

The New Zealand-Philippines Roadmap for Comprehensive Partnership 2026

During their meeting on 18 April 2024, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon of New Zealand and President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. of the Philippines agreed to elevate the bilateral relationship to a Comprehensive Partnership by 2026.

This decision represents the mutual intent of New Zealand and the Philippines to improve the relationship in ways that deliver real benefits and advance shared security and economic interests.

The Leaders directed their Foreign Ministers and relevant officials to put in place a Roadmap to guide the Comprehensive Partnership. In June 2024, both sides discussed at the Foreign Minister level the enduring friendship between both countries, reiterated their mutual desire to elevate the relationship to Comprehensive Partnership by 2026, and discussed steps towards this objective.

This Roadmap formalises our relationship elevation to Comprehensive Partnership. The Roadmap sets out the areas where New Zealand and the Philippines will work together to achieve outcomes across four pillars.

The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs will monitor progress towards achieving the outcomes outlined in this Roadmap. Progress will be assessed periodically.

Political engagement

New Zealand and the Philippines are committed to strengthening engagement at senior official, ministerial, and Leaders' levels. To achieve this, we have agreed to:

- Take every opportunity to facilitate meetings between high level officials especially at the sidelines of international conferences/meetings;
- Elevate the biennial Foreign Ministry Consultations to Vice-Ministerial level (New Zealand Chief Executive/Philippine Undersecretary) whose inaugural consultation took place on 19 August 2025 in Manila; and,
- Strengthen inter-parliamentary relations through parliamentary exchanges.

Defence, security and maritime cooperation

New Zealand and the Philippines are committed to maintaining and strengthening defence engagements and exploring new frameworks of cooperation through:

- Implementing the Mutual Logistics Supporting Arrangement (MLSA) between the New Zealand Defence Force and the Armed Forces of the Philippines signed on 10 June 2024;

- Completing the domestic procedures to implement the Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA), which was signed on 30 April 2025;
- Convening the Maritime Dialogue, whose inaugural meeting took place on 6 June 2025 in Manila;
- Maintaining the annual Bilateral Defence Talks; and Finalising a Memorandum of Arrangement on the Reciprocal Exchange of Information to Assist in the Management of Trafficking in Persons Matters in 2026.

Trade and economic engagement

New Zealand and the Philippines are committed to building stronger economic linkages to achieve a mutually beneficial 50 percent increase in two-way trade by 2030. This will be supported by:

- The early convening of the Joint Economic Commission, which shall serve as the main platform on how to improve bilateral trade and investments;
- Implementing the Specific Commodity Understanding (SCU) for the export of New Zealand onions to the Philippines and the Export Plan for fresh fruit and vegetables from the Philippines to New Zealand;
- Establishing a policy exchange mechanism on export capability in the Philippine agricultural sector; and
- Developing, before September 2026, a framework for climate cooperation under which collaborative initiatives and activities can be developed and progressed by mutual agreement, including but not limited to:
 - Regular policy exchange, building on the inaugural technical dialogue held virtually on 23 October 2024;
 - Exploring potential cooperation opportunities under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement;
 - Promoting sustainable forest management, nature-based solutions that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions reduction and avoidance and biodiversity conservation, and technology-based solutions to climate change adaptation and mitigation challenges; and
 - Encouraging business-to-business connections that drive innovation and sustainable solutions that support economic growth.

People to people cooperation

New Zealand and the Philippines are committed to strengthening linkages between our peoples, reflecting the growing diaspora of Filipinos and the important role they play in New Zealand. This will be supported by:

- Maintaining the biennial Joint Committee on Labour Meetings (JCLM), completing a review of the Arrangement pertaining to migrant worker cooperation, and initiating activities under the revised Arrangement;
- Establishing and maintaining dialogue on social security issues relating to Filipinos in New Zealand with the view to addressing their concerns;
- Enhancing cooperation on Indigenous Peoples' issues including on capacity building and sharing of best practices and indigenous knowledge on biodiversity, climate change, human rights, conservation, and promotion and protection of the environment;
- Advancing the use of the joint report between New Zealand Qualifications Authority and the Philippine Commission on Higher Education on the comparability of Bachelor's degrees in New Zealand and the Philippines; and,
- Exploring opportunities to strengthen people to people connections including joint initiatives and/or closer collaboration between counterpart agencies on areas of shared interest, that may build capacity, such as but not limited to:
 - Implementing targeted enhancements to visa access for Philippine diplomatic and official passport holders through facilitating three-year multi entry visas;
 - Both sides agree to explore a visa waiver agreement for New Zealand and Philippine diplomatic and official passport holders at the earliest possible opportunity.
 - Negotiating and finalizing a bilateral cultural cooperation arrangement to promote mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's culture, history, and way of life through:
 - Exchange of books, films, and other cultural materials;
 - Sharing of art and organizing cultural exhibitions;
 - Strengthening ties between museums, archives, and libraries, focusing on areas like indigenous cultures and intangible heritage; and
 - Promoting other valuable cultural exchanges;
 - Welcoming efforts to establish Philippine studies programs in major New Zealand universities; and
 - Creating institutional linkages between New Zealand and Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

New Zealand and the Philippines may also develop mutually agreed future cooperative activities during the implementation of this Roadmap.