

Proactive Release

Date: 13 June 2023

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

Title	Reference
Minute of Decision: Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta on behalf of Hon Aupito William Sio	CAB-23-MIN-0151
Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Aupito William Sio	

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 Act). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the Act 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 redaction codes:

7(b): would be likely to prejudice relations between the Governments of:

- (i) New Zealand; and
- (iii) the self-governing State of Niue;



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta on behalf of Hon Aupito William Sio

Portfolio Foreign Affairs

On 1 May 2023, Cabinet **noted** the report under CAB-23-SUB-0151 on Hon Aupito William Sio's travel from 18 to 21 October 2022 to Niue, Vanuatu, and Bali to represent New Zealand at various events.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

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Minister of Foreign Affairs

[IN CONFIDENCE]

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Aupito William Sio

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on Minister Sio's travel to:

- Niue on 18-21 October 2022 to attend its Constitution Day, and undertake bilateral engagements focused on Language, Culture, and Identity;
- Vanuatu on 22-26 November 2022 to represent Aotearoa New Zealand at the Pacific Community's biennial Ministerial meetings; and
- Bali, Indonesia on 7 and 8 December 2022: to represent Aotearoa New Zealand at the Indonesia-Pacific Forum for Development (IPFD) and the 15th Bali Democracy Forum (BDF).

Niue 48th Constitution Day Celebrations

Executive Summary

1. I attended the Niue Constitution Day Celebration in Alofi, hosted by the Government of Niue. I was supported by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry for Pacific Peoples.
2. The purpose of the visit was to demonstrate Aotearoa New Zealand's special and enduring partnership with Niue and emphasise our commitment to Niue as its only Constitutional partner.
3. Prior to the Constitution Day celebrations, I held bilateral meetings with Premier Tagelagi and Niue's Minister of Health, visited Hakupu Village, hosted an engagement with the Vagahau Niue Language Commission and Niue Youth Council representatives, and visited Niue Fook hospital.
4. These visits provided an opportunity to reiterate New Zealand's health and education support to Niue, including our ongoing commitment to support Niue navigate the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and support for Vagahau Niue and Taoga Niue, the Niuean language and culture.

Bilateral meetings

5. On 17 October 2022, I met with Premier Tagelagi. Premier Tagelagi acknowledged the importance of Aotearoa New Zealand attending Constitution Day, as a unique partner to Niue.

6. s7(b)(i), s7(b)(iii)

s7(b)(i), s7(b)(iii)

7. I also met with Minister Sauni Tongatule. I congratulated Minister Tongatule on Niue's successful COVID-19 vaccine roll-out. Minister Tongatule acknowledged the funding from Aotearoa New Zealand to support their COVID-19 response and expressed that continued support from New Zealand would further mitigate the effect COVID-19 would have on Niue's Health system and economy.
8. I acknowledged Niue's contribution to the recently released All of Government Pacific Languages Strategy, Minister Tongatule thanked New Zealand for involving the Vagahau Niue Language Commission in the consultation process. I reiterated our commitment to the retention of language and culture, specifically noting Minister Mahuta's support for language preservation and her encouragement of the Māori Language Commission to work with Niue.

s7(b)(i), s7(b)(iii)

9.

10. s7(b)(i), s7(b)(iii)

New Zealand is committed support for Vagahau and Taoga Niue

11. On 18 October, I visited the village of Hakupu, where I was invited to open the women's weaving centre that had been refurbished through a New Zealand High Commission Fund grant.
12. I also met with the Vagahau Niue Language Commission, the Niue Youth Council as well as Taoga Niue Council and listened to the young people talk about the importance of their language and culture for their overall wellbeing. I reaffirmed our ongoing commitment to supporting the revitalisation and maintenance of Vagahau and Taoga Niue.
13. The Vagahau Niue Language Commission contributed to the recently launched Pacific Languages Strategy in Aotearoa New Zealand. This was an opportunity to

acknowledge their contribution and continue to build on our shared interests and collaborative efforts.

Visit to Niue Fooou Hospital

14. I visited the Niue Fooou Hospital, where I was able to sit down with the Heads of Department and convey Aotearoa New Zealand's appreciation for Niue's pandemic management and vaccination programme. I also reiterated New Zealand continued commitment to support Niue to navigate the ongoing impacts of COVID-19.
15. Accompanied by Niue health officials, I was able to undertake a tour of the different facilities at the hospital including the dental surgery, mental health unit and specialist COVID-19 centre. Many of these facilities received support from the New Zealand Government.

Importance of Ministerial representation on Niue Constitution Day

16. On 19 October, I attended the flag raising ceremony and Constitution Day celebrations at the Fale Fono II alongside Premier Tagelagi, Australia's Foreign Minister, the US Ambassador, Japan's Deputy High Commissioner, and other dignitaries.
17. In my speech at the Constitution Day celebrations, I reiterated Aotearoa New Zealand's special and enduring partnership with Niue and emphasised New Zealand's ongoing commitment to Niue as its Constitutional partner.
18. It will be necessary for New Zealand to continue to have Ministerial representation at future Constitution Day celebrations especially those of significance such as the 50th anniversary in October 2024.

South Pacific Community's (SPC) 12th Ministerial Conference

Executive Summary

1. On 24-25 November I attended the South Pacific Community's (SPC) 12th Ministerial Conference hosted by current SPC Chair, Vanuatu.
2. The purpose of this visit was to Show New Zealand's strong governance support for SPC as a key regional partner and engage with senior Ministers from across the Pacific.
3. Prior to my attendance at the Ministerial Conference, I undertook a bilateral programme meeting with Vanuatu Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Internal Affairs, and the Minister for Climate Change.
4. These meetings provided an opportunity to Highlight New Zealand's enduring relationship with Vanuatu, our partner-led development programme, our strong advocacy for climate action in the Pacific, and to discuss the increasingly complex geostrategic environment.

Bilateral Meetings

5. I met with Prime Minister Alatoi Ishmael Kalsakau where we discussed ways that his government could collaborate with and receive support from Aotearoa New Zealand. I encouraged the Prime Minister to engage with the New Zealand High Commissioner to discuss ways in which Aotearoa New Zealand could provide further support. I was able to pass on a congratulatory video from Prime Minister Ardern, which was well received.
6. I met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Jotham Napat. We discussed a wide range of topics with an emphasis on Vanuatu's economic recovery. I conveyed to Minister Napat that Aotearoa New Zealand was committed to supporting Vanuatu to address its development needs and we were very conscious of the need to see economic outcomes. Our existing support ranges from tourism, improving biosecurity and market access for agricultural products, and state-owned enterprise reform.
7. I met with the Minister of Internal Affairs Christophe Emelee. Minister Emelee raised issues around cyber security and the recent cyber-attacks. We also discussed pastoral care for RSE workers and concerns that their workers were not being adequately supported by their employers. I acknowledged Vanuatu's contribution to the RSE scheme. I also noted that the upcoming RSE Policy Review would be a key opportunity to discuss areas for improvement.

Community engagements

8. While in Port Vila, I had the opportunity to tour the Harbour with Minister of Foreign Affairs to view the South Paray Wharf, New Zealand's waterfront project. The Vanuatu Inter-Island Shipping Support Project (VISSP) was a Vanuatu Government managed project to upgrade Vanuatu's port facilities and expand shipping services to remote islands. During this tour, I was able to announce NZD10 million in further funding for the construction of wharves, as part of the Vanuatu Inter-Island Shipping Support Project (VISSP).
9. Accompanied by Wan Smolbag, I visited the Blacksands community. This was an opportunity to speak with locals and see first-hand their challenging conditions. After a traditional welcome I was able to tour the village and gain insight into some initiatives that are supporting positive change for marginalised communities.
10. I attended a Women in leadership BBQ jointly hosted by the New Zealand High Commission and the United Kingdom. The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan, British Secretary of State and myself used this as an opportunity to recognise and encourage women leaders in Vanuatu to continue to drive positive change in their spheres of influence, acknowledge the 16 Days of Activism Campaign to end violence against women and girls, and acknowledge Vanuatu's only Female MP, Ms Julia King.

11. I joined the Minister of Climate Change, Ralph Regenvanu for a tour of Vanuatu's Cultural Centre. This was an opportunity for informal engagement with Minister Regenvanu and to discuss with Minister Regenvanu our respective efforts on climate change and the environment, and to learn more about Regenvanu's priorities.
12. I visited the Port Vila Handicraft Market and met with some of Vanuatu's 'mamas' selling handicrafts. I discussed their experiences during the pandemic. One of the concerns raised was their struggle to sell certain items as tourists were not confident taking items through customs upon their return home.

SPC Ministerial Conference

13. On 24 November, I attended the official opening of the SPC Ministerial Conference which was followed by Special Thematic Session of The Twelfth Conference of the Pacific Community. All 27 member countries were represented except for Guam.
14. I spoke on the significance of SPC reaching 75 years and encouraged members to think about how it could move forward and enhance its capacity, capability, and coordination to address the complex challenges that the region faced.
15. I also emphasised the importance of the blue economy and the role of kaitiakitanga in protecting the region's natural resources. Partnerships across funding, regional frameworks, and regional organisations, as well as a high degree of coordination and trust, was required to unlock the blue economy and ensure support was as accessible, streamlined, and effective as possible.
16. My engagement in the Conference and positive energy were welcomed, including by the Secretariat. These meetings showed strong regional governance in action.

Indonesia-Pacific Forum for Development (IPFD) and the 15th Bali Democracy Forum (BDF)

Executive Summary

1. On the 7 and 8 December 2022, I attended the Indonesia Pacific Foreign for Development, and the Bali Democracy Forum.
2. Indonesia's Foreign Minister invited Ministers from 19 Pacific Island countries and territories for a High-Level Dialogue focused on development issues in the Pacific.
3. I was also invited to attend the Bali Democracy Forum, the theme for this year's meeting was "Democracy in a Changing World: Leadership and Solidarity". Aotearoa New Zealand had been asked to speak on the issue of 'Democracy at the Crossroad: Shaping Governance in the New Global Landscape'.

Outcomes of Aotearoa New Zealand's attendance at Indonesia-Pacific Forum for Development (7 December)

4. My attendance at this Forum provided an opportunity to demonstrate Aotearoa New Zealand's support for Indonesia's engagement with the Pacific, while also encouraging engagement which aligns with Pacific priorities and our Pacific Resilience approach.
5. In my statement, I talked about Pacific Regionalism, and in particular our 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, as key parts of our toolkit in navigating the significant challenges that we were all facing. I also emphasised the importance of regionalism for small countries, in strengthening our voices, and drawing global attention to such issues, and the impacts that they would have on our Blue Pacific Continent.
6. I also took the opportunity reinforce on behalf of the Pacific Region that climate change remained the single greatest threat to Pacific livelihoods. I reinforced the importance of building climate resilience and the need to remain at the centre of our efforts.
7. I believe future Ministerial attendance from Aotearoa New Zealand at this forum would be important as I was able to demonstrate Aotearoa New Zealand's support for Indonesia's engagement with the Pacific, while also encouraging engagement which aligns with Pacific priorities and our Pacific Resilience approach.

Outcomes of Aotearoa New Zealand attendance at Bali Democracy Forum (8 December)

8. I represented Aotearoa New Zealand at the Bali Democracy Forum. My attendance demonstrated our support for Indonesia's efforts to promote democracy, and the democratic values of good governance in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.
9. I communicated Aotearoa New Zealand's belief in participation, debate and dialogue – facilitated by the full promotion and protection of human rights – which was critical to a strong democracy. This helped facilitate trust in institutions, experts and government, and in turn strengthened our democracy and governance.
10. The full promotion and protection of human rights, including freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, played a crucial role in the promotion of political participation and in allowing for debate and dialogue. This, in turn, promoted the rule of law, social inclusion and economic development – all of which reflected good governance.

Proactive release

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.

Recommendation

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

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Minister of Foreign Affairs