

28 March 2018

### **The Pacific Reset and Papua New Guinea's perspective**

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Deputy Prime Minister  
Foreign Affairs

### **Introductory remarks at the address by Foreign Minister Rimbink Pato New Zealand Institute of International Affairs,**

28 March 2018

### **The Pacific Reset and PNG's perspective**

Good afternoon. Sir Doug Kidd, Maty Nikkhou-O'Brien, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your introduction.

It is a pleasure to meet again Papua New Guinea Foreign Minister Rimbink Pato.

We had an opportunity to meet together on the margins of the APEC meeting in Vietnam early this year, and have just concluded a very useful bilateral discussion in the Beehive.

First, let me put on the record the New Zealand Government's condolences to the people of PNG for the loss of life and for all those affected by the recent earthquake.

It was a significant event with the rescue efforts compounded by the challenging terrain and remoteness of the Highlands region.

A time of crisis is a time when neighbours help.

New Zealand assisted in the early stages of the rescue efforts, particularly with the deployment of its C-130 aircraft carrying relief supplies.

We will continue to stand with Papua New Guinea during the recovery and reconstruction effort.

Earlier this month our government announced that New Zealand would provide an additional three million dollars in earthquake relief to Papua New Guinea.

This includes up to \$1.5 million for New Zealand NGOs working with local partners to deliver ongoing emergency relief and early recovery activities in the Highlands.

There is much work to be done with your recovery and we wish you well  
As mentioned, Minister Pato and I have just concluded a productive bilateral meeting here today.

It was timely a discussion.

It has been an opportunity to deepen New Zealand's relationship with the largest and most strategically located country in the Pacific.

From our perspective Papua New Guinea is unique geographically. It is the only Pacific Island country that has land border with Asia and sits at a critical strategic crossroads between the two regions.

As you may well be aware, this comes while New Zealand is seeking to reset its engagement with the region.

There are a number of reasons why we have adopted a Pacific reset.

New Zealand is a Pacific country, linked to the Pacific by history, geography, common interests, politics, and demographics.

Pacific prosperity and security matters to us here in New Zealand as much as it matters in Papua New Guinea.

Our region is also challenged by an array of social and environmental problems which must be understood and confronted.

As well, the Pacific is an increasingly viewed as a contested strategic space by a range of external actors.

All these dynamics, and a change to New Zealand's relative influence, motivates us to adopt a re-energised approach.

New Zealand has five principles to how it will chart its regional diplomacy.

The five principles are:

- exhibiting **friendship**, including honesty, empathy, trust and respect;
- demonstrating a depth of **understanding** of the Pacific, drawing on the expertise in both the region and New Zealand
- striving for solutions of **mutual benefit**
- pursuing **collective ambition** with Pacific partners and external actors
- and seeking **sustainability** by focusing on the region's long-term goals

**APEC**

And just finally, before I pass the floor to Minister Pato.

Papua New Guinea's hosting of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation this year should not be undervalued. It is without doubt a significant event for the region and PNG. It is also a daunting task.

In conclusion, New Zealand is committed to working with our Papua New Guinea colleagues to help achieve a successful meeting.

We are working in partnership with PNG to provide a range of assistance, including for security, police training, and protocol.

And we intend to build on Papua New Guinea's groundwork of a 'Pacific version' of APEC when New Zealand hosts in 2021.

Thank you.