

# Proactive Release

Date: 5 September 2022

The following Cabinet paper and related Cabinet minute have been proactively released by the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control

Title	Reference
<b><i>Minute of Decision – Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Phil Twyford</i></b>	CAB-21-MIN-0273
<b><i>Report to Cabinet: Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control travel to The Hague, The Netherlands and Vienna, Austria, 15-25 June 2022</i></b>	

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the OIA that would apply have been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Key to OIA redaction codes:

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



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Phil Twyford

**Portfolio**                      **Disarmament and Arms Control**

On 25 July 2022, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Phil Twyford under CAB-22-SUB-0273 on his travel, from 15 to 25 June 2022, to:

- 1        The Hague, the Netherlands for bilateral meetings;
- 2        Vienna, Austria to attend the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons First Meeting of States Parties.

Rachel Hayward  
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively released by the  
Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control

**In Confidence**

Office of the Minister for Disarmament & Arms Control  
Chair, Cabinet

**Report to Cabinet: Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control travel to The Hague, The Netherlands and Vienna, Austria, 15-25 June 2022**

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to The Hague, The Netherlands and Vienna, Austria, from 15-25 June 2022. The primary purpose of the travel was to attend and demonstrate support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) First Meeting of States Parties (MSP1) in Vienna, and a preceding conference on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. I also delivered a keynote address at a civil society event being hosted by the Nobel Prize winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), provided remarks at the Parliamentarians for the TPNW Conference, and met with a number of key international organisations.

**Report**

- 2 The MSP1 delivered a range of significant outcomes both for New Zealand, and for international disarmament efforts more broadly. These included:
  - What has been described as the strongest ever multilateral statement against nuclear weapons: the Vienna Declaration - Our Commitment to a World Free of Nuclear Weapons
  - Agreeing a detailed Action Plan that will guide states parties' work during the intersessional period. New Zealand has been nominated co-chair on issues relating to implementation of the Treaty's nuclear elimination provisions
  - Presenting a strong Pacific voice, which gave prominence to the region's experience of nuclear testing and underscored the very practical difference the Treaty can make to victims.
- 3 New Zealand's contribution to the success of this meeting was significant, and demonstrated the high regard in which we are held for our work internationally in

disarmament and arms control. The delegation I led undertook a full programme of bilateral meetings, and engaged widely across the agenda to ensure credible and important outcomes were achieved. Our Disarmament Ambassador was nominated Friend of the President, Ambassador Alexander Kmentt of Austria, and led negotiations to nominate workstream leads for the period between this meeting and the Second Meeting of States Parties (MSP2), to be held in November 2023.

- 4 Participation at the meeting exceeded our expectations. It was particularly pleasing that seven out of eleven States Parties from the Pacific were represented (the Cook Islands, Fiji - including Prime Minister Bainimarama, Kiribati, Palau, Samoa, Timor-Leste and New Zealand). In addition, several nuclear umbrella States also joined the meeting as observer States (including Australia, Belgium, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden). A wide array of civil society organisations, including the International Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), contributed to an inclusive and dynamic meeting.
- 5 Dominant themes of the meeting were well-summarised by President Kmentt: the world was at a “threshold moment,” with nuclear risks higher than ever; we were witnessing disconcerting rhetoric about the use of nuclear weapons; and the world was on the cusp of a new nuclear arms race. President Kmentt emphasised that virtually all indicators were trending in the wrong direction; the TPNW was an exception to this, and it was important to strengthen and implement it.
- 6 The TPNW is the first international framework to address the humanitarian and environmental impacts of nuclear weapons use and testing. New Zealand has made significant contributions to this work stream over the past twelve months. Moving ahead, Kiribati and Kazakhstan will now facilitate a working group on the same topic. Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine also featured heavily in discussions, with a particular focus on condemning Russia’s threat to use nuclear weapons (referred to as “blatant nuclear blackmail” by Austria’s Foreign Minister).
- 7 Following its recent change in government, Australia made the welcome decision to send an observer to the conference just a few days before it began. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

s6(a)

s6(a)

Looking forward, we will continue to use our interactions with Australia to present our views on the Treaty’s merits.

- 8 One of the key decisions taken at the meeting was to establish the deadlines by which time a nuclear weapon possessing or hosting state must have completed its disarmament procedures. This was set at ten years, with provision for the granting of extensions as appropriate. Nuclear hosting states such as Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey would have 90 days to safely remove nuclear weapons from their territory after joining. A Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) was established to provide states parties access to relevant scientific and technical advice. Once active, the Group will advise on issues relating to implementation of the treaty, victim assistance, environmental remediation, elimination of nuclear weapons, verification of elimination, and more.
- 9 Attending the meeting, and associated events, at Ministerial level was an important way to demonstrate our strong support for the TPNW, including as a member of the core group of countries that had driven negotiations forward. Along with the specific outcomes reached, it was an important opportunity to promote our interests in strengthening multilateral institutions at what is a difficult time for the rules-based international order.
- 10 Attending MSP1 also allowed me to hold bilateral meetings with a wide range of ministers, heads of delegation, civil society representatives, think tanks, and international organisations based in Vienna, including hosting a dinner for the Pacific delegations attending MSP1 – a valuable opportunity to build relationships and further demonstrate New Zealand's commitment to the region. I was also able to spend two days prior to the meeting in another European disarmament capital, the Hague, engaging with a similar range of interlocutors.
- 11 Across both locations, key meetings included:
  - Prime Minister of Fiji, Frank Bainimarama
  - Foreign Minister of Austria, Alexander Schallenberg
  - Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, Mukhtar Tilerberdi
  - Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste, Adalijiza Magno
  - Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi
  - Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO), Robert Floyd

- Deputy Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Odette Melono
- Secretary General of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, Joseph Hackett
- Political Director of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands, Marcel de Vink
- Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Beatrice Fihn
- Civil Society Representatives from the Pacific
- OPCW Ambassadors
- Chatham House representative Patricia Lewis.

12 Topics traversed during these discussions included Pacific nuclear issues, prospects and strategy for the upcoming Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, Ukraine, nuclear weapons free zones, chemical weapons, Iran, North Korea, Syria, test ban treaty ratifications, autonomous weapons systems, and the recent political declaration on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

13 In the Hague, I was also able to visit the OPCW's new ChemTech centre, to which we have provided financial support. The centre will enhance the global verification system, with inspections becoming both safer and more numerous. Whilst at the OPCW I also announced further funding we have provided to the organisation. This funding will support the provision of assistance to Ukraine in the event of a chemical weapons incident, and assist with upgrading the physical security at the premises of the OPCW.

14 <sup>s6(a)</sup>

### **Proactive release**

15 This paper will be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO(18)4 on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website. Proactive release is subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information act (1982).

**Recommendations**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement.

Hon Phil Twyford

**Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control**

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Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control