

Proactive Release

Date: 4 September 2023

The following Cabinet paper has been proactively released by the Minister of Climate Change

Title	Reference
Report of the Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee: Period Ended 21 July 2023	CAB-23-MIN-0317
Update to Aotearoa New Zealand's Approach to International Climate Change Negotiations	ENV-23-MIN-0035
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Key to redaction codes:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(ba): to protect the supply of confidential information by another party; and
- 9(2)(j): to avoid prejudice to negotiations.



Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Update to Aotearoa New Zealand's Approach to International Climate Change Negotiations

Portfolio Climate Change

On 20 July 2023, the Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee:

- 1 **noted** that New Zealand's approach to international climate change negotiations was last substantively updated in 2019; since then the need for a global course correction to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement has become more urgent, negotiations now have a greater focus on implementation, and the role of climate change Conferences of the Parties has evolved;
- 2 **noted** that in April 2023, the Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee agreed to public consultation on an updated mandate to guide New Zealand's approach to international climate negotiations which ran from 13 April to 10 May [ENV-23-MIN-0010];
- 3 **agreed** that paragraphs 4 to 49 below form the mandate for New Zealand's approach to COP and related international fora and replace all previous versions of the climate change negotiation mandate;

Mandate: approach to international climate change negotiations

Aotearoa New Zealand's objectives and priorities

- 4 **agreed** that Aotearoa New Zealand's overarching objectives for engagement on international climate change are to seek effective global action; promote Pacific resilience and an empowered Pacific transition and support New Zealand's domestic transition;
- 5 **agreed** that New Zealand will approach international climate change issues with a view to reflecting the government's commitment to the Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi partnership with Māori;
- 6 **noted** that Tokelau participates at COP as part of the New Zealand delegation and is included in the scope this mandate, and that New Zealand works closely with Tokelau to support its meaningful participation in the UNFCCC process;
- 7 **agreed** to affirm the whanaungatanga of New Zealand and the Pacific, recognising that climate change is the single greatest existential threat to the peoples of the Pacific;

- 8 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for outcomes that are accessible and responsive to the needs of the Pacific, and support the interests of Pacific countries, to the extent possible consistent with New Zealand's national interest;
- 9 **agreed** that New Zealand will place a high priority on advocating for Pacific climate priorities agreed as a region through the Pacific Islands Forum implementation plan for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent;
- 10 **agreed** that the New Zealand will seek to amplify Pacific voices in international climate-related fora;

Global ambition and the goals of the Paris Agreement

- 11 **agreed** to affirm that New Zealand will constructively seek outcomes that deliver on the goals of the Paris Agreement – limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees, fostering climate resilience, and making financial flows consistent with low-emissions and climate resilient development;
- 12 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for countries and non-state actors to align their climate action with limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels with limited or no overshoot, and for urgent action to reduce emissions as much as possible in this decade, particularly action by major emitters, recognising that action this decade will largely determine whether warming is limited to 1.5 degrees;
- 13 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for climate action consistent with the best available science, and will support the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which sets out the best available science and represents the most robust and comprehensive assessment of climate science to date;
- 14 **agreed** that New Zealand will promote the consistency of NDCs with 1.5 degree pathways (while mindful of equity), and expansion of coverage of NDCs to include all sectors and gases;
- 15 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for the global phase-out of fossil fuels;
- 16 **agreed** that New Zealand will support clarity in distinguishing between emissions removals (e.g. direct air capture), and emissions reductions (e.g. carbon capture and storage technologies)
- 17 **agreed** that New Zealand will support an aspiration for a just transition to a fossil fuel free Pacific;
- 18 **agreed** that New Zealand will seek adaptation outcomes that encourage flexible and locally relevant solutions, the use of risk assessment and adaptation planning, and outcomes that focus on the most vulnerable;
- 19 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for all financial flows to be aligned with low emissions and climate resilient development, reflecting that achieving this goal includes measures such as emissions pricing, the removal of environmentally harmful subsidies, climate-related disclosures, and is broader than climate finance only;

New Zealand-specific considerations

- 20 **agreed** that New Zealand's approach to climate issues internationally should acknowledge the importance of indigenous rights, knowledge and values in addressing climate change;

- 21 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for greater global action to reduce emissions and build resilience in the agricultural sector, including through promoting a focus on outcome and circumstance appropriate action, and increasing the focus on agriculture within Nationally Determined Contributions;
- 22 **agreed** that New Zealand will seek to drive research, development and innovation, in low emissions agriculture approaches that could be used by in support of our domestic transition, including through existing avenues such as the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases;
- 23 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for climate action that fosters positive, and avoids negative, impacts on biodiversity; consistent with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;
- 24 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for the global uptake of nature-positive actions, and for recognition of the leadership of Indigenous Peoples as kaitiaki of biodiversity, in the implementation of nature-based solutions;
- 25 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for Parties, when taking action to address climate change, to uphold their international human rights obligations and protect and promote universal human rights, including but not limited to the rights of women and girls in all their diversity, of Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, children and young people, and other marginalised identities; and will advocate for their meaningful inclusion in the process;
- 26 **agreed** that New Zealand will seek outcomes that ensure international cooperation to reduce emissions has environmental integrity, is transparent, and contributes to limiting warming to 1.5 degrees and closing the ambition gap;
- 27 **agreed** that New Zealand will seek outcomes that are consistent with the spirit of the Paris Agreement and associated decisions by Parties, and resist developments that undermine the Agreement's applicability to all countries or its principles of environmental integrity and progressive ambition;
- 28 **agreed** that New Zealand will seek effective and efficient outcomes, including avoiding duplication of existing multilateral processes;
- 29 **agreed** that New Zealand will, where and when appropriate, seek to close or rationalise Kyoto Protocol institutions and processes that do not serve a function under the Paris Agreement;

Guidance on specific negotiating items / thematic areas

- 30 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for the new collective quantified goal on climate finance to: be contributed to by all Parties in a position to do so; include both public and private finance; and that financial contributions to this goal are nationally determined;
- 31 **agreed** that New Zealand will seek increased global ambition, action, and collaboration on sustainable forest management, including increased cooperation to address deforestation and forest degradation;
- 32 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for best-practice, nationally appropriate forestry removals and nature-based solutions for mitigation and adaptation;

- 33 **agreed** that New Zealand will promote gender-responsive climate policy in implementing the Paris Agreement, and promote equity and equal rights for persons of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics;
- 34 **agreed** that New Zealand will seek to minimise the negative impacts and maximise the positive benefits of climate policies, both within and between countries;
- 35 **agreed** that New Zealand will seek outcomes on the impacts of climate change response measures that are not an impediment to climate action, and that discussions of the negative impacts of the climate response are contextualised by the negative impacts of climate change itself;
- 36 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for Indigenous Peoples having access to the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform regardless of their country's involvement, recognising the value of the Platform for Indigenous Peoples to exchange experience, best practice and knowledge, and build their capacity to engage in the UN Climate Change process;
- 37 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for work on just transition as an enabler of climate action and to accelerate the transition to a low emissions future;
- 38 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate that people, communities and workers at the forefront of the global transition are not left behind;
- 39 **agreed** that New Zealand will advocate for arrangements for addressing loss and damage in vulnerable developing countries (including the Santiago Network, and a fund and funding arrangements), that are accessible and responsive to the needs of the Pacific;
- 40 **agreed** New Zealand will seek outcomes on oceans that complement and amplify action, and which are mutually reinforcing with other multilateral and regional processes (such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea);
- 41 **agreed** that New Zealand will seek outcomes that promote and enhance the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries;
- 42 **agreed** that New Zealand will seek to promote transparency and accountability regarding Party and stakeholder climate action, and seek to maintain and strengthen a robust and efficient transparency framework for Parties;

Who New Zealand works with, and how

- 43 **agreed** that New Zealand align and actively partners with progressive countries and groups, including both developed and developing countries;
- 44 **noted** New Zealand will resist outcomes that are inconsistent with this mandate;

Powers to act

Delegations within bounds of Cabinet guidance

- 45 **authorised** the Minister for Climate Change and, where appropriate, relevant portfolio Minister/s to take any final decisions on issues in the negotiations;

Delegations outside bounds of Cabinet guidance

- 46 **noted**, should the negotiations move outside the bounds of existing Cabinet decisions, any final decisions with regards to New Zealand's international climate change position would, where possible, be considered by Cabinet;
- 47 **noted** that where there are fast-moving developments in the negotiations and time constraints, it may not be possible to convene Cabinet to take final decisions;
- 48 **authorised** the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Finance and the Minister for Climate Change to take together any final decision on climate-related financial support for developing countries;
- 49 **authorised** the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, the Minister for Climate Change, and relevant portfolio Minister/s, to take together any final decisions on other issues in the negotiations;

Next steps

- 50 **directed** officials to consider ways to enhance engagement with Māori on international climate change issues, and report back to the Minister of Climate Change.

Rebecca Davies
Committee Secretary

Present:

Hon Kiri Allan
Hon Damien O'Connor
Hon David Parker (Chair)
Hon Peeni Henare
Hon Barbara Edmonds
Hon Willow-Jean Prime
Hon Rachel Brooking

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Officials Committee for ENV