transition, and the New Zealand - Malaysia defence relationship. On education, the Prime Minister said that he would like to see more Malaysian students study in Australia and New Zealand. ^{s9(2)(a)}

The Prime Minister said that work on New Zealand's 50th anniversary with ASEAN should start now and that it should focus on trade, business, and investment, as well as cultural engagement.

10. Our meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Energy Transition Fadillah (from Sarawak state) largely focused on renewable energy. ^{s9(2)(a)}

Fadillah said that Malaysia had targets of 20% renewable energy by 2030 and 100% by 2050. Malaysia is investigating a broad range of technologies including solar, hydro, hydrogen, biomass and wave power. Sarawak state, with its abundant natural resources, was key to overall energy plans, with 10,000 MW of capacity planned. Fadillah mentioned that Sarawak was also starting to produce aviation fuel using

algae-based technology,^{s6(a), s6(b)(i)}

11. Other visit elements included the Selangor Turf Club (Malaysia is a growing market for New Zealand racehorses); a visit to the National Mosque (which generated considerable media coverage); and an engagement with senior New Zealand alumni to underline the education relationship.

Visit to the Philippines

12. We travelled to the Philippines from 9 to 11 June. We met with key political leaders including President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, Senate President Francis Escudero, Foreign Secretary Manalo, and National Defence Secretary Gilbert Teodora. Our visit to the Philippines helped to reaffirm the importance of the New Zealand - Philippine relationship and progress bilateral outcomes.

13. During our meeting with Foreign Secretary Manalo, the Secretary expressed his desire for greater cooperation across all parts of the bilateral relationship. We agreed to work towards the development of a Comprehensive Partnership Roadmap in time for the East Asia Summit in October. At the joint press conference Secretary Manalo expressed support for New Zealand's request to elevate its relationship with ASEAN to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and our plans to host a 50th anniversary commemorative summit in 2025.

14. Defence and security was a significant theme of our visit. Against the backdrop of shared concern for regional maritime security, we signed a Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement (MLSA)^{s6(a)}

15. President Marcos Jr. and Foreign Secretary Manalo both emphasised their desire to see greater two-way trade and investment with New Zealand. Manalo said he wanted to see increased tourism flows^{s6(a), s9(2)(j)}

In response to New Zealand's request for resolution of market access for onions, Manalo said his department was "seriously looking at the issue" in consultation with the Department of Agriculture.

16. Other events during our visit included an alumni event in which we launched New Zealand's new flagship International Development Cooperation (IDC) activity, 'Indigenous Women and Girls in Mindanao, the Philippines – Leadership and

Empowerment in Ancestral Domains (I-LEAD)'. This is a five-year, NZ\$8.6m partnership with UNDP Philippines and the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP).

Visit to Timor-Leste

17. Our visit to Timor-Leste from 12 to 13 June provided an important opportunity to reconnect with the political leadership in Dili and demonstrate our commitment to working closely with Timor-Leste to support its prosperity and resilience.

18. We met with President Jose Ramos-Horta, Acting Prime Minister Francisco Kalbuadi Lay, and Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Minister Bendito dos Santos Freitas, who also hosted us for dinner. The level of access and courtesy afforded to us was significant and reflected the close friendship and partnership between New Zealand and Timor-Leste. This was further evidenced by the Government of Timor-Leste swiftly accommodating our request to push the visit back by a day.

19. Our core message in these meetings was that we were there to listen, that New Zealand wanted to support Timor Leste's ASEAN accession, and that we were committed to engaging bilaterally and with the region.

20. The development challenges facing Timor-Leste were readily evident. Timor-Leste remains a young, post-conflict nation,^{s6(a)}

21. We issued a joint statement supporting reform of the United Nations, and commenting on Myanmar, the Israel-Hamas conflict, and Ukraine. We confirmed that New Zealand would be increasing its support for English-language training and education, while Timor-Leste Ministers sought an update on a request to join New Zealand's labour mobility scheme.

22. A poignant moment for all was when we visited the New Zealand Embassy 'Kiwi Stone' and plaque to lay a wreath in acknowledgement of all those who served in Timor-Leste, across agencies, and to remember the seven New Zealanders who died – two civilians, and five Defence Force personnel. We also visited the Timor-Leste Resistance Museum, which documents the country's struggle for independence.

23. The visit highlighted the infrequency of high-level visits by New Zealand Ministers to Timor-Leste. The last was former Defence Minister Ron Mark, for the 20th commemorations of Interfet in 2019, and it had been a decade since a New Zealand Foreign Minister visited. A Prime Minister last visited 22 years ago.^{s6(a)}

Proactive release

24. This paper will be proactively released 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 under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

25. I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs

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