

New Zealand – Tonga
Statement of Partnership
2019 – 2023

He waka eke noa

Takanga 'etau Fohe

We are all in the waka together

Synchronise our paddles

This Statement sets out the principles and priorities under which the Government of New Zealand and the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga will cooperate, coordinate, and partner in accepted priority areas in line with the Tonga Strategic Development Framework 2015-2025.

In coming together in partnership, we acknowledge the unique nature and significance of the enduring relationship between our two countries and the celebration of 50 years of diplomatic relations in 2020.

We recognise our shared Pacific geography, historical ties and culture, the depth of connections between our peoples and institutions, and our common interests in the region.

We recognise our genuine and respectful bilateral relationship founded on sovereign equality and governed by a spirit of close friendship.

We acknowledge key principles which we wish to guide and deepen our partnership: understanding, friendship, mutual benefit, collective ambition, and sustainability.

We recognise the four golden values that are central to Tongan society, language and culture:

- Faka'apa'apa – Respect
- Feveitokai'aki – Reciprocity
- Mamahi'i me'a – Commitment
- Loto To - Humility

We reaffirm the fundamental shared values at the heart of our partnership, in particular our common support for democracy, human rights, gender equality, effective governance, rule of law, environmental stewardship, and strong regional and international cooperation.

In doing so, New Zealand and Tonga have identified common priority areas for ongoing cooperation and commit to building deeper connections, creating a more progressive and inclusive Tonga with a higher quality of life for all Tongans and pursuing inclusive and equitable development that leaves no one behind.

Over the period December 2019 to December 2023, New Zealand and Tonga accept to progress work under the following areas:

- **Partnership** – collaborating and sharing knowledge and expertise
- **Climate change** – addressing this global issue as the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of Tonga and the Pacific
- **Stability and security** – working towards a safe, well-governed Tonga and wider Pacific community
- **People** – connecting our peoples and growing Tonga's human capital
- **Prosperity** – fostering mutually beneficial regional trade and a resilient and inclusive Tongan economy.

Priority Areas for Cooperation

Under this Statement of Partnership, New Zealand and Tonga together will:

Partnership

- Foster cooperation between New Zealand and Tonga, including towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Deepen interagency cooperation between New Zealand and Tonga to realise joint benefits;

- Promote increased coherence between domestic and bilateral priorities;
- Recognise the long-term and multi-faceted partnership of His Majesty's Armed Forces and the New Zealand Defence Force, including their efforts to adapt and build resilience against the impacts of climate change and natural disasters;
- Recognise the close partnership between Tonga Police and New Zealand Police to strengthen national and regional security through continued capacity development and technical operational assistance;
- Collaborate through regional institutions and multilateral fora to identify and prioritise issues, and progress collective action on these priorities;
- Draw on New Zealand volunteers to strengthen organisational and individual capability across the public, private and civil society sectors.

Climate Change

- Support national, regional and international undertakings towards achieving the aims of the Paris Agreement, including holding the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels;
- Support action on climate change resilience and adaption, aligned to Tonga's Joint National Action Plan 2 and the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions, and ensure this is pursued in all policy and development assistance efforts;
- Through mechanisms including the Nationally Determined Contributions Hub, support Tonga's efforts to implement, enhance and recommunicate its Nationally Determined Contribution and to develop and submit a long term low-emissions development strategy;
- Continue to support Tonga's leadership in managing disaster response and respond swiftly to disasters.

Stability and Security

- Support Tonga's governance models, accountability institutions, and processes, and contribute to the reconstruction of Tonga's Fale Alea and Office of the Legislative Assembly;
- Work together to identify and respond to shared security challenges in the Pacific region and internationally, including environmental and climate change security, transnational and human security;
- Cooperate on information and assessment exchange in areas of shared interest: illicit drugs, disarmament, non-proliferation, intelligence, policing and law enforcement, maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, cybersecurity, health security, biosecurity, and transnational and border security;
- Develop joint processes and practices to identify and respond to challenges arising from criminal deportees, and support their reintegration into Tongan society.

People

- Encourage and strengthen heritage, cultural, recreational and sports linkages between New Zealand and Tonga, including through leveraging Tongan diaspora connections;
- Implement a new health sector programme that supports Tonga's health sector plan and builds on and strengthens institutional linkages between New Zealand and Tonga;
- Collaborate to improve basic education outcomes,
- Embed and expand vocational pathways for young people;
- Deliver targeted scholarships and workplace training opportunities that enable leadership and professional capability development aligned with Tonga's development priorities;
- Continue our cooperation on cross-border child protection issues and broader human rights issues.

Prosperity

- Foster effective governance through budget support, joint dialogue, and supporting policy reform initiatives to stimulate economic growth;
- Share expertise to develop secure e-government delivery in Tonga;
- Grow the economic benefits and development impacts from Tonga's participation in the Recognised Seasonal Employer and other labour mobility schemes;
- Recognise our shared Blue Pacific identity, our connection to, and importance of, the ocean for our food security as well as our social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being;
- Support sustainable management, inclusive growth and resilient practice in the agriculture sector and fisheries;
- Leverage economic opportunities created by the ratification and implementation of the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER Plus).

Shared Understandings and Approach:

Under this Statement of Partnership, New Zealand and Tonga together will:

Shared Understandings:

- Hold periodic ministerial level talks to consider and refresh the priority areas set out in this Statement;
- Hold annual officials' level talks to monitor progress against the accepted priority areas set out in this Statement;
- Jointly develop a framework to monitor progress, and ensure collaboration, in the accepted priority areas;
- Coordinate long-term and predictable assistance to priority sectors in accordance with sector plans;

- Work towards increasing the proportion of development expenditure channelled through higher level aid modalities and managed within Tongan country systems;
- Strengthen the bilateral partnership through open and honest communication and effective delivery of accepted priority areas of cooperation;
- Coordinate development assistance at sector level alongside other partners and stakeholders; and
- Provide timely and regular financial updates on the Tonga development assistance programme.

Approach:

- Pursue these understandings based on the joint respect of each country's integrity and sovereignty;
- Maintain ongoing open communication at all levels to ensure effective cooperation, coordination, and accountability;
- Pursue coherence and integration across internal and foreign policy and development efforts;
- Pursue development activities that are inclusive, resilient, sustainable and effective;
- Respect the channels of communication and processes for coordination between governments;
- Be clear about and accountable for what we will each deliver; and
- Pursue flexibility to respond to emerging priorities as they arise.

This Statement of Understanding will take effect on the date of its signature. Any jointly decided amendment to the priorities, commitments, or principles will be decided in writing. Either side may withdraw from this Statement of Understanding by providing written notice at least ninety (90) days prior to the intended date of termination.

Signed at

on 6 December 2019

For New Zealand

For the Kingdom of Tonga

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Deputy Prime Minister of
New Zealand

Hon Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of
Tonga