

Proactive Release

25/10/2022

The following Cabinet papers and related Cabinet minutes have been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta</i>	CAB-22-MIN-0373
<i>Report to Cabinet: Minister of Foreign Affairs' Visit to Cambodia and Malaysia: 2-9 August 2022</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;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments;



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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 Nanaia Mahuta

Portfolio **Foreign Affairs**

On 12 September 2022, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Nanaia Mahuta under CAB-22-SUB-0373 on her travel, from 2 to 10 August 2022, to Cambodia for ASEAN-related meetings and Malaysia for bilateral meetings.

Rachel Hayward
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

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by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

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Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

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Report to Cabinet: Minister of Foreign Affairs' Visit to Cambodia and Malaysia: 2-9 August 2022

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Cambodia for ASEAN-related meetings and to Malaysia for bilateral engagements.

Report

ASEAN-Related Meetings hosted by Cambodia

- 2 I led the Aotearoa New Zealand delegation to the series of ASEAN-led ministerial meetings in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from 4-5 August, preceded by a series of bilateral meetings on 3 August.
- 3 The key elements ASEAN programme included the ASEAN-New Zealand Ministerial Meeting, the East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Foreign Ministers' Meetings.
- 4 My participation in the meetings was underpinned by five main objectives:
- i. Demonstrating that Aotearoa New Zealand remained an engaged and active participant in the Indo-Pacific region;
 - ii. Conveying Aotearoa New Zealand's condemnation of the ongoing violence and erosion of democracy in Myanmar, including the recent executions;
 - iii. Encouraging ^{s6(a)} ASEAN countries to more vocally support the international rules-based order and join condemnation of Russia's actions in Ukraine;
 - iv. Putting on record Aotearoa New Zealand's positions on the core issues affecting the rules-based order and strategic environment in our region; and
 - v. Supporting the key architecture to weather the storm of current challenges by positioning Aotearoa New Zealand as a constructive partner to ASEAN.
- 5 As the first in-person set of ASEAN ministerial meetings since 2019, ASEAN Chair Cambodia had its work cut out to deliver the set of substantive meetings in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and with a mounting list of regional and international crises on the agenda. Going into the meeting it was expected that Myanmar, Ukraine, South China Seas and North Korea would dominate the discussions. ^{s9(2)(g)(i)}

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6 s9(2)(g)(i)

7 As anticipated, Myanmar's military regime declined the ASEAN offer to send a non-political representative to the week's events, and instead were represented by an empty chair in each of the main events. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

8 The EAS Foreign Ministers' Meeting was the main stage for the geopolitical tensions to play out. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

9 ASEAN members were united in urging the major powers to show restraint, de-escalate and act in accordance with international law. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

10 In my interventions I was able to put on record Aotearoa's values-based positions on key regional security issues and to reinforce the importance of responding collectively to promote and safeguard the international rules-based order. I emphasised that geopolitical turmoil in the region was not necessarily our destiny, as good decisions and actions could still be taken.

11 The ASEAN-New Zealand Ministerial Meeting provided a much more positive atmosphere, and an opportunity to traverse the breadth of cooperation between Aotearoa and ASEAN. Representatives reflected on the significant COVID-response assistance New Zealand has provided to ASEAN, the upgrade of AANZFTA, the entry into force of RCEP and the opportunities for enhanced cooperation in areas of climate change and e-commerce. Now that Aotearoa New Zealand's borders were reopen, both sides looked forward to the recommencement of people-people exchanges such as scholarships and English language training for officials.

12 The formal outcomes from the ARF meeting included 1) a framework on inclusive processes for the women peace and security and youth peace and security agendas; 2) a statement committing the ARF to preserve the South East Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone; and 3) a statement on promoting peace, stability and prosperity through confidence-building measures

13 The first in-person ASEAN-related meetings for two years provided a good opportunity to meet with some ministers of the first time, and to deepen established connections with others. I held ten bilateral meetings with counterparts from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, the European Union, Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Republic of Korea, Timor-Leste, the Republic of Türkiye, and Viet Nam.

14 In the lead up to the leaders level East Asia Summit in November, more work will need to be done to ensure Aotearoa New Zealand is laying the groundwork s9(2)(g)(i) to maximise opportunities for progress on the key issues of importance for Aotearoa and our own Indo-Pacific agenda such as climate change, non-proliferation and addressing mis/dis-information.

Malaysia – Strengthening relations with a key regional partner

- 15 Malaysia is one of New Zealand’s oldest partners in Southeast Asia, with ties originally based on defence and education but also with strong trade links - our 11th largest trade partner and 4th largest dairy market. s6(a)
- 16 The visit, the first by a New Zealand Minister in over two years, was an opportunity to:
- Reconnect with Malaysia and reiterate our ambitions bilaterally and regionally.
 - Announce a Strategic Partnership with Malaysia, which will strengthen existing ties and explore new areas for future cooperation, such as transnational crime, cybersecurity, climate change, and indigenous collaboration
 - Reaffirm our trade and business connections with Malaysia, which remains a key export destination for New Zealand, and a partner for post-pandemic trade and economic recovery.
- 17 s6(b)(i)
- 18 My meeting with Rural Development Minister Mahdzir Khalid was an opportunity to engage more substantively on indigenous issues. Mahdzir’s portfolio includes responsibilities for JAKOA (the indigenous affairs department) and MARA (an indigenous education department). s6(b)(i)
- 19 There was considerable interest in New Zealand’s expertise in indigenous leadership development, including business leadership. Malaysia was keen to learn from Māori exporters, tourism operators and entrepreneurs. I also suggested education research and agricultural cooperation as areas for future collaboration, and highlighted New Zealand as a destination for Malaysian students, particularly those of indigenous descent.
- 20 My visit to Malaysia also coincided with a visit by the Fonterra CEO Miles Hurrell and Chair of the Board Peter McBride. They hosted me on a tour of the tour of Fonterra’s factory in Kuala Lumpur, one of its largest operations in the region. Fonterra imports New Zealand ingredients, processes these locally and then sells to the Malaysian market and the rest of the region.
- 21 Other engagements in the Malaysia visit programme included:

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- Meeting with a group of indigenous student leaders, to hear the challenges they face and to share Aotearoa New Zealand's experience to date.
- Addressing a breakfast meeting of the New Zealand Malaysia Chamber of Commerce, a group of around 40 businesses with links to New Zealand.
- Delivering a speech at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, the training academy for Malaysia's young diplomats. The genesis of the event was an instruction last year from Foreign Minister Saifuddin that Malaysia needed to study how New Zealand deployed its soft power so effectively. The topic, "Foreign Policy for Small States", provided a platform to describe the challenging international environment, our vision for the region, our principles and our diplomatic toolkit as we worked in concert with others, sometimes alone, while holding to our independent foreign policy.

Proactive Release

22 This paper will be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO(18)4 on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website. Proactive release is subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

The Minister of Foreign Affairs recommends that Cabinet:

- 1 note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Minita Take Aorere / Minister of Foreign Affairs