

23 May 2024

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proactive release

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I refer to your email of 23 March 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*please supply all written advice, briefings, notes, reports and aides-memoire, provided for and arising from, the following engagements:*

- 1. A meeting between the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, and the Cook Islands Foreign Minister, Tingika Elikana, held on 21 March 2024.*
- 2. A meeting between the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, and the Republic of Marshall Islands Foreign Minister, Kalani Kaneko, held on 20 March 2024.*
- 3. A meeting between the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, and High Commissioner of Vanuatu to New Zealand, Jimmy Nipo, held on 6 March 2024.*
- 4. A meeting between the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, and High Commissioner of Papua New Guinea to New Zealand, Sakias Tameo, held on 6 March 2024.*
- 5. A meeting between the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, and the President of French Polynesia, Moetai Brotherson, held on 5 March 2024.*
- 6. A meeting between the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, and the President of Nauru, David Adeang, held on 29 February 2024.*

We have numbered your request for administrative convenience.

On 23 April 2024, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 22 working days because responding to your request necessitated the review of a large quantity of information, and due to the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request (section 15A(1)(a) and 15A(1)(b) of the OIA refers).

The following items containing information in scope of your request are attached.

1. Meeting Brief: Hon Tingika Elikana, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cook Islands [dated 18 March 2024]
2. Brief: Bilateral Meeting with Republic of the Marshall Islands' Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Kalani Kaneko [Dated March 2024]
3. Meeting Brief: Meeting with Jimmy Nipo, Vanuatu High Commissioner to New Zealand
4. Meeting Brief: Meeting with the High Commissioner to New Zealand for the Independent State of Papua New Guinea – His Excellency Sakias Tameo
5. Bilateral Meeting with Moetai Brotherson – President, French Polynesia [dated February 2024]
6. Bilateral Meeting with Nauru's President David Adeang [dated February 2024]

We have withheld some information under the following sections of the OIA:

- 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;
- 6(b)(ii): to protect the passing of information from an international organisation on a confidential basis;
- 7(b): to avoid prejudicing the relations between any of the Governments of New Zealand; the self-governing State of the Cook Islands;
- 7(c)(i): to avoid prejudicing the international relations of the self-governing State of the Cook Islands
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy;
- 9(2)(f)(iv): to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments.

Regarding the *meeting between the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, and the President of Nauru, David Adeang, held on 29 February 2024* (part 6 of your request), As per section 16(e) of the OIA, we are providing you with the following excerpt from the report of this meeting, noting that the remainder of the document is outside the scope of your request:

FORMAL MESSAGE: NAURU: TRUST FUND MEETING 29 FEB [s6(a)]

[6(a)]

14. Deputy Prime Minister Peters hosted the President and his delegation for dinner following the Prime Minister's meeting. The conversation reflected similar themes to those with Prime Minister Luxon.

15. The President and Deputy Prime Minister reflected on the current operation of the PIF and agreed on the importance of the current review of Pacific regional architecture, [s6(a)]

16. [6(a)] The President thanked New Zealand for our ongoing support for regional fisheries and education, noting the expansion of fisheries revenue had been a success story for Nauru. [s6(b)(i)].

With reference to the reports of the remaining five meetings:

1. *A meeting between the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, and the Cook Islands Foreign Minister, Tingika Elikana, held on 21 March 2024.*
2. *A meeting between the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, and the Republic of Marshall Islands Foreign Minister, Kalani Kaneko, held on 20 March 2024.*
3. *A meeting between the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, and High Commissioner of Vanuatu to New Zealand, Jimmy Nipo, held on 6 March 2024.*

*4. A meeting between the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, and High Commissioner of Papua New Guinea to New Zealand, Sakias Tameo, held on 6 March 2024.*

*5. A meeting between the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, and the President of French Polynesia, Moetai Brotherson, held on 5 March 2024.*

The documents in scope of these parts of your request is withheld in full under the following sections of the OIA:

- 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; and
- 7(b): to avoid prejudicing the relations between any of the Governments of New Zealand; the self-governing State of the Cook Islands.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, we have identified no public interest in releasing the information that would override the reasons for withholding it.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website: [www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/)

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: [DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Sarah Corbett  
for Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

## Meeting Brief: Hon Tingika Elikana, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cook Islands

**Time and date (NZT):** Thursday 21 March 2024, 11 – 11.45am NZT



Minister Elikana was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Immigration, and Marine Resources in February 2024. He is a member of the Cook Islands Party, representing Pukapuka-Nassau, and has been in Parliament since 2018. Before joining politics, he served as Secretary of Justice, Solicitor-General, crown prosecutor, and a police officer.

You met Minister Elikana while in the Cook Islands in February 2024, during your bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Mark Brown. Minister Elikana is in Wellington to lead a visit by the Cook Islands Public Accounts Committee, in his role as Chairperson.

Population: 14,800 (June 2023)  
GDP (PPP, per capita): \$24,040  
Inflation (%): 13

NZ exports (NZ\$/yr): 152.5m (2022/23)  
NZ imports (NZ\$/yr): 1.29m (2022/23)  
Next elections: 2026

### Key objectives

- Reconnect and build a relationship with Minister Elikana as the newly appointed Cook Islands Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- Confirm the upcoming Joint Ministerial Forum (JMF) on s9(2)(f)(iv) as an important opportunity to cover a range of important bilateral issues.

### Discussion points

- Congratulate Minister Elikana on his appointment as Foreign Minister and reflect on your visit in February and appreciation for the Cook Islands' hospitality.
- Ask about his home island and constituency, Pukapuka. Note New Zealand is supporting the upgrade of its renewable solar systems through the Infrastructure Trust Fund (ITF).
- Enquire about his priorities for this term as Foreign Minister.

### Joint Ministerial Forum – lock in the date s9(2)(g)(i)

- Note that s9(2)(f)(iv) has been set aside for the JMF, and this is important as we have not had a full JMF since May 2019. s9(2)(f)(iv)
- s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g)(i)
- s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g)(i)
- s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g)(i)

### Development programme

- New Zealand is the Cook Islands' largest development partner, with bilateral assistance largely consisting of budget support (\$9.1m per year) and support to the Infrastructure Trust Fund (\$40m), plus \$24m in climate flexible finance as well as approximately \$10m



in capability-building support per year from NZ Inc agencies. For the funding period 2021-24, New Zealand provided \$65m in COVID-related emergency budget support and \$29m through multi-country and regional activities,

*Pacific Islands Forum*

- Congratulate Elikana on the Cook Islands' chairing of the Japan-Pacific (PALM) Ministerial Interim Meeting in Suva. **Emphasise the importance New Zealand places on the PIF and a robust, fit-for-purpose regional architecture.** Our overall objective is to protect our long-term investment in Pacific regionalism as we work with Forum Members to actively shape our future and strategic environment.

s7(c)(i)

- s6(a)

s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii), s7(c)(i)

- s7(b)(i),  
s7(b)(ii),  
s7(c)(i)

s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

*If raised: International Memberships*

- s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii),  
s9(2)(g)(i)

we support the Cook Islands membership of international organisations where it meets the criteria for membership. s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

*If raised: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Membership:*

- Ask about the Cook Islands' campaign for membership. We consider the Cook Islands meets the technical eligibility criteria for membership, s9(2)(g)(i)  
Membership will also require political support by existing IMF members, s9(2)(g)(i)

*If raised: Seabed mining:*

- Refer to the presentation you received during your visit in February to Rarotonga. Ask about the Cook Islands' planning under way for the PIF Talanoa on Seabed Mineral Management.

Pacific Polynesia and French Pacific Division/NZ High Commission Rarotonga  
18 March 2024

## Meeting Brief: Bilateral Meeting with Republic of the Marshall Islands' Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Kalani Kaneko

**Time and date (NZT):** Wednesday 20 March, 5:30pm NZT /4:30pm RMI



Kalani Kaneko was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade in January 2024, following the election of President Hilda Heine. The Minister entered politics in 2016 after a career in the US Military, first as an infantryman and later as a recruiter. He was the Minister of Health and Human Services under the previous Heine administration (2016-2020). You wrote Kaneko a congratulatory letter on his appointment. This will be your first engagement with him.

### Key objectives

- Emphasise the importance New Zealand places on our relationships within the Pacific Islands Forum, including with the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

### Discussion points

- New Zealand welcomes efforts to ensure the Pacific Islands Forum is delivering for all Members as we work together in support of our region's priorities. Marshall Islands is a key player in the Forum. We are stronger together, <sup>s6(a)</sup>  
How would you see the Forum strengthened and ensure Micronesian countries feel shared ownership, including through implementation of the Suva Agreement?
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>  
We remain closely aligned with RMI on global issues, including human rights and climate change and will continue to promote your and the Pacific region's voice where possible. <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- New Zealand remains committed to supporting the Marshall Islands' development and has provided approximately NZ\$9.5M in development funding in the 2021-2024 period. Our key partnerships are in fisheries, climate resilience and early childhood development. What are your views on how New Zealand and Marshall Islands can improve cooperation?
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- <sup>s9(2)(g)(i)</sup>
- <sup>s9(2)(g)(i)</sup>

## Background

1. Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is fully self-governing and linked to the United States (US) by a Compact of Free Association (COFA) Treaty, affording RMI economic support and visa free access to work and live in the US. In return, the US receives exclusive defence access to RMI's surrounding waters and airspace. The US recently signed into law the next twenty years of financial support under COFA which includes fiscal transfers of US\$2.3 billion to RMI over the next twenty years. This has been welcomed by President Heine. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

2. New Zealand has a long-standing bilateral relationship with RMI, based on common membership of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and shared interests in fisheries, development coordination, regional security, and climate change. New Zealand does not have official representation in RMI; the bilateral relationship is managed from our Consulate General in Honolulu. Two-way trade is modest. New Zealand's development programme and our global advocacy on climate change forms a large part of our engagement.

3. New Zealand provides funding to RMI as part of our North Pacific development programme. The total allocation for the North Pacific (including the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau) is NZ\$24.2 million for the 21/22 - 23/24 triennium. Our development activities in RMI focus on support to RMI's fisheries' management agency, climate change, tertiary scholarships, and child and maternal health.

4. As a low-lying atoll nation, climate change is an existential threat for RMI. New Zealand and RMI technical experts are designing activities to help address loss and damage from climate impacts as part of a programme funded by our international climate finance. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

### *Forum Unity – the Micronesian Withdrawal and Suva Agreement*

5. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

With Henry Puna's election as Secretary General in 2021 ahead of a Micronesian candidate (a senior Marshallese diplomat), the Micronesian Members moved to withdraw from the Forum. Through sustained diplomacy Forum Leaders signed the Suva Agreement in July 2022. This addressed a number of Micronesia's concerns whilst also agreeing to uphold principles of transparency, due process and inclusivity in the selection of Secretary General, and of the primacy of Leaders' discretion in the process.

### *Diplomatic recognition*

6. President Hilda Heine has reiterated her government's support for Taiwan following her election in January 2024. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

*Pacific Melanesia and Micronesia Division/ New Zealand Consulate General, Honolulu  
March 2024*



## Meeting Brief: Meeting with Jimmy Nipo, Vanuatu High Commissioner to New Zealand

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**Time and date:** 10.30am, Wednesday 6 March



Jimmy Nipo has been Vanuatu's High Commissioner to New Zealand since September 2021. He was a Member of Parliament for the Vanuatu Leaders' Party from 2018-2020 representing the Tanna constituency. Nipo has strong links to New Zealand having worked as a Development Programme Manager for the New Zealand High Commission in Port Vila from 2008-2018. Prior to this, he was CEO of the Vanuatu Football Federation for five years. s6(a)

s9(2)(a)

### Key objectives

- Convey the importance and enduring quality of the New Zealand-Vanuatu relationship.
- Highlight New Zealand's track record of being a constructive and responsive development partner, as well as our commitment to our long-standing security relationship with Vanuatu.

### Discussion points

- Acknowledge High Commissioner (HC) Nipo's hard work and dedication while in the role over the last two and a half years. s6(a)
- Reflect on the enduring nature of the New Zealand-Vanuatu relationship. New Zealand has had diplomatic relations with Vanuatu since it first declared independence in 1980, and we are considered one of Vanuatu's 'traditional' partners. The relationship has, however, evolved considerably since 1980. Today, we have a dynamic relationship, based on our identity as Pacific nations, our shared values, and our people-to-people connections.
- Note that you are prioritising travel to Vanuatu this year, s6(a)
- With reference to the upcoming national referendum on political party reform laws, you could seek HC Nipo's views as to whether the proposed changes will be sufficient to stabilise the current political situation in Vanuatu (Note: There have been four motions of no confidence, two of them successful, in the last six months – see Background).

### *Development partnership*

- Emphasise that we are a committed, long-term development partner. We cooperate across a range of areas including governance, climate change, and disaster response.



- Highlight New Zealand's support for Vanuatu's economic growth. In recent years, we have focussed on the tourism, agriculture, and shipping infrastructure sectors. (You may wish to note that you visited South Paray Wharf (*pron. Pah-ray*) the last time you were in Vanuatu – the project is on track for completion by the end of 2024.)
- Note the linkages between our economies, particularly in the trade and tourism sectors and through the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme. Note the essential contribution that ni-Vanuatu workers make to New Zealand's RSE scheme – it is our largest participant country and was the first pilot country.
- Acknowledge the discussion taking place in Vanuatu on the social and labour force impacts of labour mobility. New Zealand is committed to ensuring that the RSE scheme leads to positive outcomes for both countries, including through New Zealand's ongoing RSE Policy Review (in which HC Nipo has been involved).

### *Geopolitics and security*

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

### **Background**

Political instability in Vanuatu has seen two Prime Ministers removed by motions of no confidence in the last six months – Ishmael Kalsakau was removed by Bob Loughman in September 2023, and Loughman was removed by current Prime Minister Charlot Salwai in October 2023. Two (unsuccessful) motions of no confidence have been tabled since, the most recent on 15 February 2024. Parliament recently passed a suite of electoral and political reform laws aimed at reducing instability. A public referendum on 29 May will decide whether laws to prevent waka jumping will come into effect. Development of these reforms is part of New Zealand's electoral strengthening programme implemented by UNDP.

s9(2)(g)(i)

There is some concern about the social and economic impacts of labour mobility in Vanuatu. For the 2022-23 season, approximately 7,000 ni-Vanuatu participated in New Zealand's RSE Scheme (40% of the RSE workforce), and approximately 9,000 in the Australian scheme. In total, this amounts to 11.5% of Vanuatu's working age population. While there are clear economic benefits for families in participating, there are also significant domestic impacts. The Vanuatu Government retains a keen interest in the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's ongoing RSE policy review.

Meeting Brief: Meeting with the High Commissioner to New Zealand for the Independent State of Papua New Guinea – His Excellency Sakias Tameo

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**Time and date:** Wednesday 6 March 2024, 5:30 – 6:00 pm



Sakias Tameo arrived in New Zealand on 1 January to take up the role of High Commissioner. He previously served as Deputy High Commissioner at the Papua New Guinea High Commission in Canberra and at the Papua New Guinea Permanent Mission to the UN in New York. s9(2)(a) s6(a)

He presented his Letter of Introduction to PM Luxon on 21 February.

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**Key Objectives**

- Welcome High Commissioner Tameo to New Zealand.
- Affirm our warm and long-standing bilateral relationship and briefly exchange views on key issues.

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**Talking Points** (to draw on as required)

*Greeting: Gud aftanun tru* good afternoon; *lukim yu bihain* (loo-keem yoo bee-highn) goodbye [in Tok Pisin]

*Bilateral and Regional Relationship*

- Congratulate Tameo on his appointment and welcome him to New Zealand (after a gap of two years in the role).
- s9(2)(f)(iv)
- Affirm the value New Zealand places on our warm and long-standing relationship with Papua New Guinea.
- Acknowledge Papua New Guinea's role as an important security partner in the region, including in non-traditional areas such as climate change and cyber-security.
- Note the long-standing and valued mutual cooperation by our two Defence Forces.

*Development Cooperation*

- New Zealand has a long-standing commitment to development cooperation and strengthening resilience in Papua New Guinea, one of New Zealand's largest development programmes (NZ\$112 million forecast to be spent this triennium 2021/22 – 2023/24). Key focus areas are in energy, agriculture, health, gender, governance, election support, policing and climate change.
- Express solidarity with the Papua New Guinea Government's concern about ongoing intercommunal violence, particularly in the Enga province in the highlands. We are looking at supporting the United Nations' work on peace building in the highlands.



*Diplomatic Training*

- We were pleased to have 19 officials from Papua New Guinea's Department of Foreign Affairs participate in Pacific Diplomatic Training in Wellington in October 2023, followed by training in Port Moresby which is currently underway. This training responded to a request by Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Marape. We will host another cohort of Pacific diplomats in Wellington this year, including nine more officials from Papua New Guinea.

*Labour Mobility*

- Acknowledge Papua New Guinea's strong interest in increasing the numbers of workers participating in New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme. Papua New Guinea officials have been looking at ways to increase numbers from Papua New Guinea and we were pleased to support a visit to Port Moresby and Mt Hagen by RSE employers in late 2023 to grow interest in recruiting Papua New Guinea workers.

*Bougainville*

- Enquire about progress in the post-referendum negotiations between the Governments of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. Note New Zealand's ongoing support for peace, development and a mutually agreed solution.

*Sports Cooperation*

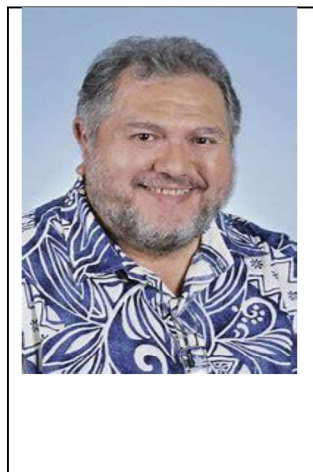
- *[If raised]* Acknowledge Papua New Guinea's interest in increasing sports cooperation with New Zealand. We recognise the wide-ranging benefits of increased sporting links. New Zealand Rugby League is looking at the possibility of a game between the Kiwis and Kumuls although this is unlikely in the next year due to existing scheduling.



## Bilateral Meeting with Moetai Brotherson – President, French Polynesia

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**Time and date:** 16:00 – 20:00, 5 March 2024



Moetai Brotherson was elected President of French Polynesia in May 2023. Prior to this, Brotherson represented French Polynesia as a member of the French Parliament for five years.

He is a member of the pro-independence Tāvini Huira'atira Party.<sup>s6(a)</sup>

Brotherson has a master's degree in computer science, and has worked in France, Japan, Germany and the United States. He speaks English fluently.

### Key objectives

- Establish positive relationship with new French Polynesian President and express commitment to working together to advance priority areas.
- Encourage French Polynesia's further integration and engagement in regional architecture, particularly the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

### Discussion points

- Congratulate Brotherson on his appointment as President last year.

### *Bilateral relationship*

- New Zealand values its warm and long-standing relationship with French Polynesia, founded on deep cultural connections and mutual respect. Note as an example of this the upcoming visit at the invitation of the French Polynesian Government of Professor Rangi Mātāmua<sup>1</sup> to Tahiti in late March to share knowledge of and practices around Matariki.
- We were pleased to support biosecurity cooperation through extension of New Zealand's detector dog-training programme to French Polynesia.
- Opportunities exist for us to further deepen our collaboration in certain areas, particularly our business links. New Zealand was pleased to host French Polynesian companies and French Polynesia's Minister Raffin in Auckland in March 2023 for first French Pacific Business Forum.

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<sup>1</sup> Rangiānehu Mātāmua ONZM (Tūhoe) is an indigenous studies and Māori cultural astronomy academic and is Professor of Mātauranga Māori at Massey University. He is the chief advisor to the New Zealand Government on the public holiday Matariki.

- [if raised:] Acknowledge trade imbalance in New Zealand's favour and French Polynesia's interest in increasing exports.
- Note that New Zealand is hoping to renew our Joint Cooperation Plan with French Polynesia later this year. What priority areas would you like to see further engagement from this government?

*Regional engagement*

- We value French Polynesia's active engagement in regional architecture. What are your views on regional fora such as the PIF? What are French Polynesia's priorities for regional engagement over the coming year? s6(a)
- s9(2)(g)(i)

*Political issues*

- s6(a)

**Media**

Social media: Pleased to meet with French Polynesia's President Moetai Brotherson today, & reaffirm the warm & long-standing [NZ flag]–[FP flag] relationship — which is founded on deep cultural connections & mutual respect — & to discuss further collaboration in certain areas, such as our business links.

Pacific Polynesia and French Pacific Division  
February 2024

## Bilateral Meeting with Nauru's President David Adeang

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**Time and date:** Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March 10:30 am, MFAT Auckland Office



His Excellency David Adeang ["ah-dee-yang"] is the 17th President of Nauru, elected on 30 October 2023 after a motion of no confidence in his predecessor Russ Kun.

Adeang is the longest serving member of the current Parliament (since 2001). Under the Waqa Government (2013-2019) he held the finance and justice portfolios. s6(a)

He presided over the recent diplomatic switch to China, s6(a)

Adeang is visiting New Zealand to attend the Intergenerational Trust Fund Meeting (immediately prior to your meeting). New Zealand became a member in 2019 and will provide NZ\$15M over 15 years. He has been accorded Guest of Government status.

s9(2)(a)

### Key objective

- Re-emphasise the importance of New Zealand's relationship with Nauru at a key moment in Nauru's foreign policy trajectory.

### Discussion points

- New Zealand remains committed to supporting Nauru's development. New Zealand has provided approximately NZ\$60M in development assistance to Nauru since 2005. The total support expected for the 2021-2024 period is NZ\$12M, with a focus on education, energy, justice and economic resilience. What are your views on how New Zealand and Nauru can improve our cooperation?
- s6(a)
- s6(a)



- We have been thinking recently about how we can deepen our partnerships with Pacific countries. s6(a)
- New Zealand welcomes efforts to ensure the Pacific Islands Forum is delivering for all Members as we work together in support of our region's priorities. We are stronger together, s6(a) What are your views on how to continue strengthening the Forum and how to ensure Micronesian countries feel a sense of shared ownership of the Forum, including through implementation of the Suva Agreement?

## Background

1. New Zealand has a long-standing bilateral relationship with Nauru, which is based on common membership of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and shared interests in fisheries, development coordination, security, regional trade and climate change. New Zealand does not have official representation in Nauru and the bilateral relationship is managed from Wellington. Given the relative distance and small size of Nauru's economy, two-way trade between New Zealand and Nauru is modest. New Zealand's development programme forms a large part of our engagement.

2. s6(a)

3. The Intergenerational Trust Fund for the People of Nauru (Trust Fund) was established in 2015 by Nauru and Taiwan as an alternative revenue source in the face of declining natural resources s6(a)

New Zealand became a contributor in 2019 and provides NZ\$1 million a year. s6(a)

## Political controversies

4. s6(a)

5. Nauru's former President Baron Waqa was appointed to be the next Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Secretary General in 2023, s6(a)

His appointment came after the Suva Agreement, s6(a)  
s6(b)(ii)

## Diplomatic relationships and Nauru's China switch

6. On 15 January, Nauru changed diplomatic recognition from Taiwan (back<sup>1</sup>) to China.  
s6(a)

7. s6(a)  
s6(a), s6(b)(i)

8. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

9. s6(a)

#### *Economic development*

10. On 14 November 2023, Nauru's only commercial bank, Bendigo, announced its intention to exit from December 2024. s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)

11. s6(a)

New Zealand has provided NZ\$60M in development assistance to Nauru since 2005. s6(a)

Nauru is also eligible for scholarships to study in New Zealand with four scholars currently.

12. As other options dwindle, Nauru sees deep-sea mining as a viable source of future income. Nauru has partnered with commercial entity Nauru Ocean Resources Inc to pursue this – with a work-plan expected in late 2024. In October 2022, New Zealand announced support for a conditional moratorium on deep-sea mining in areas beyond countries' national jurisdiction until strong environment rules, backed by robust science, are in place. We explained our position to Nauru ahead of this announcement.

*Pacific Melanesia and Micronesia Division, February 2024*

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<sup>1</sup> Nauru established diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1980, then shifted recognition to China in 2002-03, reverting back to Taiwan in 2005 following a change of government. s6(a)