

# Proactive Release

Date: 29 June 2020

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

***Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters***

***(CAB-19-MIN-0603 refers)***

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 code:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the international relations of the New Zealand Government.



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters

**Portfolio**                      **Foreign Affairs**

On 18 May 2020, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Rt Hon Winston Peters under CAB-20-SUB-0226 on his travel, from 21 to 29 November 2019, to:

- 1        Nagoya, Japan to attend the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting;
- 2        Dubai and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) for bilateral discussions, and to visit the Expo 2020 site.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

Chair  
Cabinet

**REPORT ON OVERSEAS TRAVEL: RT HON WINSTON PETERS: JAPAN AND UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, FROM 21 – 29 NOVEMBER 2019**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Japan, for the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and to the United Arab Emirates, for a bilateral visit, from 21 – 29 November 2019. Due to changes to our original planned itinerary we returned to New Zealand between the two trips.

**Report**

*Japan (G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting)*

2 From 21 – 24 November 2019, we visited Nagoya, Japan, in order to take up the invitation from our hosts for New Zealand to be represented at the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meetings. New Zealand was invited as a guest participant s6(a)

This was the

first time New Zealand had attended a G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

3 Japan's focus as host of the meeting was on free trade and the multilateral trading system, sustainable development, and on Africa. Free trade emerged as the headline issue from the meeting and attracted the greatest interest and engagement from Ministers. Japan's Foreign Minister, in summarising the discussion amongst Ministers at the concluding press conference, emphasised the shared sense of urgency on World Trade Organisation (WTO) reform.

4 In New Zealand's intervention, we delivered a strong message about the need to reduce barriers to trade, and to defend and strengthen the WTO. We noted that protectionism and the use of restrictive trade practices were at an unprecedented level, and that governments needed to ensure the benefits of trade were understood by citizens. Some countries referred to unfair trade practices and the rise of unilateralism around the world. Several Ministers explicitly praised the work being led by New Zealand's Permanent Representative to the WTO, Ambassador David Walker, on the Appellate Body and WTO reform generally.

5 During the session on sustainable development, we focused our intervention on the Pacific, noting the importance of the Pacific in delivering the 2030 Agenda and that Pacific perspectives were rarely heard at the G20. We emphasised that development assistance needed to be aligned to Pacific regional priorities and that there was a need to remove environmentally harmful subsidies, particularly those for fossil fuels ("we cannot continue to subsidise the climate change we seek to avert").

6 Taking advantage of New Zealand's attendance at the Foreign Ministers' Meeting, we took the opportunity to undertake several useful bilateral meetings with counterparts. These included with the foreign minister of Indonesia, the new foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, a productive first meeting with Germany's foreign minister, the incoming European Union High Representative, Singapore's foreign minister, as well as a number of other informal discussions with others in the margins and at the foreign ministers' dinner. Participation at the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting therefore was not only valuable for New Zealand to advocate for our multilateral interests (e.g. on the need to prevent backsliding into trade protectionism), but it was also highly productive in terms of advancing our bilateral interests with significant partners who we do not see regularly in regional meetings (e.g. Germany).

#### *United Arab Emirates*

7 From 27 – 29 November 2019, we undertook a successful visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where we completed a wide-ranging and productive programme. During the two days on the ground, we strengthened the political, trade

and economic relationship with the UAE, New Zealand's strongest partner and largest market in the Middle East.

8 There were several key outcomes from our November visit to Dubai and Abu Dhabi. These included a commitment to closer engagement with the UAE on Pacific issues, including the signing of a Renewable Energy Cooperation Arrangement; a forward-looking discussion on New Zealand's Free Trade Agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council (of which the UAE is a member); reaffirmation of New Zealand's strong support for Expo 2020; s6(a)

In our meeting with Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah we also formally committed New Zealand's support for the UAE's 2021 – 2022 UN Security Council candidature, reinforcing our multilateral cooperation. The visit provided a useful opportunity to exchange views on respective regional issues s6(a)

9 The visit also underlined the depth of respect and admiration the UAE holds for New Zealand's response to last year's Christchurch terrorist attack. The Minister of State Sayegh (responsible for New Zealand and the Pacific) described New Zealand's response as a "model for the world" which had "cemented New Zealand's goodwill ... especially the Islamic world". The response had been consistent with the UAE's Year of Tolerance message and had, as Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah put it, "showed so many around the world what New Zealand was made of".

10 Other valuable components of the visit included bilateral meetings with HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Minister of Finance and Deputy Ruler of Dubai; and with HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman of Emirates Airline Group and Chairman of the Expo 2020 Dubai Higher Committee. During the latter meeting we acknowledged the value that New Zealand placed on Emirates' on-going commitment to its New Zealand flight services (a longer term message made all the more important by COVID-19), as well as to reaffirm our support for Expo 2020. A site tour of New Zealand's Expo 2020 pavilion, which has been making excellent progress, provided us with an opportunity to witness first-hand the scale and scope of Dubai's vision for Expo, now likely to be postponed until next year.

11 Our delegation also met with New Zealand Defence Force personnel in the UAE s6(a) to recognise their contribution in support of our regional security deployments and to convey my appreciation on behalf of Cabinet for their work. An engagement with UAE racing industry leaders at Meydan racecourse and stables also raised the profile of New Zealand's racing industry and provided an opportunity for us to brief key interlocutors on the ongoing reform of New Zealand's racing industry. The programme also enabled us to drop by a coaching session the All Blacks Sevens team was undertaking with local Abu Dhabi junior touch rugby teams and to convey the Government's support ahead of their upcoming tournament in Dubai.

### **Proactive Release**

12 I plan to release this paper in part within 30 business days. All redactions will be made in line with the Official Information Act 1982.

### **Recommendation**

13 I recommend that Cabinet **note** this report.

### **Approved for lodgement**

Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Minister of Foreign Affairs