



26 September 2024

Minister of Climate Change

For approval by

2 October 2024

UN Climate Change – New Zealand's negotiating mandate

BRIEFING Decision Submission

PURPOSE Seek agreement to a high-level negotiating mandate for New Zealand's participation in UN Climate Change processes.

Recommended referrals

Prime Minister	For information by	17 October 2024
Minister of Foreign Affairs	For concurrence by	17 October 2024
Minister for Trade	For information by	17 October 2024
Minister of Finance	For information by	17 October 2024
Minister for Infrastructure	For information by	17 October 2024
Minister for Energy	For information by	17 October 2024
Minister of Transport	For information by	17 October 2024
Minister of Agriculture	For information by	17 October 2024
Minister for the Environment	For information by	17 October 2024
Associate Minister of Climate Change	For information by	17 October 2024

Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE
Georgie Halstead	Policy Officer	Climate Change Unit	s9(2)(a)
Todd Croad	Unit Manager	Climate Change Unit	

Minister's Office to complete

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Referred |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs amendment | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events | <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's notes | |

Comments

UN Climate Change – New Zealand's negotiation mandate

Key points

- This paper seeks agreement to a revised negotiation mandate providing high level instructions for New Zealand's participation at United Nations Climate Change meetings. This will ensure New Zealand's participation in multilateral climate negotiations is aligned with Government priorities – including the Government's 'Foreign Policy Reset' and 'Climate Change Strategy', and the 'Priorities for New Zealand's international climate change engagement', agreed by Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Climate Change.
- New Zealand engages with UN Climate Change processes to influence action in line with the above priorities, and to ensure the system is effective and efficient. To do this, New Zealand will consistently:
 - Seek outcomes that align with the goals of the Paris Agreement – i.e. limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees, fostering climate resilience, and making financial flows consistent with low-emissions and climate resilient development.
 - Support the architecture of the Paris Agreement (and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) to be effective and efficient in its implementation.
 - Seek outcomes that are responsive to, and workable in, New Zealand's national circumstances – for example, seeking opportunities to leverage collaborative work programmes to benefit New Zealand's economic transition.
 - Resist outcomes that undermine the letter or spirit of the Paris Agreement or New Zealand's interests (e.g. efforts to undermine the nationally determined nature of new mitigation or climate finance commitments).
 - Seek outcomes that will improve Pacific resilience consistent with the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy and support the interests of Pacific countries to the extent possible consistent with New Zealand national objectives.
 - Calibrate positions to maintain New Zealand's international standing and promote our key relationships – e.g. cooperate closely and seek alignment with likeminded partners, ^{s6(a)}
- These instructions will replace the previous negotiating mandate and are intended to be enduring, to enable a consistent approach and planning over coming years (e.g. COP30, COP31, and relevant intersessional meetings). Further guidance on specific areas is provided in paragraph five and the full set of instructions is set out in Appendix 1.
- The Minister of Climate Change will provide more specific guidance within this framework, as needed, for particular issues and meetings. If decisions needed are particularly high-profile or move outside the bounds of these instructions, we propose the Minister for Climate Change takes decisions in consultation with the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and relevant portfolio Ministers.



Victoria Hallum
for Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

UN Climate Change – New Zealand’s negotiation mandate

Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

EITHER

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| 1 | Agree to the instructions for New Zealand’s engagement in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meetings as set out in Appendix 1. | Yes / No |
| 2 | Agree that in the event decisions are needed on matters outside the bounds of these instructions, or for particularly high-profile issues, the Minister of Climate Change will take decisions in consultation with the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs (and the relevant portfolio Minister). | Yes / No |
| 3 | Refer a copy of this submission for concurrence to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and for information to the Prime Minister and the members of the Climate Priorities Ministers Group (Minister for Trade, Minister of Finance, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Energy, Minister of Transport, Minister of Agriculture, Minister for the Environment and the Associate Minister of Climate Change). | Yes / No |

OR

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| 4 | Meet with officials to provide feedback by 7 October. | Yes / No |
|---|---|-----------------|

Hon Simon Watts
Minister of Climate Change

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Date: / /

Date: / /

UN Climate Change – New Zealand’s negotiation mandate

Report

Alignment with Government priorities

1. The Government’s Climate Change Strategy is to meet New Zealand’s targets, reduce the impact of climate change and prepare for its future effects. As Ministers have agreed in the submission ‘Priorities for New Zealand’s international climate change engagement’, New Zealand’s three core interests are:
 - a) to navigate the economic transition, ensuring New Zealand is well placed to succeed;
 - b) to support the agreed international cooperation framework (i.e. the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement) to be effective in reducing the impact of climate change, while ensuring rules favourable to our interests and a least cost approach; and
 - c) to improve Pacific resilience and stability in the broader Indo-Pacific region, including for New Zealand’s security.
2. Alongside these climate change objectives, New Zealand’s engagement in UN Climate Change processes should support the Government’s Foreign Policy Reset and seek outcomes that are responsive to, and workable in, New Zealand’s national circumstances.
3. Climate change is driven by global emissions. The Paris Agreement is the best, and currently only, option for responding to climate change on a global level. It is in New Zealand’s national interest that effective climate action is taken by all countries, in accordance with agreed multilateral rules.
4. Action on climate change and green economy cooperation is also a key strand of bilateral engagement with priority partners – ^{s6(a)}
 - . New Zealand playing its part alongside these partners to support the agreed international system to be effective will support these foreign policy relationships. For example, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders have reaffirmed that climate change remains the single greatest existential threat to the region and set a vision for the region to “continue to play a global leadership role in climate action” in the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy. Looking ahead, COP31 will likely be co-hosted by Australia in partnership with the Pacific in 2026, providing a unique opportunity for New Zealand engagement.
5. Overarching instructions are proposed in the key points section of this paper. Further guidance on specific areas of negotiation is set out below.
 - **Limiting warming to 1.5 degrees** – New Zealand will seek action that is based on the best available science and taken by all countries in line with national circumstances.
 - **Fostering climate resilience and adaptation** – New Zealand will seek outcomes that:
 - encourage flexible and locally relevant solutions;
 - support the regular use of risk assessments, adaptation planning, implementing, monitoring and adjusting of actions;
 - focus on the most vulnerable; and
 - recognise the role that restored ecosystems and nature-based solutions can play

UN Climate Change – New Zealand’s negotiation mandate

- **Aligning financial flows with low emissions and climate resilient development** – New Zealand will seek outcomes that support the scale up of investment in climate action from all sources, remove environmentally harmful subsidies and support emissions pricing mechanisms.
- **Agriculture** – New Zealand will seek outcomes which enhance global cooperation to drive action on the ground, increase investment in low emissions agri-tech and the repurposing of environmentally harmful agricultural subsidies.
- **Carbon markets and non-market cooperation** – New Zealand will seek effective and efficient outcomes that enable the full operationalisation of Article 6 with transparency, environmental integrity, and without further delay; that preserves New Zealand’s optionality.
- **Means of implementation (including climate finance)** – New Zealand will seek outcomes on means of implementation (climate finance, capacity building and technology transfer) that are consistent with New Zealand obligations under the Paris Agreement and support improving access to finance for the Pacific and other Small Island Developing States. Outcomes should be workable, transparent, support high-quality action, and be contributed to by countries according to their capabilities as part of a global effort.
- **Rights** – New Zealand will engage with rights-based issues (e.g. human rights, indigenous, gender and labour issues) in line with its general approach to international human rights advocacy, (as agreed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 9 September 2024), and calibrate these positions with our likeminded countries.
- **Transparency** – New Zealand will support the implementation of the Enhanced Transparency Framework, to build mutual trust, confidence and accountability while promoting the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.
- **Loss and damage** – New Zealand will engage on loss and damage issues to support particularly vulnerable developing countries, including the Pacific, to respond to loss damage.

Appendix 1 sets out the full set of instructions.

Consultation

6. **Tokelau:** As a self-governing territory of New Zealand, Tokelau participates in UN Climate Change processes as part of New Zealand’s delegation and is actively engaged given the priority it attaches to climate change. Tokelau officials confirmed the content of these revised instructions reflects Tokelau and Tokelau’s priorities. They emphasised the ongoing importance of including Tokelau and its priorities when implementing this mandate. New Zealand’s approach will continue to be informed by the meaningful participation of Tokelau.
7. **Iwi/Māori:** officials engaged with the National Iwi Chairs Forum Pou Āhuarangi chair. No issues were raised with the direction proposed in these revised instructions and discussions were focused on how they will be implemented. Areas of importance identified included mitigation, adaptation and finance, along with the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous rights. They were also focused on ensuring accountability and applicability of decisions to all major emitters and economies. We consider that the approach in this paper is aligned with this feedback, and will continue to engage with iwi/Māori on these issues.

UN Climate Change – New Zealand’s negotiation mandate

8. **Feedback from 2023 public consultation:** In 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade undertook public consultation in developing the previous negotiating mandate. We received 112 individual submissions, 1,206 form submissions and oral submissions from hui. While individuals’ views and priorities varied, the overarching themes from submitters were 1) New Zealand should push for urgent global course correction to keep 1.5 alive and seek more concrete outcomes from the COP and 2) New Zealand should demonstrate leadership internationally. The approach in this paper continues to support the achievement of the goals of the Paris Agreement; and reflects the Government’s preference to calibrate its position with likemindeds, rather than seek to play a global leadership role.
9. **Agency consultation:** The following agencies were consulted, the Ministry for the Environment, Treasury; Ministry for Primary Industries; Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment; Ministry of Transport; Ministry of Māori Development; Department of Conservation; and the Ministry of Defence.

COP29 Specific decisions

10. The above instructions are intended to form a consistent, high-level basis for New Zealand’s engagement over time. Additional guidance will be sought on specific issues and key decisions, as needed.
11. For COP29 the key issue under negotiation is agreement to a new collective quantified goal on climate finance. You and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Finance approved guidance on this issue in the July submission ‘Approach to negotiations on the new collective quantified goal on climate finance (NCQG)’.

Resourcing

12. The proposed approach has no resourcing implications.

UN Climate Change – New Zealand’s negotiation mandate

Appendix 1: UN Climate Change – New Zealand’s negotiating mandate

1. New Zealand engages with UN Climate Change processes to influence action in line with its priorities. This means engaging to ensure this system is effective and efficient. To do this, New Zealand will consistently:
 - 1.1. Seek outcomes that align with the goals of the Paris Agreement – i.e. limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees, fostering climate resilience, and making financial flows consistent with low-emissions and climate resilient development.
 - 1.2. Support the architecture of the Paris Agreement (and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) to be effective and efficient in its implementation – e.g. supporting the proper functioning of the Global Stocktake and Enhanced Transparency Framework, and where appropriate, seeking to close or rationalise legacy institutions and processes that do not serve a function under the Paris Agreement (e.g. the Kyoto Protocol), and seek synergies with other multilateral conventions as appropriate.
 - 1.3. Seek outcomes that are responsive to, and workable in, New Zealand’s national circumstances – for example, seeking opportunities to leverage collaborative work programmes to benefit New Zealand’s economic transition (e.g. including through sharing best practice, seeking ways to channel financial flows towards low emissions investment and innovation, the management of agricultural emissions and development of international carbon markets).
 - 1.4. Resist outcomes that undermine the letter or spirit of the Paris Agreement or New Zealand’s interests (e.g. efforts to undermine the nationally determined nature of new mitigation or climate finance commitments).
 - 1.5. Seek outcomes that will improve Pacific resilience consistent with the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy and support the interests of Pacific countries to the extent possible consistent with New Zealand national objectives.
 - 1.6. Calibrate positions to maintain New Zealand’s international standing and promote our key relationships – e.g. cooperate closely and seek alignment with likeminded partners, ^{s6(a)}
2. Further guidance on specific areas of negotiation is set out below:
 - 2.1. Limiting warming to 1.5 degrees – New Zealand will seek action that is based on the best available science and taken by all countries in line with national circumstances.
 - 2.2. Fostering climate resilience and adaptation – New Zealand will seek outcomes that:
 - 2.2.1. encourage flexible and locally relevant solutions;
 - 2.2.2. support the regular use of risk assessments, adaptation planning, implementing, monitoring and adjusting of actions;
 - 2.2.3. focus on the most vulnerable; and

UN Climate Change – New Zealand’s negotiation mandate

- 2.2.4. recognise the role that restored ecosystems and nature-based solutions can play.
- 2.3. Aligning financial flows with low emissions and climate resilient development – New Zealand will seek outcomes that support the scale up of investment in climate action from all sources, remove environmentally harmful subsidies and support emissions pricing mechanisms.
- 2.4. Agriculture – New Zealand will seek outcomes which enhance global cooperation to drive action on the ground, increase investment in low emissions agri-tech and the repurposing of environmentally harmful agricultural subsidies.
- 2.5. Carbon markets and non-market cooperation – New Zealand will seek effective and efficient outcomes that enable the full operationalisation of Article 6 with transparency, environmental integrity, and without further delay; that preserves New Zealand’s optionality.
- 2.6. Means of implementation (including climate finance) – New Zealand will seek outcomes on means of implementation (climate finance, capacity building and technology transfer) that are consistent with New Zealand obligations under the Paris Agreement and support improving access to finance for the Pacific and other Small Island Developing States. Outcomes should be workable, transparent, support high-quality action, and be contributed to by countries according to their capabilities as part of a global effort.
- 2.7. Rights – New Zealand will engage with rights-based issues (e.g. human rights, indigenous, gender and labour issues) in line with its general approach to international human rights advocacy, (as agreed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 9 September 2024), and calibrate these positions with our likeminded countries.
- 2.8. Transparency – New Zealand will support the implementation of the Enhanced Transparency Framework, to build mutual trust, confidence and accountability while promoting the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.
- 2.9. Loss and damage – New Zealand will engage on loss and damage issues to support particularly vulnerable developing countries, including the Pacific, to respond to loss damage.