

Proactive Release

Published on or before: 21/02/2025

The following Cabinet papers and related Cabinet minutes have been proactively released by the Minister of Climate Change

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts – November 2024</i>	CAB-24-MIN-0508
<i>Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts – November 2024</i>	

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the OIA that would apply have been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Key to OIA redaction codes:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government.



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: Hon Simon Watts - November 2024

Portfolio Climate Change

On 16 December 2024, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Simon Watts under CAB-24-SUB-0508 on his travel, from 13 to 24 November 2024, to:

- 1 London, England to meet with stakeholders on global insurance, renewable energy, and climate action;
- 2 Baku, Azerbaijan to attend the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP29).

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively Released by the Minister of Climate Change

~~[In Confidence]~~

Office of the Minister of Climate Change

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts - November 2024

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Baku, Azerbaijan via London, England from 13 November to 24 November to attend the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP29) and meet with climate action stakeholders.

Report

London visit

- 1 My visit to London 14-16 November 2024, ahead of my travel to Baku, Azerbaijan for COP29, provided a valuable opportunity to engage with key stakeholders in the global reinsurance market and connect with high-profile kiwi businesspeople and climate experts. This was the first visit by a New Zealand Minister of Climate Change to the United Kingdom since Glasgow hosted COP26 in November 2021.
- 2 The key element of my visit were meetings with London-based reinsurance and insurance companies, facilitated by the Insurance Council of New Zealand (ICNZ). ICNZ CEO Kris Faafoi, AIG New Zealand CEO Amanda Whiting and Suncorp New Zealand CEO Jimmy Higgins accompanied the delegation for meetings with representatives from Lloyd's, Munich Re, Nephila, Flood Re, and Aon.
- 3 At the meetings with reinsurance executives, I provided an overview of New Zealand's climate adaptation framework, and our emerging legislative framework for insurance, and how both would be integrated with our long-term infrastructure pipeline. I consistently delivered the message that New Zealand had a clear-eyed and bipartisan approach to natural hazards and climate adaptation, and how these issues interface with the insurance sector. I conveyed my appreciation for the reinsurance industry's continuing support for the New Zealand insurance sector, and by extension New Zealand policyholders.
- 4 Reinsurers viewed New Zealand as a significant and important market, with the Natural Hazard Commission (NHC), and IAG and Suncorp's New Zealand brands being covered by some of the world's largest reinsurance treaties. Reinsurers said that although New Zealand was seen as a high-risk market because of our exposure to a range of natural hazards, we had an excellent reputation with global insurers. The NHC was seen as particularly innovative and data driven. Some reinsurers said that they would like to see more

government investment in flood management infrastructure and better data modelling if they were to grow their exposure to the New Zealand market.

- 5 I also met with London-based members of Kiwis in Climate, a professional network that brings together New Zealanders working on climate and environment issues; Nathan Ross, The King's Assistant Private Secretary and Climate Advisor; Will Straw, CEO of King's Trust International; and David Kennedy, Partner for Corporate Sustainability at Ernst and Young.

29th United Nations Climate Change Conference in Baku

- 6 Following my visit to London, I attended the 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan from 17 November to 22 November. COP29 is the annual meeting that governs the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement.
- 7 My Ministerial delegation included Labour's Opposition Spokesperson for the Environment Hon Rachel Brooking, as well as Green Party's spokesperson for Climate Change Chlöe Swarbrick.
- 8 COP29 provided an opportunity for New Zealand to engage with partners to ensure our climate change story resonated internationally and signal that we were playing our part in an effective global response to climate change. I focused on building relationships and cooperation with the Government's priority partners ^{s6(a)}
- 9 I represented New Zealand at Ministerial-level negotiations on high priority COP29 outcomes, hosted a Pacific Ministerial Roundtable, met with New Zealand stakeholders, and participated in 'Umbrella Group' (including Australia, Canada, UK, US) Ministerial strategy and coordination discussions. I also announced a \$10 million dollar contribution to the global Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage.
- 10 Singapore's Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Grace Fu and I co-chaired negotiations on Article 6 (carbon market rules) to a successful conclusion. This marked the completion of almost a decade of rule-making negotiations, and was one of the Presidency's top priorities for COP29. Article 6 provides trusted and transparent carbon markets for countries as they collaborate to reach their climate goals. This includes the operationalisation of a centralised carbon market mechanism that will enable the undertaking of emission reduction activities, and quantification and transaction of emissions reductions for countries to meet their emissions reduction targets.
- 11 Another significant outcome from COP29 was Parties agreeing to a New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance. This includes a collective target of at least \$300bn by 2035. In accordance with our mandate, New Zealand's ability to nationally determine its climate finance contribution is preserved in this goal.

12 Parties did not agree to how we will collectively follow-up on the outcomes of COP28's global stocktake (the centrepiece of last year's historic UAE Consensus) – particularly those outcomes related to 1.5 degrees, mitigation, and energy transition. ^{s6(a)}

13 No agreement was reached on who will host COP31 in 2026. Both Australia and Türkiye remain committed to their bids. COP30 in 2025 will be hosted by Brazil.

Bilateral meetings

14 A significant part of my time at COP29 was spent meeting with bilateral counterparts on the margins. I had nine bilateral meetings with partner countries. I also reached agreement to negotiate two climate Memorandum of Arrangements. This included signing a joint declaration with the Philippines, and joining an Asia Development Bank initiative to support carbon market negotiations in the region.

Proactive release

15 I propose to proactively release this paper within 30 business days in accordance with Cabinet Office Circular CO (18) 4. Proactive release is subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act.

Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Simon Watts

Minister of Climate Change