

13 February 2025

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OIA 29901

Thank you for your email of 20 January 2025 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

"I am writing to inquire about information about the diplomatic relations of New Zealand with African countries. I would like to receive a list of African countries which New Zealand maintains diplomatic relations with, most importantly with the date of establishment of diplomatic relations. If a full list is not possible, any information would be appreciated."

Background

The establishment of diplomatic relations is a matter of concurrence between two States. New Zealand adopts a pragmatic approach to defining diplomatic relations. Contacts over time with another state at ministerial, diplomatic, or senior officials' level are considered to constitute the conduct of diplomatic relations. These may occur in the context of bilateral meetings, or through multilateral diplomacy - for example, at the United Nations.

Diplomatic relations may be taken a step further with a decision by each State to formally accredit a diplomatic representative to the other. Once agreement has been reached to take this step, the Foreign Ministers of both countries may make a public announcement. A list of New Zealand embassies overseas, and foreign diplomatic representatives accredited to New Zealand, is publicly available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/embassies>

Response to request

New Zealand maintains diplomatic posts in three African states, South Africa, Egypt, and Ethiopia, and has diplomatic relations with all African members of the United Nations.

As described in the background above, for many countries including within the African continent, there is not a single marker indicating that diplomatic relations were established on a particular date. It is more that our diplomatic relations can be inferred from the nature and level of our dealings. A start date could be viewed as the accreditation of the first resident ambassador, the opening of a building, or the signing

of an agreement. This may result in numerous instances of multiple dates per country or state. Our counterparts in other countries or states may do the same and view the start date of diplomatic relations with New Zealand differently.

To establish all instances where New Zealand has any form of diplomatic relationship, and the start dates of each of these diplomatic relations would require substantial research and review. Accordingly, your request for the date of establishment is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

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