

In Confidence

Office of the Minister for Pacific Peoples

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Aupito William Sio

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to the Cook Islands from 14-17 March 2019 to attend the Climate Change Development and Resilience Roundtable hosted by the Cook Islands Government from 14-15 March 2019.

Report

- 1 The Climate Change Development and Resilience Roundtable meeting was held across two days and was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Mark Brown. The aims of the event were to share their new Climate Change Country Programme 2018-2030 which outlines their priorities for climate change; present a range of concept notes that support the delivery of the Country Programme and for donors to signal support for areas of potential cooperation.
- 2 Participants at the Roundtable included current and potential future development partners of the Cook Islands including donor countries Australia, China and Japan, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Green Climate Fund (GCF) and key partners the Pacific Community (SPC), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- 3 The primary objectives of my attendance and participation at the Roundtable were threefold: to demonstrate New Zealand's support for the Cook Islands particularly as they graduate from Overseas Development Assistance status at the end of 2019, demonstrate our commitment to climate change action, and to gain a better understanding of their priorities.
- 4 I delivered New Zealand's keynote speech during the opening session on Thursday 14 March. I acknowledged the Cook Islands' Government for their leadership in setting itself ambitious targets under the Paris Agreement and for holding the Roundtable as it was an important step in ensuring that there were concrete plans and means to achieving their goals. I outlined New Zealand's focus on partnering with the Cook Islands' particularly in the areas of adapting to the impacts of climate change such as improving water and food security, strengthening ecosystems and improving disaster resilience.
- 5 Prior to the Roundtable, the Cook Islands Government had distributed reading material to all participants including their comprehensive Country Programme that was developed with assistance from GCF. I believe the intentions were for donor countries and key partners to have identified specific areas where they would be keen to invest/partner up however, during the plenary, the majority of statements delivered by each donor country and key partners outlined what each was doing in the climate change space and it was mainly through bilateral meetings and informal discussions with officials that we were able to get more detailed information on key partners areas of interest.

