

7 November 2023

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release

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OIA 28816

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I refer to your email of 18 September 2023 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

Please supply any documents, reports, briefings, memos, aides-memoire, notes or written advice prepared for the following meetings under the Official Information Act:

- *The Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting held in Suva during the week of September 11th, 2023.*
- *A meeting of the Partners in the Blue Pacific, held in New York during the week of September 18th, 2023.*

In addition, I would like to request any reports or minutes arising from these meetings, or if none exist, written recollections of the meetings from participants. I would appreciate receiving these individually as soon as each could be made available and in accessible formats. If you need any more information from me please let me know as soon as possible.

On 21 September 2023 we notified you that as the Partners in the Blue Pacific meeting has not yet occurred, we would need to refuse this part of your request. We invited you to withdraw this part of your request at this time and to resubmit this part of your request after the meeting had occurred.

You did not respond to our email of 21 September 2023. Please note that the information we have provided in answer to the second part of your request is outside the scope of your request as it did not exist on 18 September 2023, the date of your original request.

On 16 October 2023, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 20 working days because responding to your request necessitated the review of a large quantity of information to make a decision on your request (section 15A(1)(a) of the OIA refers).

Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting

For the purposes of responding to the first part of your request we have defined “...any documents, reports, briefings, memos, aides-memoire, notes or written advice prepared for ... The Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting held in Suva during the week of September 11th, 2023...” to be written documents containing policy advice that were provided to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in advance of her attending the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting held in Suva.

There are seven documents within scope of the first part of your request, set out in the document schedule below.

Document Schedule Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting			
Date	Document Type	Document Title	Withholding Grounds
24 Aug 2023	Submission	Pacific Islands Forum: Priorities and Planning in 2023	6(a); 6(b)(i); 6(b)(ii); 7(b)(i); 7(b)(ii); 9(2)(a); 9(2)(g)(i); 9(2)(j)
	Media Pack	Social Media	9(2)(g)(i)
		Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Programme (PHWP)	6(a); 6(b)(i); 9(2)(g)(i)
		Report by the Secretary General on the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty - 'the Treaty of Rarotonga'	6(a); 6(b)(i); 6(b)(ii); 9(2)(g)(i); 9(2)(h)
14 Sept 2023	Briefing	Bilateral Meeting with Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown	6(a); 6(b)(i); 7(b)(i); 7(b)(ii); 7(c)(i); 9(2)(f)(iv); 9(2)(g)(i)
14 Sept 2023	Briefing	Bilateral Meeting: Tuvalu Minister of Justice, Communications and Foreign Affairs Hon. Panapasi Nelesone and Minister of Finance Hon. Seve Paeniu	6(a); 6(b)(i); 9(2)(f)(iv)
15 Sept 2023	Briefing	Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon Nanaia Mahuta: Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting	6(a); 6(b)(i); 6(b)(ii); 6(d); 7(b)(i); 7(b)(ii); 7(c)(i); 9(2)(a); 9(2)(f)(iv); 9(2)(g)(i); 9(2)(h); 9(2)(j)

Partners in the Blue Pacific

In response to the second part of your request, we have included the Event Briefing - Partners in the Blue Pacific Ministerial Meeting, dated 22 September 2023 and the Formal Message which acts as a report back on the Partners in the Blue Pacific Ministerial Meeting, dated 30 September 2023. Please we have withheld some information in these documents.

The Formal Message contained a copy of the Joint Statement on the Partners in the Blue Pacific Foreign Ministers Meeting which is publicly available at: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/joint-statement-on-the-partners-in-the-blue-pacific-foreign-ministers-meeting/#:~:text=Ministry%20Statements%20%26%20Speeches%3A%2025%20September%202023%20The,Blue%20Pacific%20Foreign%20Ministers%20Meeting%20September%2022%2C%202023.>

The information relevant to your request is attached. 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;

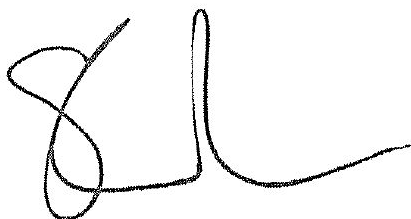
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 6(b)(ii): to protect the passing of information from an international organisation on a confidential basis;
- 6(d): to avoid endangering the safety of any person;
- 7(b): to avoid prejudicing relations between any of the Governments of New Zealand and the self-governing State of the Cook Islands and the self-governing State of Niue;
- 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;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments;
- 9(2)(h): to maintain legal professional privilege; and
- 9(2)(j): to avoid prejudice to negotiations.

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/

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: 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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sarah Corbett', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Corbett
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade



24 August 2023

Minister of Foreign Affairs

For action by

31 August 2023

Pacific Islands Forum: Priorities and Planning in 2023

BRIEFING Decision Submission

PURPOSE To provide advice on key issues and priorities for the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum and related meetings.

Tukunga tūtohua – Recommended referrals

Prime Minister	For information by	7 September 2023
Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs	For information by	7 September 2023
Minister of Climate Change	For information by	7 September 2023

Taipitopito whakapā – Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE
Jonathan Austin	Divisional Manager	Pacific Regional Division	s9(2)(a)
Tharron McIvor	Unit Manager	Pacific Regional Division	s9(2)(a)

Mā te Tari Minita e whakakī – Minister's Office to complete

<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Noted	<input type="checkbox"/> Referred
<input type="checkbox"/> Needs amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Declined	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
<input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events	<input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's notes	

Comments

Pacific Islands Forum: Priorities and Planning in 2023

Pito matua – Key points

- Cook Islands, as the Pacific Islands Forum Chair, will host the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting from 6-10 November in Rarotonga, with the Leaders' Retreat taking place in Aitutaki on 9 November. This will be preceded by the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 15 September in Suva, Fiji. The theme for PIF 2023 is: "E Reo Toa, Rangatira Ei Tatou", "Our Voices, Our Choices, Our Pacific Way: Promote, Partner, Prosper".
- Following the New Zealand general election, we will provide detailed advice to the Prime Minister recommending attendance the Leaders' Meeting, including the Leaders' Retreat.
- Discussions with Forum Leaders and Ministers are most likely to focus on implementing the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*, and how international engagement and advocacy can support the realisation of the Strategy's ambition.
- Our overall objective for these Forum meetings is to protect Aotearoa New Zealand's long-term investment in Pacific regionalism as we continue to work with Forum Members to actively shape our future and strategic environment. We propose that Aotearoa New Zealand's focus areas for these meetings include:
 - **Agreeing an implementation plan** for the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*, a series of actions to steer our region – in partnership with others – towards the ambitions set out in the 2050 Strategy;
 - **Strengthening engagement with Forum Dialogue Partners**, embedding the concept of Forum centrality, and more effectively leveraging our collective agency as a region;
 - **Advancing discussions on regional security priorities**, including our collective understanding to taking a "family first" approach to security s6(a) ;
 - **Reinforcing Pacific leadership on climate ambition and resilience** following Leaders' declaration of a climate emergency, including through draft Leader-level declarations on the region's energy transition s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j)
- Cook Islands, as Chair, has proposed a new 'Pacific Partnerships for Prosperity' to identify and prioritise early wins under the 2050 Strategy. s6(a)

Other issues we expect to attract substantive discussion include Japan's release of treated water from Fukushima and a regional approach to labour mobility.
- s6(a)

We recommend you attend the Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Suva, including time ahead of the meeting to engage with counterpart Ministers and undertake a short programme of related calls.

Bernadette Cavanagh
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Pacific Islands Forum: Priorities and Planning in 2023

Tūtohu – Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| 1 | <p>Agree Aotearoa New Zealand's focus areas for upcoming Pacific Island Forum meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agreeing an implementation plan for the <i>2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent</i>; - strengthening engagement with Forum Dialogue Partners; - advancing discussions on regional security priorities; and - reinforcing Pacific leadership on climate ambition and Pacific climate resilience. | Yes / No |
| 2 | <p>Reaffirm your agreement to attend the Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting in Suva on 15 September and undertake a short programme of related calls and engagements on 14 September.</p> | Yes / No |
| 3 | <p>Note the update on the Cook Islands' plans for hosting the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting from 6-10 November this year.</p> | Yes / No |
| 4 | <p>Note the Ministry's plans for Aotearoa New Zealand attendance, participation and support for the Leaders' Meeting.</p> | Yes / No |
| 5 | <p>Refer this submission to the Prime Minister, Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Climate Change for information.</p> | Yes / No |

Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Minister of Foreign Affairs / Minita Take Aorere

Date: / /

Pacific Islands Forum: Priorities and Planning in 2023

Pūrongo – Report

1. The Pacific Islands Forum remains critical to Aotearoa New Zealand's foreign policy objectives. As the pre-eminent Pacific-led regional mechanism, the Forum is a core platform for Pacific countries to *talanoa* and build consensus on shared challenges. At a time when we are continuing to see an uptick in great power engagement in the region, Pacific regionalism is important for enhancing the voice and agency of individual Pacific countries, and supporting regional security and sovereignty.

2. s6(a)

Overlaying this is the existential threat of the climate emergency together with the region's longstanding social, economic and security vulnerabilities.

3. The 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, chaired and hosted by Cook Islands, is set for 6-10 November in Rarotonga, with the Leaders' Retreat to be held in Aitutaki. This will be preceded by the Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 15 September, in Suva. You agreed to formal advice provided on 6 June recommending your participation.

Aotearoa New Zealand's focus areas in 2023

4. The Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting is the centrepiece of a suite of meetings that contribute to the agenda for the Forum Leaders' Retreat. Through these meetings, Aotearoa New Zealand has a strong interest in working with other Forum Members to strengthen our collective resilience to current and emerging threats through strong regional unity. Alongside a number of standing issues that will be outlined in your briefing pack, we propose four core focus areas set out below.

Agreeing an implementation plan for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent

5. In the context of the existential threat of climate change and intensifying geostrategic competition, Leaders adopted at their Retreat last year *the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* – a clear articulation by Pacific countries of our shared vision for the region, including priorities for regional development. At the direction of Leaders, officials will bring to Foreign Ministers a draft Implementation Plan for the 2050 Strategy. Ministers will be asked to endorse a series of outcome statements for each thematic area (e.g., Ocean and Environment) and associated high-level actions that the region should take to achieve these.

6. Aotearoa New Zealand's objective for this process is a clear, ambitious and practical plan for a peaceful, stable, prosperous, and resilient Pacific, with a continued global leadership role for our region on climate change. It will be important the plan has a strong focus on effective action and diplomacy pre-2030, in this critical decade to keep global temperature rise within 1.5 degrees. It will be equally important that this is a plan we can direct all external partners to follow, ensuring engagement is in support of Pacific priorities. We also have the opportunity to embed 'family first' regional responses to security challenges.

7. The Cook Islands as Forum Chair has circulated a proposal termed the 'Pacific Partnerships for Prosperity'. It is aimed at catalysing the implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent by identifying nine initiatives which are considered "impactful early wins". s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

Pacific Islands Forum: Priorities and Planning in 2023

s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

Strengthening engagement with Forum Dialogue Partners

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

9. In this context, New Zealand officials have emphasised the need to drive third country engagement through Pacific-led mechanisms, s6(a), s6(b)(ii)

Advancing discussions on regional security

10. This year's suite of meetings will also be another opportunity to discuss the increasingly complex global and regional strategic environment. The Pacific is receiving greater attention and interest from larger powers, s6(a)

These meetings will provide opportunities to reaffirm Aotearoa New Zealand's views on the kinds of security cooperation we want to see in the Pacific, including how we as a collective region want to engage with external security actors in a way that preserves our collective long-term regional security interests.

11. It is important that we maximise the opportunity this increased attention presents in order to extract good outcomes for our region, while building resilience to threats. We want to build into our implementation of the 2050 Strategy our shared regional norms and values underpinning our security and reaffirm our collective commitment to regional security architecture that supports regional sovereignty and promotes and protects Pacific countries' wider interests. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

Supporting regional climate ambition and action

12. There is now broad support for high ambition on climate issues in the region, though some climate issues are contested, s6(b)(ii) s6(a)

s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

13. s6(b)(ii), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

This

Pacific Islands Forum: Priorities and Planning in 2023

reflects the significance of this year's COP, with high profile decisions slated for loss and damage (a Pacific priority issue); high expectations for fossil fuel phase-out outcome; and with the first five year review of progress implementing the Paris Agreement.

14. s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)

A response, welcoming the aspiration in the Call, was conveyed by Minister Shaw in a 14 August bilateral. s9(2)(g)(i)

we support the aspiration. A Forum Leaders' declaration that takes forward its ambition could send an important signal on fossil fuels ahead of COP28, and potentially be leveraged to raise Pacific visibility and crowd in climate finance to the region.

15. s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)

the landmark 2021 Forum Leaders' *Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the Face of Climate Change-Related Sea-Level Rise*. Aotearoa New Zealand has been closely involved s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii) s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j)

What else is on the agenda?

16. We anticipate further discussion on Japan's decision to release treated water into the Pacific from Fukushima. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

17. At the Forum Special Leaders' Retreat in February, Leaders were asked to consider a proposal from Secretary-General Puna to establish a Special Envoy in the US, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

The Secretariat will report on the feasibility of establishing such an office at the Leaders' Meeting, including resource implications and the value of the role. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

18. We are also mindful of the direction of Leaders for the Secretariat to hold further dialogue to better understand challenges of labour mobility, part of a broader consideration on the benefits of regional social, economic, and security integration. We will provide separate advice on this issue.

Update on the 52nd PIF Leaders' Meeting

19. The 52nd Pacific Islands Forum will be hosted by Cook Islands from 6-10 November 2023. s6(b)(i), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

The Cook Islands have expressed its ambitions for the event through the theme of "E Reo Toa, Rangatira Ei Tatou", "Our Voices, Our Choices, Our Pacific Way: Promote, Partner, Prosper".

¹ Supported by Fiji, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu

Pacific Islands Forum: Priorities and Planning in 2023

Aotearoa planning for PIF Leaders Week

20. Noting that this event will take place in early November, the Ministry will provide detailed advice after the General Election. To effectively advance Aotearoa New Zealand's objectives, we will recommend the Prime Minister's attendance at the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum, including the Leaders' Retreat. s9(2)(g)(i)

21. Aotearoa New Zealand has contributed \$350,000 in grant funding to the Cook Islands Government to support their policy and logistical efforts as Forum Chair. s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii), s9(2)(g)(i)

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Social Media

Adi Cakobau School visit — midday, Thursday 14 September

Ni sa bula vinaka Adi Cakobau School *[open book][Fiji flag]*! Thank you for hosting me this morning alongside @LyndaTabuya. Inspiring to discuss indigenous & women's leadership with students — there is so much we can learn from the next generation: ^{s9(2)(g)(i)}

Image: Taken on the day, with students, or presenting speech

s9(2)(g)(i) - 3 pages withheld

Released under the Official Information Act

Press Release — already live

Foreign Affairs Minister to attend PIF Foreign Ministers' Meeting

13 September 2023

[Nanaia Mahuta to attend PIF Foreign Ministers' Meeting | Beehive.govt.nz](#)

Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta will attend the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Foreign Ministers' Meeting, in Suva, Fiji alongside New Zealand's regional counterparts.

"Aotearoa New Zealand is deeply committed to working with our Pacific whanau to strengthen our cooperation, and share ways to combat the challenges facing the Blue Pacific Continent," Nanaia Mahuta said.

"The Forum is the core platform for Pacific countries to talanoa and build consensus on issues of shared interest and importance like climate change, regional security and ensuring we continue to work together to maintain strong regional unity.

"This meeting will be an opportunity to connect and discuss — as Pacific partners, kanohi ki te kanohi — how the region can continue to work together in response to the many pressures affecting Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, and in ways that support Pacific priorities and enhance Pacific mana."

"This will include agreeing to an implementation plan for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent — our region's North Star, guiding us as we work together and with our partners to secure the future of our region.

"Engagement that recognises, advances and reinforces Pacific leadership on regional security, and on climate ambition and climate resilience, is also critical to maintaining strong regional unity — and to supporting security and prosperity, both for the Pacific and here, in Aotearoa New Zealand," Nanaia Mahuta said.

Nanaia Mahuta departs New Zealand on 13 September. While in Fiji, she will also undertake bilateral meetings with Forum Foreign Ministers and visit Adi Cakobau School.

Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Programme (PHWP)

Handling instructions

- Australia plans to announce the launch of the PHWP at the FFMM. ^{s6(a)}
_{s6(b)(i)}
- We recommend that you signal New Zealand's support for the Programme, ^{s6(a), s9(2)}
_{(g)(i)}

Intervention

- Aotearoa New Zealand fully supports and is pleased to partner with Australia and others in the Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Programme.
- The Programme will enhance disaster readiness, response, resilience, and locally led humanitarian action throughout the region. It will also help to ensure our Pacific partners have robust, environmentally sustainable and well-managed warehouses with relief supplies that they can quickly access when disasters strike.
- The Programme aligns with and supports the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, Boe Declaration on Regional Security and Action Plan, and the Nadi Declaration commitment to regional prepositioning of humanitarian relief supplies.
- We acknowledge Australia for initiating the programme, and inviting us to partner, and we welcome SPC's leadership role in programme implementation.

New Zealand's position

- New Zealand strongly supports the Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Programme. It is supported by Pacific countries, and strongly aligns with New Zealand's humanitarian goals and strategic interests in the region and Pacific regional frameworks. It enhances Pacific countries disaster resilience and humanitarian effectiveness, supports Pacific countries desire to lead their own responses and supports our broader geostrategic interests in the Pacific.

Background

1. ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

_{s9(2)(g)(i)}

2. The PHWP aims to enhance Pacific disaster readiness and response capability through ensuring that 14 Pacific Island countries¹ and Timor-Leste have robust, environmentally friendly warehouses with socially inclusive relief supplies which they can distribute within the first 48 hours of a disaster.
3. It aligns with regional frameworks and initiatives aimed at achieving such self-reliance including:
 - The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, which specifically asserts the desire for Pacific leadership in protecting the well-being of Pacific peoples;
 - The Boe Declaration on Regional Security and its accompanying Action Plan which aims at increasing regional coordination around pre-positioning relief supplies;
 - and the 'Nadi' Declaration in which Pacific countries commit to disaster preparedness including through regional pre-positioning of relief supplies.
4. The PHWP will run over eight years with a total cost of between NZ\$108 - 130 million. Australia is the largest contributor to the programme and the United States (NZ\$8.35 million), France (NZ\$14.6 million) and Germany (NZ\$5.5 million) have also made financial commitments. ^{s6(b)(i)}
5. ^{s6(a), s6(b)(i)}

¹ Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati , Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

Report by the Secretary General on the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty – ‘the Treaty of Rarotonga’

Intervention

- New Zealand is a strong supporter of efforts to universalise the Treaty of Rarotonga in our region and to encourage ratification of its Protocols by the United States. We welcome efforts to strengthen links between our Treaty and other regional treaties that establish regional nuclear weapon-free zones.
- We also support further meetings of States Parties to the Treaty and of the Treaty’s Consultative Committee. In doing so, we want to ensure that we are not duplicating discussion that sits more appropriately in other fora. The ALPS treated water release from Fukushima is of interest to all Forum members, for example, and think it is best discussed in the PIF where all members are present.
- Similarly, New Zealand supports regional action to address the effects of the legacy of nuclear testing, and recognises the work already under way in the Forum on this. We look forward to the report of the CROP Taskforce on Nuclear Legacy Issues later this year and are particularly keen to see the launch of the regional study on these issues.
- New Zealand is actively engaged in efforts to promote visibility and action on the legacy of nuclear testing across a range of multilateral fora. These include the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the Human Rights Council, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the United Nations General Assembly. We are pleased to see these issues getting more attention and hope that this will lead to long overdue and concrete results.

New Zealand’s position

- New Zealand strongly supports the Treaty of Rarotonga and the proposal for further meetings of States Parties and the Treaty’s Consultative Committee. ^{s6(a)}
- ^{s6(a)}

We acknowledge the Treaty affirms the South Pacific’s commitment to keeping our region free of environmental pollution by radioactive wastes and other radioactive matter, ^{s9(2)(h)}

The issue is more appropriately discussed within the PIF, particularly as not all PIF members are party to the Treaty.
- The Treaty of Rarotonga is limited in its ability to address nuclear legacy issues. We strongly support regional action to address the ongoing effects of the legacy of nuclear testing, for instance the CROP Taskforce on Nuclear Legacy Issues.

Handling advice

^{s9(2)(g)(i)}

Background

The Treaty of Rarotonga

- 1 The South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga), prohibits the manufacture, use, testing and possession of nuclear weapons by Parties to the Treaty. It also prohibits the dumping of radioactive waste by Parties within the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone defined in the Treaty (the zone), and obligates Parties not to take any action to assist or encourage the dumping within the zone by anyone. It provides that each Party remains free to decide whether to allow visits to airfields and ports, or allow transit or navigation through territorial seas, by foreign ships and aircraft.
- 2 The Treaty entered into force in 1986. It has 13 Parties: Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Samoa. Three associate states not located within the zone (the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau) are not Parties to the Treaty but are eligible to become so. The Treaty has three Protocols concerning stationing, testing and use of nuclear weapons that are open to specified nuclear weapon states to join. The US is the only nuclear weapons state to have not yet ratified these protocols.

The Secretary General's report

- 3 The Secretary General has submitted a report in line with the reporting provisions under Article 9(3) of the Treaty. We agree with the recommendations in the Secretary General's report. ^{s6(b)(ii)}

4 ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

^{s9(2)(h)}

Further, not all PIF members are party to the Treaty of Rarotonga, and we do not want to establish a parallel process to discuss this issue among only a subset of PIF members.

- 5 Similarly, the Treaty is limited in its ability to address nuclear legacy issues, both because these issues are not mandated in the Treaty and because not all members of the PIF are party to the Treaty (including members affected by nuclear testing such as the Marshall Islands).

AUKUS (see separate AUKUS brief)

- 6 This year's Secretary General's report has not reflected any considerations related to AUKUS, ^{s6(b)(ii)} The Treaty does not apply to nuclear propulsion. Australia has been clear that it will comply with all its legal obligations on nuclear matters. ^{s6(a), s9(2)(h)}

New Zealand's key messages about AUKUS include noting that, based on what we know about AUKUS, we are confident that Australia can, and will, continue to meet its international legal obligations under the Treaty.

Bilateral Meeting with Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown

Time and date: 2pm, Thursday 14 September



Mark Brown was first appointed Prime Minister in September 2020 after a decade as Finance Minister and was re-elected in August 2022 for another four-year term. He holds portfolios for foreign affairs and finance. You last met with Brown in the margins of the recent East Asian Summit.

Greetings

- **Formal greeting:** Kia orana
- **Thank you:** Meitaki

Ngā Whaingā - Key objectives

- Reaffirm New Zealand's support for Cook Islands' Chairing of the Pacific Islands Forum.
- Share views on engagement with third country partners^{s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)}
- Register our interest in sharing more, including in the context of the Joint Ministerial Forum next year^{s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)}
- Seek to understand Prime Minister Brown's efforts to grow the Cook Islands' international personality and the priority he places on specific memberships.

Pito kōrero - Talking points

^{s9(2)(f)(iv)}

Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

- Thank you for your efforts as PIF Chair to give international profile to regional priorities, including last week at ASEAN and the East Asia Summit. Interested in your reflections on the Summit.
- How are your preparations going for Leaders' Week?
- *If raised – travel to the Pacific Islands Forum in November:* ^{s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)}

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

US in the Pacific

- Pleased to hear the Cook Islands intends to establish diplomatic relations with the US at the US-Pacific Summit. What are your hopes for the bilateral relationship?
- We hope the upcoming US Summit will be another positive engagement between Pacific Leaders and President Biden, and we know expectations are high. The Summit is a further demonstration of the US' enduring commitment to our region, and their willingness to spend time with Leaders and talanoa.
- ^{s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii), 7(c)(i)}
- Through crowd funding PBP will support a substantial regional humanitarian warehousing programme and cyber security initiatives. We are advocating for PBP support for the SPC's proposed fisheries research vessel, to deliver science-backed fisheries and climate outcomes for the region.
- As we engage in this mechanism, we see the potential in a group of countries with significant resources who want to do things the right way with the Pacific.
- To succeed the PBP will require direction from Pacific countries on scope and thematic focus. I will advocate for this at the upcoming Ministerial meeting on the margins of UNGA.

- If the *Pacific Partnerships for Prosperity (PPFP)* initiative is endorsed, we see there could be an opportunity for the PBP to feed into and support PPFP. How do you envisage PBP could support this in line with the 2050 Strategy?

s6(a)

- s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

- s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

- s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

-

The Cook Islands' international memberships

- Great to see the growth of the Cook Islands' international persona under your leadership. Interested in an update on your current membership bids. Is the Cook Islands' focus still on IMF ^{s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)} memberships?

s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

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

If raised – IMF membership:

- How is this bid being received by key members at the IMF (for example the United States)?
- s9(2)(g)(i)

If raised – UN membership:

- It is for the Cook Islands Government and the people of the Cook Islands to determine the next step in its self-determination journey. Aotearoa New Zealand stands ready for these discussions whenever the Cook Islands is ready.
- s9(2)(g)(i)

Climate Action

- A strong Pacific voice on the Global Stocktake will be critical, we welcome your leadership as Champion and Forum Chair. We look forward to working closely with you at COP28.
- We need our formal agreed outcome from here in Suva to give us all a mandate to speak with a united Pacific voice on the urgent need for course correction. The Pacific cannot be silent or speaking only as individual countries on this in New York next week. We want to take forward the good discussion Climate Ministers also had in Suva but outside the Forum process. Where there is shared ambition in the region, we want to bring it into the Forum. New Zealand has proposed some drafting suggestions but we will also look forward to the Ministerial discussion tomorrow.

- Forum Economic Ministers agreed to take forward the aspiration of the Port Vila Call and consider a Forum Leaders' declaration on the region's energy transition. What are you anticipating as PIF Chair?

Papamuri - Background

s9(2)(f)(iv)

1. s9(2)(f)(iv)

Travel to Rarotonga for the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in November

2. In previous years, we have invited other Forum Member delegations to travel by NZDF flight from Aotearoa New Zealand to PIF Leaders' Meeting, alongside our delegation.

3. s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

4. s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

Partners in the Blue Pacific

5. s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

6. s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

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s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

7. s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

8. s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

9. s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

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Bilateral Meeting: Tuvalu Minister of Justice, Communications and Foreign Affairs **Hon. Panapasi Nelesone** and Minister of Finance **Hon. Seve Paeniu**

Time and date: Thursday 14 September, Time: 3:30pm

Panapasi Nelesone



Hon. Panapasi Nelesone (*Pah-nah-pah-see Nel-ey-so-ney*) was appointed Minister for Justice, Communications, and Foreign Affairs in early August, after the 28 July resignation of Hon. Simon Kofe.

Nelesone became a Member of Parliament in December 2019 after a career as a public servant, which included time as the Secretary to Government, Secretary for Finance, and Secretary for Foreign Affairs. He is married to Senior Magistrate, Corinna Lafai.

Seve Paeniu



Hon. Seve Paeniu (*Sev-ay Pie-knee-ew*) was appointed Tuvalu's Minister of Finance in September 2019. As the Minister for Finance, he acts as the governor of the National Bank of Tuvalu, and represents the Government of Tuvalu on the board of directors of the Tuvalu Trust Fund. Minister Paeniu is also the Pacific Political Champion for Just Transition.

Before entering politics, Paeniu was Tuvalu's High Commissioner to Fiji, Secretary of Finance for Nauru, and Head of the Secretariat for the Oceania Customs Organisation. Paeniu attended Nelson College, gained a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Canterbury, and gained a Master of Arts in Economics from the University of Hawaii.

Ngā Whaingā - Key objectives

- **Establish** a relationship with the new Minister, noting your disappointment that ill-health prevented your August visit to Tuvalu.
- **Confirm** the regard in which Aotearoa New Zealand holds its relationship with Tuvalu. Despite distance, the partnership is strong and reflects mutual trust and understanding. We want to ensure we keep strengthening the friendship.
- **Explore** the Minister's sentiments as he takes on his portfolio and exchange thoughts on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Pito kōrero - Talking points

- **Welcome** Minister Nelesone into his role.

Representational Challenges

- **Welcome** the enhanced in-person engagement we have been able to enjoy since Tuvalu's border reopened – including the presenting of credentials by New Zealand's non-resident High Commissioner.

- s6(a)

The International Development Cooperation (IDC) Programme

- **Note** that Aotearoa New Zealand's IDC total aid flow for Tuvalu across the 2021-2023 triennium is NZD 59.2 million, NZD 34.6 million bilaterally and NZD 24.6 million through multi-country programmes.
- **Note** that in your letter to Minister Nelesone, congratulating him into the new role, you advised him of contributions to the Tuvalu Trust Fund (AUD 10 million), health (NZD 2 million) and climate finance.

Pacific Regionalism

- **Reiterate** the importance New Zealand attaches on Pacific regionalism.
- **Welcome** views on the Pacific Islands Forum, and other regional institutions. Exchange on key Aotearoa New Zealand priorities – including the 2050 Strategy

and agreeing messages at the FFMM for a strong unified Pacific voice on climate ahead of UNGA and COP28. New Zealand is also keen to work with Tuvalu to strengthen our architecture, and ensure it is delivering for all Forum Members.

• s6(a)

Climate change cooperation

- **Acknowledge** Tuvalu's ongoing climate change advocacy. Aotearoa New Zealand supports a range of existing and new climate change activities that deliver benefits in Tuvalu.
- **Note** that at COP 27, New Zealand pledged NZD 20 million to loss and damage activities in the Pacific. ^{s9(2)(f)(iv)}

• s6(a)

Labour Mobility and Immigration

- **Reinforce** Aotearoa New Zealand's commitment to working alongside our Pacific partners to maximise the benefits of the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) Scheme and address concerns related to the impact of labour mobility in Tuvalu. Share that the RSE policy review is progressing well.

s6(a)

s6(a)

Papamuri – Background

Aotearoa New Zealand-funded Climate Change Activities

1. Aotearoa New Zealand supports a range of bilateral and multi-country climate change activities in Tuvalu. Existing activities focus on water security, ecosystem resilience, invasive species management, climate mobility, coastal resilience and sea level rise. Through the core bilateral programme we will co-finance an Asian Development Bank (ADB) project on Funafuti, to provide climate-adapted, resilient and improved drinking water supply, drainage, and sanitation services. Internal ADB approval for this project is expected in early 2024.

Tuvalu Coastal Adaption Project (TCAP)

2. The Tuvalu Coastal Adaption Project is a land reclamation project, comprising of three main outputs, including: strengthening awareness and knowledge for resilient coastal management; reducing the vulnerability of key coastal infrastructure against wave induced damages; and establishing a sustainable financing mechanism for long-term adaption efforts. It is a UNDP implemented project with current financing from the Green Climate Fund (USD 38 million) and the Government of Tuvalu (USD 2.9 million).

3. s6(a)

Strengthening Pacific Labour Mobility programme

4. Tuvalu is a keen and valued participant in the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

s6(a)

5. s6(a)

6. s6(a)

7. s6(a)

8. s6(a)

Interisland Passenger Ferries

9. MFAT and Maritime New Zealand have a long history of support to Tuvalu for the safety and maintenance of its two passenger ferries, the *Manu Folau* and the *Nivaga III*.^{s6(a)}

10. In 2022, during border closures, Aotearoa New Zealand funded the NZD 4.2 million repair of the *Manu Folau* in Fiji through IDC funds. The *Nivaga III* is scheduled to arrive in New Zealand for extensive repairs in November. The estimate for works is NZD 5.4 million and is to be met by the Government of Tuvalu.

11. ^{s6(a)}

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**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HON NANAIA MAHUTA**

**PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM
FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING**

15 September 2023



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Agenda

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Agenda

Friday, 15 September 2023

1. Opening (9.00am – 9.05am)

The Chair will call the meeting to order and opening formalities will be observed.

2. Adoption of Agenda and Meeting Timetable (9.05am – 9.10am)

3. Global and Regional Strategic Environment (9:10 – 10.15am)

To discuss the broader global and regional trends and dynamics shaping our regional context both from within the region and external to the region.

Morning Tea Break (10.15am – 10.30am)

4. Implementation Plan for the 2050 Strategy (10.30am – 11.00am)

To discuss and endorse the draft 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan.

5. Forum Engagement and Advocacy (11.00am – 11.30am)

To discuss and agree on the region's engagement and advocacy priorities, including the regional messages for the 78th United Nations General Assembly and preparations for COP28, including updates on partner engagements and related issues.

6. Way Forward on the Fukushima Issue (11.30am – 12.00pm)

To discuss the proposed way forward on the Fukushima Issue.

7. Pacific Regional Climate Mobility Framework (12.00pm – 12.30pm)

To discuss and approved the framework for Leaders further consideration.

8. Pacific Humanitarian Coordination Mechanism (12.30pm – 1.00pm)

To discuss the review of the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway for COVID-19 and the related recommendations.

Lunch Break (1.00pm – 2.00pm)

9. Draft Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on Statehood and Persons affected by Sea-level Rise (2.00pm – 2.30pm)

To discuss and endorse the draft Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on Statehood and Persons affected by Sea-level Rise, it's Aide Memoire.

10. Pacific Resilience Facility (2.30pm – 3.00pm)

To discuss the Declaration on the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) and consider an update on the re-design of the PRF as endorsed by the Forum Economic Ministers.

11. Update on 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders and Related Meetings
(3.00pm– 3.30pm)

To consider an update from the Office of the Forum Chair on the preparations for the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders and Related Meetings.

Afternoon Tea Break (3.30pm – 4.00pm)

12. Pacific Partnership for Prosperity (4.00pm – 4.30pm)

To consider a presentation on the Forum Chair's initiative, Pacific Partnership for Prosperity.

13. Update on the Trilateral Security Pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (4.30pm – 5.00pm)

To consider a verbal update by the Hon. Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs for Australia.

14. Consideration of the draft 2023 Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting Outcomes (5.00pm – 5.30pm)

15. Closing (5.30pm)

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Overview

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Overview and Objectives

Strategic Overview

1. The Pacific Islands Forum is critical to protecting and promoting Aotearoa New Zealand's foreign policy objectives s6(a)

As the pre-eminent Pacific-led regional mechanism, the Forum is a core platform for Pacific countries to *talanoa* and build consensus on shared challenges. With intensifying great power engagement in the region, Pacific regionalism is important for enhancing the voice and agency of individual Pacific countries, and supporting regional security and sovereignty.

2. Engagements at the Pacific Islands Forum this year will take place s6(a)

3. Overlaying this, and of greater importance to Pacific countries, is the existential threat of the climate emergency together with the region's longstanding social, economic and security vulnerabilities. At the same time, Pacific capacity to build geopolitical resilience is being stressed by a range of distinct yet inter-related pressures. This year we have experienced for ourselves the increasing severity of weather events. Transboundary threats are intensifying, including transnational crime, environmental degradation from illegal logging and maritime pollution, and IUU fishing; as well as more recent phenomena such as cybercrime, foreign interference and mis-and-disinformation. And the long tail of COVID-19 and rising global inflation continue to exacerbate economic and social vulnerabilities.

4. In this context, the Pacific has never mattered more for New Zealand's own security and prosperity. s6(a)

s6(a)

5. In the face of all of these pressures, the Pacific Islands Forum has been working to develop an implementation plan for the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*. The strategy provides a clear articulation of the norms and values we want to see embedded in our region, and our collective response to the twenty-first century

challenges we are all facing. The aim is to present a clear, credible implementation plan for endorsement by Leaders in November.

Key Objectives

6. The Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting, alongside the Ministerial economic, trade and women meetings, forms part of a suite of meetings that contribute to the agenda for the Forum Leaders' Retreat, to be held 6-10 November in Cook Islands. Aotearoa New Zealand has a strong interest in working with other Forum Members through this process to strengthen our collective resilience to current and emerging threats through strong regional unity.

7. Related to this is the importance we place on responding to Pacific priorities – and that our own relationship with the Pacific is grounded in *hononga* and focused on developing genuine *whanaungatanga*, *kotahitanga*, and *manaakitanga*. The meeting will provide an opportunity to connect and discuss, as Pacific partners, how our region can work together in response to our shared challenges, and how we can shape engagement in ways that support Pacific priorities and enhance Pacific resilience.

8. In line with that, our particular policy priorities for the Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting focus on:

- agreeing an implementation plan for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent;
- strengthening engagement with Forum Dialogue Partners;
- advancing discussions on regional security priorities; and
- reinforcing Pacific leadership on climate ambition and Pacific climate resilience.

9. More broadly, the meeting also provides an important opportunity for you to talanoa again with your counterparts – emphasising New Zealand's understanding that how things are done in the Pacific is just as important as what is announced.

Context

10. Cook Islands, as the Pacific Islands Forum Chair, will host the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting from 6-10 November in Rarotonga, with the Leaders' Retreat taking place in Aitutaki on 9 November. The theme for PIF 2023 is: "E Reo Toa, Rangatira Ei Tatou", "Our Voices, Our Choices, Our Pacific Way: Promote, Partner, Prosper".

11. The Pacific Islands Forum Officials' Committee lays the policy and strategic groundwork for the Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the Forum Leaders' Retreat. This year, the Committee will meet over 12-13 September. New Zealand will assume the Chair responsibilities at this meeting, giving us an opportunity to help shape the conversations and drive consensus.

Global and Regional Strategic Environment

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Global and Regional Strategic Environment

Intervention

- When Aotearoa New Zealand looks out at the world, we see increased complexity and growing levels of disruption and risk. For the last 70 years, our region has benefited from a strategic environment favourable to our shared values and interests, but the assumptions that underpinned this are changing. The risk of a shift in the strategic balance in the Pacific region is now a present and serious concern for us and presents a risk to our collective ability to chart our own future, and to the stability of our region.
- In our recent Strategic Assessment, Aotearoa identified three big shifts in the global environment:
 - A shift from rules to power, where international rules, and their liberal underpinnings, will be more contested because more states have the power and inclination to challenge them. Certain countries are also increasingly exercising hard power to test the limits of the rules-based system, at the expense of rules that serve smaller countries like ours. A break-down in the rules-based international system will reduce the strength of the Pacific's voice, and a more polarised region could undermine Pacific decision making.
 - Secondly, a shift from economics to security, where economic relationships are being reassessed in light of a more securitised, less stable world faced with increasing military competition. The shift to a focus on issues related to security risks international engagement shifting away from matters that are Pacific priorities, including climate change and development. New Zealand will continue to put Pacific priorities first and will encourage others to do the same.
 - Thirdly, a shift from efficiency to resilience, where a new form of global growth is emerging, based on building greater resilience and addressing pressing social and sustainability issues.
- For New Zealand, we want to work with you, our Pacific Islands Forum colleagues. As we face this range of complex challenges our message is a simple one. We are stronger together. We must work together to ensure that major powers support our desire for a peaceful, stable, prosperous and resilient Pacific.
- We maintain the view that local security challenges should be resolved locally, with Pacific Islands Forum Members' security being addressed first and foremost by the Forum family.

- Leaders have been clear that collectively we have the capacity and commitment to address security needs from within the region, and we are committed to ensuring there are no gaps, and no need to look outside our region in ways that could destabilise the arrangements that have served us so well, for so long.
- However, we should not limit our discussions to security responses; under a family first approach to security the *how* we work together is just as important. For New Zealand, we are looking for:
 - Cooperation that supports a peaceful, stable, prosperous and resilient Pacific region, respecting region's priorities;
 - Co-investment that strengthens sovereignty and builds capacity across the full spectrum of security interests – including climate, economic and health security – led by the region; and
 - Engagement by partners that is consistent with our interests and values, such as transparency; our region's consent-based community policing approach; interoperability; and mindful of the impact on our region.
- Within our region, we see many reasons for optimism. We are leading the global conversation on addressing climate change. Our Leaders have agreed the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.
- And we have demonstrated the value of working together to address the needs of our region. We were proud to stand alongside Forum Members in supporting Solomon Islands during the RAMSI years. Our region led the world in our regional response to COVID-19. And Aotearoa New Zealand will always be grateful for the support we received from fellow Forum Members in responding to the devastating impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle earlier this year.
- Looking ahead, we see further opportunities to test our commitment to each other and to demonstrate to ourselves, and to our partners, the value of a region working in support of its Members. In particular, we have the Pacific Games this year and CHOGM next year, and Aotearoa New Zealand stands ready to work with Forum Members in support of both events.
- For New Zealand, it is vital we continue to work together, to be active in shaping our environment. Through the implementation of the 2050 Strategy, we see a real opportunity for us as a region to build more integration across a number of areas, including security.
- We want to use this process to build a shared sense of our values, our collective ambition, and our needs and priorities, providing a good basis from which to engage other partners, and being clear as a region about what it is we want from partners.

New Zealand's position

- New Zealand has a strong interest in registering our concern with rising strategic competition in the region, and emphasising the need to work together *as a region* to ensure external engagement advances Pacific priorities, is consistent with established regional practices, and supportive of Pacific regional institutions.

s6(a)

Handling advice

- We recommend you reiterate New Zealand's position on the regional strategic environment, and register New Zealand's concerns with increasing strategic competition as well as our key messages on responding to developments as a region. Suggested talking points are provided above.

Background

1. Aotearoa New Zealand is connected to the Pacific region by people, ocean, history, culture, politics, and shared interests. Our engagement in the region is steered by our desire for a peaceful, stable, prosperous and resilient Pacific in which we operate as a true partner. The Pacific Resilience Approach acknowledges that the most enduring way we, as a region, can address the shared, complex 21st century challenges we all face is through a holistic approach in close partnership with Pacific countries. This includes managing the challenge of intensifying geostrategic competition in the region.

2. s6(a)

3. Our message to our Pacific partners is that we are stronger as a region when we work together. s6(a)

4. Supporting Pacific-led solutions to regional responses is also a key way in which we can embed the key principle of the Biketawa Declaration that the region has the collective capacity and commitment to meet its own security needs, as well as Leaders' direction that the region should take a family first approach to security.

5. s6(a)

6. To support Pacific countries to strengthen their resilience against the harmful impacts of geostrategic competition, we work alongside Pacific countries, including through regional institutions. s6(a)

7. Our key message to Pacific countries is that we are all navigating these challenging dynamics, and as Pacific partners, we are stronger when we do so together. And the Pacific Islands Forum is critical to advancing and protecting Aotearoa New Zealand's foreign policy objectives s6(a) As the pre-eminent Pacific-led regional mechanism, the Forum is a core platform for Pacific countries to *talanoa* and build consensus on shared challenges. At a time when we are continuing to see an uptick in great power engagement in the region, Pacific regionalism remains important for enhancing the voice and agency of individual Pacific countries, and supporting regional security and sovereignty.

2050 Strategy

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Implementation Plan for the 2050 Strategy

Intervention

- The Strategy is our blueprint to advance Pacific regionalism and development priorities for the next three decades, and the Implementation Plan will guide the practical actions in support of that.
- We are already seeing the value of the 2050 Strategy as a point of reference for our external partners, and to guide their support for and engagement with our region. In our view, the 2050 Strategy is central to our efforts to work together to secure our region's future, to advance our priorities, and be a global leader on the issues that matter most to us.
- A strong regional architecture, guided by the 2050 Strategy, is important to Aotearoa New Zealand as it allows the Pacific to deliver its own solutions to regional challenges; empowers and strengthens our Pacific voice; and plays an important stabilising role in the contested regional environment.
- We appreciate the efforts of the regional agencies, civil society, non-state actors, development partners and the private sector, in supporting the development of the Plan. In our view, this is a time for us to be ambitious as we chart our own future and we look forward to its presentation to Forum Leaders in November.

New Zealand's position

- New Zealand strongly supports the endorsement of the Implementation Plan 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.
- It is in our interests to have a clear and actionable Implementation Plan agreed to this year, both to capitalise on the 2050 Strategy's momentum, and to guide regional action^{s6(a)}

Handling advice

- It is not essential that you make an intervention for this item, particularly given the previous intervention. However, you may wish to share Aotearoa New Zealand's strong support for the Implementation Plan – noting that this is a priority issue for New Zealand and the region – and thank the PIF Secretariat and other Forum Members for their hard work in bringing it together.

Background

1. Pacific Islands Forum Leaders at their 2019 meeting in Tuvalu noted that escalating climate change impacts, coupled with the intensification of geostrategic competition was exacerbating the region's vulnerabilities. In this context, Leaders agreed that the future of our Blue Pacific Continent could not simply be left to chance, but required a long-term vision, a carefully considered regional strategy, and most importantly the collective commitment to achieve it.

2. The 2050 Strategy was agreed at the 51st Pacific Islands Forum in July 2022. This document sets out a blueprint for how we will work together to overcome shared challenges. The Strategy focuses on seven themes: political leadership and regionalism; people-centred development; peace and security; resource and economic development; climate change and disasters; ocean and natural environment; and technology and connectivity.

3. Forum Officials, CROP Agencies, and other actors have been developing the implementation plan for the Strategy over recent months. The Plan involves Outcome Statements for 2030, and identifies high-level actions that will support the Outcomes.

4. Aotearoa New Zealand's objective for this process is for it to result in a clear, ambitious and practical plan for a peaceful, stable, prosperous, and resilient Pacific, with clear monitoring and accountability mechanisms. It will be equally important that this is a plan we can guide all external partners to follow, ensuring engagement is in support of Pacific priorities. The Strategy and implementation plan has the potential to become a central tool in anchoring our region's response to the increasing attention we are receiving from external partners.

Challenges

5. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

important at this stage to endorse a flexible plan that provides guidance on the path forward, as we encounter increasing threats to our collective resilience.

Forum Engagement and Advocacy

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Forum Engagement and Advocacy

See next page for intervention.

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Intervention

Partner engagements

- As I noted in my earlier intervention, in a time of increasing complexity it is vital that we give active consideration to how we engage with our Forum Dialogue Partners, how we work together to ensure our Partners are supporting our priorities and delivering tangible benefits to our region.
- As we discussed earlier, the 2050 Strategy and the implementation plan will be central to these efforts.
- We also commend the Secretariat's efforts to improve the Forum Dialogue Partner process. We agree this an important task and we should give careful thought to how we structure these engagements and on what basis we should be granting access to our Leaders.
- At the same time, Aotearoa New Zealand sees merit in including in our discussions how best to manage our summit-type meetings on an individual partner basis.
- s6(a)

- In our view, need to make sure that cooperation is done in manner that is Pacific-led, and serves the interests of Pacific Islands Forum Members first and foremost. We want to ensure that the Pacific drives the format, agenda, and outcomes of engagement. We need to find ways to emphasise PIF Centrality.
- This would require us, as a Forum membership, supported by our Secretariat, to have an agreed approach to such meetings, including to continually ask our partners to work through the Forum and our Secretariat to agree and formalise the arrangements for such meetings. s6(a)

- Adopting such a model would help to re-balance partner engagement so that we are in the driving seat. At the same time, it would also provide priority Forum Dialogue Partners with certainty and predictability regarding Forum engagements.
- We are seeing some of our partners starting to take this approach, and we welcome the Secretariat's efforts to work with the US to agree an agenda and draft an outcomes statement ahead of the upcoming US-Pacific summit.

COP28

- Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to working with our Pacific whanaunga so we can respond to climate change together. Our Leaders have set out a vision in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific to continue our global leadership on climate.
- We know from the IPCC's sixth assessment report that the world is not on track to limit warming to 1.5 degrees, a goal the Pacific fought hard to secure in the Paris Agreement. We know the window is closing to keep 1.5 alive.
- Heading into the United Nations General Assembly and COP28, we want to work together to have a strong collective Pacific voice on the need for urgent action by all major emitters pre 2030, and a commitment to global phase out of fossil fuels.
- We support the aspiration of the region for a just transition to a fossil fuel free Pacific, and we see the potential for a Forum Leaders' Declaration to be a powerful signal to COP28.
- New Zealand was proud to stand with the Pacific on loss and damage at COP27 and we will be with you on operationalising that historic victory at COP28. We are currently programming our loss and damage contribution announced at COP27 with partners in the Pacific – we recognise that the urgency of addressing escalating climate impacts means we need to be acting now.
- We agree the loss and damage fund should use existing national and regional mechanisms where we can. We see the Pacific Resilience Facility as a good channel to attract loss and damage finance from outside the region.
- We are also committed to supporting the Pacific on making climate finance more accessible. We are innovating to achieve this objective with our own climate finance, including providing flexible funding directly through national systems of Pacific partner governments for them to pursue their own climate priorities.
- New Zealand is committed to delivering our share of the collective US \$100 billion goal climate finance goal. Our climate finance commitment for 2022-25 is NZ\$1.3 billion.
- Of this, NZ\$781m (98 percent) of the NZ\$800m new funding is now allocated. This was a big scale-up for us. Over 60% is being delivered to the Pacific and more than 50% to adaptation.

UNGA

- Aotearoa supports the proposed Forum Key Messages for the 78th UN General Assembly.

New Zealand's position

There are three distinct components to this agenda item:

Partner Engagements

- In our view, the current mechanisms for partners looking to engage with the region are not sufficiently serving Pacific interests. We are strongly supportive of a discussion among Foreign Ministers, then Leaders about how we can transform this mechanism, to put the Pacific back in the driver's seat.

COP28

- New Zealand supports a strong Blue Pacific voice for ambition at the upcoming UN Climate Ambition Summit and at COP28, and stands with the Pacific on loss and damage and climate finance access.

UNGA

- Aotearoa supports the proposed Forum Key Messages for the 78th UN General Assembly.

Handling advice

- It is not essential that you make an intervention for all three sub-items. However, suggested talking points are provided in particular a) to build momentum towards "PIF centrality" (an issue on which officials have played an active role, s6(a))

Background

Partner Engagements

1. s6(a)

2. s6(a)

We already have a good example of how this can work in practice

with Japan and the PALM process, s6(a)

We are also supportive of the Secretariat's efforts – including through discussions with the ASEAN Secretariat – to strengthen the Forum's engagement with Forum Dialogue Partners, including at the Forum Leaders' week.

COP28

3. The world is not on track to meet the Paris Agreement's goal to limit global temperature rise to 1.5-degrees. COP28 is an opportunity for a global course correction, with the first five yearly review of the implementation of the Paris Agreement – the 'Global Stocktake' (GST). There is a closing window for urgent action to keep 1.5 alive - action by 2030 will determine whether this can be achieved.

4. Pacific advocacy secured the 1.5-degree target in the Paris Agreement. The Pacific are seeking continued global leadership on climate change under the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy for the Pacific. Pacific countries have designated Pacific Political Climate Champions on priority issues. Cook Islands (on GST), Tonga (climate finance) and Fiji (Oceans) have Leader-level Champions. Vanuatu Minister Regenvanu is Loss and Damage Champion. Tuvalu's Minister Paeniu has created a new Just Transition Champion role, highly focused on the Port Vila Call (see background briefing).

5. New Zealand's Minister of Climate Change participated as an observer at a recent Pacific Small Island Developing States High Level Dialogue, alongside Australia. There was alignment on the need for a strong and united Pacific voice on mitigation and fossil fuels at COP28, alongside acknowledgement that fossil fuel phase out would not be immediate and had to enable a just transition. Delivering on loss and damage and prioritising this in messages to partners was also a key priority.

UNGA

6. Aotearoa New Zealand's objectives at High-Level Week 2023 are:

- Demonstrate our commitment to international rules and a strong multilateral system;
- Support progress on global challenges and celebrate recent achievements;
- Secure and reaffirm important relationships; and
- Progress key foreign policy interests, including by amplifying the Pacific voice and Small Island Developing States priorities.

7. The priorities for advocacy proposed by the PIF Secretariat are:

- 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent;

- COVID-19 Response and Recovery;
- Gender Equality;
- Climate Change and Resilience;
- Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise;
- Nuclear Threats and Legacy Issues;
- Sustainable Ocean Management, Use and Conservation; and
- Regional Security.

Released under the Official Information Act

s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

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Released under the Official Information Act

s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

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- s6(a)

- s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

Fukushima

Released under the Official Information Act

Way forward on the Fukushima Issue

Intervention

- Aotearoa New Zealand recognises that the Fukushima treated water release is a significant issue of interest to the Pacific, particularly in light of the region's traumatic nuclear legacy.
- As acknowledged by Forum Chair Prime Minister Brown and Secretary General Puna, there is a range of views within the Forum Membership on this issue and it is the prerogative of each Member to determine their own national position.
- In terms of our approach to this issue, Aotearoa New Zealand has been clear throughout that consistent transparency and open communication is essential. Accordingly, we appreciate the sustained efforts of Japan and the International Atomic Energy Agency to engage with the Forum, and we welcome their commitment to continued dialogue and information-sharing. We welcome in particular the IAEA's commitment to the establishment of an elevated dialogue mechanism with the Forum.
- Mindful of the IAEA's expertise as the international authority on nuclear safety matters, we reiterate our full confidence in the Agency's independent advice as expressed in its comprehensive report released in July, and commend its commitment to an ongoing review of the release for the duration of its operation.
- The maintenance of the IAEA's permanent monitoring presence at Fukushima and provision of publicly available information via its website will be crucial to providing reassurance that the release continues to comply with international safety standards.
- Finally, we welcome the Secretariat's commitment to facilitating ongoing dialogue with Japan and the IAEA, and to keeping Forum Members apprised of the latest information on this issue.

- s6(a)
- [Redacted text]

Aotearoa New Zealand's position

- Aotearoa New Zealand supports ministerial consideration of this matter in recognition of the region's traumatic nuclear legacy and the divergence of views within the Forum.

- Aotearoa has expressed its full confidence in the advice of the IAEA as set out in its comprehensive report, which concluded that the release was consistent with international safety standards and would have a negligible impact on human and environmental health. We welcome the IAEA's commitment both to continue its independent review of the release for its duration (expected to be approximately thirty to forty years) and to make Agency monitoring data publicly available.
- Aotearoa New Zealand has consistently advocated for sustained and meaningful dialogue between Japan, the IAEA and the Pacific to ensure this matter is dealt with in a transparent manner that engenders trust and understanding. We will continue to promote such engagement, particularly via the planned mechanism for elevated dialogue between the Forum and the IAEA.

Handling advice

- Noting the breadth and depth of regional interest in this issue, it is important that Aotearoa New Zealand make an intervention on this issue, following other Pacific Leaders to set the scene.

Background

1. In April 2021, Japan announced its decision to eventually discharge treated water from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant into the Pacific Ocean. The water – over a million tonnes in total stored across more than 1,000 steel water tanks at Fukushima – has accumulated after being pumped into the site to cool the plant's damaged reactors, a crucial element in the plant's decommissioning process. Prior to release, the water will be treated through the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS), a filtration system designed to remove radioactive contaminants from the water (with the exception of tritium, which will be diluted separately). The water is projected to be discharged over a period of approximately 30 to 40 years.

2. The IAEA's comprehensive report, released in July 2023, confirmed that the discharge is consistent with international safety standards. The IAEA also found that the discharge "would have a negligible radiological impact on people and the environment". To provide ongoing transparency, the IAEA will continue its review during the discharge phase, including through a continuous on-site presence at Fukushima and by providing live, publicly available monitoring data on the IAEA's website.

Commencement of the discharge and response of the Pacific

3. On 24 August 2023, the discharge of ALPS (Advanced Liquid Processing System) treated water commenced. This first release is expected to last 17 days and involve approximately 7,800 cubic metres of treated water.

4. The day before the discharge commenced, Cook Islands Prime Minister and current PIF Chair Mark Brown released a statement. He reiterated his confidence in the IAEA and noted the Agency's commitment to establishing a permanent monitoring presence at Fukushima and an elevated dialogue mechanism with the PIF. Brown stated his belief that "the discharge meets international safety standards" and welcomed the opening of the IAEA office at the Fukushima site in July. In closing, he acknowledged that not all Pacific leaders would have the same position and that it was the prerogative of leaders to determine their national positions.

5. PIF Secretary General Henry Puna also released a statement. Echoing Brown's statement, Puna referenced the "divergent views and responses ... within the Forum Membership on this issue" and also recognised "the sovereignty and prerogative of Forum Members to determine their own national positions".

6. Much of the region's response to Japan's discharge plan thus far has been informed by the Pacific's experience of nuclear testing as well as the advice of the PIF Panel of Experts, a group of scientists commissioned by the PIF to interpret and translate scientific data provided by Japan to assist PIF Members' understanding of the regional implications of the discharge. The PIF Panel maintains that the decision to discharge the treated water is premature and lacking in sound scientific basis.²

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a)

² Although one member of the Panel, Antony Hooker, has recently dissented from the Panel's view, claiming that Japan's discharge plan is safe and that he would be comfortable eating fish caught in the vicinity of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant.

Climate Mobility Framework

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Pacific Regional Climate Mobility Framework

Intervention

- Climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific. We know that climate change is undermining the conditions needed for some of our Pacific communities to continue to live where they are. Relocation is already happening within some countries.
- Walking side by side with our Pacific partners means addressing challenges together, and that includes the challenges of climate mobility.
- Aotearoa New Zealand is very supportive of the Pacific Regional Framework as a guide for Pacific government action on climate mobility. We are grateful to the Chairs of the Joint Working Group, colleagues from Fiji and Tuvalu, for all their hard work in facilitating this final version for our consideration today.

New Zealand's position

- New Zealand strongly supports the endorsement of the Pacific Regional Climate Mobility Framework.

Handling advice

- Australia has proposed some changes to the Framework, which will need to be agreed Officials. MFAT officials will brief you on the outcomes of this prior to the Ministers' Meeting.
- It is preferable, but not essential that you make a brief intervention for this item. New Zealand was one of the active participants in the Joint Working Group which developed the Framework, so it would be in keeping with that approach that we respond positively in the meeting. We suggest waiting for other delegations to intervene first. (It is likely that Tuvalu and Fiji, being co-chairs of the Joint Working Group, will speak in support.)

Background

1. After more than a year of coordination between officials and UN implementing agencies, a final draft of the Pacific Regional Climate Mobility Framework was agreed after an in-person Regional Dialogue in Suva in July.
2. This final draft Framework fits its intended purpose as a high level guide to Pacific governments for addressing the complex and wide ranging issue of climate mobility. It strikes a good balance of being ambitious and laying out a shared baseline, without

implicitly committing countries to domestic legislative or policy change (as earlier drafts did). As a Framework, this document is, by nature, non-binding.

3. The Framework considers the challenges and potential solutions across a range of types of climate mobility: staying in place ('immobility'); planned relocation; migration and displacement. It includes a set of four guiding principles, as well as clear indication that the Framework will be implemented in line with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

4. s6(a)

They have made some proposed changes to be considered by other PIF Members at the Forum Officials Committee which immediately precedes this Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting. s6(a)

We will update you following the FOC to provide the most up to date status of this Framework.

5. Officials' engagement in the drafting to date has focused on:

- s6(a)
- Shifting the Framework from one that was overly technical and detailed to one that laid out a high-level approach to climate mobility in the region that Leaders could agree to and that could be built on over time.
- Ensuring provisions of the Framework did not extend beyond what is actually agreed by international law or accepted practice (e.g. the specific inclusion and defining of the principle of non-refoulement in the context of climate change which is not yet agreed in international law).
- Ensuring the scope remained focused on *climate* migration (i.e. that it did not expand into areas beyond *climate change induced mobility*, such as labour mobility in the broader context).
- Seeking clarity on implementation of the Framework – who will implement what, when, and with what resourcing?

6. Through the various iterations of the draft Framework we were able to resolve most of these specific issues. s6(a)

s6(a)

7. The key outstanding issue is the implementation of the Framework. s6(a)

However, we anticipate it will be aligned with the work currently under way on the 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan, which will make implementation of the Framework easier to orchestrate once details of both are settled at PIF Leaders' Week in November.

Released under the Official Information Act

Humanitarian Coordination Mechanism

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Pacific Humanitarian Response Coordination Mechanism

Intervention

- First, I would like to congratulate Forum Members and the Secretariat for the PHP-C, as we look to formally close the mechanism. We can be proud of our efforts as a region to support each other in a time of crisis, through the Biketawa Declaration.
- Looking forward, Aotearoa New Zealand supports the concept of a regional humanitarian mechanism, although sufficient time will be required for Members to fully flesh out how such a mechanism should work. Aotearoa New Zealand will continue to support its development.

New Zealand's position

- New Zealand strongly supports the regional humanitarian mechanism as a means to promote regional coordination, 'family first' responses and humanitarian effectiveness.

Handling advice

- It is preferable but not essential that you make an intervention in support of the regional mechanism. It would be useful to hear comments from Fiji first who may provide useful context for your intervention. s6(a)

Background

1. In 2020, Forum Members invoked the Biketawa Declaration to stand-up the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on Covid-19 (PHP-C) in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. PHP-C served to provide an enabling political environment and commitment to expedite assistance between Forum Member countries. This involved a Ministerial Action Group and Regional Taskforce, supported by regional and international agencies.
2. An independent evaluation of the mechanism found that PHP-C demonstrated considerable value in providing the political environment for rapid response and demonstrated the significance of utilising existing regional architecture in addressing unprecedented regional crises. The Forum can be proud of the work PHP-C achieved and will now formally close PHP-C as the need to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic abates. Forum Members are considering future needs and looking to establish a Pacific Humanitarian Response Coordination Mechanism.

3. In April 2023, the PIF Secretariat consulted with Members to develop a concept note on the mechanism for Members' consideration, which was shared in July. The note emphasises that Members do not want any new regional bureaucratic structures that would require more resourcing, but rather a focus on supporting and coordinating existing systems.

4. There has been little engagement on the concept note. Only three countries (including Australia and New Zealand) attended the last consultation session. This likely reflects a lack of clarity among Members as to exactly what is envisioned for the mechanism and a lack of resource to engage.

5. Subsequently the PIF Secretariat advised that development of the mechanism will be delayed to allow Members more time to engage in the process. To aid development of the mechanism, a Technical Working Group will be established and will present a proposal to Disaster Management Ministers when they next meet, likely in 2025. New Zealand has been invited to participate in the group.

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Sea-level Rise

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Draft PIF Declaration on Statehood and Persons affected by Sea-level Rise in relation to International Law

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j)

New Zealand's position

- s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j)
- s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

Handling advice

- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j), s6(b)(i)

- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j), s6(b)(i)

Background

1. Pacific Leaders have consistently focused on the international law implications of sea-level rise, and protecting Pacific countries' sovereign rights. The Forum demonstrated leadership in this area with the 2021 PIF Leaders Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones, which Aotearoa was closely involved in developing.

2. Over time, that Declaration has achieved widespread support and has reinforced Pacific Island countries' rights to retain their Exclusive Economic Zones, notwithstanding sea-level rise.

3. Forum Leaders in 2022 directed the region to consider the issues of statehood and protection of persons affected by sea-level rise, guided and informed by applicable principles and norms of international law.

4. To initiate collective consideration of these issues, a legally-focused Regional Conference on Statehood and Protection of Persons affected by sea-level rise was held in March 2023 in Fiji, attended by officials from almost all Members and international legal experts. Forum Chair and Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown addressed the Conference asking *"How can we realise our shared Vision when our very status as "states" are being questioned?"* Tuvalu's then Foreign Minister Simon Kofe also spoke articulating the complex issue of whether a state loses its statehood under international law following territorial inundation (or loss of population), or whether international law recognises statehood as enduring.

5. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j), s6(b)(i)

6. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j), s6(b)(i)

- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j), s6(b)(i)

- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j), s6(b)(i)

7. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j), s6(b)(i)

ICJ Advisory Opinion on Climate Change

8. The UN General Assembly has asked the ICJ to provide an advisory opinion on states' international legal obligations on climate change. New Zealand was part of the Core Group of states supporting Vanuatu in this initiative. Officials are preparing New Zealand's written submissions, which are due by 22 January 2024.

9. s6(a)

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Draft Declaration on the Continuity of Statehood and the Protection of Persons in the Face of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j)

Released under the Official Information Act

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j)

Released under the Official Information Act

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(j)

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Pacific Resilience Facility

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Pacific Resilience Facility

Intervention

- The design of the PRF has come a long way since it was endorsed by Forum Leaders in 2019. As a Pacific designed- and led-initiative, the PRF can play a key role in building resilience, through investments in strengthening preparedness for natural disasters and the impacts of climate change.
- We are pleased to have been involved in the PRF's early development, as part of the Technical Working Group, alongside other Pacific partners. And, more recently, the PRF redesign work.
- On the PRF's funding, we recognise that the involvement of a broad range of partners will be important if it is to deliver on its objectives. To be successful, the PRF needs to be supported by those who would not normally provide funding to the Pacific, otherwise it risks simply becoming a reallocation of existing donors' resources.
- New Zealand is committed to making a contribution to the PRF capital base. While our contribution will be modest in terms of the PRF's overall financing ambition, we recognise that our support will be important for 'crowding-in' other donors.
- We recognise the benefits of formally signalling New Zealand's contribution early on, rather than waiting for others. We will finalise our proposed contribution in advance of the global pledging.

New Zealand's position

- The Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) design aligns well with New Zealand's focus on supporting initiatives to strengthen Pacific resilience.
- Any New Zealand announcement of a commitment for the PRF capitalisation should be timed to align with, and support, the pledging event.

Handling advice

- It is recommended that, if appropriate, you emphasise Aotearoa New Zealand's support for the PRF.

Background

1. The Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) aims to increase the grant financing to Pacific Islands Forum members to build resilience through investment in preparedness for natural disasters and the impacts of climate change, with a particular focus on

community-level projects. The proposal to establish the PRF was first endorsed at the Fiftieth Pacific Islands Forum in Tuvalu in August 2019.

2. However, while some donors made positive expressions of support, this did not result in financing commitments. As a result, in August 2021, a decision was made to defer the planned global pledging event to capitalise the facility.

3. Since the deferral of the global pledging event, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat have been working on a substantive redesign of the PRF which has involved reviewing the purpose of the facility, the structure of the facility, its legal establishment, the governance arrangements, and its financial model.

4. At the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting in August 2023, Ministers approved proceeding with the implementation of the redesigned PRF. The PRF will now move ahead for final consideration at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting.

5. New Zealand's positioning is as an open-minded partner on the PRF, aiming to be responsive to priority-setting as determined by Pacific governments. New Zealand has signalled our support (although not a dollar amount), including most recently at the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting in August 2023. Funding has already been nominally earmarked for a contribution to the capital base of the PRF once it is operationalised.

6. Australia and the United States have pledged funding to continue with PRF establishment work, consisting of AUD\$2-\$3 million, and USD\$2 million, respectively. New Zealand officials are involved in the PRF technical working group that is supporting establishment, but judge further funding for establishment activities is not required at this stage.

7. A contribution from New Zealand to the PRF is subject to:

- The PRF being established. Work will continue on the PRF's operational design over the coming weeks with the PRF's foundation documents being put to the Forum Leaders meeting for endorsement.
- A completed MFAT business case assessing funding options.
- Instrument of Delegation holder approval.

8. PIFS have been making genuine efforts to work on a redesigned PRF in order to broaden donor appeal. However, the issues which originally caused a deferment of the PRF global pledging event were less about the PRF design, and more about: the mixed donor appetite for new funding mechanisms; a constrained global funding environment; and what was considered a lack of Pacific support for a PIFS-administered regional financing facility.

9. New Zealand's support will therefore be important for 'crowding-in' other donors. A key success metric for the PRF will be how successful it is in attracting financial support from the wider international donor community. Relying predominantly on funding from New Zealand (and Australia) risks simply being a reallocation of funding already supporting the Pacific.

10. The global pledging event to capitalise the PRF is now planned for the fourth-quarter of 2024. Officials recommend waiting until next year to confirm the exact level of support New Zealand will provide, including to generate momentum in the lead-up to the pledging event. s6(b)(i)

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Forum Leaders and Related Meetings

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Update on 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' and Related Meetings

Key Points

- Aotearoa New Zealand is supporting the Cook Islands to host the Forum Leaders' meetings. The proximity of Leaders' Week to our General Election creates some complexity for planning purposes but we are proceeding on the basis that our Prime Minister will attend.
- Cook Islands has expressed an interest in the Aotearoa New Zealand delegation's mode of transport to Rarotonga in November, including if we intend to offer seats to other Pacific delegations.

Background

1. The 52nd Pacific Islands Forum will be hosted by Cook Islands from 6-10 November 2023. s6(a)

Cook Islands has expressed its ambitions for the event through the theme of "E Reo Toa, Rangatira Ei Tatou", "Our Voices, Our Choices, Our Pacific Way: Promote, Partner, Prosper".

2. Noting that this event will take place in early November, the Ministry will provide detailed advice after the General Election. To effectively advance Aotearoa New Zealand's objectives, we will recommend the Prime Minister's attendance at the Forum, including the Leaders' Retreat.

3. Aotearoa New Zealand has contributed \$350,000 in grant funding to the Cook Islands Government to support their policy and logistical efforts as Forum Chair. We will continue to explore opportunities to bolster Aotearoa New Zealand's profile, in a manner befitting our constitutional relationship with Cook Islands, during Leaders Week.

4. The Cook Islands government has expressed an interest in the Aotearoa New Zealand delegation's mode of transport to Rarotonga in November. It considers that Cook Islands' hosting would benefit other from spare seats being made available to other Forum delegations.

5. s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

Other Matters

Released under the Official Information Act

Pacific Partnerships for Prosperity

Intervention

- I want to thank our Chair for putting forward the Pacific Partnerships for Prosperity proposal.
- Aotearoa New Zealand acknowledges our collective commitment to developing the Implementation Plan for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. The 2050 Strategy and its Implementation Plan are the overarching blueprint for the region to advance our collective goals.
- In that spirit, we are interested to learn more about how the Cook Islands proposal could complement and amplify the impact of the 2050 Strategy and its Implementation Plan.
- It is critical that the 2050 Implementation is a Forum-led and owned process with buy-in from all Members, and that we avoid duplication where we can.

Handling advice

- An intervention may be appropriate, guided by the tone in the room and support from other Members.

New Zealand's position

- s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g)(i)
- s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g)(i)

Background

1. Cook Islands has put forward a new initiative for consideration – the Pacific Partnerships for Prosperity (PPfP). PPfP proposes nine priority initiatives to focus efforts on the 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan. Cook Islands introduced the PPfP at the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM) in early August, with the intention to launch

it at PIF Leaders' Week in November. s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

2. PPfP initiatives appear to have been drawn from Leaders' Communiques, Ministerial meetings, and sections of the draft 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan. s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

3. s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

Initiatives under the PPfP

- The Pacific Resilience Facility;
- The Weather Ready Pacific Decadal Programme;
- A Pacific Labour Mobility Framework;
- Strengthening Cyber Security Arrangements;
- Establishing a Pacific Centre of Excellence on Deep Ocean Science;
- Re-Energising the Rarotonga Treaty for a Nuclear Free Pacific;
- The Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration;
- The Global Plastics Treaty; and
- Pacific Framework for Climate Mobility.

4. s9(2)(g)(i)

5. s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(i)

6. s9(2)(g)(i)

- s9(2)(g)(i)
- s9(2)(g)(i)
- s9(2)(g)(i)

Views from PIF Members and CROP agencies

7. During the FEMM, Members recognised the potential of the PPfP to support the delivery of the 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan. They fed back that the PPfP needed to be consulted across the membership, with more discussions held to shape up the regions priorities. s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

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AUKUS

Intervention

- Our priority is to work alongside partners who share our values to ensure a secure, safe and stable region.
- We continue to welcome the increased engagement of the UK and US in the region, along with our ally Australia.
- We agree with the AUKUS partners that the collective objective needs to be the delivery of peace and stability, and the preservation of the international rules-based system in the region.
- We understand the strategic drivers for AUKUS - we too see the deteriorating strategic environment in our wider region. We know that Pacific countries are focused on geostrategic pressures, as well as climate change as the existential security challenge facing the region.
- Aotearoa New Zealand has a long-standing and bipartisan nuclear free policy – this won't change.
- We understand the region's long-standing concerns about nuclear issues. The AUKUS partners have reiterated their commitment to non-proliferation, and their compliance with international law – including for Australia the Treaty of Rarotonga. This is an important message.
- We welcome the AUKUS partners' ongoing engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure robust safeguards and verification measures. We look forward to further advice from the IAEA, which is the international authority on this issue.
- **[Pillar two – if raised]** Pillar Two of AUKUS includes cooperation in emerging security areas, including areas in which we already work closely with Australia, the US and the UK. Officials are having conversations about what Pillar Two might offer or mean for New Zealand, on a no commitments basis.

If needed – Treaty of Rarotonga

- Australia has been clear that AUKUS is consistent with the Treaty of Rarotonga.
- Australia is a trusted partner and responsible international citizen. It takes compliance with its international legal obligations seriously, and there is nothing in AUKUS which gives us reason to doubt this commitment.

- Australia is a trusted partner and responsible international citizen. It takes compliance with its international legal obligations seriously, and there is nothing in AUKUS which gives us reason to doubt this commitment.
- The Treaty of Rarotonga prohibits the manufacture, use, testing and possession of nuclear weapons in the South Pacific region. s9(2)(h) [REDACTED]

Handling advice

- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Background

1. Announced in September 2021, the AUKUS trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, is a military technology partnership. s6(a)

2. s6(a)

3. The initial and highest profile initiative under AUKUS is Australia's transition from its current fleet of conventionally armed, diesel powered submarines, to significantly more advanced conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarines - known as Pillar One of AUKUS. Pillar Two of AUKUS involves accelerated cooperation on a range of non-nuclear advanced military technologies and capabilities, s6(a)

The AUKUS Leaders' announcement and international reactions

4. The AUKUS Leaders' announcement on 14 March confirmed next steps for the AUKUS submarine initiative. This includes plans for increased US and UK submarine

visits to Australia, including a rotational presence from 2027; Australian purchase of US conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarines (early 2030s); and the development of a new class of conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarine (by the early 2040s).

5. s6(a)

6. s6(a)

7. s6(a)

8. s6(a)

On 23 April, the Prime Minister said (in a joint press conference with PM Albanese) that in respect of AUKUS, New Zealand - like Australia - was clear-eyed about the challenging Indo-Pacific strategic environment; that we agreed with the AUKUS partners that the collective objective was peace and stability and the preservation of the international rules-based system in our region; and that we welcomed the assurance that AUKUS did not impact on Australia's commitment to non-proliferation.

9. s6(a)

s6(a)

Potential New Zealand engagement in Pillar Two

10. s6(a)

New Zealand has indicated to the AUKUS partners (and publicly) that we are open to conversations about what AUKUS Pillar Two might offer/mean for New Zealand, on a no commitments basis.

Non-proliferation considerations, and the Treaty of Rarotonga

11. New Zealand has an interest in ensuring that AUKUS does not set a precedent for proliferation by other countries, and has been strongly supportive of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in engaging with AUKUS partners. The focus is determining robust safeguards and verification measures to ensure the highly enriched uranium used as submarine fuel cannot be diverted to other military uses, in order to meet obligations under international law and to set a high threshold for any other state that might seek to follow the precedent set by AUKUS.

12. The AUKUS partners continue to emphasise that they will remain in full compliance with their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and for Australia under the Treaty of Rarotonga. They have engaged constructively in response to concerns raised about NPT obligations and the Treaty of Rarotonga. s6(a), s9(2)(h)

13. The IAEA Director General has noted the Agency's satisfaction with the constructive engagement with the AUKUS partners to date. The Director General's second report on AUKUS (released on 31 May) provided an update on the Agency's technical engagement with the AUKUS partners, including work towards developing a safeguards arrangement with Australia under Article 14 of Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, and in-country verification activities in Australia.

Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Programme (PHWP)

Intervention

- Aotearoa New Zealand fully supports the Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Programme. It will enhance disaster readiness and response capability throughout the region.
- We welcome the important contribution the programme will make to lifting warehousing management expertise, promoting environmental sustainability and social inclusion. As well as supporting implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, Boe Declaration and Nadi Declaration.
- We welcome the programme being led by the Pacific Community and thank Australia for the work that went into its design.
- I am pleased to announce that Aotearoa New Zealand will invest \$20 million New Zealand dollars in the programme to support its implementation over the next eight years.

New Zealand's position

- New Zealand strongly supports the Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Programme (PHWP). It is supported by Pacific countries and strongly aligns with New Zealand's humanitarian goals and strategic preferences in the region. It enhances Pacific countries disaster resilience and humanitarian effectiveness, supports Pacific countries desire to lead their own responses and supports our broader geostrategic interests in the Pacific.

Handling advice

- s6(a)

advice closer to the time.

We will provide further

Background

1. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

2. The PHWP aims to enhance Pacific disaster readiness and response capability through ensuring that 14 Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste have robust local warehousing capacity with prepositioned relief supplies which they can distribute within the first 48 hours of a disaster. In addition, the programme will strengthen local warehouse operations expertise, and will support environmental sustainability and social inclusion.

3. It aligns with regional frameworks and initiatives aimed at achieving such self-reliance including:

- The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, which specifically asserts the desire for Pacific leadership in protecting the well-being of Pacific peoples;
- The Boe Declaration on Regional Security and its accompanying Action Plan which aims at increasing regional coordination around pre-positioning relief supplies; and
- The Nadi Declaration in which Pacific countries commit to disaster preparedness including through regional pre-positioning of relief supplies.

4. The PHWP will run for eight years with a total cost of between NZ\$108 - 130 million. Australia is the largest contributor to the programme and the United States (NZ\$8.35 million), France (NZ\$14.6 million) and Germany (NZ\$5.5 million) have also made financial commitments. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

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Background Briefs

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Suva Agreement – Secretary General Election Process

Key Points

- Aotearoa New Zealand welcomes the decision by our Micronesian family to re-join the Pacific Islands Forum. In the face of the dire threat posed by climate change, regional unity has never been more important.
- New Zealand is committed to the successful implementation of the Suva Agreement and has provided NZ\$1.5m to this effect.
- s6(a)

Background

1. The election of the Pacific Island Forum Secretary General is a ‘consensus-based model,’ in which Leaders discuss nominations until consensus is reached on a final candidate.⁴ Where agreement is difficult, the process towards consensus can include voting (as occurred in the appointment of Puna); and/or for Members to agree to withdraw nominations until a final candidate is agreed (as was the case in 2014 when Micronesia withdrew its candidate to allow consensus for Dame Meg Taylor’s appointment).

2. In response to Micronesian concerns at Puna’s appointment, the June 2022 Suva Agreement formally established a system where the Secretary General would rotate amongst Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia, with the next Secretary General to be from Micronesia.⁵ At the same time, Leaders agreed to updated *Procedures Governing the Appointment of the Secretary General* to include regional rotation. Of note, the Procedures are “guided by the principles of the primacy of Leaders’ discretion in the nomination of candidates, and ultimately the selection and appointment of the Secretary General; and transparency, due process, and inclusivity.” The appointment of the Secretary General is to be made by Leaders in Retreat and communicated through their Communique.

3. The Procedures also offer non-binding guidance on presenting candidates to Leaders:

⁴ Under the Agreement Establishing the Pacific Islands Forum, “the Secretary General shall be appointed by the Forum Leaders under such conditions as the Forum Leaders may determine.

⁵ For the purposes of rotation, New Zealand was agreed to be part of Polynesia and Australia part of Melanesia.

- The designated sub-region is responsible for instituting the necessary process for the nomination of its candidate(s).
- The nominating Forum Member Government shall ensure due diligence, integrity, transparency, and good standing in relation to their nomination.
- The Forum Chair may propose for endorsement the establishment of an evaluation/interview panel of Leaders to assess the nominations.
- Candidates may be invited to participate in informal dialogue with Leaders before the Forum begins its selection.

4. Micronesian Leaders agreed, through their February 2023 'Palikir Communique' that the next Secretary General would come from Nauru. At the PIF Special Leaders' Retreat the following week, the Micronesian Leaders, led by Palau, presented former Nauru President Baron Waqa as the sole candidate, s6(a)

5. s6(a)

Leaders included in their Retreat Communique of 24 February 2023:

"In accordance with the Leaders' agreement for the rotation of the position of Secretary General, Leaders appointed Mr Baron Waqa of Nauru as the next Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum in 2024."

6. s6(a) New Zealand officials' priority has been to ensure that the PIF Secretariat remains a resilient organisation that is able to deliver on Members' priorities. This includes agreeing a clear 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan, and supporting candidates with strong governance backgrounds into key Secretariat roles.
s6(a)

7. It is also worth noting that under the Agreement Establishing the Pacific Islands Forum, the Secretary General "shall be appointed for a term of three years and shall be eligible for reappointment." Under the Procedures, the second term has been reduced to 2 years.

8. Other progress towards implementation of the Suva Agreement:

- The new sub-regional office of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat will be located in Kiribati.
- Dr Filimon Manoni (previous Deputy Secretary General of the PIF Secretariat) began his term as Pacific Ocean Commissioner in August.
- The Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner (OPOC) has begun moving from Fiji to Palau. The offices full transition is expected to be complete in June 2024. OPOC is in the process of signing separate Memorandum of Understandings' with Palau (as OPOC's host country) and PIFS (on back-end function support).
- New Zealand has provided NZ\$1.5m, and Australia has committed NZ\$2.5 million to the operationalisation of the Agreement, which together will likely cover costs until 2026. Beyond this, Members have agreed to integrate the ongoing costs into the Secretariat's Annual Budget.

List of Forum Secretaries General

No.	Name	Country	Took office	Left office
Directors of the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation				
1	Mahe Tupouniua	Tonga	November 1972	1980
2	Gabriel Gris	Papua New Guinea	1980	1982 (died in office)
–	John Sheppard (acting)	Australia	1982	January 1983
3	Mahe Tupouniua	Tonga	January 1983	January 1986
4	Henry Naisali	Tuvalu	January 1986	September 1988
Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum				
–	Henry Naisali	Tuvalu	September 1988	January 1992
5	Ieremia Tabai	Kiribati	January 1992	January 1998

6	Noel Levi	Papua New Guinea	February 1998	16 May 2004
7	Greg Urwin	Australia	16 May 2004	2 May 2008 (resigned)
–	Feleti Teo (acting)	Tuvalu	2 May 2008	13 October 2008
8	Tuiloma Neroni Slade	Samoa	13 October 2008	4 December 2014
9	Meg Taylor	Papua New Guinea	4 December 2014	24 May 2021
10	Henry Puna	Cook Islands	24 May 2021	Incumbent

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Labour Mobility

Key Points

- Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to supporting economic and social resilience in the Pacific region through labour mobility. Our efforts are guided by key principles, including aligning labour mobility outcomes to Pacific partners' own aspirations.
- Aotearoa New Zealand recognises that “brain drain” is an area of growing concern for some partners. Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to working alongside countries to ensure worker flows are sustainable and that useful skills and experience are taken back to contribute to local economies.
- Aotearoa New Zealand engages on regional labour mobility issues primarily through the Arrangement on Labour Mobility (ALM) signed alongside PACER Plus. We are committed to supporting the current review of the ALM, and its full implementation.

Background

1. The RSE scheme is Aotearoa New Zealand's primary vehicle for delivering labour mobility opportunities to the Pacific. It is highly valued by Pacific partners, is a critical component of many of Aotearoa New Zealand's bilateral relationships, and supports Aotearoa New Zealand's overall standing and influence in the region. In the 2022 – 2023 season, 16,144 Pacific RSE workers were employed under the scheme.
2. Aotearoa New Zealand is undertaking a review of the RSE scheme. This review is aimed to lift it to a gold standard and maximise the benefits for the Pacific. ^{s6(a)}
3. Labour mobility is currently an area of focus for the region. Interest centres on the impact of labour mobility schemes on domestic workforces, ^{s6(a)} as well as social and worker well-being issues. Consideration of labour mobility issues is increasingly appearing on the agenda of Forum meetings and we expect labour mobility to be raised at the Leaders' meeting in November 2023.
4. Over the past three years, the PIF Secretariat has sought to establish a greater role for itself in regional labour mobility. In February 2020, Forum Trade Ministers directed PIFS to undertake a comprehensive regional assessment of labour mobility schemes and issues in the region. The assessment was completed in 2022. A recommendation was that a Regional Labour Mobility Strategy be developed. A concept note on this Strategy is expected to be tabled at the Forum Trade Ministers' Meeting in

October. The Secretariat has commenced country-level consultations to inform the approach to the strategy, but the appetite for a strategy among Pacific partners is unclear.

5. s6(a)

6. s6(a)

We continue to view the Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting (PLMAM), established under PACER Plus, but inclusive of non-PACER members, as the primary regional meeting on labour mobility. The PPIU has set aside time for the Forum Secretariat to present on their intended Regional Labour Mobility Strategy at the PLMAM. s6(a)

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Climate Finance

Key Points

- New Zealand stands with the Pacific on priority climate finance issues such as loss and damage, improving access to finance, and doubling adaptation finance.
- New Zealand is committed to delivering our share of the collective US \$100 billion goal climate finance goal. We have now programmed most of our NZ\$1.3 billion climate finance commitment for 2022-25, guided by the *International Climate Finance Strategy – Tuia te Waka a Kiwa*.
- Of these funds, NZ\$781m (98 percent) of the NZ\$800m new funding is now allocated to activity design or implementation. This was a big scale-up for us. Over 60% is being delivered to the Pacific and more than 50% to adaptation.
- We support operationalising the new loss and damage fund as soon as possible to be accessible for the Pacific and support national, programmatic approaches. We recognise the importance of addressing slow onset events and non-economic loss and damage in the region.
- Initiatives have sought to work within the regional architecture, supporting agencies mandated to work on climate change. This has included the Pacific Community (SPC), South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and University of South Pacific (USP).

Background

1. Since 2009, developed countries have worked towards collectively mobilising US \$100 billion in climate finance per year for developing countries between 2020 and 2025 in the context of meaningful mitigation action and transparency on implementation. The goal is expected to finally be met in 2023. Parties are currently deliberating on setting a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance at COP29 in 2024.
2. At COP 26, Parties took a decision that urges developed countries to double the provision of adaptation finance from by 2025 above 2019 levels. We support this call and are achieving this doubling within our own climate finance.
3. Access to climate finance can be difficult for the Pacific. The challenges the Pacific faces in accessing finance are multidimensional – relatively complex processes, inconsistently applied informational requirements, and lack of regional knowledge have seen delays in approving and disbursing funding.
4. The PIF Secretariat are developing a regional roadmap to enhance access and management of climate finance for the Forum Economic Ministers meeting in 2024.

5. Loss and damage refers to the negative impacts of climate change that occur despite or beyond efforts to mitigate and adapt. Parties will take decision on the design of new funding arrangements, including a new fund, for addressing loss and damage at COP 28. The Pacific has been advocating the fund to provide programmatic support to national loss and damage strategies (rather than project-by-project).

6. New Zealand supports these Pacific priorities and is also programming NZ \$20 million of climate finance specifically for addressing loss and damage in collaboration with Pacific partners s9(2)(f)(iv)

7. s9(2)(f)(iv) Weather Ready Pacific Programme (WRP) and the Country Flexible Finance Programme (CFF). s9(2)(f)(iv)

8. The WRP is an estimated US\$160m programme designed to strengthen the region's resilience through improved weather and climate information and early warning systems. It has been advocated for by the Pacific at key climate change events and was endorsed by PIF leaders in 2021. The Pacific Meteorological Council will report on progress made at the upcoming leaders forum as highlighted in the recent Namaka Declaration of the Pacific Ministers for Meteorology (August 2023).

9. In October 2022 Aotearoa New Zealand established the CFF Programme as a mechanism to deliver climate finance, capacity support, and technical assistance to Pacific countries, aiming to increase autonomy regarding the use of climate finance. The approach has been welcomed by Pacific governments, both as a mechanism that represents best-practice development, and as a response to calls from Pacific governments for more flexibility and predictability of climate finance. Our objective is for this mechanism to become a template which donors might join or replicate.

10. Aotearoa New Zealand's investments through SPC include NZ\$30m into SPC's integrated Climate Change Flagship; NZ\$5.5m to support establishment of the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science and NZ\$25m to support SPC to implement the Climate Science for Ensuring Pacific Tuna Access initiative.

11. USP provides opportunities to expand Pacific-led research such as partnering with the University of Canterbury to undertake an interdisciplinary assessment of the climate crisis and oceans in the Pacific, giving voice to Pacific indigenous knowledge and response mechanisms and how they can work together with western science. Options for ongoing investment to USP are being explored.

Review of Regional Architecture

Key Points

- A Review of (Pacific) Regional Architecture (RRA) will follow Forum Leaders' approval of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent Implementation Plan in November. The aim of the RRA is to ensure regional mechanisms and structures are fit-for-purpose to deliver on the ambitions of the 2050 Strategy.
- MFAT officials will be closely engaged in the RRA. We see opportunities to streamline and strengthen what is a complex regional ecosystem.

Background

1. A strong regional architecture is important to New Zealand as it allows the Pacific to deliver its own solutions to regional challenges; empowers and strengthens the Pacific voice; and plays an important stabilising role in the contested regional environment. The architecture is not static. For example, the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner (OPOC) was separated from that of the PIF Secretary-General as a result of the 2022 Suva Agreement, to relocate it to Palau as part of enhancing Micronesia's leadership.
2. The RRA, to be undertaken during 2024, will focus on four elements of the regional architecture – political, institutional, governance; and engagements and partnerships.
3. MFAT's preliminary objectives for our involvement in the RRA are to strengthen, define and buffer the regional architecture through:
 - reinforcing the pre-eminence of the Pacific Islands Forum;
 - better security architecture coherence;
 - improving the CROP or regional agency network and functionality; and
 - Improved engagement and coordination by donors/dialogue partners.
4. New Zealand makes a significant investment in the work of the Pacific regional agencies. While it is unclear if the review will suggest structural change such as the merging or dissolution of any agencies, we see opportunities for stronger coordination, streamlined governance, and efficiencies within the intense calendar of regional meetings. It is possible Pacific countries may seek more in-country presence from the regional agencies, and more mandate clarity especially on issues such as oceans and climate change.

Papua⁶

Key Points

- New Zealand continues to support the PIF Leaders' position from 2019: calling for a visit by the United National High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Papua. We are one of more than 80 countries which have called this visit;
- s6(b)(ii)
- s6(a)

Background

1. New Zealand has recognised Indonesian sovereignty over Papua since the United Nations established this status in 1969, following a referendum on self-determination in which 1,025 Papuan leaders selected by Indonesia voted unanimously to remain with Indonesia. This is known as the Act of Free Choice.

2. s6(a)

Human rights and Papua

3. New Zealand has raised concerns about the human rights situation in Papua through the multilateral system over many years, from working-level to Ministerial-level, and will continue to do so. We actively engage through multilateral mechanisms in support of human rights in Papua, including through the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, and the UN's Third Committee in New York.

4. s6(a)

⁶ New Zealand refers to the Indonesian provinces of Central Papua, South Papua, South West Papua, Highlands Papua and West Papua collectively as Papua.

s6(a)

Pacific engagement

5. ULMWP aspirations for MSG membership were again unsuccessful at the MSG Leaders' summit in Port Vila on 22-23 August. Indonesia, an Associate Member, sent a 15 person delegation^{s6(a)}

As such, MSG Leaders proposed a visit to Jakarta to raise human rights issues, and proposed that matters on West Papua should be handled at the Pacific Islands Forum.

6. Papua has featured on the PIF Leaders' agenda 10 times since the year 2000. It was elevated as a standing Leaders agenda item in 2015. At the 2019 Leaders Retreat, Pacific Islands Forum members recognised Indonesia's sovereignty over Papua and raised concerns over the reported escalation in violence. Leaders called for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights mission to be permitted to visit Papua.

Recent developments in Papua

7. The security situation in Papua is volatile. Clashes between Indonesian security forces and armed groups have reportedly seen casualties mounting, including civilian deaths, displacement, destruction of property, and loss of livelihoods. It remains difficult to obtain accurate information about the situation in Papua.

8. On 7 February, the West Papua National Liberation Army (in Bahasa Indonesia abbreviated to TPNPB), the military wing of the Free Papua Movement (OPM), took hostage New Zealand citizen Phillip Mehrtens in the Papuan highlands of Indonesia.

s6(d)

Pacific Trade

Background

1. In the year ended December 2022, the total trade value between Aotearoa New Zealand and Pacific Islands Forum countries (excluding Australia) was over NZ\$3 billion. If treated as a single bloc for trade in total goods and services, the grouping would rank as New Zealand's 9th highest export value destination.

2. The impacts of COVID-19 and rising global inflation have deepened a range of economic and social vulnerabilities. Economic regionalism, the resurgence of Pacific trade (particularly tourism) and the strengthening of regional markets is essential in supporting the region's economic recovery. Trade plays a critical role in driving employment, economic growth, and improving living standards. Although trade has improved post-COVID, there is still a way to go before it returns to pre-pandemic volumes.

3. The Pacific Islands Forum Trade Ministers' Meeting (FTMM) is the core event to determine regional trade priorities, occurring bi-annually. An FTMM was scheduled for August 2023 but recently postponed. The proposed new date is 6 October, which would enable Trade Ministers' decisions to be factored into the Forum Leaders' meeting in November. The Minister for Trade and Export Growth is considering attending the FTMM.

4. The Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus remains a key vehicle to promote regional trade and economic integration. Aotearoa New Zealand has a key interest in broadening the membership of PACER Plus, including to Nauru (that signed but hasn't yet ratified), Fiji and one day, Papua New Guinea. Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia fund a programme to help Pacific parties benefit from PACER Plus. We have an interest in the PACER Plus Implementation Unit working with regional bodies such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, to support the implementation of the Agreement and its initiatives. This helps to ensure support is targeted to Pacific needs and avoids duplicated efforts.

5. As the central organising document on regional trading priorities, Aotearoa New Zealand supports the Pacific Islands Forum's Pacific Aid for Trade Strategy (PAfTS). The Strategy identifies four thematic issues as key intervention areas: e-commerce; deepening Forum markets (including quality infrastructure); connectivity (digital infrastructure, labour mobility and business-to-business links); and the services sector.

6. Aotearoa New Zealand's own Pacific Aid for Trade support contributes to PAfTS outcomes. Our Aid for Trade contribution is guided by our Aid for Trade Framework and

our PACER Plus commitment to “aim to spend 20% of our total Official Development Assistance on Aid for Trade activities in the Pacific”. This Aid for Trade support is mainstreamed across our International Development Cooperation programme and ranges from infrastructure projects to sector specific support for agriculture, tourism and fisheries.

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CHOGM 2024: New Zealand Support to Samoa as Host

Key Points

- Aotearoa New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to support Samoa's hosting of CHOGM, which will be a milestone achievement for Samoan and Pacific diplomacy and a major logistical exercise.
- I am pleased to see that officials on both sides are making good progress at identifying and addressing CHOGM needs, s6(a)
- I look forward to hearing more about Samoa's expectations in terms of policy outcomes for CHOGM and how Aotearoa New Zealand and Pacific partners can assist.

Background

1. Samoa will host CHOGM in October 2024, the first to take place in a Pacific SIDS. This will be a large and complex undertaking. You attended the last CHOGM in 2022 in Rwanda, with more than 5,000 delegates from 54 member countries, including 29 Heads of Government.

2. Samoan Prime Minister Fiamē has indicated that Samoa's CHOGM will focus on resilience, including as an opportunity to showcase Pacific solutions to shared challenges. Samoa is expected to present its policy priorities and host planning progress for CHOGM at the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Meeting during UNGA High Level Week.

3. CHOGM 2024 will also be notable s6(b)(i)

and as the point at which a new Commonwealth Secretary-General will be appointed to replace Baroness Scotland.

New Zealand's Support to Samoa

4. Samoa has asked New Zealand and other development partners to provide a range of support for its CHOGM hosting. s6(a)

- s6(a)

s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

5. s6(a)

6. Samoa will also be receiving (or anticipating) offers of support from other members, including Australia, the UK, and India, as well as from non-Commonwealth countries such as the USA, China and Japan. MFAT officials are working with partners to coordinate and deconflict these offers of assistance.

Port Vila Call and COP 31 Bid

Background

Port Vila Call

1. Vanuatu is leading the Port Vila Call for a Just Transition to a Fossil Fuel Free Pacific. During your visit to Vanuatu last year, you were asked to consider whether New Zealand could become a co-champion of the Call. While commitments in the Port Vila Call go beyond current New Zealand domestic policy – notably commitments to stop permitting fossil fuel exploration and set a production end-date – New Zealand supports the aspiration of the Call.
2. How to take forward the aspiration of the Call in a potential declaration is yet to be discussed at officials' level through Forum processes. s6(a)

3. s6(a)

s6(a)

Australia's bid to host COP31

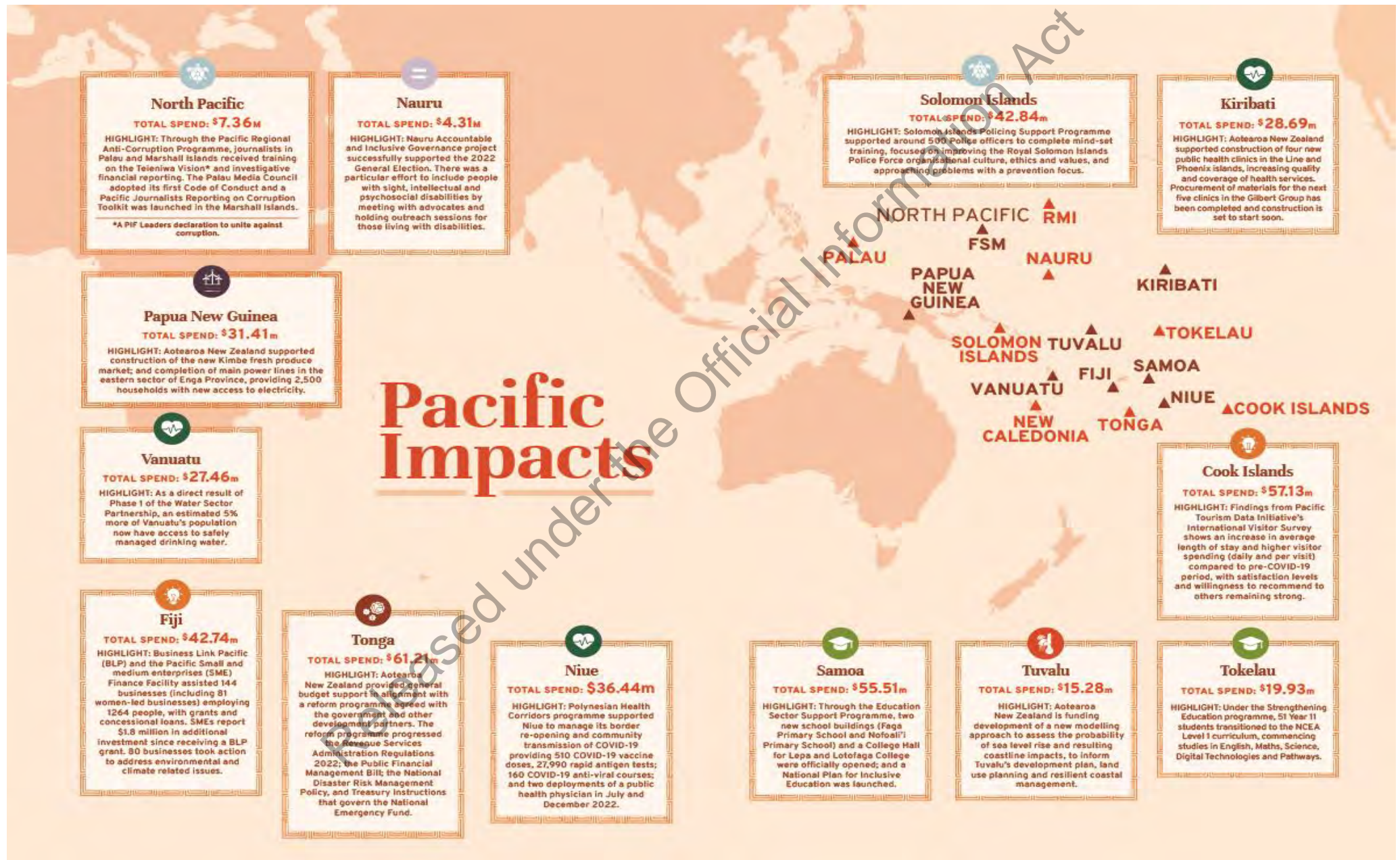
4. PIF Leaders have endorsed Australia's bid to host a 'Pacific COP'. Australia hosted a Pacific Climate Ministerial Roundtable on 23 August in Suva seeking Pacific views of what a 'Pacific COP' should look like. s6(a)

Pacific climate Ministers were strongly supportive and eager to secure the 'once in a generation' opportunity to host a COP in the region.

5. s6(a)

Ministers discussed Pacific diplomacy to support the bid including Pacific delegates jointly lobbying with Australia in the margins of UNGA, and preparing letters of support from PIF. UNGA is the next opportunity to add momentum the bid to secure the 'Pacific COP' for 2026.

Pacific Impact – total New Zealand spend per country



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Biographies

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Bilateral Meeting with Cook Islands Prime Minister **Hon. Mark Brown**

Note: officials will provide you an updated brief closer to the engagement.

Time and date:

Time TBC, Thursday 14 September



Mark Brown was first appointed Prime Minister in September 2020 after a decade as Finance Minister and was re-elected in August 2022 for another four-year term. He holds portfolios for foreign affairs and finance. You last met with Brown in the margins of the Korea-Pacific Leaders' Summit in May 2023, and he has since met with the Governor-General when Her Excellency visited the Cook Islands in June.

Greetings

- **Formal greeting:** Kia orana
- **Thank you:** Meitaki

Ngā Whaingā - Key objectives

- Reaffirm New Zealand's support for Cook Islands' Chiring of the Pacific Islands Forum
- s9(2)(g)(i)
- Share views on engagement with third country partners, s6(a)
- Seek to understand the Prime Minister Brown's efforts to grow the Cook Islands international personality and the priority he places on specific memberships.

Pito kōrero - Talking points

s9(2)(f)(iv)

s9(2)(f)(iv)

Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

- Thank you for your efforts as PIF Chair to give international profile to regional priorities, including last week at ASEAN and the East Asia Summit. Interested in your reflections on the Summit.
- How are your preparations going for Leaders' Week?
- s6(a)

s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii), s6(a), s6(b)(i)

US in the Pacific

- Pleased to hear the Cook Islands intends to establish diplomatic relations with the US at the US-Pacific Summit. What are your hopes for the bilateral relationship?
- We hope the upcoming US Summit will be another positive engagement between Pacific Leaders and President Biden, and we know expectations are high. The Summit is a further demonstration of the US' enduring commitment to our region, and their willingness to spend time with Leaders and talanoa.
- s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii), s7(c)(i)
- Through crowd funding PBP will support a substantial regional humanitarian warehousing programme and cyber security initiatives. We are advocating for PBP support for the SPC's proposed fisheries research vessel, to deliver science-backed fisheries and climate outcomes for the region.
- As we engage in this mechanism, we see the potential in a group of countries with significant resources who want to do things the right way with the Pacific.

- To succeed the PBP will require direction from Pacific countries on scope and thematic focus. I will advocate for this at the upcoming Ministerial meeting on the margins of UNGA.
- If the *Pacific Partnerships for Prosperity (PPFP)* initiative is endorsed, we see there could be an opportunity for the PBP to feed into and support PPFP. How do you envisage PBP could support this in line with the 2050 Strategy?

s6(a)

- s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)
- s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

The Cook Islands' international memberships

- Great to see the growth of the Cook Islands' international persona under your leadership. Interested in an update on your current membership bids. Is the Cook Islands focus still on IMF s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii) memberships?

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

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

If raised – IMF membership:

- How is this bid being received by key members at the IMF (for example the United States)?
- s9(2)(g)(i)

If raised – UN membership:

- It is for the Cook Islands Government and the people of the Cook Islands to determine the next step in its self-determination journey. Aotearoa New Zealand stands ready for these discussions whenever the Cook Islands is ready.
- s9(2)(g)(i)

Papamuri - Background

s9(2)(f)(iv)

1. s9(2)(f)(iv)

Travel to Rarotonga for the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in November

2. In previous years, we have invited other Forum Member delegations to travel by NZDF flight from Aotearoa New Zealand to PIF Leaders' Meeting, alongside our delegation.

3. s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii), s6(a)

4. s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii), s6(a)

Partners in the Blue Pacific

5. s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)

*Te Rāwhiti o te Moana, Polynesia and French Pacific Division
September 2023*

Bilateral Meeting: Tuvalu Minister of Justice, Communications and Foreign Affairs **Hon. Panapasi Nelesone**

Time and date: Thursday 14 September, Time: TBC



Hon. Panapasi Nelesone (*Pah-nah-pah-see Nel-ey-so-ney*) was appointed Minister for Justice, Communications, and Foreign Affairs in early August, after the 28 July resignation of Hon. Simon Kofe.

Minister Nelesone became a Member of Parliament in December 2019 after a career as a public servant, which included time as the Secretary to Government, Secretary for Finance, and Secretary for Foreign Affairs. He is married to Senior Magistrate, Corinna Lafai.

Ngā Whaingā - Key objectives

- **Establish** a relationship with the new Minister, noting your disappointment that ill-health prevented your August visit to Tuvalu.
- **Confirm** the regard in which Aotearoa New Zealand holds its relationship with Tuvalu. Despite distance, the partnership is strong and reflects mutual trust and understanding. We want to ensure we keep strengthening the friendship.
- **Explore** the Minister's sentiments as he takes on his portfolio and exchange thoughts on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Pito kōrero - Talking points

- **Welcome** Minister Nelesone into his role. **Note** your disappointment that you were unable to visit in August, and **convey** regret after all the effort the government and people of Tuvalu invested.

Representational Challenges

- **Welcome** the enhanced in-person engagement we have been able to enjoy since Tuvalu's border reopened – including the presenting of credentials by New Zealand's non-resident High Commissioner.

-
- s6(a)

The International Development Cooperation (IDC) Programme

- **Note** that Aotearoa New Zealand's IDC total aid flow for Tuvalu across the 2021-2023 triennium is NZD 59.2 million, NZD 34.6 million bilaterally and NZD 24.6 million through multi-country programmes.
- **Note** that in your letter to Minister Nelesone, congratulating him into the new role and apologising for being unable to visit Tuvalu, you announced contributions to the Tuvalu Trust Fund (AUD 10 million), health (NZD 2 million) and climate finance (amount to be confirmed).

Pacific Regionalism

- **Reiterate** the importance New Zealand attaches on Pacific regionalism.
- **Welcome** views on the Pacific Islands Forum, and other regional institutions. Exchange on key Aotearoa New Zealand priorities – including the implementation of the Suva Agreement. New Zealand is keen to work with Tuvalu to strengthen our architecture, and ensure it is delivering for all Forum members.
- s6(a)

Climate change cooperation

- **Acknowledge** Tuvalu's ongoing climate change advocacy. Aotearoa New Zealand supports a range of existing and new climate change activities that deliver benefits in Tuvalu.
- **Note** that at COP 27, New Zealand pledged NZD 20 million to loss and damage activities in the Pacific. s9(2)(f)(iv)

Labour Mobility and Immigration

- **Reinforce** Aotearoa New Zealand's commitment to working alongside our Pacific partners to maximise the benefits of the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE)

Scheme and address concerns related to the impact of labour mobility in Tuvalu. Share that the RSE policy review is progressing well.

s6(a)

- s6(a)

Papamuri – Background

Aotearoa New Zealand-funded Climate Change Activities

1. Aotearoa New Zealand supports a range of bilateral and multi-country climate change activities in Tuvalu. Existing activities focus on water security, ecosystem resilience, invasive species management, climate mobility, coastal resilience and sea level rise. Through the core bilateral programme we will co-finance an Asian Development Bank (ADB) project on Funafuti, to provide climate-adapted, resilient and improved drinking water supply, drainage, and sanitation services. Internal ADB approval for this project is expected in early 2024.

Strengthening Pacific Labour Mobility programme

2. Tuvalu is a keen and valued participant in the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

3. s6(a)

Interisland Passenger Ferries

4. The Ministry and Maritime New Zealand has a long history of support to Tuvalu for the safety and maintenance of its two passenger ferries, the *Manu Folau* and the *Nivaga III*. s6(a)

s6(a)

5. In 2022, during border closures, Aotearoa New Zealand funded the NZD 4.2 million repair of the *Manu Folau* in Fiji through IDC funds. The *Nivaga III* is scheduled to arrive in New Zealand for extensive repairs in November.. The estimate for works is NZD 5.4 million and is to be met by the Government of Tuvalu.

6. s6(a)

Te Rāwhiti o te Moana, Polynesia and French Pacific Division
September 2023

Released under the Official Information Act

Pull-aside: Solomon Islands Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Hon **Jeremiah Manele**



Hon Jeremiah Manele [*“ma-nel-ee”*] was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade in 2019. As an MP he represents a constituency in Isabel. Earlier in his career he was Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs and External Trade. Manele is well across his portfolios, and understands Aotearoa New Zealand’s engagement with Solomon Islands. He often focuses in meetings on issues related to economic resilience.

Manele’s last Ministerial engagement with Aotearoa New Zealand was a meeting with DPM Sepuloni during the April 2023 Pacific Mission visit to Solomon Islands. He last met with you when he came to Aotearoa New Zealand in October 2022.

Ngā Whaingā - Key objectives

- This brief has been prepared to support your engagements with Minister Manele
s6(a)
- s6(a)
- s6(a)

Pito kōrero – Key points

- **Formal greeting:** Gudfala moning [Good morning] / Gudfala aftanun [Good afternoon] / Gudfala evening [Good evening]
- **Thank you:** Tagio tumas
- s6(a)
- s6(a)

s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

- s6(a)

Papamuri - Background

1. During his visit to China in July 2023, Solomon Islands Prime Minister Sogavare signed a number of agreements, including a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and policing 'implementation plan'**. s6(a)

2. s6(a)

3. s6(a)

4. s6(a)

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5. s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

Possible pull-aside: Papua New Guinea, Special Envoy for the Prime Minister, **Hon Justin Tkatchenko**

Time and date: TBC



Hon Justin Tkatchenko [*Ta-CHEN-Ko*] was appointed Foreign Minister in August 2022 ^{s6(a)}

Tkatchenko is representing his country as Special Envoy for Prime Minister Marape, who is currently Foreign Minister. Tkatchenko was first elected to Parliament in 2012 and represents the Port Moresby South electorate. He has previously held the housing, sports and APEC portfolios. Tkatchenko was born in Australia and is of Ukrainian heritage. Prior to entering politics he was a TV presenter and landscaper in Port Moresby. His Guest of Government visit to Aotearoa New Zealand in February 2023 was cut short due to Cyclone Gabrielle. Tkatchenko met with Deputy Prime Minister Sepuloni in February this year in the margins of the Pacific Islands Forum Special Leaders' Retreat in Fiji. You last met Minister Tkatchenko during your visit to Papua New Guinea in September 2022.

Ngā Whaingā - Key objectives

- A meeting with Minister Tkatchenko (or an alternative ministerial special envoy from PM Marape) will allow you to reaffirm our close and valued partnership with Papua New Guinea, ^{s6(a)}

Pito kōrero – Key points

- **Welcome** the opportunity to meet with Minister Tkatchenko after you were unable to meet with him during his February 2023 visit to Aotearoa New Zealand due to Cyclone Gabrielle.
- **Extend** your thoughts to those impacted by the eruption of Mt Bagana and flooding in Southern Bougainville. Note that New Zealand has provided support to the Mt Bagana response, including a relief supply flight and emergency response experts on the ground.
- **Welcome** an update on the discussions at the recent Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Summit, ^{s6(a)}

s6(a)

- **Welcome** our close cooperation with Papua New Guinea across a number of sectors, including foreign policy training. Note that we welcome participation of a cohort of new and early in career Papua New Guinea foreign affairs officials in the regional Diplomatic Training pilot that begins in Aotearoa New Zealand in October this year.
- **Note** that we value our close cooperation with Papua New Guinea in the security sector, including through our strong defence partnership and support to the Bougainville Police Service. Note our interest in deepening our security partnership including in non-traditional areas such as cyber security and climate change.
- s6(a)
- s6(a)

Other points if time

- **Welcome** Papua New Guinea's hosting of the World Indigenous Business Forum in Port Moresby from 24-26 October this year. **Note** it is positive to see Papua New Guinea taking a leadership role in Indigenous commerce. Aotearoa New Zealand looks forward to strengthening indigenous business partnerships and sharing experiences at the Forum.
- **Acknowledge** Papua New Guinea's interest in growing foreign direct investment, including in agriculture. **Note** we support increased engagement by Papua New Guinea with New Zealand businesses to discuss trade and economic opportunities, including through the New Zealand – Papua New Guinea Business Council. We also support ongoing reforms that will contribute to a more predictable environment for the private sector.
- **Welcome** the opportunity to share our thinking to support work on both the Foreign Policy White Paper and Defence White Paper. We were pleased to share the MFAT 2023 Strategic Assessment and the Aotearoa New Zealand Defence Policy and Strategy with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Department of Defence respectively.

Background

1. Papua New Guinea has expanded its formal security partnerships over the last year, including signing new Status of Forces agreements with France and the United Kingdom, a border agreement with Indonesia and a Defence Cooperation Agreement with the US, and is in the process of negotiating a bilateral security agreement with Australia.

2. s6(a)

Released under the Official Information Act

Australia – Minister of Foreign Affairs **Penny Wong**



Penny Wong is the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Leader of the Government in the Senate. She had previously served as Shadow Foreign Minister for six years. Wong was born in Sabah, Malaysia and moved to Adelaide with her family in 1976, when she was eight. Wong was first elected to the Senate in 2001. She has served as the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Minister for Finance and Deregulation, Leader of the Government in the Senate, and Leader of the Opposition in the Senate (she was the first woman to hold either of these roles). Wong lives in Adelaide with her partner and their two daughters. In her spare time she enjoys cooking, shopping at the Central market and from time to time enjoying South Australian wine. You last formally met with Minister Wong at the Foreign Ministers Consultations in December 2022.

Federated States of Micronesia – Mr **Ricky Cantero**

FSM will be represented at Deputy Secretary Level (Ricky Cantero). This is equivalent in the NZ system to a Chief Executive/Secretary. FSM President Simina has nominated Mr Lorin Roberts as the Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Mr Roberts is expected to be confirmed by Congress on 12 September but will not travel to the Forum.

Fiji – Prime Minister Hon. **Sitiveni Rabuka**



Sitiveni Rabuka [*“ram-BOOK-ah”*] became Fiji’s Prime Minister for the second time in December 2022 (his previous term ran 1992-99). Rabuka’s three-way coalition, between his People’s Alliance Party and two smaller parties, has a slim majority in Fiji’s Parliament. He also holds the ministerial portfolios of Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises, and Veterans Affairs. A former senior military leader, he instigated Fiji’s 1987 coup, for which he has publicly repented. ^{s6(a)}

A former Fiji military officer, he has spent time at Waiouru Military Camp, ^{s9(2)(a)}

He is also a former top-level sportsman. You met with Prime Minister Rabuka during his June 2023 visit to Aotearoa New Zealand.

French Polynesia

French Polynesia will be represented by an official.

Kiribati - President **Taneti Maamau**



Taneti Maamau [*Tar-ness Maam-ow*] is the President and Foreign Minister of Kiribati [*Kiri-bas*]. He has served as President since 2016, winning re-election in June 2020. President Maamau looks well set to win another term in the upcoming 2024 election.

An economist, Maamau worked as a civil servant for 23 years, including as Secretary for Finance. He is a former deacon of the Kiribati Uniting Church.

President Maamau's last substantive engagement with you was via phone call in April 2021.

Nauru – HE President **Russ Kun**



Russ Kun is the 16th President of Nauru, elected unopposed on 28 September 2022. He holds the ministerial portfolio for Foreign Affairs and Trade, among many others (such as Public Service, and Justice & Border Control). Kun was first elected to Parliament in 2013. Prior to his presidency, Kun was Deputy Minister for Finance, Nauru Ports, Tourism, National Heritage and Museum. He is an active MP in his constituency of Ubenide, advocating for education and youth. Kun started his career as a computer teacher in Aiwo Primary School, before becoming a manager for an internet provider then Director of the Department of Commerce, Industry & Environment. s9(2)(a)

You have never met

President Kun.

New Caledonia

New Caledonia will be represented by an official.

Niue – Premier **Dalton Tagelagi** (TBC)



Dalton Tagelagi [“Tangh-eh-langh-ee”] is a sixth-term Member of Niue’s Assembly, representing Niue’s most populous village constituency of Alofi South. He served as a Member Assisting a Minister and as a Cabinet Minister under Sir Toke Talagi (his cousin). He was elected Premier in June 2020 and re-elected in May 2023. You met him on your visit to Niue in August 2022. He visited New Zealand in February 2023 where he met with Prime Minister Hipkins. Tagelagi holds the New Zealand relationship in high regard. He attended Penrose High School in Auckland, has lived in both New Zealand and Australia and represented Niue at lawn bowls and golf.

Palau – Minister of State Hon. **Gustav Aitaro**



Gustav Aitaro [“eye-tah-row”] was appointed Minister of State in September 2021. Prior to this appointment he held the role of Special Assistant to the Office of the President on Foreign Matters. Minister Aitaro worked in Palau’s Ministry of State for close to two decades and served as a Koror State Legislator from 2006-2010. He was the Political Affairs Advisor for Japan’s Embassy in Palau from 2018-2019. Former Associate Foreign Affairs Minister, Aupito Sio met with Minister Aitaro during the 7th Our Ocean Conference hosted by Palau in April last year. You have not met with Minister Aitaro.

Papua New Guinea ^{s6(a)}



Elias Wohengu [“War-hair-ngoo”] was appointed Secretary of Papua New Guinea’s Department of Foreign Affairs in April 2022 after having previously acted in the role since November 2020. Wohengu has served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d’Affaires at Papua New Guinea’s Embassy in the US. He is from East Sepik Province. Secretary Wohengu met with PM Hipkins during his visit to Papua New Guinea in May this year for the US-Pacific Summit. You previously met with Wohengu during your visit to Port Moresby in September last year.

Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI)

RMI will be represented by Ambassador Junior Aini.

Samoa – Prime Minister **Afioga Fiamē Naomi Mata’afa**



Fiamē is the first female Prime Minister of Samoa. She is the daughter of Samoa’s first Prime Minister Fiamē Mata’afa Faumuina Mulinu’u II. Fiamē is a strong advocate of women’s development, including in leadership. She is a staunch defender of Pacific regionalism and uses her platform to reaffirm the salience of climate change as the key security risk facing the Pacific. She was first elected to represent the constituency of Lotofaga in 1985 and has held the seat since then. She was a member of the HRPP until 2020 and served as a Minister from 1991–2020. Fiamē attended Samuel Marsden Collegiate School in Wellington and Victoria University of Wellington.

You last met with Prime Minister Fiamē during your official visit to Samoa in April 2023.

Tonga – Minister for Foreign Affairs **Fekitamoeloa ‘Utoikamanu**



Minister for Foreign Affairs, **Fekitamoeloa ‘Utoikamanu** [Address as: Minister “*ugh-toh-ee-car-mah-nu*”] is Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Tourism. She has been a senior public servant for more than two decades, including several head of mission postings. Minister ‘Utoikamanu graduated from the University of Auckland with a Masters of Commerce in Economics in 1983. You last spoke to her in the margins of the PIF.

Tuvalu - Minister for Justice, Communications, and Foreign Affairs Hon. **Panapasi Nelesoni**



Panapasi Nelesoni was appointed Minister for Justice, Communications, and Foreign Affairs earlier this month after the 28 July resignation of Simon Kofe.

Minister Nelesoni became a Member of Parliament in December 2019 after a career as a public servant, which included time as the Secretary to Government, Secretary for Finance, and Secretary for Foreign Affairs. He is married to Senior Magistrate, Corinna Lafai.

Vanuatu – Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade **Marc Ati**



Hon Marc Ati [*“ah-tee”*] was re-appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade on 4 September 2023 following a successful motion of no confidence against former Prime Minister Kalsakau. Ati previously held the role April 2020 – October 2022.

Before entering Parliament, Ati was a successful businessman involved in logistics and agriculture. s6(a)

s6(a)

The new Kilman Government has promised to review Vanuatu’s foreign policy to see how Vanuatu can “better benefit from all its foreign relations.”

You last met Ati at the Pacific Islands Forum in July 2022.

Pacific Islands Forum - Secretary General **Henry Puna**



Henry Puna was Prime Minister of Cook Islands from November 2010 until October 2020. He stood down as Prime Minister in June 2020 to contest the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General role, taking up a three year term in May 2021. In May 2024, former Nauru President Baron Waqa will take over the role, as decided by Leaders in February 2023.

Puna was educated at the University of Auckland and worked as a lawyer before entering politics.

Pacific Ocean Commissioner - Dr. **Filimon Manoni**



Filimon Manoni assumed the role of Pacific Ocean Commissioner (POC) and head of the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner (OPOC), in August 2023. His appointment as Standalone POC was a direct result of the Suva Agreement. Prior to taking up this role, Dr Manoni was the Deputy Secretary General at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) (appointed in May, 2021). He previously held the position of International Legal Adviser at PIFS, providing advice and analysis on oceans governance, nuclear issues and other regional issues covered by the Forum Secretariat. Before joining PIFS, Dr Manoni was the Attorney General for the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, providing both legal and policy analysis on regional and international matters, including treaty negotiations and agreements. He has also served as a Legal Adviser at the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency.

Tokelau – Ulu o Tokelau **Kelihiano Kalolo**



Kelihiano Kalolo is currently Ulu o Tokelau (titular head) for the period March 2023 to March 2024. As Faipule (elected leader) of Atafu atoll, he carries the national ministerial portfolios for education and climate change over the General Fono's current three-year term (2023-2026). As the current Ulu, he also carries the portfolios for foreign affairs, justice and police, for a period of 12 months. Faipule Kalolo has been elected to the General Fono four times - in 2011, 2017, 2020 and 2023, previously serving as Ulu in 2012, 2019 and 2021. Prior to his political career, he gained a Master of Education from Auckland University, was Director of Education in the Tokelau Public Service, and in 2012 was Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific

Event Brief – Partners in the Blue Pacific Ministerial Meeting

Ngā whakaritenga - Event details

Time and date: 4:00pm – 5:15pm, Friday 22 September

Ngā Whāinga – Objectives

- To underscore our ongoing support for the Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP), given its potential to bring energy, new funding, and coordination to support Pacific priorities;
- With other PBP Ministers, demonstrate progress to deliver against regional priorities (particularly humanitarian warehousing and cyber security); and,
- Ensure that Pacific Ministers have space to share their advice on areas of future focus for the PBP.

Ngā whaikōrero – Speaking notes

- Aotearoa New Zealand welcomes constructive engagement with, and increased coordination among, international partners with an interest in supporting the Pacific. It is in this spirit that we engaged with the Partners in the Blue Pacific from the outset.
- PBP is an informal, inclusive, transparent grouping with a common commitment to the values of transparency, accountability, support for sovereignty, stronger Pacific regionalism, and partnership with the Pacific.
- Partners recognise and support the centrality of the Pacific Islands Forum as the pre-eminent regional organisation in the Pacific. One of the goals of the initiative is to ensure Pacific regionalism and support for the Pacific Islands Forum is shared across Partner governments.
- As both a Pacific country ourselves and a member of the Partners in the Blue Pacific, our priority is to ensure that the mechanism supports the region to achieve the goals we have set ourselves in our 2050 Strategy.
- Ongoing consultation and engagement with our fellow Pacific Islands Forum members will be central to the grouping's success. We welcome the commitment of all our partners to continue to listen to the advice of the Pacific, including Pacific regional institutions, on how the initiative can work most effectively.

- We have been pleased to partner in the Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Programme and see progress on cyber security initiatives for the region. These are long-standing priorities, shared across the region, and demonstrate the impact of countries coming together to support the Pacific, under the guidance of Pacific institutions and countries.
- And we know there is much more that can be done. We welcome the opportunity we have today to provide PBP members a steer for the next year of prioritised initiatives. For Aotearoa New Zealand for example, we see opportunities for partners to provide additional support in the climate, science, and oceans space, in service of our region's identified priorities.

Kaupapataka – Agenda

- The event is scheduled for 75 minutes
- US Secretary of State Blinken will open the event, welcome guests, and deliver opening remarks.
- Australian Foreign Minister Wong, as incoming PBP Chair, will then speak (TBC) followed by a Pacific Minister (TBC), and then PIF Secretary-General Puna.
- The floor will be then be opened up to feedback from Pacific countries and PBP partners. An order of interventions will be provided.
- Secretary of State Blinken will close the event, summarising discussions and noting areas of follow up.

Hunga pāpāho - Media

- A joint press release from the Partners of the Blue Pacific members is being prepared in advance of the Ministerial Meeting. A draft will be shared for clearance in due course. It is expected that each PBP member release the statement following the event.
- Media will be invited to the opening of the meeting.

Social media: ^{s9(2)(g)(i)} to sit down with Pacific and Partners in the Blue Pacific Ministers to discuss how we can continue to deliver for our region, together.

Manuhiri – Principal Guests

- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will host the meeting. Ministers from the Partners in the Blue Pacific (US, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Canada, German, Japan, Korea, and UK) have been invited, as have Pacific countries and the Secretary General of the Pacific Island Forum.

- The US issued invitations on 19 September ^{s6(a)}
. We have not yet received a list of attendees.

New Zealand delegation attendees

- Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Bede Corry
- Nevada Halbert

Papamuri – Background

1. The Partners in the Blue Pacific initiative is an informal coordination mechanism led by the US and including Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, the UK, Japan, Germany, Canada, and South Korea. The lines of effort for the initiative are framed around Pacific priorities as identified in the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* adopted by Forum Leaders in July 2022.

2. Over the last year, PBP members have focused on delivering tangible projects to demonstrate to Pacific countries what the initiative can achieve. Members are now in a position to announce investments in humanitarian warehousing and cyber security.
^{s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)}

^{s9(2)(f)(iv)}

And, other work streams in IUU fishing, climate financing, and maritime domain awareness have demonstrated some good outcomes with regard to coordination between PBP members.

3. ^{s6(a)}

4. ^{s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)}

5. The US continues to seek feedback from Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, and Pacific partners on the PBP, ^{s6(a)}

s6(a) it is making an effort to work through the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat; to align the priorities for coordinated engagement with those of the region; and taking steps to better consult and engage the mechanism with Pacific countries and the PIF itself.

Pacific Regional Division
September 2023

Released under the Official Information Act

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Subject: FORMAL MESSAGE: PARTNERS IN THE BLUE PACIFIC: MINISTERIAL MEETING IN NEW YORK
Date: Saturday, 30 September 2023 8:36:38 am
Attachments: [Joint Statement on the Partners in the Blue Pacific Foreign Ministers Meeting.docx](#)

[RESTRICTED]

RĀPOPOTO – SUMMARY

US Secretary of State Tony Blinken convened a Ministerial meeting of the Partners in the Blue Pacific, together with Pacific Island Ministers, in New York on 22 September. s6(a)

HOHENGA – ACTION

None – for information

PŪRONGO – REPORT

A Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP) Ministerial Meeting was held in New York on 22 September at which PBP members engaged with Pacific counterparts (including the Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum and the Director-General of the SPC). The meeting was chaired by **US Secretary of State Blinken**, supported by Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific Dan Kritenbrink, US Ambassador to Australia Caroline Kennedy, and a senior official from USAID. New Zealand was represented by **Foreign Minister Mahuta** and there was Minister-level participation from PBP members **Australia** (Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy Jenny MacAllister); **ROK** (Foreign Minister Park); and the **UK** (Foreign Office Minister Lord Ahmad). **Germany**, **Canada** and **Japan** attended at senior official level. Pacific countries were represented at the political level by **Fiji** (PM Rabuka); **Palau** (President Whipps); **PNG** (Deputy PM Rosso); **Marshall Islands** (Education Minister), and **Kiribati** (a Minister whose title and name were inaudible). **Vanuatu** and **French Polynesia** attended at senior official level, as did PBP Observers **France**, **India** and the **EU** (the Special Envoy for Small Islands States).

2 s6(a), s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii), s7(b)(iii)

3 The agreed sequence of the meeting was to entail statements from the US as PBP Chair,

Australia as incoming Chair, followed by Pacific representatives, then other PBP members and Observers. On the day this slate didn't quite hold given requests by various countries to speak earlier in order to depart for other commitments. Nonetheless we are reporting on the meeting by "cohort" rather than by following the actual sequence of events.

4 s6(a)

5 s6(a)

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

6 s6(a)

7 s6(a)

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8 s6(a)

9 s6(a), s6(b)(i)

10 A Joint Statement on the meeting was issued by PBP Members at the conclusion of the meeting, and is attached.

TĀKUPU – COMMENT

11 s6(a)

Mutu – Ends

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