

Proactive Release

Date: 16 September 2019

The following Cabinet paper and related Cabinet minute have been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon James Shaw

(CAB-19-MIN 0053 refers)

This paper was prepared for release as a part of an Official Information Act request and intended for release on 30 April 2019, due to a clerical error there has been a delay in uploading this paper to our website.

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Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon James Shaw

Portfolio **Climate Change**

On 25 February 2019, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon James Shaw under CAB-19-SUB-0053 on his travel, from 8 to 23 December 2018, to:

- 1 Katowice, Poland to attend the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24);
- 2 Sussex and London, United Kingdom, to attend a Pacific climate change and resilience forum and hold bilateral meetings.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon James Shaw

In Confidence

Office of the Minister for Climate Change

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon James Shaw

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Katowice, Poland and Sussex and London, UK from 8 to 23 December 2018 for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24), a Pacific climate change forum and bilateral visit programme respectively. For COP24 this report covers the objectives set for New Zealand at the conference (the italicised subheadings), within which my Ministerial travel priorities are subsumed.

Report

- 1 **COP24** was the most important UN climate change meeting since 2015 when the Paris Agreement was adopted. Alongside the UN negotiations, COP summits are also a major ‘trade fair’ for ideas and solutions for climate challenges. They are a place to build networks and influence outside of the formal meetings.
- 2 New Zealand was represented at the COP by a larger and more diverse delegation than we have sent previously to these annual meetings, reflecting the diversity, volume and materiality of New Zealand interests at stake. Complementing the work of government officials, the delegation members from iwi, business, farming, union and the NGO sectors added important dimensions to New Zealand’s presence and impact.
- 3 New Zealand’s domestic story - from the foundational Crown-Maori relationship through to the land-based nature of our economy – was brought to life through the different perspectives and voices on our delegation. For example, Iwi Chairs Forum representatives Mike Smith and Hinekaa Mako provided a strong New Zealand input into discussions on the Local Communities’ and Indigenous Peoples’ Platform.

Reach agreement on a Paris Agreement 'rulebook' that is robust, transparent and has environmental integrity

- 4 COP24 reached agreement on the details of the “Paris rulebook” – a result for which New Zealand Climate Change Ambassador Jo Tyndall can take a lot of credit as the co-chair of the officials’ level negotiation. As a result, we now have the technical guidelines to provide for effective implementation of the Paris Agreement’s pledge and review system. Crucially, COP24 agreed that there would be common reporting requirements for all countries. Robust

outcomes were also landed on mitigation and compliance, and a fair result was delivered on support for implementation by developing countries.

- 5 The one aspect of the Paris rulebook that was left unresolved was guidance for the use of carbon markets. Despite significant progress, and willingness by many to make a deal, one significant country blocked consensus; negotiations will now continue in 2019. The COP24 outcome will not obstruct New Zealand's efforts to promote high environmental integrity in carbon markets, nor to use them to help meet our climate change targets, if required. (The Paris Agreement is "permissive"; there remains no impediment for countries to cooperate on international carbon markets should they wish to do so.)
- 6 Arguably, COP24 was the culmination of 13 years of UN negotiations about what would follow the Kyoto Protocol. Now that the Paris rulebook is agreed, the focus will move quickly onto implementation - how countries are meeting their existing commitments, and what more can be done to raise ambition and spur greater climate action. (The collective set of emission reduction pledges by countries currently falls short of what is necessary to stay below a 1.5°C temperature increase.) In the wake of the release of the IPCC's Special Report into 1.5°C, much of the discussion at COP24 was about 2030 and what action is needed in the next 12 years to avoid exceeding that temperature level.

Work closely with our Pacific neighbours consistent with the Government's Pacific Reset, and use the IPCC Special Report on 1.5 degrees to generate impetus for more ambitious action

- 7 New Zealand advocated clearly and strongly for ambitious international climate action. The Prime Minister's engagement on climate change at UNGA Leaders Week in September 2018 boosted New Zealand's profile ahead of the COP. That generated significant interest in what New Zealand was doing, and led to a large number of invitations for the delegation to participate in events and calls for action at COP24.
- 8 We stood strongly with our Pacific neighbours at the meeting, and Tokelau's representatives were an active part of the New Zealand delegation. New Zealand was vocal in its advocacy for recognition of the IPCC's Special Report. We also sought a meaningful outcome to the Fiji-led Talanoa Dialogue process, and positive outcomes for the Pacific on finance and loss and damage. The Pacific and Koronivia Pavilion – a partnership between the Fijian COP23 Presidency, New Zealand and Pacific regional agencies - was a visible demonstration of our partnership.
- 9 We can expect action on climate change mitigation and adaptation to stay as a top priority for the Pacific. New Zealand's continued support for our region will remain important through 2019 and beyond.

Raise awareness of sustainable agriculture and climate change, including through hosting a programme of events called Act!on Agriculture

- 10 A three day “Act!on Agriculture” programme showcased our leadership on agriculture and climate change. This was accompanied by outreach on the New Zealand-initiated Global Research Alliance and engagement on agriculture in the formal negotiations.
- 11 The seven agriculture sector representatives on the delegation meant the New Zealand contributions to the “Act!on Agriculture” events were anchored in real life experience. Their stories demonstrated that action is both possible and is taking place, providing confidence and encouragement for other countries to do the same. In turn it gave our representatives new networks and insights that will help to inform future opportunities for our agricultural sector domestically.

Progress other initiatives that New Zealand is taking a leading role in, such as the Carbon Neutrality Coalition and the Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform

- 12 New Zealand’s place amongst progressive voices on climate change was reinforced through my engagement at Ministerial level with partners in the Carbon Neutrality Coalition and the High Ambition Coalition. At officials’ level we engaged through the Cartagena Dialogue for Progressive Action and the Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform. New Zealand endorsed the Polish COP Presidency’s three declarations on just transition, e-mobility and forests. New Zealand will continue to use international initiatives such as these to influence and encourage collective action on climate change.

Raise the profile of recent initiatives in New Zealand, such as the launch of New Zealand Green Investment Finance Ltd

- 13 COP24 provided an opportunity for New Zealand to share its domestic economic transition story. With COP24 taking place shortly after the launch of New Zealand Green Investment Finance Ltd, COP24 was an early platform for the team to network with international green investment experts.
- 14 There was considerable interest at COP24 as to whether developed countries were planning to use surplus Kyoto Protocol units towards their post-2020 Paris Agreement commitments. It was helpful for our reputation and influence at Katowice that I could unequivocally put on the record, in response to queries from media and environmental organisations, that New Zealand would not use them for this purpose.
- 15 I held useful bilateral meetings with Ministerial counterparts from Tokelau, Australia, Brazil, Scotland, The Netherlands, and the EU, as well as a roundtable with Pacific Ministers and Leaders.
- 16 Immediately following COP24, I took part in a **Forum on Pacific climate change and resilience** at Wilton Park, Sussex. The Forum was co-hosted by New Zealand, the UK and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. The event brought together Prime Ministers, Ministers, officials, civil society and academics to consider four climate change-related themes – oceans, finance, security, and migration. For each theme participants discussed current and emerging problems, and developed a range of proposals for progressing

those issues. The Wilton Park format enabled perspectives to be shared in a safe environment, amplifying Pacific voices, and building networks in the region and beyond. With positive feedback received about the forum, the UK is actively considering holding a second event in the Pacific region in 2019.

- 17 My visit to the UK concluded with a **bilateral visit programme** in London. This visit was an opportunity to understand UK experiences and lessons learned, including from the last ten years of its Climate Change Act.
- 18 The Climate Change Act was seen as a successful long-term framework for greenhouse gas emission reduction in the UK that incorporated both ambition and flexibility. The establishment of the independent and rigorous Climate Change Commission was also viewed favourably.
- 19 My discussions in London also focused on how to 'green' investment, including drawing on insights from recent UK taskforces on green investment and [climate-related financial disclosures](#).
- 20 My overall takeaway from the UK visit was that we are on the right track here as we look forward to the introduction of climate legislation into the New Zealand Parliament and a positive impact from New Zealand Green Investment Finance Ltd on our economic transition.

Proactive release

- 21 I propose to release this paper proactively as per Cabinet Office Circular CO (18) 4, on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website. Proactive release will be subject to redaction as appropriate under the [Official Information Act 1982](#).

Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon James Shaw

Minister for Climate Change