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VOL. 7

J—PAPERS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

IN THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY
QUEEN ELIZABETH THE SECOND

Being the Fifty-first
Parliament of New Zealand

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Government Response to

Report of the Education and Science Committee

on their

Inquiry into engaging parents in the education of their children

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252
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Introduction

The Government welcomes the report of the Education and Science Select Committee’s inquiry into parents’ engagement in the education of their children entitled Engaging Parents in the Education of their Children (the Report).

The Government has carefully considered the Report and makes this response in accordance with Standing Order 252.

The Government is committed to ensuring that every child gets the best possible education so they can succeed in life. Children are learning all the time from birth and across a range of contexts in their lives. Maximising education outcomes for all children and young people requires input from everyone involved in children’s learning, including parents, caregivers, family, whānau, education providers, community groups, iwi, business and government service providers.

The Government fully endorses the Committee’s view that children are better equipped to achieve their full potential when they are encouraged and supported through their education journey by their parents, whānau and caregivers.¹

The importance of parent, family and whānau engagement in children’s learning is well documented in national and international research. The significance of parental engagement in children’s learning is twofold:

1. for most children, their parents are the one constant factor throughout their journey through the education system, from early learning to tertiary education
2. evidence indicates that, overall, parents have the greatest effect on their children’s achievement (Biddulph et al., 2003).

Children’s learning and development is influenced by their access to learning experiences and by what their parents know and expect of children’s learning and development:

“...parents need to hold high aspirations and expectations for their children, and schools need to work in partnership with parents to make their expectations appropriately high and challenging, and then work in partnership with children and the home to realize, and even surpass, these expectations” (Hattie, 2009).

Parents play a role:

- as educators when teaching their children at home
- as facilitators of learning, supporting their children by engaging with teachers and schools
- through the expectations they hold of their child to participate in and achieve at school
- by supporting their young people to achieve qualifications and make decisions about their subjects, vocational pathway and career.

¹ The word parent is used to include all primary caregivers in a child’s life. This includes grandparents, Child, Youth and Family caregivers, whānau carers and other adults who act in a parent-type role for children.
A parent’s role will change as their child grows. As illustrated in figure one below, in the early years, parents are the primary provider of educational experiences. Once children attend an early childhood education (ECE) service and school, parents have a role in continuing informal learning, such as by participating in cultural activities, as well as supporting more formal learning through partnerships with teachers.

Figure 1 – New Zealand’s education system

Also as illustrated in figure one, the education system formalises a large part of children’s learning. The education system focuses learning on what is needed to participate effectively in our society and economy. As the main steward of the education system, the Ministry of Education aims to ensure that everyone involved in children’s learning works together to support participation and achievement in education.

The Government knows that education can make a critical contribution to reducing the prevalence and impacts of negative social issues such as poverty and crime. Consequently, the Government has focused on achieving better results in education through three Better Public Service targets:

- increasing participation in ECE
- increasing the proportion of 18 year olds with NCEA level 2 or an equivalent qualification
- increasing the proportion of 25 to 34-year-olds with advanced trade qualifications, diplomas and degrees (at level 4 or above).

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2 Te Whāriki is the Ministry of Education’s framework for teaching and learning in early childhood education.
We also know that a number of complex issues such as poverty and family violence can impact on children’s learning and the ability of parents, families and whānau to provide support for children at school. Many of these issues are currently being addressed via a range of government initiatives included in the Children’s Action Plan. The Children’s Action Plan supports a unified focus on child safety across the children’s workforce. A safe environment is fundamental to children’s engagement in learning. Budget 2014 provided additional assistance to families through a range of initiatives such as extending paid parental leave, increasing parental tax credits, providing free General Practitioner visits and prescriptions for children aged under 13, increasing ECE funding, providing additional funding for support vulnerable children, and providing additional funding for Whānau Ora navigators. These initiatives will support families so they can be better placed to support their children’s learning.

The Government notes that the majority of the Select Committee’s recommendations focus on improving the way education providers within the formal education system engage with parents. Without going beyond the scope of the Select Committee inquiry, the Government notes the important role social and health service providers (outside the education system) have in supporting parents to educate their children, particularly from the prenatal period through to children’s enrolment in ECE.

Services such as Well Child Tamariki Ora talk with parents about the importance of early learning in the home and choices in ECE, and promote enrolment in these services. The B4 School Check is a free nationwide initiative which aims to identify and address any health, behavioural, social, or developmental concerns such as a hearing problem or communication difficulty which could affect a child’s ability to get the most benefit from school.

The Ahuru Mowai and Born to Learn curriculum used in the Parents As First Teachers programme and Family Start have a strong emphasis on early literacy and reading with babies and young children in the family home. Using this curriculum, PAFT and Family Start are contributing to building children’s literacy from a young age.

In line with the Select Committee’s recommendations, the remainder of this Government Response focuses on the formal education system, including ECE, primary and secondary schooling and tertiary education.

Education increases the range of life choices and opportunities open to New Zealanders. Better educated people are more likely to be healthy, prosperous and satisfied with their lives. Higher educational achievement leads to higher employment rates and higher average income levels, as well as increased productivity and a more competitive economy. The more qualified people are, the more likely they are to be in paid work and to earn more. A range of social indicators are positively associated with higher levels of education, including levels of volunteering and civic engagement.

Learners are at the centre of the education system. Our education system must meet the learning needs of all New Zealanders, based on their culture and identity. As New Zealand changes, these needs are becoming more diverse. Success in education is critical for Māori to succeed as Māori. We need to ensure that the education system supports and sustains Māori language, identity and culture, and enables Māori to succeed in te ao Māori, New Zealand, and the world.
Achievement is influenced by quality teaching, parents and educators having high expectations regarding performance, school leadership, and relationships between parents and educators that focus on working together to support children’s learning.

The Government is of the view that encouraging and supporting parents to be involved in their children’s education is core business for education providers, from the early years in ECE through to when young people are making decisions about their vocational pathway. Enabling parents to be engaged in their children’s learning reflects the evidence about best practice in delivering quality education.

New Zealand has a highly devolved education system. This means that education providers have a high degree of autonomy and a range of ways to achieve success for learners. Increasing collaboration is key to sharing best practice on raising achievement and spreading the benefits of educator, parent and community expertise to help all the educators in a community. Sharing best practice is a feature of some of the Select Committee’s recommendations.

The Select Committee made 18 recommendations on engaging parents in their children’s education. This Government Response is structured to reflect the chapter themes and order of recommendations made in the Select Committee’s report.

In summary, Government is of the view that the majority of the Committee’s recommendations align with existing or planned work programmes. The Government Response highlights the range of parent focused activities that are occurring across government agencies and services in the education, health and social sectors. The Government accepts all 18 of the Committee’s recommendations.
Enabling and encouraging parental engagement

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Government amend the fourth National Education Goal to reflect the importance of engaging parents and families throughout the education sector.

Response: Accept

The Government agrees that the importance of the education sector engaging with parents and families should be reflected in regulation and will consider whether the National Education Goals (NEGs) are the most appropriate legislative instrument.

As the Select Committee has identified, effective partnerships between parents and educators can improve the wellbeing, behaviour and achievement of children right into adulthood, not only in the early years. Evidence shows that maximising education outcomes for all children and young people requires significant input from everyone involved in children’s learning for at least the first 15 years of the child’s life. In contrast, the fourth NEG as currently worded focuses on the early years of education: A sound foundation in the early years for future learning and achievement through programmes which include support for parents in their vital role as their children’s first teachers.

The Government is considering how effectively the Education Act 1989 (the Act) supports the current goals and objectives of the education system, including the mechanisms currently in place to convey the Government’s priorities. Legislative instruments such as the NEGs will fall within the scope of such consideration, addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Government review the support available to parent-led early childhood education services in light of some of the concerns raised during this inquiry.

Response: Accept

It is a Government priority that children and their families and whānau are able to access quality ECE. The Government’s Better Public Service goals will see 98% of children engaged in early learning before they go to school by 2016. Government agrees that a range of different types of early learning is important to meet the range of needs and aspirations of diverse parents and children. Government will continue to support parent-led ECE services and will consider the support available to parent-led services in the context of a wider examination of ECE funding arrangements.
Early engagement and life-long learning

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the Government support evidence-based cross-departmental initiatives to encourage parental engagement in education.

Response: Accept

The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government is committed to using the best available evidence to guide decision making in policy development, funding and service delivery. In the education sector three publications are frequently referred to with respect to encouraging parental engagement in education:

- **Best Evidence Synthesis on the Complexity of Community and Family Influences on Children's Achievement in New Zealand** (Biddulph et al., for the Ministry of Education, 2003).
- **School Leadership and Student Outcomes Best Evidence Synthesis** (Robinson et al., for the Ministry of Education).
- **Partners in Learning: Schools’ engagement with parents, whānau and communities, Parents’ Voices and Good Practice** (Education Review Office, 2008).

The Ministry of Education’s Research Division undertakes and commissions a variety of research and evaluation projects to actively develop the evidence base. The work programme of the Research Division is extensive and a full list of projects can be found at [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/research/52109](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/research/52109).

The recent establishment of the Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (SuPERU) within the Families Commission will further support this goal of evidence-based policy and initiative development. SuPERU promotes the use of evidence in the social sector so that better decisions can be made about funding, policies or services. SuPERU works across the social sector to:

- promote informed debate on key social issues for New Zealand, its families and whānau, and increase awareness about what works
- grow the quality, relevance and quantity of evidence in priority areas
- facilitate the use of evidence by sharing it and supporting its use in decision making.

Government agrees that there is significant benefit in joining-up across government agencies to develop and support cross-sector initiatives. For example, Whānau Ora supports parents and whānau to set and achieve their own goals for a healthy lifestyle. Regional reporting shows that education is amongst the most popular goals for whānau involved in Whānau Ora, and education success a significant area of improvement.

Pasifika PowerUP is an engagement programme for Pasifika students, parents, families and communities delivered by the Ministries of Education and Pacific Island Affairs. The PowerUP programme recognises the strength and influence of Pasifika parents, families and communities which work to leverage their collective power for educational success.
Examples of evidence-based cross-sector initiatives to encourage parental engagement in education that the Government currently supports include:

- in ECE – Family Start, Home Instruction Programme for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), Incredible Years Parent programme, Triple P, Parents As First Teachers (PAFT), Whānau Toko I Te Ora (WTITO), Well Child Tamariki Ora
- for parents with primary school aged children – ManaiaKalani, Social Workers in Schools, Incredible Years Parent programme
- for parents with secondary school aged young people – teen parent services, NCEA and the Whānau.

The Government notes the important role social and health service providers (outside the education system) have in supporting parents to educate their children, particularly from the prenatal period through to children’s enrolment in ECE.

Appendix one provides a summary of evidence-based initiatives (cross-sectoral and education-led) that seek to engage parents in their children’s education.

An example of cross-sectoral research is Growing Up in New Zealand, a study managed by the Families Commission/SuPERU. The study is supported by a steering group which includes the Ministries of Education, Health and Social Development. Growing Up in New Zealand is a contemporary longitudinal study tracking the development of approximately 7,000 New Zealand children and their families from before birth until they are young adults. The study is designed to provide unique information about what shapes children’s early development and how interventions might be targeted at the earliest opportunity to give every New Zealand child the best start in life. Examining parental engagement with their children and with institutions such as ECE services and schools is a critical aspect of this study.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the Government review the coverage and take-up of the Early Reading Together and Reading Together programmes, with a view to possible expansion of the Early Reading Together programme.

Response: Accept

Government supports this recommendation.

Reading Together®

The Reading Together® programme helps parents to support the language and literacy learning of five year olds (who are reading beyond Emergent/Magenta level of Ready-to-Read) to 15 year olds.

The Reading Together® programme has repeatedly shown significant and lasting improvements for children at a relatively low cost. Reading Together® provides an average of a year’s acceleration to children’s reading levels within just 12 weeks, and reading levels keep improving after the programme is completed.

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3 The Early Reading Together® and Reading Together® programmes are both the intellectual property and a registered trademark of The Biddulph Group.
The original evidence for the effectiveness of Reading Together® comes from a randomised, controlled, within and between school trial that showed a 2.25 effect size for reading level gains and a 0.44 effect size for gains on a standardised test (Biddulph, 1983). A later replicated evaluation in a decile 1 primary school showed a 0.68 effect size not only for targeted children but also their siblings aged 6-13 years (Tuck, 2006).

In July 2011, the Ministry of Education established the Reading Together Project. It aims to support all decile 1 to 3 English medium schools with students in any of years 1 to 8 to implement the Reading Together® programme. In October 2014, 803 schools were participating in the Reading Together Project, consisting of 521 (91.4%) of the target decile 1 to 3 schools, 232 (56.6%) of the target decile 4 to 5 schools and an additional 50 decile 6+ schools. The Reading Together Project continues until June 2016.

Data collected through the Ministry’s Reading Together Project continues to affirm the success of Reading Together® in empowering parents to help learning at home and develop effective relationships with teachers.

In Budget 2014, an additional $2.370 million was provided over four years to expand the Reading Together Project to include all decile 4 and up to half of all decile 5 English medium schools for students in years 1 to 8 and to support sustainability of the programme at all project schools. The Ministry of Education is continuing to consolidate this scaled-up programme and ensure its sustainability by supporting schools to effectively implement the programme. A particular focus is to strengthen outcomes for Māori and Pasifika learners, learners with special education needs and learners from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Early Reading Together®

The Early Reading Together® programme aims to help parents support the language and literacy learning of babies to five and six year olds. It is implemented by early childhood educators and junior school teachers in collaboration with community librarians.

This programme has been identified by the OECD (Taguma et al., 2012)4 as being designed specifically to support children and parents from diverse backgrounds and is effective at increasing the competence of parents assisting their children at home with reading.

Evidence suggests5 that introducing Early Reading Together® to ECE services through partnerships between early learning services and schools has the potential to create many beneficial outcomes including:

- enabling parents to help their children more effectively at home with spin-off effects for other siblings and other areas of learning
- improving children’s oral language and early literacy skills
- developing partnerships between ECE services and schools focused on children’s learning and whānau support (potentially supporting Communities of Learning)

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5 Refer to http://www.readingtogether.net.nz
• providing opportunities for ECE services and schools to better understand a child’s parents and whānau and their aspirations
• supporting better transitions for children and their whānau from early learning to school through shared understandings, practices and working partnerships.

The Ministry of Education is committed to continuing to build the capacity and capability of the ECE sector to effectively implement the Early Reading Together® programme with families, in association with partner schools.
Clear roles and responsibilities

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the Government encourage education providers to consider outreach in their community to be part of their core business.

Response: Accept

The Government agrees that reaching out to parents, families and the wider community is core business for education providers. It is an essential part of ensuring that every child can participate in education and achieve their potential.

The Ministry of Education’s ECE curriculum framework *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early Childhood Curriculum* requires ECE services to be culturally responsive to the needs of children, parents and whānau in their communities. As the needs of communities can differ, ECE services make their own decisions about how they outreach, and the ways in which they respond to local needs.

The Ministry of Education’s ECE Participation Programme provides support to ECE providers to ensure they are responsive to the needs of local communities and non-participating children. The Early Learning Taskforce supports achievement of the Better Public Service targets for ECE. The Taskforce has established Community Action Groups (CAGs) to utilise community knowledge and understanding to increase children’s participation in ECE services. CAGs have been established in areas of low ECE participation, for example in Kaitaia, Meremere, Wairoa, and Porirua. CAGs reach children who are not participating in ECE, identify solutions in terms of what works best for them and develop action plans for increasing early learning.

All state schools, state-integrated schools and kura are governed by a Board of Trustees whose role is to make sure that the school is run in the best interests of every student to ensure that every child succeeds. Trustees are elected by the parent community, staff members and, in the case of schools with students above year 9, the students.

Boards of Trustees consult with staff, students and the community to:

- set the strategic direction of the school
- oversee the management of staff, property, finances, curriculum and administration
- monitor achievement and let parents know how the school is progressing against its annual targets.

The Government encourages schools to work closely with communities through productive partnerships that generate shared action, outcomes and solutions. One way is through *Hautū – Māori cultural responsiveness self review tool for Boards of Trustees*. *Hautū* offers Boards of Trustees guidance and tools to strengthen their engagement with Māori stakeholders, planning and decision making, and their focus on Māori student achievement. *Hautū* moves Boards of Trustees through a process of critical reflection to action, gathering and applying evidence to set firm goals and targets to lift Māori student achievement in collaboration with parents, families and whānau. An equivalent tool, *Tātaiako*, is available for teachers and principals.
Boards of Trustees have an important role to play in leading and implementing this culture shift, as they are the main link between the community and the school. The Education Act 1989 requires school Boards of Trustees not only to serve the parents of the children at their school, but also to meet the needs and aspirations of their local community.

The Ministry of Education notes that work is underway to better support the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) to increase professional training and support for Boards. This includes improved support for Boards to act on their obligations towards student progress and achievement, particularly for Māori, Pasifika and students with special needs.

The service agreement between the Ministry of Education and NZSTA includes a requirement that Boards can demonstrate that the views of their communities are regularly sought and that the community’s understanding of the Board’s role and accountabilities are increased. NZSTA have a schedule of training events for Boards of Trustees, including the course Representation – R201 which has community consultation as a key part of the workshop.

The Government believes that communities can be supported to develop flexible outreach models that develop to meet unique community needs. Two excellent examples of this are the Manaiakilani programme and Mutukaroa.

The Manaiakilani programme is achieving significant improvement in student achievement for 12 mostly decile 1A schools in the Auckland suburbs of Glen Innes, Point England and Panmure where 95% of students are Māori and Pasifika. The programme provides each student with a netbook and wireless internet access at home and school. Students and their whānau are able to access their learning anywhere, anytime and at any pace. The programme is accelerating educational results and realising the potential for enhanced employment and life outcomes for students. Formed in 2012, the Manaiakalani Education Trust draws on resources from the government, philanthropy and national and local businesses to ensure the programme’s long term sustainability.

Mutukaroa is a home school learning partnership developed by Sylvia Park school in Auckland. It seeks to accelerate learning progress and achievement for students in years 1, 2 and 3 by fostering the active engagement of parents and whānau in learning partnerships, and providing them with tools and knowledge so they can support the development of core skills in their children. Children are assessed when they start school then again at 5 ½ years, six and seven years to track progress. An Early Learning Support Advisor reviews the assessment data, discusses any issues with the teacher and agrees the next steps for learning. Next steps complement what teachers are doing in the classroom. Parents and whānau are invited to a 45 minute to one hour meeting with the Early Learning Support Advisor to discuss the assessment data and learning targets. Sessions take place at a time and location that meets the needs of the parent, for example at home, a cafe, at school or at the parent's workplace. The Early Learning Support Advisor offers parents and whānau structured and specific advice about how to support their child’s learning. Parents and whānau receive literacy and numeracy tools to use at home. The Early Learning Support Advisor establishes 10 week targets co-constructed with parents and whānau. These targets become the basis for the next review session.

Under the guidance of Sylvia Park school, Mutukaroa was successfully trialled in 10 schools in Auckland in 2013. In 2014, the programme has been expanded into 44
schools around New Zealand. After three years of consistent improvement, the Ministry of Education is now supporting the extension of Mutukaroa into a further 50 schools in 2015.

Within the Ministry of Education, Special Education provides another example of working proactively with parents. Special Education provides funding, services and support for 31,000 children with special education needs and their parents every year. Partnership with parents is a cornerstone of the delivery of special education services. Parents are always encouraged to be involved in the planning and setting of learning goals collaboratively with teachers and the Special Education team. Parents and caregivers have a key role to play in supporting their children to reach their learning goals. Special Education asks parents to provide feedback through a national client satisfaction survey (CSS) and a district-level service survey. The CSS survey gives parents an opportunity to suggest any improvements that would be helpful for them. The district-level service survey provides an opportunity for parents and educators to reflect on the service they received when a case is closed.

The Social Sector Trials is another initiative that has provided an opportunity to ‘test’ the effectiveness of a community-led approach to achieve new and innovative ways of tackling social issues for targeted groups. The Trials are led by a mandated individual or non-government organisation who brings together local knowledge, including education providers, with resources to develop local responses to specific issues, thereby increasing community responsibility and ownership of solutions.

The approach of the education-specific Trial in Rotorua, Excel Rotorua, places a strong focus on the education sector to work better together, and alongside parents, whānau and communities. The Ministry of Education is supporting the development of an evaluation framework for Excel Rotorua. The Government is considering a more permanent approach to community-led delivery of social services through the Social Sector Integration work programme.

In January 2014 the Prime Minister announced the Government was investing an extra $359 million in funding over the next four years, and $155 million a year after that, to help raise student achievement through a new initiative Investing in Educational Success (IES). Research has shown that, within schools, the quality of teaching has the biggest influence on student achievement. The IES initiative is intended to raise achievement by:

- improving teaching practice across New Zealand
- enabling teachers to work together and benefit from each other’s knowledge and experience
- helping all children benefit from the skills and knowledge of great teachers from across a group of schools
- helping schools work together so it is easier for children and their parents to move through the education system.

IES will also provide new career opportunities for teachers and principals.

One of the ways IES will achieve its goals is through the establishment of Communities of Schools. Groups of schools and kura will come together into ‘communities’ of around 10 schools which will represent the pathway for students from primary to secondary school. It is expected that parents, families and whānau will be actively engaged in identifying and addressing achievement challenges in
their Communities of Schools. This will result in parents and communities being better connected and working with their schools to achieve shared goals.

Alongside the new Communities of Schools initiative, there are 49 Learning and Change Networks (LCNs) established in 28 secondary schools, 302 primary schools, 12 composite and 13 special schools, and five early childhood centres across New Zealand. LCNs enable a group of schools, kura and communities to work together to grow capability to accelerate learner achievement in a culturally responsive way. LNCs are creating innovative solutions to raise achievement for priority learners through partnerships between priority learners, their parents and whānau, teachers and school/kura leaders. The LCN initiative genuinely engages parents as partners in their children’s learning. Parents are involved in identifying the change priorities of the network. The initiative includes local facilitators who are aware of the community culture. There are two LCNs in a Māori medium setting with an iwi mandate.

Parents have the greatest overall influence on students’ career choices. Actively engaging parents in the process of decision making can ensure that they are equipped to provide the best vocational advice to their children.

Careers New Zealand has developed Career Education Benchmarks to provide a common understanding among education providers of effective career development processes and practice. The suite of Benchmarks for years 7 and 8, secondary and tertiary students aim to improve the quality and consistency of career education throughout New Zealand. Parents and whānau are identified in the Benchmarks as key influencers of young people as they make choices about their career pathway. The Benchmarks specify elements of best practice for education providers developing effective approaches for engaging parents. In particular, the Benchmarks address the importance of engaging parents, family and whānau in effective transitions of young people to, through and from secondary school. Careers New Zealand is encouraging a system-wide adoption of the Career Education Benchmarks which would support this recommendation.

The Department of Corrections provides education initiatives for offenders in custody and the community. Initiatives relevant to engaging parents in their children’s education include Mother and Babies Units which are available in the three women’s prisons in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch for children under two years old. The Units aim to assist mothers to develop and maintain a functional relationship with their child and reduce the likelihood of the mother re-offending. The Units provide wraparound services to support the mother in her parenting, including ECE and parenting programmes. Feeding and bonding facilities are also available to remand and high security women prisoners. Story-book Dads is a project aiming to increase literacy amongst male prisoners and develop their parenting skills. A DVD is created of the prisoner reading a book to their child. They also write a card and workbook that gets sent to their child. To date, over 90% of those who have completed the programme have made literacy gains. The programme is also aiming to strengthen family and whānau relationships while the men are in prison.

**Recommendation 6**

We recommend that the Government consider effective funding models to fund outreach in the community.

**Response: Accept**
The Government needs to maintain an affordable education system that provides all New Zealanders with the competencies and skills they need to participate in society and the economy. Funding systems must support teachers and educators to deliver results and enable all young people to reach their full potential. The existing system is made up of complex layers of entitlements that are not adequately directed to education outcomes for children and young people. Amongst other things, the current system restricts educational innovation, including collaboration between groups of education providers to share resources, and with parents, whānau and communities, for the benefit of children.

As noted in the response to recommendation 5, as Communities of Schools are established, they will provide an effective mechanism for education providers to work together with parents and the community to identify what is required across their wider community to deliver educational success. Funding will also be available to support innovative teacher practice to improve achievement.

The Social Sector Trials are funded by three of the partnering agencies, the Ministries of Social Development, Education and Health. These three agencies and the New Zealand Police provide in-kind resourcing. The intent of the model is to support increased decision making at the local level and strengthen coordination at every level of government and within the community. The Government’s Social Sector Integration work programme is considering how this funding model and other similar models, can inform a permanent approach to community-led delivery of social services.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the Government ensure that the Ministry of Education develop best practice guidelines for education providers to use when developing effective approaches to engaging parents.

Response: Accept

In 2014, ERO is undertaking a national evaluation Collaborative working relationships with parents and whānau in all schools during terms 3 and 4. The findings of this evaluation will inform policy makers and contribute to the development of best practice indicators to guide future review officer judgements and inform school practices. When this evaluation is published it will provide the education sector with clearer expectations about successful parental engagement and will help to build schools’ capability to successfully engage with their school communities.

The evaluation is underpinned by the Best Evidence Synthesis findings that high quality school and family connections can have large positive effects on achievement and social outcomes for students, especially for those who are at risk of not achieving.

As discussed in the response to recommendation 5, Careers New Zealand has developed benchmarks which aim to improve the quality and consistency of career education. The Benchmarks specify elements of best practice for education providers developing effective approaches for engaging parents.

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Recommendation 8

We recommend that the Government ensure that teacher training and professional development includes training on effective methods of parental engagement.

Response: Accept

Teacher training

Since 2008, teacher education institutions have been required to demonstrate to the New Zealand Teachers Council how their programmes will equip graduates to meet the Graduating Teacher Standards in order to obtain approval or re-approval as accredited programmes. The Graduating Teacher Standards describe what a teacher at the point of graduation from an initial teacher education programme will know, understand and be able to do, and the dispositions they will have that are likely to make them effective teachers.

The Graduating Teacher Standards ensure that there is an agreed standard that graduating teachers have to meet. These standards apply to all graduates whether they will be teaching in a school or early childhood centre, including all Māori medium settings. The Graduating Teacher Standards are included as part of the Council's definition of 'satisfactorily trained to teach'.

When ITE students are on practicum in schools or ECE centres, their associate teachers are required to assess students on competencies that are aligned to the Graduating Teacher Standards. Practicum provides real-life opportunities to learn how to teach and to put theory and research into practice. It also provides opportunities to observe skilled professionals working.

Key to learning how to work effectively with families and whānau is the framing of the Graduating Teacher Standards within the Treaty of Waitangi.

Two of the Graduating Teacher Standards focus on the capability to work effectively with family and whānau:

Standard Six: Graduating Teachers develop positive relationships with learners and the members of learning communities

a. recognise how differing values and beliefs may impact on learners and their learning
b. have the knowledge and dispositions to work effectively with colleagues, parents/caregivers, families/whānau and communities
c. build effective relationships with their learners
d. promote a learning culture which engages diverse learners effectively
e. demonstrate respect for te reo Māori me ngā tikanga-a-iwi in their practice.

Standard Seven: Graduating Teachers are committed members of the profession

a. uphold the New Zealand Teachers Council Code of Ethics/Ngā Tikanga Matatika
b. have knowledge and understanding of the ethical, professional and legal responsibilities of teachers
c. work cooperatively with those who share responsibility for the learning and wellbeing of learners
d. are able to articulate and justify an emerging personal, professional philosophy of teaching and learning.

**Professional development**

School leaders and teachers who get results promote teamwork and high quality teaching, based on relationships with students, their parents and whānau, and other professionals. The Government considers that better and clearer career pathways are needed so that more teachers can make the most of their abilities and continue their development, progressing to more challenging and senior positions, within the classroom as well as into school leadership roles. Investments in professional learning and development (PLD) should be driven off student achievement information, student needs and school needs. They should reflect evidence about how PLD can best raise student achievement. There should be more use of learning on the job through everyday practice and collaborating with colleagues. Sharing of expertise should be encouraged and promoted.

In December 2013, the Minister of Education tasked the Ministry of Education with establishing a Professional Learning and Development Advisory Group to provide advice on the future design of centrally funded PLD across the compulsory school sector. In August, the PLD Advisory Group published a report which set out:

- an emerging approach for PLD to achieve a system-wide lift in student achievement
- a summary of the evidence which informs the approach
- principles to underpin exemplary practice for PLD
- a list of the strengths and weaknesses of the current system
- a new approach to centrally funded PLD.

The Advisory Group sought feedback on their report from the profession. The Advisory Group will report again to the Minister of Education in November. In this context, it is too early to make any decisions about the future content of PLD. The Government notes recommendation 8, pending future decisions about the provision of PLD.

The Government is also progressing legislation to establish the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (EDUCANZ). This independent professional association for teachers and education leaders will, among other things, set out what the best models of twenty-first century education practitioners are, providing clear goals for guiding investment in PLD and better career pathways, to drive up quality across the education profession.

Government notes that in 2011, Registered Teacher Criteria (RTC) were implemented to specify essential knowledge and capabilities for quality teaching in New Zealand. The RTC provide a framework to guide career-long PLD for all teachers. The New Zealand Teachers Council promotes appraisal of teachers using the RTC. RTC that are relevant to the Committee’s recommendations are that fully registered teachers:

**RTC 1** – engage in appropriate professional relationships and demonstrate commitment to professional values. The key indicator is that teachers engage in ethical, respectful, positive and collaborative partnerships with students, teaching colleagues, support staff and other professionals, whānau and other carers of students and agencies, groups and individuals in the community.
RTC 2 – demonstrate commitment to promoting the wellbeing of all students. A key indicator is that teachers acknowledge and respect the languages, heritages and cultures of all students.

RTC 3 – demonstrate commitment to bicultural partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand. The key indicator is that teachers demonstrate respect for the heritages, languages and cultures of both partners to the Treaty of Waitangi.

RTC 9 – respond effectively to the diverse language and cultural experiences, and the varied strengths, interests and needs of individuals and groups of students.

RTC 11 – analyse and appropriately use assessment information, which has been gathered formally and informally. A key indicator is that teachers foster involvement of whānau in the collection and use of information about the learning of students.

The Code of Ethics for teachers also requires a commitment to parents, guardians, family and whānau. The code states that teachers recognise that they work in collaboration with the parents, guardians, family and whānau of learners encouraging their active involvement in the education of their children. The Teachers Council will continue to stress the centrality of the Code to the professional responsibilities of teachers.

**Recommendation 9**

We recommend that the Government encourage and support trialling methods of parental engagement, so that the most effective can be adopted by other education providers.

**Response: Accept**

As noted in the response to recommendation three, the Government prioritises evidence-based initiatives to encourage the engagement of parents in their children’s education. We also support the Select Committee’s recommendations 13 and 14 that teachers, the Ministry of Education and education providers find and share effective methods and good practice in parental engagement.

The Government recognises that education providers have expertise, innovative practices and ideas for engaging with parents. Moreover, they have specific knowledge of the parents in their communities. One factor that the Ministry of Education has identified as being critical to effective engagement with parents is the need to recognise and respond to the diversity of the parent and community populations that education providers serve.

While the Government accepts in principle the concept of trialling methods of engagement, we do not believe there is a “one-size-fits-all” solution to successful parental engagement. The Government is of the view that successful initiatives will generally align with the ten factors the Ministry of Education identified in its report to the Select Committee as underpinning a good practice framework for parent, family and community engagement in education:

- leadership
- relationships
- school culture
- partnerships
An example of trialling methods of parental engagement is a Ministry of Education research project *Ngāue fakataha ki he ako ‘a e fānau – school and parents and families working together to better understand and support Pasifika children’s progress and achievement at school*. The first phase of this project explored in three Auckland primary schools – mainly through the voices of Pasifika parents and caregivers, but also through children, teachers, leadership staff and Boards of Trustees – how families and schools worked together. It has yielded valuable information about the experiences of those who participated. Using this information, subsequent phases of the research involve the researchers working in schools to help all participants develop realistic, practical solutions to enhance interactions between Pasifika parents and families and schools for more effective collaboration over Pasifika children’s progress and achievement.

Another example of a successful trial which is being expanded is Mutukaroa, discussed earlier in the response to recommendation 5.

**Recommendation 10**

We recommend that the Government broaden the role of the Education Review Office to include a function for reviewing parental and community engagement.

**Response: Accept**

The Education Act 1989 already gives the Education Review Office (ERO) the mandate for reviewing parental and community engagement in schools. ERO is currently redeveloping its evaluation indicators for learning and these will include a specific section on parental and community engagement. ERO’s approach is to focus on the importance of the relationships between home and school concentrating on children’s learning, in line with the educational research in this area.

During term 3 and 4 2014, ERO has been undertaking a national evaluation of collaborative working relationships between schools and parents and whānau in all school reviews. Collaborative working relationships with parents and whānau will be published in 2015.
Collaboration and integrated support

Recommendation 11

We recommend that the Government ensure that the Ministry of Education’s web channel redevelopment initiative supports the engagement of parents and communities in their children’s education, providing access to learning resources and information about the education system.

Response: Accept

The Government accepts this recommendation.

During 2014, the Ministry of Education has redeveloped its website. The new website www.education.govt.nz is part of the development of a new single website for all education information across all education agencies. The aim is that users will be able to find education information quickly, that information is easy to understand and related information is connected together. There will be a seamless relationship between related content so that users can find information regardless of which education agency owns the content. A similar development process will support building a new Māori language site that reflects a Māori perspective and structure.

A new website for parents http://parents.education.govt.nz/ has been developed within www.education.govt.nz. It has been operational since early July 2014. The parents’ website aims to give parents practical information about education so that they can be informed when they talk with their education providers and they can be involved in their children’s learning. The parents’ website provides information about topics such as:

- special education service and support
- school terms and holidays
- finding an ECE service or school
- early learning: choosing an ECE service; different kinds of ECE services; setting up an ECE service; play ideas
- primary school: ideas to help with reading, writing and maths; enrolling and starting your child at school; how can I be involved?
- secondary school: what my child learns; parent-teacher meetings; NCEA
- further education: further education and training options; student loans and allowances; scholarships.

The parents’ website has been developed with help from parents. During the initial development, parents told the Ministry of Education that they wanted practical information about the education system, tips on how they can support their children’s learning, and information that supports them when they talk to their children’s teachers. Now the website is active, parents are encouraged to be part of an email test group to test the style, content, tools and resources that are included on the website. The parents’ website will continue to be developed in response to parent feedback, topical issues and education developments.

The Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring there is a mix of methods available for parents to communicate with education providers. Many parents use multiple methods for sourcing education information, including technology and face-to-face communication with their children’s education providers.
Careers New Zealand is also redeveloping its website, including aligning it with the new parents' website. The Careers New Zealand website promotes the important role parents play as primary influencers of their children and young people. Careers New Zealand is reviewing how their website can be enhanced to be more accessible and useful to key audiences, including parents.

The Government is enabling schools to act as ‘digital hubs’ for communities. Under certain conditions, the wider community may be able to take advantage of schools’ fibre capabilities. Initiatives like Manaiaakalani (described in the response to recommendation five) provide examples of schools that are building strong connections with their communities. These schools are focused on students’ learning and are using digital technologies to engage parents and whānau. The Ministry of Education is working with the Manaiaakalani Trust on the Trust’s outreach programme, which will enable other clusters of low-decile schools to learn from the practices that are lifting engagement and achievement in the Manaiaakalani cluster of schools in Auckland. The cluster’s focus on close involvement by parents and whānau is a key factor in its success.

**Recommendation 12**

We recommend that the Government ensure that targeted communications strategies are developed for different communities, and that resources are made available to parents in their heritage languages.

**Response: Accept**

The Ministry of Education provides a range of translated multi-lingual support material, notices, forms and information to assist schools to communicate with parents in their first language. This includes “How well is my child doing?” pamphlets with information about National Standards, and “Supporting Your Child’s Learning” booklets which provide detailed information about National Standards and suggestions for how parents can help at home. Special Education has produced some resources in the five main Pasifika languages: Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan, Niuean and Cook Island Māori. The Ministry of Education provides information about NCEA in eight languages to help families of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds understand how the assessment system works. NZQA provides information on NCEA in Samoan, Tongan, Nuiean and Cook Island Māori. NZQA’s NCEA guide app is available in both te reo Māori and English.

Since 2011, the Ministry of Education’s Parents, Family and Whānau (PFW) team has been working to assist Māori whānau in high potential, high risk communities to support the learning and achievement of their children. The PFW programme is based on a philosophy that all parents want the best for their children; however parents and whānau vary in their skill and confidence in accessing and engaging in education and in supporting their children’s learning. The PFW team focuses on things that the research evidence indicates make a big difference to children’s learning. The PFW team is made up of 15 Senior Advisors nationwide. The Senior Advisors are supported by a small group in the Ministry of Education national office and are responsible for:

- providing whānau with information that will help them to get involved with their children’s learning
- providing intensive support to those whānau that require more targeted assistance to support their children’s learning
- promoting Ministry of Education-led programmes to whānau.
In 2013/14, the PFW team provided:

- information to 267 whānau
- information to 4,264 participants at 183 community presentations
- intensive work with 175 whānau to develop Whānau Education Action Plans (WEAPs)
- brokerage services for whānau to 144 different groups, including Youth Guarantee, attendance services, schools, ECE services and Alternative Education.

In response to all these interactions, the majority of whānau reported that they are more confident and better equipped to support their children’s learning. In 2014/15 the PFW team are aiming to develop WEAPs with 1,500 whānau.

The team also plays an important role as a ‘go-between’ for whānau and the Ministry of Education, providing Ministry colleagues with information about the issues and challenges facing whānau, together with advice on the potential solutions to these challenges.

NCEA and the Whānau and NCEA ma le Pasifika are information programmes aimed at increasing Māori and Pasifika parents’ understanding of NCEA. The programmes provide advice on how parents can engage with and support their children to achieve NCEA. The workshops are interactive and for Māori whānau are often held in the evening at marae, schools or other community venues. NCEA ma le Pasifika is delivered to Pasifika parents and communities in a Pasifika fono and includes delivery in Pacific languages where possible. The information programmes are a collaborative initiative of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Careers New Zealand, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs.

The Government provides funding for the Achieving Through Pasifika Languages initiative. This supports schools and community groups to establish and operate centres that promote achievement for Pasifika bilingual students in years 1 to 8 through fostering Pasifika first languages as part of students’ learning alongside their parents and family.

The Ministry of Education is also piloting a programme with Pasifika new entrant students, parents and teachers using newly developed dual-language early readers (in Samoan and English). The readers are used at home and in the classroom to help transition children into English medium schools by building on the strengths of their first language. If the pilot is successful more resources will be developed for the other four Pasifika languages (Tongan, Tokelauan, Niuean and Cook Island Māori). Translated parent materials have been developed to help parents support their child in this process and fono are held for parents with facilitators speaking in Pasifika languages to help them understand their role.

Schools can employ bilingual support staff to help students and their families who have recently arrived in New Zealand to adjust to their new school and society. They may assist in classrooms and liaise with the migrant community. These staff can interpret at enrolment, during parent information meetings and at parent-teacher interviews, and translate school communications and newsletters into community languages.
Pasifika PowerUP is an engagement programme for Pasifika students, parents, families and communities. The PowerUP programme recognises the strength and influence of Pasifika parents, families and communities which work to leverage their collective power for educational success. The PowerUP programme was piloted over eight weeks in 2013 in Auckland and Wellington with 1,738 Pasifika students, parents and adults officially registered.

The 2014 PowerUP programme has a broader scope and is being delivered in Auckland, Wellington, Levin, and Christchurch. PowerUP remains focussed on providing education knowledge and information for parents, families and communities, and NCEA support for students. In 2014 there has been a stronger focus on early learning and National Standards, with a more explicit link to Vocational Pathways and the Youth Guarantee programme. The PowerUP programme is a key means of engaging with Pasifika parents and communities regarding the Government’s Better Public Service and Ministry of Education targets.

The Government also provides the Computers in Homes programme. The programme aims to give participants the tools and confidence to become more actively involved and supportive of their children’s learning. Participants receive free computer training, a refurbished computer, technical support and a free internet connection for one year. Computers in Homes targets low income families, many of whom are from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Many schools now use their websites as a means of communicating with families, with some providing a translation facility. Schools also use email and text messaging to communicate with families. Schools are starting to use digital tools and online resources to provide learning opportunities to assist with English language learning within the family and home context.

**Recommendation 13**

We recommend that the Government encourage teachers to share effective methods of engaging with parents.

*Response: Accept*

**Recommendation 14**

We recommend to the Government that the Ministry of Education work with education providers to find and share information on good practice in parental engagement.

*Response: Accept*

A combined response is provided for recommendations 13 and 14, both of which are accepted.

The Government agrees that there is potential for education providers to share more about successful practices and specific actions to enhance engagement with parents, as well as resources such as templates for parent engagement plans or questions to ask parents. Education providers hold knowledge about what works best that could be shared with others. The educator websites POND (operated by Network for Learning), the teacher support site Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) (currently being reviewed)
and the Virtual Learning Network (VLN) all offer opportunities for educators to share what is working for them and to discuss how to improve what they are doing.

The Investing in Educational Success initiative and Communities of Schools will provide new opportunities for education providers to share best practice, and there is an expectation that all Communities of Schools will engage with their parent communities.

While the Government supports the intent of this recommendation, the impetus for sharing best practice must come from education providers themselves if it is to be effective. This is one of the reasons that the POND site is for educators only.

As discussed above in recommendation 10, the Education Act 1989 gives the Education Review Office (ERO) the mandate to review schools' performance, including how they promote parental and community engagement in schools. The findings of ERO’s national evaluation of collaborative working relationships between schools and parents and whānau will provide the education sector with clearer expectations about successful parental engagement, and will help build schools’ capacity and capability to successfully engage with their school communities.

This new evaluation builds on previous work by ERO to investigate the ways schools and ECE services engage parents in their children’s learning. In 2008, ERO published a series of national reports about parents as partners in learning in schools. One of these reports included parents’ comments about how schools are working with or alienating them. The report indicated that:

- parents, whānau and communities had high expectations that the school would support their children to be successful learners
- parents were usually pleased and willing to attend school events and support activities such as fundraising
- it was the relationships that focus on children’s learning and achievement that were most highly valued; parents wanted schools to be open and inclusive places that respected and acknowledged each child’s background and potential to learn.

ERO published a series of national reports from 2010 to 2012 about how ECE services were building their relationships and working in partnership with parents/whānau of Māori children. The early childhood ERO reports identified that although many services are building their relationships with whānau, only a small percentage are effectively working in partnership with them. Strong partnerships with whānau were evident when early childhood services had well articulated philosophies of working with whānau. They were evident when professional leaders understood whānau aspirations and worked with whānau to achieve their goals.
Respecting diversity

Recommendation 15

We recommend that the Government develop targeted initiatives to support refugee and migrant families who face multiple barriers to parental engagement.

Response: Accept

Through the Ministry of Education, the Government funds five regional Migrant and Refugee Education Coordinators to support schools to develop effective relationships with migrant and refugee families and communities. The Coordinators work with schools to employ bilingual support workers, establish homework centres and provide information for parents.

Students from refugee backgrounds may have complex needs that are best addressed by someone who understands their language, culture and background experiences. As noted in recommendation 12, bilingual support staff can help students and their families adjust to their new society and school.

An example of a targeted initiative to support refugee families is the Refugee Computers in Homes programme (discussed in recommendation 12). The programme is run by bilingual tutors and is available for 100 refugee background families each year. Participants receive free computer training, a refurbished computer, technical support and a free internet connection for one year.

In 2015, an online English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme will be available for migrant and refugee students at intermediate and secondary schools on the Virtual Learning Network. The intent of this programme is to accelerate English language learning for these students so that they are able to access the curriculum as quickly as possible and gain qualifications. An aspect of the programme to be strengthened in 2015 is parental involvement in student learning.

Recommendation 16

We recommend that the Government review existing engagement initiatives and increase investment in the most successful.

Response: Accept

The Government is committed to using the best available evidence to guide decision making in policy development, funding and service delivery. Evaluating initiatives provides an evidence base from which decisions can be made on future investments and on shifting current investments towards the most effective interventions and initiatives.

The findings of ERO’s national evaluation of schools’ relationships with parents and whānau will inform policy makers and funders, and contribute to the development of best practice indicators to guide future review officer judgements and inform school practices in this area. When this evaluation is published it will provide the education sector with clearer expectations about successful parental engagement and will help to build schools’ capability to successfully engage with their communities.

Examples of existing evidence-based initiatives which seek to engage parents in their children’s education are set out in Appendix one. Other initiatives that have not been
evaluated but are showing promising results in engaging parents include: Mutukaroa, Achieving Through Pasifika Languages, Computers in Homes, Multi-Agency Support Services in Secondary Schools (MASSiS), Youth Workers in Schools (YWIS), the Excel Rotorua Social Sector Trial, Learning and Change Networks (LCNs), NCEA male Pasifika and Pasifika PowerUP.

Recommendation 17

We recommend that the Government continue to support initiatives that help education providers reflect the culture of their community.

Response: Accept

Effective strategies for engaging parents in their children’s education will acknowledge and respond to diversity. All population groups have their own unique cultures, identities, languages, approaches, pressures, talents and needs.

Identity, language and culture are critical ingredients in the educational success of all learners, including Māori learners. Iwi and whānau are uniquely placed as the repositories of this knowledge, and have a critical role in contributing to policy and programme design, and education provision. Iwi offer the opportunity for authentic engagement with the principles of ako – reciprocal learning and teaching – and Māori potential. They have aspirations for their whānau and hapū that include education, social and economic goals. These provide a point of engagement with schools.

Ka Hikitia Accelerating Success 2013-17 is the Ministry of Education’s strategy to rapidly change how the education system performs so that all Māori students gain the skills, qualifications and knowledge they need to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori. Ka Hikitia has identified strong engagement and contribution from parents, families and whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations, communities and businesses as being critical to Māori students’ achievement. Creating strong education pathways for Māori students should be a community-wide aspiration that increases the ability of the learner and their family to support the learner’s potential.

Central to the strategy is that the education experience for Māori students reflects and values their identity, language and culture. This will require education providers to develop partnerships that help build their understanding of the impact identity, language and culture has on Māori student learning and shaping learners’ lives.

The Ministry of Education’s Tau Mai Te Reo – the Māori Language in Education Strategy 2013-2017 ensures that there is a connected and cohesive approach to education contributions that support and strengthen the Māori language. Education connections with iwi, whānau and communities are a critical factor through Tau Mai Te Reo. The connections will lead to achieving high-quality language and education outcomes for learners of the Māori language.

Students engaged in Māori medium education have the opportunity to learn using Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, the companion document to the New Zealand Curriculum. It is based on Māori values and principles and its vision starts with the learners, their knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. Te Marautanga o Aotearoa upholds the cultural identity and heritage of learners and their families and emphasises the socio-cultural aspects of teaching and learning. The home, the hapū, the community and culture of the learner all contribute to the education provided by schools. For learners to succeed, the school, the home, hapū, iwi and community must work together effectively and consistently.
Students’ learning in Kura Kaupapa Māori is also guided by Te Aho Matua, the foundation document and driving force for Kura Kaupapa Māori. It lays down the principles by which Kura Kaupapa Māori identify themselves as a distinct group and provides guidelines for parents, teachers and Boards of Trustees for their respective roles and responsibilities. The draft Te Aho Matua curriculum, Te Marautanga o Te Aho Matua, has been completed and is currently being trialled in 10 Kura Kaupapa Māori.

The Ministry of Education’s iwi relationship framework Whakapūmautia, Papakōwhaitia, Tau ana: Grasp, Embrace and Realise describes the importance of partnering with iwi in a way that builds strong relationships and enhances Māori achievement. This approach aims to enable iwi to support education providers to strengthen education provision by including identity, language and culture in the learning environment. It also enables iwi to contribute to Ministry of Education and Government priorities.

With respect to Pasifika students and their families, the Ministry of Education is guided by the Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017. The vision of the Pasifika Education Plan is to see ‘five out of five Pasifika learners participating, engaging and achieving in education, secure in their identities, languages and cultures and contributing fully to Aotearoa New Zealand’s social, cultural and economic wellbeing’. Two of its three goals relate directly to parent involvement in education, and all depend on effective parent engagement:

1. Pasifika children start school well prepared for education success.
2. All Pasifika parents, families and communities understand and value the importance of early learning.
3. ECE services are culturally intelligent and effectively engage Pasifika children, parents, families and communities.

Actions in the Pasifika Education Plan include interagency collaboration. For example, one project sees Work and Income staff refer Pasifika beneficiaries affected by the Social Obligations policy7 to an early learning workshop run by the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs. The early learning workshops cover topics such as the benefits of early learning, subsidies and entitlements available to parents, different types of ECE and local ECE services. This project is supported by the Ministry of Education.

In addition, recommendation five discusses how Communities of Schools and Learning and Change Networks can involve and draw on their communities to improve education outcomes for their children.

**Recommendation 18**

We recommend that the Government ensure that parents have access to information and resources on the importance and means of engagement.

**Response: Accept**

The Government accepts this recommendation.

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7 Social Obligations require all beneficiary parents to ensure their children attend 15 hours a week early childhood education from age three, attend school from age five or six, enrol with a General Practitioner and complete core Well Child/Tamariki Ora checks.
The Ministry of Education’s Early Learning Taskforce works with communities, early learning providers, iwi, Māori organisations, and Pasifika churches to support local innovation and action that increases children’s participation in early childhood education (ECE). This helps to increase participation in quality ECE; and in ways that support and value the identity, language and culture of these children.

The Taskforce has worked in local communities to establish Community Action Groups which can help to raise the value of education and importance of engaging in early learning. Community Action Groups comprise a membership of active support, "the doers" who can lead innovation, encourage engagement and help stimulate demand for quality ECE places. They are also helping to address supply issues. The Taskforce is also involved in the promotion of early learning and ECE in places where families and communities naturally come together, e.g. community festivals, marae, sport clubs and local events. Community activities such as play days and street parties are held to support this engagement. The target group for such community activities are families with children under the age of five years old who are not currently engaged in ECE.

The Better Information for Parents project has also contributed to raising the value of education with the development of promotional resources for parents, families, whānau and front line services. The print, radio and advertising resources support key messages promoting the benefits and value of quality ECE, including information about where to get assistance to support engagement and enrolment. These include the Early Learning – a Great Start pamphlet, the Early Childhood Education – Be Involved Get Enrolled pamphlet, and the revised Choices booklet.

Recommendation 11 discusses the new parent website which provides information about the importance of parent engagement and how parents can support their children’s education at home.

Also noted in the response to recommendation 11, the Careers New Zealand website seeks to engage parents so they can help their young people make effective transitions to, through and from secondary school. Careers New Zealand also provides Advice Line Services, through an 0800 number, email address and chat rooms. Careers New Zealand staff are trained and equipped to respond to parents’ enquiries about student subject choices, supporting transitions through the education system, post-secondary training options and future career decisions for their children. This service directly contributes to assisting parents to engage with their young people on their education-to-work journey.

Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and Te Aho Matua both expect parents to be strongly engaged in their children’s education as part of the philosophy underpinning Māori medium education. Special Education has regional parent reference groups to discuss what is working well and what could be improved. Parents and caregivers can contact Special Education via email or on a free 0800 phone number. Parents can quickly get advice about services and strategies and be put in touch with the right local support.

ERO has developed a series of booklets for parents to assist them to navigate the education system. These booklets have been very sought after and ERO is considering further titles in the series, as well as translations of some of the earlier booklets for Māori and Pasifika parents. Current titles include:

- Your Child’s Education – Learning opportunities in New Zealand
• Early Childhood Education – A guide for parents
• How is My Child Doing?
• Effective Teaching – What’s happening in my child’s classroom
• From Education to Employment – Questions to ask at school
• School Trustees – Helping you ask the right questions.
Appendix one – Examples of evidence-based cross-sector and education-led initiatives to encourage parental engagement in education

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Funder</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Start</td>
<td>Intensive home visiting programme helping families/whānau whose children’s health, education and social outcomes are at risk. 33 social service providers support around 6,000 vulnerable babies and infants each year. Families can be referred from the second trimester of pregnancy until 12 months old. The programme ends when child starts school.</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Development</td>
<td>2009 review (MSD)</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.beehive.govt.nz/webfm_send/4">www.beehive.govt.nz/webfm_send/4</a></td>
<td>2005 outcome/impact evaluation (MSD)</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-">http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-</a></td>
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<td>work/publications-resources/evaluation/outcome-impact-family-start/</td>
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<td>Home Interaction Programme for Parents and</td>
<td>Home-based education programme for children aged 3.5–6 years to prepare for school. Parents and children undertake workbook-based activities, a tutor regularly visits plus fortnightly facilitated meetings with other parents. Aims to increase participation in ECE, engage families in the learning of their children, support an effective transition to school, and encourage parents to be more involved in ECE, school and their community.</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Development</td>
<td>2010 review (MSD)</td>
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<td>Youngsters (HIPPY)</td>
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<td>Incredible Years Parent (IYP) Programme</td>
<td>A 14 session programme for parents of children aged 3-8 years with significant behavioural difficulties. Provides parents with skills to better manage their child’s behavioural problems, creating a home environment that is conducive</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td>2013 evaluation (MSD)</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-">http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-</a></td>
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<td>work/publications-resources/evaluation/incredible-years-report/index.html</td>
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<td>Programme</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Responsible Ministry</td>
<td>Additional Information</td>
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<td><strong>Primary Care Triple P Project (Triple P)</strong></td>
<td>Triple P provides programmes and support for parents who have children with challenging behaviour. After attending Triple P, parents and caregivers report that they feel better about their parenting, that they have better relationships with their children, that there is better communication with their children and partners, that dramatic changes have happened quickly, and parents feel more prepared for later developmental stages.</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
<td><a href="http://www.triplep-parenting.net/glo-en/about-triple-p/the-evidence/">http://www.triplep-parenting.net/glo-en/about-triple-p/the-evidence/</a></td>
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<td><strong>Parents As First Teachers (PAFT)</strong></td>
<td>PAFT is an early intervention home visiting parent education and family support programme that focuses on families considered to be at some risk of poor parenting and child outcomes, with children in the prenatal to three years age range. The aim of PAFT is to help parents to participate more effectively in their children’s early development and learning. New Zealand PAFT has its own curriculum, Āhuru Mōwai and Born To learn.</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Development</td>
<td><a href="http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/evaluation/parents-as-first-teachers/">http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/evaluation/parents-as-first-teachers/</a></td>
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to improve their lives.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Ministry of Health (some via DHBs)</th>
<th>Link</th>
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| **Well Child Tamariki Ora**                     | The Well Child Tamariki Ora programme is a series of health and development assessments and support services for children and their families from birth to five years. It includes promoting early learning to support positive development and future educational success.  
The B4 School Check is the twelfth core contact of the Well Child Tamariki Ora schedule of services. The B4 School Check is a free nationwide initiative which aims to identify and address any health, behavioural, social, or developmental concerns such as a hearing problem or communication difficulty) which could affect a child’s ability to get the most benefit from school. | 2012 quality reviews                                                                                                         | [http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/well-child-tamariki-ora-programme-quality-reviews-0](http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/well-child-tamariki-ora-programme-quality-reviews-0) |
<p>| <strong>Whānau Toko I Te Ora (WTITO)</strong>               | WTITO is a high intensity, home-based family support service for Māori whānau. The programme supports parenting based on a holistic approach that emphasises the growth and development of tamariki during the first five years of life. | 2013 evaluation (MSD)                                                                                           | <a href="http://www.readingtogether.net.nz">http://www.readingtogether.net.nz</a>                                      |
| <strong>Early Reading Together®</strong>                    | This programme aims to help parents support the language and literacy learning of babies to five and six year olds. It is implemented by early childhood educators and junior school teachers in collaboration with community librarians. |                                                                                                                 | <a href="http://www.readingtogether.net.nz">http://www.readingtogether.net.nz</a>                                      |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Lead Agency</th>
<th>Reference(s)</th>
<th>Website(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Together®</td>
<td>The Reading Together® programme helps parents to support the language and literacy learning of five year olds to 15 year olds. The Ministry of Education’s Reading Together Project aims to support all decile one to three English medium schools with students in any of years 1 to 8 to implement the Reading Together® programme.</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td>Biddulph, 1983; Tuck, 2006</td>
<td><a href="http://www.readingtogether.net.nz">http://www.readingtogether.net.nz</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manaiakalani</td>
<td>The Manaiakalani programme provides students in 12 Auckland schools with a netbook and wireless internet access so they and their whānau are able to access their learning anywhere, anytime and at any pace.</td>
<td>Manaiakalani Education Trust</td>
<td><a href="http://www.manaiakalani.org/our-story/research-evaluation">http://www.manaiakalani.org/our-story/research-evaluation</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Workers in Schools (SWiS)</td>
<td>SWiS is a school-based programme for vulnerable children in low decile primary and intermediate schools and their families. The service is targeted at children where there are concerns about their wellbeing and/or safety, or where social factors impacting the family are affecting the child’s ability to learn.</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Development</td>
<td>2000 process evaluation of the pilot programme (MSD)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/evaluation/social-workers-in-schools/">http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/evaluation/social-workers-in-schools/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>NCEA and the</td>
<td>On-demand workshops delivered at no cost to whānau and their communities. Generally held</td>
<td>NZQA (lead agency)</td>
<td>2014 evaluation available from NZQA</td>
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<td>Whānau</td>
<td>in the evenings at request of marae, Māori community groups, schools and church groups. Workshops are interactive and aim to increase parents understanding of NCEA and provide advice on how parents can support their children/whānau to achieve NCEA.</td>
<td>supported by Ministry of Education, Careers NZ, Tertiary Education Commission, Te Puni Kökiri</td>
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Government Response to the Report of the Education and Science Select Committee, on its Inquiry into the identification and support for students with the significant challenges of dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism spectrum disorders in primary and secondary schools

Presented to the House of Representatives in accordance with Standing Order 252
Government Response to the Report of the Education and Science Select Committee, on its Inquiry into the identification and support for students with the significant challenges of dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism spectrum disorders in primary and secondary schools

Introduction

The Government welcomes the Education and Science Select Committee report on its inquiry into the identification and support for students with the significant challenges of dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in primary and secondary schools.

The Committee’s report represents a significant contribution to the work being done to support the achievement of all students, including students with additional learning needs.

The Committee’s report summarises a comprehensive inquiry informed by extensive public submissions and expert advice. The Government acknowledges the contributions of the many students, parents, teachers, academics, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and others who supported the inquiry by sharing their knowledge and experience. Submitters to the inquiry contributed to a greater understanding of how well current support services meet the needs of students with additional learning needs.

The terms of reference of the inquiry were:

- best educational practice for dyslexic, dyspraxic, and autistic students
- current screening for dyslexic, dyspraxic, and autistic students
- support available for the transition through schooling for dyslexic, dyspraxic, and autistic students, and adaptations for their learning, including special assessment conditions (SAC)
- how teacher training and Professional Learning and Development (PLD) prepares teachers to identify and support the education of students with dyslexia, dyspraxia and ASD
- the implementation of the 2008 New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline recommendations specific to education, to assess the level of progress.

The inquiry highlighted several key themes:

- parents need more information about what support is available, and assistance with accessing that support
- schools are variable in their approach to supporting students with additional learning needs
- the capability and capacity of teachers, teacher aides, and specialist support providers varies widely between schools.

The inquiry highlighted that significant progress has been made to improve the support for all students with additional learning needs, including dyslexia, dyspraxia and ASD, but acknowledges that work needs to be ongoing. The Ministry of Education (the Ministry)
advises that work is already underway, or planned, which includes work to strengthen inclusion, improve the PLD and support for teachers, and provide better information and support for parents.

The inquiry coincides with a broader programme of work the Ministry is undertaking called the Learning Support (Special Education) Update (the Update). Much of the feedback parents, students, teachers and others provided to the inquiry is consistent with what the Ministry heard in the consultation process for the Update.

The themes in the feedback from the inquiry support and strengthen this programme of work and the recommendations in this report are consistent with the Update work programme. The Government notes the recommendations in the Select Committee report were developed after significant cross-party discussion and collaboration, and in consultation with Ministry advisers, and are endorsed by each committee member. Where parties have disagreed with policy direction, or sought to further the recommendations of the report, they have included a minority view. The Government notes the views and additional recommendations expressed in the minority view.

The Select Committee makes 46 recommendations to Government. The Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 252. The Government response to the Committee’s recommendations is outlined below. The work that is currently being progressed in many areas is outlined, along with proposed additional work in other areas.
Recommendation 1

That the Government task the Ministry of Education to consider collecting the school-entry data from schools and Communities of Learning to better identify responses to possible need.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government agrees that early identification of additional learning needs is important and should take place within the first school year or, if possible, prior to school entry and continue to be undertaken by every teacher as part of their normal student assessment processes at each year level. Further work is being undertaken with the Ministry of Health to consider how to better share information about children receiving support from the Child Development Services.

The Government notes the Ministry is exploring options for achieving earlier identification and assessment and resources for literacy, language and learning needs typically associated with dyslexia, dyspraxia and ASD. For example, the proposed updated Te Whāriki, the New Zealand Early Childhood curriculum, explicitly references oral language and early print concepts to support teachers to notice, understand and respond to the learning of children in early learning settings. Teachers will be able to access resources to support their practice via a new website that will be released in March 2017.

In 2015/16 Early Intervention services and support were provided to over 14,000 children under the age of 5 years who were identified as needing additional support to learn. Regular monitoring indicates that demand for Early Intervention services is growing as early childhood teachers, parents, health professionals and others are identifying concerns earlier, with children increasingly accessing the services and support they need.

The Government notes the Ministry’s continued work around how data can be more effectively used to support higher achievement for all students, particularly through Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako (CoL).

CoL are the key vehicles for providing support across the entire learning pathway for individual students and in some cases, groups of students. The Government notes the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the major teacher unions, principal organisations and the New Zealand Schools Trustees Association developed a series of resources for CoL. Two of these, Community of Learning – Guide for Schools and Kura and Tips and Starters: Working Together provide good advice and guidance for CoL about working collaboratively and how to develop good achievement challenges. Included is guidance about students with additional learning needs. Ministry staff work closely with CoL and provide advice, information, guidance and facilitation to support CoL to develop collaborative practice and achievement challenges.

CoL enable teachers, leaders and communities to work together to share and benefit from each other’s experience. By schools collaborating and sharing expertise, students’ learning pathways are supported and their transition through the education system is improved.
The Government notes new resources are now available to support teachers to better identify responses to students’ learning needs.

To help teachers focus on individual students’ progress the Ministry has built and tested tools to map that journey, strengthen teacher judgments and show what progression looks like for reading, writing and maths. These are:

- The Learning Progressions Framework (LPF) – Years 0-10
- The Progress and Consistency Tool (PaCT) – Years 0-8.

The progress tools above are designed to give teachers a clear picture of the skills and knowledge required across the curriculum. They prompt teachers to consider what students know and what their next learning steps might be. Access to this information will ensure more timely and targeted support for students not making expected progress; in turn informing interventions at a school, CoL and system level.

The Ministry is working with the Ministry of Health to discuss the sharing of B4 School Check information to inform analysis of learning need.

Recommendation 2

*That the Government task the Ministry of Education to consider increasing the funding of Intensive Wraparound Services to meet student needs.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS) delivers intensive support for students with the highest and most complex behavioural and learning needs.

Subsequent to the announcement of the Select Committee inquiry on 2 Oct 2015, the Government provided an extra $8.9 million in Budget 2016 for the IWS over the next four years. This increased the number of students receiving intensive, personalised support by 50, to 335 students a year. The additional support included an extra $1.5 million for specialised equipment and technology to help these students better access the curriculum and to learn in class.

Recommendation 3

*That the Government task the Ministry of Education to extend its promotion of inclusive education information and resources to support teachers, including those who may be teaching students with needs arising from dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism spectrum disorder.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

In July 2016 Cabinet endorsed moves to strengthen the inclusiveness of the education system by designing one system of learning support with improved accountability, using investment analysis to better target resources and deliver services more effectively. The
approach builds on the Government’s commitment to social investment principles by putting students at the centre of planning, programmes and resourcing at the same time ensuring that students already receiving learning support services continue to receive support.

The Government has a clear expectation that the education system will foster the educational achievement of every student. To achieve this expectation we need a sustainable, integrated, fit-for-purpose and inclusive education system that puts progress and success for all students at the heart of teaching and learning.

The Government acknowledges that, while the education system has become much more inclusive over recent years, the ongoing work needs to continue.

Strengthening inclusion is one of the Ministry’s strategic intentions in its *Four Year Plan 2016-2020*.

Consultation during the Update process indicated that more information and support for inclusive practice in schools is needed. The Ministry is looking for opportunities to improve its provision of information, as part of its ongoing monitoring and review process. The Ministry will continue to support teachers by providing inclusive education training, PLD and online practical guidelines and information.

To support the focus on inclusive education the Ministry is providing:

- support for Boards of Trustees in the area of school governance and ensuring all students are catered for effectively and that progress is monitored
- inclusive practice self-review tools and a recommended review process. These are designed to assist school leaders and staff to consider what inclusion means for their school and how best to support students with a diverse range of learning needs. The review process and supports include surveys for staff, families and whānau and students
- a guide to using inclusive practices when designing and delivering the school curriculum. This is a key resource for professional learning and development (PLD) providers, specialist teachers and schools to strengthen inclusive practices in the classroom and wider school environment. It can be found at the following link: [http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Inclusive-Practice-and-the-School-Curriculum; http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/](http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Inclusive-Practice-and-the-School-Curriculum; http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/)
- the Inclusive Education website, [www.http://inclusive.tki.org.nz](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz) provides guidance on specific disabilities and additional information on systems and processes that ensure students with additional learning needs are catered for effectively in their schooling pathway. Site visitors remain steady at around 6,000 per month. The Ministry is developing a more extensive communication plan to increase usage.

The Ministry is continuing to expand the Inclusive Education website. In 2016 it added guides on:

- preparing students to leave school
- supporting Effective Teacher Aide Practice
• Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and Learning planning Innovative Learning Environments (ILE).

The Ministry, between February 2015 and 1 December 2016, provided workshops introducing the websites and inclusive education themes to nearly 3,000 Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), principals, deputy principals and Ministry special education/learning support staff. Feedback has been very positive and the Ministry is continuing this training in 2017.

The Government notes the Ministry plans to:

• continue to add to and enhance the existing tools it has available
• carry out a concerted publicity drive to make the tools more widely known to schools and parents
• undertake a detailed evaluation of the Inclusive Education website, which will inform site enhancements and also inform a communication plan for the site
• look at how to use the Ministry’s parent website to better connect parents to the rich content that is on the Inclusive Education website
• continue capability building with a focus on supporting Ministry staff and RTLB to provide workshops in their local areas
• run workshops with Ministry property staff and architects on building ILE that work for all students.

Recommendation 4

That the Government task the Ministry of Education to develop policy on learning support needs to explicitly explain what best practice for inclusion is, and how monitoring and professional development will support this policy in all schools.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes the findings of the 2013 Education Review Office (ERO) report Including Students with High Needs Primary Schools are encouraging. ERO found that 77 percent of schools were mostly inclusive, 16 percent of schools had some inclusive practices, and seven percent had few inclusive practices. The Ministry is working with these latter schools to build more effective practice.

The Government also notes that on 29 November 2016, the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 was launched. The new Strategy will enable New Zealand to better support disabled people to achieve their potential, and improve the lives of disabled New Zealanders and their families. Cabinet agreed the new Strategy will provide the mandate and guide the work of government agencies on disability issues for the next 10 years, to be led by the Office for Disability Issues.

What this means for education:
disabled people are consulted on and actively involved in the development and implementation of legislation and policies concerning education, including early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education

- access to mainstream education is inclusive (including policy, practice and pedagogy)
- services that are specific to disabled people are high quality, available and accessible
- inclusive education is a core competency for all teachers and educators
- decision-making on issues regarding education of disabled people is informed by robust data and evidence.

The Government expects the Ministry to work with all other agencies to implement the Strategy. The Government will be working in partnership with disabled people and the disability sector to ensure the Strategy is carried out and that real changes are made. To help measure progress an Outcomes Framework which specifies the targets and indicators to achieve the aspirations of the strategy, will be developed in 2017.

The Ministry’s Update programme of work is significantly redesigning the system of support for students with additional learning needs. The themes in the feedback from the Select Committee inquiry support and strengthen this programme of work and many of the recommendations in this report are consistent with the Update work programme.

The programme is:

- designing a recognisable, simple system of additional learning support
- re-designing the service delivery model to remove fragmentation, inflexibility and other barriers to effective service delivery
- implementing the revised service delivery model
- undertaking an ongoing programme of work to ensure the best use of funds and examine the return on investment for all system components.

The Ministry has implemented some changes to PLD available to CoL, schools and kura. The redesign aims to ensure:

- centrally-funded PLD is tailored to sector identified needs
- PLD will make more of a difference to student outcomes in priority areas e.g. reading, writing, mathematics, science and digital technologies
- support for school leadership is provided to lead and sustain improvement; and
- professional networks are strengthened as a complementary source of support for teachers and leaders.

**Recommendation 5**

*That the Government task the Ministry of Education to investigate the equity of access to publically funded services for Māori and Pasifika.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.
The Government notes the Ministry monitors access to different specialist services by ethnicity. The Ministry, and other services such as the RTLB service, provide access to support on the basis of assessed student need.

The Government will ask the Ministry to continue to monitor and investigate equity of access across all provision of learning support to ensure that the right support gets to the right students at the right time.

The Government notes the Ministry uses data to work with schools to identify student need and raising attainment. An example of this at secondary level is At Risk of Not Achieving (ARoNA) which uses data to support system change to improve education results, in particular for Māori and Pasifika students. Through ARoNA, Ministry staff use a student focussed methodology based on NCEA achievement data to support secondary schools and the students’ families to identify how individual students at risk of not achieving NCEA Level 2 can be supported to succeed in their studies.

The Government also notes evaluations of Ministry initiatives are carried out to identify what has worked well. As noted in the Ministry’s 2016 Annual Report, the Ministry is currently developing an Investment Management Framework which will enable it to cost, select, manage, and evaluate investments across operating and capital expenditure so that resources are allocated to areas of highest value and benefits are tracked. This will help better evaluate and understand which initiatives are most effective for improving educational results for Māori and Pasifika students.

**Recommendation 6**

*That the Government require the Ministry of Education to review and, as necessary, update advice about, and resources for, students with additional learning support needs.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government considers this work is part of a broader work stream that requires the Ministry to provide the best information available for parents, teachers and schools and others who are supporting students with additional learning needs.

The Inclusive Education website [http://inclusive.tki.org.nz](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz) has been live for 18 months (see Recommendation 3).

The website provides schools, parents and students with extensive information, resources, and curriculum materials to enhance teaching and learning, raise student achievement, and advance PLD for teaching staff and school managers.

The site includes information on:


In addition to this there is a number of inclusive education resource materials located on the New Zealand Curriculum Online website. Placement of information on this site was a deliberate move to locate the New Zealand Curriculum as central to, and inclusive of, all students and to help teachers plan accordingly. Information on dyslexia can be found on the Literacy Online website (http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz) and in the booklet, About Dyslexia, which has been available in every school since 2007.

However, the submissions highlight that not all schools and teachers are aware of the material and resources available online. As a result of the Select Committee inquiry, the Ministry has re-visited the online support material, particularly the information provided on the Inclusive Education website, and concluded that it is, in general, fit for purpose. The Ministry is planning to promote awareness of these tools and resources through a range of ways including the Inclusive Practices workshops and the Update (see Recommendation 3).

Recommendation 7

That the Government require the Ministry of Education to develop and disseminate consistent intervention guidelines and support pathways for students with dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism spectrum disorder.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes that improving student-centred pathways is one of the Ministry’s strategic intentions in its Four Year Plan 2016-2020.

The Government considers this work is part of a broader work stream that requires the Ministry to provide the best information available for parents, teachers and schools and others who are supporting students with additional learning needs (see Recommendation 6).


The Government notes the Update is designing a recognisable, simple system of additional learning support (see Recommendation 4).

The Ministry intends to develop more formal links to a range of national and international experts to ensure its policies, approaches and supports are easily accessible and coherent, and consistent with research evidence and best practice (see Recommendation 11).

Recommendation 8

That the Government require the Ministry of Education to work with Dyslexia NZ to develop a specific pathway guide for families of students with dyslexia.
Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government considers this work is part of a broader stream of work that requires the Ministry to provide the best information available for parents, teachers and schools and others who are supporting students with additional learning needs (see Recommendation 6).

The Ministry intends to develop more formal links to a range of national and international experts to ensure its policies, approaches and supports are easily accessible and coherent, and consistent with research evidence and best practice (see Recommendation 11).

The Government will ask the Ministry to continue working with all concerned parties, including Dyslexia New Zealand, to explore ways in which resources can be better strengthened and enhanced to provide a pathway guide for families.

Recommendation 9

That the Government require the Ministry of Education to work with Dyspraxia NZ to develop a specific pathway guide for families of students with dyspraxia.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.


The Government will ask the Ministry to continue working with all concerned parties, including the Ministry of Health and Dyspraxia New Zealand, to improve and update the information available where necessary.

The Ministry will initiate a discussion with Dyspraxia New Zealand about exploring ways in which resources can be better utilised to provide a pathway guide for families. This engagement could also provide the opportunity to look at what else could be done to support families better.

Recommendation 10

That the Government require the Ministry of Education to develop specific pathway guides for families of students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, and foetal alcohol syndrome.
Response: The Government accepts this recommendation although notes that students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) were not included in the initial scope of the inquiry.

The Ministry is committed to working together with the Ministry of Health, partner agencies, professionals, communities and families to implement the recently released FASD Action Plan, Taking Action on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: 2016-2019. Key actions within this plan include developing accessible pathways of support for people affected by FASD and their families and whānau.

The Government notes the Ministry has educator booklets and guides on the Inclusive Education website about attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and ASD. A new guide on FASD was launched in 2016 in response to calls from teachers and RTLB for more advice on supporting students with FASD.

The guide brings together the latest research, literature and targeted strategies for supporting students to organise, plan, understand consequences, maintain and shift attention, and memorise data.

The Government expects the Ministry to continue to work with all concerned parties, including families, to improve and update the information available where necessary.

Recommendation 11

That the Government task the Ministry of Education to develop more formal links to a range of national and international experts to ensure that its policies, approaches, and supports on specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism spectrum disorder, are easily accessible, coherent, and consistent with research evidence and best practice.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes that some parents and schools are choosing to access programmes (not endorsed by the Ministry) that lack robust evidence of efficacy. An evidence-based approach is critical to ensuring positive outcomes as well as cost effectiveness.

The Ministry will continue to establish both informal and formal links to a range of national and international experts so that it can ensure the latest thinking and research evidence regarding best practice is available. The Ministry will make this advice and evidence accessible to parents and schools so they can make informed decisions about supports for students with additional learning needs.

The Ministry and the Ministry of Health have contributed to the ASD Guideline which remains the specific reference document for planning and providing interventions for students with ASD. The Ministry will incorporate specific national and international expertise in the governance and implementation of its proposed ASD Action Plan.
Recommendation 12

That the Government ensure that the Ministry of Education makes evidence regarding best practice and advice about dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism spectrum disorder available to parents and schools so they can make fully informed decisions when contemplating programmes.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

See Recommendation 11.

Recommendation 13

That the Government require the Ministry of Education to investigate the provision of one-stop-shop access to specialist help, which schools can offer families once students have had learning support needs identified.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

Currently students with additional learning needs get support from schools first, and then from the Ministry when more intensive specialist support is needed. However, feedback from parents has shown this can create confusion about where to go for support. For access to Ministry specialist services, parents have to apply separately for each service, which can seem like a 'series of hurdles'.

The Government notes that, together with the wider education sector, the Ministry will establish local Learning Support Teams to assess each student's needs and agree on the kind of support they need as part of the Update work programme. These teams will also provide parents and whānau with some immediate steps to take, and develop a local learning support plan with them.

As part of the Update pilot in Bay of Plenty/Waiariki¹ the Ministry is working with schools to design how to better support students through collaboration between schools, RTLB and Ministry specialists. The Update is making support easier to access through clearer processes designed around the student, not the system, bringing timely support together around the student, and using the resources currently available. The Ministry is working with schools to ensure children with identified learning needs are supported by a lead practitioner who will act as a single point of contact for parents and provide a clear avenue to access information and support, respond to questions and concerns, every step of the way. Planning is underway to ensure all children who require additional learning support have a co-ordinated plan in place.

Recommendation 14

That the Government require the Ministry of Education to encourage schools to develop a plan for individual learning needs for all students identified with learning support needs.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes that under the National Administration Guidelines each board of trustees is required to:

(a) on the basis of good quality assessment information, identify students and groups of students:
   (i) who are not achieving;
   (ii) who are at risk of not achieving;
   (iii) who have special needs (including gifted and talented students); and
   (iv) aspects of the curriculum which require particular attention;

(b) develop and implement teaching and learning strategies to address the needs of students and aspects of the curriculum identified in (c) above;

See Recommendation 13.

Recommendation 15

That the Government task the Ministry of Education to continue to investigate working with bodies, such as the Children’s Commissioner, to create a mediation and dispute-resolution model for parents and schools, which uses arbitration as a last resort.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes the Ministry has been working in partnership with the New Zealand School Trustees Association, with support from the Centre for Dispute Resolution based in the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), to develop a dispute resolution process. This process will be used where there are challenges for schools and families around individual students that cannot be resolved at a local level.

The project is being managed by a group comprising representatives of school and parent groups, and has been informed by cross-sector stakeholder workshops. It will be trialled in three Ministry regions from early 2017.

Recommendation 16

That the Government require the Ministry of Education to initiate research on the effect of innovative learning environments on students with additional learning support needs.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.
The Government notes the Ministry has recently published a guide on planning an Innovative Learning Environment (ILE) [http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/ile/]. This guide summarises existing research and provides strategies and suggestions for developing ILE that work for all students. It focuses on supporting schools that are planning a new build or building modifications and includes specific information on access for students with additional learning support needs.


As ILE is an expanding and growing topic the evidence base will also continue to grow including research that includes students with additional learning support needs. The Government expects that the Ministry will continue researching in this area and stay up to date with research that is being conducted both in NZ and overseas.

**Recommendation 17**

*That the Government require the Ministry of Education to research what is needed to strengthen learning support policy, and include culturally appropriate researchers who can identify Māori, Pasifika, and refugee and migrant learning support needs.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes that there has been significant research over the last few years to understand what is effective to meet the diverse needs of Māori, Pasifika, refugee and migrant learners who need additional support and much of current practice is built on this research. The Government also notes that the Ministry will continue to regularly research, identify, review and evaluate the impact of its key learning support programmes to ensure that the needs of diverse learners, particularly Māori and Pasifika learners, are being met.

**Recommendation 18**

*That the Government require the Ministry of Education to research what is working, and what is failing, for students with learning support needs (nationally and internationally).*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Update consultation process provided considerable evidence about what schools, families and students consider is working and what is not working. This evidence along with national and international evidence will continue to be used to inform the future direction for learning support.

The Government also notes that the New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Guideline provides a comprehensive evidence-based approach to best practice regarding ASD. Part 3 of the Guideline, which focuses on education, provides practical information...
regarding both the challenges and opportunities facing educators working with students with ASD.

**Recommendation 19**

*That the Government require the Ministry of Education to conduct research with a Māori research organisation to look at barriers to Te Tiriti o Waitangi issues, equity issues from a Māori perspective, and recommendations for change.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

See Recommendation 17.

**Recommendation 20**

*That the Government require the Ministry of Education to convene a process with learning support research communities to identify what research gaps exist.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

See Recommendation 18.

**Recommendation 21**

*That the Government encourage the Ministry of Education to explore options for earlier identification, assessment, and resources for the literacy, language, and learning needs typically associated with dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism spectrum disorder.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government agrees that early identification of learning needs is important and should take place within the first school year or, if possible, prior to school entry and continue to be undertaken by every teacher as part of their normal student assessment processes at each year level. The Government notes the Ministry is exploring options for achieving earlier identification and assessment (see Recommendation 1).

The Government notes the Ministry aims to accelerate progress in achievement so students are achieving National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. To support this objective the Ministry aims to have teachers able to earlier identify children with learning needs typically associated with dyslexia, dyspraxia and ASD, and know how to respond to them with resources and knowledge based on best practice.

The Ministry aims to provide teachers with the best tools and resources available to identify students with dyslexia, dyspraxia and ASD early in their schooling, and provide students with evidence-based interventions, so that literacy learning is supported and not delayed.
The Government notes the Ministry is currently scoping the feasibility of extending and adapting the Learning Progression Framework (LPF) to show the finer grained progress of students learning long-term within level one of the New Zealand Curriculum (see Recommendation 1).

The Government also notes that the Early Childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki, is being updated to strengthen its bicultural content. The revised document will provide a clearer focus on identity, language and culture, and the inclusion of all students (see Recommendation 1).

**Recommendation 22**

*That the Government task the Ministry of Education to investigate lessons from the B4 school check modelled in the State of Victoria, Australia, for learning differences such as dyslexia, which is universally applied to all schools in the state.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes that the Australian programme, Healthy Kids Check, was ceased by a previous government. The Government will task the Ministry to investigate lessons from the Healthy Kids Check, and understand the outcomes to help inform better practice in New Zealand. The Ministry will work with the Ministry of Health to inform any outcomes from lessons learnt.

The Government notes B4 School Checks are available in New Zealand free of charge to every child after they reach four years of age and before they go to school. About 93% of children participate in the B4 School Checks. A main focus of the check is to help identify any issues which may impact on a child's learning or development. These include any impacts arising from different ways a child may process information.

**Recommendation 23**

*That the Government require the Ministry of Education to work with the Ministry of Health, as part of the Learning Support Update, on strengthening transition support for all students receiving Early Intervention services, and strengthening referral pathways for students with autism spectrum disorder and dyspraxia.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes that improving student-centred pathways is one of the Ministry’s strategic intentions in its *Four Year Plan 2016-2020.*

A service design process is under way as part of the Learning Support Update pilot in the Bay of Plenty/Waiairiki. Ministry of Health input is regarded as essential to this process and consideration is being given as to how relevant staff can be involved.
A Good Start in Life under the Government’s Disability Action Plan seeks to improve the way the system as a whole works for parents, families and whānau with disabled children from 0-8 years old. The project is led by the Ministry in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development and ACC. The work includes:

- a child development service improvement project
- a parent, family and whānau centred design process
- action research on partnership with families.

Strengthening links with the Ministry of Health’s work to improve the reach and effectiveness of Child Development Services (CDS) will support the changes proposed in the Update as CDS shares many clients and some staff with the Ministry’s Learning Support (Special Education) services. This will provide an opportunity to ensure that the services are aligned, reduce the risk of duplication and ensure that workforce capability is distributed in a way that best meets the needs of children and young people.

The Government notes a number of the Update Improvement Projects focus on strengthening transition support for students receiving Early Intervention services. The Ministry advises that students in some locations are already starting to experience improvements – seamless support; less rigidity around criteria for services; and a stronger focus on immediate support for the student and the adults around the child – including parents, whānau and teachers.

**Recommendation 24**

*That the Government require the Ministry of Education to investigate, as part of the Learning Support Update, creating targets for the timely identification of the need for, and provision of, additional support for students with learning differences.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government agrees that early identification of learning needs is important and should take place as early as possible after the presentation of need (see Recommendation 1). The Update is focussed on early support around the needs of the student and timely response with support provided regardless of the age of the student. The Update is designing details such as targets for consideration as part of national implementation.

The Government notes the Ministry currently monitors service indicators, such as wait-times for service and age of first referral to Early Intervention services.

**Recommendation 25**

*That the Government task the Ministry of Education to work with schools and Communities of Learning on opportunities to strengthen teaching for all students, and improve access to, and coordination of, resources and services so they travel with students throughout their education pathway.*
Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

See Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 26

That the Government task the Ministry of Education to develop further advice on the effectiveness of Reading Recovery for students identified as having dyslexia, and subsequent interventions for students who may need it.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes the Ministry aims to accelerate progress in achievement so that students are achieving National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Reading Recovery has two purposes:

- to accelerate the reading and writing progress of students who have not made expected progress in learning to read and write after one year at school
- to identify the small number of students who will need further, ongoing literacy support.

The Ministry is investigating the group of students for whom Reading Recovery appeared to be unsuccessful\(^2\). It will incorporate findings from this work into any future design changes. This work will include consideration of how Reading Recovery could be deployed more effectively within CoL to support students.

Recommendation 27

That the Government require the Ministry of Education, as part of the Learning Support Update, to conduct an analysis of the demand for communication services for students with speech, language, and communication needs associated with dyslexia, dyspraxia, or autism spectrum disorder, and to make recommendations for workforce planning, and that policy is changed to meet the needs identified.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Ministry is undertaking as part of the Update an analysis of the demand for communication services for students with speech, language and communication needs associated with dyslexia, dyspraxia or ASD, and will discuss the policy implications of findings with the Minister of Education.

Recommendation 28

\(^2\) In 2014 13% (equals 1,057 out of 7,952) of students who exited Reading Recovery were referred for specialist help for long term support
That the Government task the Ministry of Education to continue to work with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, and the cluster managers of Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour, to develop resources to promote good practice for access to Special Assessment Conditions (SAC).

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes the Ministry and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) reviewed SAC in 2014.

As a result of the review, a range of actions have been undertaken to improve access to SAC. The Ministry and the RTLB service have worked together with NZQA to develop resources which promote good practice accessing SAC. These have been useful for schools and have contributed to an increase in applications (see Recommendation 29).

NZQA will continue to provide regional seminars to assist RTLB in their understanding of the application process and facilitate improved knowledge of the information required for a successful application.

Recommendation 29

That the Government task the Ministry of Education to continue to work to provide more equitable access to special assessment conditions—in particular, for low-decile schools.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Ministry and the NZQA reviewed Special Assessment Conditions (SAC) in 2014 (see Recommendation 28).

As a result of the review a range of actions has been undertaken to address the issues that were identified, including the disparity in numbers of applications between schools of different decile.

RTLBT are actively involved in targeting low decile secondary schools and supporting them to provide school based evidence for SAC.

The Ministry has worked with the RTLB service to develop resources which promote good practice accessing SAC. Since 2014 there has been an overall increase in access to SAC (57.6%), with the greatest percentage increase being in decile 1-3 schools (176%). There was a significant increase in the use of school-based evidence for all schools (a 330% increase) but most importantly a 522% increase in the use of school based evidence in decile 1-3 schools.

The Ministry expects the number of applications from low decile schools to continue to improve as a result of actions being taken.
NZQA monitors applications for SAC on a school-by-school and decile basis and provides data to the MOE on request. NZQA will continue to engage with and provide additional support to low decile and small schools, particularly those with low uptake of SAC.

**Recommendation 30**

*That the Government require the Ministry of Education to support building capability for special assessment conditions staff*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Ministry will continue to work with the RTLB service to develop resources which promote good practice accessing SAC.

**Recommendation 31**

*That the Government ensure that the Ministry of Education investigates current research on assistive technology for students with dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism spectrum disorder, and updates its policies on effective teaching and assessment accordingly.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes championing 21st century practice in teaching and learning, and strengthening inclusion are strategic intentions in the Ministry *Four Year Plan 2016-20.*

The use of assistive technology was the most commonly reported accommodation by submitters to the inquiry. There is an upward trend in the number of students accessing assistive technology, including assistive technology funded by the Ministry of Education. Current practice is based on research and evidence about what works for individual students in their local context. The Ministry will continue to ensure that current research informs effective teaching and assessment.

Technologies available in schools enable many students to learn independently within a classroom environment using interactive, multi-sensorial tools. Technology can make it easier for all students to engage with the curriculum. Assistive technology funded by the Ministry for individual students may include devices like laptops, tablets, specialist software or hearing loops for classrooms.

As technology continues to develop and improve, it can assist a wider range of students. It is important to note that while the growth of personal devices provides an increasing range of options, the teacher’s focus needs to remain on learning effectiveness, according to individual learning needs and the outcomes required.

The digital environment is transforming teaching and learning in our schools. The Government is committed to taking full advantage of this opportunity to help schools become world leaders in digital education systems through changes to their infrastructure, practices and pedagogy.
Towards Digital Fluency sets out the range of initiatives underway to ensure schools have:

- state-of-the-art ICT infrastructure
- 21st century teaching and learning
- access to quality content and resources
- equitable access to digital technologies.

The Ministry’s draft vision for education in 2025 *Lifelong Learners in a Connected World* shows a highly connected, interdependent education system that equips students with the skills for the future, fosters students’ identity, language and culture, and prepares students to participate as successful citizens in the 21st century.

**Recommendation 32**

*That the Government task the Ministry of Education to investigate the feasibility of a recognised qualification for Special Education Needs Coordinators.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes some schools designate teachers as Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) or Heads of Learning Support to provide advice and to coordinate the provision of additional support for students who need it.

The Ministry is working with Massey University on a proposal to develop a network of expertise for teachers and SENCOs. This will include opportunities to investigate how to better provide professional development, which may include the possibility of qualification.

**Recommendation 33**

*That the Government task the Ministry of Education with assessing the feasibility of funding full-time, trained Special Education Needs Coordinators for schools with more than 200 students.*

**Response:** The Government does not accept this recommendation.

The SENCO role is often an additional role undertaken by senior staff as part of their work, or a description of a staff member who has been given the portfolio for ‘special needs’ (see Recommendation 32). The job titles of these staff include ‘SENCO’, ‘Head of Learning Support’, ‘Head of Special Needs’, with a range of roles and responsibilities depending on what works for the school.

SENCOs are employed by Boards of Trustees and are funded from a variety of funds available to schools. Not all schools choose to have SENCOs or organise their resourcing in this way.
As part of the Update, the Ministry is working with schools to design how to better support students through collaboration between schools (including SENCOs), RTLB, and Ministry specialists. The Update is making support easier to access through clearer processes designed around the student, not the system, and by bringing support together around the student in a timely way and using the resources currently available. There is a strong focus on building the capability of leaders and teachers in CoL to ensure the additional learning needs of students can be met.

**Recommendation 34**

*That the Government task the Ministry of Education to develop an information and support package for Special Education Needs Coordinators.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

See Recommendation 3. As part of the publicity drive, the Ministry will target SENCOs to ensure they have access to the necessary information and resources.

**Recommendation 35**

*That the Government ensure that the Ministry of Education works with the Education Council to strengthen initial and ongoing teacher education to identify and respond to students' additional learning needs, particularly those associated with dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism spectrum disorder.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes there is already a programme of work underway between the Ministry of Education and the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (Education Council) to strengthen teacher education. Further opportunities will emerge as this work continues.

The Ministry is working with the Education Council to ensure Initial Teacher Education programme requirements, and the Practising Teacher Criteria, which are currently being revised, meet the expectation that all teachers are knowledgeable in inclusive practices that support learners with diverse needs.

**Recommendation 36**

*That the Government ensure that the Ministry of Education asks the Education Council to consider amending the Practising Teacher Criteria Key Indicators list to include “ability to create an inclusive classroom, meet the needs of students who need learning support, and access additional help where needed”, as well as “(ii) select teaching approaches, resources, technologies and learning and assessment activities that are inclusive and effective for diverse ākonga”.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.
The Government notes the Practicing Teacher Criteria are standards that teachers in New Zealand must meet in order to be issued with and renew a full practising certificate. The Education Council is currently reviewing these criteria which will be piloted over the first two terms this year, 2017. The current criteria include the following, which are particularly relevant to students with additional learning needs:

9(ii) select teaching approaches, resources, technologies and learning and assessment activities that are inclusive and effective for diverse ākonga.

9(iii) modify teaching approaches to address the needs of individuals and groups of ākonga. 12 (i) systematically and critically engage with evidence and professional literature to refine practice.

If a teacher’s practising certificate is renewed, these criteria should mean they are confident in teaching students with additional learning needs. The Education Council introduced an audit of 10% of all practising certificate renewals to support lifting the quality and consistency of judgments made by professional leaders as they endorse renewals. ERO is contracted to undertake this work, and completed over 4,000 audits in the first year. The overall results and trend is pleasing. In addition, the Council has continued to provide professional development to the profession on appraisal.

**Recommendation 37**

*That the Government require the Ministry of Education to strengthen professional development and support for teachers to identify and respond to students with additional needs, such as dyslexia, and to engage with the parents of these children.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes reading and writing are two of the priority areas for PLD for the next three to five years.

The PLD for practising teachers is currently being changed as a result of the PLD review. Changes are being implemented over a three year period from 2016-2018. Professional support that builds capability across the system to undertake teacher inquiry will be strengthened.

Building inquiry capability will support school leaders and teachers to identify students who require additional learning support to be successful students, as well as provide information about the kinds of strategies and actions they can take.

The Government will ask the Ministry to strengthen PLD and support for teachers to identify and respond to students with additional needs, such as dyslexia, and to engage with the parents of these children. This work will be incorporated into the PLD implementation work programme.
In addition the Ministry will support, develop and strengthen networks of expertise, including CoL, to enable teachers to learn from each other about effective practice (see Recommendation 4).

Recommendation 38

That the Government require the Ministry of Education to incorporate its work into strengthening professional development and support for teachers, to identify and respond to learners with additional needs, into its existing Professional Learning and Development programme.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

See Recommendation 37.

Recommendation 39

That the Government ensure that the Ministry of Education makes available professional development for specialist teachers (such as Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour and Resource Teachers: Literacy) and teacher aides to strengthen working relationships, improve role clarity, and build knowledge of inclusive practice.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes the Ministry funds clusters to provide PLD for specialist teachers.

The Government notes the Ministry provided over 340 special education study awards and scholarships for 2017. The awards and scholarships are provided each year aiming to ensure the supply of sufficient specialist teachers in the workforce to provide a quality service to children with additional learning needs.

One of the qualifications supported by the Ministry is the Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching: Autism Spectrum Disorder. This qualification develops specialist teaching skills relating to understanding, assessing, and providing education for students with ASD. *Autism Spectrum Disorders in New Zealand: Promising Practices and Interesting Issues* recently won a prize for a resource in New Zealand higher education. Finalists for this award are chosen by teachers themselves. This is a practical demonstration of the value of this resource.

The Ministry has published resources which focus on the role clarity of teachers and teacher aides, and are designed to promote effective working partnerships. The existing modules are currently being refreshed. Three new modules will be available from early 2017, alongside a new self-review tool for school leaders to support their strategic planning in using teacher aides and other learning support effectively.

CoL is strengthening working relationships and extending inclusive teaching practice between schools. The Ministry, NZEI Te Riu Roa and the NZ School Trustees Association
are engaged in joint work to developing and foster the contribution of support staff, including teacher aides, in these CoL.

**Recommendation 40**

*That the Government require the Ministry of Education to review the alignment of specialist services, such as Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour, and Resource Teachers Literacy, and other specialist services, within Communities of Learning.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes there are currently three groups of specialist teachers who support individual students with language, literacy, learning and behaviour difficulties and their teachers: Resource Teachers: Literacy, RTLB, and Resource Teachers Māori. Each group has different governance and management arrangements. There are practice boundaries and limited cohesion between them. As CoL progress, the Ministry will review how best specialist services can be aligned within this framework.

**Recommendation 41**

*That the Government require the Ministry of Education to investigate and lift the capability of the specialist teacher workforce, including the current capacity and capability of the specialist teacher workforce to support students with dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism spectrum disorder in schools and Communities of Learning.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government will ask the Ministry to continue to investigate the practice of the specialist teacher workforce, including the current capacity and capability of the specialist teacher workforce to support students with dyslexia, dyspraxia and ASD across schools and CoL.

The Ministry advises that the training level of the specialist teacher workforce is variable. RTLB receive training on dyslexia within a wider focus on reading difficulties. In addition, some RTLB may have undertaken the specialist course in ASD.

Resource Teachers: Literacy do not receive specific training in dyslexia, but some may take it on themselves to undertake training in this area, or join RTLB for training.

Resource Teachers: Māori do not receive explicit training in these areas – however some may take it on themselves to undertake training in this area, or may join RTLB for training.

**Recommendation 42**

*That the Government task the Ministry of Education to ensure that Special Education Needs Coordinators’ training and professional development focus on creating a school culture of inclusion, and providing advice about access to additional services, including assisting with Ongoing Resourcing Scheme applications alongside families.*
Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The proposed recommendation is consistent with current policy and practice. Some SENCOs have access to PLD that promotes inclusive education through their local SENCO networks. Some SENCOs have also been involved in a national programme of Inclusive Education workshops to introduce the Inclusive Practice tools and the Inclusive Education resources on Te Kete Ipurangi. The Ministry anticipates CoL will provide opportunities to develop strong collaborative expertise among SENCOs/Learning Support Coordinators.

Recommendation 43

That the Government require the Ministry of Education to work with Communities of Learning on opportunities to use expertise in multiple schools.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government agrees one of the most significant things we can do within schools to raise student achievement, is to support and lift the quality of teaching.

Teaching improves when teachers discuss and consider the effectiveness of what they do for their individual students, and plan their teaching based on that. CoL provide a way to widen the pool of teachers with the skills and knowledge to do this well.

The Government agrees there are opportunities to help schools make better use of their SENCO resource (see Recommendation 34). These include developing an information and support package that will bring together all the information SENCOs need for effective practice. In addition there is an opportunity for schools in a CoL to pool their SENCO resource so that individual schools who may not have a dedicated SENCO could still access a SENCO ‘shared’ across the CoL.

The opportunities for CoL to collaborate to share expertise and resources are being actively pursued by the Ministry.

Recommendation 44

That the Government require the Ministry of Education to continue to build sector capability that includes autism spectrum disorder-specific content, inclusive practice, and curriculum planning.

Response: The Government accepts this recommendation.

Resources to build teacher capability have been made available online on the Inclusive Education website and on the Curriculum Online website (see Recommendation 3). This content includes ASD-specific information for educators, as well as information about inclusion, curriculum planning, and progress and achievement. ASD-specific study awards are available for a range of educational professionals each year.
The Ministry continues to collaborate with the Ministry of Health to fund Tips for Autism, which is a three-day course for teams that support students with ASD aged 5–12 years. The Ministry also jointly funds ASD Plus with the Ministry of Health. This is an initiative to increase parents’ knowledge and skills to support their pre-school children with ASD. Participation in these programmes is voluntary for teachers and parents.

Resources to build teacher capability have been made available online on the Inclusive Education and the New Zealand Curriculum Online websites. This content includes ASD-specific information for educators, as well as information about inclusion, curriculum planning, progress, and achievement.

ASD-specific study awards are available for a range of educational professionals each year. Resources have also been developed so that Ministry teams and RTLB clusters continue to support school staff to access other PLD about ASD.

**Recommendation 45**

*That the Government task the Ministry of Education to review its autism spectrum disorder action plan in response to the updated New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes that, although the Ministry of Health has overall responsibility for reviewing the guideline, it is a shared initiative with the Ministry of Education. The Ministry is currently reviewing its ASD action plan and is planning to convene a cross sector, multi-agency working group to identify opportunities and provide advice regarding implementation of the ASD Guideline.

The Government acknowledges that any response to the challenges and opportunities which autism present needs to include people with ASD themselves, their families and whanau, multiple Government agencies, and other organisations supporting people with ASD.

**Recommendation 46**

*That the Government task the Ministry of Education to work with parents, the Ministry of Health, and Autism NZ to review information resources for parents.*

**Response:** The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Ministry will prioritise a review of information resources. The Government notes a Disability Information and Advisory Service, *Altogether Autism*, is funded through the Ministry of Health and will contribute to the review.
Government Response to the
Report of the Government Administration Committee
on
Inquiry into the accessibility of services to Parliament

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252
Government Response to report of the Government Administration Committee on its inquiry into the accessibility of services to Parliament

Introduction

The Government has carefully considered the Government Administration Committee’s (the Committee) report on its inquiry into the accessibility of services to Parliament.

The Government welcomes the Committee’s report, which seeks to align the accessibility of the services provided to Parliament with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention), and represents a major contribution to the development of accessible services for disabled people.

Recommendations to the House of Representatives and response:

The Committee made the following recommendations to the House of Representatives:

- the Parliamentary Service and the Office of the Clerk develop policies for accessibility, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. (p. 9)
- the Parliamentary Service and the Office of the Clerk devise and implement a plan to address disability access concerns regarding Parliament, including those raised in this report and others that may be raised in subsequent consultation, and to report back to us on progress in twelve months (p. 9)
- the Parliamentary Service and the Office of the Clerk consult with disabled people regarding all accessibility issues and upgrades. (p. 9)
- members ensure that their offices outside Parliament are fully accessible, and that the Parliamentary Service help members to do so. (p. 22)
- the Office of the Clerk and the Parliamentary Service to ensure that all venues used outside Parliament are fully accessible for disabled people. (p. 22).

Response:

The Parliamentary Service and the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives may provide a written response to the Committee’s recommendations.

Recommendation to the Government and response

Recommendation 2 (page 15 of the report):

That the Government appropriate funding dedicated to making the parliamentary precincts and processes accessible for disabled people by:

- providing mobility car parks close to the main public entrance
- providing appropriate signage, accessible walkways, and rest benches in the precincts
- ensuring that information on security processes is readily available at security checkpoints and on the Parliament website
- providing disability awareness training for security staff
- upgrading the reception counters to ensure full accessibility
- urgently upgrading the stairway between the Executive Wing and Parliament House to ensure full and equal access for disabled people
• upgrading all the lifts to talking lifts
• installing tactile indicators where necessary
• clearing the hallways and walkways of obstacles
• ensuring that the necessary contrast is on all glass windows, doors and walls.

Response:

Ministers will consider all funding requests made by the Parliamentary Service and/or the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives to implement a plan of actions to address access concerns relating to the services of Parliament for disabled people as part of future Budget processes.

Recommendation 3 (page 20 of the report):

That the Government provide funding for upgrading the Parliament website to make more information available, to publish educational videos, and to ensure that information and videos are available in additional languages and accessible formats such as easy-read and large print.

Response:

Ministers will consider all funding requests made by the Parliamentary Service and/or the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives to upgrade the accessibility features of the Parliament website as part of future Budget processes.

Recommendation 4 (page 20 of the report):

That the Government provide funding for Parliament Television to provide live audio descriptions and simultaneous New Zealand Sign Language interpretations of coverage of the House as part of normal funding processes. (p. 20)

Response:

Ministers will consider all funding requests made by the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives to implement live audio descriptions and simultaneous New Zealand Sign Language interpretations of coverage of the House as part of future Budget processes.

Recommendation 5 (page 22 of the report):

That the Government ensure that sufficient funding and support is provided to enable disabled members of Parliament to carry out their roles as elected representatives fully. (p. 22)

Response:

Ministers will consider all funding requests made by the Parliamentary Service to enable disabled members of Parliament to fully carry out their roles as elected representatives as part of future Budget processes.

Conclusion

The Government acknowledges that:

• Parliament is at the heart of democracy in New Zealand and should be accessible to everyone
the Committee's recommendations to improve access to the services of Parliament align with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and assist us to meet our obligations under this Convention.

ensuring equal access to the services of Parliament for disabled people will also have additional benefits in providing improved access for other groups such as young and elderly people.

To support the recommendations made by the Committee, the Government will consider all funding requests, as part of normal funding processes, which are made by the Parliamentary Service and/or the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives to implement a plan of actions to address access concerns to the services of Parliament for disabled people.
Government Response to
Report of the Health Committee
on
Petition 2011/102 of Carmel Berry and Charlotte Korte

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 248

Introduction

The Government has carefully considered the Committee’s report on Petition 2011/102 of Carmel Berry and Charlotte Korte, requesting that the House of Representatives inquire into the use of surgical mesh in New Zealand.

The Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 248.

The Government supports all of the Committee’s recommendations.

Recommendations and government response

Recommendation 1: That the Government work with relevant medical colleges to investigate options for establishing and maintaining a centralised surgical mesh registry.

Response: The Government is working on a new and comprehensive regulatory regime to regulate therapeutic products in New Zealand, which will replace the Medicines Act 1981. This regime will modernise the regulatory framework for all therapeutic products, including medical devices, and will be flexible enough to ensure effective control over evolving technology. The regime will look to align with international standards where appropriate.

The Government has made a series of decisions about the new regulatory regime. These decisions confirm the government’s intention that the new regulatory regime will be comprehensive and will cover all therapeutic products. This regime will enable controls that assess and manage the risks of therapeutic products used in New Zealand.

Post market monitoring of therapeutic products is an important aspect of ensuring the benefits of using these products continue to outweigh the risks. There currently exists an array of post-market mechanisms which are used to monitor the performance of therapeutic products and can be used to make ongoing decisions about continued use of products. These mechanisms include adverse reaction / event reporting by health care professionals, suppliers and patients; ongoing monitoring and testing by the regulator and through obligations placed on the product supplier to notify concerns. Actions taken can include recall of products, removal of product from the market and product correction. The new regime will require a continuation and further development of these provisions to ensure adequate and effective control of medical devices once they have been placed on the market. The use of registries can be seen as a further mechanism that may assist in deciding whether products continue to meet risk / benefit expectations.

Establishing medical device registries in New Zealand requires careful consideration and it will be important to balance the benefit likely to accrue against the cost to the health system. Important matters for consideration will include:
- The expected utility of information available from a registry. Information may, for instance, be useful for tracing patients, measuring health care outcomes and performance, providing information about products used and so on.
- The dataset that should be collected and how this could be achieved.
- The utility of the data in determining problems and trends. The small New Zealand population may mean that the trends may not be readily apparent.
- Whether a registry would be cost effective, how it would be funded, who should operate it and have access and whether it should be mandated in legislation.

The Ministry of Health will carefully consider the utility of a registry to record surgical mesh use and will consult with the relevant parties. This consultation may take place within a wider consideration of the need for medical device registries and also within the context of the development of new therapeutic products legislation. Consultation on the new regime will be wide-ranging and involve all relevant stakeholders including the medical colleges.

**Recommendation 2:** That a registry be informed by the International Urogynaecological Association classification for recording mesh surgery complications.

**Response:** If a surgical mesh registry is established, consideration will be given to aligning terminology with recognised international standards and classification terms.

**Recommendation 3:** That the Government suggests that the Colleges take note of the petitioners’ and others’ experiences and review best practice around informed consent for mesh procedures.

**Response:** The Ministry of Health will discuss the outcomes of the Health Committee report with the relevant colleges in the context of the expectations of the profession in terms of maintaining best practice and ensuring patients receive the information they need to make an informed decision about their care.

The Ministry of Health agrees that the professional colleges are the most appropriate organisations to take the lead on professional practice matters such as appropriate use of surgical mesh and ensuring patients are informed of the benefits and risks of any treatment. This is consistent with the requirements for health practitioners described in the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' Code of Ethical Practice ([available at: https://www.ranzcog.edu.au/the-ranzcog/policies-and-guidelines/code-of-ethical-practice.html](https://www.ranzcog.edu.au/the-ranzcog/policies-and-guidelines/code-of-ethical-practice.html)) is an example of how this requirement is addressed.

**Recommendation 4:** That the Government encourages health providers to ensure that coding for mesh surgery is consistent. This should include a system to allow patients with mesh complications to be identified and monitored.

**Response:** The Ministry of Health will work with DHBs and other health providers to ensure the consistency of coding of procedures in regard to the use of surgical mesh is improved.

**Recommendation 5:** That the Government encourages utilisation of the adverse events reporting system as applicable to medical devices.
Response: The Government strongly supports the reporting of suspected adverse events associated with the use of all medical devices and has in place mechanisms to facilitate this. Arrangements will be made to further encourage use of this system including reminding health care professionals about their responsibility to report adverse events.

Recommendation 6: That the Government endorses the provision of ongoing education for surgeons on the use of surgical mesh and mesh removal surgery.

Response: The Government supports ongoing education for all healthcare professionals in New Zealand. The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 requires healthcare professionals to operate within their scope of practice and maintain competence in this scope.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has issued advice to its members about the use of surgical mesh. The College is expected to update advice as new information about the use of surgical mesh becomes available. The Ministry of Health’s view is that it is appropriate for the profession to take the lead in ensuring surgical mesh is used appropriately and publishes links on the Medsafe website to guidance published by the College and by internationally recognised regulators.

Recommendation 7: That the Government considers expanding Medsafe’s role over time to assess the quality and safety of a medical device before it can be used in New Zealand.

Response: The Government is working on a new and comprehensive regulatory regime to regulate therapeutic products in New Zealand, which will replace the Medicines Act 1981. This regime will modernise the regulatory framework for all therapeutic products, including medical devices, and will be flexible enough to ensure effective control over evolving technology.

The new regime will also look to align with international standards where appropriate and put in place an upgraded domestic regime for the regulation of therapeutic products. This is necessary to address the legislative framework and gaps in policy settings, which increase the risks of adverse health outcomes, especially in relation to medical devices and cells and tissues therapies.

The new regime is seeking to implement a life cycle approach to regulation. This approach includes risk appropriate requirements for approvals to be issued before a medical device can be used in New Zealand, as well as strengthening post market controls to identify safety issues and take action in a timely manner.

Conclusion

The government has carefully considered the Committee’s report on Petition 2011/102 of Carmel Berry and Charlotte Korte, requesting that the House of Representatives inquire into the use of surgical mesh in New Zealand.

The government supports all of the Committee’s recommendations.
The government has initiated a project to develop a new and comprehensive regulatory regime to regulate therapeutic products in New Zealand, which will replace the Medicines Act 1981. This regime will modernise the regulatory framework for all therapeutic products, including medical devices, and will be flexible enough to ensure effective control over evolving technology. The regime will look to align with international standards where appropriate.

The recommendations of the Health Committee that are associated with the regulation of medical devices in New Zealand, adverse event reporting, and options for a registry will be carefully considered as part of the development of new legislation and the associated regulatory regime for therapeutic products.

The Ministry of Health has noted the recommendations associated with ensuring patients receive informed consent, and ensuring health care professionals who use surgical mesh maintain best practice and keep informed about the risks and benefits of using these products. These actions sit with the professional bodies such as the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. The Ministry will be discussing the outcome of the Health Committee report outlining its expectations to the Colleges with respect to professional practice.
Government Response to
Report of the Health Committee
on
Petition 2011/109 of Jody Anderson
on behalf of Tube Wean NZ and 4,161 others

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252

Introduction

The government has carefully considered the Committee’s report on Petition 2011/109 of Jody Anderson on behalf of Tube Wean NZ and 4,161 others (the Petition).

Tube feeding provides nutrition and hydration for those children that are unable to feed orally. Although some medical conditions require long term tube feeding, some children can become dependent on the tube for feeding. If this is the case, a transition plan from tube feeding to consuming food and liquid orally is often required. Some transitions can be managed in a community setting, but other more serious cases require intense intervention.

The Petition called for the government to recognise feeding tube dependency as a condition that needs effective treatment. It also requested that New Zealand support and fund the internationally recognised Graz method, with training for New Zealand health professionals and create a strict protocol for children leaving our hospitals tube fed.

The two latter requests by the petitioner were later amended to ask the government to consider a national tube weaning programme, and provide guidelines and advice to clinicians and parents to understand the risks and potential complications from tube feeding.

The government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

The government has taken action on all of the Committee’s recommendations.

Recommendations and government response

Recommendation 1: that it [the government] investigate introducing a national intensive tube-weaning programme and report back to the committee on its findings

Response: The government is not intending to develop or introduce a national tube feeding programme. It considers that appropriate actions are being taken to improve the national consistency and availability of tube weaning services.

The National Tube Weaning Clinical Network was set up in July 2015 through a contract between the Ministry of Health and the New Zealand Paediatric Society. The members of the Network are recognised experts in the field of paediatric tube feeding and tube weaning. The role of the Network is to continue to educate and support clinicians, health providers and families to improve the national consistency of tube weaning services.

The Ministry of Health will ensure that the Network continues to monitor the number of children who require long-term tube feeding and develops a coordinated approach to the ongoing provision of tube weaning services, both community-based and intensive.

At this stage it does not appear that funding is a barrier to the availability of tube weaning services. There is provision within current DHB baseline funding and Inter District Flow processes for tube weaning services. The government will request that the National Pricing Programme, Ministry of Health, prioritise a review of tube weaning pricing within the next two years. This review will ensure the level of funding remains sufficient to cover the cost of providing tube weaning services and can take into account costs of enhancing the service.
Recommendation 2: that it investigate ways to provide information and guidance to health service providers about tube feeding and its risks, including tube dependency, as soon as possible

Response: The government considers this action completed.

Guidelines

The Clinical Network has developed a national guideline on the end-to-end tube feeding process, including risks, weaning, and positive approaches to optimise oral feeding. It is currently going through consumer and sector consultation and are expected to be publically available by 30 June 2017. The guideline is intended for both clinicians and consumers.

These guidelines supplement those developed by Waitemata District Health Board in 2014, which were specific to intensive tube weaning programme.

Consumer advisor

One of the members of the Clinical Network is a consumer advisor. Their role is to link with consumer organisations, such as Tube Wean NZ and ensure that the consumer perspective is included in any discussion and decision making process. Currently the consumer advisor is working on a survey with the aim to increase engagement with other consumers.

The Clinical Network has identified the need to improve communications with the sector and consumers as a priority in 2017.

Conclusion

The government is satisfied with the progress in developing national improvement and consistency of tube feeding and tube weaning. Through the Network it will continue to ensure that children and families impacted are fully informed of any risks and receive high-quality, consistent care.

The government thanks the writers of the petition for bringing this matter to their attention.
Government Response to

Report of the Health Committee

on

Petition 2011/122 of Rachel Noble on behalf of Disabled Persons Assembly and 1,491 others

Presented to the House of Representatives
in accordance with Standing Order 249
Government Response to Report of the Health Committee on Petition 2011/122 of Rachel Noble on behalf of Disabled Persons Assembly and 1,491 others

Introduction

The Government welcomes the Health Committee’s (the Committee’s) report on Petition 2011/122 of Rachel Noble on behalf of Disabled Person’s Assembly and 1,491 others. The Government has carefully considered the Report and makes this response in accordance with Standing Order 248.

The Committee has made one recommendation to the Government on investigating ways to improve the uptake of Funded Family Care (FFC) policy by making it simpler and more accessible for potential applicants.

The Government supports the recommendation and is taking action on the Committee’s recommendation to make improvements to the ease of access to, and application of, the policy, particularly in regards to improving information and communication.

Background

For over 20 years, the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) and its predecessors have operated a policy of not paying family carers (parents, spouses and resident family members) for the support that they provide to disabled family members receiving disability support services (DSS), funded through the Vote Health National Disability Support Services appropriation.

In January 2010, the Human Rights Review Tribunal (the Tribunal) declared that this policy resulted in unjustified discrimination that is inconsistent with Section 19 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 (NZBORA) (see Atkinson & others v Ministry of Health [2010] NZHRRT 1.) Following the declaration that this policy was discriminatory, the Ministry was granted an order to suspend the effect of the declaration until further order of the Tribunal.

The Crown subsequently appealed the Tribunal’s declaration to the High Court and the Court of Appeal. Both courts however, upheld the declaration (see: Ministry of Health v Peter Atkinson on behalf of the Estate of Susan Atkinson & Others). The Government elected to not appeal to the Supreme Court, which meant that the Tribunal’s declaration stood and the Ministry was required to change its policy of not allowing family carers to be paid for providing disability support. In later 2012, the plaintiffs agreed that they would not initiate action to lift the Suspension order before May 2013.

It should be noted that the Ministry did have a pre-existing policy of allowing non-resident, non-spousal family carers, to be employed by a provider under Individualised Funding. In response to the Court decision, the Government introduced the FFC policy to address the specific discrimination found in the court case.

The Family Carers case raised issues that went to the heart of the relative responsibilities of the state and families, and the degree of responsibility that family members in different situations have towards each other. The Government’s fundamental tenet is that families have primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their members. Therefore, there is a level of care that families can reasonably be expected to provide to disabled members. The FFC policy recognises that in the case of disabled adults with high

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1 Individualised Funding is funding to enable the disabled individual to contract their own disability supports other than, or in addition to Ministry contracted service providers.
and very high support needs, the level of support provided by family members is sometimes above and beyond what would reasonably be expected of families.

The decision was made to pay qualifying family carers through a Section 88 Notice issued under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 (NZPHDA) at a payment rate that is based on the minimum wage plus associated employment costs. This decision involves paying adult disabled people allocated Ministry-funded Home Community Support Services (HCSS) an allowance under Section 88 of the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 (NZPHDA) and allowing them to employ family carers.

Following the initial implementation, the Ministry commissioned an independent evaluation of the policy. The aim of this independent evaluation was to assess the impact and effectiveness of FFC and the reasons influencing its uptake in its first year of operation. This report was released in April 2015 and its key findings were:

- Nearly 9/10 of respondents said that FFC funding had impacted positively
- Almost 2/3 of respondents said their household was on a better financial footing
- Almost all would recommend FFC to others in similar circumstances
- Nearly 6/10 of respondents thought the eligibility criteria fair.

Current Cases

Extensive litigation, and legislation precedes this petition.

Atkinson claims

Between 2001 and 2002, the Human Rights Commission received three claims alleging discrimination under the Ministry’s ‘blanket’ policy of not paying family members to care for their disabled adult children in a manner similar to contracted providers. Also in January 2002, Part 1A of the Human Rights Act 1993 came into force. In addition to section 19 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, this part prohibits discrimination by the government through its practices or policies.

Between 2004 and 2006, nine Claimants filed a claim under the new Part 1A with the Human Rights Commission. The claims alleged discrimination based on family status under the Ministry of Health’s Policy of prohibiting the funding of resident family members and spouses and parents (whether resident or not) to provide disability support services to disabled family members. As the claims were against the policy, mediation was not appropriate and therefore they progressed to the Tribunal for a hearing; the hearing was in September and October 2008. The Tribunal issued a declaration that the Ministry’s policy was discriminatory. The declaration was, however, ‘suspended’ by the Tribunal to allow the Crown to appeal the decision. Between 2010 and 2012, the Crown appealed to the High Court and Court of Appeal; both appeals were dismissed.²

During 2012, following the Atkinson Court of Appeal decision, Margaret Spencer requested to be paid by the Ministry for caring for her adult disabled son. The Ministry confirmed its original decision that it would not pay for providing such family care. Accordingly, Mrs Spencer filed a claim in the High Court for judicial review of the Ministry’s decision to refuse to pay her.

Part 4A NZ Public Health and Disability Act 2000

In May 2013, as part of Budget legislation, Parliament enacted Part 4A of the NZ Public Health and Disability Act 2000. This was a new specific Part of the Act to respond to the Atkinson claims. The Part

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provided a statutory framework lifting the blanket ban on paying family members for such care, and authorising family care policies enabling payment to most family members for caring for their disabled adult children. The intent of the Part was to apply both retrospectively and prospectively, and included provision to preclude similar claims from being heard or decided by any Tribunal and Court.

Payment was, however, to be balanced against the principle that family members had the primary responsibility for the well-being of their disabled family members and that funding to support the new policy must be within sustainable limits. This aligned with the overall purpose of the Act. Part 4A also preserved the Atkinson claims and Mrs Spencer's judicial review proceedings, and enabled settlement of those claims. Mrs Spencer subsequently filed additional High Court proceedings seeking a declaratory judgment to be joined to the Atkinson claims.

On 1 October 2013, the Ministry issued its new funded family care policy of paying some family members to provide such care. The Minister of Health also issued a notice under section 88 of the Act providing the parameters of payments and prescribing the obligations on all parties.³

At the same time, the Government approved settlement of the Atkinson claims.

Spencer claims

Also in October 2013, the High Court decided the Spencer proceedings (judicial review and declaratory judgment). The Court found that the Ministry's former policy of not paying family members was not a family care policy under Part 4A as it did not provide for payment as defined in that Part. The Court also concluded that the exclusionary provisions inserted to prevent further claims therefore did not apply retrospectively (they did apply prospectively), so Mrs Spencer could pursue a claim for damages/compensation in a manner similar to the Atkinson claimants. The Crown's appeal to the Court of Appeal was dismissed.⁴

Mrs Spencer's claim in the High Court exceeded $1.2m. On 20 July 2016, the High Court awarded damages to Mrs Spencer of $207,681.⁵

Recommendations and Government Response

Recommendation:

The Health Committee has considered Petition 2011/122 of Rachel Noble on behalf of Disabled Person's Assembly and 1,491 other, and recommends that the Government investigate ways to improve the uptake of the Funded Family Care policy by making it simpler and more accessible for potential applicants.

Response: Accept

The Ministry of Health accepts the recommendation and, in response to the independent Evaluation of FFC and additional information collected from Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination (NASC) agencies about take-up of FFC, has already taken action to improve the uptake and communications around availability of FFC for eligible carers. These changes will make the policy and its boundaries clearer, improve ease of access and enhance communication around availability of the policy. Specific changes include:

⁴ Spencer v Attorney-General [2014] 2 NZLR 80; Attorney-General on behalf of the Ministry of Health v Spencer [2015] NZCA 143
⁵ Spencer v Ministry of Health [2016] NZHC 1650
• Clarifying the intention of the informed consent mechanism and introduce supported decision making principles
• Raising awareness of the FFC policy to make the scheme and its boundaries clearer, for example, NASCs will offer FFC as one of the many support options available to people when they first approach services for support
• Decreasing monitoring from monthly visits for the first six months of the arrangement, to one visit in the first month, and annual reassessments thereafter
• Clarifying the process and requirements of what should be done with unused funds, for example if holiday pay is not used, or if the family member chooses not to join KiwiSaver.

Outlined below are details of Ministry policy being reviewed following the Committee’s report.

**Awareness raising**

Access to information about FFC was mentioned in the independent evaluation as a potential barrier. There was also misinformation about some aspects of FFC; such as how the funding may or may not affect access to other funding. This also had the potential to put potential FFC recipients of from applying.

Some of the evaluation responses suggest the need for better information and communication about FFC. In 2015, the Ministry released further information on accessing FFC through the Disability Information Advisory Services. A guidance document was issued to NASC agencies in 2015 to provide additional supplementary information on the FFC policy and to assist NASC staff to interpret the FFC process and to apply the FFC requirements in a consistent way.

**Low uptake**

The additional information collected by NASCs showed that almost half of the respondents interviewed as part of the independent evaluation did not take up FFC as they were happy with their current support arrangements at this time. Responses included that they didn’t want to be a paid family carer, they were not in a position to provide full time care and needed external workers, and they wanted to encourage independence from their family. However, the evaluation did identify some administrative processes that will make uptake more attractive, as outlined below.

**Supported decision making**

Under the policy, if a disabled person has been assessed as eligible for FFC, the NASC must ensure that the person is able to make an informed decision whether to choose this option or not. The disabled person may make the decision with or without the assistance of an advocate. Either way, the NASC must be satisfied that the disabled person has made an informed and willing choice about the FFC option.

The Evaluation report found this aspect of informed decision making to be a barrier to accessing FFC, as the majority of those most likely to benefit from FFC were thought to lack the capacity to comply with these requirements.

The FFC Policy has been strengthened to provide a greater focus on the role of supported decision-making principles. The supported decision-making principles need to be evident so that the disabled person’s preferences and wishes are adequately represented.

**Disabled people as employers**

The responsibilities of the disabled person as the employer includes responsibilities such as complying with all laws as an employer, ensuring that payments relating to employment obligations are made, and resolving any employment problems. The independent evaluation found that the capacity of the disabled
person to carry out their responsibilities as an employer of the family carer under the FFC arrangement was a barrier.

The Ministry will provide clearer information and support for the disabled person in their role as an employer. The direction of the disability sector is towards disabled people having greater choice and control over their lives and support they receive. Having the disabled person as the employer in FFC is in keeping with this direction.

**Clarification of what to do with unused funds**

The independent evaluation highlighted some issues around what to do with unused money accumulating in the employer’s account and how to reimburse family carers for expenses. Unused funds can accumulate in a disabled person’s account for a variety of reasons; the family or whanau carer opts out of KiwiSaver, the disabled person decides to stop FFC, or replacement care is provided as voluntary care. The disabled person (and/ or their nominated representative) can now contact the NASC for help in resolving these issues.

**Decreasing follow up visits**

The local NASC agencies assist with monitoring the delivery, safety and quality of FFC arrangements by undertaking follow-up visits with FFC funded families. The NASCs were expected to undertake a follow up visit at least each month for the first six months. This was initially to ensure the arrangements were working satisfactorily for the disabled person and their family. However, the independent evaluation found that the value of the visits was questionable. The Ministry has changed the policy to reduce the frequency of the visits to one visit in the first month followed by an annual reassessment.

**Further change to policy amending the 40 hour cap**

In addition to the actions, as outlined above, the Government has recently made an additional change to further increase uptake.

The change will remove the 40 hour allocation cap for FFC per eligible person. Disabled people with an assessed allocation of support of more 40 hours a week will now be able to employ more than one family carer, where circumstance allow, rather than having external additional supports.

The policy change means that those granted an FFC allocation exception beyond 40 hours per week could employ more than one family/whānau carer (up to a maximum of 40 hours per carer), if there is capacity, capability and desire within the family/whānau and it is in keeping with the disabled person’s wishes.

The change allows additional flexibility in the application of the policy to ensure that the disabled person and their family have as much choice and control over their care/carer arrangements as possible.

**Conclusion**

The changes made so far have resulted in a 38 percent increase in numbers of eligible people receiving FFC since November 2015.

In summary, the Government supports the Report and notes the requirement that the Ministry of Health report back on the work done to improve the policy by January 2017. The Government thanks the Committee for the contribution it has made through its work.
Government Response to
Report of the Health Committee
on
Petition 2014/27 of Bridget Rowse on behalf of Patu Puauahi Smokefree Northland

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252
Introduction


2 The Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

Background

3 Evidence shows that smoking in cars is harmful for any children present.

4 Exposure to second-hand smoke is a serious health hazard and estimated to account for about five to eight percent of the 4500 to 5000 tobacco-related deaths in New Zealand each year.

5 The New Zealand Health Survey 2012-13 found around five percent of children were exposed to second-hand smoke in the car in which they usually travelled. For Māori children the figure was 11 percent. Children who lived in the most deprived areas were four times more likely to be exposed to SHS in the car than children who lived in the least deprived areas.

6 There are currently no legal restrictions on smoking in private vehicles that are not workplaces.

7 The Government’s approach to addressing second-hand smoke exposure has been to consider non-legislative options, for example extending smoke-free restrictions to include areas such as vehicles, parks, playgrounds and beaches where children are particularly at risk from second-hand smoke and the negative behavioural role model of adult smokers.

8 Attempts to reduce the exposure of children to smoking in cars have focused on public health education and media campaigns. An early media campaign evaluation in 2007 found that 55 percent of smokers with children recalled the campaign and about 10 percent had changed their behaviour.

9 There are some initiatives run at local and regional levels to promote smokefree cars when children are travelling in them which have been assisted by community partnership grants funded by the Health Promotion Agency.

10 The Government recognises that protecting children from the harms of second-hand smoke exposure is important and needs to be taken seriously by all those concerned.

11 The Government has a significant tobacco control programme and is continuing to implement best practise smoking succession initiatives including promoting smokefree cars, legislative change or other measures.
Recommendation and government response

12 **Recommendation:** The Health Committee has considered Petition 2014/27 of Bridget Rowse on behalf of Patu Puauahi Smokefree Northland and recommends to the Government that it introduce legislation, or other measures, to ban smoking in cars carrying children under the age of 18 years.

13 **Response:** The Government has considered the Health Committee's report and believes present initiatives are sufficient to deter smoking in cars carrying children under the age of 18 Years.
Government Response to

Report of the Health Committee

on

Petition 2014/61 of Evangelia Henderson on behalf of the New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation and 10,000 others.

Presented to the House of Representatives
in accordance with Standing Order 249
Government Response to Report of the Health Committee on Petition 2014/61 of Evangelia Henderson on behalf of the New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation and 10,000 others

Introduction

The Government welcomes the Health Committee’s (the Committee’s) report on Petition 2014/61 of Evangelia Henderson on behalf of the New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation and 10,000 others. The Government has carefully considered the Report and makes this response in accordance with Standing Order 248.

The Committee has made one recommendation to the Government that it investigate extending New Zealand’s free national breast screening programme to women aged between 70 and 74.

The Government supports the recommendation and has directed the Ministry of Health to undertake work to investigate what impact extending the eligible age range would have in New Zealand. This work will include the impact on:

- equity issues, and the impacts and potential risks for priority groups
- BreastScreen Aotearoa’s ability to maintain the existing high quality programme for women aged 45 to 69
- workforce and capacity
- co-located mammography services for symptomatic and high risk women.

Recommendations and government response

Recommendation 1: The Committee recommend to the Government that it investigate extending New Zealand’s free national breast screening programme to women aged between 70 and 74.

The Committee recommend that the following matters are considered when deciding on whether to extend New Zealand’s free national breast screening programme to women aged between 70 and 74.

- Whether the benefits observed internationally would translate to a New Zealand setting.
- Whether the 70 percent screening target, which aims to achieve a 30 percent reduction in breast cancer mortality, can be maintained in the population already eligible for screening.
- What effect an extension of the screening programme would have on Māori coverage rates.
- Whether there is workforce capacity to implement such an extension of the screening programme.

Response: The Government supports the recommendation to investigate if New Zealand’s national breast screening programme should be extended to women aged between 70 to 74. The Ministry of Health is undertaking an investigation of what impact extending the eligible age range would have in New Zealand. Any changes to the national breast screening programme need to be carefully considered in the New Zealand context and introduced without jeopardising service provision for current participants, particularly for priority groups.

Conclusion: The Government supports the recommendation and work is underway to examine the benefits and harms and the impact on BreastScreen Aotearoa of extending the eligible age range to 74 years for New Zealand women.

1 Priority groups for BreastScreen Aotearoa include Māori, Pacific, unscreened and under-screened women.
Government Response to  
Report of Justice and Electoral Committee  
on  
*Inquiry into 2013 local authority elections*

Presented to the House of Representatives  
in accordance with Standing Order 252
Government Response to Report of Justice and Electoral Committee on Inquiry into the 2013 local authority elections

Introduction

The Government welcomes the Justice and Electoral Committee’s report: Inquiry into the 2013 local authority elections.

The report makes 19 recommendations. The Government has carefully considered the Committee’s report and responds to it in accordance with Standing Order 252.

Recommendations and Government response

The Government has considered the recommendations of the Justice and Electoral Committee under two main themes:

- Improving voters’ understanding about local elections

  Most of these recommendations involve development, promotion and sharing of good practice. The Government is pleased to advise that the local government sector organisations, including Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) and the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM), are already undertaking work in this area.

- Improving local electoral processes

  These recommendations would mostly require legislative change to existing electoral law, if they are to be implemented. The Government will therefore need to identify the most suitable opportunity to progress any legislative changes. This may mean that some changes cannot be progressed in sufficient time for the next local elections in 2016.

The Government response to each of the Committee’s recommendations is set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation to the Government</th>
<th>Government response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving voters’ understanding about local elections</td>
<td>The Government accepts the objectives of these recommendations, which aim to improve voters understanding of the work of local authorities and their awareness of the local election process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That it provide local authorities with good-practice guidance on placing information online, and on preparing plain English records of decisions made.</td>
<td>The Government is aware of the work already undertaken by Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ), the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM) and the Association of Local Government Information Managers (ALGIM), to promote good practice in these areas. The Government considers that these organisations are best placed to develop and disseminate good practice guidelines. The Government understands that SOLGM is already reviewing its ‘Code of Good Practice’, and that discussions are underway with representative groups from the visually impaired community around improving accessibility of written documents.</td>
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<td>That it consider providing local authorities with guidelines on promoting local authority elections (including the voting period, how to vote, and the importance of voting—linking this to key local issues); and examples of good practice.</td>
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<td>That it encourage the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers to amend its Code of Good Practice to provide guidance on the format and design of candidate profile statements and pre-election reports, and the use of these reports to inform candidate profile statements.</td>
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<td>Recommendation to the Government</td>
<td>Government response</td>
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<td>That local electoral officers develop more accessible documents for electors.</td>
<td>There seems little to be gained from central Government duplicating this work by issuing alternative sets of guidance. Instead, Government officials will continue to work with these local government representative organisations, as they work with local councils and electoral officers to support their preparations for the 2016 local elections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That it encourage the use of alternative methods for casting votes and the collection of ballot papers (such as postal and booth voting, and placing ballot boxes at various locations).</td>
<td>Work is already under way within the Ministry of Education, with input from the Electoral Commission, on incorporating and resourcing civics education in the social sciences / tikanga ā-Iwi learning areas; this is an ongoing and iterative piece of work as The New Zealand Curriculum and Te Morautanga o Aotearoa are regularly reviewed and updated. The Government does not consider that funding research into the impact of civics education in New Zealand on voter turnout and voter behaviour should be a key priority at present. Instead the Government will work with that LGNZ, SOLGM and other local council organisations to encourage the provision of experiential learning opportunities for schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That it review the available teaching material in civics education and investigate the commissioning of research into the impact of civics education in New Zealand on voter turnout and voter behaviour.</td>
<td>The Government considers the local government sector is best placed to investigate the feasibility of a national public information campaign for local elections, because the sector holds the expertise in running local elections, as well as responsibility for funding local elections. The Government understands that LGNZ and SOLGM have started to consider possible approaches to education and publicity activity for the 2016 local elections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That it investigate the feasibility and desirability of a national campaign to inform the public about, and encourage participation in, local elections.</td>
<td>The Government notes that the existing legislative framework does not prohibit or prevent electoral officers from developing initiatives to improve the facilitation of participation in local elections. The Government considers that, at present, resources should be focused on working with SOLGM and others to develop specific initiatives and share good practice on measures that can facilitate participation, as outlined above. This will be more effective in achieving the objectives of improving voter awareness and understanding in the longer-term.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That it consider amending the Local Electoral Act 2001 to provide a clear mandate to improve the facilitation of participation.</td>
<td>Improving local electoral processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That candidates standing in local elections not be required to state on their candidate profile statement whether or not they live in the area for which they are seeking election.</td>
<td>The Government agrees with this recommendation. Candidates standing in general elections are not required to state whether they live or do not live in the area to which they are seeking election.</td>
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<td>Recommendation to the Government</td>
<td>Government response</td>
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<td>That the order of candidate names on all ballot papers in local authority elections be completely randomised.</td>
<td>The option of randomising names of a ballot paper is already available for councils to use, should they resolve to do so. The current ‘default’ method is alphabetised. The Government is committed to maintaining a statutory framework that allows councils to determine the electoral arrangements that best suit their communities. The Government agrees to consider introducing changes to make randomisation the ‘default’ method, while still permitting councils to resolve another ordering method, so as not to undermine this principle of local electoral choice. In the meantime, the Government encourages councils to consider adopting the randomisation of names on ballot papers under the existing provisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That trials of any online voting systems be conducted successfully before any system is introduced nationwide.</td>
<td>The Government notes that local government will be responsible for leading any trial of online voting, because the running and funding of local elections is a local government responsibility. The results of any trial will need to be carefully considered before decisions can be made about its wider introduction at future local elections. The local authorities involved in any trial will need to publically consult voters about the security and transparency of online voting as a voting method before deciding to participate in any trial. They will be responsible for providing clear information to voters using the online voting method.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That any implementation of online voting be supported by public information explaining how to vote online, and addressing security and transparency concerns.</td>
<td>The Government notes that the main alternative to postal voting currently under consideration is online voting. We will reconsider this recommendation further if online voting is successfully implemented, and there is a sufficiently high voter understanding and acceptance of online voting as a voting method.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That it shorten the voting period to two weeks, provide alternatives to postal voting, and publicise the changes.</td>
<td>The Government does not agree with this recommendation. The evidence is not sufficient to determine whether the school holidays per se are impacting on the ability of voters to cast their vote, to justify this significant change. This change would impact on the rest of the electoral timetable, as well as other council planning and reporting processes. The Government considers that the Committee’s other recommendations to improve the degree of salience of local elections by improving voter awareness and understanding, will be more effective in encouraging people to prioritise voting as an activity.</td>
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<td>That the polling date be moved to early September to avoid the school holiday period coinciding with the voting period.</td>
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<td>Recommendation to the Government</td>
<td>Government response</td>
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<tr>
<td>That it provide for the electronic transmission of special voting documents for local authority elections for electors overseas.</td>
<td>The Government agrees to consider changes to permit the electronic transmission of blank voting documents to overseas voters. However the electronic transmission of completed voting documents from overseas voters raises similar IT and secure transmission issues to online voting. The Government considers that developing online voting as a voting method has greater potential to address the needs of overseas voters and so focusing current resources on online voting, including addressing any security concerns, is preferred. The Government notes that this recommendation could be considered as an interim step if online voting cannot be progressed sufficiently in the next few years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That it give local authorities access to the supplementary roll and the deletions file held by the Electoral Commission.</td>
<td>The Government agrees with the aim of simplifying the processing of special votes, and agrees to consider this recommendation further with local councils and the Electoral Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That staff who are contracted to process voting documents be treated as electoral officials, subject to the same legal sanction as council staff and required to make the same declaration.</td>
<td>The Government agrees with the objective of these recommendations, which is to make the voting process easier for voters on the unpublished roll. However the Government does not agree with the Committee’s proposed approach. The current provisions aim to balance access to voting with protecting the privacy and safety on vulnerable voters on the unpublished roll. The Government does not consider that this can be adequately assured if access to the unpublished roll is expanded, as per these recommendations. Instead, the Government will ask the Electoral Commission to consider whether there are process improvements that could make it easier for these voters to receive their voting papers, while maintaining their privacy.</td>
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<td>That it investigate providing electoral officers with access to the unpublished roll.</td>
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<td>That enrolment on the ratepayer electoral roll be made continuous, unless a ratepayer no longer wishes to remain enrolled, or is no longer eligible.</td>
<td>The Government agrees to discuss this recommendation further with local councils, who have responsibility to maintain the ratepayer roll, with a view to making any appropriate legislative changes when a suitable opportunity arises.</td>
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Government Response to the
Report of the Justice and Electoral Committee
on the
Inquiry into the 2014 General Election

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 249
Introduction

The Government welcomes the Justice and Electoral Committee’s report: *Inquiry into the 2014 General Election*.

The report makes 28 recommendations. The Government has examined the Committee’s recommendations and responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 249.

Recommendations and Government Response

The Inquiry’s recommendations can be separated into three categories: those that do not require legislative change; those relating to Part 6 of the Broadcasting Act 1989; and those that relate to the Electoral Act 1993 and/or Electoral Regulations 1996.

Three recommendations do not require legislative change. These recommendations are:

- *Exploring the further development and coordination of ongoing, independent, civics education.*

- *Promoting voter enrolment as a whole-of-government priority with government agencies working together to facilitate enrolment.*

- *Improving accessibility to advance voting places by increasing their numbers and opening hours, and providing greater consistency, as far as is practical, between advance voting places and voting places on election day. Provided that improved accessibility is achieved, we recommend considering a 12-day advance voting period.*

The Government will consider how to best implement these in consultation with the Electoral Commission and other relevant agencies.

In particular, the Government agrees that declining voter enrolment and turnout needs to be addressed. The Government notes that while the Electoral Commission might lead this work, it will require dedicated input from a wide range of stakeholders. The Government will encourage other government agencies, and other key stakeholders as appropriate, to work more closely with the Commission to increase enrolment and turnout.

Five recommendations relate to Part 6 of the Broadcasting Act 1989, which deals with election broadcasting. The Government considers it important for electoral broadcasting issues to be dealt with as a complete package alongside other amendments to the Broadcasting Act as part of work on digital convergence and content regulation. The Government will therefore consider these recommendations as part of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage led Digital Convergence Bill.
The remaining 20 recommendations would require changes to the Electoral Act 1993 (‘the Act’) and/or Electoral Regulations 1996 (‘the Regulations’). The Government generally supports these recommendations.

The Government will consider complexity and the implications of these recommendations with an aim of including those able to be implemented for the 2017 General Election through an Electoral Amendment Bill and/or through amendments to the Regulations.

The recommendations which require more significant consideration are unlikely to be included in a Bill prior to the 2017 election. However, the Government will consider these for inclusion in a later bill for the 2020 election.

**Conclusion**

The Government thanks the Justice and Electoral Committee for its considered report.

The Government will consider how to best implement the three recommendations which do not require legislative change in consultation with the Electoral Commission and other relevant agencies. The Government in particular agrees that declining voter enrolment and turnout needs to be addressed and will encourage other government agencies and other key stakeholders to work more closely with the Commission in this regard.

The Government will consider the five recommendations relating to Part 6 of the Broadcasting Act 1989 as part of the Government’s intended Digital Convergence Bill so broadcasting issues can be dealt with as a complete package.

The Government generally supports the intent of the remaining 20 recommendations. The Government will look towards implementing those which can be in place for the 2017 General Election by inclusion in an Electoral Amendment Bill and/or through amendments to the Electoral Regulations 1996.
Government Response to 
Report of the Justice and Electoral Committee 
on 
Petition 2014/11 of Hillary Kieft and 6 others

Presented to the House of Representatives 
In accordance with Standing Order 252
Introduction
The Government has carefully considered the report by the Justice and Electoral Committee on Petition 2014/11 of Hillary Kieft and 6 others. The Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

The petitioner requested “That the Parliament pass legislation providing that a parent of a woman under the age of 16 years has the right to know if that woman has a pregnancy confirmed before she is referred for any resulting medical procedure, and that any consent sought for the medical procedure be fully informed as to procedure, possible repercussions, and after-effects.”

Select committee’s recommendations
The Justice and Electoral Committee did not support the petitioner’s request for legislative change.

Instead, the Justice and Electoral Committee made five recommendations for the Abortion Supervisory Committee about its approach to its oversight of abortion services, relating specifically to post-procedure care, the certification and training of consultants, and best practice guidelines. The recommendations in summary are:

- **Post-procedure care** – the Abortion Supervisory Committee should collect data on the uptake of post-procedure care, such as counselling services (recommendation 1), and take responsibility for and strengthen the regime around post-procedure care and oversight (recommendation 2);

- **Certification and training of consultants** – the Abortion Supervisory Committee must emphasise, when renewing or certifying a consultant, the consultant’s responsibilities around post-procedure care and the protection of children under 16 who have an abortion procedure (recommendation 3). The Abortion Supervisory Committee should also ensure that ongoing training was provided to certifying consultants to assist them in recognising the risk and safety issues around parental notification and the need to act accordingly (recommendation 4); and

- **Best practice guidelines** – the Abortion Supervisory Committee should, together with District Health Boards, confirm best-practice guidelines for pre- and post-procedure care, and mandatory follow up for children under 16 years old, especially for those who opt not to inform a parent or caregiver (recommendation 5).

Role of the Abortion Supervisory Committee
The Abortion Supervisory Committee is established under the Contraception, Sterilisation, and Abortion Act 1977 (the Act). Three members are appointed to the Committee by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the House of Representatives.

The Abortion Supervisory Committee implements and oversees the regulatory framework governing the provision of abortion services in New Zealand. The Abortion Supervisory Committee has the statutory function of keeping abortion law under review, and the operation and effect of those laws in practice. It must also report to Parliament.
each year on how the abortion law has been managed, and provide statistical information on abortions carried out in New Zealand.

Some of the Committee’s other responsibilities include:

- considering and reviewing hospital or clinic licence applications to perform abortions in New Zealand
- ensuring that hospitals and clinics with abortion licences have adequate facilities
- appointing doctors (known as certifying consultants) to consider cases where a woman is seeking to have an abortion.

**Government response**

The Government notes that it considers it appropriate for the Justice and Electoral Committee to direct its recommendations to the Abortion Supervisory Committee, which is a statutory body that oversees the regulatory framework for abortions, and is independent from the government.

In responding to the select committee report, the Government must act in accordance with the Abortion Supervisory Committee’s status and not fetter its independence. It would not be appropriate for the Government to comment on recommendations by the select committee that are directed at the Abortion Supervisory Committee for its consideration.

Rather, the Government has drawn the select committee recommendations to the attention of the Abortion Supervisory Committee. It is open to the Abortion Supervisory Committee to consider the recommendations and respond to the recommendations if it sees fit.

The Ministry of Health supports strengthening care for young and other vulnerable women post termination of pregnancy. Additional follow up appointments and data collection may raise resourcing issues for District Health Boards with larger patient volumes, which will need to be worked through. Proposed best practice guidelines for District Health Board termination of pregnancy services can be incorporated into the Ministry of Health Gynaecology Services service specification.
Government Response to the
Report of the Law and Order Committee

on its

Inquiry into issues relating to the illegal possession of firearms in New Zealand

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252
Government Response to the Report of the Law and Order Committee on its Inquiry into issues relating to the illegal possession of firearms in New Zealand

Introduction

1. The Government has carefully considered the Report of the Law and Order Committee (the Committee) following its Inquiry into issues relating to the illegal possession of firearms in New Zealand.

2. The Government responds to the Committee’s Report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

Overview

3. In March 2016, the Committee unanimously resolved to inquire into issues relating to the illegal possession of firearms in New Zealand.

4. In announcing this decision, the Committee Chair noted that New Zealand Police had recently seized 14 illegally owned firearms from a home in Takanini among which were military-style semi-automatic firearms (MSSAs). The Committee decided on the following terms of reference to guide the inquiry:

   • how widespread firearms possession is among criminals, including gangs;

   • how criminals, gangs, and those who do not have a licence come into possession of firearms; and

   • what changes, if any, to the current situation might further restrict the flow of firearms to criminals, gangs, and those who do not have a licence?

5. The Committee undertook its Inquiry in the knowledge that:

   • New Zealand has a very low crime rate with firearms (about 1.4 percent of all violent crime).

   • Most firearms have entered the illicit market through theft from legal owners or dealers, or illegal transfer from licensed owners to an unlicensed owner, or illegal importation into New Zealand.

   • In 2014/15, there were 242,056 licensed firearms holders in New Zealand and the majority of these are law abiding.

   • There are three broad categories of firearms in the New Zealand market (civilian armoury): (i) those lawfully possessed by licence holders (with correct endorsement); (ii) those possessed by unlicensed people but not held for criminal purposes (‘grey’ firearms); and (iii) those used by criminals and gangs (unlicensed) in the commission of offences.

6. NZ Police officials were invited to act as advisers to the Committee. The Committee also invited particular comment from the New Zealand Customs Service and the New Zealand Police Association.

7. Public submissions were invited. The Committee received a total of 99 submissions. Submissions were received from a range of submitters, including
non-government organisations, professional and sports associations, and individual firearms owners.

8. The Committee’s report, which is a majority report, has made twenty recommendations which it considers will reduce the flow of firearms to criminals, gangs, and those who do not have a licence, without unfairly impinging on law-abiding firearm users.

9. The Committee’s twenty recommendations are grouped into 6 areas relating to:
   - Sale and supply of firearms and ammunition (5 recommendations)
   - Definition of military-style semi-automatics (1 recommendation)
   - Effectiveness of licensing, training and registering firearms (5 recommendations)
   - Criminal offending with firearms (6 recommendations)
   - Reducing the number of grey firearms (2 recommendations)
   - Importing firearms into New Zealand (1 recommendation).

10. New Zealand First presented a minority view which supported only those recommendations relating to prohibiting gang members and their prospects from being granted a firearms licence, and to increasing sentences for crimes committed by gang members.
Committee’s recommendations and Government response

Sale and supply of firearms and ammunition

Committee Recommendation 1: That the law be amended so that a firearms licence is required to possess ammunition, unless the person in possession of the ammunition is under the immediate supervision of a firearms licence holder.

Comment
11. The Government acknowledges the Committee’s concern about the ability of those who do not have a firearms licence to possess ammunition even though it may have been obtained illegally through theft or using a licensed person to purchase on their behalf.

12. It is already an offence under section 43B of the Arms Act 1983 (the Act) to supply ammunition to a person who does not hold a valid firearms licence (unless for use by a person under immediate supervision of a licence holder). For this reason sellers or suppliers must check that the person to whom the ammunition was sold or supplied is either a holder of a firearms licence or a licensed dealer.

13. The Government must consider consequential negative effects of this recommendation on law abiding gun owners. These include the potential to capture innocent third parties, and to disrupt normal business and sporting activity, particularly in rural and more remote areas where the licence holder may purchase through placing an order for ammunition at the store, or order online or through mail order, and arrange for employees or family members to pick up.

Response to Recommendation 1
14. The Government does not intend to act on this recommendation as the possible benefit of limiting criminals’ access to ammunition is insufficient to outweigh the inconvenience, possible compliance costs and the risk of inadvertent capture of members of the law-abiding, gun owning community.

Committee Recommendation 2: That the law be amended so that a firearms dealer’s licence be required to sell or supply ammunition by way of a business.

Comment
15. While acknowledging the Committee’s wish to stop unlicensed people illegally acquiring ammunition, the Government does not support this recommendation. It would require stores that do not sell firearms or firearm parts but sell ammunition to have a dealer’s licence which would need to be renewed annually. This would be additional to meeting the regulatory requirements for handling hazardous substances. Requiring an additional dealer’s licence would add compliance costs to sellers of farm and hunting supplies, disadvantage the rural community and create additional work for Police with no clear additional public safety benefit.
Committee Recommendation 3: That the law be amended so that dealers be required to keep records of sales of ammunition.

Comment
16. The Government acknowledges there is a weakness in the system in that those selling ammunition are not required to record the firearms licence of the purchaser. Farmlands, a large farm supplier, advises that their sales system requires a licence number to be entered before a sale can be completed. Other retailers have indicated an intention to move to a sales recording system similar to that being operated by Farmlands. Police is working towards an improved and ‘IT- friendly’ format for the firearms licence. At that time it would be beneficial to re-consider the introduction of a requirement for sellers of ammunition to record the firearms licence number at point of sale. At the moment, however, the Government is taking no action on this Recommendation.

Committee Recommendation 4: That the Government create a Police registration process for websites that wish to facilitate the buying, selling, or trading of firearms, parts of firearms, or ammunition online. It would be an offence to operate such a website without current registration.

Comment
17. The Committee has noted the public concern over online sales and a number of submitters discussed the possibility of banning or restricting the online sale of firearms. The Committee is concerned that there is no requirement for sellers to enter their licence number before selling. It is also concerned that it is relatively easy to advertise online but to complete the transaction offline to avoid the ‘mail order’ requirements.

18. The Government notes that Police has worked with TradeMe and it now has a responsible platform for selling and buying firearms. This suggests that an approach based on mutually supportive arrangements can be effective and should be considered rather than adopting the legislative fix proposed by the Committee which can be readily circumvented by completing transactions offline.

19. Prior to the Inquiry a media reporter demonstrated the relative ease of illegally acquiring a firearm online. Since then, the Police has applied a policy of applying the ‘mail-order’ process to transactions that are completed online. This requires the buyer to complete a purchase form which is then provided to the Police for Police to supply to the seller. The Government recognises that the legislation is silent about whether this ‘mail order’ process applies to ‘online’ sales and agrees this should be clarified in the Act.

20. Therefore, the Government does not intend to progress this Recommendation but will take steps to clarify that the mail order process applies to online sales.

Committee Recommendation 5: That the permit to procure process be extended to cover the sale or transfer of all firearms.

Comment
21. The Committee has noted that pistols, MSSAs and restricted weapons can only be supplied to a purchaser who has a permit to procure issued by Police.
However, a permit to procure is not required for the transfer of A category firearms.

22. The Government acknowledges the Committee’s concern around the relative ease of illegally transferring A category firearms\(^1\) from a licensed holder to a non-licensed holder.

23. Introducing a permit to procure process would place an additional load on the administration of the Act. Considerable improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall administration of the licensing and permitting regime is needed before consideration can be given to expanding the permit to procure requirements to the sales/transfers of A category firearms. The Government’s focus will therefore be on Police delivering these improvements rather than supporting this Recommendation.

### Definition of military-style semi-automatics (MSSAs)

**Committee Recommendation 6:** That the Police investigate the creation of a category of restricted semi-automatic firearm (rifle and shotgun) to replace the MSSA firearm endorsement category.

**Comment**

24. The Committee expressed concerns about whether the current classification of MSSAs, including the distinction made with other semi-automatic firearms, is sustainable or enforceable. It also noted that it is difficult for legislation to take into account the interchangeability of parts and the wide variety of grips.

25. The Government acknowledges the strong agreement in the firearms community that: there are major issues with how the Arms Act categorises certain firearms as MSSAs, and recognises that this part of the Act is difficult for the Police to administer and, consequently, has led to court challenges.

26. An amendment was enacted in 2012 (Arms (Military Style Semi-automatic Firearms and Import Controls) Amendment Act 2012), mainly to address difficulties over determining what was “a military pattern free-standing pistol grip”. However, the 2012 amendment has not addressed the difficulty of administration.

27. The Government recognises that the legislation remains complex but, at this stage, is not convinced that a simple solution that meets the needs of both the firearms community and Police is readily available. Therefore we will not progress this recommendation. Priority needs to be given to other areas of the administration of the Arms Act.

28. Having said that, we are aware that experts in the firearms community have suggested alternative approaches. The Government remains open to hearing any such suggestions.

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\(^1\) There are a number of categories of firearms licence. A category firearms are shotguns and rifles. Persons with a licence without endorsement can have and use any number of A category firearms but cannot use, possess, collect, MSSAs, pistols or other restricted weapons.
Committee Recommendation 7: That firearms prohibition orders be implemented in New Zealand.

Comment

29. The Committee noted and endorsed the basis of the current firearms regime that focuses on people being fit and proper to possess firearms. In its report the Committee noted that several submitters felt that more stringent restrictions should be applied. Suggestions included applying a more onerous vetting process, the introduction of a firearms prohibition order, and prohibiting gang members from legally owning firearms.

30. The Government welcomes the Committee’s recommendation as a measure to limit access to firearms by criminals, and, in particular, gang members. New Zealand’s current firearms regime does not apply sufficiently tight controls for high-risk offenders. These offenders do not comply with firearms laws and use firearms to facilitate their criminal activity.

31. A Firearm Prohibition Order regime can assist the active management of the risk presented by high-risk individuals and their illegal possession and use of firearms.

32. As it is too early to work out the full implications, Government intends to take a cautious approach to implementing FPOs in New Zealand through targeting the highest-risk gang members, following the development of an options paper and Regulatory Impact Statement. The regime could be expanded to include all high-risk offenders with convictions for firearms offences, including gang members.

33. This will require changes to the Arms Act which the Government has already advised it intends to progress.

Committee Recommendation 8: That the Police Arms Manual guidelines on criteria to consider when determining who is fit and proper to possess firearms be codified within the Arms Act 1983, with any necessary modifications, to improve the overall certainty and consistency of the licensing process.

Comment

34. The Committee recognised that there is no right to own or possess firearms under New Zealand law. The basis of the current firearms regime focuses on people being deemed as fit and proper to possess firearms. Police can issue a firearms licence under section 24 of the Arms Act if satisfied that the applicant is of, or over, the age of 16 years and is a fit and proper person to be in possession of a firearm or airgun. Police can also decline an application if concerned that any firearm held by the applicant is likely to be accessed by a person who is not fit and proper to have firearms.

35. Police, as the administrator of the legislation, has developed a process and standards to assist implementation of, and ensure compliance with, these provisions.

36. The Police Arms Manual 2002 advises staff that a fit and proper person is a person of good character who will abide by the laws of New Zealand and the provisions of the Arms Act 1983, the Arms Amendment Act 1992 and the Arms
Regulations 1992 (paragraph 1.2). Elsewhere in the Manual (paragraph 2.29) it advises that a person could be considered not fit and proper if he or she has:

- been the subject of a protection order under domestic violence legislation; or
- shown no regard for the Arms Act or Arms Regulations; or
- been involved in substance abuse; or
- committed a serious offence against the Arms Act; or
- committed any serious offence against any other Act; or
- committed a series of minor offences against the Arms Act; or
- committed crimes involving violence or drugs; or
- affiliations with a gang involved in committing violent offences or in conflict with another gang; or
- been or is involved in matrimonial discord involving violence or threats of violence; or
- exhibited signs of mental ill health; or
- attempted to commit suicide or other self-injurious behaviour; or
- not complied with security conditions; or
- for some other reason been considered not fit and proper.

37. The Committee has recommended codifying the above criteria in the Act.

38. The Government will not be progressing this recommendation as codifying in legislation will not materially impact on criminals’ ability to source firearms. In addition, there are other more effective mechanisms for raising public awareness of the fit and proper criteria.

**Committee Recommendation 9:** That Government implement a stand-down period after revocation of a licence, before a new application for a firearms licence can be made.

**Comment**

39. The Committee reported that some submitters, including the New Zealand Police Association, expressed concern about the revocation of firearms licences. In particular, it expressed concern over the absence of a stand-down period.

40. When police revoke a licence, for reasons of due process, they usually first give notice of their intention to revoke and the reasons for this. The licensee is given the opportunity to make a submission on this matter in writing or in person. If revocation then proceeds, notice of this is served on the licensee. There is a right of appeal to the District Court under section 62 of the Arms Act.

41. On receiving an application for a firearms licence from a previously revoked person, full vetting procedures need to be undertaken to ascertain their fit and proper status.
Currently, a person can apply for a firearms licence as soon after their previous licence was revoked as they like. Police receives numerous applications within relatively short time frames. While Police does not issue new licences in these cases, the process is resource intensive and not a good use of Police time.

The Committee did not recommend a particular stand-down time.

The Government agrees that the Committee has identified a weakness in the Act and, while firm data is not available, the absence of a minimum stand-down period is leading to unnecessary demands upon Police’s time and resources. Providing for a stand-down period, which we are proposing to be 12 months, could be progressed through the legislation that addresses firearms prohibition orders and firearm licensing issues referred to in the discussion under Recommendation 7.

**Committee Recommendation 10:** That the Arms Act 1983 be amended to clearly state that a gang member or prospect must not be considered a fit and proper person to possess firearms and therefore must not hold a firearms licence.

**Comment**

The Committee commented on the evidence indicating that the unlawful possession and use of firearms is an integral aspect of gang culture. Work undertaken by Police in 2014 showed that 44% of gang members and prospects had been charged with an offence involving a firearm with 9% being charged five or more times. The Committee also noted that in 2014, Cabinet had approved the “Whole-of-Government Action Plan to Reduce the Harm Caused by New Zealand Adult Gangs and Transnational Crime Groups”. The Committee supported this initiative. They noted also that the current law creates difficulty in refusing to issue or renew a firearms licence solely on the basis that a person is a member of a gang.

The Government agrees that it is not clear that the courts would be satisfied that criminal gang membership on its own would provide police with sufficient grounds to determine that a person is not fit and proper to possess firearms. We agree that the law should enable police to make that determination.

This matter is one that will be picked up in the development of the legislation referred to in the discussion relating to Recommendation 7.

**Committee Recommendation 11:** That the law be amended to require the Police to record the serial numbers of all firearms possessed by licence holders upon renewal of their licence or inspection of their premises.

**Comment**

The Committee received the second highest number of submissions commenting on the issue of registration (33) with 17 supporting registration and 16 opposed.

The Committee acknowledged that New Zealand Police does not maintain a record of all standard sporting firearms owned by firearm licence holders. Information provided to the Committee, based on the Thorp methodology, an

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2 The Thorp Report was a Review of Firearms in New Zealand released in June 1997.
estimate of the number of lawfully held A category firearms to be around 1 million but there is no information to indicate the margin of error with this estimate. There is no legislative requirement, nor is there a current system, for individual firearms, to be ‘registered’. Police has encouraged A Category (standard sporting firearms and rifles) owners to provide the serial number of their firearms at the time the applicant is vetted. Additionally owners are provided information about a free website called SNAP for identification and tracking purposes; however, this is not a legal requirement and is not enforceable.

50. The Government recognises the inherent attraction in having a ‘system’ by which all firearms are recorded. However, it is well recognised that the registration of all firearms owned by firearm licence holders would be resource intensive, expensive, and likely to be inaccurate.

51. As the number of submissions to the Committee, both for and against registration, shows, there is strong feeling in the firearms community on this matter with many considering it would impose restrictions on fit and proper firearms owners while having no impact on criminals or criminal activity. Some in the community consider any move towards registration could erode the trust the community has with Police.

52. On balance the Government considers that this recommendation would not deliver advantages over that which is already provided through the current voluntary process, and would be very expensive so this recommendation will not be progressed.

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**Criminal offending with firearms**

**Committee Recommendation 12:** That the Government review the penalties in the Arms Act 1983.

**Comment**

53. The Committee reported that several submitters expressed concern that the current penalties under the Arms Act have very little deterrent effect. This point received the highest number of submissions (40) calling for tougher penalties and sentencing. It was noted that many of the current penalties under the Arms Act are out of date and do not reflect the seriousness of the offences.

54. The current penalties singled out by the Committee for attention are those that apply to: (i) importing firearms without a permit (section 16); possession of firearms without a licence (section 20); (iii) selling or supplying a firearm to an unlicensed person (section 43); and (iv) carrying or possession of firearms, airguns, pistols, restricted weapons or explosives except for lawful, proper and sufficient purpose (section 45).

55. It is agreed that many of the penalties do not reflect the seriousness of the offences, and are overdue for review. Financial penalties have been considerably devalued through inflation. The financial hardship imposed on offenders has been accordingly reduced. The Arms Act penalties are more in line with administrative breaches rather than with offences that can have serious criminal consequences for which an offender should be held accountable.
The Government considers that changes would need to be progressed after further consideration and consultation. Any review would necessarily involve comprehensive consultation with the Ministry of Justice and be subject to a full Regulatory Impact Statement.

**Committee Recommendation 13:** That the law be amended so that where a dealer has committed an offence under the Arms Act 1983, the court must treat this as an aggravating factor at sentencing.

**Comment**

57. The Committee considered the role of dealers, noting that their offending can have greater consequences than a private owner’s non-compliance with the Arms Act.

58. The Government considers it is not clear that introducing this aggravating factor is necessary. The prosecutor of a person charged with an offence against the Arms Act would be likely to argue (in appropriate cases) that being an arms dealer was an aggravating factor, under the generic provision in s 9(4)(a) of the Sentencing Act:

   (4) Nothing in subsection (1) or subsection (2)—

   (a) prevents the court from taking into account any other aggravating or mitigating factor that the court thinks fit;

59. The Government does not intend to progress this Recommendation.

**Committee Recommendation 14:** That the Police undertake further work to determine appropriate security standards for “A” category firearms.

60. The Committee received a number of submissions around secure storage with 17 submitters calling for improvements. The Committee has responded to those concerns by asking for more work to be done, while not expecting the level of secure storage for current A category firearms to be increased to that for MSSAs and restricted firearms.

61. The Government notes that Regulation 19 of the Arms Regulations makes every firearms licence subject to security precautions. It outlines the reasonable steps a licence holder must take which include keeping on the holder’s premises one of the following:

   - a lockable cabinet, container, or receptacle of stout construction in which firearms may be stored
   - a lockable steel and concrete strong room in which firearms may be stored
   - a display cabinet or rack in which firearms may be immobilised and locked so that none of them may be fired.

62. The Government supports work on ensuring robust and workable requirements that limit the ability for criminals to gain access to secured firearms by theft or burglary.
63. The Government notes that Police, as part of its wider review of Firearms Administration and Management, is undertaking a review of security in collaboration with a subcommittee of the Firearms Community Advisory Forum. This review will be underway in early June 2017 and it is expected that the recommendations coming from that work will give a clear direction on the extent the current standard is being met and whether any changes are required. Therefore, the Government does not intend to take any specific action on this recommendation until after that subcommittee has reported back, and with the clear expectation that any proposed changes will be well consulted on and communicated to the firearms owning community.

**Committee Recommendation 15:** That the law be amended to make it clear that the secure storage requirements must be met to the satisfaction of the Police, before a licence or endorsement can be issued.

**Comment**

64. The Committee focussed on this aspect as theft and burglary is recognised as one of the pathways that firearms are obtained by criminals and was concerned to make it clear that complying with security conditions was critical to being considered fit and proper to hold a licence or endorsement.

65. The Government recognises that the intent of this recommendation is to enable police to be satisfied that the security is in place before the applicant takes possession of the firearm thus reducing the risk of insecure storage or no storage and unsafe outcome.

66. However, the Government considers the amendment proposed by the Committee is unnecessary as, before issuing a firearms licence, a member of Police must, under section 24 of the Act, be satisfied the applicant is 16 years old or over and a fit and proper person to be in possession of a firearm. In practice, police take into account the security arrangements the person has in place when assessing whether the applicant is fit and proper, and can exercise their discretion on a case by case basis.

**Committee Recommendation 16:** That Government extend the power under regulation 29 to allow the Police to enter premises to inspect the security of “A” category firearms.

**Comment**

67. As part of its consideration of theft and burglary as one of the pathways that criminals obtained firearms, the Committee considered the inability for Police to more regularly inspect the security of A category firearms. The Committee noted that endorsements provided under Arms Regulation 1992 are subject to two conditions (i) to produce the pistol/restricted weapon/MSSA on demand; and (ii) permit inspection of where their pistol/restricted weapon/MSSA is kept. These conditions do not extend to A Category firearms.

68. The Government agrees that the number of firearms recorded by Police as stolen has steadily increased and that many stolen firearms are A category. It is possible that enabling police to more regularly inspect the secure storage of all firearm would be a useful tool. On the other hand, more frequent inspection by
police would place unnecessary additional demand on lawful A category firearm owners, most of whom hold their firearms in their homes.

69. The Government will not progress this Recommendation as it considers other actions including greater investment in communication and education are a better approach to achieving improved security at this time.

**Committee Recommendation 17:** That the Arms Act 1983 be amended so that failure to comply with the storage regulations must result in revocation of a firearms licence.

*Comment*

70. The Government notes the Committee’s concerns about criminals acquiring firearms through theft and burglary and that firearms need to be stored responsibly and in facilities of a sufficient standard.

71. Government supports the intent of this recommendation but prefers an alternative put forward by my external advisors. This is to amend the Act so as to give Police a new power to suspend a firearms licence where the holder has committed a minor or technical breach which needs to be rectified, or in cases where circumstances have led to Police needing to assess if the licence holder continues to be fit and proper to possess firearms.

72. This approach is discussed in the additional Government recommendations below.

### Reducing the number of grey firearms

**Committee Recommendation 18:** That Government clarify the amnesty in section 10 of the Arms Act 1983 and extend it to include MSSAs, “A” category firearms, and the handing-in of firearms to the Police.

*Comment*

73. The Committee considered that sharper management of ‘grey’ firearms will reduce this avenue of supply to the illicit market. It recognised the risk that the theft of ‘grey’ firearms may not be reported as those who may have been holding these firearms for non-criminal purposes are afraid of being charged for unlawful possession. The Committee also noted that Police needed to improve its follow-up of licences that expire to satisfy itself that the firearms continue to be held lawfully.

74. The current Arms Act 1983, section 10, outlines the handing over of restricted weapons and or pistols to dealers, and clearly states that a dealer is exempt from prosecution if the item is handed to the Arms Office immediately. It does not explicitly cover the handing in of military style semi-automatics or A Category firearms.

*Section 10 Restriction on possession of pistol or restricted weapon by licensed dealer*
(1) No licensed dealer shall take a pistol or restricted weapon into his possession for sale unless he obtains it—
   (a) pursuant to a permit issued for the purposes of section 16(1) or under section 35; and
   (b) either—
      (i) from a holder of a firearms licence that bears an endorsement made under section 30; or
      (ii) from a licensed dealer.

(2) Notwithstanding anything in subsection (1), a licensed dealer does not contravene that subsection if, on obtaining possession of any pistol or restricted weapon from any person, the licensed dealer immediately surrenders the pistol or restricted weapon to the nearest Arms Office for inspection and inquiries.

(3) Every person commits an offence against this Act and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding $2,000 who contravenes subsection (1).

75. The Government agrees with the Committee that the legislation should make it explicit that the provisions for handing-in extend to all firearms and to their handing into Police.

Committee Recommendation 19: That the Police develop policy guidance so that, under the amnesty, when people hand in firearms that are unlawfully in their possession, or report firearms lost, stolen, or destroyed, the Police will have the discretion not to prosecute for the possession offence, subject to police inquiries not revealing offending other than breach of lawful possession of firearms(s) under the Arms Act 1983.

Comment
76. The Government acknowledges the intent of this recommendation which is to encourage holders of “grey” firearms to surrender these without the fear of prosecution. However, the Government considers such guidelines are unnecessary because, as a matter of course, police will exercise their discretion whether to investigate or prosecute on a case by case basis.

Importing firearms into New Zealand

Committee Recommendation 20: That it ensure that visitors who have imported firearms and have been in the country for up to twelve months for a sporting holiday or competition should have the export of the firearms checked by the Police when they leave New Zealand.

Comment
77. The Committee has considered the gap in the administration of the New Zealand firearms regime that allows for visitors to possess firearms for hunting for up to one year, and to apply for a visitor’s firearms licence and a permit to import if they bring in their own firearm(s), but does not require any evidence that the firearm(s)
are taken out when they leave New Zealand, or alternatively legally sold in New Zealand.

78. Government supports this recommendation and encourages Police to work closely with New Zealand Customs and Aviation Security to determine guidelines and policy to cover visitors leaving NZ with firearms.

**Additional Government Recommendations**

**New Government Recommendation - One:** Amend the Arms Act so that in all situations where Police has the power to revoke a firearms licence, Police should also have the power to suspend a licence, for a specified period of time or pending possible revocation.

79. The Committee’s recommendation 17 relates to failure to comply with the security regulations and draws attention to just one of the situations in the Act where Police has the power to revoke a licence.

80. In responding to recommendation 17, the Government recognises that a power to suspend a licence would be useful in responding to minor or technical breaches which need to be rectified, or in cases where a breach has led to Police needing to assess if the licence holder continues to be fit and proper to possess firearms. Consequently, the Government is looking to develop such a proposal.

**New Government Recommendation – Two:** Improve the consultation processes with the firearms community

81. There were a number of submissions that referred to lack of trust in Police’s administration of the Act and the need for better communication and consultation with the firearms community.

82. The Government agrees that trust and confidence in Police’s administration of the Act is an important part to incentivising fit and proper people to continue to act in accordance with the provisions of the Act and to not take ‘unlawful’ actions to avoid what they consider to be unnecessary and expensive compliance conditions.

83. The Government, Police, members of the firearms community, and the general public, have a common objective of allowing those who need firearms for their business, or choose firearms for sporting or recreational purposes, to do so safely and securely without endangering themselves, their families or the general public.

84. Achieving the right balance between management of risk and unnecessary compliance is a challenge to all regulatory regimes and arriving at an agreed balance relies on a good communication process. To that end, the Government is proposing that the Minister of Police issues a direction to the New Zealand Police to consult with representatives of the firearms community and, where appropriate, the general public on all proposed changes to policy relating to

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3 Situations where Police has the power to revoke includes situations where another person who is considered non-fit and proper is able to access the licensed person’s firearms.
administration of the Arms Act 1983. The outcome of that consultation will need to be included in any advice to the Minister of Police.
Government Response to
Report of the Law and Order Committee
on
Petition 2011/124 of Ann Hodgetts and 744 others

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252

Introduction

1 The Government has carefully considered the report by the Law and Order Committee (the Committee) on Petition 2011/124 of Ann Hodgetts and 744 others in respect of protection orders.

2 The Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

3 The Government acknowledges the concerns raised by the petitioner and the Committee about responses to family violence, specifically the enforcement of protection orders. The Government recognises that family violence is one of New Zealand’s most significant social issues in terms of the number of people affected, long-term life effects and cost to the country.

Recommendations and government response

4 Recommendation:

The Committee recommends to the Government that the review of the Domestic Violence Act 1995 by the Ministry of Justice consider the following matters:

- the effectiveness and enforcement of protection orders
- better case management of protection orders, which could be achieved by setting “sunset clauses” or renewable expiry dates on protection orders, and by creating and monitoring a central register of protection orders
- better strategies for preventing repeated breaches of protection orders
- preventative and rehabilitative strategies to address the drivers of protection order breaches, such as mental health issues, or alcohol and drug dependency.

5 Response:

In July 2014, the Prime Minister announced a package of initiatives to better support victims of family violence, to break the cycle of violence within families and across generations, to keep victims safe and to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviours.

One of the key initiatives is a review of family violence legislation, including the Domestic Violence Act 1995, which contains provisions about making and enforcing protection orders. In July 2015, a public discussion document was released to obtain public feedback on preliminary ideas for change and to support a discussion about how family violence legislation can be improved.

The Government confirms that the review of family violence legislation will include consideration of the effectiveness of protection orders, and legal tools
and powers to reduce repeated breaches of protection orders. Some of the preliminary ideas raised in the discussion document include improving the accessibility and effectiveness of protection orders, and considering compelling police action in certain circumstances, such as requiring mandatory arrest for all breaches of protection orders.

The review will also include consideration of mechanisms to support case management of protection orders, which may include the creation of a central register of protection orders.

However, the setting of "sunset clauses" or renewable expiry dates for protection orders will not be considered as part of the review. The Government does not consider that these are the most appropriate measures to improve victim safety. Under the Domestic Violence Act 1995, a final protection order continues in force until an application is made to discharge it. This is considered to be good practice internationally. Requiring the renewal of a protection order could place an additional burden on the victim and potentially affect their safety. It could also create additional complexity for Police in determining whether a protection order is currently in force.

The Government confirms that preventative and rehabilitative strategies to address family violence are being considered as part of the wider work programme of the Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence. The Ministerial Group is overseeing cross-government work to develop an integrated co-ordinated system that is accessible and responsive to the needs of victims and effective at holding perpetrators to account. This work also aims to ensure government agencies work together effectively to deliver the right services to victims, perpetrators and whānau.

Conclusion

6 The petitioner and the Committee have raised valid concerns about responses to family violence. The Government is committed to addressing family violence in New Zealand and keeping victims safe. The Government's work programme on family violence is intended to address this complex issue by finding ways to reduce the incidence and impact of family violence. As detailed above, consideration will be given to the issues underlying the Committee's recommendation as part of this work.
Government Response to
Report of the Local Government and Environment Committee
on
Petition 2008/135 of Sue Kedgley

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 249

Introduction

The government has carefully considered the report from the Local Government and Environment Committee (the Committee) and its recommendations on the 2008 petition of Sue Kedgley relating to bee health.

The government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

The petition called for a bee health strategy, an annual bee population survey, a halt on the use of pesticides until a reassessment finds they do not pose a risk to bee health, and the prohibition of honey and other bee products that could introduce further bee diseases into New Zealand.

In response to the petition, the Committee received a briefing on pollinator security, including submissions from the petitioner, the National Beekeepers’ Association of New Zealand and the then Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The Committee’s response to the petition makes a number of recommendations for the government.

The government considers bee health important for our primary industries. Internationally, the loss of hives through disease, stress, and other causes continues to be a significant issue.

In the United States of America (USA) Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) has been identified as a particular problem, but the classical symptoms of CCD have not been recorded in New Zealand. The arrival of Varroa in New Zealand in 2000 provided particular challenges to beekeepers, but effective management of the pest has resulted in the number of hives increasing by 73% over the last decade. However, threats to the health of bees remain from exotic diseases, management practices and environmental conditions.

The government takes an active interest in supporting and promoting bee health and the bee industry in a number of areas and already undertakes some of the Committee’s recommendations. The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) already provides a wide range of services that support the beekeeping industry. MPI collects annual statistics on beehive and beekeeper numbers and is working with the industry to develop and implement a national bee health survey to help establish a baseline record of hive losses and bee health. It is expected that this will help identify trends in bee health nationwide.

The government agrees that agencies with enforcement functions for hazardous substances under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (the HSNO Act) and the Health and Safety Reform Bill should ensure that user compliance is monitored and enforced. The EPA’s practice is to examine whether a reassessment of hazardous substances, for example, neonicotinoids and surfactants is required, on the basis of new information.

The government also notes that the Primary Production Committee is interested in the health of bees and their contribution to pollination. This Committee has received briefings on these topics from government officials and the bee industry.
Recommendations and government response

Recommendation: That it investigate whether sufficient administrative support is being provided to the beekeeping industry

Response: Government considers that sufficient support is provided by its agencies to the beekeeping industry (MPI)

MPI does not routinely provide administrative support to individual industry groups within the primary industries. These groups provide their own resources for basic administrative and organisational activities.

MPI does, however, provide a wide range of services which support primary industry activities and enable them to provide safe and high quality foods and other products for sale in New Zealand and in overseas markets. The support for the beekeeping industry currently provided by MPI includes:

- Provision of overall biosecurity protection to primary industries in pre-border, border and post-border activities
- Assisting the review and approval of the American Foulbrood National Pest Management Plan which is made under the Biosecurity Act 1993. This Plan was amended a few years ago.
- Working to better understand the baseline microbial flora of bees in New Zealand
- Co-funding a national apiary register which is administered by AsureQuality
- Facilitating access for honey to export markets
- Negotiating and issuing export certification for honey and bee products
- Supporting Sustainable Farming Fund programmes including:
  - “Trees for Bees” (Federated Farmer Bee Industry Group) – quality pollen supplies
  - “Betta Bees” – with Otago University, bee genetics study to improve understanding of bee resilience to Varroa and to weather
  - Sustainable management of natural alkaloids in honey
  - Exploring the scope of bees in Maori Agribusiness
- Operating the Primary Growth Partnership - High Performance Manuka Plantations Programme. The goal is to develop a science basis for manuka husbandry, with co-investors - Manuka Research Partnership (NZ) Limited and Comvita Limited
- Co-funding a study with Department of Conservation to evaluate and aggregate the estimated costs of introduced vespid wasps across all affected New Zealand sectors, including their effects on bees
- Participating in the Bee Products Standards Council with bee industry representatives to set standards for honey and address other industry issues
- Developing a manuka honey labelling guideline
- Working with the industry on the Government Industry Agreement (GIA) for biosecurity readiness and response.

The beekeeping industry is currently working towards amalgamation of the two main representative groups: the National Beekeepers Association and the Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group. MPI supports this amalgamation and will assist the industry to reinstate a commodity levy if there is industry agreement on this.
Recommendation: That the Ministry for Primary Industries mandate the conducting of regular bee population surveys

Response: Government supports the conducting of regular bee population surveys and already collects annual statistics on beehive and beekeeper numbers (MPI)

MPI already collects annual statistics on beehive and beekeeper numbers. This dataset clearly demonstrates the increase in beehive numbers since 2000 despite the impact of Varroa on hives. The resurgence of hobby beekeeping has contributed to the increase. The graph below summarises the numbers of beekeepers and hives from 2000 to 2014.

![Figure 1: Registered Beekeeping Enterprises and Hive Numbers in New Zealand, 2000 to 2014](image)

This population information, along with information on production, honey and bee product sales, industry costs and issues is published annually by MPI in a report on the MPI apicultural monitoring programme.

MPI is also working with the National Beekeepers Association and Federated Farmers Bees to develop and implement a national bee health survey to help establish a baseline bee health record and help identify trends in bee health nationwide.

Recommendation: That it develop a strategy to promote the health of bees

Response: The Government recognises the importance of secure and resilient pollination services for New Zealand. MPI is currently considering the contribution of bee health to pollination and will use opportunities arising from the Government Industry Agreement to work with the bee industry to protect bee health (MPI)

Secure and resilient pollination services are critical to New Zealand’s primary production and also for the protection and enhancement of our native biodiversity. Honey bees play an
important role in pollination in New Zealand. MPI already undertakes a number of activities, in partnership with industry and some contractors, to promote the health of bees.

MPI is also using the opportunity provided by of the Government Industry Agreement (GIA) on biosecurity preparedness and response to provide an opportunity for bee industry representatives to work closely with MPI on issues relating to pest and disease risks to New Zealand bees.

The GIA provides a forum for the industry to take a greater role in decision-making around biosecurity preparedness and response, provided they agree to share costs of any joint activities undertaken by MPI. The industry has signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the GIA and is considering signing the deed.

The GIA provides a platform for future discussions on a strategy for bee health. Interest in bee health and pollination is also shared by national and regional government agencies, industry and research groups, and other beekeepers and individuals.

Recommendation: That it support the Trees for Bees programme, and the planting of “bee corridors”

Response: Government already actively supports these initiatives (MPI)

MPI already supports the Trees for Bees programme through the Ministry’s Sustainable Farming Fund. The programme, established by Federated Farmers Bee Industry Group, aims to ensure bees have the opportunity to gather quality pollen and nectar to provide the energy, vitamins and minerals required to maintain optimum hive strength and secure pollination services.

The Trees for Bees programme is an example of how MPI works with the bee industry. Bees forage from a wide range of native and introduced plant species. Intensively managed agricultural environments often have a reduced range of nectar and pollen sources. This project promotes planting of bee friendly species to different group such as farmers and urban gardeners, and has strong bee industry support.

Planting choices remain the decision of the landowner.

Recommendation: That it ensure that users of neonicotinoids are provided with information about their effects on bees

Response: Government considers that users of neonicotinoids already have sufficient information about the appropriate use of these ecotoxic substances (EPA)

Neonicotinoids are regulated as hazardous substances under the HSNO Act. As part of their approval, there are controls on their use including information requirements. These information requirements include labelling and the provision of safety data sheets (SDS). For example, for the approval of “Poncho” an agricultural insecticide that contains Clothianidin (a neonicotinoid) controls include requirements relating to handling, personal protective equipment, restrictions on transport, requirements to protect beneficial insects, record-keeping, information, packaging, and disposal.
Product labels have to provide information about the HSNO Act classifications of a substance. When a substance is toxic to bees the substance approval will require that this has to be clearly mentioned on labels. Similarly, SDS must be provided with a pesticide, such as a neonicotinoid, when they are used, sold, and transported. SDS provide information on the hazards of substances and how they should be safely used, stored, disposed of, and transported. SDSs also describe emergency procedures, such as what to do in the event of a spill or fire.

Recommendation: That the Environmental Protection Authority reassess pesticides that may be harmful to bees, including neonicotinoids

Response: Government considers that neonicotinoids already have stringent controls and at this stage do not need to be reassessed. A reassessment in the absence of significant new information would not be legally justified (EPA)

In general, the Environmental Protection Authority (the EPA) is concerned with the risks of all insecticides to bees and other beneficial insects. In relation to neonicotinoids, the EPA notes that there are already significant controls in place and there have been so for some time. These controls are specifically in place for products containing neonicotinoids in order to minimise the risk to pollinator insects.

Under section 62(2) of the HSNO Act, the EPA may decide to reassess a hazardous substance where, amongst other things, significant new information relating to the substance has become available. In the absence of significant new information, it would not be legally justifiable to carry out a reassessment.

The EPA further notes the importance of international best practice in determining potential changes to controls on a hazardous substance. The EPA also notes comments about changes to the regulation of neonicotinoids in the European Union (EU) and the USA.

The use of three neonicotinoids, Imidacloprid, Thiamethoxam and Clothianidin, was restricted from December 2013 for two years in the EU pending further information about their effects on bees. This moratorium should end in December 2015. Additionally, Imidacloprid and other neonicotinoids are under registration review by USA-Environmental Protection Agency (USA-EPA), they have also requested new information. It is expected that USA-EPA will decide on Imidacloprid in January to March 2016.

The EPA must consider the best prioritisation of its resources and the risks and benefits to people and the environment when considering the reassessment of one group of chemicals. The EPA considers that a reassessment of these substances should take account of the work being undertaken in the EU and by the USA-EPA. Until this work has been completed, the EPA considers that it would be premature to begin a reassessment of neonicotinoids.

Recommendation: That the Environmental Protection Authority assess surfactants, and determine whether they should be registered

Response: Government considers that the assessment of surfactants is not an immediate priority unless new information is provided (EPA)
The Committee’s report noted that surfactants, which are wetting agents to help insecticide sprays adhere to plants, may also be a threat for New Zealand bees and that surfactants are not covered in any detail in the HSNO Act. The report does not provide further detail.

Surfactants are covered by the *Additives, Process Chemicals and Raw Materials (Corrosive) Group Standard 2006* of the HSNO Act. The EPA has discussed this approval with beekeepers representatives over its effectiveness when surfactants are used as spray adjuvants for pesticides. As noted above, the EPA must consider its strategic priorities when approaching any potential reassessment of any hazardous substance. Should further information on the group standard on surfactants come to light, the EPA would consider a review.

Recommendation: That it require the Ministry for the Environment, the Environmental Protection Authority, and territorial authorities to police adequately breaches of the chemical trespass provisions in the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996, including those relating to bee deaths

**Response: Government agrees that agencies with enforcement functions for hazardous substances under the HSNO Act should ensure that user compliance is monitored and enforced (EPA, WorkSafe, MfE)**

The government recognises that while there are no enforcement gaps under the HSNO Act, because WorkSafe has a clear responsibility to enforce compliance of ecotoxic controls, the monitoring and enforcement of ecotoxic controls is difficult. The government considers the amendments proposed under the Health and Safety Reform Bill will improve enforcement of breaches of neonicotinoid provisions.

**Conclusion**

The government recognises the importance of bee health and the contribution of bees to both honey production and to the provision of essential pollination services to the primary industries. Despite the challenges from the arrival of *Varroa* in 2000, both hive and beekeeper numbers have increased since 2000. However, threats to the health of bees remain and the government will continue to work with the beekeeping industry to enhance its economic and environmental contributions to New Zealand.

The government considers the protection of the environment and the health and safety of people very important. The government is confident that the EPA would take appropriate steps to ensure the risks of hazardous substances are adequately managed, if new information relating to hazardous substances becomes available. We also expect that the proposed health and safety amendments will improve enforcement of breaches with hazardous substances controls.
Government Response to the Recommendation of the Officers of Parliament Committee regarding the requirement for annual audits of cemetery trusts and reserves boards

Presented to the House of Representatives

In accordance with Standing Order 252
Government Response to the Recommendation of the Officers of Parliament Committee regarding the requirement for annual audits of cemetery trusts and reserves boards

Introduction

1. In its report entitled “Alterations to the 2014/15 appropriations for Vote Audit, Vote Ombudsmen, and Vote Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, and 2015/16 draft budgets for the Office of the Controller and Auditor-General, the Office of the Ombudsman, and the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (I.15A)”, the Officers of Parliament Committee raised an issue relating to the requirement for annual audits of cemetery trusts and reserves boards.

2. The Committee noted that, unlike other audits for which fees are charged, the Office of the Controller and Auditor-General receives Crown funding to undertake these audits but in recent years the cost of carrying out these audits has exceeded the funding received and the Office of the Controller and Auditor-General has been absorbing the resultant loss.

3. In its report the Committee cited the Auditor-General’s view that the cost of completing these audits outweighs the accountability benefit, particularly as little public interest is shown in the results of the audits.

Recommendation

4. The Committee recommended that the Government examine the situation regarding the annual audits of cemetery trusts and reserves boards, and consider amending the relevant Acts to relieve the Auditor-General of this audit responsibility, while providing for a more cost-effective approach to financial assurance regarding such entities.

Response

5. The Government welcomes this recommendation of the Officers of Parliament Committee.

Reserves Boards

6. There are numerous administering bodies for reserves, including 20 reserves boards, managing a variety of reserves throughout the country. While the reserves are of local significance, in most cases their financial activities are minor.
7. Three boards operate businesses (i.e., campgrounds and shops) that generate somewhat sizeable income and expenditure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reserves Board</th>
<th>Expenditure (year ending 30 June 2013) $000</th>
<th>Revenue (year ending 30 June 2013) $000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaiteriteri Recreation Reserve Board (Nelson)</td>
<td>4,754</td>
<td>4,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waipu Cove Recreation Reserve Board (Northland)</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruakaka Recreation Reserve Board (Northland)</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. The financial reporting and audit requirements for administering bodies of reserves (but not reserves boards) are set out in the Reserves Act 1977 while the financial reporting and audit requirements for reserves boards are set out in the Public Finance Act 1989.

9. The Government concurs with the Auditor-General’s view that the statutory requirement for these boards to be audited is disproportionate to any public benefit.

10. To address this issue, the Government intends, at an appropriate opportunity, to amend the Reserves Act 1977 and the Public Finance Act 1989 to repeal the requirement that the Auditor-General audit the financial statements of reserves boards and other administering bodies of reserves, with any necessary consequential amendments.

11. The Government will also review whether any administrative or legislative safeguard is needed to ensure that the Government can require a board to be audited should a public interest need arise.

12. This approach does not change the requirement for these boards to keep and prepare appropriate financial records.

Cemetery Trusts

13. A 2013 Law Commission survey of trustee-managed cemeteries found views similar to those of the Auditor-General:

- a number of the cemetery trustees surveyed felt that the auditing process was unduly time consuming, given the small amounts involved.
- of the 98 trustee-managed cemeteries audited in 2005/2006, 73 per cent had cash holdings of less than $10,000, while over 90% had annual receipts and payments of less than $10,000.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Refer Controller and Auditor-General Local government: Results of the 2005/06 audits (Office of the Auditor General, Parliamentary Paper B29[07b], June 2007).
in many cases the costs of undertaking the audit exceeded the yearly funds received by the cemeteries.²

14. The Government concurs with the Auditor-General’s view that the statutory requirement for these boards to be audited does not appear to be providing much public benefit, compared to the costs to undertake them. The Government agrees in principle with amending the Burial and Cremation Act 1964 to remove this statutory requirement, but intends to defer any final policy decision until it can be informed by the outcome of the Law Commission’s review of this Act.

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Government Response to the

Report of the Primary Production Committee

_Briefing from Beef and Lamb New Zealand_

Presented to the House of Representatives

In accordance with Standing Order 252
Government response to the Report of the Primary Production Committee

*Briefing from Beef and Lamb New Zealand*

**Introduction**

The government has carefully considered the Committee’s 30 April 2015 report “Briefing from Beef and Lamb New Zealand”.

The government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 248.

The government has considered the Committee’s recommendation in the context of existing, proposed, and recently announced immigration policies and proposes that the needs of the meat industry be re-examined once these policies and reviews have been implemented.

**Recommendations and government response**

**Recommendation:** That the Minister of Immigration reconsider the immigration status of Halal slaughtermen in light of the contribution they make to the New Zealand meat industry, in order to simplify the complex and repetitive process related to the renewal of their visas.

**Response:** The recently announced pathway to residence for a limited number of long-term migrants on temporary work visas in the South Island may have a positive impact on the availability of workers for the Halal industry. The Minister of Immigration announced that the government is considering offering residence to some migrants who have worked in the South Island for at least five years. The meat industry has previously supported requests for exemptions to resident visa requirements for Halal slaughtermen who have spent significant amounts of time in New Zealand, and many of these workers have been granted visas to work in the South Island.

Reviews planned as part of the immigration policy strategic work programme may also affect Halal slaughtermen. In particular, the government is interested in reducing long-term reliance on low skilled foreign labour, while a review of the Pacific Access Category may increase the selection rate of Fijian Halal slaughtermen from the ballot.

The immigration instructions which require Halal slaughtermen to apply for visas on an annual basis are in place to ensure that New Zealand citizens and residents are considered first for employment opportunities. While the government recognises the importance of the Halal meat product industry it does not consider an exception to this policy for Halal slaughtermen to be consistent with the goal of reducing long-term reliance on lower-skilled migration.

**Conclusion**

Recently announced policy initiatives and reviews of existing policies underway provide a pathway to residence for a number of Halal slaughtermen. Reviews of skilled work policies under the Immigration Policy strategic work programme may result in changes to the work visa requirements for Halal slaughtermen. The government recommends that the impact of new policies and policy reviews on Halal slaughtermen be investigated by officials.
Government Response to
the Report from the Primary Production Select Committee
on
the ‘Briefing from the bee industry’

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252
Introduction
The Government has carefully considered the Primary Production Select Committee’s (the ‘Committee’) report. The Government welcomes the report, which covers a wide range of issues from bee health to current export markets. The Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

Last year, sales of exported New Zealand honey grossed approximately $200 million. A substantial portion of this honey was labelled as mānuka. At present, the industry uses a range of ways to label and grade mānuka honey. Businesses are responsible for ensuring that any statements on labels are accurate, that there are reasonable grounds for making those statements and that the statements meet legislative requirements.

Recommendations and government response

Recommendation: The Committee ‘recommends to the Government that the Ministry for Primary Industries work with the industry to establish and implement a credible certification and grade standard system for mānuka honey and its integrity as an export product, as a matter of urgency’.

Response: The Government has been working with industry for several years to ensure that mānuka honey is accurately labelled and that any grading systems meet legislative requirements. The Government is also assessing whether any changes are required to strengthen the existing framework for traceability and official assurances for honey.

The Ministry for Primary Industries’ work to develop labelling guidelines

In New Zealand, all food must be truthfully and accurately labelled. After concerns were raised in 2013 by a number of export markets about label claims on honey, MPI started to work closely with the industry to develop an interim labelling guide for mānuka honey. In July 2014, MPI released the ‘Interim labelling guide for mānuka honey’, which can be found here: [http://www.mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/4603](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/4603). The guide provides simplified explanations on how to comply with applicable labelling requirements under the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. This labelling guide applies to honey packed for both domestic and export markets.

Science programme to define mānuka honey

When a honey claims to be from a single floral source (e.g. ‘mānuka honey’) it is said to be monofloral. In order to make that claim it must be wholly or mainly from that source. MPI has reviewed published science and industry-supplied research and has not identified anything that is suitable to develop a robust definition of mānuka honey.
The Committee’s report notes that ‘to be deemed monofloral by European standards, mānuka honey must have a mānuka pollen count of at least 70 per cent’. The Government notes that, while this parameter has been accepted by some European testing laboratories, MPI has concerns about this value as the analysis is from thirty years ago and based on a sample size of five. In addition, current testing limitations mean that mānuka pollen cannot be fully differentiated from other pollen types.

Another way mānuka honey has been commonly defined is via the presence of the chemical methylgloxal. However, methylgloxal is not unique to mānuka, is unstable over time and temperature, and can be easily added artificially to the honey.

To help resolve this important issue, and to support mānuka honey businesses, MPI is investing in a two-year science programme using a consortium of service providers to determine an acceptable definition for monofloral mānuka honey. The programme is focused on identifying attributes that are accurate, stable, cost effective, and limit opportunities for fraud and adulteration. In the meantime, the interim labelling guide outlines the characteristics of ‘mānuka-type’ honey.

**Grading systems**

Grading systems are used by the mānuka honey industry to communicate the quality of a product type using numbers or symbols. These are often in the form of ‘10+’, ‘20+’ ‘30+’ or ‘100’, ‘200’ and frequently include abbreviations such as ‘MG’ or trademarks such as ‘UMF’ and ‘MGO’. There is a variety of different grading systems used by mānuka honey businesses. All are voluntary.

MPI does not approve or endorse industry grading systems and has no plans to do so. However, MPI is actively working with the industry to review grading systems and guide businesses to comply with legislative requirements.

If a business chooses to provide a grading system on a label, then the parameters associated with it should be able to be verified, explained on the label, and the level claimed must be maintained throughout the entire shelf-life of the product. All grading systems should relate to the contents of the honey.

Since the publication of the ‘Interim labelling guide for mānuka honey’, many businesses have had to revise their labelling and grading systems to ensure they meet legislative requirements. Many grading systems originated from tests related to topical application of mānuka honey. The labels arising from this have had to be removed from food products and have been replaced by content claims. It would not be appropriate for the Government to endorse grading systems for honey sold as a food based on parameters relevant only to its use for topical application.

If an adequate definition of mānuka honey arises from the science being undertaken, then businesses may wish to establish a grading system using this definition.
Official assurances for mānuka honey export

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) provides export certification for honey through an official assurance system established under the Animal Products Act 1999. That Act empowers the Director-General of MPI, and officials authorised by him, to issue official assurances in respect of animal material and animal products.

An official assurance is a statement from the New Zealand Government to the delegated Government authority of an importing country attesting that the animal product being exported to it is fit for purpose, meets New Zealand standards and any additional requirements specifically agreed between New Zealand and the importing country.

The MPI official assurance framework and the underlying technical evidence for honey certification will evolve as new risks to the integrity of our products are identified and as the expectations of our trading partners change.

Until there is a robust, scientifically validated definition for monofloral mānuka honey, MPI cannot certify honey as ‘mānuka honey’. MPI will continue to work with industry to ensure that official assurances for honey, and all bee product exports, are fit for purpose. This work is initially looking at strengthening requirements for the eligibility, traceability, and verification of honey intended for export to markets for which official assurances are required. The aim of this work is to provide confidence that honey labelled as mānuka has been sourced and processed appropriately. Officials consider that continued integrated and collaborative work between Governments and industry is still the most appropriate way to progress mānuka honey certification systems.

Government engagement with industry

The Government notes that MPI is already working with the bee products industry through both the Bee Products Standards Council and a mānuka honey labelling guidelines liaison group, which includes both Bee Products Standards Council members and representatives from large mānuka honey packers and exporters. The Government is committed to working with industry on an ongoing basis to ensure robust regulatory systems are in place.

The Committee’s report refers to the potential establishment of a unified Apiculture Industry Governance Board. The Government welcomes this initiative. Once this is established, the industry may wish to examine the option of developing a commodity levy to fund industry-good activities. MPI can offer advice to the industry on the process of obtaining a Commodity Levy Order.
**Conclusion**

The Government acknowledges the work done by the Committee and the responsibility this Committee has to bee industry stakeholders. The Government thanks the Committee for its time and attention in compiling the report and notes that officials have considered the Committee’s report and recommendation in detail.

Government will continue to work with the bee industry, the research sector, and officials from key export markets to ensure that mānuka honey is accurately labelled and certified.

The Government is satisfied that this approach is consistent with the Committee’s recommendation.
Government Response to
Report of the Privileges Committee
on the
Question of Privilege Regarding Use of Intrusive
Powers Within the Parliamentary Precinct

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252
Government response to the Report of the Privileges Committee on the question of privilege regarding use of intrusive powers within the parliamentary precinct

Introduction

The Government has carefully considered the Committee’s report on the question of privilege regarding use of intrusive powers within the parliamentary precinct.

The Government welcomes the Committee’s report which represents a major contribution to resolving the issues that might arise over questions of privilege regarding use of intrusive powers within the parliamentary precinct.

The Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 252. The Government will take action on both of the Committee’s recommendations.

Recommendations and Government response

Recommendation 1: Recommend that the Government update the Cabinet Manual to reflect that where an inquiry is established under the Inquiries Act 2013, the exercise of powers in relation to members of Parliament and the parliamentary agencies will require recognition of parliamentary privilege.


Recommendation 2: Recommend that the Government develop some standard terms of reference for use in any inquiry where it appears that powers may be exercised in relation to members and the parliamentary agencies.

Response: The Department of Internal Affairs will develop during the 2015 parliamentary year a standard terms of reference for use in any inquiry where it appears that powers may be exercised in relation to members and the parliamentary agencies.

Conclusion

The Government will implement the recommendations of the Committee.
Government Response to
Report of Regulations Review Committee
on
Inquiry into Parliament’s legislative response to future national emergencies

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252
Introduction

The Government would like to thank the Regulations Review Committee (the Committee) for its final report on the Inquiry into Parliament’s legislative response to future national emergencies (the Report).

The Government has carefully considered the Report and makes this response in accordance with Standing Order 252.

The Government is committed to ensuring that people and businesses affected by national emergencies receive a rapid and effective response from the Parliament. In light of recent events in the Hurunui/Kaikōura districts, the Government considers that the Committee’s recommendations are well-timed and highlight the importance of a robust Parliamentary response to national emergencies.

The Committee has made 11 recommendations to strengthen the Parliament’s legislative response to national emergencies. These 11 recommendations can be grouped into the following three themes:

1. executive powers to override enactments should extend only as far as is necessary to deal with the emergency itself, and should only be exercised for that purpose;

2. emergency legislation should include safeguards; and

3. any legislative response to a national emergency should be designed to ensure that recovery from the emergency begins on day one.

The Government generally agrees with the recommendations contained in the Committee’s Report but notes the ability to respond flexibly and appropriately to each national emergency must be retained.

The Government response to each of the Committee’s recommendations is outlined below.

Recommendations and government response

Recommendation 1: Emergency legislation should be bespoke for each national emergency and confer powers only as necessary to each situation. Generic national emergency legislation should not be passed in advance.

The Government uses a mixture of generic and bespoke legislation to manage emergencies. For instance, the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 provides a core underpinning set of powers. The Government also uses sector specific legislation such as the Health Act 1956 and the Epidemic Preparedness Act 2006. Further, the Government has passed bespoke legislation in response to national emergencies such as the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011, the...

Recommendation 2: As much time as possible in the circumstances should be allowed for select committee consideration of emergency legislation.

As a matter of general principle, the Government agrees with this recommendation. The nature and scale of the emergency will affect the time that can be made available to the select committee, and an extensive select committee process may not be feasible. For example, the Hurunui/Kaikōura Earthquakes Emergency Relief Bill was considered by a select committee for one day and the Civil Defence Emergency Management Amendment Act 2016 Amendment Bill was not referred to a select committee at all (although there had been cross-party discussions about the Bill, before it was introduced). The Hurunui/Kaikōura Earthquakes Recovery Bill was referred to select committee on 1 December 2016 and a report back was received on 8 December 2016.

Recommendation 3: Existing select committees should consider emergency legislation.

The Government’s recent approach has been to use existing select committees for emergency legislation. However, in accordance with Standing Orders, the House can establish temporary committees to consider proposed legislation if the House determines that the established select committees are inappropriate.

Recommendation 4: Emergency legislation should take the form of primary legislation wherever reasonably possible, rather than relying on broad powers to make delegated legislation.

The Government considers that emergency legislation should take whatever form that is most suitable in the circumstances. Where it is clear that there are a limited and defined number of amendments that need to be made, then those amendments can be made through primary legislation, as was done in the Hurunui/Kaikōura Earthquakes Emergency Relief Act 2016.

On the other hand, in a response to a national emergency, it may be clear that amendments to a variety of Acts are likely to be necessary, but the specific nature of those amendments may not be clear. In those uncertain times – which the Government faced following the Canterbury and Hurunui/Kaikōura earthquakes – the Order in Council mechanism allows for the immediate exercise of powers to resolve recovery problems while also providing the flexibility to deal with unforeseen issues later on. Further, full parliamentary consideration of a large number of amendments may slow down the effective response to a national emergency.

Recommendation 5: Powers to override enactments by Order in Council should provide a “positive list” of the specific enactments that can be overridden.

The Government’s recent approach has been to provide a “positive list” of Acts that can be amended by Orders in Council as part of emergency legislation. The Government also considers that it is appropriate to have a mechanism in place to add more enactments to the list in defined circumstances. It is also possible to have a
“negative list” of Acts that cannot be amended: for example, the Hurunui/Kaikōura Earthquakes Emergency Recovery Act 2016 provides a “positive list” as well as a “negative list” that contains seven constitutional statutes including the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, the Constitution Act 1986 and the Electoral Act 1993.

Recommendation 6: Orders in Council should be subject to scrutiny before and after they are made.

It has been recent Government practice to subject Orders in Council to the scrutiny of specialised review panels and, in the Hurunui/Kaikōura Earthquakes Recovery Act 2016, the Regulations Review Committee, before they are made. Further, the Regulations Review Committee may review Orders in Council after they are made. However, each national emergency is unique and the approach will need to be tailored to the needs of the communities affected.

Recommendation 7: The right to seek judicial review of Orders in Council made under emergency legislation should be preserved and upheld.

Orders in Council provide a fast and flexible mechanism that allows the Government to react quickly to a range of issues after a national emergency. There is potential for the delivery of essential recovery activity to be unduly delayed by litigation. The Government’s recent approach has therefore been to limit the ability to judicially review the relevant Minister’s recommendation to the Governor-General that an Order in Council be made (or other associated decisions made by the Minister).

Recommendation 8: Legislation for national emergencies should have regard to international norms and benchmarks.

The Government will comply with its international disaster response and other international obligations. Where it is appropriate, the Government will make use of other international benchmarks and norms as part of future responses to national emergencies in New Zealand. It will take those decisions in light of the nature and scope of the national emergency.

Recommendation 9: Bespoke emergency powers should be in force only for as long as is reasonably necessary, and should have built-in sunset provisions.

Recent Government practice has been to include built-in sunset provisions for emergency powers. The Committee’s Report suggests that as a matter of principle emergency powers should be renewed by Parliament every three years. However, the Government considers that it is useful to retain the flexibility to determine the lifespan of emergency powers at the time of each national emergency. For instance, the Government found that it was appropriate in the Hurunui/Kaikōura Earthquakes Recovery Act 2016 to have provisions relating to the affected district councils to survive longer than the rest of the Act.

Recommendation 10: Legislation must reflect the principle that recovery from a national emergency starts on day one.

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 provides for recovery to start in anticipation of an emergency occurring. The Act also provides for recovery to begin in
a state of emergency as well as in a national transition period. This theme is supported by a principle contained in the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan that states that recovery measures should be pre-planned and implemented from the first day of the response (or as soon as practicable).

**Recommendation 11:** The responsible Minister should formally report, annually, to the House on the exercise of powers under the emergency legislation and on progress with the recovery effort.

Under the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 and the Hurunui/Kaikōura Earthquakes Recovery Act 2016, the relevant Minister must report on the use of emergency powers quarterly and every six months, respectively. Depending on the scale of future national emergencies it may be more suitable to have a shorter or longer reporting period than the Committee’s recommendation of one year.

There are a number of mechanisms where the House can be updated on the recovery effort. These include questions in the House, select committee examinations and annual reports from the involved agencies.
Government response to the
Report of the Regulations Review Committee
on
Inquiry into the oversight of disallowable
instruments that are not legislative instruments

Presented to the House of Representatives
in accordance with Standing Order 252
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO REPORT OF THE REGULATIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE ON ITS INQUIRY INTO THE OVERSIGHT OF DISALLOWABLE INSTRUMENTS THAT ARE NOT LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS.

Introduction

The Government has carefully considered the Regulations Review Committee’s report on its Inquiry into the Oversight of Disallowable Instruments that are not Legislative Instruments (the report) and thanks the Committee for its work.

The Regulations Review Committee, in its report, has made six recommendations to the Government about the making and publication of instruments that are disallowable under the Legislation Act 2012 but that are not legislative instruments under that Act.

For ease of reference, this response to the report has allocated a number to each of the bullet points on page 5 of the report, and refers to them as recommendations 1-6.

The Government responds to the recommendations in the report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

Recommendations and Government response

Recommendation 1: We recommend to the Government that it introduce legislation to the House to establish a register of delegated legislation similar to the Australian Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.

Response:

The Committee is concerned disallowable non-legislative instruments (DINLIs), sometimes referred to as “Agency Regulations”, “Other Instruments”, or “Deemed Regulations”, can be difficult to identify and that this undermines its oversight of such legislation. It refers to the Government’s response to the Committee’s 2004 Report that it would introduce new administrative requirements to address these types of concerns and monitor the Australian legislative solution. The Committee considers that the problems relating to its oversight of DINLIs have not lessened over the past 10 years.

The Government notes that others have similar concerns. The New Zealand Law Society, in a submission to the Committee, proposed that a central register of all regulations, rules, and other legislative instruments be established following the Australian approach. The New Zealand Productivity Commission, in its June 2014 report Regulatory Institutions and Practices, commented that the absence of a central electronic repository of Other Instruments constrains the ability of firms and individuals to access and understand their regulatory rights and obligations. It recommended that the New Zealand Legislation
website (www.legislation.govt.nz) should be expanded to provide a central and comprehensive source of DINLIS.

The Government is committed to promoting ready access to New Zealand legislation so that citizens know what the law is and are therefore able to comply with the law. The Parliamentary Counsel Office (PCO) is required to publish all Acts and Legislative Instruments. On a discretionary basis, it also publishes Other Instruments on the New Zealand Legislation website. To address concerns raised previously about access to Other Instruments, the PCO added a section to the New Zealand Legislation website that contains links to DINLIs that are published on agency or departmental websites and provides addresses for obtaining print copies. DINLIs are referred to on the Legislation website as “Other Instruments” and there are currently about 820 available via the website. This provides convenient access to these instruments, which are searchable by title and year, and the information is updated regularly. The PCO, however, relies on information received from the agencies responsible for making these Other Instruments and cannot guarantee this information is always complete or up to date. The Legislation website also links to the New Zealand Gazette, published by the Department of Internal Affairs, which publishes either DINLIs in full or notifies their making and where they can be found on agency or departmental websites.

The Government recognises that there is a significant concern about access to DINLIs. It also acknowledges that, in principle, broadening the content of the Legislation website to include the registration of DINLIs should improve public access by consolidating the current, varied sources of legislation so that the New Zealand Legislation website would provide a broader central source of authoritative and official legislation. This would remove the fragmentation of legislation and make it easier for people to find the correct, current version of legislation that applies to them. For these reasons, the Government has directed the PCO to explore an amendment to the Legislation Act 2012 for the provision of a register of DINLIs, based on the Australian Commonwealth model.

Considerable policy work and consultation will need to be undertaken, however, before the Government will be able to form a final view about whether a legal register of DINLIs should be established to replace the existing notification and publication arrangements. The Law Commission recommendations in 2008 relating to the re-enactment of the Regulations (Disallowance) Act 1989 (in the Legislation Act 2012) did not discuss or recommend major changes to the legislation, such as the introduction of a register. This work will need to:

a. scope the major components of a registration system which, based on the Australian Federal example, is likely to require a lodgement system, a checking process, and a publication system;

b. analyse ways to address the access problem, which could include enhancing the current access arrangements as well as reviewing the potential benefits and impacts of a register, and assessing the likely implementation costs and ongoing resources required (which are likely to involve significant IT-related costs);

c. explore a number of important policy issues, such as determining the consequences of a failure to register and the likely implications for the legal effect of an instrument if later discovered;
d. consider the relationship (both legal and technological) between any such register and the *New Zealand Gazette* and also the existing primary and secondary legislation drafting and publication system (the public face of which is the Legislation website and database).

In Australia, the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments (made under their Legislative Instruments Act 2003) took several years to develop and implement. Their experience is that this is a significant project that needs careful consideration and resourcing. In light of the likely timeframes before a decision about a register could be made, the Government will ask the PCO to continue to use its best endeavours to get as many DINLIs listed on the Legislation website on the Other Instruments page as is practicable, including those that the Committee identify as falling within the residual category that are disallowable because they are determined to have significant legislative effect.

**Recommendation 2:** We recommend to the Government that it:

- designate an agency to be responsible for disallowable instruments that are not legislative instruments (DINLIs), as an area of law, and
- consider the resourcing needed by the agency to fulfil its new responsibility.

**Response:**

The Government does not support the recommendation to designate a single agency to be responsible for DINLIs because it considers that it is not clear that this would help address the Committee’s concerns. Each government agency that administers DINLIs is already responsible for the policy and law contained in those DINLIs. Under section 32(1)(d)(ii) of the State Sector Act 1988, department or agency chief executives are responsible to their Minister for the stewardship of the legislation administered by their department or agency.

They are responsible for ensuring that their DINLIs are correctly drafted, notified, and published. They can refer for guidance to the Legislation Advisory Committee *Guidelines on Process and Content of Legislation*, which is a guide to making good legislation and contains material about the making of delegated legislation. The Cabinet Manual refers agencies to these Guidelines. There is also a Cabinet Office circular about the disallowance and publication of delegated legislation that is being updated.

The PCO has an advisory drafting function under the Legislation Act 2012 and will assist agencies on drafting matters. The PCO drafts and publishes a very small number of DINLIs on a discretionary basis and the PCO promotes best-practice drafting of these instruments, for example, by ensuring the date on which they are made is expressly stated, and has provided drafting templates to some agencies. The PCO provides drafting training to the agencies that draft DINLIs.

Creating a new area of agency responsibility for the process of making, notifying, and publishing DINLIs is unnecessary and could result in unclear areas of responsibility as between agencies that make DINLIs, the Ministry of Justice with responsibility for disallowance legislation, and the PCO as adviser on drafting and provider of access to primary and secondary legislation.
The Committee’s inquiries and reports in this area also assist agencies to understand their duties in making and administering DINLIs.

The Committee’s concerns appear to arise from process issues relating to the drafting, gazetting, presentation, and publication of DINLIs. If the Government decides to establish a registration system for DINLIs, this would address these concerns.

**Recommendation 3**: We recommend to the Government that it introduce legislation to ensure that every empowering provision, whether in an Act or in delegated legislation and whether already made or being made, states which of the categories the instrument falls into.

**Response**

The Government does not support the recommendation to introduce legislation to ensure that every empowering provision on the statute book states which category instruments made under the empowering provision fall into.

The Government is reluctant to devote resources to drafting, for consideration and enactment, provisions that are legally unnecessary. The sole purpose of such provisions would be to explain an outcome that is already clearly achieved by another enactment. The Government does not consider it appropriate to seek parliamentary time to put into statute law redundant statements of existing fact.

The Government has a concern that to adopt a practice of always inserting declaratory provisions would increase very considerably the length and complexity of empowering provisions (by including repetitive standard provisions that are legally unnecessary and do not alter legal effect). It would be prudent to avoid increasing the length and complexity of legislation where the additional words are already provided by other legislation, otherwise default provisions (like those in the Interpretation Act) would be unnecessarily repeated in nearly every Bill before the House.

The report suggests that ‘the process begun by the passage of the Legislation Act 2012 will not be completed until every piece of delegated legislation is categorised’. The Government does not agree. The definitions and the default provisions in the Legislation Act 2012, together with the empowering provisions in each relevant enactment, make the category of most instruments clear. In a small residual category it is necessary to assess whether certain instruments have a significant legislative effect (and so whether they are disallowable).

It is not necessarily the case that, if a register of DINLIs is established, every empowering provision would have to be amended as that is just one of several different means of achieving the same end. However, if this was the preferred approach, it would make sense to wait until a decision has been made about a register so that the task of amending every empowering provision on the statute book would be undertaken in a planned and efficient way.
Any legislation to amend every enactment on the statute book that contains an empowering provision would be an enormous undertaking. A project of this scale should only be undertaken if it is truly essential, or if the benefit of doing so outweighs or is at least commensurate with the cost. Aside from the undesirability of making declaratory statements in statute law, it is difficult to justify the use of drafting resources and House time for an enormous set of, what would be, legally unnecessary changes.

**Recommendation 4:** We recommend to the Government that it introduce legislation to the House to:
- remove the significant legislative effect test from the Legislation Act 2012
- require the amendment of each empowering provision to state clearly the category into which its instrument falls.

**Response**

When it considered the Bill for the Legislation Act 2012, the Committee agreed both:
- that the new Act would have separate definitions for different purposes (for example, for publication and disallowance); and
- that the disallowable instruments definition would include a residual category of instruments that have a significant legislative effect (“ISLEs”).

The Committee expressly welcomed the proposed residual category because it strengthened parliamentary scrutiny by enabling disallowance of all instruments that have a significant legislative effect (regardless of their form and maker) if the empowering law does not expressly exempt the instrument from disallowance. In its report on the Bill for the 2012 Act, the Committee stated: “We are aware of the concern that clauses 37 and 38 would narrow the scope of disallowance, as the definition of “legislative order [instrument]” appears to be significantly narrower than the current definition of regulation. However, after careful consideration we are satisfied that the provisions in the bill that separate the publication and the disallowance of delegated legislation, and the broad definition of “disallowable instrument”, will in fact have the opposite effect. For instance, paragraph (c) of the definition includes instruments that have “significant legislative effect”. This focuses on the substance of delegated legislation rather than its form or description, and reverses the current position that allows delegated legislation to be excluded from the disallowance regime depending on how it is described. We are therefore satisfied that the bill would increase parliamentary oversight of the use of delegated powers by the Executive, and make it more difficult to avoid disallowance.”

The residual category ensures that parliamentary scrutiny cannot be avoided simply by describing an instrument in a certain way. It is the substance that matters and, if an instrument has a significant legislative effect, then it is disallowable. The Government does not agree with the Committee that the significant legislative effect test creates an unacceptable degree of uncertainty. Its meaning and scope are capable of being ascertained by asking the relevant questions:
- Does the instrument create, alter, or remove (or determine or alter the temporal application of) rights or obligations?
b. Does it also determine or alter the content of (or determine or alter the temporal application of) the law applying to the public or a class of the public? If the answer to both of these questions is yes, then the instrument is an ISLE (and therefore a disallowable instrument).

The Government is confident that the Committee will, using its own knowledge, experience, and judgment, and with the benefit of advice, be able to determine whether or not an instrument falls within the definition of significant legislative effect.

The Government does not agree with the change in the Committee’s position in relation to the significant legislative effect test. The Government therefore does not accept the recommendation that the test be removed from the Legislation Act 2012, as it considers this would weaken effective parliamentary scrutiny of the exercise of delegated legislative powers. The test has only been in force since August 2013 and it would be useful to monitor its operation in practice over a much longer period before concluding that further legislative change is necessary.

The second bullet point in recommendation 4 is a restatement of recommendation 3, and the Government refers to its response to recommendation 3, above.

**Recommendation 5**

We recommend to the Government that, whether or not a register is established, it require:

- a DINLI that must be presented to the House to have the words “disallowable instrument” on it at the top of the first page
- the empowering provision of a DINLI that must be presented to the House to include the requirement for presentation explicitly.

**Response**

The Government does not accept the recommendation that it should require all DINLIs that must be presented to the House to have the words “disallowable instrument” at the top of the first page. Just as a disallowable instrument remains disallowable and amendable by the House even if not presented, so it is the case that a disallowable instrument would remain disallowable even if it failed to comply with any new practice requirement that it have the words “disallowable instrument” at the top of the first page. Such a requirement would not necessarily relieve the Committee of the task of satisfying itself whether a certain instrument was in fact disallowable even though the relevant words did not appear on the first page or the instrument was not presented for tabling.

The Government supports the practice of making clear in empowering provisions the presentation requirement for DINLIs. The Government’s current drafting practice for empowering provisions for DINLIs requires those provisions to state whether these instruments must be presented under section 41 of the Legislation Act 2012.

The Legislation Act 2012 consequentially amended many Acts to ensure that their empowering provisions expressly provide for a presentation requirement where appropriate. For existing empowering provisions identified since then, similar consequential
amendments will be made via the Legislation Amendment Bill. If any have not been changed, the operation of the Legislation Act 2012 and other enactments that may contain presenting requirements make the situation governing the presentation of particular DINLIs sufficiently clear, and the wholesale amendment of such empowering provisions is, therefore, unwarranted.

**Recommendation 6**

We recommend to the Government that if a register is not established it:

- amend the Legislation Act to provide for DINLIs to be notified in the *New Zealand Gazette* and published in full on the law-making bodies’ websites
- require the provision of a template for *Gazette* notices about DINLIs
- require the publication of a step-by-step guide to the process of making DINLIs.

**Response**

The Government appreciates the concerns that prompt the Committee’s recommendation if a register is not established. In principle, an amendment to the Legislation Act 2012 to provide for the notification and publication of DINLIs would appear to be, in that case, appropriate. However, a decision about the register needs to be taken first.

When drafting Bills that provide for the making of DINLIs, the current approach is that, if the general rules in the Legislation Act 2012 would not be applicable, the requirements for the notification and publication of DINLIs will be expressly set out in those individual Bills. The empowering provisions for DINLIs or agency regulations always specify their status.

The PCO is currently undertaking work on a guide to drafting tertiary instruments with supporting information, including a Microsoft Word template for use by departments. The PCO already provides templates and assistance to individual agencies. Other guidance about delegated legislation exists in the Cabinet Manual and LAC Guidelines.

**Conclusion**

**Register**

The Government recognises there is a significant concern about access to DINLIs and has directed the PCO to explore an amendment to the Legislation Act 2012 for the provision of a register of DINLIs, based on the Australian Commonwealth model. In principle, broadening the content of the New Zealand Legislation website to include DINLIs should improve public access by consolidating the current, varied sources of legislation in one place.

Considerable policy work and consultation will need to be undertaken before the Government is able to form a final view about whether a legal register of DINLIs should be established to replace the existing notification and publication arrangements. As this could take several years, based on the Australian example, the Government will ask the PCO to continue to use its best endeavours to get as many DINLIs listed on the Legislation website on the Other Instruments page as is practicable, including those that the Committee identify as falling within the residual category that are disallowable because they are determined to have significant legislative effect.
Agency with responsibility for DINLIs
The Government does not support the recommendation to designate a single agency to be responsible for DINLIs because it considers that it is not clear that this would help address the concerns about access. Each Government agency that administers DINLIs is already responsible for the policy and law contained in those DINLIs. Under the State Sector Act 1988, department or agency chief executives are responsible to their Minister for the stewardship of the legislation administered by their department or agency.

The PCO has an advisory drafting function under the Legislation Act 2012 and will assist agencies on drafting matters. The PCO provides drafting training to the agencies that draft DINLIs. Agencies can refer for guidance to the Cabinet Manual and the Legislation Advisory Committee Guidelines on Process and Content of Legislation (2014 edition). The Committee’s inquiries and reports in this area also assist agencies.

Empowering provisions
The Government does not support the recommendation to introduce legislation to ensure that every empowering provision on the statute book states which category instruments made under the empowering provision fall into. This would be a huge undertaking that is legally unnecessary. It would increase very considerably the length and complexity of empowering provisions. The definitions and the default provisions in the Legislation Act 2012, together with the empowering provisions in each relevant enactment, make the category of most instruments clear. In a small residual category it is necessary to assess whether certain instruments have a significant legislative effect (and so whether they are disallowable).

Significant legislative effect test
The Government does not support removing the significant legislative effect test from the Legislation Act 2012, as it considers this would weaken effective parliamentary scrutiny of the exercise of delegated legislative powers. The test was expressly approved by the Committee when it considered the Legislation Bill. The Government notes the change in the Committee’s position since then but considers that, as it has only been in force since August 2013, it would be useful to monitor its operation in practice over a much longer period before concluding that further legislative change is necessary.

The Government is confident that the Committee will, using its own knowledge, experience, judgment, and with the benefit of advice, be able to determine whether or not an instrument is disallowable because it has significant legislative effect.

“Disallowable instrument” wording in DINLIs
The Government does not accept the recommendation that it should require all DINLIs that must be presented to the House to have the words “disallowable instrument” at the top of the first page. A disallowable instrument would remain disallowable even if the words were omitted.

The Government supports the practice of making clear in empowering provisions the presentation requirement for DINLIs. The Government’s current drafting practice for
empowering provisions for DINLIs requires those provisions to state whether these instruments must be presented under section 41 of the Legislation Act 2012.

The Legislation Act 2012 consequentially amended many Acts to ensure that their empowering provisions expressly provide for a presentation requirement where appropriate. For existing empowering provisions identified since then, similar consequential amendments will be made via the Legislation Amendment Bill. If any have not been changed, the operation of the Legislation Act 2012 and other enactments that may contain presenting requirements make the situation governing presentation of particular DINLIs sufficiently clear, and the wholesale amendment of such empowering provisions is, therefore, unwarranted.

\textit{Notification and publication of DINLIs if no register; DINLI template and guide}

In principle, an amendment to the Legislation Act 2012 to provide for the notification and publication of DINLIs would appear to be, if there is no register established, appropriate. However, a decision about the register needs to be taken first.

When drafting Bills that provide for the making of DINLIs, the current approach is that if the general rules in the Legislation Act 2012 would not be applicable, the requirements for the notification and publication of DINLIs will be expressly set out in those individual Bills. The PCO is currently preparing a guide to drafting tertiary instruments with supporting information, including a Microsoft Word template for use by agencies. The PCO already provides templates and assistance to individual agencies. Other guidance about delegated legislation already exists in the Cabinet Manual and LAC Guidelines (\textit{2014 edition}).
Government Response to
Report of the Regulations Review Committee
on
Investigation into the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers
(Fees and Disciplinary Levy) Amendment Notice 2015

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252
Government response to Report of Regulations Review Committee on Investigation into the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers (Fees and Disciplinary Levy) Amendment Notice 2015

Introduction

1 The Government has carefully considered the Regulations Review Committee (the Committee) Report on Investigation into the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers (Fees and Disciplinary Levy) Amendment Notice 2015 (the 2015 notice).

2 The Committee considered whether the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 (the Act) authorised the charging of the fees prescribed in the 2015 notice relating to people working under a section 19, 21, and 25 exemptions.

3 After evaluating evidence and explanations sought from the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (the Board) and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, and considering legal advice, the Committee concluded that:
   • the fees set out in clause 5 of the 2015 notice are authorised under the Act
   • there are serious problems with the clarity of the empowering provision in the Act.

4 The Government responds to the Committee Report in accordance with Standing Order 252. The Government must present a paper responding to the recommendation of the Committee to the House not more than 60 working days after the Committee report was presented.

Recommendation and Government response

5 Recommendation: The Committee recommended that the Government amend the empowering provision in the Act, by way of a statutes amendment bill, to explicitly grant the authority to charge a fee.

6 Response: The Government accepts the Committee's finding.

7 The Government will amend the empowering provision in the Act, at the next suitable legislative opportunity. The proposed amendment will improve the clarity of the regulation, reducing uncertainty and making it more understandable as expected under the Code of Good Regulatory Practice.
Government response to
Report of the Regulations Review Committee
on

*Regulation-making powers that authorise
transitional regulations to override primary legislation*

Presented to the House of Representatives
in accordance with Standing Order 252
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO
REPORT OF THE REGULATIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE ON
REGULATION-MAKING POWERS THAT AUTHORISE
TRANSITIONAL REGULATIONS TO OVERRIDE PRIMARY LEGISLATION

The Government has considered carefully the Regulations Review Committee’s (the Committee’s) report on Regulation-making powers that authorise transitional regulations to override primary legislation (the report). The Government thanks the Committee for its further work on the use in primary legislation of provisions authorising the making of temporary transitional overriding regulations.

The Committee has in the report made a recommendation addressed to the Government. The Government therefore responds to that recommendation in accordance with Standing Order 252.

Recommendation and Government response

Recommendation (report, p 5):

The Regulations Review Committee recommends that the Government note this report and take steps to limit the use of transitional override powers in legislation in accordance with the principles identified in this report and the Regulations Review Committee report of 1995.

Response:

The Government notes the report, and also notes the principles applying to the use in primary legislation of temporary transitional override regulation-making powers. Those principles are summarised in the report, and are principles that the Committee identified first in its report of 1995. Those principles have, to the extent they were agreed with in the 1996 Government Response to that 1995 report, generally been complied with since 1995. The 1996 Government Response then agreed that a lifespan of three years is generally desirable for overriding transitional regulations but noted that there may be occasions when a longer period may be necessary, and that confirmation by Act may be desirable if that period is more than 3 years. It did not agree that formal consultation should always be a precondition to the exercise of transitional regulation-making powers, particularly in view of existing consultation requirements.

In Government Bills, the practice is, and has been, generally to draft empowering provisions in line with the principles set out by the Committee in its 1995 report, subject to the reservations expressed in the 1996 Government Response to those principles. These are the principles adopted by the Legislation Advisory Committee (LAC) in its Guidelines on the Process and Content of Legislation (2014 edition).

When compared to the total number of public Acts enacted each year, there are relatively few provisions enacted each year that empower the making of regulations for transitional purposes of the type referred to in the report. These provisions are generally only used in
exceptional circumstances, and thus are not used at all routinely. The Committee’s own analysis of new legislation shows, for the period 2010–2014, a decreasing incidence of transitional override powers in Bills. But as Professor John Burrows says in his evidence (which is attached to the report as Appendix C), use of provisions of this kind (subject to appropriate checks and balances) arises simply from the incidence of proposals for complex new legislation, the generally-agreed need to ensure an orderly transition from the old to the new, and the difficulty of obtaining quickly remedial primary legislation. Applying the principles in those few instances of empowering provisions, a reasonable case can be made for those kinds of powers in their individual contexts.

With a few exceptions, overriding transitional regulations are made relatively sparingly to fix anomalies, discrepancies, and mistakes (as the Committee envisaged in its 1995 report). Since 1995, transitional override powers have been inserted, in line with the accepted principles, into Acts that contain complex reforms and where there may be difficult, and unknown, implementation issues. In the special and exceptional circumstances following the Canterbury earthquakes, there has been extensive use of transitional regulation-making powers under the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 and its 2010 predecessor. It was not possible to foresee clearly at the enactment of the Canterbury earthquake Acts all the likely transitional overrides that would be necessary. Similarly the inevitably complex legislative reforms necessary to establish the Auckland super city resulted in a wider use of transitional regulation-making powers under the various local government Acts enacted in 2009 and 2010.

The Government considers that, with the exceptional cases noted above, transitional regulation-making powers that alter the language or effect of primary legislation have been inserted into Acts and, used once enacted, in a way that is both circumspect and limited. Examples of situations where those provisions have been inserted are largely confined to legislation of considerable complexity and difficulty where the legislative landscape is complex, as was the case in the context of the Canterbury earthquakes, or where the consequences of error would be very difficult for any government to manage (for example, the election expenses and donations provisions in the Electoral Amendment Act 2009).

The Government notes that, in his evidence, Professor John Burrows comments on the increasing complexity of legislation today, which reflects modern society and business, and also changing methods and theories of regulation. He also comments on the considerable time pressures in preparing some legislation today. He thinks the enactment of “an average of 4 a year is still scarcely outrageous”.

Justice Gageler of the High Court of Australia has noted recently that empowering provisions of this kind reflect not a return to the executive autocracy of a Tudor monarch, but the striking of a legislated balance between flexibility and accountability in the working out of the detail of replacing one modern complex statutory scheme with another. It is notable that the use of provisions of this kind is a well-established legislative design technique in jurisdictions that are comparable to New Zealand.

On the whole, empowering provisions authorising transitional regulations are drafted in New Zealand in specific and limited terms and must be consistent with the purposes of their Act. The great majority contain expiry requirements (and are thus temporary in nature). A greater range of purpose-related restrictions is increasingly being included in these
provisions in the form of strict preconditions for their use. These safeguards inhibit the use of the empowering provisions to make changes of policy that are simply seen as desirable, as distinct from legally essential changes to make the transition from a previous legislative scheme to a new legislative scheme work, or suitably to save rights or obligations under the old law. The need for an orderly transition, and adequate savings provisions, is mostly entirely uncontroversial. Since much contemporary legislation amends pre-existing legislative schemes, there will inevitably be a greater call for complex and overriding transitional and savings provisions to move from one regime to another rather than in the past when legislation was often dealing with a previously unregulated/unlegislated landscape.

Overriding transitional provisions are among the significant legislative features that, as from August 2013, must now be explicitly identified in the legislative disclosure statement that is now published alongside a government Bill or substantive government SOP. These are intended to enhance the parliamentary and public scrutiny of legislation and increase, in particular, the scrutiny of these empowering provisions. The guidance for officials specifically draws their attention to transitional regulations and the desirability of an expiry clause.

Practice for proposing these empowering provisions has, the Government considers, almost always been linked to, and clearly in line with, the accepted relevant principles. The Government therefore considers no clear need has been established for it to take steps to limit their use contrary to those principles. That 27 Acts have been passed since 2000 containing these provisions (out of a total of 1621 Acts) also tends only to confirm that subject select committees, and Parliaments in general, were satisfied these provisions were in each particular case justified.

**Conclusion**

In Government Bills, the practice generally is to draft empowering provisions in line with the principles set out by the Committee in its 1995 report, subject to the reservations expressed in the 1996 Government response to those principles. These are the principles adopted by the Legislation Advisory Committee (LAC) in its *Guidelines on the Process and Content of Legislation* (2014 edition). The Government considers that, apart from in some special types of contexts involving complex legislative landscapes, transitional regulation-making powers that alter the language or effect of primary legislation have been inserted into Acts and, used once enacted, in a way that is circumspect and limited.

These empowering provisions are drafted in specific and restricted terms and must be consistent with the purposes of their Act. Nearly all contain expiry requirements and a greater range of purpose-related restrictions is increasingly being included in these provisions. The Government supports the Committee’s intention to continue to monitor the use of transitional override regulation-making powers. This will ensure that this technique is not being used routinely, and that the accepted principles are continuing to be applied.
Government Response to
Report of the Social Services Committee
on
Inquiry into boarding houses in New Zealand
and
Briefing into long-term caravan park and motor camp accommodation

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252

1
Government Response to Report of Social Services Committee on Inquiry into boarding houses and Briefing into long-term caravan park and motor camp accommodation

Introduction

The Government welcomes the Committee’s report on the Inquiry into boarding houses in New Zealand, and Briefing into long-term caravan park and motor camp accommodation.

The report contains six recommendations. Four of the recommendations focus on legislative changes such as aligning boarding house definitions and updating regulations to be reflective of modern housing standards. For the remaining two recommendations Government has taken action on certain aspects, for example the sharing of boarding house information collected by territorial authorities and government agencies is already taking place in Auckland and Christchurch.

The Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 248.

Recommendations and Government Response

Recommendation 1:

That Government aligns terminology in the Health Act 1956 so that the definition of the term “dwelling house” specifically mentions boarding houses, and aligns the definition of “boarding house” in the Housing Improvement Regulations 1947 with the definition used in the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.

Response:

The Government agrees with the recommendation subject to recommendation 5. It considers any amendments that may be required are achievable through relatively minor amendments to the Health Act 1956 and the Housing Improvement Regulations (HIR) 1947. These could be achieved as consequential matters via amendments to the relevant principal Act, as part of an omnibus Bill, or independently if required.
Recommendation 2:

That Government requires Statistics New Zealand to amend its Census Dwelling Form to enable boarding house residents and/or owners to self-identify as owning or residing in a boarding house.

Response:

The form already enables people to self-identify as owning or residing in a boarding house so the Government does not agree with this recommendation. However, the Government values the information provided by the Census so officials from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) will work with officials from Statistics New Zealand to look into ways of improving Census data on boarding houses.

Recommendation 3:

That Government amends the “Application for approval of an evacuation scheme” form under the Fire Safety and Evacuation of Buildings Regulations 2006, to require a building owner to specify a building’s current or intended use.

Response:

The Government agrees with the recommendation. The application form currently has a voluntary question about a building’s use, which specifies different choices, but it does not include a boarding house as one of the choices. The New Zealand Fire Service will amend the application form to include ‘boarding house’ as one of the choices.

Government has also agreed that officials from the Department of Internal Affairs will work with the New Zealand Fire Service to identify whether other amendments to the application form, or to the Fire Safety and Evacuation Regulations 2006, could assist to promote fire safety in general, and for boarding houses in particular. The Government will then consider whether to proceed with amendments of the Fire Safety and Evacuation Regulations. This will need to be considered against the priority work of progressing the Fire Services Review.
Recommendation 4:

That Government ensures that information on boarding houses collected by territorial authorities and government agencies is shared in order to promote collaboration.

Response:

MBIE encourages a collaborative approach when working with territorial authorities and non-government organisations when working in the boarding house sector. Meetings are held with territorial authorities, government departments and non-government organisations to discuss boarding house issues in Auckland (quarterly) and Christchurch (every six weeks). These working relationships provide MBIE with a solid foundation for undertaking, compliance and policy advice in the boarding house sector. MBIE is progressing the following activities to improve collaboration:

- plans to undertake market research for benchmarking current levels of knowledge of tenancy rights and obligations among boarding house tenants and landlords.

- creation of a centralised database of boarding houses, to help address the gaps in information regarding the numbers and locations of boarding houses in New Zealand. The database will be managed by MBIE and shared with territorial authorities and other agencies.

- involvement in housing forums that discuss and/or have a special focus on boarding houses.
Recommendation 5:

That where necessary, Government updates the regulations under the Health Act 1956, the Building Act 2004, the Residential Tenancies Act 1986, and the Local Government Act 2002 to:

- make the minimum standards more reflective of modern standards
- align penalties to reflect the costs of inspection and enforcement
- allow infringement notices to include the recovery of council enforcement costs.

Response:

For residential properties built prior to the introduction of the Building Code\(^1\) (including boarding houses), Government acknowledges that the regulation of quality is fragmented and outdated, both in terms of what minimum standards could be expected, and penalties local government can apply in cases of non-compliance.

Currently, the quality of older residential buildings (including boarding houses) is primarily regulated through the Housing Improvement Regulations (HIR) 1947, under the Health Act 1956. The HIRs set out minimum standards including overcrowding provisions for all houses (including boarding houses) built before the establishment of the Building Act 1991.

To address the Committee’s recommendations, Government would need to consider which Act would be the most appropriate regulatory vehicle. Boarding house minimum standards would most logically be considered alongside minimum standards for other residential rental accommodation. Government will need to prioritise work on minimum quality standards against other housing priorities, including work on how to increase the supply of affordable housing while progressing the social housing reform programme.

There is a risk that raising and enforcing minimum standards in boarding houses would reduce the supply of boarding house accommodation. For example landlords may be forced to shut down their boarding house accommodation due to non-compliance. Or landlords could increase their rental costs after upgrading their boarding houses thus causing hardship for boarding house tenants. Options for the management of these risks will be developed by officials alongside the further development of minimum quality standards implementation decisions.

\(^{1}\) Under Building Regulations 1992
The Committee also suggested that the Government allow infringement notices to include the recovery of council enforcement costs. The Government considers a review of the infringement regime for local government bylaws would need to closely examine whether a penalty regime would be an appropriate mechanism for enforcement of cost-recovery. Further work would depend upon available resources and is not a priority for the Government at this time.

**Recommendation 6:**

That Government ensures that local territorial authorities are more proactive in enforcing the current legislative requirements of the Health Act 1956, the Building Act 2004, and the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.

**Response**

The Government is committed to improving the performance of local government across its functions. The Department of Internal Affairs will discuss the issue with the relevant territorial authorities so that they can understand the nature of the issues and promote enforcement action.

It is important to note that territorial authorities do not have powers to enforce the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) 1986. MBIE has responsibility for the RTA and provides a dispute resolution service as well as administering applications to the Tenancy Tribunal.

**Conclusion**

In responding to the Committee’s recommendations, Government agrees to align terminology in the Health Act so that the definition of the term “dwelling house” specifically mentions boarding houses, and the Government will align the definition of “boarding houses” in the Housing Improvement Regulations 1947 with the definition in the Residential Tenancies Act 1986. Subject to recommendation 5.

The Government does not agree to require Statistics New Zealand to amend its Census Dwelling Form to enable boarding house residents and/or owners to self-identify as owning or residing in a boarding house as people can already self-identify as owning or residing in a boarding house.

The Government agrees with the recommendation to amend the “Application for approval of an evacuation scheme” form to require a building owner to specify a building’s current or intended use is a boarding house.
The Government agrees to ensure that information of boarding houses collected by territorial authorities and government agencies is shared in order to promote collaboration. This is already taking place.

The Government agrees that where necessary, it updates the regulations under the Health Act 1956, the Building Act 2004, the Residential Tenancies Act 1986, and the Local Government Act 2002 to:

- make the minimum standards more reflective of modern standards
- align penalties to reflect the costs of inspection and enforcement
- allow infringement notices to include the recovery of council enforcement costs.

However, more policy advice is required to determine which Act is the most appropriate regulatory vehicle.

The Government agrees to ensure that local territorial authorities are more proactive in enforcing the current legislative requirements of the Health Act 1956, and the Building Act 2004. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment is responsible for the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.
Government Response to the
Report of the Social Services Committee
on its
Inquiry into the funding of specialist sexual violence social services

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252
Government response to the Report of the Social Services Committee on its Inquiry into the funding of specialist sexual violence social services

Introduction

1 Government has carefully considered the Social Services Committee’s (the Committee) report on its inquiry into the funding of specialist sexual violence social services.

2 The Committee set out to inquire into the sustainability and effectiveness of specialist sexual violence social services for all New Zealanders.

3 Government welcomes the Committee’s report, which represents a major contribution to its understanding of sexual violence in New Zealand, the needs of victim/survivors, and the range of issues facing those working to address sexual violence.

4 The Committee’s report summarises a very comprehensive inquiry informed by extensive public submissions and expert advice.

5 Overall, the inquiry found that:
   - current specialist sexual violence social services do not provide adequate cover
   - current funding approaches are insufficient
   - having stable and effective services would significantly reduce the harm and costs of sexual violence in New Zealand.

6 The report concludes that ‘an overhaul of New Zealand’s sexual violence services sector is needed’. In particular, it identifies that Government leadership is critical and calls for the collaboration of all stakeholders to develop an ‘integrated whole-of-system approach’ to meet the needs of all people affected by sexual violence.

7 The Committee makes 32 recommendations to Government.

8 Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

9 Concurrent with the Committee’s inquiry, Government has been focussing on the issue of sexual violence in New Zealand and the adequacy of sexual violence services. This began with the 2013 cross-agency review of sexual violence services. Since November 2014 the work has progressed under the oversight of the Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence (the Ministerial Group).\(^1\) The Ministerial Group is responsible for oversight and direction-setting across government agencies in relation to sexual violence and family violence.

\(^1\) The Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence is co-chaired by the Minister of Justice and Minister for Social Development. The other Ministers in the group are the Ministers of Health, Education, Police, and Corrections, ACC, Pacific Peoples, Ethnic Communities, Senior Citizens, Disability Issues, Women, Māori Development, and Whānau Ora; Associate Ministers of Social Development and Justice.
The Committee's report acknowledges this work and suggests that the Ministerial Group could take up the recommendations and incorporate them into its work programme.

In December 2015 the Law Commission reported on its review of the justice response to victims of sexual violence. The Law Commission made a number of recommendations aimed at improving social support for victim/survivors of sexual violence, which are broadly consistent with the Committee's findings.

Government accepts the overarching finding of the Committee's report and accepts all of the issues raised within its recommendations. Government's responses to the recommendations reflect the context of the existing Ministerial Group work programme. Work that is currently in train in many areas is outlined, along with proposed additional work in other areas.

Recommendations and Government response

**Recommendation 1:**
*We recommend that the Government develop an overarching policy framework for an integrated whole-of-system approach to preventing and responding to sexual violence, including a whole-of-Government statement of intent.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

Government acknowledges that an overarching sexual violence policy framework is needed to support an integrated approach across government agencies to prevent and respond to sexual violence, and to ensure sustainable and effective services are available to those who need them.

The Ministerial Group work programme includes a project to develop such a policy framework.

In response to the Committee's recommendation, Government will actively prioritise the development of this framework.

An overarching policy framework will establish intent, mandate, roles and responsibilities across government, and help set leadership and direction. It will incorporate and connect existing policies, and develop other necessary components.

The policy framework would build key principles into all Government responses to sexual violence, including sustainability, integration at the levels of governance and service, wide consultation, and kaupapa Māori principles.

Officials are scheduled to report back to Government on the progress of this framework in December 2016.
**Recommendation 2:**

*We recommend that the Government clearly set out the mandates, roles, and responsibilities of government agencies for sexual violence services.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

19 The mandates, roles and responsibilities of Government will be set out as part of the overarching sexual violence policy framework as outlined in the response to Recommendation 1 (above).

**Recommendation 3:**

*We recommend that the Government nominate a lead agency and establish an interagency organisation to lead and coordinate the Government’s response to sexual violence.*

**Response:** Government broadly accepts the recommendation to address weaknesses in governance arrangements.

20 The Committee’s proposal to establish a permanent inter-agency organisation is something that is closely connected to current Ministerial Group work on governance and accountability, and the Law Commission’s recommendation to set up an independent commission for sexual violence.

21 Substantial work is required to identify the most suitable governance arrangements including linkages with family violence, and any constitutional or other implications. This work is closely linked to development of an overarching policy framework and will need to be progressed in step with it.

22 Officials have been directed to undertake this work and are scheduled to report back to Government on the progress of this governance project in December 2016.

**Recommendation 4:**

*We recommend that the Government support the specialist sexual violence social services sector to develop and manage itself.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

23 Government considers that there is a permanent role for it in supporting the sector related to policy, governance, investment, and the design of funding and service delivery models (See also Government’s responses to Recommendations 1, 3, 7 and 8).

**Recommendation 5:**

*We recommend that the Government consult widely with stakeholders on proposals affecting funding and infrastructure arrangements.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.
Consultation with a wide range of stakeholders is one of the principles that will be used to guide work relating to the specialist sexual violence services sector, including work on funding arrangements, and infrastructure arrangements. Key stakeholders include victim/survivors, those providing specialist and non-specialist services, advocacy groups, academics, Māori and other vulnerable population groups, including other ethnic groups, older people and disabled people.

**Recommendation 6:**

_We recommend that the Government enable Māori to fully participate in policy development and planning processes, and that kaupapa and tikanga principles be integrated into these processes._

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

Inclusion of kaupapa Māori approaches is a key principle of Government’s work in responding to sexual violence. The project to develop an overarching sexual violence policy framework (outlined in response to Recommendation 1) will include consultation with Māori about how they wish to participate in policy development and planning processes, and how kaupapa and tikanga principles are integrated.

**Recommendation 7:**

_We recommend that the Government develop and implement an integrated, purpose-built funding and service delivery model for specialist sexual violence social services to achieve desired coverage and access._

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

Government acknowledges the need to improve its approach to funding and service delivery arrangements for specialist sexual violence services across the continuum of intervention. This would help ensure that funding is adequate, coordinated and well-targeted; funding processes are not onerous to providers; and gaps in service are addressed.

Already in place is ACC’s Integrated Strategy for Action on Sexual Violence, which included increased funding to primary prevention of sexual violence and the redesign of ACC’s sensitive claims service (Integrated Services for Sensitive Claims - ISSC). The ISSC aims to help people more easily access long-term care and recovery services that are individually tailored, integrated and fully-funded.

The Ministerial Group has confirmed that purpose-built funding and service delivery models would support sustainable and effective first response services for victim/survivors and services for those with concerning or harmful sexual behaviour.

The Committee’s recommendation to consider the Victorian model of service delivery in Australia (Recommendation 16) has been taken on board. The Ministerial Group has drawn on the Victorian model to sketch out possible options for first response services. MSD is progressing service development.
The resourcing necessary to design and implement such models is subject to ongoing Budget processes.

Policy and infrastructure arrangements to support such models are under active development as outlined in the responses to Recommendations 1 and 3 (above).

**Recommendation 8:**

*We recommend that the Government allocate funding that takes into account minimum levels of service (as guided by good practice) for clients in all urban and rural areas, including additional funding for specific high-needs areas or groups, particularly for Māori and whānau, to ensure consistent cover.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

Government recognises the need to increase investment in service quality and quantity to establish and maintain a minimum level of specialist sexual violence services throughout the country for the long-term.

Government acknowledges that some population groups are particularly vulnerable and that there are population groups with unique needs in terms of support and treatment.

The Ministerial Group is overseeing work across a number of agencies to improve the alignment and use of Government’s current investment. This is happening across the continuum of intervention, including primary prevention, early intervention, crisis response and long-term care and recovery. The work is considering all those affected by sexual violence: victim/survivors, those with concerning or harmful sexual behaviour, and their families and whānau.

Examples of activities that are already underway to increase access and extend reach include ACC’s ISSC, which is seeing a significant increase in claims since going live in November 2014, and ACC’s Mates & Dates secondary schools based healthy relationships programme, which is continuing to expand, with growing numbers of providers and schools.

The possibility of further investment will be considered through on-going Budget processes.

**Recommendation 9:**

*We recommend that the Government develop a long-term system for sexual violence data collection, incorporating a careful and consistent approach to data definitions, data capture, and information-sharing.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

Government recognises the value of a careful and consistent approach to data definitions, data capture and use, and information-sharing is essential to inform good service development, and contribute to research and evaluation of services.
Government knows that some social service agencies are using effective data management systems.

The Ministerial Group has confirmed that current data collection and monitoring processes in agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs) are not always adequate and that systemisation is needed.

Consideration of the need for a sexual violence-specific data collection system is on the Ministerial Group’s work programme. This includes its connection to work already underway across government to improve data collection and information sharing, and MSD’s Community Investment Strategy.

Officials are scheduled to report back to Government on the progress of this work in December 2016.

**Recommendation 10:**

*We recommend that the Government collect data about specialist sexual violence service use and costs from government agencies and NGOs.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

As noted in the response to Recommendation 9 (above), work is underway to improve the collection of data relating to the delivery of specialist sexual violence services.

**Recommendation 11:**

*We recommend that the Government commission targeted population-level research about sexual violence in New Zealand.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

Government acknowledges that there is very limited population-level research about sexual violence in New Zealand. Currently the most useful source of data is the New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey (NZCASS), which is undertaken every five years. The NZCASS does not capture data on disability, nor does it capture key environments where abuse occurs for both disabled people and older people, i.e. in care settings.

The Youth2000 survey, which is a national survey of the health and wellbeing of secondary school students in New Zealand that is undertaken every five years, includes some sexual violence-related questions.

Population-level research is one of the aspects of a research and evaluation agenda, which is discussed in the response to Recommendation 12 (below).

**Recommendation 12:**

*We recommend that the Government commission research into specific groups affected by sexual violence, including research into Māori understandings and*
definitions of sexual violence, and research into the current effects of sexual violence within Māori whanau.

Response: Government accepts this recommendation.

46 Government is committed to developing evidence-informed services that meet the needs of New Zealanders.

47 While some research has been undertaken into the needs of Māori affected by sexual violence\(^2\), on the whole there is insufficient research on the groups most affected by sexual violence in New Zealand.

48 The Ministerial Group has confirmed that current research on sexual violence is patchy, with no adequate oversight, coordination or sharing, and that some form of centralisation is needed.

49 Research and evaluation as it relates to family violence is on the Ministerial Group work programme. Active consideration is being given to developing a strategic research agenda for sexual violence similar to the draft *Family Violence Strategic Research Agenda*. Such a research agenda could include research into specific groups affected by sexual violence, research into the effects of sexual violence within Te Ao Māori, and consideration of the need for, and viability of, establishing a dedicated sexual violence research hub.

50 Officials are scheduled to report back to Government on the status of this work in December 2016.

**Recommendation 13:**

*We recommend that the Government develop a national violence prevention framework and action plan that would include sexual violence prevention as a major feature.*

Response: Government accepts this recommendation.

51 Government is actively progressing sexual violence primary prevention through the work of the Ministerial Group. Work is well underway to progress a national primary prevention framework for family violence and sexual violence.

52 This framework will support integrated and coordinated approaches to ensure consistent primary prevention messages and activities across the country, and linkages to responses in other parts of the intervention continuum.

**Recommendation 14:**

*We recommend that, over time, sexual violence prevention initiatives be informed by New Zealand-based research and evaluation.*

Response: Government accepts this recommendation.

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The Ministerial Group has confirmed that there is very limited New Zealand-based research and evaluation on primary prevention, and that it is currently not well coordinated or prioritised.

As outlined in the response to Recommendation 12 (above), research and evaluation are on the Ministerial Group work programme. Active consideration is being given to developing a strategic research agenda for sexual violence similar to the Family Violence Strategic Research Agenda. It is anticipated that, in the medium to long term, the development and implementation of initiatives to address sexual violence (including primary prevention initiatives) would be informed by New Zealand-based research and evaluation.

**Recommendation 15:**

*We recommend that integration be central to any new policy framework, national strategies, infrastructure projects, and funding and service delivery models for specialist sexual violence social services.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

Government recognises the work undertaken by the Committee to understand the need for integration at the levels of sector governance, cross-government arrangements, and delivery of social, health and justice services.

Government agrees that integration is necessary across all levels of the social system, and the establishment of the Ministerial Group reflects this. Integration is a key principle underpinning current work on specialist sexual violence services.

Forward work will involve stakeholders across government and the sector in identifying ways to improve integration across the system. For example, from agency funding coordination to referrals between frontline service providers.

**Recommendation 16:**

*We recommend that the Government draw from the Victorian funding and service delivery model in co-designing an integrated model for New Zealand, modified to meet New Zealand’s unique environment, including an acknowledgement of Māori needs. We recommend that services for those with concerning or harmful sexual behaviour be considered in a New Zealand integrated model.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

Government acknowledges the value in learning from international examples of integrated approaches to preventing and responding to sexual violence. Learning drawn from the Victorian model (modified for New Zealand’s environment) has been used in the development of the Ministerial Group work programme, with a particular focus on first response services, as noted in the response to Recommendation 7 (above).

Services for people with concerning or harmful sexual behaviour will be addressed as part of the policy framework and future service delivery model.
Recommendation 17:

We recommend that the Government facilitate an assessment of existing good practice guidelines, a discussion of whether it is necessary to make them more consistent with each other, and a discussion of whether further guidelines are needed. As part of this, we recommend that the Government lead the development of a system of national standards for sexual violence services, acknowledging the need for kaupapa Māori.

Response: Government accepts this recommendation.

60 Government acknowledges that work in this area is needed in order to ensure people have access to consistently high quality services, and are not re-traumatised by their service experience.

61 Issues of good practice need to be addressed alongside workforce, and are interdependent with the design of funding and service delivery models.

62 This is because good practice is understood and maintained through diverse cultural perspectives; and wide-ranging mechanisms such as policy development; professional networks; and training and accreditation systems.

63 Assessment of good practice guidelines and standards will occur as part of the workforce competency framework outlined in the response to Recommendation 20, and other existing projects on the Ministerial Group work programme. For example, overarching policy framework, governance, and work to develop funding and service delivery models.

64 Officials are scheduled to report back to Government on the status of this work in December 2016.

Recommendation 18:

We recommend that any new model for specialist sexual violence social services properly consider the work of the Law Commission on the court experience for victim/survivors.

Response: Government accepts this recommendation.

65 The findings of the Law Commission’s report are being considered by Government. In particular, the recommendations about social support services for victim/survivors of sexual violence, outlined on pages 18 and 19 (R74-R82), are being considered alongside the Committee’s recommendations.

66 These recommendations have significant implications for policy, governance, research, and service delivery. In the first instance Government is considering the question of governance as set out in the response to Recommendation 3 (above).
**Recommendation 19:**

We recommend that the Government assess whether changes should be made to the remuneration and working conditions of workers in the sexual violence sector, including

- access to professional development
- access to support such as clinical supervision
- whether there are enough staff to prevent “compassion fatigue”.

**Response:** Government broadly accepts this recommendation.

67 It is anticipated that the remuneration and working conditions of workers in the sexual violence sector will be factored into the service redesign outlined in response to Recommendation 7 (above).

**Recommendation 20:**

We recommend that the Government assess whether professional accreditation standards and regulations that include kaupapa Māori and other culturally competent practice should be developed and introduced for workers in the specialist sexual violence social services sector.

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

68 Government agrees that work is required to assess the need for accreditation system, including standards and regulations that ensure culturally competent workers. Government is aware of the wider need to support those who work with people affected by sexual violence through opportunities for development and training.

69 Currently there are inconsistent accreditation arrangements within the specialist sexual violence workforce. Where practitioners have a qualification they will usually be members of a professional body, which maintains practice standards and offers professional development. These will not necessarily be specific to sexual violence service delivery. As well, there are unqualified workers who are not subject to regulations and have less access to support.

70 The Ministerial Group has agreed that workforce issues be examined as part of the work programme. MSD is leading an initial project to develop a workforce competency framework to address family violence and sexual violence, and align with the existing children’s workforce. This includes development of cultural competencies, which is used in its broadest sense to include diverse social and cultural groups.

71 Future work will consider the need for an accreditation system and will clarify Government’s role in supporting the sexual violence workforce.

72 Workforce issues are interdependent with policy, good practice, and the design of funding and service delivery models.
Officials will report back to Government about the workforce competency framework in November 2016.

**Recommendation 21:**

*We recommend that the Government encourage shared training opportunities in the specialist sexual violence social services workforce.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

The opportunity for shared training in the specialist sexual violence sector will be considered as part of the workforce competency framework outlined in the response to Recommendation 20 (above).

**Recommendation 22:**

*We recommend that the Government encourage training opportunities for general service providers in dealing with sexual violence.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

Training opportunities for general service providers in dealing with sexual violence will be considered as part of the workforce competency framework outlined in the response to Recommendation 20 (above).

**Recommendation 23:**

*We recommend that the Government determine an acceptable minimum level of service, including appropriate geographic coverage of first response services.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

The acceptable minimum level of service will be addressed as part of the design of funding and service delivery model for first response services, as outlined in the response to Recommendation 7 (above).

**Recommendation 24:**

*We recommend that the Government ensure that the opening hours of services are extended where necessary to achieve 24-hour, seven-day coverage for first response services.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

Issues of service coverage, including 24-hour, seven-day availability, will be addressed as part of the design of funding and service delivery model for first response services, as outlined in the response to Recommendation 7 (above).
Recommendation 25:
We recommend that the Government explore the use of diverse service delivery mechanisms, especially in remote areas.

Response: Government accepts this recommendation.

78 Consideration of the most appropriate range of service delivery mechanisms for different regions of New Zealand will be addressed as part of the design of funding and service delivery model for first response services, as outlined in the response to Recommendation 7 (above).

Recommendation 26:
We recommend that the Government take account of provider capability and capacity when contracting.

Response: Government accepts this recommendation.

79 Government understands that effective service delivery is achieved when providers are capable and have capacity to meet demand. Government has invested $31.65 million in NGO provider capability and capacity through MSD’s Capability Investment Resource over four years from 2012/2013.

80 The Ministerial Group has looked specifically at levels of funding going into the sexual violence sector and the ability of providers to meet demand. As a result the Ministerial Group work programme includes projects to address identified gaps in first response services for victim/survivors, services for those with harmful sexual behaviour, and male survivors of sexual abuse.

81 Government acknowledges its role in supporting the infrastructure necessary for a sustainable sector. This includes a commitment to ensure that providers delivering specialist sexual violence services have the resources they need to deliver any additional contracted services without compromising service quality.

Recommendation 27:
We recommend that, as part of a new model for specialist sexual violence social services, the Government ensure that services are accessible to all clients, including those with disabilities, and are whānau-centred, culturally competent, and responsive.

Response: Government broadly accepts this recommendation.

82 Government acknowledges the importance of accessible services, including for people with disabilities and Māori.

83 Government notes that disabled people are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse, and may have special needs that have to be considered as part of therapy (e.g. individuals with a learning disability).
The Ministerial Group work programme includes consideration of accessibility and service appropriateness through its work to develop an overarching policy framework and improve funding and service delivery models (Select Committee Recommendations 1 and 7). Service appropriateness will be supported through MSD’s project to develop a workforce competency framework outlined in response to Recommendation 20 (above).

These will include stakeholder consultation as outlined in the response to Recommendation 5 (above).

**Recommendation 28:**

*We recommend that the Government engage with relevant parties to ensure that any new service delivery model includes whānau-centred, culturally competent service options for Māori.*

**Response:** Government accepts this recommendation.

Government acknowledges the need for whānau-centred, culturally competent service options for Māori.

Government will engage in consultation with relevant parties through service development as outlined in the responses to Recommendations 5 and 7 (above).

**Recommendation 29:**

*We recommend that the Government support mainstream service providers to become whānau-centred and culturally competent and work towards the integration of tikanga into practice.*

**Response:** Government broadly accepts the recommendation that it support mainstream sexual violence service providers to be culturally competent.

Government’s aim is to ensure all services are accessible and appropriate to all who need them, including Māori.

Government acknowledges the importance of embedding principles of cultural responsiveness and accessibility at each level of the specialist sexual violence service sector. This is reflected in MSD’s project to develop a workforce competency framework, which includes cultural competence, outlined in response to Recommendation 20 (above).

At the service level, Government seeks to ensure providers are culturally responsive and appropriate through the use of contracting and monitoring mechanisms.

**Recommendation 30:**

*We recommend that the Government support and strengthen existing kaupapa Māori specialist sexual violence social services.*
Response: Government broadly accepts this recommendation.

91 Government notes that a high proportion of those affected by sexual violence are Māori.

92 Government is committed to strengthening responses to Māori whānau, hapu and iwi affected by sexual violence, and recognises the value of kaupapa Māori approaches.

93 Government will seek to engage specifically with Māori and kaupapa Māori providers in order to ensure that such service options are available.

Recommendation 31:

We recommend that an integrated approach include a strategy to help organisations that support specific population groups to develop expertise in dealing with sexual violence and links with specialist sexual violence service providers.

Response: Government broadly accepts this recommendation.

94 Government acknowledges that members of specific populations groups\(^3\) may prefer to seek help from a service that is familiar and that they trust. These services may not have staff with specialist sexual violence knowledge or skills.

95 Government knows that to effectively address sexual violence in New Zealand, services need to be accessible and appropriate for all who need them. This means that generalist services need to know how to respond to people making disclosures and seeking help, and where to refer them.

96 The training needs of workers and organisations that are not core sexual violence service providers will be considered as part of the workforce competency framework outlined in the response to Recommendation 20 (above).

Recommendation 32:

We recommend that the Government ensure that public information about services is in accessible formats and is well targeted to all audiences, especially high-need target groups.

Response: Government broadly accepts this recommendation.

97 Government is aware that the availability and targeting of information about services is inconsistent.

98 Tailored information about what services exist, and how to access them, will be actively addressed as part of the design of first response and harmful sexual behaviour services as outlined in the response to Recommendation 7 (above).

\(^3\) Specific population groups include Māori, Pacific, migrant, refugee and other minority ethnic groups, disabled people, and older people
Conclusion

99 Government recognises sexual violence as a serious, harmful and costly issue for New Zealand. It is committed to the prevention of sexual violence and to supporting those affected by sexual violence to receive the help they need, when they need it.

100 Government acknowledges the importance of specialist sexual violence social services and is committed to working with the sector to ensure their sustainability and effectiveness for all New Zealanders.

101 Government accepts all of the recommendations made in the report of the Social Services Committee inquiry into the funding of specialist sexual violence social services. It is pleasing to see the congruence between the conclusions reached by the Social Services Committee and the Government work initiated in 2013/14, which is being overseen by the Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence.

102 As outlined in this report, the Ministerial Group work programme includes work already underway or about to be started on all of the areas covered by the Committee's report, namely:

- Policy
- Governance
- Investment
- Primary prevention
- Funding and service delivery models
- Monitoring, research and evaluation
- Good practice and workforce
- Service accessibility.

103 In keeping with wider Ministerial Group work, Government is working to develop agreed definitions, principles and outcomes to inform this work across agencies. Government is also planning in-depth stakeholder engagement in coming months to further improve specialist sexual violence services.
Government Response to the
Report of the Social Services Committee
on its
Inquiry into the operation of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252
Government Response to the Report of the Social Services Committee on its Inquiry into the operation of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003

Introduction

1 The Government has carefully considered the Report of the Social Services Committee (the Committee) following its inquiry into the operation of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (the Act).

2 The Government responds to the Committee’s Report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

Overview

3 At the request of the Minister for Social Development, the Committee set out to inquire into key issues with the current operation of the Act. The purpose of the inquiry was to identify options for addressing these issues, with a view to making recommendations to the Government for legislative reform.

4 The Social Workers Registration Board (the Board) prepared an Issues Paper, which was released by the Committee as background information to inform the public submission process for its inquiry.

5 In its Report, the Committee makes 38 recommendations to the Government covering the current registration system for social workers under the Act. The Committee’s recommendations largely reflect the options for legislative reform of the regulation of social workers suggested by the Board in its Issues Paper.

6 The findings and recommendations in the Committee’s Report take into account public submissions from individuals and organisations, as well as advice from officials from the Board and the Ministry of Social Development.

7 Overall, the Committee’s inquiry found that:

- some form of registration should be mandatory for social workers and social work students
- the present requirement for a competence assessment (in addition to a qualification), repeated every five years for a social worker to keep their practising certificate, should be removed
- social workers with a recognised New Zealand qualification should be presumed to be competent, but the Board may still require assessments as needed
- there was a need for strengthening of vetting, on-going fitness to practise, and complaints and disciplinary processes
- social work registration on the basis of practical experience without a social work qualification (section 13 of the Act) should be phased out.
The Committee’s Report notes the need to ensure that cultural competence is a core requirement for social workers, and encourages the Board to continue developing its policies and processes in this area.

Following its inquiry, the Committee concludes there is a need for legislative reform, and suggests how that reform might be achieved. Options include amendments to the current Act, repeal and replacement of the Act, or full or partial incorporation into the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

The Government welcomes the Committee’s Report, which represents a major contribution to the understanding of the issues and implications surrounding social worker regulation and the operation of the Act.

The Government thanks the Committee for their work and their careful consideration of the current system for the regulation of social workers. Government also thanks members of the public who made a submission during the consultation phase of the Inquiry. It shows the strong commitment by all those involved in the Inquiry process to increase the professionalism of social work in New Zealand.

The Government has considered the recommendations made by the Committee. These include significant changes to the system in order to protect the safety of members of the public by ensuring social workers are suitably qualified and competent to practise. These changes also aim to ensure social workers are held accountable for poor practice through the introduction of increased regulation to provide better protection for the public than the current voluntary registration system offers.

The Government acknowledges the overall intent of the Committee’s recommendations, and the case made by the Committee for some form of increased regulation of social workers. The Government will carry out further work to identify possible policy and legislative changes that could best give effect to the intent of the Committee’s recommendations to increase the professionalism of the social work workforce.
Committee's recommendations and Government response

**Mandatory Registration (recommendations 1-5)**

**Committee Recommendation 1:** That the Government make registration mandatory for social workers.

**Committee Recommendation 2:** That the Government permit only registered social workers to practise social work, as defined in a legislative instrument (Order in Council or regulations).

**Committee Recommendation 3:** That the Government permit only registered social workers to use the title 'social worker'.

**Committee Recommendation 4:** That the Government introduce a particular form of registration for social work students.

**Committee Recommendation 5:** That the Government require social workers to practise in accordance with the scope of practice to be developed by the Social Workers Registration Board and as prescribed by notice in the Gazette.

14 In its report, the Committee presents its case for mandatory regulation, and the reasons why it considers this is needed to protect public safety and enhance the professionalism of social workers, collectively addressed in recommendations 1 to 5 above.

15 As a part of its inquiry, the Committee has been advised on how other professions approach registration and, on this basis, looked at who should be registered as a social worker if the Government makes registration mandatory, as recommended by the Committee.

16 The Government acknowledges the case made by the Committee that moving towards some form of mandatory registration of social workers in New Zealand could provide greater protection for the public than the current voluntary registration system. There is literature that suggests that, provided the registration system is consistent and enforceable, occupational regulation improves professionalism and standards.

17 Social workers are working with the most vulnerable people and disabled people of all ages, and are increasingly dealing with clients who have complex needs – including family violence, drug and alcohol addiction and mental health issues. In such situations, incompetent practise may not only cause harm, but the impact may also be long lasting. Social workers are frequently brokers of services for individuals, families and communities with high levels of needs, and are uniquely placed to make a significant difference for their clients' long-term outcomes. The public needs to be confident that social workers are suitably qualified, competent and experienced to carry out this work, and that their practice meets required standards.

18 The Committee notes that many people use the title 'social worker' even though they are not performing what it considers should be defined as social work. Conversely, some people working in positions that would be defined as social work do not use the title 'social worker'. The Committee recommends reserving the title 'social worker' for registered social workers to help make sure that only those who meet the criteria for registration can purport to be a social worker. This will give the public assurance about the competence of the profession.

19 In its Report, the Committee has estimated the number of social workers in New Zealand. Based on 2013 Census data, the number of people who identified themselves as 'social worker' is 6,128. Of these, 80 percent are women and 58 percent are aged
45 years or older. As noted by the Committee, using a wider definition of social work would mean the number of social workers in New Zealand is closer to 18,330.¹

20 Over 6,000 social workers have chosen to become registered under the current voluntary system of registration set out under the Act. However, there are still a significant number of practising social workers working with vulnerable children, young people and adults who are not registered. The Board estimates this to be between 1,000 and 2,000 social workers. This means they have not been certified as having the requisite social work qualifications, and are not subject to on-going professional development and disciplinary requirements.

21 As noted by the Committee in its Report, many occupational groups in New Zealand are regulated, including occupations that are similar to social work such as teaching and nursing. Under the Government’s Policy Framework for Occupational Regulation [Cabinet Office Circular (99) 6], the aim of regulating occupations is “to protect the public from the risks of an occupation being carried out incompetently or recklessly”. The higher the potential for risk, the stronger the case for regulation. Risk includes the likelihood of significant harm occurring, the extent to which any harm caused is irreversible, and whether the risk is voluntarily entered into by the client. The risk of significant irreversible harm, such as death, or acute psychological harm is demonstrably present in a context where clients of social workers are vulnerable and unable to choose which risks they are exposed to.

22 As well as ensuring that social workers are competent to practise, the intent of the Committee’s recommendations is to increase the level of professionalism of social workers. This is seen as a way to help promote the social work profession and enhance public trust and confidence in social workers. It is also promoted as a means to help to raise standards and improve accountability by providing a legal pathway (through the Complaints Assessment Committees set up under the Act) to deal with issues where a social worker’s practice is seen as incompetent or unprofessional.

23 The Committee has not proposed a definition of social work or social worker. Instead, it suggests it would make sense to require registration of those doing certain defined work, rather than just those with the title ‘social worker’. In the Committee’s opinion, this would remove the ability to circumvent the requirement to register by simply changing job title while doing the same job. In addition, it would prevent people in non social work roles, which should not be covered, from using the title “social worker”.

24 Currently, the Act establishes a voluntary system of certification. The Policy Framework for Occupational Regulation defines certification as where an agency is given the power to legally certify that certain people are competent and professional practitioners of a given profession. The difference in the status quo and the Policy Framework for Occupation Regulation is the voluntary nature of the system.

¹ The 2013 Census figure of 18,330 as the number of social workers in New Zealand is based on the New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations 1999 (NZSCO99) definition of social work. This includes 13 separate occupations such as health promotion officer, community worker, family support worker, parole or probation officer, recreation officer or co-ordinator, community arts worker, youth worker and disabilities services officer. In contrast, 2013 Census data showed 6,128 people identified their occupation solely as ‘social workers’ based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANSCO).
Factors that would need to be considered in determining who would be covered by any changes in the regulation of social work include:

- whether it will restrict a range of activities currently considered to be ‘social work’, and which are assessed as being low-level risk activities. This includes, for example, professionals involved in community development, recreational activities or the arts

- the alignment with other legislation, such as the recently passed Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Advocacy, Workforce, and Age Settings) Amendment Act 2016. Under this Act, the Chief Executive can delegate functions and powers under this Act to any person that the Chief Executive is satisfied is appropriately qualified to perform or exercise it, taking into account the person’s training and expertise. This will include the likelihood that tasks previously undertaken by a social worker may be delegated to another professional.

Setting out definitions of ‘social work’ and ‘social worker’ would be important to give legal clarity on the activities that only registered social workers can undertake if there is to be an increase in regulation of social workers.

The Committee’s Report gives examples of other registered groups such as teaching, law and health professions who are subject to forms of Government regulation. The most appropriate form of mandatory registration of social workers would depend on the scope of occupational regulation, which in turn depends on who and what is to be covered by the regulations.

In its Report, the Committee has also identified a need for a special student registration, with appropriate criteria and restriction, to help protect public safety during student placements. Currently social work students are not required to be registered.

The Government acknowledges the need to ensure only safe and competent social workers, including students, who are working with our most vulnerable people and that increased regulation may be a way to achieve this. Further work is needed to identify the most effective policy and legislative changes that could increase the professionalism of social workers.

**Committee Recommendation 6: That the Government:**

(a) retain, for a one-year transitional period only, registration on the basis of practical experience under section 13 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003, and

(b) confirm that the removal of section 13 after a transitional period would not affect the validity of the registration of social workers who, before that section is removed, have obtained full registration on the basis of section 13.

The Committee has reviewed the current registration process under the Act, together with the qualification, competence, and fitness to practise core prerequisites to registration. On this basis, it considers it is time to remove section 13 of the Act which provides for registration on the basis of practical experience if a social worker does not have an approved qualification.

Section 13 was intended to ensure people who entered the social work profession before the Act came into force in 2003 who had valuable practical experience but no qualifications could continue to practise. This also recognised that, at the time, tertiary institutions were not offering the range of social work qualifications available now, so there were fewer opportunities for social workers to get qualified.
The Government recognises that if registration were to become mandatory, it would be appropriate to temporarily retain practical experience as a basis for registration. This would enable this generation of social workers who were practising before the Act came into force to apply for registration under section 13.

The Government is aware that under the voluntary system there are a small number of older experienced social workers who have not yet sought registration. Some of these social workers are unlikely to undertake further training, but are highly valuable in the current workforce. Further work is required to determine the most appropriate transitional arrangements for phasing out section 13, and protecting the position of social workers who have already obtained full registration under section 13 of the Act.

### Competence assessment requirements be removed (recommendations 7 and 8)

**Committee Recommendation 7:** That the Government remove the requirement for social workers who have a recognised New Zealand qualification to carry out competence assessments when applying for registration and at five-year intervals.

**Committee Recommendation 8:** That the Government enable the Social Workers Registration Board to require social workers to carry out competence programmes or assessments in specified circumstances, such as where concerns have been raised about their competence, or for social workers with overseas qualifications.

As part of its inquiry, the Committee has reviewed the requirement under Part 3 of the Act for social workers to complete a competence assessment every five years, in addition to having an appropriate qualification, in order to keep their practising certificate. The Committee has examined the need for these competence assessments in the context of the other prerequisites to registration, including qualifications, used by the Board to assess competency. It has also taken into account other changes proposed by the Board in respect of continuing professional development requirements and other proposals aimed to improve social worker competence generally.

On the basis of its review, the Committee considers it would be appropriate to assume that a formally qualified social worker is competent until cause for concern arises, and therefore the current competence assessment requirement could be removed.

The Committee makes a case that removing this requirement will align social work with other regulated professions such as health practitioners, teachers, and lawyers. All these professions have no practical assessment as a prerequisite to registration. Ensuring that social workers have Board recognised social work qualifications as part of the registration criteria will also provide assurance of competency for new entrants to the social work profession.

The Committee notes that holding a valid competence certificate is also part of the criteria for making a section 13 application for registration, so any changes to current competency assessment requirements would need to be taken into account for any transitional arrangements for removing section 13 (see also the response to recommendation 6 above).

The Government acknowledges the rationale for enabling the Board to require social workers to carry out competence programmes or assessments where concerns have been raised and substantiated about their competence. As pointed out by the Committee, this would help to ensure a high level of social work practice for the profession.
39 The Government acknowledges the case put forward by the Committee. Further work is required to identify possible legislative and policy changes that would be needed to ensure social workers on-going competence.

**Continuing professional development regulated (recommendation 9)**

**Committee Recommendation 9:** That the Government require social workers to complete, each year, a number of hours as specified in regulations of continuing professional development approved by the Social Workers Registration Board. We recommend that this continuing professional development include a proportion of cultural competence development, as appropriate.

40 The Committee has considered the role of continuing professional development for social workers as a way to maintain and enhance a person’s knowledge, expertise, and competence. The Committee has reviewed the current requirements under the current voluntary registration regime. Based on its findings, the Committee recommends that social workers should be required to complete at least 20 hours of continuing professional development each year, and supports continuing the current requirement for registered social workers to record their continuing professional development activities.

41 The Board is developing proposals for a kaitiakitanga framework within social work education and social work practise to assess and strengthen social workers’ competence to work with Māori. The Committee expects these proposals to help raise the level of cultural competence so that all social workers can work safely and appropriately with children, young people, families and whānau from all ethnicities.

42 The Government acknowledges the Committee’s recommendation that social workers should be required to complete a minimum number of continuing professional development hours each year to maintain and enhance a social worker’s knowledge, expertise and competence, and that this requirement should be clearly set out in regulations.

43 The Government acknowledges the recommendation that professional development for social workers should include a proportion of cultural competence development (see also response to recommendations 13 and 14 below). The Act states that, in addition to professional competence, the Board must be satisfied that an applicant is competent to practise social work with Māori and other ethnic or cultural groups (cultural competence). However, the Act does not clearly provide how cultural competence is to be assessed. Further work will identify any policy and legislative changes that are needed to improve professional development requirements.

**Introduce requirements for cultural competency (recommendations 10-12)**

**Committee Recommendation 10:** That the Government require the Social Workers Registration Board to recognise only qualifications that produce graduates with the cultural competence required to practise social work in New Zealand.

**Committee Recommendation 11:** That, in light of recommendation 9, the Government require the Social Workers Registration Board to require social workers to carry out cultural competence programmes or assessments in specified circumstances, such as where concerns have been
raised about their cultural competence, or for social workers with overseas qualifications.

44 The Committee has considered how the Board currently assesses every applicant’s competence to practise social work with Māori and other ethnic and cultural groups. In doing so, the Committee has taken into account work underway by the Board to examine competence assessment, including cultural competence as part of the review of the Act, and its proposals to incorporate a kaitiakitanga framework within social work education and extra overview of recently graduated social workers.

45 The Government acknowledges that cultural competence is important, particularly given a significant proportion of social work practice is with Māori children and whānau. For example, approximately 60 percent of children in care are Māori. Raising social workers’ cultural competency will also benefit both Pacific workers and Pacific users of social work services by ensuring the multi-cultural capability of workers.

46 The Government acknowledges the Committee’s recommendation that the Board recognise only qualifications from New Zealand tertiary institutions that produce graduates with cultural competence to practise social work in New Zealand. The Board already has processes in place to assess the cultural competence of overseas qualified social workers, and continuing professional development requirements relating to cultural competence during their period of provisional registration.

47 The Government notes that social work qualifications could also include competencies in family and sexual violence, as well as the cultural and communication competencies recommended by the Committee. Further work is required to identify ways to strengthen programmes of study and social work degree courses.

### Communication skills requisites (recommendations 13 and 14)

**Committee Recommendation 13:** That the Government require the Social Workers Registration Board to recognise only qualifications that produce graduates with the communication skills required to practise social work in New Zealand.

**Committee Recommendation 14:** That the Government enable the Social Workers Registration Board to assess a social worker’s communication skills in specified circumstances, such as where concerns have been raised about their communication skills, or for social workers with overseas qualifications that were not in English.

48 The Committee has considered issues raised by the Board with regard to the current requirements covering the communication skills of social workers. The Committee looked into whether communication skills fit better with competence than with fitness to practise and what the best way is to assess communication skills.

49 The Committee found that the best way was for communication skills to be assessed in a similar way to cultural competence – through assessing qualifications to consider whether a course will produce graduates with the appropriate communication skills, and to recognise only those courses.

50 The Government recognises that social workers should be able to demonstrate they have the necessary communication skills to practise social work in New Zealand, before they are registered and that this could be a prerequisite to registration, especially for social workers with overseas qualifications. Further work is required to consider what changes would be needed to address the Committee’s recommendations around social workers’ communication skills.
Better defining fitness to practise (recommendation 15)

**Committee Recommendation 15:** That the Government expand and clarify the definition of fitness to practise by removing the current partial prescription from legislation and empowering the Social Workers Registration Board to prescribe criteria or prerequisites to assess whether someone is a fit and proper person to practise social work.

51 The Committee has reviewed how fitness to practise is assessed as a prerequisite for social worker registration under the Act (section 47), and compared these requirements with other occupations such as health practitioners. This has led the Committee to consider that the Act should provide a more suitable definition of fitness to practise.

52 The Committee found that the concept of fitness to practise is complicated by the way it is partially prescribed in the Act. The Committee’s recommendation is to remove the current fitness to practise definition in the legislation, and instead allow the Board to prescribe suitable criteria, to allow for a broader and more flexible approach to the fitness to practise assessment.

53 The Government acknowledges the Committee’s recommendation to expand and clarify the definition of fitness to practise and will investigate whether appropriate policy and legislative changes can improve the definition of fitness to practice.

Board to be informed of any criminal convictions (recommendation 16)

**Committee Recommendation 16:** That the Government require the Social Workers Registration Board, when determining an applicant’s fitness to practise social work, to do a full Police check, including convictions normally withheld under the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004, discharges without conviction, and family violence reports.

54 The Committee has examined the adequacy of the provision of Police vetting checks under section 50 of the Act to determine whether it is sufficient for the Board to be able to assess an applicant’s fitness to practise social work. It has also looked at how safety checks are carried out under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014, and considered whether this safety checking role could be combined with the role of assessing a social worker’s fitness to practise to increase efficiency. The Committee concluded that there were good reasons to keep these two checks separate.

55 The Committee’s findings were that it would be useful for the Board to be informed of convictions normally withheld under the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004, discharges without conviction and family violence reports.

56 The Committee notes in its report that while people who work with children are required to be safety checked under the Vulnerable Children Act, these safety checks are limited to people working in certain publicly funded services and the information released is targeted to a particular employment role. Consequently, Police checks carried out under the Vulnerable Children Act may not be relevant for the purposes of the Board as not every social worker will be a ‘core children’s worker’ or working for a government funded non-government organisation (NGO).

57 The Government notes that existing vetting of social workers already includes, among other things, discharges without conviction, family violence reports where the social worker is a perpetrator, and convictions normally concealed by the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act. Therefore, the substance of this recommendation appears to already be in effect.

58 The Government acknowledges the intent of this recommendation, and notes that comprehensive Police vetting checks are already being carried out to assist the Board in
assessing an applicant's fitness to practise social work. Further work will ensure that the vetting regime for registration of social workers under legislation is consistent with the vetting process used for similar purposes.

**Increasing the Board’s oversight of social workers (recommendations 17 and 18)**

**Committee Recommendation 17:** That the Government empower the Social Workers Registration Board to review a social worker’s fitness to practise at any time.

**Committee Recommendation 18:** That the Government empower the Social Workers Registration Board to take the following actions where, after review, concerns are identified about a social worker’s fitness to practise:

(a) refuse to issue a practising certificate

(b) impose conditions on a social worker’s practising certificate

(c) if the review was carried out on direction from a Complaints Assessment Committee, refer the matter back to the same Complaints Assessment Committee

(d) if the review was not carried out on direction from a Complaints Assessment Committee, refer the matter to a Complaints Assessment Committee.

59 The Committee has considered the Board’s role in reviewing a social worker’s competence, fitness to practise and responding when it has received notifications about a social worker’s performance through a complaints process.

60 The Committee found that the Board did not have sufficient power to take appropriate action where a complaint has been received. Further, the Committee noted some inefficiency in how the complaint process is managed between the Board and a Complaints Assessment Committee. The Committee made recommendations 17 and 18 to address these issues.

61 The Government acknowledges the intent of the recommendation that the Board be given additional powers to review a registered social worker’s fitness to practise at any time. The Government also notes the recommendation to strengthen the Board’s power to suspend social workers on an interim basis, discussed below in the Government’s response to recommendations 36 and 37.

62 Further work is required to identify any appropriate policy and legislative changes that will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the complaints process.

**The Board to assess a fitness to practise at registration and renewal of practising certificate (recommendation 19)**

**Committee Recommendation 19:** That the Government require the Social Workers Registration Board to assess social workers’ fitness to practise both at the time of applying for registration and on applying for practising certificates.

63 The Committee looked at the process used by the Board to issue practising certificates for registered social workers. It found that under the current system when a registered social worker applies for a practising certificate, the Board is not required to consider whether the person is fit to practise social work. The Committee considered this could be a risk to the public, and suggested it would be proper to require the Board to expressly consider the question of fitness to practise for every application for a practising certificate.
The Government notes the intent of the Committee’s recommendation, and will consider any policy and legislative changes that might be needed to improve fitness to practice requirements.

**Board to be empowered to take action when concerned about a social worker’s ability to perform their work (recommendation 20)**

**Committee Recommendation 20:** That the Government empower the Social Workers Registration Board to choose from the following actions, in addition to its existing options, when notified of concerns about a social worker’s ability to perform their work adequately:

(a) suspend or impose conditions on the social worker’s practising certificate or registration on an interim basis until the concerns are addressed

(b) review the social worker’s fitness to practise

(c) refer the matter to a Complaints Assessment Committee.

The Committee looked at the options available to the Board when it has received a report of concern about a social worker’s performance, and considered that the options available to the Board should be expanded.

The Committee has recommended that a wider range of options for taking action when notified of concerns about a social worker’s ability to perform their work adequately is in the best interests of the public. This is particularly important if it provides added protection for clients against unsafe or incompetent social work practise, and the criteria for use of particular options are clear and reasonable (see also the Government’s response to recommendation 18 above).

The Government will consider any legislative changes that are needed to ensure that only people who are competent to perform social work functions can do so.

**Social workers and their employers notify the Board when concerned about a social worker’s ability to perform their work (recommendation 21)**

**Committee Recommendation 21:** That the Government require registered social workers and their employers to notify the Social Workers Registration Board when they have reason to believe that:

(a) because of a mental or physical condition, a registered social worker cannot adequately perform the functions needed to satisfactorily practise social work

(b) a registered social worker is not a fit and proper person to practise social work

(c) a registered social worker may pose a risk of harm to the public because they do not have the competence required to practise social work

(d) a registered social worker has breached the social workers’ code of conduct or has committed another disciplinary offence or a criminal offence under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003.

The Committee considered the use of mandatory reporting of concerns about an individual’s performance used in other occupations such as health and law and compared this to the situation for social workers, where social workers do not have to inform the Board if they are concerned about a colleague’s performance or conduct. The Committee considered that social workers should be subject to similar standards as used in other professions.

Current regulations under Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 already place a general duty on employers and social workers to take reasonably practical steps to eliminate or
minimise risk of harm to persons affected by their work. Government considers there may be an opportunity to clarify the duties of employers, service providers and contractors in terms of reporting concerns about a social worker's competency or safety to practise social work.

70 The Government will consider how the Committee's recommendation might work in conjunction with the requirements under the Protected Disclosures Act 2000.

**Changing the name of Complaints Assessment Committees (recommendation 22)**

**Committee Recommendation 22**: That the Government change the name "Complaints Assessment Committee" in the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 to "professional conduct committee".

71 The Committee considered the role of Complaints Assessment Committees in looking into complaints and convictions against a social worker. The Committee found that, in its opinion, the name 'Complaints Assessment Committee' did not adequately reflect its scope and suggested it would be more appropriate for it to be changed to 'Professional Conduct Committees'.

72 The Government acknowledges the Committee's recommendation, and will consider this amongst other changes.

**Assigning some administrative responsibilities for the complaints process from the Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal to the Board (recommendation 23)**

**Committee Recommendation 23**: That the Government assign responsibility for receiving and assessing complaints, and appointing and reconstituting Complaints Assessment Committees, to the Social Workers Registration Board.

73 The Committee looked at how the complaints process is managed by Complaints Assessment Committees and by the Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal (the Tribunal). The Committee found that it would be more appropriate for the Board to be responsible for what are essentially administrative tasks currently carried out by the Tribunal. It also found there was a potential conflict of interest in cases where the chairperson of the Tribunal may have already received and screened the complaint and in doing so, have seen prejudicial information not presented to the Tribunal later.

74 The Government acknowledges the Committee's recommendation, and will consider this amongst other recommended changes.

**The Board to screen notifications of criminal convictions (recommendation 24)**

**Committee Recommendation 24**: That the Government require the Social Workers Registration Board to screen notifications of criminal convictions against social workers and decide whether to refer them to a Complaints Assessment Committee.

75 The Committee looked at the process set out under the Act (section 63) for screening of convictions against a social worker before they are referred to the chairperson of the Tribunal. It noted that, unlike complaints, notifications of convictions are referred to a Complaints Assessment Committee without any screening by the Board. The Committee found that it would improve efficiency of the process if the Board screened convictions against a social worker before they are referred to a Complaints Assessment Committee, given the Board already assesses convictions in the context of fitness to practise.
The Government acknowledges the Committee’s rationale for this recommendation, and considers that allowing the Board to screen notifications before they are referred to the Complaints Assessment Committee has the potential to improve the efficiency of the complaints process.

The Government acknowledges the Committee’s recommendation, and will consider this amongst other changes to improve the efficiency of the complaints process.

Additional investigative powers for the Board and Complaints Assessment Committees to review cases of complaints (recommendations 25 and 26)

Committee Recommendation 25: That the Government expand the investigative powers of Complaints Assessment Committees to include powers to request and require documents or information to be provided to them.

Committee Recommendation 26: That the Government empower Complaints Assessment Committees to consider other conduct or matters relating to social workers that come to their attention during their investigation.

The Committee looked at Complaints Assessment Committee powers and considered whether investigative powers should be granted to the body in charge of screening complaints and convictions (that is, the Board) before they are referred to a Complaints Assessment Committee. The Committee considered it was not necessary to grant investigative powers to the Board, as too much specification could confine the Board in its preliminary consideration of cases.

The Committee did consider, however, that the investigative powers of Complaints Assessment Committees should be expanded, and that this should include power to require documents or information. Complaints Assessment Committees should also be able to consider other matters about social workers that come to their attention during the investigation to assist Complaints Assessment Committees to perform their functions properly and make effective and informed assessment of the conduct or concerns referred to them.

The Government notes that this recommendation would give Complaints Assessment Committees (which the Committee recommends now be set up by the Board instead of by the Chair of the Tribunal) the power to request and require information. Currently that power only sits with the Tribunal, which is out of step with, for example, the powers of professional conduct committees under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

The Government notes that any additional powers granted to the Board to request additional information from the complainant, social worker or employer will need to be consistent with other legislation such as the Privacy Act 1993, and that the Privacy Commissioner and the Government Chief Privacy Officer will need to be consulted. The Government notes that the power of professional conduct committees under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act to require information is subject to conditions of relevancy. There is also a potential for the unintended capture of, or access to, sensitive or private information. This includes information held by the Accident Compensation Corporation, health and educational agencies and the Defence Force.

The Government acknowledges the intent of this recommendation, but more work is required to assess the potential privacy, procedural and evidential issues of this recommendation. This will be considered this amongst other recommended changes that could improve the effectiveness of the Complaints Assessment Committees.
Committee Recommendation 27: That the Government expand the options available to Complaints Assessment Committees when determining the outcome of their investigations, to include:

(a) directing an apology from the social worker to the complainant

(b) appointing an independent person to act as a conciliator

(c) directing mediation of the complaint, including to the Employment Relations Authority mediation process

(d) referring the subject matter of the complaint to the New Zealand Police

(e) censuring the social worker

(f) directing the social worker to undergo training, counselling, or mentoring.

The Committee has examined the four options available to Complaints Assessment Committees under the Act (section 17) when they are considering complaint cases. The Committee concluded that options available to Complaints Assessment Committees should be expanded as this would be consistent with other professions and would ensure that Complaints Assessment Committees can choose the best option for the wide range of circumstances they consider.

The Government will consider these recommendations amongst other changes that could improve the effectiveness of the Complaints Assessment Committees.

Make changes to the membership of the Tribunal (recommendations 28 and 29)

Committee Recommendation 28: That the Government require that the chairperson and deputy chairperson of the Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal are lawyers.

Committee Recommendation 29: That the Government require Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal panels to be made up of the chairperson or deputy chairperson of the Tribunal, three members who are registered social workers, and one lay member.

The Committee has examined the functions of the Tribunal, which include administering the complaints process and exercising disciplinary powers over registered social workers. The Committee has considered these functions in relation to the current membership of the Tribunal. The Committee found that, given proceedings often involve issues of law, it would be appropriate for the Tribunal chairperson and the deputy chairperson to be lawyers (currently only one member of the Tribunal is a lawyer).

The Government acknowledges the Committee’s recommendations, and will consider these amongst other changes that could improve the effectiveness of the complaints and disciplinary processes.

Widen the definition of professional misconduct (recommendation 30)

Committee Recommendation 30: That the Government widen the definition of “professional misconduct” in section 82(2) of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 to include any conduct that has brought or that is likely to bring discredit on the social work profession.

The Committee has reviewed the grounds for disciplining a social worker under the Act (section 82), including how “professional misconduct” is defined (section 82(2)). In the Committee’s view, the current definition is too narrow and should be more broadly
defined. The Committee suggests it also include conduct that has discredited, or that is likely to discredit, the profession. This would align with principle 9 of the social worker Code of Conduct (to maintain public trust and confidence in the social work profession), and would align with the approach taken in other professions, such as health practitioners and lawyers.

88 The Government acknowledges the intent of this recommendation and will consider this recommendation amongst other changes.

### Widen the grounds for disciplining a social worker (recommendations 31 and 32)

**Committee Recommendation 31:** That the Government amend the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 to allow the Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal to cancel a social worker’s registration on any ground of discipline, including removing the threshold of “gross or severe” professional misconduct before registration can be cancelled for professional misconduct.

**Committee Recommendation 32:** That the Government expand the sanctions available to the Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal, to include powers to:

(a) suspend a social worker for a period of up to three years

(b) take any course of action that is available to a Complaints Assessment Committee.

89 The Committee has looked at the sanctions available under the Act (section 83) to the Tribunal when it finds there are grounds for disciplining a social worker.

90 As part of the inquiry, the Committee was advised of a drafting issue with the Act, which prohibits the Tribunal from cancelling a social worker’s registration “unless it finds him or her guilty of gross or severe professional misconduct”. The Committee considers the interpretation of this section of the Act inappropriately confines the Tribunal’s assessment of suitable penalties for particular misconduct. It has suggested how it can be revised to give better effect to the intent of the relevant sections of the Act in its recommendation.

91 The Committee has also looked at the strength and range of sanctions available to the Tribunal and considered they are more limited than in other professions and should be expanded.

92 The Government acknowledges the Committee’s recommendations, and will consider them amongst other changes that could improve the effectiveness of the disciplinary processes.

### Changes to the provisions for suspending and cancelling practising certificates and registration (recommendations 33-35)

**Committee Recommendation 33:** That the Government make it clear that, except in interim situations, cancellation or suspension affects a social worker’s registration rather than their practising certificate and that cancellation or suspension of registration automatically cancels or suspends a practising certificate.

**Committee Recommendation 34:** That the Government ensure that, whenever cancellation of registration is available against a social worker, the lesser sanctions of suspension and imposition of conditions are also available.
Committee Recommendation 35: That the Government empower the Social Workers Registration Board and/or the Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal to impose, in conjunction with suspension, conditions on a social worker’s return to practise.

93 The Committee has examined the provisions in the Act about suspending and cancelling a social worker’s registration or practising certificate. The Committee found the approaches set out in various sections of the Act were inconsistent and considered that the law relating to suspension and cancellation should be clearer.

94 The Committee considered that the Board and Tribunal should have a full range of options open to them when considering the action to take in cases of misconduct or incompetence, and has suggested other options, which could include imposing conditions such as supervision requirements.

95 The Government acknowledges the intent of the Committee’s recommendations, and will consider this issue alongside other recommended changes.

Allowing immediate interim suspensions or conditions to be imposed where there are reasonable grounds for concerns about a social worker (recommendations 36 and 37)

Committee Recommendation 36: That the Government allow immediate interim suspension or conditions to be imposed on a social worker when there are reasonable grounds to believe that:

(a) the social worker is not competent or fit to practise social work or is not able (for example, because of a physical or mental condition) to perform adequately the functions required to practise social work satisfactorily, and

(b) the suspension or conditions are reasonably necessary in light of the purposes of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003.

Committee Recommendation 37: That the Government remove from legislation the 10 day time limit for interim suspensions.

96 As part of its inquiry, the Committee noted that the Board has a very limited interim suspension power, and that it does not cover all the situations needed to protect public safety and maintain professional standards. The Committee considers that the grounds for interim suspension or conditions be reviewed and expanded.

97 The interim suspension power of the Board under the Act is confined both in the circumstances in which it is available (essentially where, because of mental or physical health, a person is unable to practise social work satisfactorily) and the length of time that it applies for, which is a maximum of 10 days. The other powers of suspension given to the Board generally only arise once the Board has finished its assessment of a social worker’s competence or fitness to practise.

98 The Government acknowledges the intent of the Committee’s recommendations and will consider these issues amongst the other recommended changes.

Government to examine the legislative options for achieving reform (recommendation 38)

Committee Recommendation 38: That the Government examine the legislative options to determine which would be the best means for implementing these recommendations.

99 As a result of its inquiry, the Committee has concluded there is need for legislative reform, and has made suggestions for how that reform might be achieved. Options
suggested include amendment, repeal and replacement of parts or all of the Act, or the potential of full or partial incorporation into the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. It notes there will be advantages and disadvantages with each of these options for achieving the recommendations.

100 The Government acknowledges the overall intention of the recommendations, which is to improve public safety and efficacy in the practice of social work. There are a range of occupational regulation options that could give effect to the Committee’s recommendations, including industry regulation or varying levels of non-statutory or statutory Government intervention, which will affect the impact and cost of any changes.

101 The Government will carry out further work to identify possible policy and legislative changes that could best give effect to the intent of the Committee’s recommendations to increase the professionalism of the social work workforce. Once this work is completed, the Government will form a final view on the Committee’s recommendations.

Conclusion

102 In conclusion, the Government acknowledges the recommendations in the Committee’s Report, and expresses its gratitude for the work of the Committee, as well as the individuals and organisations that provided submissions, to the on-going commitment to increase the professionalism of social workers.

103 The Government acknowledges the importance of ensuring there is an appropriate regulatory system in place to protect the safety of members of the public by ensuring social workers are suitably qualified and competent to practise, and are held accountable for poor practice while also lifting the professionalism of social work.

104 The Government will consider options for policy and legislative change to realise the intent of the Committee’s recommendations.

105 In the meantime, the Government will continue to pursue its goal for ensuring we have a safe and competent workforce for our most vulnerable children, young people, their families and whānau and communities. Social workers are a significant part of this workforce. Work is already underway in this area through the:

- **Children’s Action Plan and the Vulnerable Children Act 2014** – to develop a safe and competent children’s workforce (approximately 370,000 people) by ensuring they have been safety checked. This includes safety checks for all paid people who work with children for government-funded organisations and unpaid people working with children as part of an educational or vocational training course

- **Ministerial Group on Family and Sexual Violence work programme** – which includes a workforce development project that will identify and put in place best practice core competencies that members of the family violence and sexual violence workforce need to effectively deliver services.

- **Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki** – which will come into effect on 1 April 2017, and will have a performance framework that clarifies performance expectations at all levels of management and operations, driving strong incentives and a culture of delivering outcomes.

Development is also underway on a set of agency core competencies (building on the work previously conducted by the Children’s Action Plan) for the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki. These will identify the knowledge, skills and values that will be required by frontline staff to be effective at responding to
the needs of vulnerable children. They will be underpinned by a set of shared system competencies, which (when implemented) will provide organisations with greater consistency and consensus about how we work together to provide successful outcomes for children. A strong component of this will be competency in working with Māori.
Government Response to report of the Standing Orders Committee on the Review of Standing Orders

Presented to the House of Representatives in accordance with Standing Order 252
Introduction

The Government has carefully considered a recommendation made to the Government by the Standing Orders Committee in its report on the review of Standing Orders. The Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

Recommendation to the Government and Government response

**Recommendation:** The Standing Orders Committee recommends to the Government that financial provision be considered for full implementation of webcasting of hearings of evidence from any select committee meeting room in the parliamentary precincts.

**Response:** The Government supports the principle of increasing public accessibility to parliamentary processes and enhancing transparency. The Government understands that the full roll-out of webcasting to all select committee meeting rooms in the parliamentary precinct will result in a cost beyond the current resources of the Office of the Clerk and the Parliamentary Services.

The Government will be interested to see the proposals for the development of a webcasting system and will consider financial provision for any such proposals.
Government Response to
Report of the Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee
on
Petition 2014/14 of Maureen Patricia Saville

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252
Introduction

1 The Government has carefully considered the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee’s report on Petition 2014/14 of Maureen Patricia Saville. The Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

2 The Government will take action on the first of the Committee’s recommendations, but is unable to respond positively to the second recommendation that the Government recommend to Pharmac that it investigate the funding of Pemetrexed.

Recommendations and Government response

3 **Recommendation 1**: that the Minister for ACC work with the Minister of Health to investigate how many people may be suffering from mesothelioma caused by asbestos who do not have cover for a personal injury under the Accident Compensation Act 2001.

4 **Response**: the Minister for ACC and the Minister of Health will discuss how best to capture data on non-work related mesothelioma.

5 **Recommendation 2**: the Government recommend that Pharmac investigate the funding of Pemetrexed, or similar medications, for those people.

6 **Response**: Pharmac is a Crown entity whose role within the New Zealand health system is to make independent decisions on which medicines are funded in order to get the best health outcomes from within the available funding. It would not be appropriate for the Government to recommend to Pharmac that it investigate funding a particular medicine.

Conclusion

7 The Government agrees that more data is needed on the numbers of people who are suffering mesothelioma and who do not have cover for personal injury under the Accident Compensation Act 2001. This data may help to inform Pharmac’s decision-making regarding the funding of medications to treat mesothelioma in the future.
Government Response to
Report of the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee
on
Petition 2014/59 of Joanne Clendon

Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 252
Government response to Report of the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee on Petition 2014/59 of Joanne Clendon

INTRODUCTION

1. The Government has carefully considered the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee's (the Committee) report on the Petition 2014/59 of Joanne Clendon on the issue of cycling on the footpath.

2. The Government welcomes the Committee's report, which highlights the interest from the sector and the community about tensions around the safety of children cycling in New Zealand. The Government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 252.

3. The Government has responded to all of the Committee's recommendations. It has directed officials to investigate the development on a rule to allow cycling on the footpath for children.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Background

4. In May 2016, Joanne Clendon presented her petition to Parliament. The New Zealand Transport Agency had already commissioned a research report into the effect of, and options for, rules relating to footpath cycling, before this petition was made.

5. Current rules mean that there is a period between a child out-growing a very small wheel size and gaining the skills to ride on the road, during which most children cannot ride legally on the footpath or safely on the road. As a result, illegal footpath cycling is commonplace throughout New Zealand. It is noted that this issue is contentious, and that there are opposing views.

Recommendations

6. In its report the Committee recommended to the Government that it:
   - allow cycling on the footpath by children up to and including 12 years of age or year 8 (and accompanying adults), seniors over 65, and vulnerable users (such as those with mental or physical disabilities);
   - make bells mandatory for any bicycle used on footpaths or shared use paths;
   - allow local authorities to exclude, on a reasonable basis, certain areas of footpath from being used for cycling.

Response

7. The Government has carefully considered the Committee's report and recommendations.

8. The Government response is that the Committee's recommendations will be included in the 2017/18 Transport Rules Programme for policy investigation. Currently, cycling rules are primarily in the Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004.
9. The policy investigation will consider the Committee's report, relevant research, and international practice. Discussions with local authorities and other stakeholders will be required on any potential changes, including the use of shared footpaths. The status quo will remain as an option under any proposed changes.

10. Policy on any proposed changes to cycling rules will be considered by Cabinet before any draft amendment rules are released for public consultation.

Conclusion

11. The Government thanks the Committee for its report and its thorough consideration of the proposals. This will be a valuable record for the policy investigation stage of the transport rule-making process.

12. The House may be interested to know that:

   - Research has been commissioned and completed on footpath cycling rules and potential impacts.

   - Practices in overseas jurisdictions have also been investigated.

   - Work has begun on the investigation of a rule to allow cycling on footpaths for children.
Report by the New Zealand Delegation led by the Speaker to the 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference, Cameroon, Africa 4–10 October 2014

Rt Hon David Carter
Speaker
Fifty-first Parliament

Presented to the House of Representatives
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Report by the New Zealand Delegation led by the Speaker to the 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference, Cameroon, Africa 4–10 October 2014

Delegation members
The New Zealand delegation to the 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Conference in Cameroon, Africa comprised:

- Rt Hon David Carter MP, Speaker, Head of Delegation
- Lindsay Tisch MP, Assistant Speaker
- Wendy Hart, secretary to the delegation.

Background
I was very pleased to lead a delegation to the CPA’s annual conference, the first time a New Zealand Speaker has done so in recent years. It gave me the opportunity to witness first-hand the challenges and opportunities for change that confront the association and to make sure that the importance we place on financial transparency, accountability, and a fair and equitable deal for all branches in the CPA is heard at the highest levels of the association. I alternated as a representative of the Pacific Region on the CPA Executive Committee.

Lindsay Tisch also attended the conference as a representative of the Pacific Region on the CPA Executive Committee, as both this position and the New Zealand Parliament’s
Permanent Delegate to the CPA had yet to be appointed in the new parliament. Regrettably, the third delegate, a woman member of parliament, was unable to attend.

Wendy Hart attended as acting CPA Pacific Region Secretary and represented the Clerk of the New Zealand Parliament at the annual meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table (SOCATT).

**Introduction to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association**

The CPA is an international community of parliaments and legislatures working together to deepen the Commonwealth’s knowledge and understanding of and commitment to democratic governance. The CPA pursues these objectives through professional development seminars, workshops and exchanges, conference networking, technical assistance to individual parliaments, and the provision of specialist information.

There are active CPA branches in approximately 175 national, state, provincial, and territorial parliaments and legislatures of all the 54 Commonwealth countries, representing approximately 17,000 parliamentarians. Through these branches, which are organised into nine regions, the CPA seeks to build an informed parliamentary community and to enhance co-operation between its parliaments and legislatures.

The CPA provides opportunities for the New Zealand Parliament to engage in a significant international organisation, contribute to debate on matters of international importance, and ensure that matters of importance to New Zealand and the Pacific Region are included on the CPA’s agenda.

**Annual Conference**

The annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) is an opportunity for more than 500 members of parliament, representing the parliaments and legislatures of Commonwealth nations, states, provinces, and territories, to discuss policies on global issues and parliamentary democracy. About 100 parliamentary officials also attend.

The theme of the 60th CPC was “Repositioning the Commonwealth for the Post-2015 Development Agenda”. Workshops and plenary sessions linked to this theme focused on the Commonwealth’s commitment to equality and the respect of political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development. The CPC was chaired by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon and 2014 President of the CPA, Rt Hon Cavayé Yéguié Djibril MP.

Prior to the official opening of the CPC, meetings of the CPA Executive Committee, the CPA Working Party, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Steering Committee, and the 34th Small Branches Conference (made up of the Commonwealth’s smallest jurisdictions) took place. The theme of the Small Branches Conference was “The challenges of small states” and examined vulnerabilities in their quest for social and economic development.

A business meeting and session of the CWP was held on Wednesday, 8 October, with the theme “Increasing women’s political representation in the Commonwealth in the post-2015 era: challenges and way forward”. The CWP was founded by women delegates in 1989 as a forum to discuss how to increase female representation in parliament and work towards mainstreaming gender considerations in all CPA programmes. It has a Steering Committee of 10 members to plan its activities.
Regional meetings of CPA Branches were also held at the annual conference. Branches are organised into nine regions – Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands and Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic; India; Pacific; and South-East Asia – which meet to discuss matters of regional interest. New Zealand is a member of the Pacific Region. However due to low attendance by Pacific Branches due to health and security concerns, a Pacific Region meeting was not held. New Zealand and Kiribati held an informal meeting. The Australian Region kindly invited us to join them at their meeting.

As the Australian and Pacific Regions work closely together, this was valuable time to discuss matters such as the next annual conference, the re-entry of Fiji to the Commonwealth, and financial and governance matters of the CPA.

Officers of the Association, the Chairperson of the CWP, and three regional representatives from each region (except Africa, which has six representatives) make up the CPA Executive Committee. The committee, which is responsible for managing the business of the CPA, meets twice a year: before the opening of the annual conference, and mid-year. Regional representatives are appointed to the Executive Committee on a rotational basis. Lindsay Tisch attended the meeting of the Executive Committee as a Pacific Regional representative, along with myself and Hon David Christopher MP of Kiribati, who alternated for Hon Ludwig Scotty from Nauru and Lord Fakafanua from Tonga, who were unable to be present at the CPC.

During the conference, parliamentary officials can attend the Society of the Clerks-at-the-Table (SOCATT) meeting, which runs in parallel with the conference. This gives parliamentary officials an opportunity to discuss issues and trends in parliamentary procedure and process across the Commonwealth. Wendy Hart, secretary to the delegation, attended this meeting and made an intervention on developments in parliamentary privilege in New Zealand.

Two significant events took place during the conference. The first was the death of the CPA’s Secretary-General, Dr William F Shija as the conference opened. The second was the election of a new Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee.

Delegates were also acutely aware of the Ebola epidemic affecting many countries, but most severely Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria. We expressed our solidarity with the countries affected and trust the support of the international community will continue.
Dr William F Shija, Secretary-General 2007–2014

The Secretary-General of the CPA, Dr William F Shija, passed away on 4 October 2014 in London. Dr Shija had served in the role since January 2007. Dr Shija was a former Minister and Member of the Tanzanian Parliament. Dr Shija’s death cast a long shadow over the conference, as he was remembered for his services to the parliaments of the Commonwealth. He was laid to rest in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania on 12 October 2014.

The passing of Dr Shija leaves a large gap in the governance of the association and the leadership of the CPA Secretariat. In the interim, the Director of Finance is to act as Secretary-General. During meetings of the Executive Committee, we urged that the position be filled without unnecessary delay and that this process be robust and cognisant of the views of all the CPA’s constituent regions.

Election of Chairperson of the Executive Committee

This conference was a particularly important one for the future direction of the CPA, as the election of a new Chairperson of the Executive Committee was to take place at the General Assembly on the final day. I had discussed the significance of the conference and the election of the new Chairperson when I chaired the General Meeting of the New Zealand Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Inter-Parliamentary Union in June 2014. I had noted that the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition agreed that New Zealand delegates should attend, regardless of the General Election results.

The role of the Chairperson is to be the executive head of the CPA and to lead it as an organisation that promotes the underpinning goals of the Commonwealth: commitment to democracy, human rights, good governance and respect for the rule of law. Two candidates were notified – Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament and Juliana O’Connor-Connolly, Speaker of the Cayman Island Legislative Assembly. Lobbying and promotional material was prohibited under the rules. Therefore the candidates had to articulate their vision for the CPA while the membership was in plenary. Voting was by secret ballot with 137 valid ballots and one spoiled ballot. With 70 to 67 votes, Dr Chaudhury was declared elected.

We were pleased that the organisation took up the offer of assistance by the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table (SOCATT), for two Clerks to ensure the election was procedurally correct and fair. This avoided procedural issues that had occurred in past elections, which were seen by many as contrary to the mandate of the CPA to promote good practice in parliamentary democracy and electoral conduct. We hope to see the CPA drawing upon the expertise of the SOCATT in the future.

We believe that Dr Chaudhury is the right person for this challenging job and we hope that she will not shy away from taking some tough decisions. It is my hope that her leadership will ensure a transparent organisation that embodies the very notions of good governance and democracy it espouses. It is, as we discussed with her in Cameroon, a significant juncture for the organisation as it farewells the incumbent Secretary-General. The relationship between the Chairperson and the new Secretary-General will be critical to the very survival of the organisation. The New Zealand Parliament looks forward to working closely with Dr Chaudhury over the next three years as we move the CPA into a new phase. I also offer departing Chairperson, Sir Alan Haselhurst my thanks for his time as Chairperson.
Participation

The conference included plenary sessions, workshops, regional group meetings, a CWP conference, and a meeting of the General Assembly of the Association.

Members of the New Zealand delegation attended the following events:

- Small Branches Conference – The challenges of small states
- Opening Plenary and Tribute to the Secretary-General of the CPA
- Australian Regional Group meeting
- Business Meeting of CWP
- Workshop A: Unity in diversity: The role of Parliament
- Workshop B: Joining hands for women’s rights: The role of Parliamentarians in gender empowerment
- Workshop C: Evaluating the emergent content of the post-2015 development agenda against the standards set out in the Commonwealth Charter
- Workshop D: Good governance for the 21st century: Transparency and accountability continue to be needs and requirements throughout the Commonwealth
- Workshop E: How can Parliament ensure that young people are placed at the centre of sustainable development: The role of education
- Workshop F: Financial oversight in Westminster style and francophone parliaments: Sharing good practice
- Workshop G: What is the role of Parliament in providing for the most vulnerable in society?
- Workshop H: Parliamentarians and public trust: Do codes of conduct help?
- 52nd Annual Meeting of SOCATT
- Regional Secretaries’ Meeting

Above: Rt Hon David Carter MP meets with Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury MP, elected Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee at the General Assembly.
General Assembly: Election of Chairperson of the Executive Committee

Closing Plenary.

New Zealand’s participation in workshops and other sessions is summarised later in this report.

60th CPA Conference Opening Ceremony

The President of the Republic of Cameroon, His Excellency Paul Biya, presided over the Opening Ceremony. Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon and 2014 President of the CPA, Rt Hon Cavayé Yéguié Djibril MP, opened the conference. Both Cameroon’s Head of State and the 2014 President took care to highlight the host country’s cultural diversity and its unity, addressing the delegates in both English and French.

His Excellency Brian Olley, British High Commissioner to Cameroon, delivered a message from Her Majesty The Queen, the Patron of the Association. Her Majesty encouraged delegates to continue their work for democracy and wished the conference the very best in its deliberations.

Opening Plenary

Traditionally, at the Opening Plenary, delegates hear from both the Secretaries-General of the Commonwealth and Commonwealth Parliamentary Association signifying the enduring relationship between the two bodies. Given the passing of the Dr William F Shija, late CPA Secretary-General, the Opening Plenary, chaired by the CPA President, heard from Mr Joe Omorodion, Acting CPA Secretary-General and Director of Finance. The Acting Secretary-General thanked Cameroon for their warm hospitality and dedicated his opening words to honouring the late Dr Shija. He also expressed, on behalf of the CPA membership, sorrow for the loss of life in countries affected by Ebola and taken in the recent Malaysia Airline accidents.
Mr Amitav Banerji, Director of Political Affairs Division at the Commonwealth Secretariat, delivered a message on behalf of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, His Excellency Kamalesh Sharma. He expressed condolence on behalf of the Commonwealth for the loss of Dr Shija. He emphasised that the CPA is a valued partner of the Commonwealth Secretariat and an integral part of the Commonwealth family. It was noted that in bringing together so many members from Commonwealth countries, the CPA is truly a phenomenal and diverse family. He reminded delegates of the importance of parliamentary democracy as development is easier and more sustainable in democratic societies, where the individual has liberty and choice, where the tide of economic growth lifts all and leaves none behind.

Delegates acknowledged that parliaments have a crucial role to play in defining the post-2015 Development Agenda, and parliaments are no longer only concerned with issues within their national boundaries, but are engaging in global debates at the national level.

The Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr Martin Chungong – in his homeland of Cameroon – also delivered a speech at the plenary as a mark of respect to Dr Shija. He took the opportunity to highlight the importance of public transparency, accountability and diversity in parliaments to maintain public confidence in democratic institutions.

Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst MP, Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, gave a brief address, firstly acknowledging Dr Shija and wishing the CPA his very best as outgoing Chair.

**34th Small Branches Conference**

The official opening ceremony of the 34th Small Branches Conference, due to be held on Saturday, 4 October, was postponed due to the death of the Secretary-General. Following an emergency meeting of the Coordinating Committee a decision was made to adjourn the day’s proceedings out of respect and that the programme would be amended to have the opening ceremony on 5 October 2014 followed by three shortened sessions.

Lindsay Tisch and I were able to attend the opening ceremony and plenary of the Small Branches Conference around Executive Committees. Although New Zealand is not considered a small branch, we have particular interest in matters that affect our small branch neighbours: Bougainville, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu. The delegation secretary sat in sessions where we had conflicting Executive Committee commitments.

The official opening ceremony of the 34th Small Branches Conference began with a welcome by Rt Hon Cavayé Yéguié Djibril MP, Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon and President of the CPA Association. Speeches were given by Small Branches Chairperson Honourable Abdulla Maseeh Mohamed MP, the Acting Secretary-General of the CPA, and the Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee.

The first order of business for the Small Branches was considering a proposal to create a Small Branches Chairperson, who would be an officer of the Executive Committee.

This matter was first raised with the Executive Committee at its meeting in Johannesburg in September 2013. In April 2014, the Executive Committee had recommended that a consultation relating to a Small Branches Chairperson should take place at this conference. After a lengthy discussion at the Small Branches Conference, it was agreed unanimously that a recommendation should be made to the Executive Committee for the establishment of a Small Branches Chairperson.
It was noted that, should the position be created, the views of the Small Branches would be better represented at Executive Committee meetings, a change to the CPA constitution would be required, and thought should be given to the structure of the annual conference to enable the Chairperson to attend the Small Branches Conference and the Executive Committee meeting. New Zealand has expressed its support for the proposal. It was agreed that a consultation with the wider Association would take place between October 2014 and February 2015 followed by the final decision by the Executive Committee to make the recommendation for adoption by the General Assembly in 2015.

At the first plenary of the Small Branches Conference, delegates examined the challenges of small states’ vulnerabilities in their quest for social and economic development. Delegates discussed how improving the skills of the local workforce in small states improved the wider labour force, increasing potential revenues for social spending. In addition, studies showed that nations with higher educational standards had an increased GDP. The relationship between education and improved health and well-being was also recognised.

The second plenary looked at the role of parliaments in providing for the most vulnerable in society. Delegates set out three key points to consider: commitment to transformation, understanding of the nature of the transformation by listening to vulnerable people’s needs, and partnering with non-government organisations. The need for parliament (and political parties) to be diverse and represent the most vulnerable, for example indigenous peoples and women, was also highlighted. Delegates also raised the important role parliaments have in scrutinising the budgets and policies put forward by the executive, to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable are being provided for.

**Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians business meeting and session**

On Wednesday 8 October, a business meeting and session of the CWP was held, moderated by Rt Hon Rebecca Kadaga, the CWP Chairperson and Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda. The theme of the session was increasing women’s political representation in the Commonwealth in the post-2015 era: challenges and way forward.

Senator Eno Emma Lafon began proceedings with an account of the experience of women in Cameroonian politics; women representation has substantially increased since 2013 to 31 percent in the Assembly and 20 percent in the Senate, an increase partly explained by changes to the electoral code to increase the participation of youth and women.

Delegates, led by Senator Lafon, Hon Alix Boyd Knights of Dominica, and Ms Chris Charlton MP of Canada, discussed how socio-cultural beliefs can impinge upon the number of women in parliament. Obstacles to women in politics, including family and household responsibilities, gender pay gaps, and educational opportunities were discussed. Some speakers pointed out how the practices of political parties in recruiting and promoting candidates, and the electoral system itself, also create barriers to women entering political life.

Delegates agreed that mentoring, mobilising and motivating women in or entering politics was important, and that men have a role to play in this. There was a strong call from members to show unity and engage international organisations in enhancing female representation in politics, to share experiences and examples of best practice and embrace mentoring opportunities in the pursuit of absolute gender equality.

The session was attended by the delegation secretary, who provided an update on developments in women in political leadership in the Pacific Region including the recent
election in Fiji and the appointment of women to the posts of Speaker and Secretary-General.

Workshop sessions

On Wednesday 8 October, eight workshops were held, giving delegates a chance to discuss a variety of issues. Each two-and-a-half-hour workshop was addressed by up to four presenters, and had a chairperson. The presentations were followed by contributions from the floor during moderated interactive discussions. Delegates were able to move between workshops as they wished, and we were able to participate in a number of the workshops.

Workshop A: Unity in diversity: The role of Parliament

The theme of this workshop was inspired by the concept of “unity in diversity” articulated in the constitution of Cameroon, the host branch. Discussion leaders and the moderators were all from Cameroon and able to give unique insights of post-colonial unification. This was a particularly interesting discussion from a New Zealand perspective given the partnership under the Treaty of Waitangi and developments in our parliament such as simultaneous translation of te reo Māori.

Delegates discussed the importance of protecting this unique diversity and nourishing the cultural differences. Cameroon has English and French influences, as well as its diverse indigenous cultures and languages. All Cameroonians speak a local dialect as well as French and/or English; political parties have actively embraced the linguistic and cultural diversity of Cameroon since independence and campaigned to protect the various cultures contributing to Cameroon’s people today. Delegates debated how local languages and indigenous law should be protected, as well as the influences of European languages and cultures in the country. Delegates discussed how national unity is the basis for ensuring and embracing diversity.

Workshop B: Joining hands for women’s rights: The role of Parliamentarians in gender empowerment

Workshop B was the topic put forward by women parliamentarians. This workshop examined the representation of women in parliaments across the Commonwealth. Discussion leaders came from Pakistan, Canada, and the Economic Community of West African States. We were particularly pleased to see a Parliamentarian article by Hon Elizabeth Burain, Member of the Bougainville Parliament, detailing developments in Pacific parliaments amongst the papers for this workshop.

Delegates emphasised that there was a need to go “beyond numbers” when reflecting on women’s leadership. Members discussed the importance of creating women’s caucuses across party lines in parliaments, which can develop and strengthen women’s presence in parliament and considered improving international links between women parliamentarians for mutual support and sharing best practice. Delegates also suggested that parliaments should work with non-governmental and development organisations to explore ways of ensuring women are part of the development agenda and increasing the participation of women in community and political leadership.

Workshop C: Evaluating the emergent content of the post-2015 development agenda against the standards set out in the Commonwealth Charter

Delegates, led by discussion leaders from Zambia, Perak and former New Zealand Member of Parliament, Charles Chauvel of the United Nations Development Programme,
considered how Commonwealth parliaments could help develop and implement the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It was emphasised that parliamentarians should be aware of the development and implementation of the post-2015 Development Agenda. Delegates noted that although some progress had been made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed in 2000, there was still much to be done. I found Mr Chauvel’s presentation to be particularly useful in explaining the intersection between the proposed SDGs and the Commonwealth Charter. It was agreed that any action taken in Commonwealth countries should be linked to the aims of the Commonwealth Charter, such as the commitment to good governance.

**Workshop D: Good governance for the 21st century: Transparency and accountability continue to be needs and requirements throughout the Commonwealth**

This workshop included discussion leaders from New South Wales and Scotland, and Dr Ken Coghill of Monash University, who is undertaking research on codes of conduct in parliament. Members affirmed that the first accountability for parliamentarians throughout the Commonwealth is to the people they serve and members should always act in the best interests of the people.

Delegates agreed that the key duty of a parliamentarian is to hold the government to account. Discussion leaders reinforced that responsible government should reflect how the executive is responsible to parliament and not the other way around. The principle lies in the supremacy of parliament, with the executive accountable to it. This workshop noted that parliament has the responsibility to ensure accountability and openness of executive government through powers including oversight of government agencies, programmes and service delivery; scrutiny committees; and minimising opportunities for corruption.

**Workshop E: How can Parliament ensure that young people are placed at the centre of sustainable development: The role of education**

Discussion leaders from India, the United Kingdom and South Africa were joined by external expert Professor Cosmas Cheka of Cameroon to look at actions and solutions to increase the participation of young people in education and public life. Delegates recommended the need to create an enabling environment whereby young people are meaningfully involved in the dialogue on sustainable development and agreed that legislators and policymakers have tools at their disposal to ensure young people take their rightful place in society and help to shape sustainable development.

**Workshop F: Financial oversight in Westminster style and francophone parliaments: Sharing good practice**

Discussion leaders from Cameroon, Quebec and the United Kingdom, shared their experiences of good practice in their legislatures. They were joined by external expert Professor Rick Stapenhurst of the World Bank and McGill University. Delegates agreed the importance of all parliamentarians acting in a transparent and accountable manner. This was central to retaining public faith and confidence in the institution of parliament. Some speakers raised the impact of technological developments and social media, and the corresponding rise of public expectation regarding information. This was of particular interest to us from a New Zealand perspective, given the emphasis we have put on full and proactive disclosure of members’ expenses and entitlements.
The workshop recommended that parliaments share best practice of effective financial oversight and noted that there was greater collaboration and sharing possible between the parliaments of English- and French-speaking countries.

**Workshop G: What is the role of Parliament in providing for the most vulnerable in society?**

This workshop was led by Deputy James Reed of Jersey and Mr Chauvel of the UNDP, and focused on how parliaments and governments should work together with civil society to transform the lives and opportunities of the most vulnerable people in society. Delegates noted that parliaments should have regard to the particular importance of dismantling entrenched patterns of inequality.

Mr Chauvel highlighted the underrepresentation of indigenous peoples and women in parliaments, and noted that sub-groups of parliamentarians – such as women’s caucuses or standing committees – can provide useful spaces for working on issues important to the most vulnerable in society. There was interesting discussion between delegates on the levels of support that can be provided by the state and the need for people to be independent.

**Workshop H: Parliamentarians and public trust: Do codes of conduct help?**

Delegates in this workshop, led by Mr Crispin Blunt MP of the House of Commons and Professor Ken Coghill of Monash University, discussed public trust in parliamentarians. I found the contribution of Mr Blunt to be especially candid and confronting, as he gave his perspective on the crisis of public trust in parliamentarians that stemmed from expenses scandals in the United Kingdom and the response to his homosexuality. We discussed the impact of such scandals on the public’s trust of politicians, negative media on politicians and lack of faith in the parliamentary system. Delegates considered it the responsibility of the media to continue to hold politicians to account, but stressed that balance is key, and that Members should demand reason and perspective from the media.

In the workshop, we noted that codes of conduct could reflect the very purposes of parliamentary democracy and should advance public trust in parliaments as institutions and parliamentarians as representatives of the public. Delegates also discussed sanctions set out in the codes and the position of non-political commissioners who are charged with enforcing standards.

Professor Coghill is undertaking research on codes of conduct, and recently received a submission from the Clerk of the New Zealand House of Representatives detailing our regime.

**Society of Clerks-at-the-Table meeting**

The Society of Clerks-at-the-Table (SOCATT) in Commonwealth Parliaments was founded in 1932 by Owen Clough, a former Clerk of the Senate of South Africa. SOCATT exists to make the parliamentary practice of various Legislative Chambers of the Commonwealth more accessible to Clerks-at-the-Table, or those with similar duties; and to foster among Officers of Parliament a mutual interest in their duties, rights, and privileges. The SOCATT meeting provides a useful opportunity for the Office of the Clerk to meet with procedural staff from other parliaments with a shared heritage.

On Wednesday 8 October, the 51st general meeting started with a presentation on the parliamentary system and developments in Cameroon, by Mr Goddy Mukete, Deputy Secretary-General of the National Assembly of Cameroon. A series of presentations on
parliamentary privilege, budgetary processes and scrutiny, procedural reform and unintended consequences, election readiness and induction of new Members followed.

These presentations were followed by break-out groups to discuss in more detail managing political, constitutional, and procedural change. Regional presentations from all CPA regions were also given throughout both days of the meeting, including a written report from the Pacific. The delegation secretary attended parts of this meeting, on behalf of the Clerk, and provided interventions from a New Zealand perspective.

**General Assembly**

On Thursday 9 October, the General Assembly was held. The first order of business was the election of the Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee which, as detailed above, was a tight contest between Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, and Juliana O’Connor-Connolly, Speaker of the Cayman Island Legislative Assembly. Dr Chaudhury was duly elected into the position that she will hold for three years.

As is tradition, for the next host to take the mantle of president, Pakistan’s Speaker, the Rt Hon Sardar Ayaz Sadiq was voted as the new CPA President, replacing Cameroon’s Speaker, Rt Hon Cavayé Yéguié Djibril.

Reports from the Chairperson, the Treasurer, the Executive Committee, the Small Branches Conference, and the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians meeting were presented.

Then followed a heated debate about the proposed constitutional amendment from the Gauteng Legislature (on behalf of the Africa Region) to amend Article 37(2)(a) of the CPA Constitution, which states: “[a] proposed amendment shall be valid if: (a) it does not have the effect of causing the Association to cease to be a charity according to the law in the jurisdiction in which the Secretariat of the Association is then established”. The issue of the legal status of the CPA has been deliberated at the CPA Executive Committee for some 20 years – with some members, particularly the African Region, pushing for the CPA to become an ‘international organisation’ and to obtain diplomatic status. New Zealand had advised the incumbent CPA Chairperson that it does not support such a move.

The CPA currently holds charitable status under the Charities Act of the United Kingdom; this status is also articulated in article 37(2)(a) of the CPA Constitution, which states that any change is invalid if it would have the effect of causing the Association to cease to be a charity according to the law in the jurisdiction in which the Secretariat of the Association is then established. Charitable status exempts the CPA from paying tax on branch membership fees and other income.

Some CPA members have argued that the charitable status is not appropriate for the CPA and that the status of international organisation would provide the CPA with further endorsement from the international community of its mission and accomplishments, and thus provide a higher profile for the CPA as an association.

Delegates gave passionate speeches for and against a proposed amendment and eventually the President, Rt Hon Cavayé Yéguié Djibril MP, ruled the amendment “out of order” and the debate was closed. After this difficult debate, the delegates were pacified with songs from the University of Buea choir.
After a break in proceedings, plaques were presented to outgoing officers of the CPA and Lindsay Tisch accepted the mark of appreciation on behalf of the Speaker of Nauru, Hon Ludwig Scotty. A vote of thanks was also made to former member and Executive Committee officer, Moana Mackey, who had made an excellent contribution to the CPA over a number of years including chairing a Working Group on the reform of the CPA and being a champion for issues of importance to the Pacific Region.

**Meeting of the Executive Committee**

I, along with Lindsay Tisch and Hon David Christopher MP of Kiribati, attended the final meeting of the Executive Committee as alternate Pacific Regional representatives. As is tradition, the Executive Committee meets after the General Assembly has closed and is presided over by the newly elected Chairperson. Hon Datuk Ronald Kiandee of Malaysia was elected Vice-Chairperson.

The Committee examined a number of matters pertaining to the death of the Secretary-General and service payments, the outstanding proposed constitutional amendment put forward by the Gauteng legislature, and the investment of the CPA reserves. Throughout we urged financial probity and for the CPA to focus on its core business to promote good governance and the values of the Commonwealth. We wished Dr Chaudhury well in implementing her vision for a unified and inclusive CPA.

*Above: Rt Hon David Carter MP and Lindsay Tisch MP sit on the new Executive Committee chaired by Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury MP, Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee.*
Conclusion

I found New Zealand’s attendance at the CPA Conference valuable. However, it was both a confronting and challenging experience. The CPA continues to grapple with issues of transparency and accountability at the CPA headquarters, although it is pleasing to see progress in the form of the internal audit. I hope that the election of the new Chairperson of the Executive Committee and the impending appointment of a new Secretary-General will mark a turning point for the organisation. I will not shy away from stating that, if this change does not occur, the very existence of the organisation is at risk, and many years of excellent work for the promotion of parliamentary democracy will be lost. At this juncture, New Zealand will continue to withdraw its voluntary payment to the CPA. Instead, the New Zealand Parliament uses these funds in direct support to capacity building and parliamentary strengthening in the Pacific.

Putting aside ongoing issues, the CPA continues to do excellent programme work with parliaments throughout the Commonwealth and the annual conference provides a valuable opportunity to build relationships with fellow parliamentarians.

Although the demands on a Speaker’s time are many, I think it important that we Speakers and Presiding Officers lead parliamentary delegations to inter-parliamentary events, such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association annual conference, from time to time. We thank Cameroon for its very warm hospitality.

Rt Hon David Carter
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Appendix 1

60th CPA Conference Programme

Saturday, 4 October 2014

All day   Arrival of New Zealand delegation

Sunday, 5 October 2014

09:00 – 17:00   Small Branches Conference
                Executive Committee Meeting

Monday, 6 October 2014

08:00 – 09:00   Breakfast Meeting of Regional-Secretaries
11:00 – 12:30   Official Opening of the 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference
                Briefing for delegates, observers and secretaries followed by briefing for
                workshop moderators, discussion leaders, rapporteurs and session
                secretaries
13:00 – 14:00   Lunch
14:00 – 15:00   Opening Plenary and Tribute to the late Secretary-General

Acknowledging that this meeting is taking place in the shadow of tragedy, the 60th
CPC First Plenary paid homage to Dr William Ferdinand Shija, late CPA
Secretary-General, who passed away on 4 October 2014.

The First Plenary, chaired by the CPA President, heard from Mr Joe Omorodion,
Acting CPA Secretary-General and Director of Finance, Mr Amitav Banerji,
Director of Political Affairs Division at the Commonwealth Secretariat, the
representative of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, H.E. Kamalesh Sharma, and
the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr Martin Chungong.

15:00 – 17:00   Regional Group Meetings
17:00   Close
18:00 – 19:00   CPA Secretary-General’s reception for Clerks, Secretaries and Secretaries
to Delegations and their spouses/partners (followed by the Presiding
Officers’ and Clerks dinners)
19:00 – 21:00   Dinner hosted by the Head of State, CPA Vice-Patron, for Speakers,
Presiding Officers, Leaders of Delegations and their spouses/partners
(By invitation)
19:00 – 22:00   Dinner hosted by the Clerk for Clerks, Secretaries to Delegation and
their spouses/partners (By invitation)
                Dinner hosted by the Host Branch for all other delegates, accompanying
                persons and spouses.

Tuesday, 7 October 2014

All day   Conference tour
**Wednesday, 8 October 2014**

08:00 – 10:45  Business Meeting of CWP and Election of CWP Chairperson  
10:45 – 11:00  Refreshments  
11:00 – 13:30  Workshops A – D  
   A – (Host branch topic) Unity in diversity: The role of Parliament  
   B – (Gender-related topic) Joining hands for women’s rights: The role of Parliamentarians in gender empowerment  
   C – Evaluating the emergent content of the post-2015 development agenda against the standards set out in the Commonwealth Charter  
   D – Good governance for the 21st century: Transparency and accountability continue to be needs and requirements throughout the Commonwealth  
13:30 – 14:30  Lunch  
14:30 – 17:00  Workshops E – H  
   E – How can Parliament ensure that young people are placed at the centre of sustainable development: The role of education  
   F – Financial oversight in Westminster style and francophone parliaments: Sharing good practice  
   G – What is the role of Parliament in providing for the most vulnerable in society?  
   H – Parliamentarians and public trust: Do codes of conduct help?  
09:30 – 17:00  Meeting of Society of Clerks at the Table (SOCATT)  
19:00 – 21:00  Dinner hosted by the First Lady for Women Delegates  
               Dinner hosted by the Host Branch for all other Delegates

**Thursday, 9 October 2014**

0900 – 1300  General Assembly, Election of Chairperson of the Executive Committee  
1030 – 1045  Refreshments  
1300  Lunch  
1400 – 16:00  Final Plenary and Closing Ceremony including receiving of plaques for retiring Officers and Executive Committee Members  
14:00 – 16:00  Meeting of Society of Clerks at-the-Table  
16:00 – 17:00  Meeting of the new Executive Committee (SOCATT)  
1700  Close  
18:00 – 20:00  Farewell Dinner hosted by the Right Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly, President of the CPA

**Friday, 10 October 2014**

All day  Departure of all delegates
Appendix 2

Delegation media statements

Speaker leads delegation to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference and the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly

2 October 2014

Strengthening New Zealand’s ties with parliaments from across the world will be the focus of the upcoming delegation to the 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 4–10 October and the 131st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland from 12–16 October, Speaker Rt Hon David Carter announced today.

The delegation comprises Speaker Carter and Lindsay Tisch MP. Mr Tisch will also represent the Pacific Region on the CPA Executive Committee.

“I am pleased that the New Zealand Parliament will be able to participate in these particularly significant events, as the IPU will elect a new President to succeed Dr Abdelwahad Radi and the CPA will elect a new Chairperson of the Executive Committee to succeed Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst”, said Rt Hon David Carter. “Our participation will ensure that the New Zealand and Pacific Region perspective on the many issues facing the international parliamentary community is represented and heard.”

The CPA is an organisation of Commonwealth parliamentarians representing 30 per cent of the world’s population who share a commitment to strengthening the institution of Parliament. The IPU is the world organisation of parliaments of sovereign states and provides a focal point for dialogue. Over 1,300 delegates and observers from more than 120 member parliaments and international organisations will be attending the Assembly.

Under the CPA conference theme of “Repositioning the Commonwealth for the post-2015 Development Agenda” participants will explore the role of parliamentarians in strengthening unity and diversity, women’s rights, good governance, sustainable development, and evaluate the post-2015 Development Agenda against the standards set out in the Commonwealth Charter.

The IPU Assembly agenda includes a general debate on the theme “Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women”, panel discussions and workshops on issues relating to parliaments’ role in nuclear disarmament, international law as it relates to national sovereignty, cyber warfare, sustainable development, and the role of parliaments in water management. Meetings of women and young parliamentarians will also be held, to discuss and develop mechanisms for ensuring diversity and representativeness.
New Zealand Speaker marks the passing of the CPA Secretary-General

4 October 2014

“It is with great sadness that we mark the death of the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Dr William F Shija, at his home in London on 4 October 2014”, said Speaker Rt Hon David Carter from Yaoundé, Cameroon where he is leading a delegation to the 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference.

The Secretary-General is the chief executive of the CPA and responsible for promoting its aims and objectives. Dr Shija served as Secretary-General from 1 January 2007, dedicating the last eight years to building parliamentary democracy and engagement across Commonwealth parliaments. Dr Shija had a particular interest in how more established parliaments could support younger democracies and was keenly aware of the challenges faced in the Pacific.

Dr Shija was a former Minister and Member of the Tanzanian Parliament and his roles included Chairing the Foreign Affairs Committee.

“While visiting the New Zealand Parliament in December 2009, Dr Shija was accorded a seat to the left of the Chair in our parliamentary chamber – indicative of the esteem in which he was held by the Parliament”, noted the Speaker. “The New Zealand Parliament expresses its condolences to Dr Shija’s family and CPA staff at this sad time.”
New Zealand congratulates CPA Executive Committee Chairperson

9 October 2014

The New Zealand Parliament congratulates Rt Hon Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury MP, Speaker of the Jatiyo Sangshad – Bangladesh Parliament – on her election to the post of Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

Chaudhury was elected at the 60th CPA Conference held in Yaoundé, Cameroon 2–10 October 2014, at which Speaker Rt Hon David Carter MP and Lindsay Tisch MP were present.

The Chairperson is the executive head of the CPA, an organisation which connects, develops, promotes and supports Parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and the implementation of the values of the Commonwealth.

Chaudhury is the 21st Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee since the position was established in 1967. She is the first to hail from Bangladesh.

“The New Zealand Parliament welcomes Speaker Chaudhury to this significant role and wishes her every success in confronting the many challenges facing the organisation and moving it into a new phase,” said Rt Hon David Carter, Speaker of the House of Representatives. “She brings with her an excellent academic and leadership record and strong contribution to human rights and gender empowerment. I know that we have chosen the right person for the job.”

“I also offer our best wishes to Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst MP, a Member of the United Kingdom House of Commons, who has been Chairperson since 2011.”

Chaudhury has been elected for a three-year term.
Report of the New Zealand Delegation led by the Speaker to the 131st Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland
12–16 October 2014

Rt Hon David Carter
Speaker
Fifty-first Parliament

Presented to the House of Representatives
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Report of the New Zealand Delegation led by the Speaker to the 131st Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland
12–16 October 2014

The New Zealand delegation to the 131st Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland comprised:

- Rt Hon David Carter MP, Speaker, Head of Delegation
- Lindsay Tisch MP, Assistant Speaker
- Wendy Hart, secretary to the delegation.

The delegation was in Geneva from 11 to 17 October 2014, following on from attendance at the 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference, held in Cameroon.

Background

I led the New Zealand Parliament’s delegation to the 131st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly, the first time I have done so. Of the 1,410 delegates to the Assembly, 47 were Speakers and Presiding Officers. This provided an excellent opportunity to meet with my counterparts and maintain relationships with Presiding Officers from throughout the world. My meeting with the new Secretary General, Mr Martin Chungong, was a particular highlight and I look forward to the increased relationship of the IPU with Pacific parliaments.

Lindsay Tisch also attended the Assembly and alternated on the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights. Regrettably, the third delegate, a woman member of parliament, was unable to attend.

The IPU cooperates closely with the United Nations (UN) and works hard to facilitate interaction between it and parliamentarians. I gave a copy of the UN handbook to the head of each delegation at the IPU Assembly; these were well received by fellow delegates. The handbook is a comprehensive guide to how the UN system works; and is an example of how New Zealand has demonstrated its long-standing commitment and practical support for the UN by producing the handbook since 1961.

Throughout the Assembly, we took the opportunity to discuss New Zealand’s bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council, which we were delighted to learn had been successful on the final day we were in Geneva.

Introduction to the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Established in 1889, the IPU is the international organisation of parliaments of sovereign states. It is a centre for parliamentary dialogue and diplomacy among legislators representing a wide range of ideological, economic and social systems. Through resolutions and reports, the IPU expresses its views and the positions of the world parliamentary community on issues of international interest, with the aim of bringing about parliamentary action. The IPU works for peace and cooperation among peoples, the defence and promotion of human rights and the firm establishment of representative democracy. It also supports the efforts of, and works in close cooperation with, the UN (whose objectives it shares) and provides a parliamentary dimension to UN work. It also
cooperates with regional inter-parliamentary organisations, as well as with like-minded international, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Currently 166 national parliaments are members of the IPU (a list of members is attached as Appendix 1). Ten regional parliamentary assemblies are associate members. Most members are affiliated to one or more of the six geopolitical groups that are currently active in the IPU, which are: African, Arab, Asia-Pacific, Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Twelve Plus.

Delegations from the parliaments of 147 countries, including four non-member countries attending as Observers with a view to future affiliation, took part in the 131st Assembly.

The IPU is consistently active in its work to promote representative democracy throughout the world through workshops, committee visits and reports, and the biannual Assembly. Its main areas of activity are:

- representative democracy
- international peace and security
- sustainable development
- human rights and humanitarian law
- women in politics; and
- education, science and culture.

The Assembly

The Assembly is the principal statutory body for expressing the views of the IPU on political issues. These are held twice a year in spring and autumn, usually alternating venues between Geneva, where the IPU secretariat is based, and a member country. A prerequisite for hosting the Assembly is to guarantee that all member parliaments will be able to send representatives.

The Assembly comprises meetings of the following parts of the IPU:

- the plenary session of the Assembly (attended by all delegates), which has a general debate on a particular theme, debates an emergency item and holds panel discussions on particular subjects
- the Governing Council, which is the policy-making body of the IPU, and consists of two or three delegates from each member country
- ad hoc committees established by the Governing Council
- standing committees, which debate and draft resolutions on chosen topics; and
- six geopolitical groups.

The agenda of the 131st IPU Assembly is attached as Appendix 2 and the various Assembly sessions are discussed later in this report.

Our delegation attended and participated in the following sessions:

- Governing Council and the election of the President of the IPU
- Election of President and Vice-Presidents of the 131st Assembly
- Consideration of possible requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
- Debate on the emergency item
- General Debate – Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women
• Standing Committee on Peace and International Security
• Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade
• Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights
• Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs
• Meeting of Women Parliamentarians
• Meetings of the Twelve Plus Group and Asia-Pacific Group; and
• Meeting of Advisers and Secretaries to delegations.

**Governing Council**

The Governing Council (the Council) is composed of mixed gender delegations of three parliamentarians from each parliament. It met twice during the Assembly and dealt with the following matters:

- election of the President of the IPU
- membership and Permanent Observers
- financial situation
- programme and budget for 2015
- cooperation with the United Nations system
- implementation of the IPU Strategy 2012–2017
- recent specialised meetings
- reports of plenary bodies and specialised committees
- 125th anniversary of the IPU
- future inter-parliamentary meetings
- tribute to the outgoing IPU President.

At its sitting on 13 October, the Council approved requests for reaffiliation from the National Assemblies of Madagascar and Guinea, thus bringing the overall membership of the IPU to 166 national parliaments. The Council also approved a request for Permanent Observer status from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean.

**Election of the President**

The President of the IPU is the political head of the organisation and is elected to the post by the IPU Membership through its Governing Council. Upon election for a three-year mandate, the President is also the ex officio President of IPU’s Governing Council and the Executive Committee. The election of a new President of the IPU, to serve 2014–2017, dominated interactions throughout the Assembly with candidates promoting their vision for the IPU.

The post is traditionally rotated around the regions of the IPU, with candidates in this round drawn from the Asia-Pacific Region. Four candidates ran for the post: Hon Nurhayati Ali Assegaf of Indonesia, Hon Bronwyn Bishop of Australia, Mr Saber Chowdhury of Bangladesh, and Mr Abdulla Shahid of the Maldives.

Prior to leaving for Geneva, I discussed this important election with the New Zealand Executive Committee in May 2014 and members of parliament at the General Meeting of the New Zealand Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Inter-Parliamentary Union in June 2014. I noted that the Speaker of the Australian Commonwealth Parliament, Hon Bronwyn Bishop, was putting her name forward and encouraged support. Members
were very much in agreement that we should support the Australian Speaker, given that there has yet to be an Australian or Pacific parliamentarian at the helm of the IPU.

Throughout the Assembly, candidates gave presentations to the geopolitical groups and constituent bodies. We were pleased to participate in the discussions at the Twelve Plus and the Asia-Pacific groups and hear the candidates’ presentations to the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, which very much crystallised our views on the candidates. Ms Assegaf presented her vision for the IPU to attain universal membership of all parliaments, and like other candidates pointed to the absence of the United States Congress. Ms Bishop expressed her desire to see the Asia-Pacific Region play a stronger role in the IPU and highlighted the stark absence of women from IPU governance. Mr Chowdhury committed himself to delivering on the IPU’s strategic intentions and supporting the realisation of human rights. Mr Shahid noted that the climate-related challenges in his native Maldives had inspired him.

Candidates fielded questions concerning how democracy is being severely challenged by the threat of terrorism and the spread of extremism, gender rights and the role of parliamentarians in implementing the post-2015 Development Agenda.

At its final session on Thursday 16 October, the Council heard brief presentations from the four candidates. New Zealand was consistent in its support for Speaker Bishop. The candidate from the Maldives was eliminated in the first round of votes. In the second round, Mr Chowdhury obtained 169 votes, followed by M Bishop with 95 votes and Ms Assegaf with 57. Thus, following two rounds of voting by secret ballot, the Governing Council elected Mr Chowdhury as IPU President for a three-year term ending in October 2017.

The previous President was Mr Abdelwahed Radi, the former Speaker of the Moroccan House of Representatives. I offer my thanks to Mr Radi for his excellent governance of the IPU, particularly through its period of strategic reform. The Council conferred the status of Honorary President of the IPU on Mr Radi.

Other Governing Council matters

In addition to members and associate members, the IPU has a large number of observers. The Executive Committee had analysed the attendance of observers in IPU Assemblies over the previous four years and presented to the Council a revised list of permanent observers that would be invited automatically to all IPU Assemblies. This list excluded a number of organisations previously invited as observers that had not attended IPU Assemblies or engaged in any substantive dialogue or cooperation with the IPU for four or more consecutive years.

The Council also endorsed the recommendation that the IPU should facilitate regular interaction with parliamentary organisations, assemblies and networks represented at IPU Assemblies, with a view to discussing issues of common interest, including cooperation with the United Nations.

The Council received a report on the financial situation of the IPU and an updated list of unpaid contributions and the consolidated budget proposal for 2015. It was noted that the income and expenditure of the IPU were on track and the first Assembly held in March 2014 had been delivered on budget.
Each member pays a contribution to the running of the IPU and, as many parliaments have contended with a sustained period of fiscal constraint, the budget had been prepared with a 3.4 per cent decrease. The IPU noted that the Sub-Committee on Finance had balanced the reduction in contributions with the need for funding for additional activities requested by the Governing Council, including the strengthening of the four Standing Committees, the delivery of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in late 2015 and additional support for the Committee on Middle East Questions.


**125th Anniversary of the IPU**

The Governing Council was informed of initiatives taken by the IPU to commemorate its 125th anniversary, on 30 June, marked by a year long programme of events and activities. The IPU was capitalising on that landmark anniversary not only to showcase some of its achievements over the past 125 years, but also to discuss contemporary challenges to democracy.

The IPU organised a photographic exhibition along the lakeside on the Quai Wilson, Geneva that we took time to visit and reflect on the long and proud history of the IPU.

**Meeting with the Secretary General**

I was delighted to meet with Secretary General Martin Chungong on Tuesday, 14 October. Mr Chungong was elected to the post at the 130th Assembly. The key reasons his candidacy gained the support of New Zealand was his understanding of the issues that our region faces, and his vision for the future of the IPU. He reasserted his commitment to the Pacific when we met.

During our meeting, I explained how I had become more aware of the challenges faced by smaller democracies when we hosted the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth. The Secretary General concurred that it is incumbent upon us to support developing and fragile democracies and we discussed how the IPU could facilitate quality engagement with smaller and marginalised parliaments.
We also discussed the importance of accountability and transparency in inter-parliamentary organisations, and the Secretary General detailed how the IPU develops their budgets and the systems of internal and external audits.

I was grateful for the Secretary General’s time during the busy Assembly, and I am very much looking forward to welcoming him to New Zealand in 2015.

Emergency item

At each Assembly, a topic is selected for emergency consideration and a resolution is drafted on that topic. Any member of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. Nine requests were received. These were:

- Commitment by the parliaments of the world to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people, proposed by Ecuador;
- The role of parliamentarians in fighting terrorism and building an international partnership through the United Nations and other international organizations to eradicate extremism and promote cooperation and tolerance among the world’s civilizations and peoples as a basis for international peace and security, proposed by the United Arab Emirates;
- The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in addressing the terrorism and extremism of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al Nusrah Front (ANF) and other terrorist groups, proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic;
- The role of the IPU and national parliaments in formulating and implementing national action plans to combat all forms of exploitation linked to human trafficking, in particular the trafficking of women and children, proposed by Morocco;
- The role of the IPU in encouraging and supporting an initiative aimed at ensuring international protection for the Palestinian people under occupation until a two-State solution is achieved, in the light of the latest Israeli military aggression on Gaza, proposed by Palestine;
Commitment by the world’s parliamentarians to promote a multilateral legal framework for restructuring countries’ sovereign debt with a view to achieving a more stable and predictable international financial system, proposed by Argentina;

The role of parliaments in supporting implementation of UN Security Council resolution 2178 and international support to address the humanitarian disaster caused by the terrorist attacks in Iraq and Syria, proposed by Chile;

The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in promoting the UN Charter to resolve conflicts in a just manner and counter the growing threat of terrorism, proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran;

The role of parliaments in supporting an immediate and robust international response to the Ebola epidemic and in enacting laws ensuring an effective response to and preparedness for Ebola and other infectious disease outbreaks, proposed by Belgium and Zambia.

The delegations of Morocco and the Islamic Republic of Iran withdrew their proposals before the vote. The delegations of Ecuador and the United Arab Emirates merged their proposal to:

The role of parliamentarians in countering terrorism, terrorist groups such as the so-called Daesh and massive violence against civilians and in building an international partnership through the United Nations and other international organizations.

The Assembly held a roll-call vote on the final list of six items. The proposal put forward jointly by Belgium and Zambia, which had received the required two-thirds majority and the highest number of positive votes, was adopted and added to the agenda.

New Zealand supported the joint proposal of Ecuador and the United Arab Emirates and the joint proposal of Belgium and Zambia. We were of the view that both Ebola and the rise of extremism and terrorism, most acutely Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), are very real and immediate matters that parliamentarians must turn their minds to.

The debate on the emergency item was held in the morning of Tuesday, 14 October, with the incumbent IPU President Radi, in the chair. Sixteen speakers took the floor during the debate. Speakers expressed deep concern over what was one of the worst health disasters in recent history, affecting not only five countries in West Africa (Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone) but also several countries in Europe and North America. They underscored that Ebola was a global challenge and that the international community should therefore act swiftly to combat the epidemic.

General Debate

Delegates took to the floor of the Assembly over three days to debate the topic of “Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women”. Representatives from 116 member Parliaments took part, including myself on behalf of the New Zealand Parliament. A wide range of parliamentarians, regional parliamentary organisations and permanent observers shared strategies and actions that had been implemented in their countries in order to achieve gender equality and combat violence against women.

The United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, opened the debate with a video message applauding the IPU for advocating greater political representation of women and helping to bring the voices of women and girls to the legislatures of the world. Delegates also heard a video message from Emma Watson, UN Women Goodwill Ambassador, launching the “HeForShe” Campaign. We were amongst the many delegates who
expressed support for the campaign, noting how important it is for both genders to play a part. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, addressed the Assembly during an interactive debate held on the morning of 14 October.

I spoke about New Zealand’s leadership in women’s representation and participation, but urged that we not become complacent and noted there is still much for parliamentarians to do to increase the safety of women and children throughout the world. My address to the General Debate is attached as Appendix 3.

First Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

This committee met twice during the Assembly on 13 and 15 October. At its first sitting, the Committee held a hearing on the implementation of the 2008 IPU resolution on The role of parliaments in striking a balance between national security, human security and individual freedoms, and in averting the threat to democracy. Many delegates spoke of the need to balance individual freedoms and respect for private life with the need to constantly evolve counter-terrorism mechanisms and protect national security. New Zealand supported an amendment to the draft resolution put forward to the United Kingdom, that reference should be made to the central role of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

At its second sitting, the Committee had a panel discussion on Cyber warfare - A serious threat to peace and global security, the topic of a resolution that was expected to be adopted by the 132nd IPU Assembly in Hanoi (Viet Nam). We heard from representatives from the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, World Economic Forum, International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Telecommunication Union. We found the discussion to be extremely interesting, touching on the fast movement of technology and its
increasing invasiveness. It was noted that cybersecurity is not just a technical issue but also a social one, at the very heart of human interaction.

There was general agreement on the need to take legislative measures at the national and international levels to secure the cybersphere, and for international cooperation. The IPU was tasked with promoting best practices and facilitating discussions that would increase parliamentary awareness and lead to the drafting of relevant legislation. It was also noted that support should be given to developing countries, by way of capacity-building programmes, to assist with legislative and technological responses to cyber warfare.

**Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade**

This committee met twice during the Assembly on 14 and 15 October. At the first sitting, the Committee discussed the draft Outcome Document of the Parliamentary Meeting to be held in conjunction with the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Peru in December 2014, submitted by the rapporteur of the Parliamentary Meeting, Mr S Tejada Galindo of Peru. The IPU Secretariat took note of the feedback provided and undertook to incorporate it into the draft document to be presented to the Parliamentary Meeting in Lima.

The first sitting was an interactive debate with private-sector representatives. The debate focused on corporate investment in sustainable development and was organised jointly with the World Investment Forum of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

I spoke alongside Ms L Schreve, Head of Sustainable Lending at ING Bank, Mr R Milliner, B20 Sherpa for Australia, Mr N Boateng, Chief Executive Officer of Empretec, Ghana, and Mr S Chowdhury of Bangladesh. I cited the definition of sustainable development adopted by New Zealand as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” I utilised the example of the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases, of which New Zealand is a founding member. The alliance provides a framework for cooperation between government and non-government organisations globally for investment in research activities into food security and reducing greenhouse gas emissions intensity. I also highlighted the role that parliamentarians have to play in creating stable and enabling environments for investment and private-sector development, notably with respect to trade and tariffs. Fellow panellists agreed that there is scope for increased interaction between parliamentarians and the private sector, to create a policy environment that stimulates sustainable development and innovation.

At its sitting on 15 October, the Committee had a preliminary exchange of views on the subject item of the resolution to be adopted at the next IPU Assembly, *Shaping a new system of water governance: Promoting parliamentary action on water*. The topic was introduced by Mr A Iza, Head of the Environmental Law Programme, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Ms E Tranchez of Waterlex, Ms N Marino, a member of Parliament from Australia, and Mr F Bustamante, a member of Parliament from Ecuador.

**Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights**

This committee met three times during the Assembly on 13, 14 and 15 October. At the Committee’s first sitting, the draft resolution on *International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights* was presented to the
Committee by the co-Rapporteurs, Mr A J Ahmad of the United Arab Emirates and Mr P Mahoux of Belgium. In the ensuing debate, 34 speakers took the floor. The Committee started its deliberations on the text of the draft resolution in the afternoon of 13 October. It had before it 102 amendments submitted by 14 parliaments (Canada, China, Cuba, France, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Monaco, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Venezuela) and five amendments proposed by the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. The Committee took a decision on the outstanding paragraphs, but was not in a position to go through the entire text of the resolution. That review was deferred to a supplementary sitting convened for the following morning.

Lindsay Tisch attended this committee, including the final session, at which a number of delegations reintroduced amendments that had been proposed within the statutory deadline, but which had been rejected during the drafting process. Following a fraught discussion the Committee was unable to conclude its work and decided to pursue its proceedings at the 132nd Assembly in Viet Nam, based on the text that had been agreed thus far.

Lindsay Tisch also acted as a substitute member on the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, which met to consider proposals for the Committee’s agenda at future Assemblies. The Bureau agreed that the agenda would include items on: human trafficking and migration; a follow-up on implementation of the 2012 IPU resolution on Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children; and an interactive debate on The Convention on the Rights of the Child 25 years on. Lindsay Tisch promoted a proposal on maternal and child health on behalf of Ms Salma Ataullahjan of Canada.

**Fourth Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs**

The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs met three times during the Assembly. At the first sitting, the Committee held an interactive debate with the UN Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Professor A de Zayas. At its second sitting, the Committee held another interactive debate, on the question of corporate influence on UN decision-making. The Committee engaged in a third interactive debate at its last sitting, on 15 October, on the process leading up to the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs. This session would review progress on the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

**Meeting of Women Parliamentarians**

The Twentieth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians took place on 12 October 2014. A total of 133 women and 12 men from 86 parliaments attended, including New Zealand.

The meeting heard from the candidates for the position of President to gain a better understanding of the part gender issues would play in the programme of each of the candidates. All of the candidates undertook to advance gender equality at the IPU with a view to empowering women and promoting the women’s agenda on the international scene. Issues discussed ranged from the participation of women in political to increasing education levels, financial independence, and safety from violence including forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

The Secretary General of the IPU and the Secretary General of International IDEA were included in a debate on electoral quotas for women. A publication, *Atlas of Electoral Gender*
Quotas, produced jointly by the IPU, International IDEA and Stockholm University was presented at the conclusion of the debate.

Ms Ataullahjan delivered a report from the Gender Partnership group to the meeting. We heard that of the 707 delegates present at the 131st IPU Assembly, 227 (32.1 percent) were women. Of the 143 delegations present, 137 were composed of at least two delegates.

With much regret, I note that for the first time New Zealand was included amongst those delegations listed that comprised only one gender. I assured the IPU and my fellow delegates that New Zealand maintains a strong commitment to gender balance in its parliamentary delegations to the IPU, and this was an anomaly due to the proximity of the Assembly to our General Election.

Geopolitical groups

All members of the IPU are members of one or more of the six geopolitical groups that operate within the IPU structure, except for Azerbaijan. New Zealand belongs to the Asia-Pacific group, a grouping of 30 member countries extending from the Middle East to the Pacific, and to the Twelve Plus group, a group of 47 parliaments of Europe, Scandinavia, and former Soviet and Yugoslavian States, together with Israel, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Membership of these two groups is attached as Appendix 6.

The geopolitical groups play an important role in the functioning of the IPU. The IPU rules provide that each group can nominate its own candidates for committee vacancies to ensure an equitable geopolitical representation on IPU committees.

Like the Assembly as a whole, the meetings of the Twelve Plus group and the Asia-Pacific group were dominated by the contest for Presidency. Each candidate addressed the groups and the floor was open for questions. A particular point of interest was that, should Mr Chowdhury be successful, both of the major inter-parliamentary organisations would be led by members of the Bangladesh parliament as Rt Hon Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury had just been elected to the post of Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Executive Committee.

At the final meeting of the Twelve Plus Group on 16 October, chaired by incumbent Mr Robert del Picchia of France, Mr Philippe Mahoux of Belgium, being the only candidate,
was appointed by acclamation as Chair of the Twelve Plus Group. We wish Mr Mahoux our best as he takes up the post.

2014 Future Policy Award

The IPU has partnered with UN Women and the World Future Council to award the 2014 Future Policy Award in the area of combating violence against women and girls. New Zealand was nominated for the establishment of the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families.

The ceremony held on Tuesday, 14 October conferred awards on the Council of Europe’s Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence; the City of Duluth’s Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence; Burkina Faso’s legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation; and Austria’s psychosocial and legal court assistance for victims of violence during criminal and civil procedures. I commend all the nominees for their policies on ending violence against women and girls.

World Leaders Investment Summit

Alongside the IPU Assembly, I participated in United Nations Conference of Trade and Development’s World Leaders Investment Summit session on ‘Investment Policies and Development Strategies’ on 15 October. This complemented my contribution to the IPU panel discussion for the Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade. BBC Anchor Jamie Robertson chaired the session, with a mix of private and public-sector speakers including:

- UNCTAD Secretary-General, Dr Kituyi
- Australian Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon Bronwyn Bishop
- Lebanon’s Speaker of the National Assembly, Nabih Berri
- UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi
- President and CEO, US Council for International Business, Peter Robinson
- President, Fondation pour Genève, Ivan Pictet
- Chairman, China Minmetals, Zhou Zhongshu
- Founding Chair, Big Society Capital, Chairman, G8 Social Impact Investment Taskforce, Sir Ronald Cohen
- CEO, Japan Exchange Group, Atsushi Saito.

The private-sector representatives spoke of the importance of including a variety of perspectives in the post-2015 Development Agenda, as the private sector is a driver of investment, new technology and development. Sir Ronald Cohen noted Australia and New Zealand’s use of social investment bonds as a development to watch in terms of using financial instruments to address social issues.

I spoke on the topic How can investment policy at the national level better reflect the post-2015 development agenda using sustainable agriculture as a case study and highlighted the need to address harmful agricultural subsidies. My address is attached as Appendix 4.
Future meetings

The 132nd Assembly of the IPU will take place in Hanoi, Viet Nam from 28 March to 1 April 2015. It will be followed by the 133rd Assembly, which was to take place in Geneva, Switzerland. The Congress of the Republic of Colombia had expressed an interest in hosting the 133rd IPU Assembly in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia in October 2015 and the formal decision on the hosting of the 133rd Assembly will be taken in Hanoi during the 132nd Assembly.

Conclusion

We found the IPU to be a very constructive experience and it provided an excellent opportunity to engage with the international parliamentary community. I particularly valued the opportunity to meet with Mr Chungong, and share the perspectives of New Zealand and the Pacific.

While we shared in the disappointment of our Australian colleagues at Speaker Bishop’s unsuccessful bid for presidency, she put in a sterling effort and advanced the standing of Australia and our region. We wish President Chowdhury and the Secretary General the best for realising the vision of a universal membership. It is my hope that the IPU will have increased interaction in the Pacific and that Pacific membership is increased. To this end, I have invited Mr Chungong to visit New Zealand.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the New Zealand post in Geneva for the warm hospitality afforded to us, particularly our Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organisation, His Excellency John Adank, Deputy Carl Reaich, and Meredith Davis.

In 2015, the IPU will be holding the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. I am privileged to be a member of the Preparatory Committee for this important conference. We have purposefully selected to hold this at the United Nations in New York, as the United Nations will be celebrating its 70th anniversary. The IPU wants to maintain this close relationship, particularly during the development and implementation of the post-2015 Development Agenda.

Attending the IPU Assembly revitalised my commitment to the inter-parliamentary community and I look forward to New Zealand’s ongoing engagement with the IPU.

Rt Hon David Carter
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Appendices

Appendix 1 – Membership of IPU (as at November 2014)

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has 166 members and 10 associate members.

Member Parliaments

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan
Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi
Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic
Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic
Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia
Finland, France
Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau
Haiti, Honduras, Hungary
Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy
Japan, Jordan
Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan
Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg
Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar
Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway
Oman
Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal
Qatar
Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda
Samoa, San Marino, São Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic
Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey
Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay
Venezuela, Viet Nam
Yemen
Zambia, Zimbabwe.

**Associate members**
Andean Parliament
Arab Parliament
Central American Parliament
East African Legislative Assembly
European Parliament
Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union
Latin American Parliament
Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States
Parliament of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.
Appendix 2 – Agenda of 131st IPU Assembly

**Item 1**  Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 131st Assembly

**Item 2**  Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda

**Item 3**  General debate on Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women

**Item 4**  International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights)

**Item 5**  Reports of the Standing Committees on Peace and International Security; Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade; and on United Nations Affairs

**Item 6**  Approval of the subject item for the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the 133rd IPU Assembly
Appendix 3 – Address to the General Debate by Rt Hon David Carter MP

Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women

Mr President, Secretary General, my fellow Speakers and Presiding Officers, Members, Clerks and Secretaries-General, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to be with you at the 131st IPU Assembly. I am David Carter, the Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament.

New Zealand has a strong reputation internationally on gender equality.

This year New Zealand marked 121 years of women’s suffrage. In 1893, the Governor of New Zealand signed the Electoral Bill into law giving women the right to vote to elect members of Parliament. New Zealand became the first country in the world to extend this right to women. It now seems inconceivable that New Zealand women were actively shut out of the democratic process until that date.

So why does it matter for women to be represented in Parliament? Parliament embodies democracy. It is the central institution through which the will of the people is expressed, laws are passed and government is held to account. For Parliament to play its role effectively, it must be elected from and must represent all components of society.

True representation of the New Zealand Parliament has increased significantly since the adoption of a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system in 1996, although it still has some way to go before it reflects the gender balance in the New Zealand society as a whole, where women make up approximately 51 per cent of the population.

The IPU currently ranks New Zealand as 26th of 189 national parliaments for gender equality. While New Zealand has made significant gains, we are not complacent – increasing the number of women parliamentarians is an ongoing process in New Zealand as it is for many parliaments.

While there are no special measures, such as reserved seats, political parties have adopted their own mechanisms for ensuring more women in our parliament – ranging from targets to mandatory quotas on party lists.

I was proud to chair the Standing Orders Committee in the 50th Parliament, which considered ways to make Parliament a better place for women to work. The Standing Orders were amended to allow an MP to be absent from the parliamentary precincts on compassionate grounds, but to be regarded as present for the purposes of casting party votes.

The Speaker may grant Members permission to be absent for compassionate reasons, or for a family purpose, such as parental leave. I intend to use my discretion to allow a member to be absent for all or part of a day to breastfeed or care for an infant or child.

I am also pleased to note that the New Zealand Parliament has an active cross-party group of women MPs – the New Zealand Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Group – to promote parliamentary representation of women and represent women parliamentarians’ views and concerns. This group has co-Chairs from both Government and Opposition parties.

The New Zealand and Australian parliaments also work closely with our Pacific parliamentary colleagues, including through the Pacific Women’s Parliamentary Partnerships Project, to encourage more women to stand and lift the representation rate.
from its current 5 per cent. This initiative recognises that, along with economic empowerment and freedom from violence, women’s access to leadership positions is vital if Pacific women are to participate as equals in the democratic development of their countries.

I turn now to our important theme – that of ending violence against women and girls.


The United Nations strongly recommended economic empowerment of women as a protective factor for violence against women. In New Zealand:

Over the last 30 years, the number of women with a post-school qualification has increased by 131 per cent compared with a 78 per cent increase for men.

The proportion of women of working age who are in the labour force is 63.1 percent compared to 74.9 per cent for men. Our gender pay gap is the lowest in the Asia-Pacific region.

Successive governments have worked with business and non-governmental partners to raise the numbers of women in senior leadership and on state sector and private boards.

Yet we have some significant challenges:

Almost 50 percent of all homicides in New Zealand are a result of family violence. On average, 14 women are killed by a member of their family every year. Māori women are twice as likely to experience violence as other women.

This not only has a devastating and enduring impact on the individual and her family, but on the country itself. The estimated annual cost to New Zealand of family violence is up to $5 billion.

I would like to share with you some recent parliamentary initiatives to protect women, which include the following legislation:

- The Victims’ Orders Against Violent Offenders Act 2014 allows courts to impose non-contact orders on serious violent and sexual offenders. Orders may prohibit offenders from contacting victims in any way, including by electronic means. They may ban offenders from entering, living, or working in a particular area. An order can also be extended to cover associates.

- The Victims’ Rights Amendment Act 2014 requires the Ministry of Justice to develop a victims’ code outlining their rights and services available; allows victims of serious offences to read a victim’s impact statement to the court; and allows all victims of sexual offences to register on the victims’ notification system.

- The Domestic Violence Act Amendment Act 2013 increased the maximum penalty for breaching a protection order from two years’ imprisonment to three years, and expanded the definition of domestic violence to include economic and financial abuse.

- In 2010, an amendment Act came into force empowering Police to issue safety orders when they have reasonable grounds to believe that family violence has occurred or may occur. Police do not need the consent of the person at risk to issue the order.
In 2005, the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families was established to lead and co-ordinate interagency action to address family violence, including abuse and neglect of children and older persons.

The Taskforce is overseen by the Family Violence Ministerial Group and comprises key decision-makers from the government and non-government sectors, the judiciary and Crown agencies.

I am honoured that New Zealand is named amongst the nominees for the Future Policy Award 2014, organised by the World Future Council, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women for the establishment of the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families. I commend all the nominees for their policies on ending violence against women and girls.

Delegates, we have a full agenda ahead of us. It will provide the opportunity for us to share our stories and experiences, to challenge our thinking, and to gain insight for the future directions of our respective Parliaments.

I wish you all a successful Assembly.
Appendix 4 – Address to the World Leaders Investment Summit by Rt Hon David Carter MP

How can investment policy at the national level better reflect the post-2015 development agenda

Secretary-General, Distinguished delegates and colleagues.

I would like to acknowledge and applaud the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for convening the World Leaders’ Investment Summit. Today’s summit reinforces for me the need for innovation and cooperation in the face of dynamic economic, political and environmental global forces. It is timely given the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

New Zealand views it as essential that poverty eradication remain the central focus of the post-2015 development agenda, but that the outcome balances all three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

To be successful, the post-2015 development agenda needs an ‘all hands on deck’ approach with multi-stakeholder collaboration, which recognises the important role of the private sector, civil society alongside not just Governments, but all Parliamentarians. The private sector has a very important contribution to make as an enabler of sustainable economic development, and Parliaments can support this contribution by creating an enabling environment for investment in key sectors through sound national policy settings.

New Zealand regards sustainable agriculture and food security as incredibly important elements of the post-2015 development agenda. As a former New Zealand Minister for Primary Industries and a farmer, I know from personal experience that with sound investment policies at the national level, sustainable agriculture can be a catalyst for wider economic growth and development. And as a country recognised internationally as a world leader in food production, we know we have a responsibility to developing nations.

Agriculture is a key driver of economic growth and source of livelihoods for many countries, but it can be a huge enabler to many developing countries with underdeveloped agricultural resources.

Central to New Zealand’s successful agriculture sector has been a market-led approach based on integrated value chains from the farm gate to the plate. As a nation, we have prioritised biosecurity and food safety systems that protect our productive base and we encourage a strong agricultural research system.

One of the challenges in meeting global food demand and achieving food security is the projected dramatic increase in the world’s population. One response is, of course, to increase productivity, but efficient use of resources is also a critical component, and one in which effective investment policies play an important role. In New Zealand’s view, by using innovation and technology alongside local knowledge, we can work together to increase productivity and to build resilience of agricultural food production systems.

I encourage other leaders to adopt investment policies which provide more secure access to land, improve access to credit, crop insurance and other productive inputs to
smallholder farmers, including women farmers, as well as policies which promote applied agricultural research to halt and reverse land degradation and improve food production systems. These are very important national measures that policy makers can take to ensure that they not only reflect but leverage to the best effect the post-2015 development agenda for their country’s prosperity and their people’s wellbeing.

In addition, policies which promote an open and transparent trading environment are also vital, by supporting access to and facilitation between regional and international markets. Restrictive market access barriers and high subsidies are very distortive. They compromise the ability of farmers in all countries, but particularly those in developing countries to participate in global agricultural trade, thereby limiting their incomes and their ability to escape poverty, the very thing we have all agreed has to be tackled.

Secretary-General, I will conclude by reinforcing that national policy settings can be important drivers of sustainable development. My country, New Zealand, has long recognised the importance of science, technology, and innovation as key drivers of economic growth and international competitiveness. Our prosperity has been built primarily by the hard work of our farmers; and we believe that there is much potential for others to do likewise as part of the post-2015 development agenda.
Appendix 5 – Resolution adopted by the 131st IPU Assembly, Geneva, 16 October 2014

The role of parliaments in supporting an immediate and robust international response to the Ebola epidemic and in enacting laws ensuring an effective response to and preparedness for Ebola and other infectious disease outbreaks

Expressing concern at the unprecedented Ebola outbreak that has affected West Africa in the past months, and alarmed at the numerous deaths that have resulted, especially of multiple members of the same family and in the most vulnerable groups, such as health-care workers and women,

Also expressing concern at the high risk that the virus will spread around the world,

Aware that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa may, according to the United Nations, become a humanitarian disaster with immeasurable consequences,

Recalling that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa has been designated a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization (WHO) and declared a threat to international peace and security by the United Nations Security Council,

Also recalling that, on 19 August 2014, the African Union Peace and Security Council invoked Article 6(f), on humanitarian action and disaster management, of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and authorized the immediate deployment of ASEOWA (African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa),

Further recalling that, on 18 September 2014, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 69/1 approving the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) to stop the outbreak, treat the infected, ensure essential services, preserve stability and prevent further outbreaks,

Aware that the non-governmental organizations at the forefront of the fight against Ebola, such as Doctors Without Borders and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, deem the international response dangerously insufficient,

Acknowledging nevertheless that many countries have already increased their funding and material support for the countries affected in West Africa and deployed personnel on the ground to help contain the outbreak,

Noting the measures taken by the States affected in response to the Ebola epidemic, but aware that the means that the governments concerned are able to mobilize may be insufficient, and that the shortcomings brought to light by the Ebola epidemic have revealed an urgent need for support,

Concerned that many countries continue to have poorly funded and weak health systems, outdated or inadequate health laws and regulations, and insufficient capacity under the International Health Regulations, and that this hampers national and international efforts to respond to outbreaks of infectious disease,
Bearing in mind that the countries concerned are already suffering shortages of food and drinking water and that their economies are collapsing as a result of disruptions to trade, commercial flights and agricultural activity,

Expressing concern that, as a result of inadequate investment in research, there is as yet no vaccine or effective specific treatment against the Ebola virus,

Taking into consideration that the achievements of the worst affected countries in terms of consolidating peace and development risk being wiped out by the Ebola epidemic, and underscoring that the epidemic is compromising the stability of those countries,

Noting the WHO advisory opinion on the negative consequences of the Ebola response, namely the isolation and stigmatization of the countries and region affected, and on the need for all countries, especially neighbouring States, to keep their borders open to goods and people, maintain air routes, strengthen national and regional preparedness, increase the exchange of information and reinforce their health systems,

Stressing that national, regional and international action and cooperation are required to check epidemics of serious infectious diseases and that a coordinated international response to the Ebola epidemic is therefore a vital and immediate need,

1. Deplores all loss of life in the Ebola epidemic;

2. Expresses support for the governments and populations concerned in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have been severely affected by the Ebola outbreak;

3. Demands that all political parties in the countries concerned work together in unity and harmony to facilitate, without delay, free and safe access for humanitarian organizations and their staff to areas where the population needs them;

4. Recognizes that national leadership and ownership of the Ebola response in the countries concerned remains the guiding principle for international support, in keeping with their right to self-determination under the Charter of the United Nations;

5. Applauds the commitment and contribution of those battling the epidemic on the front lines, notably national and international humanitarian relief workers;

6. Deeply regrets the international community’s slow and generally insufficient response and the time lost in drawing up an effective and coordinated strategy, while acknowledging that a number of States and international organizations have already provided critical assistance;

7. Urges the relevant United Nations bodies, especially WHO, which must play a lead role, to take all necessary emergency measures to reinforce their contribution to local, national, regional and international efforts to halt the outbreak of the Ebola virus;

8. Welcomes the establishment of UNMEER, which must work in close coordination with regional organizations such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States;
9. Calls on the countries affected, responding countries and the international organizations active on the ground to work together closely and share information so as to enhance coordination and ensure effective control of the current outbreak;

10. Calls on the States that have the requisite means and on international donors to mobilize without delay essential financial resources and capacities, including medical and logistical means that can be deployed on the spot (personnel, supplies, means of transport), paying particularly close attention to the protection of women and children and of health workers entering into contact with infected persons;

11. Vigorously condemns the stigmatization of the countries concerned and their citizens, as this may exacerbate their humanitarian plight and have a negative impact on their economies;

12. Appeals to States, in particular those in the region, and all competent stakeholders providing the assistance required to deal with the Ebola epidemic to redouble their efforts to heighten public awareness, apply security and health protocols, and correct the misinformation circulating about the disease’s transmission and the scope of the epidemic;

13. Invites parliaments to promote effective policies to combat the Ebola epidemic at national and international level;

14. Also invites parliaments to enact the legislation needed to improve health systems and emergency preparedness, with a view to boosting the capacity to deal with the serious public health and humanitarian crises that may result from an infectious disease outbreak;

15. Urges the pharmaceutical industry, the private sector, research institutions, philanthropic organizations and governments to invest in research on viable treatment options and vaccines to treat and prevent Ebola and to make them available at an affordable cost to affected populations, especially the poorest victims;

16. Recommends that plans be drawn up to help the countries affected recover quickly from the negative effects of the Ebola crisis based on the lessons currently being learnt;

17. Also recommends that the international community set up a rapid health response unit to cope with health crises of this kind and urge it to learn from the management of earlier epidemics/pandemics;

18. Urges States and the international community to conduct worldwide awareness campaigns to prevent fresh outbreaks of Ebola;

19. Suggests, with regard to international development cooperation, that public health – and the prevention of health crises – be added as a core priority to cooperation programmes.
Appendix 6 – Geopolitical groups to which New Zealand belongs

**Asia-Pacific Group**
- Afghanistan, Australia
- Bangladesh
- Cambodia, Canada, China
- Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
- India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of)
- Japan
- Lao People’s Democratic Republic
- Malaysia, Maldives, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Myanmar
- Nepal, New Zealand
- Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines
- Republic of Korea
- Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka
- Thailand, Timor-Leste
- Viet Nam

**Twelve-Plus Group**
- Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria
- Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria
- Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland, France
- Georgia, Germany, Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy
- Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg
- Malta, Monaco, Montenegro
- Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway
- Poland, Portugal
- Romania
- San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey
- Ukraine, United Kingdom

**Observers:** Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, European Parliament.
Appendix 7 – Delegation media statements

Speaker leads delegation to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference and the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly

2 October 2014

Strengthening New Zealand’s ties with parliaments from across the world will be the focus of the upcoming delegation to the 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 4 to 10 October and the 131st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland from 12 to 16 October, Speaker Rt Hon David Carter announced today.

The delegation comprises Speaker Carter and Lindsay Tisch MP. Lindsay Tisch will also represent the Pacific Region on the CPA Executive Committee.

“I am pleased that the New Zealand Parliament will be able to participate in these particularly significant events, as the IPU will elect a new President to succeed Dr Abdelwahad Radi and the CPA will elect a new Chairperson of the Executive Committee to succeed Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst,” said Rt Hon David Carter. “Our participation will ensure that the New Zealand and Pacific region perspective on the many issues facing the international parliamentary community is represented and heard.”

The CPA is an organisation of Commonwealth parliamentarians representing 30 per cent of the world’s population who share a commitment to strengthening the institution of Parliament. The IPU is the world organisation of parliaments of sovereign states and provides a focal point for dialogue. Over 1,300 delegates and observers from more than 120 member parliaments and international organisations will be attending the Assembly.

Under the CPA conference theme of “Repositioning the Commonwealth for the post-2015 Development Agenda” participants will explore the role of parliamentarians in strengthening unity and diversity, women’s rights, good governance, sustainable development, and evaluate the post-2015 Development Agenda against the standards set out in the Commonwealth Charter.

The IPU Assembly agenda includes a general debate on the theme “Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women”, panel discussions and workshops on issues relating to parliaments’ role in nuclear disarmament, international law as it relates to national sovereignty, cyber warfare, sustainable development, and the role of parliaments in water management. Meetings of women and young parliamentarians will also be held, to discuss and develop mechanisms for ensuring diversity and representativeness.
New Zealand congratulates Inter-Parliamentary Union President

17 October 2014

The New Zealand Parliament today congratulates Mr Saber Chowdhury, a member of the Bangladesh Parliament, on his election to the post of President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The President is the political head of the organisation that is the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue, peace and cooperation. Mr Chowdhury was elected at the 131st IPU Assembly held in Geneva, Switzerland, 12–16 October 2014, at which Speaker Rt Hon David Carter MP and Lindsay Tisch MP were present.

Mr Chowdhury is the 28th President of the organisation in its 125-year history.

“He brings to the IPU firm views on human rights, the rule of law, and the value of parliamentary democracy, as well as a thorough understanding of the workings of the organisation and its membership”, said Rt Hon David Carter, Speaker of the House of Representatives. “The New Zealand Parliament welcomes Mr Chowdhury to his new post and looks forward to the increased interaction of the IPU with the Pacific region.

“I also offer our best wishes to Dr Abdelwahad Radi, Speaker of the Moroccan House of Representatives, who has been President since 2011. During Dr Radi’s tenure the IPU adopted its strategy to build an IPU that is universal, dynamic, effective, and able to advance democratic culture, values and institutions through cooperation among parliaments, including by strengthening the IPU’s relationship with the United Nations. I know that Mr Chowdhury will continue to lead the IPU on this path.”

Mr Chowdhury has been elected for a three-year term.
Report of the Parliamentary Delegation to the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF)
Quito, Ecuador
11–15 January 2015

Fifty-first Parliament
Lindsay Tisch, Assistant Speaker of the House of Representatives

Presented to the House of Representatives
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Report of the Parliamentary Delegation to the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF)  
Quito, Ecuador  
11–15 January 2015

Introduction
The New Zealand delegation that attended the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) comprised three members of Parliament:

- Lindsay Tisch MP, Assistant Speaker of the House of Representatives
- David Clark MP
- Gareth Hughes MP.

During four days of deliberations in Quito the New Zealand delegation made a substantive contribution to the 23rd APPF, including at the Executive Committee meeting, resolution working groups, all plenary sessions, and in the work of the Drafting Committee. The organisation and running of the Forum went smoothly throughout, and was a credit to our hosts. The programme of the APPF is attached as Appendix 1 and a media release about the visit is attached as Appendix 2.

The delegation would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for its support in providing briefing materials and advice to the delegation.

23rd Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum
General
The APPF is a forum of national parliamentarians that seeks to provide opportunities for national parliamentarians of the Asia-Pacific region to:

- identify and discuss matters of common concern and interest in a global context
- deepen their understanding of the policy concerns, interests, and experiences of the countries of the region
- examine the critical political, social, and cultural developments resulting from economic growth and integration
- encourage and promote regional cooperation at all levels on matters of common concern
- further in their respective countries a sense of regional cohesion, understanding, and cooperation.
The APPF acts to promote regional identification and cooperation, with particular focus on:

- cooperation for the further advancement of peace, freedom, democracy, and prosperity
- open and non-exclusive cooperation for the expansion of free trade and investment, and sustainable development and sound environmental practices
- non-military cooperation, giving due consideration to issues relating to regional peace and security.

The APPF expresses its views on these issues and the positions of the parliamentarians of the Asia-Pacific region through resolutions and a Joint Communiqué signed by all the Heads of Delegation.

To a great extent, the APPF acts as the parliamentary branch of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and keeps close ties with other regional integration institutions such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the South Pacific Forum, the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, and the Pacific Basin Economic Council, even though it maintains an independent agenda. Twenty-seven national parliaments are current members of the APPF.

23rd Annual Meeting of the APPF

Parliamentarians and officials from 16 member countries comprising a total of 187 delegates participated in the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum in Quito, Ecuador. Representatives of the Union of South American Nations participated as invited guests.

The New Zealand delegation members all delivered speeches in the plenary sessions. David Clark contributed to the Working Group on Economy and Trade, and Gareth Hughes and I participated in the Drafting Committee. I also attended the Executive Committee meeting.

Heads of Delegation pose with Gabriela Rivadeneira (centre in blue), President of the 23rd APPF and President of the National Assembly of Ecuador
Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on Sunday 11 January and was chaired by Gabriela Rivadeneira, President of the 23rd APPF and President of the National Assembly of Ecuador.

I represented the Oceania region along with Australia (standing in for the Oceania region’s other nominated representative, Papua New Guinea, which did not attend the event).

The Executive Committee discussed and adopted the Forum’s agenda and programme of activities, the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Drafting Committee, the time limit for speeches, and the location of the 24th Annual Meeting. It also acknowledged the draft resolutions submitted by the national delegations. The report of the Executive Committee meeting is attached as Appendix 3.

Opening session

The opening session was held on the evening of 11 January and began with a statement from the APPF Honorary President, His Excellency Mr Yasuhiro Nakasone, presented by his son and Leader of the Japanese delegation, Mr Hirofumi Nakasone. Mr Nakasone referred to current challenges to world peace and stability. He identified culture as humanity’s greatest achievement and stressed his view that politics should serve culture. People-to-people exchanges between countries through culture, art, academia and sport were important in supporting peaceful relations between countries. Communication technologies that extend beyond borders can remove barriers between countries. Maintaining peace would depend on a truly universal human consciousness.

Delegates were then welcomed by President Rivadeneira, who referred to the increasing importance of the Asia-Pacific region in discussions and solutions to global problems. She stated that the world is facing increasingly complex global issues such as military conflict, climate change, and competition for increasingly scarce resources. It is her view that Asia-Pacific parliaments have a responsibility to build bridges to reach a consensus on how to resolve these challenges, ones that are confronting both our region and humanity as a whole.

Plenary sessions

The plenary sessions of the 23rd APPF took place from Monday 12 to Wednesday 14 January. The delegates exchanged views on a number of agenda items, which were grouped in four broad categories:

1. political and security matters in the Asia-Pacific region
2. economic and trade matters in the Asia-Pacific region
3. regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region
4. the future work of the APPF.

Members of the New Zealand delegation presented their views in the first three plenary sessions. These sessions featured speeches from a broad and comprehensive selection of
delegates, and allowed our delegation to become more informed on the major topics, and to better understand how these are impacting and being addressed across the region.

**First plenary session: political and security matters in the Asia-Pacific region**

The first plenary session concerning political and security matters in the Asia-Pacific region focused on:

- strengthening peace and security in the region
- cyber-espionage: rights to privacy and security of communications
- alternative policies and new approaches to prevent and combat transnational organised crime and terrorism.

I spoke about New Zealand’s recent changes to national security legislation in relation to the topic of ‘Strengthening peace and security in the region’. My speech is attached as Appendix 4.

**Second plenary session: economic and trade matters in the Asia-Pacific region**

The second plenary session focused on:

- Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) 2014: Report of China
- open and non-exclusive cooperation to promote the growth of free trade, investment and sustainable development, food and energy security
- challenges for the financing of sustainable development in equity: new structure of global funding.

David Clark spoke on promoting the parliamentary dimension of supporting trade and economic cooperation and integration processes in the Asia-Pacific region. His speech is attached as Appendix 5.

David Clark speaking at the second plenary session
Third plenary session: regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region

The third plenary session agenda topics were as follows:

- democratisation of the organisations (to cooperate towards peace, freedom, democracy and economic welfare). From official development assistance to the new development agenda post-2015
- preservation and promotion of cultural heritage in the region
- common legislative framework for the social protection and the portability of social rights
- cooperation in disaster prevention
- climate change.

Gareth Hughes delivered a speech on the issue of climate change entitled ‘A climate of global cooperation’. A copy of his speech is attached as Appendix 6.

Fourth plenary session: future work of the APPF

Canada was confirmed as the venue for the 24th Annual Meeting of the APPF, which will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, 16–21 January 2016.

Adoption of resolutions, Joint Communiqué and media activities

The New Zealand co-sponsored resolution on trade and economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region was adopted as Resolution 7. It is included as Appendix 7. The Joint Communiqué was adopted and signed by the Heads of Delegation, along with 18 resolutions. The Joint Communiqué is attached as Appendix 8. The closing ceremony followed, with a speech by President Rivadeneira thanking the participants for their enthusiastic engagement over the course of the Forum.
I then took part with other Heads of Delegation in a press conference held by President Rivadeneira. This was an opportunity for Ecuador as the hosts to expound on the value of the Forum, and to allow other delegates an opportunity to answer questions and give their thoughts also. Afterwards I was asked to record a short interview for Ecuadorian television, and I once again gave my view on the value of the APPF as a regional forum for parliamentarians, the excellent event organised by the National Assembly of Ecuador, and the New Zealand delegation’s thanks and goodwill toward our hosts.

Other meetings

Meetings of the Drafting Committee and working groups

The Drafting Committee meetings ran concurrently with the plenary sessions on Monday 12 to Wednesday 14 January. I undertook the role of New Zealand’s representative at the Drafting Committee. Thirty-eight draft resolutions were lodged and referred to topical working groups, which developed an agreed version of each resolution before it was discussed at the Drafting Committee. Gareth Hughes attended the meeting in my place whenever I was required to speak in the plenary sessions or elsewhere. Gareth was particularly well placed to take up this role during the discussions around the resolution on climate change, a topic on which he has much interest and knowledge.

New Zealand co-sponsored a resolution on economy and trade, and was represented by David Clark in the relevant working group. The Japanese delegation approached us prior to the discussions to request that we combine our two resolutions, both to bolster their relative strength and to expedite an agreed text within the group. We agreed to this request, as there was much common ground between the two draft documents, and they
complemented each other well. Our joint resolution received strong support from within the working group from Canada and Australia, along with constructive cooperation from our colleagues from Mexico, Russia and Ecuador. It was then accepted largely unchanged by the Drafting Committee. David is to be commended for the strong leadership and exemplary negotiation skills he displayed in the working group during deliberations that lasted late into the evening.

**Bilateral meetings**
We met with representatives of the National Assembly on Wednesday 14 January. President Rivadeneira had been due to meet with us, but she was unfortunately called away to deal with a private matter.

During the meeting, Ecuador’s legal dispute with the Occidental Petroleum Company was raised. While we were interested to gain an insight into this matter, and to hear the view of the Ecuadorian side, it was not the place of our delegation to comment on matters of international trade law that are currently the subject of ongoing litigation. We can only hope that a mutually agreeable solution is found to resolve this dispute.

We took this opportunity to once again express our sincere gratitude for Ecuador’s gracious hospitality and congratulated it on a highly successful 23rd APPF.

**Conclusions**
The 23rd APPF comprised a full programme of meetings and formal social activities. The New Zealand delegation contributed to all aspects of the Forum, including debate in the plenary, negotiations on draft resolutions in meetings of working groups, and the work of the Drafting Committee throughout. It was my privilege to lead a delegation of experienced and committed members of Parliament, and their contributions to the Forum were a credit to the New Zealand Parliament.
On a personal note, this year marked the eighth occasion that I have led the New Zealand Parliament’s delegation to the APPF. Over that time, I have seen the organisation evolve and streamline its processes and activities into what I consider to be a truly excellent format. It is one that provides an invaluable opportunity for parliamentarians from the Asia-Pacific region to engage and work together to gain an understanding of each other’s perspectives on a wide range of international issues. Participants always welcome the opportunity to establish or renew contacts with elected (or appointed) representatives from delegations attending the APPF. I know from my own experience that these connections endure and will prove valuable for the future as other challenging international issues arise.

Some matters, such as ongoing tension on the Korean Peninsula and territorial disputes in the South China Sea, the perceived value or otherwise of trade liberalisation, as well as the increasingly felt effects of climate change across the region, required diplomatic compromise and recognition of others’ views. However, there was considerable goodwill evident between participants and constructive efforts resulted in resolutions being adopted on all conference topics. I commend the spirit of cooperation displayed by all those who participated in the working groups, and also that of my colleagues on the Drafting Committee.

The warm hospitality of our Ecuadorian hosts was greatly appreciated, and all members of the New Zealand delegation enjoyed our time in Quito.

Lindsay Tisch
Assistant Speaker of the House of Representatives
Appendix 1 – APPF Programme

Sunday, January 11th 2015

00h00 – 24h00 Continued arrival of the international delegations to Mariscal Sucre International Airport in Quito

Location: Mariscal Sucre International Airport

09h00 – 18h00 Continued registration of delegates and participants

Location: Plenary Hall of the National Assembly

15h00 – 16h00 Meeting with the Secretaries of the delegations for delivery of information of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

Location: Bilateral Meetings Room of the National Assembly of Ecuador (second floor)

16h00 – 18h00 Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

Location: Auditorium 1 of the National Assembly of Ecuador (first floor)

18h00 – 19h00 Solemn Opening Session of the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

Agenda

National Anthem of Ecuador

Statement by Hirofumi Nakasone, representing Yasuhiro Nakasone, Honorary President of Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

Welcome speech by Mrs Gabriela Rivadeneira Burbano, President of the National Assembly of Ecuador and President of the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

Location: Nela Martínez Plenary Hall of the National Assembly

Address: Juan Montalvo y Gran Colombia

19h00 – 19h15 Official Photo of the Delegation Heads with the President of the National Assembly of Ecuador

Location: Nela Martínez Plenary Hall of the National Assembly

19h00 – 21h00 Welcome Reception hosted by the President of the National Assembly of Ecuador in honor of the participants and guests of the 23rd Annual Meeting of the APPF

Location: Main Square of the National Assembly
Monday, January 12th 2015

09h00 – 09h15 Inauguration of the Asia Pacific Forum

09h15 – 09h45 Press Conference given by the President of the National Assembly of Ecuador, Mrs Gabriela Rivadeneira Burbano

**Topic:** Politics and Security

**Location:** Nela Martínez Plenary Hall of the National Assembly

10h00 – 10h30 Press Conference of the Executive Committee of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

**Location:** José Mejía Lequerica Hall

10h30 – 11h00 Coffee break

**Location:** Main square of the National Assembly

11h30 – 12h30 Visit to Handcraft Stands

**Location:** José Mejía Lequerica Hall

12h30 – 14h30 Luncheon hosted by the Presidents of the Groups of Friendship and Mutual Cooperation in Ecuador in honor of the International Delegations attending the APPF

**Location:** Pim’s Restaurant at Itchimbía

**Address:** Calle Iquique (No street number)

12h30 – 14h30 Lunch hosted by the President of the National Assembly in honor of the Heads of Delegation participating in the APPF

**Location:** San Francisco Hall, Plaza Grande Hotel

**Address:** García Moreno y Chile

PLENARY SESSIONS – Nela Martínez Plenary Hall

14h30 – 16h30 First plenary session: International situation: Politics and Security

- Strengthening of peace and security in the region
- Cyber-espionage: privacy rights and security of communications.

16h30 – 17h00 Coffee break

17h00 – 18h00 Second plenary session: International Situation: Policies and Security

Alternative policies and new approaches to prevent and combat transnational organized crime and terrorism.
DRAFTING COMMITTEE MEETING – Auditorium 1 of the National Assembly (first floor)

14h30 – 16h30 Drafting Committee Meeting

16h30 – 17h00 Coffee break

17h00 – 18h00 Drafting Committee Meeting

20h00 – 22h00 Reception hosted by the Foreign Minister of Ecuador in honor of the participants and guests of the 23rd Annual Meeting of the APPF

Location: Hall of Heroes, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Address: 10 de Agosto and Carrión

Tuesday, January 13th 2015

PLENARY SESSIONS – Nela Martínez Plenary Hall

09h00 – 11h00 Keynote speech by Mr Ricardo Patiño Aroca, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of the Republic of Ecuador

Topic: Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region

10h00 – 10h30 Coffee break

10h30 – 13h30 Third plenary session: Regional and International Situation: Economy

- Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) 2014: Report by China
- Open and non-exclusive cooperation to encourage the growth of free trade, investment and sustainable development
- Challenges to financing sustainable development with equity: new global financing structure.

13h30 – 15h30 Social lunch with participating delegations of the APPF Forum

Location: Restaurant Hanzo

Address: Paúl Rivet N30–54 y José Ortón

15h30 – 17h30 Fourth plenary session: Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region

- Democratization of organizations (to cooperate for peace, freedom, democracy and economic welfare)
- Preservation and promotion of cultural heritage in the region
- Common legislative framework for social protection and portability of social rights.

17h30 – 18h00 Coffee break
18h00 – 19h00 Fifth plenary session: Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region

- Cooperation in disaster prevention
- Climate change.

DRAFTING COMMITTEE MEETING – Auditorium 1 of the National Assembly (first floor)

09h00 – 11h00 Drafting Committee Meeting

11h00 – 11h30 Coffee break

11h30 – 13h30 Drafting Committee Meeting

13h30 – 15h30 Social lunch with the participating delegations of the APPF

Location: Restaurant Hanzo

Address: Paúl Rivet N30–54 y José Ortón

15h30 – 17h30 Drafting Committee Meeting

17h30 – 18h00 Coffee break

18h00 – 19h00 Drafting Committee Meeting

20h00 – 22h00 Dinner hosted by Mr Gustavo Baroja, Prefect of Pichincha, in honour of the participants and guests of the 23rd Annual Meeting of the APPF

Location: Hotel Rio Amazonas

Address: Av Amazonas y Cordero

Wednesday, January 14th 2015

PLENARY SESSION – Nela Martínez Plenary Hall, National Assembly Building

09h00 – 11h00 Future Work of the APPF

Date and place of the 24th APPF Annual Meeting

11h00 – 11h30 Coffee break

11h30 – 13h30 Final plenary session

- Adoption of resolutions and the joint statement

13h30 – 15h30 Free time for lunch

15h30 – 17h30 Signature of the joint statement by the Heads of Delegation and closing ceremony
• Speech by the delegate of the Organizing Parliament of the 24th Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

• Speech by the President of the National Assembly of Ecuador.

17h30 – 18h00 Coffee break

17h30 – 18h00 Press Conference given by the Executive Committee of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

Location: José Mejía Lequerica Hall of the National Assembly

DRAFTING COMMITTEE – Auditorium 1 of the National Assembly (first floor)

09h00 – 11h00 Drafting Committee Meeting

11h00 – 11h30 Coffee break

11h30 – 13h30 Drafting Committee Meeting

13h30 – 15h30 Free time for lunch

Thursday, January 15th 2015

Departure of delegations from Mariscal Sucre International Airport in Quito
Appendix 2 – Press Release

New Zealand parliamentarians to attend regional parliamentary forum

New Zealand members of Parliament Lindsay Tisch, David Clark and Gareth Hughes will attend the 23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) in Quito, Ecuador next week.

The APPF is a forum for parliamentarians from the Asia-Pacific region who meet on an annual basis to identify and discuss issues of mutual concern, with the aim of strengthening understanding and encouraging regional cooperation. The APPF supports other regional cooperation vehicles such as APEC.

There are 27 member countries, and the discussion agenda focuses on regional political and security matters, economics and trade, and regional cooperation between the member states. All the New Zealand delegates hope to deliver speeches over the course of the event, and New Zealand is also sponsoring a draft resolution supporting trade in the region.

The Speaker of the House, Rt Hon David Carter, said New Zealand’s attendance at the APPF is a valuable opportunity for the participating parliamentarians and of wider benefit to New Zealand.

“Inter-parliamentary relationships strengthen New Zealand’s international profile, build links between nations, and provide opportunities for New Zealand parliamentarians to engage on the global stage.

“The APPF is a well-established international organisation that contributes to matters of regional importance, including supporting the work of APEC. I am confident that the New Zealand Parliament will be well represented by our delegates at the upcoming deliberations in Ecuador.”

The APPF is taking place from 11 to 15 January.
1. WELCOME TO THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO THE 23RD ASIA PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
Ms Gabriela Rivadeneira, President of the 23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, and President of the National Assembly of Ecuador gives the most cordial welcome to the delegates members of the Executive Committee and at the same time to all delegations.

2. RESULTS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE FORUM
Ms Gabriela Rivadeneira, President of the 23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, and President of the National Assembly of Ecuador, said that there were officially 268 participants from 17 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, in the same way explained that there are 41 draft resolutions to be discussed at the Forum; all of which reflect the concerns in the region are diverse and therefore need a collective treatment.

On the other hand, she stated that the resolutions of the Ecuadorian delegation are the fruit of the confluence of ideals and thoughts that have emerged from the social struggles, one of them is the “good living”.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Cambodia: SPPD Cheang Chairman of the Committee on International Relations, International Cooperation, Information and Media
Chile: Marco Antonio Núñez Solano Deputy Head of the Delegation
China: H. E. Zhang Baowen Vice-president of the Committee of the Assembly of the People’s Republic of China
Indonesia: H. E. Fadli Zon Vice Chairman of the House of Representatives
Japan: Takuji Yanagimoto Parliamentarian of the House of Counsellors
New Zealand: Lindsay Tisch
Korea: Lee Jin Bok
Canada: Leonard Michael Wallace Member of Parliament
Australia: Bronwyn Bishop Speaker of the House of Representatives of Australia

4. DESIGNATION OF NEW REGIONAL MEMBERS
Ms Gabriela Rivadeneira, President of the 23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, and President of the National Assembly of Ecuador, said that, in accordance with the regulations of the APPF, next shall be the designation of the new regional members of the Executive Committee; thus this year the positions are renewed according to the northeast Asia subregion and to the subregion of the Americas.

In the case of northeast Asia there is a rule of succession that indicates that the members are replaced in alphabetical order, in this sense it corresponds to Mongolia be integrated as a member of the committee. On the other hand, in the subregion of the Americas, the countries have not yet designated who will take the position that is currently held by Chile; so any news will be informed during the closing session of the Forum.
5. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT ON THE AGENDA OF THE ANNUAL MEETING
Ms Gabriela Rivadeneira, President of the 23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, and President of the National Assembly of Ecuador, exposes, for subsequent approval, the agenda to be approved by the Executive Committee.

AGENDA
Regional and International Situation: Politics and Security
- Strengthening peace and security in the region.
- Cyber-espionage: rights to privacy and security of communications.
- Alternative policies and new approaches to prevent and combat transnational organized crime and terrorism.
Regional and International Situation: Economy
- Open and non-exclusive cooperation to promote the growth of free trade, investment and sustainable development.
- Challenges for the financing of sustainable development in equity: new structure of global funding.
Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
- Democratization of the organizations (to cooperate towards peace, freedom, democracy and economic welfare).
- Preservation and promotion of cultural heritage in the region.
- Common legislative framework for the social protection and the portability of social rights.
- Cooperation in disaster prevention.
- Climate Change.
Future work of the APPF
- Date and place of the 24th Annual Meeting APPF.

6. LIST OF RESOLUTIONS TO BE PRESENTED AT THE FORUM
Ms Gabriela Rivadeneira, President of the 23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, and President of the National Assembly of Ecuador, said that the resolutions presented above are being analyzed by the different working groups, the same shall be approved at the Drafting Committee, which is currently appearing. She also stressed that it is important that all countries have proposed different resolutions, therefore there will be no drawbacks in the working groups.

The delegate from China expresses that those resolutions currently can be set to not generate disadvantages within the working groups should be discussed.

Ms Gabriela Rivadeneira, President of the 23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, and President of the National Assembly of Ecuador, says that simple resolutions enter directly into the Drafting Committee; however, those more complex will be discussed within the various working groups and subsequently enter into the Drafting Committee.
7. WORK METHODOLOGY OF THE 23RD FORUM APPF
Continuing with the methodological clarification Ms Gabriela Rivadeneira, President of the 23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, and President of the National Assembly of Ecuador, exposes that there will be 4 axis of debate with 9 sub-themes and 10 working groups scattered among all the participating delegations in accordance with its resolutions.

The delegation of Indonesia requested the inclusion of a resolution within the committee that had been formally submitted, the leader of the delegation said that this had not been submitted earlier by a technical error on the part of the same. This is approved without any inconvenience within the committee. It was pointed out that the delegation of Fiji has ceased to be a member of the APPF; it should be emphasized that Ecuador never was formally notified of this particular. Even Ecuador never received an excuse of participation of the event.

8. CANDIDACY DRAFTING COMMITTEE
Ms Gabriela Rivadeneira, President of the 23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, and President of the National Assembly of Ecuador, proposes Assemblyman Fernando Bustamante as chairman of the Committee for Drafting the 23rd APPF Forum, the same was accepted unanimously.

9. NEXT MEETING OF THE ASIA PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
Ms Gabriela Rivadeneira, President of the 23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, and President of the National Assembly of Ecuador, gave the floor to the official delegate of the Parliament of Canada, which made a count of all logistical aspects that are being developed in Vancouver, for the 24th Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum.
Appendix 4 – Speech by Lindsay Tisch MP

23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

Quito, Ecuador

12 January 2015

Lindsay Tisch MP, National Party, New Zealand

New Zealand’s security and prosperity depends on international security and the willingness of other countries to respect international rules.

Multilateralism remains an important anchor internationally, as the system provides an essential vehicle for small countries, like New Zealand, to progress agendas.

New Zealand’s successful campaign last October for a seat on the United Nations Security Council will give New Zealand a voice on major decisions regarding peace and security in the international forum.

As a founding member of the UN, New Zealand’s respect for the rule of international laws is fundamental to New Zealand’s approach to promoting security, stability and peace. While New Zealand’s borders are distant from direct conflict, there are fragile states within the Asia-Pacific region. The threats of terrorism, arms proliferation, transnational crime and economic and environmental degradation show no respect for international rules. New Zealand takes a multi-layered approach to security that includes strong bilateral relationships and regional partnerships.

The security threats that countries face in the region continue to evolve as a result of both internal and external factors. One consistent external catalyst for change is the rapid growth of technology and its use by criminal groups.

The rise of ISIL, the Islamic State of Iraq, and the Levant, which is a well-resourced, globally focused terrorist entity, highly skilled in recruitment techniques using social media, is a game changer for many countries, including New Zealand.

ISIL is fuelling conflict and attracting significant numbers of foreign terrorist fighters.

Last month, December 2014, New Zealand introduced legislation focusing on our ability to manage the threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters.

The issue is a fast evolving threat and is currently the ‘top priority’ for the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service.

The objective of the new legislation provides statutory powers to the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service to:

- investigate and monitor suspected and returning foreign terrorist fighters and other violent extremists; and
- restrict and disrupt the ability of foreign terrorist fighters to travel to conflict zones.
There are a number of New Zealanders inspired by ISIL activities who may already be fighting offshore and interested in travelling for the purpose of fighting or:

- have returned from fighting with ISIL in Syria or Iraq
- are supporting others through funding, contacts or resources.

The actual number of New Zealanders engaged in foreign conflicts or looking to travel to areas of conflict is modest, but the figures are significant and relative to our size and do represent a real step change for us.

The new legislation ensures New Zealand fulfils its obligations under United Nations Resolution 2178 and adds additional mechanisms by restricting and disrupting travel by cancelling passports and giving our Intelligence Service the ability to carry out surveillance of suspicious persons for 24 hours, but without a warrant to do so.

This only applies for 24 hours, after which time a warrant to carry on surveillance must be obtained.

The legislation is very proscriptive and robust, and will be constantly monitored and scrutinised.

Shortly New Zealand will be hosting the Cricket World Cup and the FIFA Under 20 Soccer (Football) World Cup.

The legislation gives a degree of comfort for these two international events.

The tragedies that have occurred in Canada and Australia and more recently in France highlight the need to be proactive and vigilant.

New Zealand has done this. This is our first line of defence and our insurance policy which hopefully we will never need.

We take National Security obligations very seriously and our primary role is to protect New Zealanders at home, at work and at play.

Lindsay Tisch MP

New Zealand
Appendix 5 – Speech by David Clark MP

23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

Quito, Ecuador

12 January 2015

Dr David Clark MP, Labour Party, New Zealand

Madam Chair, honourable delegates and observers of the 23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum:

May I first thank our hosts – Ecuador – for their warm welcome.

It is a privilege and a pleasure to have this opportunity to address you on the matter of the economy in the Asia-Pacific region.

I have always believed that markets are powerful. They make excellent servants, and terrifying masters. I believe our challenge as parliamentarians building relationships between countries is to create stronger domestic and international institutions that support appropriately regulated international markets.

In a globalised world, our futures are intertwined. We are dependent upon one another for our future security, liberty, peace and prosperity.

To create the conditions in which we all can enhance the well-being of our respective populations, we must first create the conditions for strengthening and maintaining the rule of law, to ensure societies free from corruption. This is a precondition for happy and healthy populations engaging in profitable commerce.

Another key plank in ensuring the conditions for prosperity – within and between nations – is a path to reducing disparities in wealth.

Where disparities in wealth become too great, social mobility is reduced; distinct and irreversible socio-economic groupings emerge. From this follows suspicion that the rule of law acts in the interests only of those who can ‘afford’ its services. And with no prospect of accessing ‘fair treatment’ civil unrest often follows.

The thesis that inequality harms population outcomes – for developed countries at least – is supported by a growing body of academic literature.

And there is a close link between income – and population health, criminality, education, life expectancy, and other outcomes.

Part of the riddle lies in the shared interest of socio-economically homogenous populations.

The prosperity of nations is in part dependent upon access to infrastructure that everyone needs but few can afford on their own. Shared investment in shared infrastructure is not begrudged by anyone when it benefits all citizens. Communal funding of hospitals, schools, clean running water, roads, police forces and courts is happily and willingly supported when these services produce fair and equitable outcomes for the entire population. Not all nations will choose to fund these things via the state, but the principle of fair and equitable access to these services remains paramount – if prosperity is to ensue.
A state with improving rule of law and a population reasonably able to believe in a growing and shared prosperity becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy – where international trade opportunities and institutions support this goal.

Participants in international fora such as this one must look to protect their own nation’s interests, but equally, they should be strongly incentivised to concern themselves with creating the institutions that provide reasonable financial security to all nations.

Free capital flows provide opportunities for growth, but also carry risks too infrequently acknowledged. The Asian financial crisis and the struggles of Argentina in recent decades illustrate well the maxim that foreign investment is like an umbrella willingly loaned to any country – until it begins to rain.

If development is to be sustainable, countries must have insurance that mitigates the most damaging effects of market surges and mood swings. Our current global financing institutions are weak in this regard.

Confidence to open economies to trade grows – where the upsides are demonstrable and the downsides mitigated.

And so we all come to the table to discuss trade and it is encouraging that so many proposals for cooperation across our region are on the table.

New Zealand’s draft resolution promoting economic partnership and free trade calls upon member countries and concerned regions to continue to make efforts toward realisation of a Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP), as a means not only to further promote regional economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region, but also to complement and strengthen the multilateral trading system centred on the WTO in a transparent and globally beneficial way.

Other regional integration initiatives like the Trans Pacific Partnership may offer similar prosperity benefits if agreements are signed by nation states that share the benefits of trade fairly amongst their citizenry, have strong institutions to protect the rule of law – and are accompanied and supported by democratic global institutions that serve and protect the interests of all member countries.

We are all connected. When China’s economy sneezes, United States stock markets catch a cold.

In summary, we must – each nation – take responsibility for ensuring the conditions for growing well-being and prosperity in our own country are created (greater equality, strong rule of law). We must of course – each nation – ensure our own national interest is protected as we negotiate steps toward truly free and open trade in our region. And we must collectively – every nation – look to ensure the international institutions that support confidence in trade are strengthened.

Thank you delegates.
Appendix 6 – Speech by Gareth Hughes MP

23rd Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

Quito, Ecuador

12 January 2015

Gareth Hughes MP, Green Party, New Zealand

A climate of global cooperation

Mr Chairman, and colleagues from the Asia-Pacific region:

In the recent joint US–China statement on climate change the two countries said “Both sides recognise that, given the latest scientific understanding of accelerating climate change and the urgent need to intensify global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, forceful, nationally appropriate action including large scale cooperation is more critical than ever.”

Global cooperation on climate change is the theme of my address to you today.

The Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum was founded in 1993 as a body to encourage and enhance cooperation between nations and this year, in Quito, Ecuador we have an important opportunity to continue cooperating to address the greatest environmental challenge of our time.

I am Gareth Hughes, a third term Green MP from the New Zealand Parliament and my background is in climate campaigning. A career highlight for me was organising New Zealand’s largest ever climate campaign where around 10% of the New Zealand population joined our campaign in the weeks and months before the Copenhagen climate summit. Now, six years on, the international community can learn the lessons of that summit as we go into the 2015 Paris climate summit.

Six years on, the science screams urgency. We are seeing the impacts of global warming in the increase in global temperatures, melting glaciers and icepacks, and increase in extreme weather events.

The impacts could be in the magnitude of 5–20% of international GDP and millions of lives.

As emissions are inexorably increasing so is the global movement for action.

The international community, most recently at the Lima climate summit, have recommitted to the two degree target and no new net emissions by 2050.

Six years on from Copenhagen I am optimistic for the success of Paris. We have seen the US–China and now US–India statements, progress at Durban and Lima and real action be it in the phenomenal growth of renewable energies, climate laws and strategies in nations as diverse as the UK, Mexico and Nigeria and carbon pricing in nations like New Zealand.
At Paris the world community has the chance to come together, to cooperate and to prosper by addressing our greatest collective challenge.

At Paris, it is essential we cooperate to ensure ambitious action before and after 2020, a strong legal framework and clear rules, a central role for equity, and finance for adaptation and transition.

We can cooperate to address this threat but also to jointly prosper in a low carbon world. Data shows there are four times or more jobs in areas like clean energy than in fossil fuels. The technology to reduce emissions is available, affordable and eminently desirable.

In summary, at this global gathering we can recommit to global solutions to this most global of problems. As our nations’ parliamentarians about to submit individual country emission reduction targets we have a challenge, a responsibility and an opportunity to work together cooperatively, constructively and positively to protect the climate our planet depends on.
Appendix 7 – Resolution 7

23rd Annual Meeting
Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum

Sponsored by: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, Mexico, Russia and Ecuador

ECONOMY AND TRADE

Noting the Resolution on Economy and Trade which was adopted in the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum in January 2014, the “G20 Leaders’ Communiqué” of the G20 Brisbane Summit in November 2014, and the outcome of the 22nd APEC Economic Leaders Meeting in November 2014;

Affirming that the world economy as a whole is experiencing a weak recovery and that pressures on the financial system pose downside risks;

Reconfirming that our priority task is supporting sustainable and balanced economic growth both in the region and the world as a whole and ensuring the effectiveness of the international financial regulatory and supervisory system;

Confirming some protectionist measures in trade and investment can negatively influence the world economy, at a time of heightened tensions and significant downside risks for the global economy;

Welcoming each country’s commitment toward realizing stability of growth, employment and financial markets in international meetings such as the G20 Summit and the APEC Economic Leaders Meeting;

Recognizing that the ultimate end of economic development must be the improved well-being of all people and the need to promote sustainable development and overcome problems such as poverty, exclusion, social inequality, food security and environmental pollution;

Recognizing the need for a people-centered approach to international development;

Supportive of recent governments reform efforts in the international financial institutions.

RESOLVES TO:

1. Urge Parliaments of APPF Member States to the extent of their legislative powers to carry out an ongoing assessment of international trade instruments, with a view to promote equality of opportunities within and between Member States;

2. Call upon countries to continue to implement effective fiscal and financial policies in order to respond to downside risks and ensure the stability of economies and employment;

3. Call upon the APPF Member States concerned to implement the individual and collective infrastructure investment, competition, trade and employment policy actions and
other structural reforms as outlined in the G20 Brisbane Action Plan to achieve an additional 2% global growth by 2018;

4. **Encourage** the Parliaments of the region to promote the exchange of practices and experiences in matters of cooperation and sustainable development, focused on strengthening the different national legislation in these fields;

5. **Confirm** that Member States should exchange views on the occasion of the annual meetings of the APPF aiming at policy co-ordination in the region, and continue to oversee policy in each country in order to correct imbalances in economies and monetary and financial markets and thus ensure their soundness;

6. **Encourage** APPF Member States to commit themselves to the fight against negative protectionism measures and to complete the Doha Round negotiations in order to facilitate economic growth through free trade and investment;

7. **Reaffirm** the commitment made in the Bogor Declaration which was adopted by the APEC Leaders in 1994, to achieving the long-term goal of free and open trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region, recognize significant progress toward achieving the goal, and hope for the full achievement of the goal by all APEC economies by 2020;

8. **Call upon** all the economies within APEC and those who wish to take part to continue taking concrete steps toward realization of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) initiated at the 22nd APEC Economic Leaders Meeting in November 2014 as a means not only to further promote regional economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region, but also to complement and to strengthen the multilateral trading system based on the WTO in a transparent and globally beneficial way;

9. **Affirm** that the recent announcement by EAS leaders of the launch of negotiations towards a Regional Closer Economic Partnership current efforts is an important step in this direction along with other regional economic integration processes including the Trans Pacific Partnership;

10. **Emphasize** that efforts toward the realization of trade liberalization according to national regulations and economic integration ought to be made and the need to facilitate such activities as improvement of trade rules related to intellectual property rights and investment, implementation of good practices of regulation, food security and environmental protection;

11. **Foster** a democratic knowledge based economy that provides opportunities for technical and scientific capability construction within an environment that favors innovation, regional connectivity and respect towards intellectual property rights, through collaboration among government and academia;

12. **Encourage** APPF members to foster the participation of small and medium enterprises, and social and solidarity economic organizations, in regional markets and invest in human capital development;
13. **Encourage** businesses to utilize bilateral and regional trade agreements and Member States to explain the benefits and opportunities they provide through domestic outreach programs.

Quito, January 14th, 2015
THE 23RD ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE ASIA PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

1. The twenty-third annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, held from 10 to 15 January 2015 in Quito - Ecuador. Gabriela Rivadeneira Burbano, President of the National Assembly of Ecuador convened the forum in which 187 delegates from 17 member states of the Asia Pacific participated. The list of participating delegations is attached to this statement.

2. The Executive Committee of the Forum meeting in the National Assembly of Ecuador on January 11, 2015 resolved to approve the Agenda and Work Programme of the Annual Meeting. The report of the Executive Committee is appended to this statement.

3. The solemn opening session was held on Sunday January 11, 2015, and began with the Delegate of the Honorary President of the Parliamentary Forum, Takuji Yanagimoto, MP in the House of Councillors of Japan, who referred to the Ecuador hospitality and thanked the host for organizing the twenty-third Annual Meeting. The interventions of the formal session closed with the speech of President Gabriela Rivadeneira, who welcomed the delegations and highlighted the potential of the Asia Pacific region to build bridges to sustain the development of the region.

4. The first session of the forum was convened by Mrs. Gabriela Rivadeneira Burbano President of the forum. This session began with the reading of the rules of the twenty-third annual meeting that were approved at the Executive Committee meeting on Sunday, January 11. Subsequently, the Forum Chairperson delivered a lecture on Politics and Security in the Region, where the multidimensional vision of security was highlighted, seeking to build new centers of action and integration, to secure peace; in turn, noted the importance of thinking about security from a comprehensive vision that places human beings at the center of the actions and responsibilities of the State.
5. During the discussion within the forum of Politics and Security in the region, major issues related to the strengthening of multilateral relations the establishing of a multipolar world, friendly and tolerant mutual respect of nations were treated, the responsibilities of parliaments to take action to ensure security of its citizens. Parliamentarians are convinced of the need to prevent the violation of human rights and state sovereignty. All terrorist attacks were condemned and participants found common agreement to ensure more confidence in the region.

6. The Second Plenary Session on Economy: Regional and International Situation began with the participation of economist Ricardo Patiño Aroca, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador who highlighted the need to build a new financial architecture for the region. The speeches made by MPs, focused on the importance of regional cooperation, and the way the economy should be an instrument for the development of human beings, in accordance with the various models adopted by countries.

7. The Third Plenary Session, turned on the Future of Asia Pacific, where important considerations about the responsibilities of countries in the region to strengthen its position as a central actor in international politics were drawn, recalling that strategic goals are economic, and, above all, linked to ensure the welfare of a vast and diverse population.

8. In parallel to the plenary sessions, ten working groups discussed submitted resolutions and sought consensus on a wide variety of topics. Resolutions were then forwarded to the Drafting Committee for consideration and determination as to which resolutions would be put to the Plenary Session. The text of these eighteen resolutions is attached to this statement.
Australia

Kingdom of Cambodia

Canada

Republic of Chile

People’s Republic of China

Republic of Ecuador

Republic of Indonesia

Japan
Republic of Korea
Malaysia

Mexico
Federated States of Micronesia

New Zealand
Russian Federation

Republic of Singapore
Socialist Republic of Vietnam

GABRIELA RIVADENEIRA BURBAÑO
PRESIDENT OF THE ASIA PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
Report of the New Zealand Delegation to the 132nd Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, Hanoi, Viet Nam and bilateral visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia

25 March – 2 April 2015

Hon Annette King
Head of Delegation

Fifty-first Parliament

Presented to the House of Representatives
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Report of the New Zealand Delegation to the 132nd Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, Hanoi, Viet Nam and bilateral visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia

25 March – 2 April 2015

Background

New Zealand is an active member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and I am the permanent delegate to Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assemblies for the 51st Parliament and chair the national group. I led the New Zealand Parliament’s delegation to the 132nd IPU Assembly, the first time I have done so.

The New Zealand delegation to the 132nd Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly in Hanoi, Viet Nam comprised:

- Hon Annette King MP, Head of Delegation
- Melissa Lee MP
- Denis O’Rourke MP
- Wendy Hart, secretary to the delegation.

The delegation was in Viet Nam from 27 March to 2 April, following on from a parliamentary visit to Cambodia on 26 March.

We were very pleased to have the opportunity to visit both Cambodia and Viet Nam during 2015, a year in which we celebrate 40 years of New Zealand’s formal engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) grouping of ten economically, culturally, and politically diverse Southeast Asian nations in our neighbourhood. We enjoy warm and growing ties with Viet Nam and Cambodia, and we extend our thanks for their gracious hospitality.
Introduction to the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Established in 1889, the IPU is the international organisation of parliaments of sovereign states. It is a centre for parliamentary dialogue and diplomacy among legislators representing a wide range of ideological, economic and social systems. Through resolutions and reports, the IPU expresses its views and the positions of the world parliamentary community on issues of international interest, with the aim of bringing about parliamentary action. The IPU works for peace and cooperation among peoples, the defence and promotion of human rights and the firm establishment of representative democracy. It also supports the efforts of, and works in close cooperation with, the United Nations (UN) (whose objectives it shares) and provides a parliamentary dimension to UN work. It also cooperates with regional inter-parliamentary organisations, as well as with like-minded international, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Currently 166 national parliaments are members of the IPU (a list of members is attached as Appendix 1). Ten regional parliamentary assemblies are associate members. Most members are affiliated to one or more of the six geopolitical groups that are currently active in the IPU, which are: African, Arab, Asia-Pacific, Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Twelve Plus.

The IPU is consistently active in its work to promote representative democracy throughout the world through workshops, committee visits and reports, and the biannual Assembly. Its main areas of activity are:

- representative democracy
- international peace and security
- sustainable development
- human rights and humanitarian law
- women in politics; and
- education, science and culture.

The Assembly

The Assembly is the principal statutory body for expressing the views of the IPU on political issues. These are held twice a year in spring and autumn, usually alternating venues between Geneva, where the IPU secretariat is based, and a member country.

Delegations from the parliaments of 128 countries took part in the 132nd Assembly. Three non-member countries attended as observers with a view to future affiliation: Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, and Nauru.

Of the 1,370 delegates who attended the Assembly, 678 were members of parliament. Those parliamentarians included 45 Presiding Officers, 46 Deputy Presiding Officers and 189 women (27.8 per cent).

The Assembly comprises meetings of the following parts of the IPU:

- the plenary session of the Assembly (attended by all delegates), which has a general debate on a particular theme, debates an emergency item and holds panel discussions on particular subjects
- the Governing Council, which is the policy-making body of the IPU, and consists of two or three delegates from each member country
- ad hoc committees established by the Governing Council
- standing committees, which debate and draft resolutions on chosen topics; and
six geopolitical groups.

The agenda of the 132nd Assembly is attached as Appendix 2 and the various Assembly sessions are discussed later in this report.

Our delegation attended and participated in the following sessions:

- Governing Council and the election of the President of the IPU
- Election of President and Vice-Presidents of the 132nd Assembly
- Consideration of possible requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
- Debate on the emergency item
- General Debate – *The Sustainable Development Goals: Turning Words into Action*
- Standing Committee on Peace and International Security
- Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade
- Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights
- Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs
- Meeting of Women Parliamentarians
- Meetings of the Twelve Plus Group and Asia-Pacific Group
- Meeting of Secretaries and Advisors to Delegations.

**Governing Council**

The Governing Council (the Council) is composed of mixed gender delegations of three parliamentarians from each parliament. It met twice during the Assembly and dealt with the following matters:

- membership and Permanent Observers
- financial results for 2014
- financial situation
- cooperation with the United Nations system
- implementation of the IPU Strategy 2012–2017
- recent specialised meetings
- reports of plenary bodies and specialised committees
- future inter-parliamentary meetings
- amendments to the Statutes and Rules.

At its sitting on 29 March, the Governing Council was informed that there were no new applications for membership and no requests for observer status. The total membership therefore remained unchanged at 166.

At its second sitting on 1 April, the Council heard and endorsed a recommendation of the Executive Committee regarding the transitional parliaments in Burkina Faso and Thailand. It urged the two countries to adhere to their roadmap on the return to democracy and looked forward to welcoming the new parliaments by the time of the 134th Assembly.

The Council also received the Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for 2014 and the consolidated budget proposal for 2015. The Council received an overview of the IPU’s financial situation at 31 January 2015 and noted that the financial position remained sound. New Zealand’s contribution for 2015 (based on the United Nations scale of assessment) is 44,400 Swiss francs.
Cooperation with the United Nations system

The IPU’s interaction with the United Nations and its Member States in the context of the global talks on the post-2015 development agenda was particularly highlighted at the Council’s sittings. The outcome document of the 132nd IPU Assembly, the Hanoi Declaration, would constitute a major contribution to the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, and to the UN Summit in September 2015. The Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter, is a member of the preparatory committee for the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, an important role in ensuring the views of New Zealand and the wider Pacific Region are included in the dialogue.

The Council was informed of progress in drafting the new Cooperation Agreement between the United Nations and the IPU, as requested by IPU Members and the UN General Assembly. In addition to work done by the Sub-Committee on the future Cooperation Agreement, a first draft had been circulated to all Member Parliaments in advance of the 132nd Assembly. Amendments and other inputs from several parliaments (Australia, Bahrain, Burundi, Croatia, Germany, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand and Sudan) had been reviewed by the Sub-Committee, and subsequently endorsed by the Executive Committee. The input from New Zealand highlighted the need for the text to emphasise a strategic partnership between the two organisations, with reference to the principles of comity and mutual respect.

At its second sitting on 1 April, the Council endorsed the new text that would serve as the basis for consultations with the United Nations. Members would be briefed on further progress in negotiations on the Cooperation Agreement at the 133rd IPU Assembly in October 2015.

Emergency Item

At each Assembly, a topic is selected for emergency consideration and a resolution is drafted on that topic. Any member of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. Eight requests were received. These were:

Left: Melissa Lee MP speaks to media at the Assembly about the role of women parliamentarians.
• Ensuring enhanced protection for the cultural heritage of humanity threatened with destruction or pilage by terrorist groups in the Middle East and North Africa: The role of the IPU and national parliaments, proposed by Morocco;

• Respect for religions and religious symbols, and for freedom of opinion and expression, proposed by Jordan;

• Addressing the criminal activity of Boko Haram: The role of parliamentarians, proposed by Chad;

• The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in addressing the terrorism and extremism of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Nusra Front and other terrorist groups, proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic;

• The role of the IPU in the face of attempts to violate the sovereignty and right to self-determination of Venezuela, proposed by Venezuela;

• The role of parliaments in combating the negative effects of climate change, proposed by Kenya;

• The role of parliaments in combating all terrorist acts perpetrated by organizations such as Daesh and Boko Haram against innocent civilians, in particular women and girls, proposed by Australia and Belgium;

• The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Member Parliaments in combating terrorism and protecting the common heritage of humanity, proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran with the support of the Asia-Pacific Group.

The delegations of Morocco, Jordan and Venezuela withdrew their proposals before the vote. The delegation of Kenya withdrew its proposal and asked that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade.

The Assembly held a roll-call vote on the final list of four items. New Zealand supported the joint proposal of Australia and Belgium, which was adopted and added to the agenda. We were of the view that it is incumbent on all parliaments to condemn acts of terrorism and violence, and to actively work to protect its most vulnerable citizens, namely women, children and the elderly. We have also witnessed in alarming numbers the recruitment of children and young people to carry out acts of violence. The delegations of Cambodia, Uganda and the United Arab Emirates regretted that the resolution did not refer sufficiently to young people, who were the social group most vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist groups. They suggested that a consultative mechanism be established to ensure that the Forum of Young Parliamentarians make inputs to future resolutions.

The debate on the emergency item was held on the morning of Monday, 30 March, with Mr P Burke of Ireland in the chair. Twelve speakers took the floor during the debate. Speakers reaffirmed the urgent need to counter terrorism, which was affecting the lives of many innocent people, in particular women and children. Many expressed horror at the mass murders, kidnappings and brutal executions carried out by terrorist groups.

The Assembly adopted unanimously the resolution on the emergency item at its sitting on 31 March. The full text of the resolution is included as Appendix 5.

General Debate

Delegates took to the floor of the Assembly over three days to debate the topic of “The Sustainable Development Goals: Turning words into actions”. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a proposed set of goals and targets relating to future international development. The SDGs were first formally discussed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 (Rio+20).
They are to replace the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that expire at the end of 2015.

The United Nations is working with governments, civil society and other partners to build on the momentum generated by the MDGs and carry on with an ambitious post-2015 sustainable development agenda. The proposed goals would fully integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions, with poverty eradication as a central theme. National consultations with local stakeholders have been held in more than 60 countries. The draft prepared by the Open Working Group contained 17 goals and 169 targets. The new SDGs are expected to be formally adopted by UN Member States at the Special Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2015.

The IPU and its Member Parliaments bring a comprehensive parliamentary perspective and have been emphasising the critical role of parliamentarians in holding governments to account in their implementation of the SDGs.

Representatives from 101 Member Parliaments took part in the General Debate, including New Zealand. The General Debate was introduced with keynote addresses by Ms Tong Thi Phong, Vice Chairperson of the National Assembly of Viet Nam, Ms A J Mohammed, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Post-2015 Development Planning, and the IPU President, Mr Saber Chowdhury.

I spoke on the need for the SDGs to be targeted, holistic and future focused. If the road map is too complicated and goals conflict with each other, rather than being complementary, we will risk not achieving the new agenda. I also suggest that we must put children at the centre of the new agenda, if we are to get away from the cyclical nature of poverty, disenfranchisement and discord. My address to the General Debate is attached as Appendix 3.
The Hanoi Declaration

At its final sitting in the afternoon of 1 April, the Assembly had before it the results of the work of the Standing Committees, as well as the Hanoi Declaration – the outcome of the General Debate, Sustainable Development Goals: Turning Words into Action.

The President added that the Hanoi Declaration, adopted unanimously by the Assembly, would constitute a significant contribution to both the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and the UN Summit in September 2015. He called on all parliaments to translate the Hanoi Declaration into action, by committing to take measures to attain the SDGs. The declaration is attached as Appendix 4.

First Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

The Standing Committee held four sittings from 29 to 31 March, with its President, Mr J R Tau (South Africa), in the chair. Melissa Lee MP participated in this committee.

The committee considered an explanatory memorandum and draft resolution, entitled Cyber warfare: A serious threat to peace and global security, jointly prepared by the co-Rapporteurs from Morocco and Uruguay. It also received proposed amendments from member parliaments and the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians.

At its first sitting, the committee discussed the explanatory memorandum and draft resolution, which were presented by the co-Rapporteurs. A total of 32 speakers took the floor during the discussion. The Standing Committee then went on to consider the proposed amendments to the draft in two plenary sittings. At its morning sitting on 31 March, the Standing Committee adopted the consolidated draft by consensus. Reservations were expressed by the delegations of Cuba and Venezuela around the term “cyber warfare” itself.

The draft resolution was submitted to the Assembly at its plenary sitting in the afternoon of 1 April and adopted by consensus.

Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade held three sittings on 29, 30 and 31 March with its President, Mr R León (Chile), in the chair. Denis O’Rourke MP participated in this committee.

The committee considered 70 proposed amendments to the resolution entitled Shaping a new system of water governance: Promoting parliamentary action on water from Member Parliaments and the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. The Standing Committee’s deliberations culminated in the acceptance of some of the proposed amendments and the approval of the consolidated draft resolution in its entirety. Mr O’Rourke queried one amendment around the disproportionate impact on women and children; noting that in his view water scarcity was an issue that affected all people equally.

Having approved the resolution, the Standing Committee held a discussion on Follow-up on the IPU water governance resolution: Taking it forward. Delegates from 21 countries took the floor, highlighting the importance of the IPU resolution as an important trigger for parliamentary action on the issue of water in the context of a global push to manage water supplies in a more responsible and sustainable manner. They agreed that the resolution provided a solid framework for each parliament to build on. Delegations were urged to
bring the resolution to the attention of their parliaments and thereby further enhance awareness of the important points covered in that document.

At its final sitting on 31 March, the committee agreed on the proposal for its next subject item, *Ensuring lasting protection against destruction and deterioration for the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of humanity*.

**Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights**

The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights held four sittings between 30 March and 1 April, with its President, Ms F Naderi (Afghanistan), in the chair. I attended this committee and assumed a role as a member on the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, for a term ending in March 2017.

At its first sitting, the committee finalised the resolution on *International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights*, resuming its work on the basis of the text from the last Assembly. The President, accompanied by the co-Rapporteurs, Mr A J Ahmad (United Arab Emirates) and Mr P Mahoux (Belgium), noted that the Standing Committee had held an extensive debate and examined the amendments to the draft resolution at the 131st Assembly and no new amendments could be introduced. At the final sitting of the Assembly on 1 April, the President of the Standing Committee presented the resolution for adoption by the Assembly. She informed the Assembly of the reservations formulated by the five delegations in the Standing Committee, and proposed that those reservations be reflected in the official records of the Assembly. The President of the Assembly declared, with these reservations recorded, that the resolution had been adopted by consensus.

On 31 March, the Committee held a debate to review progress since the adoption of the 2012 IPU resolution on *Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children*. At its last sitting on 1 April, the Committee also held an interactive debate to mark the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, entitled *The Convention on the Rights of the Child 25 years on: Are children’s lives better?*

The Committee agreed that it would examine the draft resolution on *Democracy in the digital era and the threat to privacy and individual freedoms* at the next Assembly. A preparatory debate for the next resolution took place on 1 April.

**Fourth Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs**

The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs held three sittings, one on 29 March and two on 31 March 2015, with its Vice-President, Mr El Hassan Al Amin (Sudan), in the chair. Melissa Lee participated in this committee.

At its first sitting, the committee held an interactive debate to mark the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. The session was opened with a keynote address by Mr L Montiel, Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and contributions from two panellists, Ms B Bishop, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Australia, and Mr M Tommasoli, Permanent Observer of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) to the United Nations. The Standing Committee discussed whether the United Nations remained as relevant today as when it had been founded in 1945. It concluded that it was, in fact, more important than ever, given the many challenges facing the world, which could not be overcome by individual States acting in isolation.
We were particularly interested in discussions around United Nations Security Council reform, which New Zealand supports, including a restraint on the veto power that should not be used to advance the national interests of permanent members.

At the Standing Committee’s second sitting, Mr D Dawson (Canada) moderated a review of IPU field missions to examine interaction between United Nations country teams and national parliaments.

At its third sitting, the Standing Committee heard how their parliaments would mainstream the SDGs. Participants in the session contributed to discussion on the benefits and drawbacks of various initiatives to ensure that parliaments were fit for purpose to implement the post-2015 United Nations development agenda.

**Meeting of Women Parliamentarians**

The 21st Meeting of Women Parliamentarians took place on 28 March 2015. It was attended by 93 delegates from 67 countries, including New Zealand, and representatives of various international organisations. Melissa Lee and I attended the meeting. Ms Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Viet Nam, was elected President of the Meeting. The Speaker of the National Assembly of Viet Nam and the President of the IPU welcomed the participants and congratulated the meeting on its 30th anniversary.

The work of the two most recent sessions of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians was summarised. Speaker Kadaga of Uganda presented the report of the Gender Partnership Group. The group reviewed the composition of the delegations present at the 132nd IPU Assembly. Of the 675 parliamentary delegates present, 189 (27.8 per cent) were women, the lowest in four years. The group noted that the average proportion of women at IPU meetings was stagnating below 30 per cent and discussed how to enhance women’s participation at the IPU.

In its review of parliaments with few or no women members, the group noted that five parliamentary chambers currently had no women members. Three were in the Pacific (Federated States of Micronesia, Palau (lower house) and Vanuatu). The Pacific consistently has a low rate of female representation; however, there are many excellent initiatives underway in the region and progress is being made.

The participants examined, from the point of view of gender equality, the items on the agendas of the Standing Committees on Peace and International Security and Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade.

The meeting also marked its 30th anniversary with a speech by Ms Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan and a presentation by the IPU Secretary General. It adopted and signed a call for action by parliamentarians to use their power to create a better world for women and girls – *My Power for Women’s Power*.

A panel discussion on Beijing+20 provided an opportunity to review implementation of the Beijing commitments and to define new objectives. The discussion focused on the progress made and the obstacles that remained on women’s rights, gender equality and the presence of women in decision-making and leadership positions.

**30th anniversary of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians**

I attended, along with Melissa Lee, a celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, established in 1985.
We heard how women parliamentarians created the space of their own for promoting women and gender equality. The IPU Meeting of Women Parliamentarians was the first global forum for women parliamentarians. Throughout the years, it had been an effective mechanism for enabling women parliamentarians to articulate their views and concerns. It had also had a major impact on citizens’ lives by encouraging reform and providing support to parliaments on issues such as violence against women. The meeting had contributed greatly to bolstering women’s participation in national parliaments by promoting and supporting legislative reform, advocacy and empowerment. Most importantly, the meeting had placed the question of gender equality high on the IPU’s agenda.

**Launch of the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments**

On Wednesday 1 April, during the Governing Council, the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments were launched. The Speaker of the National Assembly of the Seychelles moderated a panel that emphasised the importance of strong partnerships, inclusiveness, coordination and sustainability in the provision of support to parliaments. The participants observed that the Common Principles were intended to provide a summary of the most important aspects of parliamentary development and guidelines for designing and managing effective parliamentary support. They were also intended to assist partners engaged in parliamentary support to work with parliaments with greater relevance and effectiveness.

By the end of the 132nd Assembly, the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments had received close to 80 endorsements (including 45 parliaments and 59 individual chambers, three parliamentary assemblies and 12 partner organisations).

New Zealand had carefully considered the Common Principles before endorsing them prior to the Assembly. We had found them to be well thought out and pragmatic, providing useful principles for the New Zealand Parliament and the partners we work with. This is particularly important as we embark on a period of intensification and solidification of parliamentary strengthening activities, both in our own parliament and with parliaments in the Pacific region.

**Geopolitical groups**

All members of the IPU are members of one or more of the six geopolitical groups that operate within the IPU structure, except for Azerbaijan. New Zealand belongs to the Asia-Pacific group, a grouping of 30 member countries extending from the Middle East to the Pacific, and to the Twelve Plus group, a group of 47 parliaments of Europe, Scandinavia, and former Soviet and Yugoslavian States, together with Israel, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Membership of these two groups is attached as Appendix 6.

Denis O’Rourke attended the meeting of the Asia-Pacific group on 28 March, chaired by the Hon Dato’ Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz of Malaysia. The delegation attended the four meetings of the Twelve Plus group held on 27 March and subsequent mornings, chaired by Mr Philippe Mahoux of Belgium. The geopolitical groups play an important role in the functioning of the IPU, as the IPU rules provide that each group can nominate its own candidates for committee vacancies to ensure an equitable geopolitical representation on IPU committees. I was very pleased to be put forward by the Twelve Plus group for the Bureaux of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights. I also spoke in the Twelve Plus group in support of the joint proposal of Australia and Belgium, noting that it was incumbent on parliamentarians to act with urgency to protect women and children –
the most vulnerable in times of conflict. I also noted that there was merit in the proposal to prevent the wilful destruction of cultural heritage and parliamentarians should be ambitious in their agenda.

At its final meeting, the Twelve Plus group adopted a resolution on the current situation in the Ukraine, urging the Russian Federation to return to full compliance with both its international and bilateral treaty obligations and that all parties continue to pursue the peaceful resolution of the situation in the Ukraine through international mediation efforts.

Bilateral meetings

The New Zealand delegation engaged in formal bilateral meetings with the delegations from Australia, legislatures of the Pacific, and Morocco, which were useful and very interesting discussions.

Of the IPU’s 166 current members, only seven are of the Pacific: Federated States of Micronesia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor-Leste, and Tonga. Fiji is in the final formal stages of joining the IPU. Although this is positive, it remains quite a distance from achieving the universal membership desired by the IPU. It is important that the priorities of the Pacific region are articulated and progressed within the IPU. As the global organisation of parliaments, it is essential that the IPU is aware of our priorities so that it can be an effective advocate for our parliaments at an international level. As there is not yet a formal space for Pacific legislatures to convene, the New Zealand and Australian delegation traditionally arrange a meeting of delegations from the Pacific at each Assembly.
During this meeting, delegates shared their views on the proposed SDGs, and emphasised that it was important for the Pacific to assert its voice particularly in areas of climate change, oceans, emissions, and environment. We noted that it was important to be engaged in matters of transnational crime, terrorism, and migration as the Pacific could not afford to be complacent in an increasingly globalised world.

We agreed that the meeting was an important forum for sharing perspectives and coming to a Pacific position on matters before the IPU. It was proposed that this should be replicated at each IPU Assembly in a more formal manner and at an earlier time in proceedings, in order to maximise input to resolutions of importance to the region. New Zealand and Australia undertook to scope this and come back with a proposal for the group.

I was also honoured to meet with the President of the Assembly of Councillors, of Morocco, Dr Mohamed Cheikh Biadillah. It was a very constructive meeting in which we traversed a number of issues including trade, food security, migration, and the engagement of youth in positive forms of political expression. Morocco was a strong supporter of New Zealand’s successful bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council and we thank them for this and trust our relationship will continue to grow.
Other events

Members of the delegation attended two side events: on 31 March “Consultation on the updated Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health” and on 1 April “Eliminating risks of nuclear war by accident, cyber-attack or conflict escalation”.

The first event was organised by the IPU, World Health Organisation and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health to brief parliamentarians on the updated Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health. Participants shared their experiences, and noted successes in halting maternal and infant mortality. It was very heartening to hear this issue no longer being discussed in isolation, with participants recognising the impact of conflict, education, leadership, water and sanitation on effecting change. The place of health in the SDGs was also examined, with participants noting that health will be “competing” with many other issues under this universal but voluntary mechanism.

The second event we attended was organised by the IPU and the Parliaments for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND). This included a debate on how to build confidence in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in Europe, South Asia and the Middle East. We joined Bahrain, Bangladesh, Iceland, Monaco, Netherlands and Mr Saber Chowdhury, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (and PNND Co-President) in an informal ‘Wave goodbye to nuclear weapons’. This symbolic act was one of a number of actions to follow-up the resolution ‘Toward a Nuclear Weapon Free World: The Contribution of Parliaments’, adopted at the 130th IPU Assembly in March 2014. The resolution ‘Calls on parliaments to work together and with governments and civil society to build momentum for a constructive NPT Review Conference [2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons] in 2015.’

The resolution also calls on parliamentarians to ‘urge their governments to start negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention or package of agreements to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world’. The significance of the resolution is that it was adopted with the participation and consent of parliaments from virtually all of the countries possessing nuclear weapons, as well as those under extended nuclear deterrence relationships.
Future meetings

The 133rd Assembly of the IPU will take place in Geneva from 17 to 21 October 2015. At this Assembly, a general debate will be held on the theme *The moral and economic imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration*. The following Assembly will be in Lusaka, Zambia from 19 to 23 March 2016.

Bilateral visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia

Background

Prior to the IPU Assembly, the New Zealand delegation undertook a bilateral visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia (referred to in this report as Cambodia). The bilateral relationship between New Zealand and Cambodia is limited in scope, but constructive and warm. I hold a strong interest in Cambodia given that many Cambodians resident in Wellington live in my home electorate of Rongotai. After many years of conflict, Cambodia is rebuilding many of the economic, social and physical foundations needed to ensure future growth and development. New Zealand was involved in the peace process following the end of Khmer Rouge rule and in 1993 provided its then-largest peacekeeping force to the United Nations’ peacekeeping mission.

On the evening of our arrival in Phnom Penh, prior to the commencement of the formal programme, we met with ANZ Bank Royal Chief Executive Officer, New Zealander Mr Grant Knuckey. This was a valuable exchange, which provided us with on-the-ground insight into business and trade links.

On Thursday 26 March, we undertook a full-day parliamentary programme that included meetings with members of the National Assembly.
Unlike the unicameral system we have here in New Zealand, the Cambodian Parliament is bicameral – made up of the National Assembly and the Senate. The National Assembly has 123 members, elected for a term of five years. The most recent election was held in July 2013. Members are elected by simple majority vote from nine single-member constituencies and by proportional representation from 15 multi-member constituencies, each returning between two and 18 members. There is no threshold for parties to participate in the allocation of seats. Two parties are represented in the Assembly: the Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) holds 68 seats and the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) holds 55 seats. There are 25 women in the National Assembly. The President of the National Assembly is elected by and from among the members.

The Senate has 61 members, elected or appointed for a term of six years. The most recent election was held in January 2012. Fifty-seven senators are elected by proportional representation from eight multi-member regional constituencies, each returning between five and ten senators. In each constituency, voting is by an electoral college comprising all the local government councillors of that region. Two senators are elected by the members of the National Assembly. Two senators are appointed by the King. Candidates must be citizens by birth aged 40 years or over. The President of the Senate is elected by the senators.

The Senate President at the time of our visit was Mr Chea Sim, who has sadly recently passed away. Mr Say Chhum, former First Vice-President of the Senate, is the incumbent. We pass our condolences to the family of Mr Chea Sim and his senate colleagues.

Two parties were successful in gaining seats in the regional constituencies in the 2012 election. The Cambodian People’s Party holds 46 and the Sam Rainsy Party holds 11. In June 2012, the Sam Rainsy Party, together with another party, formed the CNRP as a new party. There are nine women senators.
The results of the July 2013 National Assembly election were disputed by the opposition CNRP, which claimed that it had won 63 seats to the CPP’s 60. Consequently, the CNRP’s elected candidates declined to take their seats in the new Assembly and the CNRP argued that the Assembly was therefore illegitimate as it did not have the minimum number of 120 members required by the Constitution. The CPP countered that 123 members had been elected and that the CPP’s 68 members exceeded the quorum required for the Assembly to function. Because only two parties had won seats in the election, effect could not be given to the then electoral law’s provision that the seats of successful candidates who declined to take them up should be redistributed to the other successful parties. That would have resulted in a one-party Assembly, which would conflict with the Constitution’s statement that Cambodia is a multi-party democracy.

The CNRP’s boycott of the Assembly was brought to an end in July 2014, after the two parties succeeded in negotiating an agreement on electoral reform and on power-sharing in the Assembly. The National Election Committee, which opposition parties perceived as lacking in independence and impartiality, would have its own budget and would comprise nine members, four appointed by the government, four by the opposition and one appointed jointly by both. The rules of the National Assembly would be amended to support the separation of power between the executive and the legislature. The President and second Vice-President of the Assembly would be from the CPP, while the first Vice-President would be from the CNRP. Committee chairs and majorities on committees would be shared equally between the two parties. The President, Vice-Presidents and committee chairs together constitute the Permanent Committee of the National Assembly, which sets the legislative agenda and oversees the Assembly’s rules.

The CNRP members took their seats in the Assembly in August 2014. In December, the Assembly amended its rules to recognise the leader of any opposition party holding at least 25 percent of the seats as a minority leader. The minority leader would have equal ranking with the Prime Minister and be their dialogue partner on issues concerning national interests. The President of the CNRP, Sam Rainsy, said that the recognition of the opposition as an institution represented a significant step towards democracy. The Prime Minister, Hun Sen, said the recognition was aimed at creating a culture of dialogue.

**Parliamentary programme**

Our visit commenced with a formal call on the Second Vice-President of the National Assembly, Dr Nguon Nhel (an equivalent to our Deputy Speaker role). Dr Nguon, a member of the CPP, conveyed the best regards of the President of Cambodia, and reflected on the warm welcome New Zealand had given Cambodia when we hosted the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) in 2008. I outlined our interest in strengthening the bonds of friendship between our two countries and deepening our understanding of developments in Cambodian parliamentary and electoral processes, including how the government and opposition parties could work constructively going forward. I noted during our meetings that New Zealand has a long history of democratic governance and we have worked carefully to guard this and to ensure the robustness of our multi-party system.

Dr Nguon noted that the recently passed electoral law was the outcome of negotiation between the two parties, and that the Assembly’s minority leader, the CNRP’s Sam Rainsy, acts as a dialogue partner of the Prime Minister. We heard how a new electoral law had been drafted and unanimously approved in the Assembly on 14 March 2015.
Issues that had been debated in the development of the new legislation included: whether or not to regularly adjust the number of National Assembly seats, whether to allow soldiers and police to participate in election campaigns, the amount of air time parties should receive on state television during a campaign, and whether civil society groups should be independent and neutral for the period encompassing polling, vote counting and the announcement of election results. Proposals had also been put forward for a ban on vote buying and the empowerment of the National Election Committee to dissolve parties that are found to have manipulated an election.

During our exchange with Dr Nguon, we also discussed economic growth and our trade and tourism links. There is a steady but small trade relationship, and a considerable flow of New Zealand tourists to Cambodia. We were delighted to learn that Dr Nguon’s children had been educated in New Zealand and welcomed a reciprocal visit at a time of mutual convenience.

We then met with representatives of various Commissions in the Assembly, including those from Foreign Affairs, Education, Culture and Tourism, Justice and Health. Commissions are the Cambodian equivalent of our select committees. This meeting was chaired by Mr Chheang Vun, Chairman of the Commission on Foreign Affairs, and a former Ambassador to New Zealand (resident in Canberra). Chairman Chheang and I also share the mutual honour of being the Chairperson of our respective national groups of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

We were delighted to hear of the personal links our counterparts had with New Zealand, including Mr Phirum Keo, who had lived in New Zealand until returning to Cambodia and entering politics for the opposition. Before we commenced our formal discussions of parliamentary and public policy developments, the mood was lightened with tales of trout fishing in Turangi.

The discussion traversed a wide range of topics including electoral systems and electoral participation, scrutiny and Budget oversight, health education, and the status of women in Parliament and society. We were very interested in how the new electoral reform laws
could involve the community and civil society groups. The Chair explained that there was a need for the Government and political parties to engage the public and youth, achieving this through seminars, lectures, press conferences and meetings at village level. We shared our positive experience in New Zealand of opening up the legislative process and Parliament to the people, through the select committee submissions process and publicly available information. Our discussion of the electoral system was particularly interesting.

We highlighted the successful use of advance voting in New Zealand and the positive impact it had on declining voter turnout. In Cambodia, we heard that people are not compelled to vote and there are some challenges around improving the electoral registration system. We note that in order to be registered for elections in 2017 and 2018, individuals need to have identification cards.

At lunch, we enjoyed a less formal exchange of views. At the conclusion of the lunch, Chairman Chheang acknowledged that Cambodia needed to move on from its culture of political confrontation and instead develop a culture of dialogue between the political parties. We support and encourage our friends in the National Assembly to implement this worthy sentiment in a meaningful sense. As in New Zealand, institutions require constant fine-tuning and reform to remain relevant, strong and stable, including reforming the rules and procedures of Parliament and maintaining an independent judiciary and public service.

In the afternoon, we were briefed by the Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC), a non-partisan, non-governmental organisation funded by international donors situated at the Senate. The PIC is in part an effort to rebalance the separation of powers of the executive and the legislature and strengthen the institution of parliament. We heard about its work to build up the capacity of officials in the National Assembly, through the provision of research papers, workshops and training. It largely carries out functions to assist in effective parliamentary oversight and scrutiny that we would expect to see provided by the Parliamentary Library and Clerk’s Office here in New Zealand, to all members irrespective of their party. Mr Dararith Kim-Yeat, the PIC’s Executive Director, expressed an interest in exploring possible areas for inter-parliamentary support service cooperation with New Zealand. We welcome further discussion on how our parliament could support the PIC.

The programme concluded with a short visit to the Royal Palace, the official residence of the King of Cambodia. We were very pleased to be given an opportunity to experience Khmer heritage and architecture. This was followed by a dinner with Mr Kem Sokha, Deputy Leader of the CNRP and First Vice-President of the National Assembly.

We found our short visit to Cambodia very informative and it reinforced the warm bilateral relations that New Zealand shares with Cambodia. It was invaluable in building a deeper understanding of Cambodia’s parliamentary system and learning of the challenges faced first hand.
Conclusion

The New Zealand Parliament’s membership of inter-parliamentary organisations, such as the IPU, and its connections with other legislatures through its bilateral programme provide members of parliament with vital opportunities for the promotion and development of parliamentary democracy.

I was very pleased to lead the delegation to Cambodia and Viet Nam at this particularly special juncture of our 40-year relationship with ASEAN. The opportunity to engage with our Cambodian counterparts represented a practical way to encourage the democratisation process in Cambodia at an important time, as the government and opposition parties work to realise a culture of dialogue. It is also a time during which Cambodia, like many other parliaments, is facing growing expectations of the public and of civil society to engage in the parliamentary processes and public policy debates in a meaningful way. We are extremely grateful to our hosts for their warm hospitality and the frank exchanges we shared.

This was my first Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly and my experience leading the delegation was a positive one with many new friendships formed. I look forward to bringing the views of New Zealand parliamentarians into the IPU processes, including in my capacity as a bureaux member on the Standing Committee for Democracy and Human Rights. I am particularly looking forward to implementing a more formalised space for Pacific delegates to meet and feed a regional perspective into deliberations.

We would like to acknowledge the support and expertise of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, particularly HE Mr Reuben Levermore, Ambassador and Ms Andrea Beadle, Second Secretary at the New Zealand Embassy Bangkok and HE Mr Haike Manning, Ambassador and Mr Robbie Taylor, Deputy Head of Mission at the New Zealand Embassy Hanoi. I would like to give a special acknowledgment to the secretary to the delegation, Wendy Hart, who ensured a successful and enjoyable Assembly for the New Zealand delegation.

Hon Annette King MP
Head of Delegation
Appendices

Appendix 1 – Membership of IPU (as at 30 April 2015)

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has 166 members and 10 associate members.

Member Parliaments

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan

Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi

Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic

Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic

Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia

Finland, France

Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau

Haiti, Honduras, Hungary

Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy

Japan, Jordan

Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan

Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg

Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar

Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway

Oman

Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal

Qatar

Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda

Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic

Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey

Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay
Venezuela, Viet Nam
Yemen
Zambia, Zimbabwe.

**Associate members**
Andean Parliament
Arab Parliament
Central American Parliament (PARLACEN)
East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
European Parliament (EP)
Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)
Latin American Parliament
Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC)
Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).
Appendix 2 – Agenda of 132nd IPU Assembly

Item 1  Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 132nd Assembly

Item 2  Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda

Item 3  General Debate on The Sustainable Development Goals: Turning Words into Action

Item 4  Cyber warfare: A serious threat to peace and global security (Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)

Item 5  Shaping a new system of water governance: Promoting parliamentary action on water (Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade)

Item 6  International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights)

Item 7  Reports of the Standing Committees

Item 8  Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade for the 134th Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs

Item 9  The role of parliaments in combating all terrorist acts perpetrated by organizations such as Daesh and Boko Haram against innocent civilians, in particular women and girls
Appendix 3 – Address to the General Debate by Hon Annette King MP

President, Madame Chair, Colleagues

Tēnā koutou

Nau mai, haere mai

I wish to thank the National Assembly of Viet Nam and the people of Viet Nam for hosting the 132nd IPU Assembly. The organisation, hospitality, venues and the courtesy afforded us have been exceptional. The cultural performance at the opening ceremony was sensational.

This debate has been an interesting one and we have heard many valuable contributions, strong commitments, innovative ideas – words – from fellow parliamentarians.

There is no doubt that we live in a world facing urgent, serious and, at times, desperate challenges that need a collective global response and the sharing of responsibility. The thing that stands out at this Assembly is reflected in the very name of this debate: Turning Words into Actions.

Words are often the easy part – what follows is what matters.

Too often we make our task difficult by complicating issues. That is one of our concerns regarding the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were eight international development goals, with 21 targets and 60 indicators to monitor progress. It is now proposed to have 17 SDGs with some 169 targets and, as yet, an unknown number of indicators. The processes feeding into the Post-2015 Development Agenda suggest it has been complex. While we are told that the SDGs will offer a major improvement, I note that in the report by the International Council for Science, which reviewed the proposed goals, just 29 percent are well-defined and based on the latest scientific evidence. A further 54 percent need more work and 17 percent are weak or non-essential. The report goes on to say the targets lack integration and rely too much on vague qualitative language rather than hard, measurable, time-bound, quantitative targets.

The goals are presented in ‘silos’, for example they address inter-related challenges such as climate change, food security and health in isolation from one another – risking conflict between the goals rather than synergy.

Madame Chair, New Zealand proposes that the SDGs themselves should be simple and focused enough to be a global rallying point, supplemented by practical, measurable targets and indicators that ensure effective measurement of progress.

We believe they should comprise goals that holistically address, and further recognise the link between, the three dimensions of sustainable development: Economic, Social, Environmental.

The targets associated with the goals must be mindful of different country characteristics, including but not limited to, the level of development.

In the economic development sphere we proposed the following areas be addressed:

- Sustainable agriculture and food security;
- Sustainable fisheries;
• Sustainable energy, encompassing access to modern energy services and renewable energy; and
• Disaster risk reduction, including disaster preparedness.

In the environmental development sphere, closely related to the economic one, we believe we need to address oceans and seas. We even see value in this being a stand-alone goal such is its importance to the global community.

The rapid decline of global fish stocks, sea-level rises, the acidity of the oceans, increasing demand for space, land-based impacts, and the loss of marine diversity are threatening the health, livelihoods, homes and food security of billions of people. It is critical that oceans are given priority attention. I say this particularly from the perspective of small island developing states in our home of the Pacific, and many island nations across the globe.

In the social development sphere, we propose an emphasis on:
• Education;
• Health; and
• Gender equality, in particular the empowerment of women and girls.

And fundamental to all of the goals, and underlying targets, is democratic governance and the rule of law. Without open, transparent, corruption-free governance and the upholding of the rule of law – building safe and secure communities – no number of goals or targets will transform our world into a better place.

Madame Chair, absolutely central to all our aspiration must be children. I am disappointed that children are barely mentioned. Parliamentarians like to bandy around the slogan – children are our future. Yes they indeed are, and must be central to the post-2015 Development Agenda. Whatever actions we take, we must not leave our children and those to come with an inter-generational deficit and insurmountable problems.

My hope is that we, as parliamentarians, representing most of the countries in the world will engage in debate and bring forward an action plan to feed into the United Nations’ processes of September. This must be practical, workable, simple and accountable.

I wish you all a constructive Assembly.
Appendix 4 – Hanoi Declaration

The Sustainable Development Goals: Turning Words into Action

We, parliamentarians from over 130 countries and 23 international and regional parliamentary organizations, gathered in Hanoi, Viet Nam, reviewed the emerging sustainable development goals and considered our role in attaining them.

This is our declaration.

Despite global advances in technology, health, knowledge, and material wealth, longstanding economic and social disparities are increasing, to the detriment of the whole planet, with progress continuing to elude many the world over.

This situation – exacerbated by the urgent threat of climate change and growing waves of social unrest, political instability and conflict within or between countries – is coming to a head. As we saw with the Millennium Development Goals, international commitments can only be met with strong political will, leadership and national ownership. As parliamentarians, we have a moral obligation to act.

The adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and its sustainable development goals in September 2015 will afford a unique opportunity to meet global challenges, using a universal, integrated approach that will apply to all countries and link poverty eradication to sustainable development.

Vision

At this critical moment, we, the parliamentarians of the world, reaffirm our vision for people-centred sustainable development based on the realization of all human rights, to eradicate poverty in all its forms, and eliminate inequalities, thus empowering all individuals to exercise their full potential. This requires conditions of peace and security, in full observance of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Poverty eradication and sustainable development are a shared commitment for us all, and we should all strive for a balanced and more equitable distribution of resources. Our current production and consumption patterns are clearly unsustainable, and all countries – developed and developing alike – need to work together, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. That is the only way we can advance towards a common model of inclusive and sustainable growth.

A people-centred approach requires environmental justice: the planet and all its ecosystems must be treated as common assets for the whole of humanity to enjoy now and in the future. Human well-being must be the driver of all policies for sustainable development and progress measured in terms that go well beyond gross domestic product. People are more than taxpayers and consumers; they are citizens endowed with rights and responsibilities towards each other. We must invest in them – their health, nutrition, education and skills – as our most important resource.
All government institutions must be representative and accessible to all. Cultural differences should be respected and home-grown approaches to sustainable development employed. All people, regardless of gender, race, culture, religion and health status, must be empowered to work cooperatively for peace and the common good.

Commitment

Acknowledging that the sustainable development goals will be the result of a delicate compromise, we look forward to this transformational framework that will inspire policymaking in all countries.

We are pleased that our efforts to advocate for the inclusion of goals on healthy lives and well-being, gender equality and women’s empowerment, reducing inequalities within and between countries, as well as on governance, have borne fruit. We appreciate the broadened focus on health, which will provide an opportunity to end the AIDS epidemic while tackling emerging challenges such as non-communicable diseases.

We welcome the new goal calling for urgent action against climate change and we appreciate the broad-based goal on the means of implementation – finance, trade, technology, capacity building and systemic reforms – that must be mobilized in support of the new framework. This goal should inject new energy into the current global partnership for development.

We commit to doing our utmost to strengthen national ownership of the goals, particularly by making them known to our constituents. People must understand how the goals are relevant to their lives. As representatives of the people, we are responsible for ensuring that each and every voice is heard in the political process without discrimination and irrespective of social status.

We commit to translating the goals into enforceable domestic laws and regulations, including through the critical budget process. Each country must do its part to ensure that all the goals are met.

Action

As parliamentarians, we must support efforts to reach the new goals in ways that respect each country’s national specificities. Our responsibility is clear: to hold governments accountable for the goals they have subscribed to, and to make sure that enabling laws are passed and budgets adopted.

Our first order of business must be to examine our institutions and decision-making processes to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

As representatives of the people, our concern is to defend the public interest and pursue the common good above all else. We must prevent individual interests from exercising excessive influence in our deliberations. We must focus on building consensus around practical solutions.

We will seek to overcome the silo mentality within our own parliaments and national administrations to reflect the intersectoral nature of the goals. To this end, we will do our
utmost to institutionalize the goals in every parliament, with sufficient time for discussion and monitoring. Parliamentary committees and processes must pursue all goals coherently.

We will help build national ownership of the goals by seeing to it that each of our countries has a sustainable development plan, crafted in an inclusive and participatory manner, including through public hearings with civil society, and in line with the international human rights framework.

We pledge to make laws and budgetary provisions in line with the national sustainable development plan, clearly identifying the goals and targets that apply and means of funding. Governments should report annually to parliaments on the implementation of the national plan. Parliaments should garner regular feedback from their constituents to help assess progress on the ground, where it matters most.

We further pledge to measure progress not only in terms of national averages, but most importantly by looking at how the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our societies have fared. No one should be left behind. Strong national capacities for data collection and disaggregation, including by gender, age, minority group and health status, will be crucial.

Recognizing our role in mobilizing the means to attain the goals, including through funding from private and public sources, at both the national and international levels, we will support the implementation of all international commitments. In particular, we will work to increase domestic resources, including by combating illicit financial flows. We will improve the quality and quantity of aid, set out an orderly sovereign debt restructuring mechanism, strengthen the environment for private-sector investments, including through public-private partnerships, and reform the global financial, monetary and trade regime in ways that directly support sustainable development.

Lastly, we pledge to support accountability for meeting the goals at the global level. We will seek to join our national delegations to meetings of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, where global progress reports will be discussed. We will contribute to the national reviews submitted to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Wherever feasible, we will seek to engage with United Nations field operations in our countries to share information and explore all avenues for cooperation to advance our national plans.

We ask that the central messages of this Declaration and of its predecessor, the Quito Communiqué, be reflected in the outcome of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament later this year, which will in turn provide input to the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda.

We urge governments to conduct negotiations keeping in mind the real needs and expectations of citizens and addressing the critical linkages between sustainable development, democratic governance and human rights. The Post-2015 United Nations Declaration should commit to building strong public institutions, including parliaments, with the ability and capacity to ensure accountability for results. We encourage the drafters of the Declaration to acknowledge the critical role and responsibility of parliaments – and of the IPU as their world organization – in implementing the new development agenda and monitoring progress.
Moreover, we stress that convergence between the outcomes of this year’s negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, financing for development, climate change and disaster risk reduction is essential to facilitate implementation at the national level.

We are profoundly grateful to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, our world organization, for raising our awareness of the sustainable development goals and for making our voices heard at the United Nations. We will continue to look to the IPU for support in our efforts to attain the goals.

Together, we will succeed.
Appendix 5 – Resolution adopted by the 132nd IPU Assembly, Hanoi, 31 March 2015

The role of parliaments in combating all terrorist acts perpetrated by organizations such as Daesh and Boko Haram against innocent civilians, in particular women and girls

Resolution adopted unanimously by the 132nd IPU Assembly
(Hanoi, 31 March 2015)

The 132nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Considering that all forms and manifestations of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of the motivation and the perpetrators and no matter where they are committed,

Reaffirming that terrorism is not to be associated with any religion, nationality or civilization, or with any ethnic group,

Noting that those who commit, order, finance or support terrorist acts must be brought to justice,

Underscoring that such acts of violence target civilians, in particular women, children and the elderly,

Expressing grave concern at the continued threat that terrorism poses to international peace and security,

Bearing in mind that the self-proclaimed Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (also known as Daesh) has accepted Boko Haram’s pledge of allegiance,

Considering the scope and spread of the abuses committed by Boko Haram and ISIL, which is steadily expanding into new territory in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic,

Bearing in mind that Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon and Benin decided to mobilize 8,700 men in early February to fight Boko Haram,

Considering that ISIL’s ideology has inspired terrorist attacks in other parts of the world, for example Brussels, Paris, Sydney and most recently Tunis, and that those attacks are clearly aimed at undermining democracy and hampering intercultural dialogue and exchange by sowing terror,

Gravely concerned by the systematic looting and cultural destruction wrought by ISIL and deplored by UNESCO, which refers to “cultural cleansing”,

Noting that all anti-terrorist measures must comply with international law, notably human rights law, refugee law and humanitarian law,

Recalling all relevant United Nations resolutions, notably those adopted by the Security Council, on terrorism and organized transborder crime, and condemning all forms of financing of terrorism,

Also recalling relevant IPU resolutions on terrorism, including the declaration adopted by the Ninth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament,
1. **Condemns in the strongest possible terms** all inhuman and terrorist acts and the steady escalation in violence;

2. **Requests** parliaments to use legislative channels to contribute to the implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions;

3. **Invites** all parliaments vigorously and unanimously to condemn the acts committed by ISIL and Boko Haram;

4. **Calls for** the development of avenues of cooperation between State security and intelligence agencies in order to facilitate the exchange of information between States;

5. **Invites** parliaments to pressure their respective governments to prosecute any person or organization helping to finance ISIL or Boko Haram, in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions 2161 (2014) and 2170 (2014);

6. **Requests** that any person having helped to commit war crimes or crimes against humanity in the name of those organizations be brought to justice;

7. **Also requests** that particular attention be paid to women and children in countries in which terrorist organizations like ISIL and Boko Haram are active;

8. **Condemns** the deliberate destruction and systematic looting of cultural property and **asks** that those responsible be held accountable and brought to justice;

9. **Calls on** parliaments to draw up a common strategy on citizens joining the ranks of such organizations and **proposes** that techniques for exchanging information between States be developed for that purpose;

10. **Also calls on** parliaments to adopt a common strategy to counter the remote recruitment of combatants and propaganda on the Internet, especially on social networks;

11. **Urges** the competent UN bodies to adopt the emergency measures needed to support the efforts being made on the ground by the countries of the Economic Community of Central African States and the Economic Community of West African States, to fight Boko Haram;

12. **Endorses** the initiatives taken by the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the African Union and the international community to find a solution to the problem, notably the establishment of the Multinational Joint Task Force;

13. **Reaffirms** the significance of dialogue among the governments and parliaments of all countries involved in the fight against terrorism.
Appendix 6 – Geopolitical groups to which New Zealand belongs

**Asia-Pacific Group**

Afghanistan, Australia  
Bangladesh  
Cambodia, Canada, China  
Democratic People’s Republic of Korea  
India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of)  
Japan  
Lao People’s Democratic Republic  
Malaysia, Maldives, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Myanmar  
Nepal, New Zealand  
Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines  
Republic of Korea  
Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka  
Thailand, Timor-Leste  
Viet Nam

**Twelve Plus Group**

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria  
Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria  
Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland, France  
Georgia, Germany, Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy  
Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg  
Malta, Monaco, Montenegro  
Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway  
Poland, Portugal  
Romania  
San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland  
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey  
Ukraine, United Kingdom

**Observers:** Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, European Parliament.
Appendix 7 – Delegation media statement

Delegation to strengthen New Zealand’s links with Cambodia, Viet Nam and the IPU

Speaker of the House of Representatives

24 MARCH 2015

A New Zealand delegation will join with 600 MPs from 113 countries to discuss global issues and promote democratic ideals and practices, when the 132nd Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly takes place in Hanoi, Viet Nam from 27 March to 1 April 2015. The delegation will be led by Hon Annette King MP, with Melissa Lee MP and Denis O’Rourke MP.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt Hon David Carter, said that the IPU is a unique forum that brings together parliamentarians from around the world to discuss issues that affect us all, such as terrorism, health, education and development.

“The value of the Assembly is that members must propose solutions and we hold each other accountable if there is inaction or if we are going backwards,” said Rt Hon David Carter. “The IPU and its constituent parliaments do excellent work collecting data and information on progress against key indicators, for example the representation of women and indigenous peoples in our parliaments.”

Hon Annette King MP and Melissa Lee MP will both speak in the general debate on concrete ways parliaments can implement the new sustainable development goals (SDGs). They will bring New Zealand’s perspectives to panel discussions and workshops on nuclear disarmament, international law, cyber warfare, and water management.

Prior to the Assembly, the delegation will visit the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia. Delegates and their Cambodian counterparts will share experiences and solutions to a variety of issues that impact on our communities including health, disaster risk management, and cultural and heritage promotion. There will also be opportunity to share respective parliamentary procedures and learn new ways of doing things.

The delegation will take place 25 March to 2 April 2015.

ENDS
Report of the Parliamentary Delegation led by the Speaker to the Republic of France, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany
8 – 23 April 2015

Rt Hon David Carter
Speaker
Fifty-first Parliament

Presented to the House of Representatives
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Introduction, objectives and strategic context

The Speaker’s Delegation is a critical part of the Official Inter-parliamentary Relations Programme. Speakers of the House, because of the position they hold, have the ability to open doors in international relationships. Speaker-led diplomacy can make an important contribution to advancing New Zealand’s national interests by fostering understanding and promoting international cooperation between members of Parliament, countries and parliaments.

This year the Speaker’s Delegation visited the Republic of France, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany. The visit enabled members of the New Zealand Parliament to meet with political leaders in four Member States of the European Union (EU): France, Ireland, Poland and Germany, as well as one with strong historic ties and a long-standing friendship with New Zealand, Northern Ireland.

New Zealand’s relationship with the EU is broad, deep and growing. It is also continually evolving to reflect the diverse range of interests of its 28 Member States. Our visit included countries with which we have some of our oldest as well as most significant contemporary relationships, and took place at a time of significant economic, political and security challenges in Europe. I also saw particular value in promoting and seeking support for New Zealand’s ambition to begin negotiations with the EU on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

The visit provided an opportunity for high-level political engagement in each country and a chance to foster stronger bilateral relations between our Parliament and European Member State Parliaments, including at a sub-federal and devolved level. The programme in each country enabled an exchange of views on our respective economies, political systems and environmental challenges, and on regional security and international issues of mutual interest. We also marked a number of important occasions, including the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations with France, the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, historic ties with Northern Ireland, and our shared sacrifices in World War One battles in France.

I was pleased to lead such an engaged delegation. It included Hon Chester Borrows MP, Deputy Speaker, National Party; Adrian Rurawhe MP, Labour Party; Dr Kennedy Graham MP, Green Party; and Fletcher Tabuteau MP, New Zealand First Party, see Appendix 1.

The delegation’s objectives are attached as Appendix 2 and the media releases about the visit are included in Appendix 3. The visit programme, in Appendix 4, was extensive and intensive. It provided for high-quality meetings with people from the parliaments and executives, as well as with groups from the private and not-for-profit sectors.

The delegation would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for its assistance with organising the delegation’s programme. In particular, we greatly appreciated the advice and in-country support received from our Embassy in Paris, provided by Ambassador Dr James Kember and Emma Nichols; by High Commissioner to the United Kingdom Dr the Rt Hon Sir Lockwood Smith, Ken Ryan, Consul-General to Ireland, Alan McCarthy and Honorary Consul to Northern Ireland, Margaret Lee; Ambassador Wendy Hinton and staff of the our Embassy in Warsaw; and Ambassador Rod Harris and his staff at the New Zealand Embassy in Berlin.
Republic of France

Background on the Parliament of France
The French Parliament (Parlement) is a bicameral legislature consisting of the National Assembly and the Senate.

National Assembly (Assemblée Nationale)
The National Assembly has 577 deputies, elected for a term of five years. The most recent election was held in June 2012.

Election of members
Deputies are elected by simple majority vote from single-member constituencies. If no candidate in a constituency receives an absolute majority of votes in the first round, a second round run-off is held among the candidates whose number of votes equalled at least 12.5 per cent of registered voters. Eleven deputies are elected from constituencies representing French nationals living abroad. Voters and candidates must be citizens aged 18 years or over.

Presiding Officer
The President of the National Assembly is elected by and from among the deputies. The current President is Claude Bartolone.

Legislative process
Bills may be introduced in either House, except for budgetary bills, which must be introduced in the National Assembly. Upon introduction, a bill is referred to a committee for consideration. The bill as reported by the committee is then debated in general and considered in detail in a plenary session. At the end of this first reading stage, the bill is sent to the other House, where the same procedure is followed. If the two Houses do not agree on the text of a bill, a second reading ensues in either or both Houses, as necessary. If agreement still cannot be reached, a bill may go to a joint committee for arbitration. In the event of continuing disagreement, there is provision for the National Assembly to make a final decision.

Committees
Eight standing committees consider legislation referred to them and scrutinise the activities of government in their respective areas. On occasion a bill may be referred to an ad hoc committee. Fact-finding missions comprising one or more deputies may be established to investigate and report on an issue, and information missions may be established to consider sensitive or topical matters. Committees of inquiry may also be established.

Assembly composition
Political groups may comprise one or more political parties. Currently, the two largest political groups are:

- Socialist, Republican and Citizen: 288
- Union for a Popular Movement (UMP): 198

With a few exceptions, the Socialist, Republican and Citizen group is made up of members of the governing Socialist Party. The number of women deputies is 151, or 26 per cent.
**Senate (Sénat)**

The Senate has 348 senators, elected for a term of six years. Half the membership is renewed every three years. The most recent election was held in September 2014.

**Electoral system**

There are 336 senators that are elected from each department (territorial administrative unit) and overseas territory by an electoral college comprising mainly delegates from commune councils, together with regional and general councillors and National Assembly deputies. In departments returning up to three senators, election is by simple majority vote in two rounds. In departments returning between four and 12 senators, election is by proportional representation. Twelve senators are also indirectly elected by proportional representation by French nationals living abroad. Candidates must be citizens aged 30 years or over.

**Presiding Officer**

The President of the Senate is elected by and from among the senators. The current President is Gérard Larcher.

**Committees**

Seven standing committees consider legislation and scrutinise the activities of government. One or more committees may establish information missions and working groups as part of their scrutiny of government. There is provision for special committees and committees of inquiry.

**Senate composition**

Political groups may comprise one or more political parties. Currently the two largest political groups are:

- Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) 127
- Socialists and allies 102

UMP took control of the Senate from the Socialists in the 2014 election. The number of women senators is 87, or 25 per cent.

**Visit programme**

We began our programme in Paris, where we met first with the National Assembly France–New Zealand Friendship Group. Our discussions included a wide range of topics, from sign language as an official language to youth criminal justice. The French territories in the Pacific and France’s views on developments in that region were discussed at length, as was the growing influence and involvement of China in the Pacific. We discussed the important role the New Zealand Parliament plays in assisting to strengthen many small and vulnerable Pacific parliaments, and New Zealand’s close economic relations with China.

In response to questions from the French parliamentarians about New Zealand’s experiences of the removal of farm subsidies during the 1980s, I responded that it was tough on New Zealand farmers at that time (including myself). However, New Zealand was now a competitive agricultural producer in the global market, and no farmer in New Zealand wanted to go back to a system of state subsidies. I added that I believe the greatest challenge the world faces is food security, and that the food producing countries needed to work together to ensure a safe and stable global food supply.
We then travelled north of Paris and visited Caterpillar Valley Cemetery in Longueval, en route to Arras, where 125 New Zealand soldiers are buried. The cemetery also contains the memorial to those men of the New Zealand Division (1,205 in total) who were killed in the Battles of the Somme in 1916 and whose bodies were never found. The delegation laid poppies on the graves of the New Zealand soldiers and held a short, but very moving service at the memorial. We also laid a wreath at the New Zealand National Memorial at Longueval.

Following those commemorations we drove to Arras and were hosted at a reception by the Mayor of Arras, Frédéric Leturque, who thanked the delegation for the sacrifices made by New Zealanders in the First World War. Arras is of particular significance to New Zealand, where in 1916 the New Zealand Tunnelling Company played a major role in connecting and extending the natural cave systems under the town. On 9 April 1917, 24,000 allied troops emerged from the tunnels from the site of the Wellington Quarry to begin the Battle of Arras. The New Zealand miners named the caves after New Zealand towns, and the New Zealand Government recognised the special relationship with the naming of the Arras Tunnel in Wellington in 2014.

The next day we were guests of honour at the 98th Official Commemorations of the Battle of Arras, alongside British, Canadian, Australian and French representatives, at the dawn service at the Carrière Wellington (Wellington Quarry Museum). This was followed by a tour of the tunnels, one of the few physical traces left by New Zealanders on the Western Front.

That afternoon we travelled back to Paris and held meetings with the Senate France–New Zealand Friendship Group and with the President of the Senate, Mr Gérard Larcher. As with our meeting with the National Assembly friendship group, our discussions covered a wide variety of issues, including the French parliamentary system, agriculture, and security issues on
the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Agenda. Climate change was also a topic of much discussion, both in this meeting and throughout our meetings in France. We also heard about the importance France attaches to the Conference of Parties 21 (CoP21) process and their desire to achieve outcomes that will significantly advance improvements in climate change.

President Larcher welcomed us to the Senate and thanked us for visiting France. He too thanked the delegation for the sacrifices New Zealand soldiers made in giving their lives for freedom, adding that France owed them and many others a debt of honour. He also thanked New Zealand for its cooperation in the Pacific, including during the recent cyclone in Vanuatu. He praised New Zealand’s significant contribution to the Pacific, including to the Secretariat of the South Pacific Community. We discussed New Zealand’s case for an FTA with the EU, during which I emphasised that New Zealand was not a major global producer, nor a threat to France, because of the global demand for our products, particularly from Asia. This meant we would simply not be able to substantially increase production for Europe from its current level. I also invited President Larcher to visit New Zealand.

On our final day in France, we met with senior officials from the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Director-General of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Irina Bokova, and with the President of the National Assembly of France, Claude Bartolone.

At the OECD we held a roundtable discussion with senior officials, which began with a presentation by Deputy Secretary-General, Mari Kiviniemi. This was followed by very interesting presentations by OECD Chief Economist Catherine Mann; on climate change by former New Zealand Minister and Director of the OECD Environment Division, Hon Simon Upton; and on trade and services by Deputy Director of the OECD Trade and Agriculture Directorate, Raed Safadi. As a member of the OECD since 1973, New Zealand has agencies that are actively involved with the work of the OECD, including (for example) its trade work on global value
chains and utilising their expertise in education. The OECD’s work is valuable for debating and evaluating policy ideas and for sharing experiences, particularly to New Zealand as a small country, and we thanked them for their high quality work.

The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, complemented New Zealand on its engagement in the Pacific and on Small Islands Developing States issues. We discussed UNESCO’s work in protecting cultural heritage during armed conflict, such as the destruction of statues in Iraq, which is now on the UNSC agenda. UNESCO also plays a role in countering extremism by encouraging dialogue between groups through cooperation in education, science and culture, and on freedom of expression and the safety of journalists. The Director-General commented on the value of having parliamentarians introduced to the organisation’s work, which was something she would like to see more of.

We were welcomed to the National Assembly at Palais Bourbon by the President of the National Assembly of France, Claude Bartolone, who paid tribute to the brave New Zealand soldiers who had “shed blood for freedom” in France and on the Western Front. He also noted the level of France–New Zealand cooperation in the Pacific, and joined us in recognising 70 years of diplomatic relations between our two countries. The President reiterated that it was a true pleasure to have us visit his country and that ours was a great friendship. I also raised New Zealand’s case for beginning negotiations on an FTA with the EU and asked for France’s support, which he said was worth closer examination.

Dr Graham acknowledged, on behalf of our Parliament, the work France was leading in an attempt to reform the UNSC, particularly the circumscription of the use of the veto power by the five permanent members of the UNSC. New Zealand fully supported France in this endeavour and we encouraged President Hollande to continue to pursue this goal. President Bartolone agreed that there was a need to have a more effective multilateral mechanism to deal with such important security situations, and that the terrorism his country had experienced in January showed the need for continued cooperation in the fight against extremism.
Our visit to France concluded with the delegation participating in the rekindling of the eternal flame ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. The remains of an unknown French soldier were buried at the Arc de Triomphe on Armistice Day in 1920. An eternal flame was added over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in 1923. The ceremony of the rekindling of the eternal flame was initiated in 1921 and has occurred every night since at 6:30 pm. Hon Chester Borrows, Ambassador Dr James Kember and I laid a wreath on behalf of the people of New Zealand. Following the ceremony, we met the groups of French school children who had also taken part in the ceremony, as well as French war veterans.

The Speaker’s Delegation at the eternal flame at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Paris.

The people of France place huge importance on honouring the sacrifices of their country and others during the world wars, in the name of freedom and democracy. It was a true honour for us to stand side-by-side with them for these commemorations.

The wreath laid by the Speaker’s Delegation on behalf of the people of New Zealand.
Northern Ireland

Background on the Northern Ireland Assembly

The Northern Ireland Assembly has 108 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), elected for a term of five years. The most recent election was held in May 2011.

Electoral system

Members are elected by single transferable vote from 18 multi-member constituencies, each returning six members.

Voters must be aged 18 years or over and be a British, Irish, qualifying Commonwealth or European Union citizen who is registered at an address within an Assembly constituency. Candidates must be aged 18 years or over, and be a British, Irish, Commonwealth or EU citizen.

Presiding Officer

The Speaker is elected by and from among the members. The present Speaker is Mitchel McLaughlin.

Legislative powers

The Assembly’s legislative powers fall into three categories.

- Transferred matters, on which the Assembly has full legislative powers, cover mainly economic and social areas. They include health, education, social security, economic development, environment and transport.
- Excepted matters are matters of national importance, e.g., the constitution, international relations, defence. These remain the responsibility of the United Kingdom government.
- Reserved matters are issues where legislative authority generally rests with the United Kingdom, but the Assembly can legislate with the consent of the Secretary of State. They include broadcasting, international trade, intellectual property and the foreshore and seabed.

Legislative process

Following a bill’s introduction, its first stage takes place without debate. In the second stage the bill is debated, after which it is referred to a committee. Once the committee has reported back, the bill is considered in detail in the consideration stage and the further consideration stage. The final stage, with debate, follows.

Committees

Eleven statutory committees advise and assist Ministers in the formulation of policy within their portfolios. There are six standing committees, which include the Public Accounts and Audit Committees as well as committees dealing with internal Assembly matters. Ad hoc committees may be established to deal with particular issues.
Assembly composition

Nine parties are currently represented in the Assembly. The five largest parties are:

Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) 38
Sinn Féin 29
Social Democratic and Labour Party 14
Ulster Unionist Party 13
Alliance Party 8

These five parties together form the government. The number of women members is 21, 19 per cent.

Northern Ireland House of Commons seats

Northern Ireland is also represented in the United Kingdom with 18 seats in the House of Commons.

Visit programme

Our visit to Northern Ireland began with a briefing and dinner with New Zealand’s Ambassador to Northern Ireland (and High Commissioner to the United Kingdom) Dr the Rt Hon Sir Lockwood Smith and New Zealand’s Consul-General to Ireland, Alan McCarthy. We travelled by train from Dublin to Belfast and began with a briefing on devolution in the United Kingdom by Neill Jackson, from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The United Kingdom Government retains responsibility for foreign affairs and taxation, but the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly retain governance over most other matters. The Assembly selects its members to ensure Northern Ireland’s largest political communities (the unionists and nationalists) both participate in governing the Region. Most recently, political developments culminated in the Stormont House Agreement on 23 December 2014, which included budget and welfare reform measures, as well as institutional reforms. It also created several agencies to deal with the legacy of the past, including the Historical Investigations Unit to look at the deaths that occurred during the time of the Troubles.

We were then hosted for lunch by the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mitchel McLaughlin. This gave the delegation an opportunity to meet informally with a number of members from the different Northern Ireland communities. We took the opportunity to seek their views and learned a great deal about their individual and community perspectives. In discussing the work of the Assembly and its progress, Speaker McLaughlin used the analogy of two piles of paper, which represented the array of issues that required discussion and accommodation between the republican and nationalist communities. He commented that following the Saint Andrews Agreement, the Assembly and Executive inherited a small pile of issues that had been resolved and a significantly larger pile of unresolved issues. Very few issues, he noted, had been moved from the unresolved to the resolved pile since then, although notably peace had been maintained and progress was being made, albeit slowly.

After viewing the Assembly in Plenary Question Time, we were formally introduced and welcomed. We then had a brief opportunity to meet with the First Minister, Rt Hon Peter Robinson, Leader of the DUP, and deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness, Leader of Sinn Féin. We had the opportunity to speak with both the First Minister and deputy First Minister,
and heard their views on the progress that is being made on a range of economic issues, as well as on the peace and reconciliation process.

We then held a round-table discussion with a selection of members from across the different parties in the Assembly. We met with Stewart Dickson (Alliance), Chris Hazzard (Sinn Féin), and Sammy Douglas and Robin Swann (DUP). We heard that the concerns and issues from the Troubles are still very prominent in Northern Ireland today, and are central to contemporary political debates. However, all members we met agreed that none of them wanted to return to the violence and disagreements of the past. They all wanted to work together for a better future, and for future generations of Northern Ireland. The Stormont Agreement was viewed by the members as a critical step and further evidence that politics in Northern Ireland had evolved to an important stage, where it was possible to reach an accommodation within the system that has been put in place, and thereby preserving its integrity.

The Speaker's Delegation and New Zealand's Honorary Consul, Margaret Lee (left) meet with Rt Hon Peter Robinson, First Minister of Northern Ireland (left), and Martin McGuinness, deputy First Minister (right).

During the meetings, the delegation reflected on the peace process in Northern Ireland from our own, New Zealand, perspective. Drawing on New Zealand’s Treaty of Waitangi settlement process, Adrian Rurawhe noted the importance of reconciliation and redress in overcoming inter-generational trauma, and the importance of settlement in community healing. Hon Chester Borrows noted that, as a good friend of Northern Ireland, New Zealand had a role as kaitiaki of the peace process and that it has a responsibility to maintain connections and our understanding of developments, so that we can offer support to the parties in the future, if required.

We concluded our visit to Northern Ireland by visiting Ballance House, the birthplace of former Premier John Ballance and home of the Ulster New Zealand Trust. We were welcomed by the Executive and members of the Trust, by the Mayor of Lisburn and Castlereagh Council, Thomas
Beckett, and by three exchange students from Auckland’s Dilworth College who were studying at the Royal School Dungannon in County Tyrone, who welcomed us with a stirring haka.

To mark the visit, I had the privilege of planting a New Zealand cultivar apple tree in the Ballance House orchard, which had been replanted by the All Blacks during a tour in 1989.

We received an in-depth briefing on the rich historical influence in New Zealand from Northern Ireland, and had the opportunity to discuss the importance of maintaining awareness of the unique connections and building on the contemporary relationship. The delegation was given a short tour of Ballance House and was impressed by the care and dedication of the Trust and its volunteers in preserving and nurturing this important piece of New Zealand–Northern Ireland history.

Premier Ballance represented the electorates of Rangitikei and Whanganui during his notable political career, and the delegation included the current members of Parliament for Whanganui, Hon Chester Borrows, and for the Māori Seat of Te Tai Hauāuru, Adrian Rurawhe. Their presence as members of the delegation, and the strong historical links between Ulster and Premier Ballance with Whanganui, added further meaning and significance to the occasion of our visit.

As a good friend of Northern Ireland, and as an original donor to and Board Member of the International Fund for Ireland, which supports reconciliation throughout Ireland, it is vital that New Zealand continues to engage with the leadership of Northern Ireland. Ballance House is a special place and has become a focal point for strengthening relations between our two countries. It is important to recognise the valuable work of the Ulster New Zealand Trust, and we thank them for their hard work and dedication.
Republic of Ireland

Background on the Houses of the Oireachtas (Tithe an Oireachtais)
The Oireachtas has two Houses, the Dáil Éireann and the Seanad Éireann.

Dáil Éireann (House of Representatives)
The Dáil Éireann has 166 deputies, elected for a term of five years. The number of deputies in the next Dáil will be reduced to 158. The most recent election was held in February 2011.

Electoral system
Deputies are elected by proportional representation from 43 multi-member constituencies, returning between three and five members each. Voting is by single transferable vote. At the next general election, the number of constituencies will be reduced to 40.

Voters must be aged 18 years or over and be Irish, British or qualifying EU citizens. Candidates must be Irish citizens aged 21 years or over.

Presiding Officer
The Ceann Comhairle (Speaker / Chairperson) is elected by and from among the members. The present Ceann Comhairle is Seán Barrett.

The Ceann Comhairle traditionally does not actively participate in politics whilst in office. Unless a Ceann Comhairle announces before dissolution that they do not wish to be a member of the next Dáil, they will be deemed to have been re-elected, although there is no guarantee of continuation as Ceann Comhairle.

Legislative process
Financial bills and constitutional amendments must be introduced in the Dáil. All other bills may be introduced in either House. Introduction of a bill constitutes its first stage. The second stage debate on the bill is followed by the third, or committee, stage. The bill in its entirety may be referred to a select or special committee, or be considered in Committee of the whole Dáil, or some provisions of the bill may be referred to the former and some considered in the latter. Any amendments offered at the committee stage are considered at the fourth (report) stage before the bill is debated for the final time in the fifth stage. Once passed in one House a bill is sent to the other House where the same procedure is followed. The Dáil may override Seanad amendments to or rejection of a bill. Constitutional amendments must be put to a referendum.

Committees
There are three standing committees: the Public Accounts Committee and two committees dealing with Dáil matters. Eleven select committees, comprising both deputies and senators, consider bills and scrutinise the activities of the government in their respective subject areas. In the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland MPs also have speaking rights. Special committees may also be set up for a particular purpose.
Dáil composition

Eight parties are presently represented in the Dáil. There are 24 independent deputies. The four largest parties are:

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<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fine Gael</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sinn Féin</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fine Gael and Labour form a coalition government. There are 27 female deputies, or 16 per cent of the Dáil. Deputies’ official title is Teachta Dála (Deputy to the Dáil), abbreviated to TD.

Seanad (Senate)

The Seanad has 60 members, elected or nominated for a term of five years. Senate elections must be held within 90 days of dissolution of the Dáil. The most recent election was in April 2011.

Electoral system

A total of 43 ‘panel’ senators are elected by incoming Dáil deputies, outgoing senators, and local body councillors. Six ‘university’ senators are elected by the graduates of the National University of Ireland and the University of Dublin (Trinity College). Elections are by proportional representation using the single transferable vote method. In addition, 11 senators are nominated by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister).

Panel senatorial candidates are nominated by five panels representing vocational interests: culture, agriculture, labour, commerce and administration. The members of the panels are nominated by non-profit organisations in the relevant sector and by incoming Dáil deputies and outgoing senators. University senatorial candidates are nominated by graduates of the two universities. All candidates must be Irish citizens aged 21 years or over.

Presiding Officer

The Cathaoirleach (Speaker / Chairperson) is elected by and from among the senators. The present Cathaoirleach is Paddy Burke.

Committees

In addition to the Dáil joint committees, the Seanad has three standing committees dealing with Seanad matters, and one select committee, the Public Consultation Committee, whose purpose is to provide for direct engagement and consultation between the public and the Seanad.

Seanad composition

In theory, the Seanad does not recognise party affiliations. Actual party strengths are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fine Gael</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sinn Féin</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>14</td>
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</table>

There are 17 female senators, or 28 per cent of the Seanad.
Visit programme

After returning from Northern Ireland, we held our first meeting with Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) and Foreign Affairs, with Special Responsibility for the Diaspora. The theme of migration was prominent throughout our discussions in Ireland, but particularly with Minister Deenihan where we discussed the most recent migration of Irish workers into the construction industry in Christchurch. Approximately 14,000 Irish-born people are in New Zealand, according to Irish statistics, and they are playing a major role in the Christchurch re-build.

Minister Deenihan explained that maintaining connections with their migrants was a high priority for the Irish Government. As the domestic economy improved, it brought with it the potential to encourage migrants to reconnect, invest, create jobs and return to Ireland. The Irish Government provided us with its policy document regarding the diaspora and outlined its substantial portfolio work programme, including with the private sector and organisations such as “Connect Ireland”. We noted some strong similarities between Ireland and New Zealand and saw that there were some aspects of the Irish Government’s approach in this area that New Zealand could learn from.

Our final evening in Dublin was spent with the expatriate New Zealand community at a reception hosted by the New Zealand-Ireland Association at the Irish Film Institute.

We began the final day of our programme in Ireland meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Simon Coveney TD. Minister Coveney emphasised the commonalities between New Zealand and Ireland, adding that “more so than ever before” Ireland and New Zealand had the opportunity to influence international thinking together on sustainable intensification of agriculture. We agreed that Ireland and New Zealand have much in common, given the similarities of our agricultural systems.
Minister Coveney said Ireland was interested in emulating what he described as New Zealand’s “template for growth” in agriculture, and I agreed that we had much to offer. This included through enhanced cooperation between our industries, particularly technology and on-farm expertise that New Zealand had developed over time. Recent substantial changes in Europe, such as the lifting of the EU’s milk production quotas, provided countries like Ireland with significant opportunities to develop their industries further, and the Minister emphasised the Irish Government’s goal to increase dairy production in Ireland by 50 per cent. This provides an opportunity not only for Ireland, but for greater New Zealand and Ireland collaboration for mutual benefit.

Minister Coveney stressed that he was determined to learn from New Zealand’s experience of the environmental challenges associated with growing and intensifying production. He also emphasised that Ireland needed to prove that expansion on this scale could be achieved in a way that was sustainable from an environmental perspective. The Minister felt there needed to be a change in the way different sectors’ greenhouse gas emissions were currently treated the same way because, as New Zealand had shown, food production was a global system and this needed to be taken into account. The Minister and I agreed that the global challenge was to produce more protein for a growing global population, and to do so in a smarter way, such as through close cooperation in the Global Research Alliance. Dr Graham questioned whether this was a realistic proposition, and suggested that far more radical changes were needed in global practices, if there was to be any chance of avoiding catastrophic ecological damage.

Following a powerful performance of “Pals – the Irish at Gallipoli”, at Collins Barracks, we met privately with Caenn Comhairle (Speaker), Sean Barrett. He then hosted the delegation for a working lunch, which enabled us to interact with a cross-section of members of the House of Oireachtas and Senators. We were then given a tour of the House of Oireachtas, before meetings with members of the Foreign Affairs Committee and with the Ireland–New Zealand Friendship Group. These meetings allowed for a comprehensive exchange of views on a range of domestic policy issues, common social challenges, agriculture, the Christchurch re-build, Māori and
indigenous issues, combating problem gambling, health insurance, welfare reform, tourism, tax policy and the peace process in Northern Ireland.

The final meeting of our comprehensive programme in Ireland was with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charles Flanagan TD, and we reflected on the warmth and genuine friendship between our two countries. The Minister visited New Zealand two years before, and was interested to learn about the results of our general election and more recent political developments, including the by-election result in Northland. He too noted the strong historical and contemporary connections between Ireland and New Zealand, including the number of Irish nationals living in New Zealand, and wanted to deepen the relationship further.

We discussed our observations from our visit to Northern Ireland and the challenges that region faced moving forward. We also discussed the international challenges faced by both countries, including from terrorism and climate change.

Although Ireland and New Zealand are far apart geographically, as Minister Flanagan noted, we are very similar in many ways. Our visit to Ireland highlighted the importance of supporting and nourishing relations between good friends. The removal of the EU’s production quotas in the dairy industry provides a significant opportunity for Ireland and New Zealand to work more closely together, share technology and expertise, and grow both countries’ agricultural exports – including negotiating a high quality, comprehensive EU–NZ free trade agreement. Not only are there significant opportunities for closer cooperation between New Zealand and Irish agricultural industries, but also in addressing the critical issue of climate change. This includes through collaborative research as part of the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases.
Republic of Poland

Background on the Parliament of Poland

The Polish Parliament is made up of the Sejm (Lower House) and the Senate (Upper House).

Sejm

The Sejm has 460 deputies, elected for a term of four years. The most recent election was held in October 2011.

Electoral system

Deputies are elected by proportional representation from 41 multi-member constituencies returning between seven and 20 members each. Voters vote for one candidate on a constituency list. Seats are allocated proportionately to the highest polling candidates on the constituency lists of individual parties that obtain at least five per cent of the national vote, or party coalitions that obtain at least eight per cent of the national vote. Since 2011 it has been compulsory for every constituency list to comprise at least 35 per cent women and at least 35 per cent men.

Voters must be citizens aged 18 years or over. Candidates must be citizens aged 21 years or over.

Presiding Officer

The Marshal is elected by and from among the deputies. The present Marshal is His Excellency Radosław Sikorski, who was previously Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was elected Marshal in September 2014 after his predecessor, Ewa Kopacz, succeeded Donald Tusk as Prime Minister, when the latter resigned to become President of the European Council.

Legislative process

Bills are introduced in the Sejm. The first reading consideration of a bill usually takes place in a standing committee, but some major bills receive their first reading consideration in a plenary session before being sent to a committee. Following the second reading, a bill may be referred back to a committee, or it may proceed straight to the third reading, which includes debate on any amendments submitted during the second reading. Once passed in the Sejm, a bill is transmitted to the Senate. If the Senate does not complete its consideration of a bill within 30 days (20 days for the Budget and 14 days for urgent bills), the bill as passed by the Sejm is adopted. The Sejm has the power to overturn Senate amendments to or rejection of a bill. The Senate may draw up bills for introduction in the Sejm.

Committees

There are 27 standing committees, most of which consider legislation and scrutinise the activities of the Executive in their respective subject areas. Special committees may be set up for a particular purpose.

Assembly composition

Six parties are represented in the Sejm. The four largest parties are:

Civic Platform 202
Law and Justice 134
Polish People’s Party 38
Democratic Left Alliance 35
Civic Platform and the Polish People’s Party form a coalition government. There are 111 female deputies, or 24 per cent of the Sejm.

**Senate**

The Senate has 100 members, elected for a term of four years. The most recent election was held in October 2011.

**Electoral system**

Senators are elected by simple majority vote from single-member constituencies. Candidates must be citizens aged 30 years or over.

**Presiding Officer**

The Marshal is elected by and from among the senators. The present Marshal is His Excellency Bogdan Borusewicz.

**Committees**

There are 16 standing committees that consider legislation and other matters within their respective subject areas. Special committees may be set up for a particular purpose.

**Senate composition**

Currently there are four parties represented in the Senate. The two largest parties are:

- Civic Platform: 61
- Law and Justice: 32

There are 15 female senators, or 15 per cent of the Senate.

**National Assembly**

On certain occasions the Sejm and the Senate sit in joint session as the National Assembly. The National Assembly witnesses a President taking the oath of office, may declare a President’s permanent incapacity to exercise their duties due to health reasons, and may bring an indictment against the President. The National Assembly is chaired by the Marshal of the Sejm or, in their absence, the Marshal of the Senate.

**Visit programme**

We began our visit to Poland by meeting with our host, His Excellency Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal (Speaker) of the Senate. I hosted Marshal Borusewicz in New Zealand as a Guest of the New Zealand Parliament in mid-2014, during which time we developed an excellent relationship and discussed many important international and parliamentary issues. Marshal Borusewicz invited me to lead a delegation of parliamentarians to Poland to reciprocate his visit to New Zealand, and we were pleased to be able to do so in 2015.

Marshal Borusewicz is a senior political figure in Poland and is actively involved in foreign policy decisions. As such, and following our earlier discussions during his visit to New Zealand, the delegation and I were keen to meet with him and gain his perspective on current international events. The Marshal believed the conflict in Ukraine was clearly an example of third country aggression by Russia, rather than a civil war, and classical warfare rather than modern warfare. We agreed that although we were far away, New Zealand could also be adversely affected by this
conflict, just as many countries had been affected by the downing of flight MH17.

The Marshal believed the conflict had caused significant suffering, for both Ukraine and Russia. Ukraine has lost approximately 15 per cent of its land and 20 per cent of its industrial output. Importantly, it had not yet implemented the reforms it needed (and which its people had demanded) in the economy and the political, local government and judicial framework. The Marshal felt Russia’s economy had suffered significantly as a result of the conflict, through the devaluation of the rouble, embargoes and the fall in the price of oil. However, he felt the resolution of the conflict was in the hands of President Putin, but that his intentions were unclear.

We also discussed the conflict in the Middle East and developments in the Pacific. I offered to assist Poland build closer relationships in the Pacific and thanked them for supporting New Zealand’s UNSC candidacy. The Marshal felt New Zealand and Poland were like-minded on many international issues, and he was pleased we are able to take our place at the UNSC table.

In response to a question from Dr Graham regarding the President of France’s proposal to reform the use of the veto at the UNSC, the Marshal expressed interest in UNSC reform but said that the French proposal was not currently under discussion in the Polish Senate.

Finally, I raised with the Marshal, (as I had in France and Ireland) the issue of seeking his country’s support for New Zealand to begin negotiations with EU for an FTA, which he said he and his Government fully supported.

We then met with the Marshal of the Sejm (Lower House), His Excellency Radoslaw Sikorski. As a former foreign minister, Marshal Sikorski spoke openly about the negative consequences of the conflict in Ukraine, including over the plight of the one million displaced Ukrainians.

Looking to the future, Marshal Sikorski felt the only way forward was to maintain dialogue with
Russia, while at the same time to prepare for an escalation in the conflict. He felt the global fall in the price of oil had been fortunate for the EU, as it had added further pressure, in addition to the sanctions, on the Russian economy.

Marshal Sikorski also shared his perspective on the regional energy market, including that Russia was seeking to achieve political goals through influencing the market. He noted that Poland was paying more than Germany for gas imports from Russia, even though Poland was closer. Although Marshal Sikorski acknowledged the importance of reducing carbon emissions, he stressed that all countries should share that responsibility.

I expressed to Marshal Sikorski our appreciation for his moving a resolution that was passed in the Sejm, which thanked the Government and the people of New Zealand for its kindness and generosity in opening its doors and welcoming Polish refugees to New Zealand.

The next day we met with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Economy, Janusz Piechocinski. The Deputy Prime Minister provided us with a detailed explanation of how Poland had become more internationally competitive, through greater collaboration. Poland did not see New Zealand’s agriculture as a threat, as it maintains a positive food trade balance of 6.5 billion euros, which is expected to continue to increase. He believed Europe was no longer divided between east and west or “old and new”, but rather into countries that are open to work and focused on competitiveness, and those waiting for the world to change. The Deputy Prime Minister was also clear in his support for New Zealand beginning negotiations with the EU for a free trade agreement, declaring Poland was a “staunch ally” and offering Poland’s support in the EU, which is greatly appreciated.

We also met with the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee and the New Zealand Poland Parliamentary Friendship Group. Our conversations canvassed areas of interest, including Ukraine, global security, particularly in the Asia-Pacific, agriculture and health. We also spoke about the success of the Working Holiday Programme and discussed Poland’s interest in increasing its quota.

As guests of Marshal Borusewicz, the delegation was was provided with an outstanding cultural programme that on Friday afternoon in Warsaw, and on Saturday and Sunday morning in Krakow. Our visit to the Warsaw Uprising Museum provided a unique opportunity to better understand that particular aspect of world and Polish history. Visits to the Royal Castle, Wawel Cathedral, St Mary’s Basilica, Jagiellonian University and the Wieliczka Salt Mine enabled the delegation to see a different side of Polish culture and history, of which they are immensely and rightly proud. A dinner hosted on Saturday night in Krakow by the Wojewoda (Governor) of the Malopolska Region, Jerzy Miller, gave us additional insights into the politics and opportunities of one of Poland’s most significant regions.

Our visit to Poland concluded on Sunday with a moving, powerful and emotional visit to the former Nazi concentration and extermination camps, Auschwitz-Birkenau. As one survivor, Henry Appel, had noted, “there is only one thing worse than Auschwitz itself...and that is if the world forgets there was such a place”. Our visit during 2015, the 70th anniversary of the camps’ liberation, served as recognition of the importance of this remembrance, as do New Zealand monetary contributions to the Perpetual Fund of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation.
Our visit to Poland was truly memorable. In a number of meetings, we were thanked for New Zealand’s strong and principled position on the crisis in Ukraine and for everything New Zealand had done for Poland over the years. The New Zealand–Poland bilateral relationship is one of genuine warmth and friendship, as are the ties between our people. It is important that we continue to grow the bilateral relationship, particularly at the parliamentary level, where Poland has had extensive engagement with New Zealand in recent years.

On behalf of the delegation, I wish to sincerely thank Marshal Borusewicz, his parliamentary colleagues and staff for their outstanding hospitality and friendship during our visit to Poland.
Federal Republic of Germany

Background on the German Parliament

The German Parliament is made up of the Bundestag and the Bundesrat.

Bundestag

The Bundestag has a base number of 598 members, elected for a term of four years. The current Bundestag also has 33 additional (four overhang and 28 balance) seats, making a total of 631 members. The most recent election was held in September 2013.

Electoral system

The Bundestag has 299 members elected by simple majority vote from single-member constituencies and 299 members elected by proportional representation. Voters have two votes, one for a constituency candidate and one for a party list in their Land (state). Parties must obtain at least five per cent of the party vote nationwide, or win three constituency seats, to be eligible to be allocated seats. Parties retain, as overhang seats, any constituency seats they win in excess of their share of the party vote. Additional balance seats are allocated to ensure that parties’ representation is consistent with their share of the party vote.

Voters must be citizens aged 18 years or over. Candidates must be citizens of at least one year’s standing and be aged 18 years or over.

Presiding Officer

The President of the Bundestag is elected by and from among the members. The current President is Professor Norbert Lammert.

Legislative process

Prior to its introduction into the Bundestag, a government bill is first submitted to the Bundesrat for comment. Upon introduction to the Bundestag, the bill is considered by the parliamentary groups before its first reading, with or without debate, and referral to a committee. Once a committee has reported a bill back, the second and third readings follow. The third reading takes place without any debate unless it is requested by a parliamentary group, or at least five per cent of the members.

The bill is then sent to the Bundesrat, which has the right to object to it. Before an objection can be lodged, however, a joint Mediation Committee of the two Houses must be convened. If the bill is not a consent bill, the Bundestag can overturn the Bundesrat’s objection. Consent bills, that is, bills that substantially affect the interests of the Länder (states), must receive the consent of the Bundesrat to become law.

Committees

There are 23 permanent committees, with between 14 and 41 members each. The majority of committees consider and make recommendations on matters referred to them by the Bundestag in their respective subject areas. They may also take up matters on their own initiative, but without the power to make recommendations. The distribution of committee Chairs reflects the relative strengths of the parliamentary groups.
Special committees may be set up to deal with particular issues. Committees of inquiry are established to examine possible government maladministration and possible misconduct by politicians. Study commissions, comprising both members and external experts, prepare reports on wide-ranging and significant issues.

**Bundestag composition**

Five parties are presently represented in the Bundestag. They have formed four parliamentary groups (which may be made up of one or more parliamentary parties). The groups are:

- Christian Democratic Union – Christian Social Union: 311
  - Christian Democratic Union (CDU): 255
  - Christian Social Union (CSU): 56
- Social Democratic Party (SPD): 193
- Left Party: 64
- Alliance 90/The Greens: 63

The CDU, its CSU partner, and the SPD together form a grand coalition. There are 230 women members of the Bundestag, or 34 per cent of members.

**Bundesrat**

The Bundesrat has 69 members. Members do not serve fixed terms, but serve at the pleasure of their Land government (State Government).

**Appointment of members**

Each of the 16 Länder has between three and six votes in the Bundesrat, depending on the size of its population. A Land may appoint as many members as it has votes. Members are appointed by their Land government and must be members of that government.

**Presiding Officer**

The President of the Bundesrat is elected every November from among the Premiers of each Land on a rotational basis. The current President is Volker Bouffier, the Premier of Hesse.

**Committees**

The Bundesrat has 16 standing committees, each with 16 members, one from each Land. To assist them in balancing their dual roles as a member of the Bundesrat and as a Land minister, members may be represented in committees by departmental experts.

**Voting**

Members do not have an individual vote. In plenary sessions each Land casts a bloc vote. In committees each Land has one vote.
Bundesrat composition

Many Länder have coalition governments and are represented in the Bundesrat by members of more than one party. The three largest parties in the Bundesrat at present are:

Social Democratic Party 34
Alliance 90/The Greens 13
Christian Democratic Union 11

There are 28 women members of the Bundesrat, or 41 per cent of its members.

Visit programme

The delegation was formally hosted in Germany by the President of the Bundestag, Professor Norbert Lammert. The delegation was accorded an official State Visit, which enabled us to visit one other location in Germany, outside of Berlin. Because of its economic importance, existing linkages with New Zealand, high-tech sector and traditional and significant agricultural economy, we felt the Bavarian capital of Munich was the most appropriate destination.

Our visit to Germany began in Munich, where on Sunday evening we were hosted for dinner by the Speaker of the Bavarian Parliament, Ms Barbara Stamm. We discussed agricultural and trade policy, as well as German and New Zealand politics. Speaker Stamm noted the strong like-mindedness of our two countries, New Zealand’s support for German reunification and its popularity as a tourist destination for Germans.

Our first meeting at the start of our busy programme was with Professor Klaus Lutz, Chief Executive of BayWa, and other senior managers. Since 2012, BayWa AG is the major shareholder of T&G (formerly Turners and Growers), and we learned more about BayWa’s strategy of internationalisation during our meeting.

The Speaker’s Delegation meets with Professor Klaus Lutz, Chief Executive of BayWa.
Professor Lutz said they had been attracted to T&G as a stable and successful global business with close links to its producers (BayWa’s origins are as a cooperative). He felt their New Zealand investment had been a success, providing direct preferential access to the Chinese market, where it was experiencing double-digit growth. He noted that the European market had been more challenging recently, with the Russian import ban resulting in a flood of fruit onto the European market.

Given BayWa’s position as one of Europe’s market leaders in Agri-business, scope for expansion in Europe was limited. However, Professor Lutz said BayWa wanted to increase both its European and Asian reach. BayWa was also seeking an increased linkage between agri-tech and production, such as through their development of fertiliser software applications and other digital processes.

Professor Lutz fully supported an EU–NZ free trade agreement and saw no reason for any delay in negotiations. In response to questions from Dr Graham and Fletcher Tabuteau, Professor Lutz said BayWa’s strategy also included an investment focus on renewable energy, and felt much of BayWa’s success stemmed from keeping to its origin of cooperative values. We also learned about its research and development approach and that it had established new postgraduate scholarships in New Zealand.

We then visited the Fraunhofer Society Headquarters, and met with Executive Vice President, Professor Alexander Verl and Professor Oliver Röhrle. Professor Verl provided an overview of the organisation’s activities, including its collaboration with Auckland University’s Bio-Engineering Institute, through the “ICON project”, which was progressing well. We were particularly interested to learn about Fraunhofer’s work in licenses, where it increasingly purchased shareholdings in businesses, as opposed to purchasing intellectual property outright. It currently has interests in 79 companies, and continued to collect royalties from its MP3 invention, more than 15 years ago.

Our day ended with visits to the Bavarian Land Parliament, and Nymphenburg Palace.

The delegation and Ambassador Rod Harris (right), with First Deputy Speaker of the State Parliament of Bavaria, Hon Reinhold Bocklet (centre).
We began our final day in Bavaria meeting with the Minister for Food, Agriculture and Forestry, Helmut Brunner. The Minister complimented New Zealand on its agriculture sector, describing it as an excellent example of successful internationalisation, especially in emerging markets. He provided an overview of the Bavarian dairy sector, including its voluntary environmental protection programme. As I did with other countries, I again emphasised the opportunities for collaboration that stem from the lifting of the EU dairy production quotas, whilst also acknowledging there would be political sensitivities to manage in regions such as Bavaria.

We then visited BMW Group Headquarters and BMW World, where we were given an in-depth tour of its production plant. We were impressed with its high-tech manufacturing, which sees BMW produce 850 cars each day. The level and sophistication of its technology and robotics, combined with its extensive and highly skilled co-workers is impressive.

After arriving in Berlin, we first visited the Berlin Wall Memorial. The delegation was given a guided tour and historical presentation about the Memorial and the personal stories of those that were killed in attempting to escape East Berlin, as well as the ongoing preservation of the site. We found this visit both stimulating and moving, and it provided us with an important historical backdrop for our time in Berlin.

We were formally welcomed to Berlin and to the Bundestag by President (Speaker) Professor Norbert Lammert. President Lammert characterised New Zealand as “like family” to Germany, and although there were no major issues in the bilateral relationship, we agreed that it should not be taken for granted.

President Lammert reflected on Chancellor Merkel’s visit to New Zealand in 2014. He said that her visit had left a lasting impression, and that countries like ours needed to make more of our
shared values and common interests. I agreed that we had much in common, and that our shared commitment to democracy and human rights (as examples) meant we held very similar views on many international issues. President Lammert thought more could be done (formally and informally) to achieve more concrete cooperation between our two countries, to facilitate regular exchanges on our respective interests, and we agreed to discuss this further.

As a sociologist, Professor Lammert was interested in New Zealand’s adoption of the Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system, noting that functioning democracies seldom changed their entire voting system. We gave the President some background on the nature and scale of policy changes made by successive governments in the 1980s and early 1990s, as well as the disproportionate electoral results, the Royal Commission of Inquiry and subsequent referenda. Dr Graham and Fletcher Tabuteau both added that they were thankful to MMP for their parliamentary roles, commended Germany for its global leadership on sustainability and climate change, and (along with Adrian Rurawhe and Hon Chester Borrows) outlined their party and personal parliamentary interests.

Our discussion also included an exchange of views on the situation in Ukraine and recent developments within the EU. President Lammert noted that the process of economic and political integration in Europe was ongoing and that the counties of the Eastern Partnership had very different challenges. He believed the situation in Ukraine was particularly complicated, as it still needed to reorganise its political system. Instead, Ukraine was forced to expend time and resources on its eastern territory. We exchanged views on Russia and the implications for the ongoing crisis. President Lammert commented that nearly everyone in Europe had thought the principle of territorial integrity, self-determination and non-interference was undisputed, but that this crisis had proven otherwise. As with other political figures that we met with, President Lammert was also interested in our relations with China and its role in the Asia-Pacific region.
Our discussions on international affairs, developments within the EU and New Zealand's perspectives on these and other developments continued in meetings with the Bundestag's Parliamentary Friendship Group for Relations with Australia and New Zealand, with the State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office, Stephan Steinlein, and with the Bundestag's Committee on Food and Agriculture Chairman, Alois Gerig.

We were hosted for a working lunch by the Bundestag’s parliamentary friendship group, during which the Chairperson, Volkmar Klein, noted Germany was New Zealand’s largest trading partner within the EU. He congratulated New Zealand on its election to the UNSC. We then exchanged views on a wide range of issues, including refugee management, skilled migrant employment, the rise of China and New Zealand trade policy. I again argued our case for New Zealand to begin negotiations with the EU on an FTA, which was welcomed by the Group.

Secretary Steinlein was interested in discussing the Asia-Pacific region, and sought our views on the strategic impact of the rise of China and its relations with its neighbours. I provided an overview of New Zealand’s close bilateral relationship with China, our growing trade relationship, and the benefits being realised from our China FTA, highlighting BayWa as one beneficiary. The Secretary also noted the commonalities between Germany and New Zealand and that he believed both countries could do more to take the relationship forward.

Our meeting with the Bundestag’s Committee on Food and Agriculture provided a useful opportunity to hear a range of views from across the political spectrum within the Bundestag. Dr Kirstin Tackmann noted that there was significant potential for more cooperation in the agricultural science research sphere, and she referred specifically to Massey University’s research in the animal health and climate change protection. We also discussed food labelling, agricultural sustainability and emissions, renewable energy, prospected for an EU–NZ FTA and the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

We then proceeded to the Berlin House of Representatives, where we learned more about that legislatures’ devolved responsibilities. We exchanged views and compared how the Berlin and New Zealand Parliaments operated, as well as discussing recent parliamentary challenges and developments. As Berlin is one of the most important cities in Europe, home to almost 600 New Zealanders and a centre for trade and cultural ties for New Zealand with both Germany and Europe, it was useful for us to learn more detail about its political structures and responsibilities.

President Lammert then hosted the delegation for dinner at his Official Residence. This gave us another opportunity to interact with our host, President Lammert, and other important political figures. On behalf of the New Zealand Parliament, I presented him with a carved waka hoe paddle, and invited him to visit New Zealand as a Guest of our Parliament in the near future.

The final day of our programme began with an official welcome and a formal introduction in the plenary of the Bundestag. This gave us the opportunity to observe the Bundestag in session, which highlighted many similarities and some differences in parliamentary procedure. We were then given a tour of the Reichstag building, which highlighted its superb architecture and mix of Germany’s heritage with modern design and technology.

The first of our two meetings with Bundestag committees was with the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Dr Norbert Röttgen. As with many of his colleagues, Dr Röttgen was particularly interested in our views on and relationship with China. Although he noted
Germany had historically been more focused on domestic affairs, public awareness had shifted political interest to issues emanating from abroad. We exchanged views on China and developments within the Asia-Pacific region, and I emphasised the success of our close bilateral relations with China.

In response to a question from Dr Graham, Röttgen believed the situation in Ukraine was not ideological, but fundamentally territorial in nature. He shared his views on developments in Russian history, which he saw as helping to explain Russia’s current policies and actions.

Although we were from different parts of the world, Röttgen noted that New Zealand and Germany were not only close in our values and beliefs, but also on policy positions on current security issues. We agreed that these were good reasons for Germany and New Zealand to intensify the relationship and exchange views on global developments.

We were then hosted for a working lunch by the Bundestag’s Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy. Committee Chairman, Dr Peter Ramsauer, began by giving a broad overview of the German economy, noting the difficult reforms that had been implemented by Germany more than a decade ago, which he believed some of Germany’s neighbours needed to implement today. We discussed New Zealand’s nuclear-free status and high use of renewable energy. I again raised the issue of support for an EU–New Zealand FTA, which Ramsauer believed Germany would support. There continues to be, however, substantial discussion in Europe over the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada, as well as over TTIP, with ongoing concerns about a lack of transparency in negotiations. Members from both sides held differing views of this issue.

Later in the afternoon we met with the Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture, Christian Schmidt. Minister Schmidt welcomed us as representatives of “a great agricultural country”, noting New Zealand’s excellent reputation in agriculture and forestry. We exchanged views on the Global Research Alliance (GRA) and international climate change negotiations, and I noted that it would be in no one’s interest to limit the efficient production of food. In response to my question on an EU–New Zealand FTA, the Minister acknowledged that Germany would give New Zealand it’s full support during the reflections process and that they would encourage the Commission to progress its decision-making in this regard.

Our final meeting continued our discussions on climate change, with a visit to the Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change. Professor Ottmar Edenhofer is also Deputy Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and gave us a comprehensive presentation on the latest climate research. Although countries were not (in his view) on track to avoid a two per cent rise in global temperatures, Professor Edenhofer believed the target was achievable. However, in his view, major changes were needed to introduce CO2 removal technologies and the vast quantity of fuel reserves (including 80 per cent of coal and 40 per cent of oil and gas) needed to remain beneath the earth. This presentation, in particular, was a sobering message, which added to our concerns about climate change.

The delegation’s programme ended with a reception at the Ambassador’s Residence, hosted by our Ambassador Rod Harris. This enabled the delegation and Embassy officials to meet with a wide range of key local contacts and New Zealand expatriates who had been invited to meet the delegation.
Our visit highlighted that Germany and New Zealand are like family. Not only do both countries share many of the same values, including a strong commitment to democracy, the rule of law and freedom, but we also take a like-minded policy approach to many issues and challenges facing the world today. On behalf of the delegation, I again express my thanks to my colleague and friend, President Lammert, for his outstanding hospitality and the high-quality programme for the delegation, which enabled us to have a highly successful visit to his great country.
Conclusion

The visit of the Speaker’s Delegation to France, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Poland and Germany was successful and achieved its objectives.

It had been more than a decade since the last Speaker’s Delegation visited France. Our visit helped mark 70 years of diplomatic relations between New Zealand and France and to commemorate some important battles of the First World War, which remain prominent in the hearts and minds of the people of France today. The level of hospitality and engagement by members of both Houses of the French Parliament highlighted our common interests and genuine affinity towards each other.

Our time in Northern Ireland and Ireland was characterised by genuine warmth throughout, providing a clear illustration of our mutual affinity and the value of maintaining political dialogue between our parliaments. While our visit to Northern Ireland was a valuable opportunity to learn and engage with one of New Zealand’s longest-standing friends, our meetings in Ireland allowed us to highlight the significant opportunities for closer cooperation between the New Zealand and Irish agricultural industries, as well as in addressing the critical issue of climate change.

We were pleased to be able to reciprocate recent visits to New Zealand by Marshal Borusewicz and Deputy Marshal Pozdzię, and to contribute to the warmth and friendship that has continued to grow between Poland and New Zealand. As parliamentarians, we also increased our knowledge of important international events and issues, through high-level engagement with members of Poland’s leadership, for which we are extremely grateful.

Germany remains the political and economic engine of the EU, and is increasingly active and influential on the international stage. Our visit to Germany is the first New Zealand visit to be hosted as a State Visit, reflecting the importance Germany places on its relationship with New Zealand. We benefitted from a valuable briefing by the Potsdam Climate Impact Research Institute on Climate Change and its impact on the planet and future generations. Our discussion with our German parliamentary colleagues highlighted our shared values and like-minded policy approaches to many of the challenges facing the world today. It is therefore increasingly important, as President Lammert himself said, that we continue to engage in areas of shared interests and maintain the closest possible contacts between our two freely elected parliaments. As Speaker, I will continue to work to maintain these important contacts.

This year’s Speaker’s Delegation demonstrated once again the value of parliamentary diplomacy, and that Speaker-led diplomacy in particular remains a valuable tool in opening doors to advocate for New Zealand’s national interests and strengthen our relationships with important countries. I took every opportunity to promote New Zealand’s case for a FTA with the EU and to encourage cooperation between our countries and industries, and this was warmly received on all occasions. There can be no doubt about the value of the Speaker’s Delegation, which strengthened relationships between our Parliament and the five legislatures we visited, and advanced New Zealand’s national interests in each country.

Rt Hon David Carter
Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives

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Appendix 1

**Members of the Speaker’s Delegation**

The Rt Hon David Carter MP, Speaker and Leader of the Delegation

Hon Chester Borrows MP, Deputy Speaker, National Party

Adrian Rurawhe MP, Labour Party

Dr Kennedy Graham MP, Green Party

Fletcher Tabuteau MP, New Zealand First Party

Steve Cutting, Manager, Parliamentary Relations and Secretary to the Delegation

Lisa Kinloch, Senior Private Secretary to the Speaker
Appendix 2

Delegation objectives

All countries
- High-level political engagement with each country
- Fostering stronger bilateral relations between the New Zealand Parliament and European Member State Parliaments
- Discuss parliamentary and political developments in each country
- Learn about the economies and the economic and environmental challenges for each country
- Advocate for deeper economic, trade and people-to-people linkages between New Zealand and these European countries
- Gain individual country perspectives of current regional, security and international issues (such as in Ukraine and Syria) and of UN reform
- Learn each country’s perspective on recent developments within the EU, particularly for European economies and in the area of immigration
- Discuss agricultural issues in each country
- Discuss WW100 commemorations; and
- Discuss climate change, country perspectives and efforts to address it.

France
- Celebrate the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between France and New Zealand
- Commemorate the Battle of Arras
- Discuss recent developments and challenges in the Pacific, the role of France and the EU, and share perspectives on the Pacific.

Germany
- Learn about the similarities and differences of the German MMP system compared with New Zealand’s MMP electoral system
- Discuss recent changes, challenges and debates about the MMP electoral systems in Germany and New Zealand.

Poland
- Commemorate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Northern Ireland
- Learn about the peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland.
Appendix 3

Media Releases

PRESS RELEASE

Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives

For immediate release 2 April 2015

Speaker’s Delegation to boost NZ–Europe ties

The annual Speaker’s Delegation is meeting this year with political leaders in France, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Poland and Germany to foster stronger bilateral relations between the New Zealand Parliament and European parliaments.

The Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter says, “The New Zealand delegation is there to exchange views on the significant economic, political and security challenges in the European Union (EU) and its near neighbourhood, as well as those affecting the Pacific.”

“The delegation will also discuss and learn each country’s perspectives on recent developments within the EU, particularly for European economies and in the area of immigration.”

“For New Zealanders, the visit also provides an opportunity to advocate for deeper economic, trade and people-to-people linkages between us and Europe.

“The delegation will also mark some important and historic commemorations, including the 98th anniversary of the Battle of Arras, the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between France and New Zealand, and the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

“I believe that this visit will strengthen some of our oldest, as well as most significant contemporary, relationships with European countries” the Speaker said.

The delegation is led by the Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter and it includes Hon Chester Borrows (National), Adrian Rurawhe (Labour), Dr Kennedy Graham (Green) and Fletcher Tabuteau (NZ First).

The visit takes place from 8–23 April.

ENDS
Notes to Editors:

- Updates and images will be available on @NZParliament
- Please note international time differences are 12 to 13 hours behind NZ.
- The Speaker’s Delegation is an integral part of the New Zealand Parliament’s inter-parliamentary relations programme, approved by the Speaker on an annual basis.
- The New Zealand Parliament is a member of a number of inter-parliamentary organisations and receives numerous invitations and requests for visits. The Speaker’s Delegation forms part of an informal global reciprocal arrangement for parliamentary diplomacy.
- On this occasion, the Speaker was invited by the parliaments of Poland and Germany to lead a NZ Parliamentary delegation to those countries, and we are taking the opportunity while in Europe to also visit France, Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- Parliaments play a role in foreign policy, promoting international cooperation and democratic values, and parliamentary diplomacy is evolving as an effective channel for fostering goodwill and understanding amongst nations by advancing people-to-people contacts. It is invaluable for sharing experiences, in particular in relation to strengthening parliamentary democracy.
- The New Zealand Parliament is of great interest internationally, for its open legislative system, its active select committees, and the way in which minority governments have worked. The Speaker’s Delegation is one effective way of sharing information about these strengths.
- Representation from different political parties adds value through reflecting the divergent views of members.
PRESS RELEASE

Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives

For immediate release 13 April 2015

Honouring New Zealand’s sacrifices and promoting our economic interests

A delegation led by the Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter, attended three commemorative World War One events and promoted New Zealand’s economic interests in France during its recent visit.

The delegation laid a wreath and placed poppies on the headstones of New Zealand soldiers who gave their lives during the Battle of the Somme, and honoured the sacrifices of the New Zealand Tunnelling Company for their part in the Battle of Arras. It was also a privilege for the delegation to be asked to lay a wreath commemorating New Zealand and French soldiers who fought and died during the Great War, at a ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, at the Arc de Triumph in Paris.

The delegation strongly advocated for New Zealand’s economic interests, including seeking to gain France’s support for a European Union-New Zealand trade agreement, at meetings with MPs from the French National Assembly and Senate, with the Speakers of both Houses, and also with senior Government officials.

“Having elected representatives from the New Zealand Parliament at these occasions is important, not only to continue to recognise the sacrifices that were made by our soldiers, but also because of the significance of these commemorations to all French people,” said the Speaker.

“The people of France place huge importance on honouring the sacrifices of both countries, in the name of freedom and democracy. It was an honour to stand side-by-side with them for these commemorations.”

The delegation also held talks with leading figures in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The Speaker added, “because of our isolation, New Zealand’s parliamentarians do not get enough opportunities to engage with important international organisations, particularly for opposition MPs, and this view was also shared by OECD Deputy Secretary-General Mari Kiviniemi and the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova”.

ENDS
PRESS RELEASE

Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives

For immediate release 17 April 2015

Promoting peace and opportunities for New Zealand in Ireland

Continuing the peace and reconciliation process, opportunities in trade, agriculture, and climate change were all discussed this week when the parliamentary delegation led by the Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter, met with counterparts in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

In Belfast, the delegation met with the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the Speaker and a cross-party group of Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly to discuss the progress made in peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. They also visited Ballance House, the birthplace of former New Zealand Premier, John Ballance.

“As a good friend of Northern Ireland, and as an original donor and Board Member of the International Fund for Ireland, which supports reconciliation throughout Ireland, it is vital that New Zealand continues to engage with the leadership of Northern Ireland”, the Speaker said.

The Speaker added, “Ballance House has become a focal point for strengthening relations between our two countries, so it is important to recognise the valuable work of the Ulster New Zealand Trust and to encourage and support the Trust in its work”.

The delegation met with senior Ministers from the Government of the Republic of Ireland, including the Minister for Agriculture, Simon Coveney; Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charles Flanagan; Speaker of the House, Sean Barrett; and, Minister of State with responsibility for Irish citizens abroad, Jimmy Deenihan.

“New Zealand’s agricultural sector has been hugely successful without subsidies over the past three decades. Rather than it being seen as a threat, our success in agriculture along with the removal of the European Union’s (EU) production quotas in the dairy industry, for example, provides a significant opportunity for New Zealand and Ireland to work closely together, share technology and expertise, and grow both countries’ agricultural exports. This includes negotiating a high quality, comprehensive EU–NZ free trade agreement,” said the Speaker.

The Speaker added, “not only are there significant opportunities for closer cooperation between the New Zealand and Irish agricultural industries, but also in addressing the critical issue of climate change. This includes through collaborative research as part of the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases”.

“Our delegation has taken every opportunity to promote New Zealand’s case for a free trade agreement with the EU and this has been warmly received on all occasions”, the Speaker concluded.

ENDS
PRESS RELEASE

Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives

For immediate release 21 April 2015

Advancing New Zealand’s bilateral and trade relationship with Poland

A parliamentary delegation led by the Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter, has been advancing the bilateral and trade relationship with Poland during the past week.

In Warsaw, the delegation met with the Speakers of both the Senate and House of Representatives, as well as with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Economy, Mr Janusz Piechociński, and members of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee and the Poland-New Zealand Parliamentary Group.

The delegation’s visit to Poland reciprocated a number of recent visits by senior Polish members of Parliament to New Zealand, including by the Speaker of the Polish Senate, Marshal Borusewicz, who was hosted by the New Zealand Parliament in June last year. The Deputy Speaker of Poland also led a delegation of members of Parliament to New Zealand in November 2014 for the 70th Anniversary of the arrival of 734 Polish refugee “Pahiatua children” in late 1944.

“The New Zealand–Poland bilateral relationship is one of genuine warmth and friendship. It is important for us to continue to grow that relationship, particularly at the parliamentary level, where Poland has had extensive engagement with New Zealand in recent times”, the Speaker said.

“We were grateful to Speaker Sikorski for his motion in the Polish House of Representatives that thanked New Zealand for its kindness and generosity, in opening our doors to those Polish refugee children in 1944”, the Speaker added.

The delegation also visited the former Nazi concentration and extermination camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau.

“As one survivor, Henry Appel, said ‘there is only one thing worse than Auschwitz itself...and that is if the world forgets there was such a place.’ As New Zealand is a close friend of the Polish people and a contributor to the Perpetual Fund of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, we must never forget the evil that took place”, the Speaker said.

Finally, the delegation sought to confirm Polish support, at the political level, for New Zealand to enter into negotiations with the European Union (EU) for a free trade agreement.

“There are significant opportunities for increased cooperation between our two countries, particularly in the agricultural sector. During our discussions, the Deputy Prime Minister described Poland as a “staunch ally for New Zealand” in advocating for us to begin free trade negotiations with the EU, and we are extremely grateful to him, and Speakers Borusewicz and Sikorski, for their strong, continued support”, the Speaker concluded.
PRESS RELEASE

Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives

For immediate release 24 April 2015

Enhancing New Zealand’s bilateral and parliamentary relationship with Germany

A parliamentary delegation led by the Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter, has been enhancing the bilateral and parliamentary relationship with Germany this past week.

In Berlin, the delegation met with the Speaker of the German Bundestag, President Norbert Lammert, and the Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture, Mr Christian Schmidt.

The delegation met with the Chairpersons and members of the Economic Affairs and Energy, and Food and Agriculture Committees, as well as with members of the German–Australia–New Zealand Parliamentary Group. Finally, the delegation held talks with the Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Director of the Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change, and with the Speaker of the Berlin Regional Parliament.

Discussions with President Lammert and others centred on the shared MMP electoral system, regional security issues, agricultural and scientific cooperation, and our ambitions for a high-quality and comprehensive free trade agreement between New Zealand and the European Union (EU).

Earlier in the week in Munich, the delegation met with Speaker of the Bavarian State Parliament and Bavarian Minister for Food, Agriculture and Forestry, as well as with global German cooperative, BayWa, and the leaders of scientific research institute, the Fraunhofer Society.

“Our delegation’s visit has highlighted that Germany and New Zealand are like family. Not only do we have many shared values, including a strong commitment to democracy, the rule of law and freedom, but we also take a like-minded policy approach to many of the issues and challenges facing the world today”, the Speaker said.

The Speaker added, “Visiting Germany was a critical part of this delegation’s programme. Not only is Germany an economic powerhouse in Europe, but it also plays an increasingly important political leadership role, including in relation to the crisis in East Ukraine”.

“It is therefore increasingly important, as President Lammert himself said, that we continue to engage in areas of shared interests, and that we maintain the closest possible contacts between our two freely elected parliaments”, the Speaker concluded.

ENDS
Appendix 4

Speaker's Delegation Programme

FRANCE – WEDNESDAY 8 APRIL
1130  Delegation briefing by Ambassador Dr James Kember
1230  Lunch with Assemblé Nationale France–New Zealand Friendship Group
1400  Departure from Paris, drive to Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval
1600  Visit to Caterpillar Valley Cemetery
1830  Official Reception at Arras Town Hall, hosted by Mayor of Arras

FRANCE – THURSDAY 9 APRIL
0630  98th Anniversary of the Battle of Arras, Dawn Service at Carrière Wellington Museum
0730  Inauguration of Australian WW1 exhibition by Mayor of Arras
0830  Tour of Arras tunnels at Carrière Wellington
1000  Depart Arras, drive to Paris
1300  Lunch with the Sénat France-New Zealand Friendship Group
1500  Tour of the Sénat of France, Palais de Luxembourg
1630  Meeting with President of the Sénat of France, Mr Gérard Larcher

FRANCE – FRIDAY 10 APRIL
0900  Meetings at OECD, welcome by Deputy Secretary-General, Mari Kiviniemi
0930  Presentation by Chief Economist, Catherine Mann
1000  Presentation by Director of Environment Directorate, Hon Simon Upton
1030  Presentation by Deputy Director Trade & Agriculture Directorate, Raed Safadi
1100  Tour of OECD Château and Conference Centre
1230  Working lunch at the New Zealand Residence
1445  Meeting with UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova
1600  Meeting with the President of the Assemblée Nationale, Mr Claude Bartolone
1630  Tour of the Assemblée Nationale
1830  Rekindling of the Eternal Flame ceremony at Arc de Triomphe
FRANCE – SATURDAY 11 APRIL
1020  Delegation departs Paris on flight EI521
1105  Arrival in Dublin.

IRELAND – SUNDAY 12 APRIL
1900  Delegation dinner and briefing with High Commissioner, Rt Hon Sir Lockwood Smith and Honorary Consul, Alan McCarthy

NORTHERN IRELAND – MONDAY 13 APRIL
0735  Train from Dublin to Belfast
1030  Briefing on devolution in Northern Ireland by Mr Neill Jackson, Head of Executive Division, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
1130  Tour of Parliament Buildings
1230  Lunch hosted by the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mr Mitchel McLaughlin, MLA
1400  Viewing of the Plenary Question Time and Introduction
1430  Meeting with First Minister, Rt Hon Peter D Robinson MLA and Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MLA
1500  Round table discussion with a cross section of Members of the Legislative Assembly
1600  Guided tour of Belfast, including Interface Areas

NORTHERN IRELAND AND IRELAND – TUESDAY 13 APRIL
0900  Departure from Dublin to Lisburn
1000  Visit to Balance House
  • Welcome Haka by New Zealand exchange students
  • Meet with Mayor of Lisburn and Balance House Trust
  • Tree planting
  • Tour of Ballance House
1247  Train from Lisburn to Dublin
1600  Meeting with Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach and Foreign Affairs with Special Responsibility for the Diaspora
1800  Reception with New Zealand–Ireland Association at Irish Film Institute (IFU)
IRELAND – WEDNESDAY 15 APRIL

0830 Meeting with Minister of Agriculture, Mr Simon Coveney, TD
1030 Travel to Collins Military Barracks
1100 Performance of “Pals – the Irish at Gallipoli”
1200 Return to central Dublin
1230 Meeting with Caenn Comhairle, Speaker of the Lower House, Mr Sean Barrett
1300 Working lunch hosted by Caenn Comhairle with a cross-section of Members of the House of Oireachtas (TDs) and Senators
1430 Tour of the House of Oireachtas
1500 Meeting with members of the Foreign Affairs Committee
1545 Meeting with the Ireland–New Zealand Friendship Group
1630 Meeting with Charles Flanagan, TD Minister of Foreign Affairs and trade
2010 Delegation departs Dublin on flight EI184

POLAND – THURSDAY 16 APRIL

0800 Check-in for flight
1015 Delegation departs for Warsaw on flight LO282
1345 Delegation arrives in Warsaw
1600 Meeting with H.E. Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Senate
1700 Meeting with H.E. Radoslaw Sikorski, Marshal of the Sejm (Lower House of Parliament)
1900 Dinner hosted by H.E. Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Senate

POLAND – FRIDAY 17 APRIL

0830 Meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Mr Janusz Piechociński
0940 Meeting with members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate
1230 Visit to the Warsaw Uprising Museum
1400 Lunch hosted by the Poland–New Zealand Parliamentary Group
1600 Visit to the Royal Castle
1735 Train from Warsaw to Krakow
**POLAND – SATURDAY 18 APRIL**

1020  Visit to the Royal Castle  
1100  Visit to the Wawel Cathedral  
1145  Visit to St Mary’s Basilica, the Cloth Hall and the Collegium Maius  
1130  Transfer to Wieliczka  
1400  Lunch  
1530  Visit to the Wieliczka Salt Mines  
1900  Dinner hosted by the Wojewoda (Governor) of the Malopolska Region, Mr Jerzy Miller

**POLAND AND GERMANY – SUNDAY 19 APRIL**

0900  Departure from Krakow  
1000  Visit to the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau  
1145  Transfer to Krakow Airport  
1315  Delegation departs on flight LH1623 to Munich  
1440  Delegation arrives in Munich  
1800  Briefing by Ambassador H.E. Mr Rodney Harris  
1930  Dinner hosted by the Speaker of the Bavarian Land Parliament, Ms Barbara Stamm

**GERMANY – MONDAY 20 APRIL**

1000  Meeting with Professor Klaus Josef Lutz, Chief Executive Officer, and company’s leaders, BayWa AG  
1130  Meeting and lunch with Professor Alexander Verl and other Members of the Executive Board, Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft  
1430  Visit and tour of the Bavarian Land Parliament  
1600  Visit to Nymphenburg Palace

**GERMANY – TUESDAY 21 APRIL**

0900  Meeting with Mr Helmut Brunner, State Minister for Food, Agriculture and Forestry  
1030  Guided Tour BMW Plant and BMW World
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Working lunch hosted by BMW Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.10</td>
<td>Delegation departs for Munich Airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1455</td>
<td>Delegation departs for Berlin on flight LH2042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td>Arrival in Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645</td>
<td>Arrival at hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>Backstage tour of Friedrichstadt-Palast, by Dr Berndt Schmidt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Attend performance of “The Wyld”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**GERMANY – WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0930</td>
<td>Visit to the Berlin Wall Memorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100</td>
<td>Meeting with Professor Norbert Lammert, President of the German Bundestag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1210</td>
<td>Lunch hosted by the Chairperson of the German Bundestag’s Parliamentary Friendship Group for Relations with Australia and New Zealand, Mr Volkmar Klein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1400</td>
<td>Meeting with State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office, Mr Stephan Steinlein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1545</td>
<td>Meeting with the Chairman of the German Bundestag’s Committee on Food and Agriculture, Mr Alois Gerig, and other Committee members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>Meeting with Mr Ralf Wieland, President of the Berlin House of Representatives and tour of the Berlin Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Official dinner, hosted by Professor Norbert Lammert, President of the German Bundestag</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GERMANY – THURSDAY 23 APRIL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Official welcome in the plenary of the German Bundestag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1030</td>
<td>Tour of the Reichstag Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1145</td>
<td>Meeting with Norbert Röttgen, Chairman of the German Bundestag’s Committee on Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1245</td>
<td>Lunch hosted by Dr Peter Ramsauer, Chairman of the German Bundestag’s Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1430</td>
<td>Meeting with Mr Christian Schmidt, Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1630</td>
<td>Meeting with Professor Ottmar Edenhofer, Deputy Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Director of the Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1830 Reception in honour of the Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives, hosted by H.E. Ambassador Rodney Harris

GERMANY – FRIDAY 24 APRIL

Delegation departs Germany.
Report of the Speaker’s visit to Fiji
10–13 May 2015

Rt Hon David Carter
Speaker
Fifty-first Parliament

Presented to the House of Representatives
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<th>Contents</th>
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<td>Background and Introduction</td>
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<td>Sunday 10 May</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Monday 11 May</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 12 May</td>
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<td>Reflections and Acknowledgements</td>
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<td>Appendix 1—Press Release</td>
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<td>Appendix 2—Visit Programme</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Report of the Speaker’s visit to Fiji
10–13 May 2015

Background and Introduction
Following her visit to New Zealand in March 2015, the Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji, Hon Dr Jiko Fatafehi Luveni, extended an invitation for me to lead a delegation to visit Fiji. The visit would allow us to see first-hand the progress that has been made in restoring Fiji’s parliamentary democracy, and to assess the need for any additional support and assistance to the Parliament of Fiji and its members.

I was accompanied on this visit by the Chair of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, Mark Mitchell MP, senior Committee member and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon Phil Goff MP, the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Mary Harris, and Delegation Secretary, Daniel Tasker. A press release regarding the visit to Fiji is attached as Appendix 1.

Bilateral parliamentary visits such as this one to Fiji are a good example of the value of parliamentary diplomacy in strengthening international relationships, while at the same time providing opportunities for professional development for accompanying Members of the New Zealand Parliament. They allow for wide ranging discussion and exchange of different views on the role and responsibilities of Members, and bring to light issues that confront parliaments in our region, and in others.

Our visit programme was prepared by the Parliament of Fiji in conjunction with the Parliamentary Relations Secretariat of the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives of New Zealand, and with assistance from the New Zealand High Commission in Fiji. It was a compact three-day programme that sought to maximise the delegation’s time in the Parliament of Fiji, and in particular my time with Speaker Luveni. It also incorporated some meetings outside of Parliament with members of the Executive, the leaders of the two Opposition parties,
and a meeting with the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Pacific Regional Office. A copy of the programme is attached as Appendix 2.

Sunday 10 May

We arrived in Nadi around midday, and were met by the New Zealand High Commissioner, HE Mark Ramsden, and others from the New Zealand High Commission. We drove to Suva, which provided us with an opportunity to talk with the High Commissioner about current issues in Fiji, and to get an overview of some of the work and initiatives that New Zealand is undertaking in Fiji. It was interesting to get a sense of the geography and to see some of the recent improvements in infrastructure over our three-hour journey.

Upon arrival in Suva, we received an informal briefing from the High Commissioner on the coming two days, what we should expect, and areas in which he thought our visit would be of particular value. We finished the evening feeling ready to begin a busy programme the following day.

Monday 11 May

Our official programme began at the Parliament of Fiji with a meeting and briefing with Speaker Luveni and the Secretary-General of the Parliament of Fiji, Ms Viniana Namosimalua. After our welcome, I expressed my thanks for Speaker Luveni’s invitation to lead a delegation to Suva. We expressed our sadness at hearing of the sudden resignation for health reasons of Hon Pio Tikoduadua, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Hon Tikoduadua was regarded as somewhat of a peacemaker between the Government and the Opposition, as well as being highly regarded internationally for his diplomacy and genuine desire to see Fiji return to the international fold. The Speaker explained that, due to this unforeseen event, a number of questions that were to have been directed to the Minister had been removed from the list of Questions for Oral Answer for that morning’s sitting. This had necessitated a re-ordering of the day’s business, and a shortening of the session.

We then discussed a number of other issues currently before the Parliament, including a recommendation that Fiji re-join the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). While this was to be debated in the Chamber, Speaker Luveni’s view was that the motion would pass without opposition, as all Members were keen to re-engage with the IPU. In this same vein, Speaker Luveni indicated that movement towards re-joining the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) was also likely. As the New Zealand Parliament is a strong advocate for inter-parliamentary engagement, we welcomed news of Fiji’s intent to once again take its place amongst the community of world parliaments. We also touched briefly on the issue of Fiji’s flag referendum, which was of great interest to our delegation given that New Zealand is also in the process of undertaking a discussion over our own flag.

I was invited to sit to the right of Madame Speaker in the Chamber, which was indeed an honour, and one that also provided me with an excellent position from which to observe proceedings. We saw a lively session, in which the Opposition had no qualms about probing Ministers through robust questions and ensuing debate. Speaker Luveni kept a firm control on proceedings, and clearly the news of Minister Tikoduadua’s resignation had cast a sombre mood over the Parliament, with messages of support to the Minister expressed on both sides of the House. We were also privileged to witness the swearing in of two new Members of Parliament, one for the Government and one for the Opposition.
The day’s session also saw the tabling of the first Public Accounts Committee report covering the Auditor-General’s reports from 2007 to 2009. This was somewhat of a milestone for the Parliament of Fiji, and in many ways signalled some green shoots of bipartisanship beginning to emerge. The Committee managed to unanimously agree to a recommendation encouraging the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption to investigate outstanding irregularities. Such cooperation, particularly in the work of Committees, is essential to the proper functioning of any parliament. In particular, enquiries into the expenditure of public finances are right at the heart of transparent and effective parliaments. We were encouraged to see that an Opposition-chaired Committee was able to reach a consensus view, particularly when its recommendations may present challenges for the current Government.

Following the morning session in the Chamber, we moved on to a lunch meeting with the Chairs and some members of the Parliament of Fiji’s Committees. This was a great opportunity for our delegation to mix and mingle with some of our Fijian counterparts, as well as a chance for them to ask us questions about our Committee system. As most of the Members in Fiji are new to the parliamentary environment, these kinds of semi-formal exchanges are a great way to build valuable contacts and increase their knowledge. Having the Clerk of the New Zealand House of Representatives with us was also of great value, as Ms Harris was able to discuss in detail many of the technical aspects of our parliamentary process and procedure. At the conclusion of this meeting, Mark Mitchell took the opportunity to hand over a gift on behalf of the New Zealand Parliament’s Select Committees, and to thank the Fijian Members for their time and hospitality.

After lunch, we left Parliament for a meeting at the UNDP Pacific Centre. UNDP is currently undertaking a three-year Parliamentary Strengthening Programme in Fiji. The project is supported by the NZ Aid Programme ($1.5 million), along with Australian, Japanese, and EU funding. Pacific Centre Manager Peter Batchelor and project leader Dyfan Jones led us through an overview of the project. The New Zealand Parliament had already been actively contributing, both through hosting delegations in New Zealand, and by sending Hansard and Parliamentary Library staff to Fiji to conduct professional development for officials. This support will be ongoing, with a number of similar activities planned for later in 2015.
From UNDP’s perspective, while Fiji is still trying to find its “parliamentary feet” again, signs are positive that things are heading in the right direction. However, there is still a lot of work to do to re-establish faith from both Members and the public that the Parliament is functioning effectively, and more importantly perhaps, in a constructive and forward thinking way. Members’ confidence in the Speaker and the Secretariat will develop over time, and this can be enhanced and encouraged through quiet conversations, and further exchanges and dialogue with other parliaments in the region. While neither UNDP nor the New Zealand Parliament is seeking to tell Fiji how its Parliament should function, we are there to support it to grow in its own way that will best serve the needs of Fiji and its constituents. The UNDP programme is adding real value to the restoration of democracy in Fiji. One of the strengths of the programme is UNDP’s ability to have discussions on sensitive issues, ones that could potentially be difficult for bilateral donors to broach. The New Zealand Parliament will continue to work closely with UNDP to support its programme in Fiji as much as possible by providing assistance and expertise as and when needed.

We also had an opportunity on our first day to visit the New Zealand High Commission. New Zealand has a relatively large diplomatic presence in Suva, as Fiji serves as somewhat of a hub for New Zealand’s diplomatic and consular activities in the region. Fiji is also New Zealand’s largest trading partner in the Pacific, and our 25th largest export market by value, with $368 million in exports in 2014. Key exports include yachts and yachting equipment, dairy products, lamb and mutton, and fruit and vegetables. In addition to this trade, New Zealand is a major supplier of services to Fiji, valued at $142 million. New Zealand firms have in the past year won a series of infrastructure contracts in Fiji, including the redevelopment of Nadi International Airport, and a major roading project to improve the Queens Highway between Nadi and Suva.

Along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the High Commission also has a large Immigration New Zealand office, looking after visa applications from across the Pacific region. This includes managing applications for the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme that gives Pacific workers access to seasonal employment opportunities in the horticulture and viticulture industries. In addition, there is a New Zealand Police Counsellor and a New Zealand Defence Force Attaché based at the High Commission, reflecting the importance of New Zealand’s relationships with Fiji and the wider Pacific in these key areas. I was impressed by the passion and commitment of both the expatriate and locally employed High Commission staff. They do a fantastic job on behalf of New Zealand, and it is always of great interest and value for Members of Parliament to be able to meet these officials face to face.

The first day of our programme concluded with a dinner hosted by Speaker Luveni, with both Government and Opposition Members in attendance. We had a very pleasant and fairly informal discussion around aspects of parliamentary practice in New Zealand, as well as learning more about how the Fijian system operates. I was frank in my view that, just because something was effective in New Zealand, that did not necessarily mean it would function as well in another parliament, and that New Zealand doesn’t seek to lecture other parliaments on how they should or should not function. While there is much international recognition for the New Zealand parliamentary system as being innovative and effective, there is always room for improvement. It was clear following the evening’s discussions that there is a real will from all sides of the Parliament of Fiji to be open to outside ideas, but conversely there is also a strong feeling that Fiji will only adopt practices and procedures that fit its needs. This is an entirely realistic and valid view, and I am confident that as time goes on Fiji will develop a strong and effective parliamentary culture that is firmly its own.
Tuesday 12 May

We began our second day by once again observing proceedings in the Chamber. The day’s business was quite varied, but one item that particularly stood out was the debate on a motion for Fiji to resume membership of the IPU. This was put forward by the Prime Minister, Mr Voreqe Bainimarama, and was well received by Opposition MPs, who made statements of support, also taking the opportunity to suggest that Fiji consider re-joining the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). Speaker Luveni advised that that matter was currently under consideration. Fiji’s resumption of its place within the international parliamentary community is warmly welcomed by New Zealand, and this was a significant step forward in that respect.

We saw some robust exchanges, including an attempt by the Opposition to ask an urgent question of the Prime Minister on his stance of seeking to exclude Australia and New Zealand from the Pacific Islands Forum. The Speaker disallowed the question on procedural grounds, but the Opposition had effectively made its point. There was perhaps an element of political theatre at play in some instances, clearly influenced by the presence of our delegation. At one point the entire Opposition rose to its feet, necessitating Speaker Luveni’s intervention and ruling on the matter. I was impressed with how Madame Speaker managed a challenging session, one in which Members were clearly testing the limits of the Standing Orders.

Our next call was on Ro Teimumu Kepa, Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA), and Dr Biman Prasad, Leader of the National Federation Party (NFP), and Chair of the Public Accounts Committee. It was not unexpected to hear that Fiji’s Opposition Members are less positive about the direction of the Parliament since the 2014 election.

They took this opportunity to raise with us their concerns about Fiji’s 2013 Constitution and pre-election legislation, in particular the decrees governing the media, essential national industries, elections, and political parties’ registration. While we acknowledged their points, the delegation did not feel it appropriate to comment directly on these matters. Rather we stressed that the transition back to democracy will take time to fully bed in, and that it was not New Zealand’s nor any other country’s place to lecture Fiji on how this would best come about.

I sought to emphasise that the smooth functioning of any parliament rested heavily on the willingness and ability of its Members to work in a cooperative and collegial way. In this regard, the New Zealand Parliament places great stock in the ability of the Business Committee to reach unanimous agreement that ensures the business of the House can run relatively smoothly. This is not to say that our Parliament is a non-adversarial environment, far from it, but it does acknowledge that all Members have a responsibility to carry out their roles within the Parliament in a manner that will allow it to function effectively and democratically. Hon Phil Goff supported this view, saying that it was important for any Government to recognise that one day they would be in Opposition, and thus it behoves them to behave in a fair and transparent way towards the Opposition of the day.

It was clear from our meeting that there is still mistrust between Government and Opposition Members, and this is something that will take time to overcome. It can only be hoped that these feelings will eventually soften, allowing a sense of Parliament as an institution somewhat separate from party politics and rivalries to develop.

We had been due to meet with Prime Minister Bainimarama and the Minister for Finance, Public Enterprise, Public Service and Communications and Attorney-General Mr Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum for lunch. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Bainimarama was called away by a family emergency, so
we were hosted instead by the Minister of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation Ms Rosy Sofia Akbar, Attorney-General Sayed-Khaiyum, and the Chief Government Whip, Mr Semi Koroiavesau.

Attorney-General Sayed-Khaiyum took the opportunity to outline to the delegation his view of Fiji’s successes so far. He spoke of plans to partially privatise Fiji’s ports, electricity and airports.

Mr Goff, Mr Mitchell, and I were able to reflect on New Zealand’s experience in that respect. The Attorney-General welcomed the engagement of New Zealand firms in Fiji’s infrastructure sector. He also made a strong pitch for New Zealand to co-fund with Australia a proposed World Bank-coordinated public sector reform project. While it was certainly interesting and informative to hear of this initiative, I suggested that any such matters were better directed to the High Commissioner to bring to the attention of the New Zealand Government.

Following lunch, the delegation paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Ratu Inoke Kubuabola. This was a chance to underline the success of rebuilding Fiji and New Zealand’s relationship so far. Mr Goff took this opportunity to ask the Minister about the Pacific Islands Forum, welcoming Fiji’s recent shift towards partial re-engagement. This was a matter that had been very much in the media during our time in Fiji, and as previously mentioned, was also a topical issue in Parliament. Minister Kubuabola acknowledged New Zealand’s views, noting that our Foreign Minister Mr McCully had consistently told him that you could not “change geography”, meaning that, just as Fiji’s rightful place is with its Pacific neighbours in the Forum, so is New Zealand’s.

The Minister thanked us for the support given thus far to the Parliament of Fiji, noting that 45 out of the 50 Members are new to Parliament. With such a large number of inexperienced Members, support from countries such as New Zealand would be vital to help rebuild and strengthen the capability of the Parliament of Fiji.
Following our meeting with Minister Kubuabola, Hon Phil Goff took some time away from the delegation to meet once again with some Opposition Members at their request, while I and the rest of the delegation had a final meeting with Speaker Luveni to debrief on the two days in Suva.

I reinforced to the Speaker that to gain the respect of Members, Speakers must be seen to be fair and impartial advocates for Parliament and the parliamentary process. It is not the job of the Speaker to please parties in the House, but rather to correctly interpret and enforce the Standing Orders. There is always pressure on the Speaker, but the Speaker’s word is the rule in the House, and the Speaker is the ultimate arbiter and controller of parliamentary business. I pointed out to Speaker Luveni that she was in a special and important position in that what she set down during her tenure as Speaker would shape the new Parliament of Fiji in the coming years.

A gift from New Zealand to Speaker Luveni.

The Clerk, Ms Harris, also noted that, while Speakers and Members come and go over time, it is often left to the Officials of parliaments to be the repositories and guardians of parliamentary practice and procedure.

I once again offered any assistance that the New Zealand Parliament might be able to provide, and Speaker Luveni indicated that there would indeed be further requests, but she would need some time to assess where these would be best directed. In the meantime, she was grateful for our visit, and felt that it had been of real value to her and to the other Members and Officials that we had engaged with over the two days.

Following our meeting, the delegation re-assembled, and we took a number of questions from waiting media. We underlined the key message that the New Zealand Parliament was deeply pleased to see Fiji’s transition to democracy and would continue to assist with enthusiasm. I also reiterated and emphasised comments I had made to both Government and Opposition Members throughout our programme, that truly effective government requires a strong parliamentary Opposition, and that both sides have a responsibility to ensure that the ideals of parliamentary democracy are held as sacrosanct and inviolate.

As the final official engagement of our programme, the High Commissioner hosted us at a reception at the New Zealand Official Residence, with attendees including the Attorney-General, several Cabinet Ministers, the Leaders of the SODELPA and the NFP parties, plus prominent New Zealanders in Fiji, and other members of the diplomatic corps based in Suva. This was a relaxed and fitting end to our time in Suva.

Reflections and Acknowledgements

Over three days in Fiji, our delegation achieved all of our objectives. We were impressed with how well Fiji’s new Parliament was functioning so early in its life, with robust questioning and substantive answers by Ministers. We felt we were all able to use appropriate opportunities to emphasise the importance of deepening democracy and of international re-engagement, particularly through international fora such as the IPU and the Pacific Islands Forum. We felt
that our visit sent a strong signal of New Zealand’s support for Fiji’s restored democracy, as well as providing some useful and practical opportunities for the Fijian side to draw upon our experiences in the parliamentary sphere.

We valued the opportunity to talk face to face with UNDP, which is fast developing as one of our key partners in parliamentary assistance initiatives, not just in Fiji but also across the Pacific region. There is clear value in visits such as these, and as Fiji continues its democratic transition we would expect further requests for New Zealand’s support, both within the framework of the UNDP project and beyond it.

I would like to thank the Parliament of Fiji for organising the visit programme. As guests of the Parliament we were extraordinarily well looked after. The programme was a full one, which has provided me with particular insights into not only the challenges, but also the opportunities, facing Fiji as it re-establishes its parliamentary practice and culture. I want to thank Speaker Luveni personally for her hospitality, as well as the Inter-Parliamentary Unit for the Parliament of Fiji, who did a fine job in welcoming us and supporting our visit.

I would also like to thank the New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji, HE Mark Ramsden, and the Second Secretary at the New Zealand High Commission, Ms Sally Page. They, along with their Wellington-based colleagues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, were excellent in assisting to develop and set up our programme, and also provided excellent logistical and practical support to us when we arrived in Fiji. Their efforts were much appreciated by the delegation.

Speaker-led international diplomacy, such this visit to Fiji, is a significant and important aspect of the inter-parliamentary relations programme. In addition to the benefits of being able to discuss matters of parliamentary procedure and administration with other presiding officers, visits such as this can also contribute to New Zealand’s wider international interests, as New Zealand’s foreign relations are generally not advanced on a partisan basis.

Having the Speaker lead a cross-party delegation of Members to other parliaments can be extremely valuable in helping to promote New Zealand’s broader interests, as well as greater international understanding of the New Zealand system of representative parliamentary democracy. This was certainly the case in this instance, and I was privileged to lead a delegation of such experienced and committed colleagues and officials to Suva. It is my strong belief that the work we undertook over our three days in Fiji has laid a solid foundation upon which further engagement between our two Parliaments will progress.

Rt Hon David Carter
Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives
Appendix 1—Press Release

Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives

For immediate release 5 May 2015

Speaker reinforces New Zealand’s commitment to the Parliament of Fiji

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt Hon David Carter, will lead a delegation from the New Zealand Parliament next week to reinforce our commitment to the Parliament of Fiji. Accompanying the Speaker will be the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee Chair Mark Mitchell MP; Committee member Hon Phil Goff MP; and the Clerk of the House, Mary Harris.

The Speaker will be reciprocating and building on the recent visit to New Zealand of the Fijian Speaker, Hon Dr Jiko Fatefehi Luveni. Following a very successful visit, Dr Luveni extended the invitation for the Speaker to come to Fiji. This visit will enable the Speaker and his delegation both to see first-hand progress that has been made in restoring Fiji’s parliamentary democracy, and to assess the need for any additional support and assistance to the Parliament of Fiji and its members.

Rt Hon David Carter said “this delegation will continue the rebuilding of our relationship with an important regional ally and friend. Following Dr Luveni’s visit to New Zealand, it is clear that while progress in Fiji has been rapid in terms of its return to a functioning parliament, there is much that New Zealand can do to support and assist this process to ensure that the momentum continues sustainably”.

The Speaker will be joined by two members of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee to enable the Committee to gain a better understanding of Fiji’s progress, and to also allow the New Zealand parliamentarians to re-establish relationships with their Fijian colleagues. Meetings will be held with committee chairs and members to give them access and insight into the New Zealand Parliament’s committee system.

“Both Mr Mitchell and Mr Goff represent a repository of parliamentary knowledge and experience, particularly on the role and responsibility of committees, and in Mr Goff’s case the role of the opposition, in terms of holding governments to account”, said the Speaker. “In addition to the members’ contribution, Ms Harris and I will be on hand to offer our experience and assistance to Speaker Luveni and her officials after observing a typical business day in the Parliament of Fiji, including Questions in the House, and hopefully a meeting of the Business Committee. This is the type of support – the passing on of institutional knowledge to the Parliament of Fiji in these early days – that the New Zealand Parliament is well placed and pleased to offer.”

The delegation is also scheduled to have calls with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Speaker will lead the delegation to Fiji from 10 to 13 May.

END
## Appendix 2—Visit Programme

### Sunday 10 May 2015

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>12.45pm</td>
<td>Arrive Nadi, met by High Commissioner to depart for Suva by road</td>
<td>Meet and greet by Protocol Officer; Manager Inter Parliamentary Unit and NZ High Commissioner Proceed from Nadi to the Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva [3 hours by road]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00pm  (approx.)</td>
<td>Arrive Suva and check in to hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.30pm</td>
<td>Informal briefing and dinner with High Commissioner</td>
<td>Attendance optional</td>
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<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Free time</td>
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### Monday 11 May 2015

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.45am</td>
<td>Depart hotel for Parliament</td>
<td>Manager Inter Parliamentary Unit to meet and escort the delegation to Hon. Speaker's office Short brief by Hon. Speaker and Secretary General before Hon. Carter is escorted to the Chamber to be seated</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Arrive Parliament</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Welcome by Speaker Hon Dr Luveni</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.30am</td>
<td>View Question Time</td>
<td>Rt. Hon. David Carter will be accorded a sit next to Hon. Jiko F. Luveni during this session Reserved seats for the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Location/Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00am</td>
<td>Morning tea</td>
<td>delegates in the Gallery</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Speaker and Speaker Luveni to have morning tea in Madame Speaker’s office before joining the meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30pm</td>
<td>Lunch meeting with all Standing Committee Chairs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.00pm</td>
<td>Short tour – Discovery Centre, Parliament Complex</td>
<td>Escorted by the Manager for Civic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00pm</td>
<td>Meeting with UNDP</td>
<td>Overview of UNDP’s Pacific parliamentary strengthening programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00pm</td>
<td>Return to hotel</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.15pm</td>
<td>Depart hotel</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.30pm – 9.00pm</td>
<td>Dinner hosted by Madame Speaker</td>
<td>Opposition and Government Members to attend (names to be advised)</td>
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**Tuesday 12 May 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location/Details</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.45am</td>
<td>Depart hotel for Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Arrive Parliament</td>
<td>Manager Inter Parliamentary Unit to meet and escort the delegation to Hon. Speaker’s office</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Short brief by Hon. Speaker and Secretary General. A chance to discuss the day ahead.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.30am</td>
<td>Sit-in during Parliament session</td>
<td>Seating will be optional</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00am</td>
<td>Morning tea and meeting with Leader of Opposition, HON. RO TEIMUMU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.30pm</td>
<td>Lunch meeting with HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA, HON. AIYAZ SAYED-KHAICYUM AND HON. PIO TIKODUADUA</td>
<td>Grand Pacific Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.30pm</td>
<td>Meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs &amp; International Cooperation, HON. RATU INOKE KUBUABOLA</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.45pm</td>
<td>Brief meeting with Hon. Dr. Jiko F Luveni [Overview on the 2 days]</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.30pm</td>
<td>Press Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>Reception hosted by the New Zeland High Commissioner</td>
<td>Official Residence</td>
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**Wednesday 13 May 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.00am</td>
<td>Depart hotel for Nausori Airport</td>
<td>Protocol Officer; Manager Inter Parliamentary Unit and NZ High Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00am</td>
<td>Depart Suva for Nadi</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Arrive Nadi</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.00pm</td>
<td>Depart Nadi for Auckland</td>
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Report of the New Zealand Delegation to the 133rd Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland and bilateral visit to Vienna, Republic of Austria
17–22 October 2015

Hon Annette King
Head of Delegation
Fifty-first Parliament

Presented to the House of Representatives
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Report of the New Zealand Delegation to the
133rd Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly,
Geneva, Switzerland and bilateral visit to
Vienna, Republic of Austria

17–22 October 2015

Background

New Zealand is an active member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and I am the
permanent delegate to Inter-Parliamentary Union Assemblies for the 51st Parliament and
chair the national group. I led the New Zealand Parliament’s delegation to the 133rd Inter-
Parliamentary Union Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, which comprised:

- Hon Annette King MP, Head of Delegation
- Barbara Kuriger MP
- Dr Kennedy Graham MP
- Wendy Hart, secretary to the delegation.

The delegation was in Geneva, Switzerland from 16 to 21 October. Upon arrival, we were
greeted by New Zealand’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the World Trade
Organization in Geneva, H E Vangelis Vitalis, who extended very warm hospitality to us
and shared his knowledge throughout our stay. Following the Assembly we undertook a
bilateral visit to Vienna, Austria on 22 October and began our return to New Zealand that
evening.

The Assembly itself took place from 17 to 21 October. A particular highlight of this
Assembly was the readmission of Fiji to the IPU. I offer my congratulations to Speaker
Hon Dr Jiko Luveni. We had hosted Speaker Luveni in New Zealand in June 2015 during
the Guest of Parliament visit of the IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong, and
discussions centred on how the IPU could support Fiji’s Parliament. It was a pleasure to
witness Fiji formally rejoin the parliamentary community of the IPU and we look forward
to working with them.

Notably, the Assembly took place in the confluence of three significant global processes
under the post-2015 development agenda: the Sustainable Development Goals, Disaster
Risk Reduction, and climate change.

A critical theme of this Assembly was the international response to the current refugee
crisis. It was emphasised that the response should be humane, compassionate and
coordinated. This was also highlighted in our discussions with colleagues at the Parliament
of Austria during our visit following the Assembly.
Introduction to the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Established in 1889, the IPU is the international organisation of parliaments of sovereign states. It is a centre for parliamentary dialogue and diplomacy among legislators representing a wide range of ideological, economic and social systems. Through resolutions and reports, the IPU expresses its views and the positions of the world parliamentary community on issues of international interest, with the aim of bringing about parliamentary action. The IPU works for peace and cooperation among peoples, the defence and promotion of human rights and the firm establishment of representative democracy. It also supports the efforts of, and works in close cooperation with, the United Nations (UN) (whose objectives it shares) and provides a parliamentary dimension to UN work. It also cooperates with regional inter-parliamentary organisations, as well as with like-minded international, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Currently 167 national parliaments are members of the IPU (a list of members is attached as Appendix 1). Ten regional parliamentary assemblies are associate members. Most members are affiliated to one or more of the six geopolitical groups that are currently active in the IPU, which are: African, Arab, Asia-Pacific, Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Twelve Plus.

The IPU is consistently active in its work to promote representative democracy throughout the world through workshops, committee visits and reports, and the biannual Assembly. Its main areas of activity are:

- representative democracy
- international peace and security
- sustainable development
- human rights and humanitarian law
- women in politics; and
- education, science and culture.

The Assembly

The Assembly is the principal statutory body for expressing the views of the IPU on political issues. These are held twice a year in spring and autumn, usually alternating venues between Geneva, where the IPU secretariat is based, and a member country.
Delegations from the parliaments of 134 countries and five associate members took part in the 133rd Assembly. Two non-Member Parliaments attended as observers with a view to future affiliation: Vanuatu and Comoros. A wide range of observers, including leaders from several United Nations agencies and international organisations (such as the International Labour Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Organization for Migration, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund) also participated.

Of the 1,399 delegates who attended the Assembly, 647 were members of Parliament. Those parliamentarians included 41 Presiding Officers and 50 Deputy Presiding Officers. Of the 647 delegates, 210 (32.5 percent) at the Assembly were women, the highest percentage ever reached at an IPU Assembly.

The Assembly comprises meetings of the following parts of the IPU:

- the plenary session of the Assembly (attended by all delegates), which has a general debate on a particular theme, debates an emergency item and holds panel discussions on particular subjects
- the Governing Council, which is the policy-making body of the IPU, and consists of two or three delegates from each member country
- ad hoc committees established by the Governing Council
- standing committees, which debate and draft resolutions on chosen topics
- six geopolitical groups.

The agenda of the 133rd Assembly is attached as Appendix 2 and the various Assembly sessions are discussed later in this report.

Our delegation attended and participated in the following sessions:

- Governing Council
- Consideration of possible requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
- Debate on the emergency item
- General Debate – The imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration
- Standing Committee on Peace and International Security
- Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade
- Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights
- Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs
- Meeting of Women Parliamentarians
- Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU
- Meetings of the Twelve Plus group and Asia-Pacific group
- Meeting of Secretaries and Advisors to Delegations
- Meeting of the Pacific and Australia regions
- Information session on the IPU’s work and activities
- Panel discussion on Parliamentary action in meeting international commitments to counter terrorism
- Parity debate on Parliamentary oversight and political will
• Side event on Parliamentary leadership in implementing the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health
• Open session on The humanitarian dimension of forced migration – asylum seekers and refugees
• Panel discussion on Powerful parliaments: building capacity for effective parliamentary oversight.

In my capacity as acting President of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, I also attended the Joint Meeting with Chairs of the Geopolitical Groups and the Presidents of Standing Committees. I also chaired the meetings of the Bureau and a preparatory meeting with rapporteurs to discuss the organisation of the drafting process.

**Governing Council**

The Governing Council (the Council) is composed of mixed gender delegations of three parliamentarians from each parliament. It met three times during the Assembly on 18 October and twice on 21 October and dealt with the following matters:

• membership and Permanent Observers
• financial situation
• programme and budget for 2016
• cooperation with the United Nations system
• implementation of the IPU Strategy 2012–2017
• recent specialised meetings
• reports of plenary bodies and specialised committees
• future inter-parliamentary meetings
• decisions concerning the human rights of parliamentarians.

At its sitting on 18 October, the Governing Council approved the request for reaffiliation from the Parliament of Fiji, bringing the overall membership of the IPU to 167 national parliaments. As I previously note, we were very pleased that Fiji has come back into the IPU fold, and also noted the proposal of the IPU secretariat to engage more actively with the parliaments of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) including in the Pacific region. We heard that the IPU’s Executive Committee has recommended that the IPU facilitate the affiliation and participation of those parliaments in an effort to achieve universal membership.

The Council also approved requests for Permanent Observer status from Liberal International (LI) and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), the latter has a branch in New Zealand and several former members of the New Zealand Parliament are active in the organisation.

The Governing Council was presented with a comprehensive report on the financial situation of the IPU and took note that the income and expenditure of the IPU were close to target. New Zealand’s contribution for 2016 (based on the United Nations scale of assessment) is 41,900 Swiss francs, a decrease from the previous year.

**Cooperation with the United Nations system**

The Council reviewed the activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system. Members were briefed on the status of the negotiations for a new cooperation agreement between the two organisations. New Zealand has submitted extensively on the draft and has kept a close eye on its development. Our input has emphasised the need for a
strategic partnership between the IPU and the UN, with reference to the principles of comity and mutual respect. We have noted that often the IPU, made up of parliaments, is seen as the “little brother” of the relationship and this needs to be rebalanced to reassert the role of parliamentarians in multilateral diplomacy. At the Council, the IPU Secretary General explained that further steps towards a new agreement would be determined based on the response from the United Nations and he would report on future developments at the next Council session at the 134th Assembly in Lusaka.

We note that 2015 has been a very active year in the relationship between the UN and the IPU. A significant event coordinated with the UN was the Fourth World Conference of Speakers (preceded by the 10th Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament) held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in September 2015. This had been strategically held prior to the UN Summit on the post-2015 development agenda, to allow for parliaments to feed into the final declaration. The Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives, Rt Hon David Carter MP, participated in this conference in September and presented one of the key reports on Challenges facing Parliaments.

Emergency item

At each Assembly, a topic is selected for emergency consideration and a resolution is drafted on that topic. Any member of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. Prior to the Assembly, I had convened a meeting of the New Zealand Group of the IPU in order to discuss matters before the Assembly, including a proposal for an emergency item and amendments on the ‘Preliminary draft outcome document of the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion the UN Climate Change Conference’ to be considered by the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade. Dr Kennedy Graham proposed that climate change and protection is a major global challenge, sufficiently urgent to warrant an emergency item debated in plenary, giving particular reference to the extreme impact on the Pacific region, and provided a draft text for cross-party feedback from IPU New Zealand members.

Five requests for an emergency item, including one from the New Zealand delegation, were submitted. These were:

- Strengthening the role of parliamentarians in the effective implementation of the principles of international humanitarian law and international conventions on the protection of refugees, proposed by the United Arab Emirates;
- The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in urging countries, regional and international parliamentary organizations and the international community to provide the facilities required for those who have become refugees through war, internal conflict and economic situations, proposed by Sudan;
- The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in countering the terrorism and extremism of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Nusra Front (ANF) and other terrorist groups associated with them, proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Protecting human rights in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, proposed by Mexico;
- The role of parliaments in taking urgent action to protect the climate, proposed by New Zealand.
The delegations of the United Arab Emirates and Sudan merged their proposals to:

- The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, parliaments, parliamentarians, and international and regional organizations in providing necessary protection and urgent support to those who have become refugees through war, internal conflict and socio-economic situations, according to the principles of international humanitarian law and international conventions.

The Assembly held a roll-call vote on the final list of four items. New Zealand supported the proposal it had put forward and abstained on the other proposals. While the New Zealand proposal (attached in full as Appendix 3) passed the two-thirds majority threshold with 646 affirmative votes, it was ultimately the joint proposal of the United Arab Emirates and Sudan that was adopted, with 751 votes, and added to the agenda. We were very pleased to note that our proposal on the very important and urgent matter of climate protection and change mitigation garnered such a high level of support. However, we also support the call to action to support those who have become refugees through a range of circumstances, and to work towards solutions to the root causes of these.

The debate on the emergency item was held in the morning of Monday 19 October, with Mr M R Rabbani (Pakistan) in the chair. The co-authors of the item (from Sudan and the United Arab Emirates) emphasised both the immediate refugee crisis and the underlying causes, including poverty, conflict, war and climate change. Ten speakers took the floor during the debate and reaffirmed that the subject of the emergency item was an issue of international importance, affecting most parts of the world.

According to the United Nations, in 2014 there were 19.5 million refugees worldwide. Developing regions hosted 86 percent of the world’s refugees and Turkey was the largest host country including 1.59 million refugees from Syria. Many refugees came from the Syrian Arab Republic (3.88 million), Afghanistan (2.59 million) and Somalia (1.11 million). Children below 18 years of age constituted 51 percent of the refugee population. During 2014, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) submitted 103,800 refugees to States for resettlement. Twenty-six countries admitted 105,200 refugees for resettlement during 2014 (with or without the UNHCR’s assistance). The United States admitted the highest number (73,000). The Asia and Pacific region is home to 3.5 million refugees, the majority originating from Afghanistan and Myanmar.

The number of people seeking refuge in Europe is unprecedented since the Second World War and has been growing since the onset of crises in Libya and Syria in 2011. Figures from the UNHCR show more than 150,000 refugees entered the EU in August, taking the total for the year to date (2015) to over 500,000. This compares with 280,000 registered migrants for the whole of 2014. Historically, numbers have increased in the second half of the year, so it is expected that the final total for 2015 will be very much higher.

All countries were urged to put into practice international laws and conventions in the interest of peace and security. Some countries were probed over non-action, discriminatory policies, and criminalisation of refugees. New Zealand agreed in September 2015 to accept 750 Syrian refugees over the next two and a half years commencing from January 2016. Of the 750 places, 600 will be by way of a special emergency intake above New Zealand’s annual refugee quota of 750, and 150 places will be offered within the quota.

There was particular mention in this debate of the need to protect women and children, due to the heightened risks of sexual violence and human trafficking in refugee camps and cross-border movements.
The Assembly referred the emergency item to a drafting committee made up of representatives, including Dr Kennedy Graham of the New Zealand delegation. The Assembly adopted unanimously the resolution on the emergency item at its sitting on 20 October. The full text of the resolution is included as Appendix 4.

**General Debate**

Delegates took to the floor of the Assembly over three days to debate the theme of *The moral and economic imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration*. As the theme had been selected some time ago, when the IPU President introduced the debate he remarked that they could not foresee how topical it would be.

There was much synergy with the emergency item, but the theme also provided an opportunity to disaggregate the refugee crisis from economic migration more generally; migration should be an option not an obligation. Representatives of 95 parliaments took the floor; many emphasised the need for international cooperation and a coordinated approach to a truly global complex phenomenon.

The Director General of the International Organisation for Migration, Mr W Lacy Swing, set the scene for the debate by noting that the world was living in an era of unprecedented human migration and spoke of the important role of parliamentarians in setting the tone for and developing long-term migration strategies. There was significant xenophobia and racism, which arose from misunderstanding and fear; parliamentarians had a role to play in ensuring positive integration and leveraging of the economic benefits of migrants rather than playing up a culture of distrust.

Dr Kennedy Graham and Barbara Kuriger made contributions to this debate (attached in full as Appendices 5 and 6). Dr Graham spoke of the different imperatives for migration and proposed that refugees and forced migration be regarded as an issue of morality, and economic migration as a matter of rationality. Barbara Kuriger emphasised that New
Zealand must be part of the international response despite its traditionally perceived geographic distance as globalisation has led to the breakdown of the rules around geographical borders, with more issues being transnational and affecting the entire world.

**First Standing Committee on Peace and International Security**

The Standing Committee held one sitting on 18 October 2015 with its President, Mr R Tau (South Africa), in the chair. Dr Kennedy Graham and Barbara Kuriger participated in this committee.

The committee commenced with an expert hearing on the theme of *Terrorism: The need to enhance global cooperation against the threat to democracy and individual rights*, which will be further examined at the next IPU Assembly. Delegates heard from Mr A S El Dawla of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and Mr K Koser, Executive Director of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund. Terrorism was identified as one of the major threats to democracy, peace and security. Parliamentarians were urged to take a proactive approach that would address the root causes; the refugee crisis was included in the set of complex and interrelated factors with a call to ensure that migrants were supported and integrated into societies. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was echoed, with delegates stating that the promotion and the protection of human rights and the rule of law and the combating of terrorism were not conflicting, but complementary, goals. Parliamentarians were urged to protect the most vulnerable from terrorism and associated crimes such as human trafficking and drugs, particularly young people and women.

The definition of terrorism was discussed; terrorism was not seen as a stand-alone act however, but a complex and evolving wave destabilising good governance and affecting social and economic growth. Delegates referred to acts of terrorism in their own countries and countermeasures, including legislation to address the financing of terrorist activity, enhancing international cooperation and developing a common legal framework under the United Nations so perpetrators could be identified, investigated and prosecuted across
traditional nation state borders. The acceleration and deployment of new technologies was also identified as an enabler of terrorist activities, with counter-terrorism agencies and states needing to keep pace. The committee report was presented to the Assembly at its last sitting on 21 October by the President of the Standing Committee, Mr R Tau (South Africa).

Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

The Standing Committee held one sitting on 19 October with its Vice-President, Mr O Hav (Denmark), in the chair. Dr Kennedy Graham and Barbara Kuriger participated in this committee. Prior to the Assembly, the New Zealand delegation had provided a number of suggested amendments to the preliminary draft outcome document of the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21). The New Zealand delegation suggested that climate change presents a, if not the, major global challenge of our times and demands an effective global response that reflects unprecedented international coordination. Furthermore, we suggested that we, as parliamentarians, must undertake to play our part as national leaders. At the committee’s sitting, the draft was introduced by the rapporteur for comments which would be incorporated and presented to the Parliamentary Meeting in Paris. The committee also heard a presentation on the 2015 Global Climate Legislation Study and heard about the draft Parliamentary Action Plan on Climate Change, which had been developed at the initiative of the IPU President. As noted above, the New Zealand delegation considered the challenge of climate change and the need for climate protection sufficiently important to propose that it be escalated to an emergency item. We are very pleased that the IPU has shown leadership and will be bringing together parliamentarians in December and encouraging them to be active in holding their governments to account for commitments made in Paris.

The committee debated the subject item of its next resolution, Ensuring lasting protection against destruction and deterioration for the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of humanity. The Co-Rapporteur from Belgium, Mr A Destexhe, provided a working paper bringing together a number of threads which impact upon cultural heritage, including mass tourism, armed conflict and terrorism, globalisation and migration, climate change, looting and illicit trafficking and insufficient awareness and regulation. Parliamentarians took part in the debate, highlighting the importance of cultural heritage and underscoring the need to ratify and implement the agreements, conventions and standards that existed in that area.

The committee report was presented to the Assembly at its last sitting on 21 October by the President of the Standing Committee, Mr O Hav (Denmark).

Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

Prior to our departure from New Zealand to attend the Assembly, I had been contacted by the Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union requesting that I act as the chair of this committee at its three sittings on 18, 19 and 20 October. I was to temporarily replace its President, Ms F Naderi, who was unable to attend the Assembly due to political events in Afghanistan. I was very pleased to take up this opportunity and it provided me with valuable experience of the machineries of the IPU and its standing committees. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the secretariat of the committee, particularly Mr Andy Richardson, who so proficiently briefed me within time constraints.
On Saturday 17 October, I met with chairs of all the geopolitical groups and the standing committees at a meeting designed to ensure the smooth operation of the Assembly as a whole. The committee I was to chair had two key functions, the first being to consider the draft resolution on Democracy in the digital era and the threat to privacy and individual freedoms. One hundred and fifteen amendments from 15 parliaments and three from the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians had been received on the draft text. The committee had 7.5 hours allocated in which to hear explanations from delegates and to consider these. As it was imperative the committee worked efficiently, it was extremely useful to have a preliminary meeting with co-rapporteurs, Ms B Jónsdóttir (Iceland) and Mr H J Jhun (Republic of Korea) on the Saturday.

The committee started its deliberations on the text of the draft resolution in the afternoon of 18 October and heard from 31 delegates, working in plenary to review the proposed amendments. The committee voted to accept or reject the proposals (a task that was complex given there were multiple amendments to the same paragraph) and made some drafting improvements to the text. There was much discussion of how compliance with international law and human rights standards could be promoted, particularly how rights could be applied both online and offline. We produced a revised draft resolution, which was adopted unanimously at the final sitting in the morning of 20 October. This emphasised the interdependence between democracy and the right to privacy, freedom of expression and information and an open and free Internet. Further, the draft resolution emphasised the universal recognition of the right to privacy, its protection in international law and the expectations of citizens around the world that the right to privacy is safeguarded both in law and in practice.

The committee’s second key task was to consider proposals for the future work programme. I chaired the meeting of the Bureau of the Committee of Democracy and Human Rights on Monday 19 October. It had before it one proposal from the Russian Federation for the subject of the committee’s next resolution that had been submitted before the deadline and eight proposals from other Member Parliaments and bodies of the
IPU that had been made after the deadline. Under the Rules of the Standing Committees, the Bureau was free to put forward to the committee any subject that it wished, regardless of whether it had been formally submitted by a Member Parliament or when the proposal was made. The Bureau decided by consensus to forward two proposals to the committee for the subject of its next resolution, from the Russian Federation and Australia.

At its final sitting on 20 October, the committee heard presentations on the proposals by those two delegations and voted in favour of the Australian proposal by 27 votes to 17. The subject of the next resolution, to be adopted at the 135th Assembly in October 2016, will be *The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective.*

**Fourth Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs**

The Standing Committee met once on 20 October. Mr A Avsan (Sweden) was confirmed as President of the committee. Dr Kennedy Graham participated in this committee. I was pleased to attend this committee for a short time to present all delegates with a copy of the United Nations handbook; these were well received by fellow delegates. The handbook is a comprehensive guide to how the UN system works; and is an example of how New Zealand has demonstrated its long-standing commitment and practical support for the UN by producing the handbook since 1961.

The first session of the committee reviewed the work of the UN Peacebuilding Commission on the occasion of its 10th anniversary. The Commission works to consolidate peace in post-conflict society. The second session focused on the role of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the resolution of international disputes. The ICJ is one of six principal organs of the United Nations and facilitates peaceful settlements of disputes.

The Bureau of the committee met on 19 October and decided to hold a hearing at its next session in Lusaka with the announced candidates for the post of UN Secretary-General. The committee would dedicate one of its sessions to reviewing progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Throughout various discussions, the New Zealand delegation pressed the need for the IPU and the United Nations to work together on the basis of a comprehensive cooperation agreement premised on comity. Just as the legislature can be seen as subordinate to the executive in the relationship between the branches of government, so too the IPU can be seen as subordinate to the UN. This must be recalibrated.

The committee report was presented to the Assembly at its last sitting on 21 October by the President of the Standing Committee, Mr A Avsan (Sweden).

*Left: Dr Kennedy Graham MP.*
Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

Two meetings of Women Parliamentarians took place on 17 and 20 October 2015. The meetings were attended by 127 delegates from 75 countries, including New Zealand, and representatives of various international organisations. Barbara Kuriger attended the meetings. I regret I was unable to do so due to my commitments in chairing the Standing Committee.

The President of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, Ms M Mensah-Williams (Namibia), chaired the meetings, which opened with an address from the IPU President. The overall objective of the meetings is to ensure that the perspectives of women and gender issues are included in the work of the Assembly. For example, delegates considered the draft resolution on the agenda of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights and the theme of the Assembly’s General Debate.

Discussion centred on the challenges and opportunities for women, and particularly their vulnerability to conflict or violence, human trafficking, sexual violence and forced or early marriage. Delegates stressed the importance of ratifying international conventions to protect the rights of women and migrants, but above all of ensuring that those conventions were implemented. The meeting dedicated part of its agenda to a debate on the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and UN Security Council resolution 1325. Delegates heard from Mr E Ethuro, President of the Senate of Kenya, and Ms I. Namaraia, a member of the CEDAW committee, on the implementation of the resolution, which called for the participation of women in peace processes, their protection from violence and the promotion of gender equality as an integral part of State-building and a means of preventing new conflicts and crises. New Zealand has a National Action Plan to implement this resolution and promote efforts to empower and protect the rights of women and girls in fragile, conflict and post-conflict situations. New Zealand considers it has a responsibility particularly in the Pacific region, and has identified increasing the number of women in governance as a step to ensuring peaceful, stable societies.

Delegates also heard about the IPU’s activities to support parliaments in the area of gender equality. The Gender Partnership Programme has provided expertise and supported initiatives to increase women’s participation in politics and decision-making in Kenya and Turkey. It has also carried out activities to support women’s caucuses and build the capacity of women parliamentarians in Mali and Tunisia. In addition, the IPU’s gender team collaborated with several parliaments in efforts to combat gender-based violence, including harmful traditional practices against girls.

Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

Signifying the burgeoning importance of increasing youth participation in Parliament, the IPU established a permanent body dedicated to enhancing the participation of youth (defined as under 45) in parliaments and in the IPU. The IPU had been asked by its membership to incorporate youth participation into its activities along the lines of the measures that have been taken to promote women’s participation. Barbara Kuriger attended the forum when it met on Sunday 18 October, with approximately 60 delegates. The meeting was chaired by Mr F Al-Tenaiji (United Arab Emirates), President of the Forum.
The Forum looked at the theme of migration through a youth lens, with a focus on the specific needs of young migrants and the duty of States to address the root causes of discrimination. Young people were increasingly on the move between borders due to a range of factors including family reunification, economic deprivation, lack of access to education, conflict, persecution, violence and insecurity. If they are not included and enfranchised, there is a risk they would enter into crime, violence and terrorism.

Delegates also underscored climate change as a reason for people movement, acknowledging the convergence with disaster risk reduction and understanding, and implored their respective parliaments to do more to respond to this urgent global crisis. One delegate commented that nature did not respect national boundaries and countries needed to work together, as developing countries particularly could not meet the financial burdens of shifting to renewable energy and were vulnerable to natural disasters and lack of food security. Countries, like New Zealand, were urged to share technology and skill development.

There was also an opportunity to discuss efforts to combat terrorism with a representative of the United Nations Counter Terrorism Committee. Delegates discussed the link with the refugee crisis and the need to place human rights, cultural dialogue and the respect of freedoms at the centre of counter-terrorism efforts.

Panel discussion on Parliamentary action in meeting international commitments to counter terrorism

Barbara Kuriger and Dr Kennedy Graham attended this panel discussion, which featured panellists from the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, United Nations Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, and the parliaments of Cameroon, Pakistan and France. They heard of the devastating impact of terrorism and how it was destabilising democracy and eating away at human rights and national security across the globe. Panellists noted that terrorist groups were increasingly adept at financing their activities through international criminal networks trading in cash, drugs, humans, oil, and the illicit export of cultural goods. To meet these complex challenges effectively international commitments must be legislated for domestically. The Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan spoke of his frustration at his society being torn asunder, and questioned the relevance of UN Resolutions being made miles away. Delegates condemned terrorism in all of its forms, and urged respect for the rule of law and parliamentary oversight of intelligence agencies.

Side event on the theme of Monitor, review and act: Parliamentary leadership in implementing the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health

Barbara Kuriger and I were pleased to have the opportunity to hear from the Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Dr Margaret Chan and to also attend a side event on how parliamentarians could accelerate action to save the lives and improve the health of women, children and adolescents.

Delegates heard how WHO and the IPU were working together to support parliaments in translating the Global Strategy into laws, policies, and budget allocations to health. It was heartening to hear of the global response to contemporary public health crises, such as Ebola, but we were all urged to do more as parliamentarians to advocate for sufficient resources to ensure primary prevention. Mr A de Francisco, Deputy Executive Director for
the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) of WHO, spoke of the critical role of parliamentary action and accountability for the health of women, children and adolescents. Over the course of the Assembly, we were pleased to share some best practice examples from New Zealand as parliamentarians who work together on the Health Select Committee, particularly on prevention of communicable diseases.

**Panel discussion on Powerful parliaments: Building capacity for effective parliamentary oversight**

The Assemblies provide valuable opportunities for clerks and secretaries general of parliaments to meet and exchange developments in parliamentary practice and procedure. The delegation secretary attended a panel discussion jointly organised by the IPU and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) on Wednesday 21 October. This focused on the institutional capacity of parliament to oversee government and contributed to the preparation of the second Global Parliamentary Report on Parliament’s power to hold government to account: Realities and perspectives on oversight. We were all surveyed over the course of the Assembly to input into this report.

**Information session on the IPU**

As it was her first participation in the IPU, Barbara Kuriger took up the opportunity to hear more about the overall work and activities of the IPU. At the session on 19 October, the first of its kind held during an IPU Assembly, the IPU made a series of presentations on the IPU’s strategic plan and priorities, the structure of IPU Assemblies, the functioning of the main IPU bodies, IPU funding and human resources, efforts to enhance the visibility of the organisation, the parliamentary dimension of international cooperation, and the IPU’s work to promote democracy and to protect and promote human rights.

**Geopolitical groups**

All members of the IPU are members of one or more of the six geopolitical groups that operate within the IPU structure, except for Azerbaijan. New Zealand belongs to the Asia-Pacific group, a grouping of 30 member countries extending from the Middle East to the Pacific, and to the Twelve Plus group, a group of 47 parliaments of Europe, Scandinavia, and former Soviet and Yugoslavian States, together with Israel, Australia, and Canada. Membership of these two groups is attached as Appendix 8.

We attended the meeting of the Asia-Pacific group on 17 October, chaired by Hon Dato’ Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz of Malaysia.

The delegation attended the three meetings of the Twelve Plus group held on 17, 19 and 21 October, chaired by Mr Philippe Mahoux of Belgium. The geopolitical groups play an important role in the functioning of the IPU, as the IPU rules provide that each group can nominate its own candidates for committee vacancies to ensure an equitable geopolitical representation on IPU committees.

At the first meeting of the Twelve Plus group on the evening of 17 October, there was an interesting discussion about the role of the IPU in mediating conflict situations. The IPU had made visits to North Korea and to Syria and there was discussion of the sensitivities and limitations of IPU involvement. The New Zealand delegation also spoke to their proposal for an emergency item and we explained that parliamentarians have a central and urgent role to play in their countries and the IPU must partner with the UN in ensuring effective climate change policies. The Twelve Plus group discussed the proposals,
particularly the overlap of the proposal of the refugee crisis with the general debate theme of migration. It was agreed that the Twelve Plus group would support the emergency item introduced by New Zealand.

At the second meeting of the Twelve Plus group Dr Kennedy Graham, with Ms Monica Green of Sweden and Ms Marija Lugarić of Croatia, were designated as the group’s representatives to the drafting committee on the emergency item. I also provided an update to the group on the Third Standing Committee, noting great progress on the 115 amendments, and as the committee was three-quarters through I was confident that the committee would get through every amendment at that day’s meetings. At the final meeting of the group, I advised that the Standing Committee had been able to conclude the debate on the resolution on Democracy in the digital era and the threat to privacy and individual freedoms. I was pleased that the final draft resolution had been accepted without dissent as a result of extensive and comprehensive inputs.

**Meeting of the Pacific and Australia regions**

The Assembly provides a valuable opportunity to touch base with colleagues from parliaments in the Australia and Pacific regions. It is important that the priorities of the Pacific region are articulated and progressed within the IPU. As the global organisation of parliaments, it is essential that the IPU is aware of our priorities so that it can be an effective advocate for our parliaments at an international level. This Assembly was particularly important as we celebrated the readmission of Fiji into the IPU, and were very pleased to hear Fiji’s Speaker Dr Jiko Luveni’s contributions. Fiji’s readmission brings the number of the IPU’s current members from the Pacific region to eight (Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor-Leste, and Tonga). Vanuatu also attended this Assembly as an observer with a view to possible affiliation.

On Sunday 18 October, delegates from Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Vanuatu, Australia and New Zealand joined together for an informal lunch and discussion. We discussed a number of issues based on the IPU programme including the proposal for the emergency debate. Speaker Luveni opened proceedings and we acknowledged their return to democracy. We also congratulated them on hosting the Pacific Women’s Parliamentary Forum in 2015 with an important focus on eliminating gender-based violence and increasing women’s representation in Parliament. Regarding the proposals for an emergency item, delegates discussed how both migration and climate change posed significant, and interrelated, pressures for the region and that the unique needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) should be recognised in international negotiations. The recent United Nations Security Council debate on peace and security in SIDS was acknowledged.

Although a short discussion it was very valuable to focus the mind on the real threat climate change poses – rising sea levels and increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters are leading to displacement and migration for a number of Pacific communities. We must keep this issue on the IPU and international agendas. Many Pacific region parliaments face challenges in sending delegations to the IPU Assemblies, which can incur significant costs. Where possible, delegations intend to keep meeting at future Assemblies and IPU events.
Concluding sitting

We attended the concluding sitting in the afternoon of 21 October. Delegates were presented with and unanimously endorsed the outcome document of the general debate on *The imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration*. The President of the IPU called upon all parliaments to take urgent action and to share information with their colleagues in the IPU towards a global solution.

The resolution of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, over which I had presided, on *Democracy in the digital era and the threat to privacy and individual freedoms*, was adopted unanimously. The Assembly also took note of the reports from the other three Standing Committees and received positive feedback on the Assembly from the geopolitical groups.

Future meetings

The 134th Assembly of the IPU will take place in Lusaka, Zambia from 19 to 23 March 2016. At this Assembly, a general debate will be held on the theme *Rejuvenating democracy, giving voice to youth*. The 135th Assembly will be in Geneva, Switzerland from 23 to 27 October 2016. The subject item for the new resolution to be adopted at this Assembly is *The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective*. The March 2017 Assembly is proposed to be hosted in Bangladesh.
Bilateral visit to the Republic of Austria

Background

We left Geneva immediately after the conclusion of the IPU Assembly, and made our way to Vienna to undertake a bilateral visit to the Parliament of the Republic of Austria. Due to our geographical distance we undertake, as part of the New Zealand Parliament’s inter-parliamentary programme, to make the most of our time away in a cost-effective manner. We were therefore delighted to have this opportunity to enhance our time away from New Zealand, form new links, and gain some food for thought for potential change in our own Parliament.

Upon arrival in the evening, we were greeted warmly by the New Zealand Ambassador to Austria, H E Deborah Geels, and her staff. En route she described how the mission looks after New Zealand’s relationships with Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia and other agencies, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, which advocates for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to inhibit its use for nuclear weapons. New Zealand and Austria have a warm and enduring relationship. We share many common interests and values, including a strong commitment to multilateralism. We work closely together on international peace and security, disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, UN Security Council reform and human rights issues.

On Thursday 22 October, we undertook a full day programme that included a number of meetings with members of the Austrian Parliament. Our day commenced with an orientation tour, and we thank our very knowledgeable guide for highlighting the architectural features and rich history of the buildings.
It was very valuable to gain an overview of the Parliament before our meetings commenced, as it particularly gave context for some of the challenges and the reforms we discussed. The Parliament has two houses, the National Council (Nationalrat) and the Federal Council (Bundesrat).

The National Council has 183 members, elected for a term of five years. The most recent election was held in September 2013. Members are elected by proportional representation from 43 single- or multi-member regional constituencies, nine provincial constituencies and one nationwide constituency. Parties must win at least one regional seat, or at least four percent of the nationwide vote, to be eligible to participate in the allocation of provincial and national seats. Candidates may stand for election at more than one level. The President of the Council is elected by and from among the members and the current President is Doris Bures.

All bills are introduced in the National Council. On introduction, a bill is generally referred to a committee for consideration, although in rare instances the referral may be preceded by a first reading. Once the bill is reported back from the committee, the second reading takes place, followed by the third reading and final vote. With some exceptions, bills passed by the National Council are transmitted to the Federal Council, which has the power to veto bills. Unless a bill curtails the legislative or executive powers of the provinces, there is provision for the National Council to override such a veto. The Federal Council plays no part in the enactment of the budget and certain other financial bills.

There are 23 expert committees that consider bills, scrutinise the activities of government and conduct debates on current issues within their respective subject areas. As in New Zealand, committees may be established to investigate a particular issue.

Six parties are currently represented in the National Council. The three largest parties are the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) with 51 seats, the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) with 47 seats and the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) with 40 seats. The SPÖ and the ÖVP have formed a coalition government, led by SPÖ Chairman Werner Faymann. Women make up 31 percent of the National Council, which is quite similar to New Zealand’s Parliament.

The Federal Council has 61 members representing the nine provinces. Each province is represented by between three and 12 members. Members are elected by, and for the term of, each provincial parliament. Election is by proportional representation, but the second largest party in the elector parliament must receive at least one seat. Candidates must be eligible for election to their provincial parliament. The Presidency of the Federal Council is held by each province in turn for six months. The current President is Gottfried Kneifel from Upper Austria.

There are 16 expert committees that consider bills and scrutinise the Government’s activities. Six parties are represented in the Federal Council. The two largest parties are the Austrian People’s Party with 24 members and the Social Democratic Party of Austria with 21 members. There are 17 women members in the Federal Council (28 percent).

**Programme**

Our formal programme commenced with a meeting with Austrian Parliamentarians, including Dr Andreas F Karlsböck MP (Freedom Party of Austria), who is the Chair of the Parliamentary Friendship Group with South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand, and
Sigrid Maurer MP of the Green Party. Following our tour of the Parliament, it was interesting to hear about the different voting systems and committee operations. I was struck that committees are not open to the public. This was attributed largely to the small spaces that do not allow for a public gallery. Our Austrian counterparts were interested in New Zealand’s status as a member of the Commonwealth, the republic debate and the upcoming flag referendum. We noted that even if New Zealand were to become a republic, it was likely we would remain in the Commonwealth as it conferred a rich network of good relationships built on generations of trade and people movement. As for the flag, this was very much a live issue, but in some quarters it was felt that this was the flag that our soldiers had fought and died under and it was not to be changed lightly.

We found commonality in our respectively strong party system, and our counterparts queried how in New Zealand’s ‘highly whipped’ system (alluding to the strength of a party whip to ensure a consistent line) the right to vote as a parliamentarian was guaranteed. The procedure for a personal vote on a conscience issue and the circumstances in which such votes may occur was outlined, for example, on a conscience or moral issue such as euthanasia. There are also situations, not just a personal vote, where a party may split its vote, generally reflecting very colourful conversations held in caucus. Our hosts explained that in Austria members who do not vote with their parties may find they are lower down the list or not there at all come the next election.

We heard about the comity in Austria between the courts and Parliament, and the implications of being part of the European Union. How contempt of the House and matters of privilege are dealt with in our respective jurisdictions was also discussed. We explained the role of the Privileges Committee and the implications of the decision in Attorney-General v Leigh following which New Zealand had passed the Parliamentary Privilege Act 2014 to reaffirm and clarify the nature, scope, and extent of the privileges, immunities, and powers exercisable by the House of Representatives, its committees, and its members. We heard how in Austria alleged contempts would be referred just to the Speaker, and matters may also be examined by the Immunities Committee, which could lift immunity and open a member up for judicial proceedings.

The global refugee crisis was, and continues to be, an immediate and substantive concern for Austria and its neighbours. Our Austrian colleagues were acutely aware of the criticism they, and many others, had faced to its response to unheralded migration. We explained that due to New Zealand’s geographic distance and treacherous seas we do not have refugees spontaneously making landfall, such as Australia has contended with. However we do feel our responsibility as part of the international community to assist through UN channels and to do more.

Our next meeting was with Dr Günther Schefbeck, of the administration of the Parliament of the Republic of Austria, to hear about the all-party Commission of Inquiry into Strengthening Democracy, chaired by the President of the National Council. Furthermore, it was useful to hear from Dr Schefbeck on matters relating to the workings of the Austrian Parliament (and its interaction with municipal and local structures) and the European Parliament.

The Commission was established in September 2014 to look at ways of increasing citizens’ participation in, and the transparency of, Parliament’s work. As well as members of Parliament, the Commission’s members include eight citizens’ representatives. Matters considered by the Commission include greater public participation in the legislative process.
and the place of citizens’ initiatives and referenda. Commission members held differing views on whether or not referenda should be binding. Other matters addressed include Parliament’s resources for scrutinising the activities of government, and the encouragement of interactive communication between MPs and voters.

One aspect we were particularly taken with is the difference between our committee systems. As we described, New Zealand’s parliamentary committees invite public submission on most items of business, hear from submitters and regularly travel to other regions to do so. Having looked at the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into Strengthening Democracy, we are very interested in how the Parliament will implement the findings of the report around direct democracy and citizen participation in political processes. It is a matter many parliaments, including ours, are evaluating, particularly in the digital age, when citizens have an immediacy of information and expect a fast response from their representatives.

Our time in Parliament concluded with an extremely constructive meeting with Mag. Helene Jarmer, a member of the Green Party. She is one of the few deaf members of a national parliament and has worked extensively to ensure that her constituents can fully engage with the Parliament and in the community. We heard about the challenges she has faced in her Parliament and shared our mutual desire to ‘do away with the barriers’. We explained that upon the election of our first deaf member of Parliament, Mojo Mathers, incidentally of our Green Party, a number of changes were made to ensure she could participate fully in proceedings. It was also important that the constituency could engage, so (as a starting point) New Zealand Sign Language was broadcast on an inset screen on Parliament TV, for maiden speeches and during Question Time in Sign Language Week. In 2014, New Zealand undertook a parliamentary committee of inquiry into the accessibility of services in Parliament and in a number of areas we were found wanting. The agencies supporting Parliament have been tasked with implementing practical changes, including live captioning and live audio descriptions for visually impaired people.

Mag. Helene Jarmer’s work to increase the accessibility of Parliament and broadcasting through captioning is to be commended. We all acknowledged that there is a way to go, but as she said, there are issues in other public fora including schools and courts – but what better place to role model change than in the Parliament?

Over lunch we were joined by political commentators Annelise Rohrer and Dr Thomas Hofer, who offered their perspectives on the future direction and challenges facing Austria, including migration and the extremist response. Following this we visited the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Wien, hosted by Director Christian Ortner and his extremely knowledgeable team. It was very special to be able to view the Gallipoli photographic exhibition organised in collaboration with the New Zealand and Australian missions to Austria and to explore the wider collection including the car of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, assassinated on the eve of World War One. Our visit served as a poignant reminder of our responsibilities as legislators to work toward peaceful multilateral solutions to the significant contemporary challenges we face.
Conclusion

The New Zealand delegation was keenly involved in this Assembly and we were very proud to be so intimately involved with the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights and the emergency item amongst the many other activities. The New Zealand Parliament’s membership of inter-parliamentary organisations such as the IPU and its connections with other legislatures through its bilateral programme provide members of Parliament with vital opportunities for the promotion and development of parliamentary democracy. It is also vital that we disseminate the information upon our return home, through active national groupings.

It was valuable to be able to talk so freely with our parliamentary colleagues and for me, our visit reinforced the benefits of a multilateral approach. We, as legislators, can work together on the significant contemporary challenges we face including migration, refugees and climate change. We can also continue to champion international peace, security and human rights.

We would like to acknowledge the support and expertise of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, particularly our Ambassador H E Vangelis Vitalis, Ambassador H E Deborah Geels, Ms Meredith Davis and Mr Andrew Jackson. I acknowledge the IPU secretariat, without which the Assembly and the IPU’s intensive work programme would not advance. And finally I would like to acknowledge my fellow delegates Dr Kennedy Graham and Barbara Kuriger, who immersed themselves in the Assembly and made an excellent contribution on behalf of the New Zealand Parliament.

Hon Annette King MP
Head of Delegation
Appendices

Appendix 1 – Membership of IPU (as at October 2015)

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has 167 members and 10 associate members.

**Member Parliaments**

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan

Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi

Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic

Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic

Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia

Fiji, Finland, France

Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau

Haiti, Honduras, Hungary

Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy

Japan, Jordan

Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan

Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg

Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar

Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway

Oman

Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal

Qatar

Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda

Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic

Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey

Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay

Venezuela, Viet Nam
Yemen
Zambia, Zimbabwe.

**Associate members**
Andean Parliament
Arab Parliament
Central American Parliament (PARLACEN)
East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
European Parliament (EP)
Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)
Latin American Parliament
Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC)
Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).
Appendix 2 – Agenda of 133rd IPU Assembly

Item 1  Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 133rd Assembly

Item 2  Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda

Item 3  General debate on the theme The moral and economic imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration

Item 4  Democracy in the digital era and the threat to privacy and individual freedoms (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights)

Item 5  Reports of the Standing Committees on Peace and International Security; Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade; and on United Nations Affairs

Item 6  Approval of the subject item for the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the 135th IPU Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs

Item 7  The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, parliaments, parliamentarians, and international and regional organizations in providing necessary protection and urgent support to those who have become refugees through war, internal conflict and social circumstances, according to the principles of international humanitarian law and international conventions
Appendix 3 – Request for the inclusion of an emergency item in the agenda of the 133rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union submitted by the delegation of New Zealand

THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN TAKING URGENT ACTION TO PROTECT THE CLIMATE

Explanatory memorandum submitted by the delegation of New Zealand

This resolution affirms that parliamentarians have a central role to play in their countries, and that the IPU must effectively partner with the United Nations to ensure effective climate protection policies.

The item is aimed specifically at encouraging governments to ensure that their intended nationally-determined contributions are consistent with the two degree-Celsius threshold, as identified in the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Background

Climate change has been described by world leaders as the greatest threat of our time. The 21st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is to meet in Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015 in order to finalize negotiations for a global agreement to combat climate change. This is seen as a critical meeting of the international community and failure is not an option.

Parliamentarians potentially have a major role to play in making the Paris Conference a success and in ensuring effective national action following the meeting.

The international community has had climate change on its formal agenda for a quarter of a century: the IPCC was established and its first Assessment Report was published in 1990.

The UNFCCC (1992) remains to this day the basic framework for multilateral action on stabilization of the climate.

The Convention’s objective, however, is proving difficult to achieve:

- The Kyoto Protocol to the Convention established two commitment periods (CP-1 from 2008 to 2012 and CP-2 from 2013 to 2020), with a view to reducing emissions from developed countries. However, not all developed countries became parties to the Protocol, and the combined emissions of parties accepting binding commitments are currently only 10 per cent of global emissions.
- The first effort to follow the Kyoto Protocol with a global agreement that imposes binding obligations on all parties to the UNFCCC (Bali Action Plan 2007) ended in failure at the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) in Copenhagen in 2009.

The failure of this first attempt resulted from disagreement over the nature of the respective obligations of developed and developing countries (common but differentiated

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1 Stabilisation of atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases at a level that will prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate within a timeframe that enables ecosystems naturally to adapt.
responsibilities and respective capabilities) and the application of the principle of equity to “burden-sharing”.

From COP16 (Cancun, 2010) to COP20 (Lima, 2014), the UNFCCC parties have re-established the negotiating framework for what is effectively the second attempt at a global agreement. The draft Paris Agreement is essentially a second protocol to the UNFCCC. If adopted, it will impose general obligations on States parties to combat climate change through effective mitigation, adaption, financing and other measures. A separate standing schedule of voluntary contributions (intended nationally-determined contributions) by each State party will be associated with the Paris Agreement, and will be subject to ongoing peer review by other parties on a regular basis.

It is on that basis that the international community is aspiring to undertake effective action, in time to avoid dangerous and perhaps even catastrophic climate change.

Climate change policy has naturally been the domain of the executive branch of government. This remains the case, whether such policy is being negotiated in the multilateral context of treaty-making (UNFCCC), or debated in the United Nations Security Council. This is not to suggest, however, that the legislative branch has no role to play. Indeed, the national legislatures of all countries have a critical role in implementing, through domestic policy, whatever is agreed upon at the international level.

It is now clear, however, that the role of parliaments naturally goes beyond implementation. As the magnitude and imminence of dangerous climate change becomes clear, the public in all countries are becoming increasingly concerned and determined to ensure that effective measures to combat climate change are undertaken. Parliamentarians have a critical role to play in the relationship between public concern and government resolve. That role will not have been recognized to a proper extent until the forthcoming Paris Conference.

The 133rd IPU Assembly offers an important opportunity to ensure that parliamentarians fulfil their natural role in ensuring that all States parties to the UNFCCC play their part in the global effort.

A draft outcome document already exists to that end, which will be discussed in the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade.

The New Zealand delegation suggests, however, that the item is sufficiently important to warrant an emergency debate in plenary.

Attached is a draft resolution, which could form the basis of such a debate.
THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN TAKING URGENT ACTION TO PROTECT THE CLIMATE

Draft resolution submitted by the delegation of NEW ZEALAND

The 133rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

(1) Recalling the objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted in 1992, namely, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, within a timeframe sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally,

(2) Also recalling the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations of 11 September 2009 (Climate change and its possible security implications, A/64/350),

(3) Endorsing the view of the United Nations Security Council expressed in the Statement of the President of the Security Council of July 2011 (S/PRST/2011/15 of 20 July 2011) that climate change is a risk multiplier, exacerbating existing threats to international peace and security,

(4) Noting the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Summary for Policy-Makers, 2013 and 2014),

(5) Affirming the Lima Call for Climate Action released by the States Parties to the UNFCCC in December 2014 (http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2014/cop20/eng/10a01.pdf),

(6) Recalling the view of the United Nations General Assembly that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, its alarm that the emissions of greenhouse gases continue to rise globally, and its acknowledgement that adaptation to climate change represents an immediate and urgent global priority (Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind, A/RES/69/220, 3 February 2015),

(7) Aware of the importance of the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21), to be held on Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015, and of the imperative that a global agreement be reached at this meeting to ensure that future global emissions are consistent with the threshold of two degree-Celsius warming above pre-industrial levels, as agreed at the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) in Cancún, Mexico, in 2010,

(8) Considering the critical role played by parliamentarians in conveying to their respective governments the concerns of the peoples they represent at the threat posed by climate change to their well-being,

(9) Conscious of the responsibility to bequeath to future generations a planet that is habitable and pleasant, and capable of sustaining them,

1. Calls upon the governments of all its respective countries to ensure that their intended nationally-determined contributions are consistent with their common
but differentiated responsibilities for staying collectively within the two degree-
Celsius threshold identified above;

2. Also calls upon the peoples of the world to demonstrate their commitment
to the protection of the global climate and the rights of future generations to a
stable and benign climate that is compatible with life on Earth, through peaceful
and lawful public action as appropriate for each country, in advance of COP21 in
Paris;

3. Urges the United Nations to partner effectively with the IPU, through the
forthcoming Cooperation Agreement, to ensure meaningful and robust
cooperation between the legislatures and the executives of the governmental
systems in all its countries, including through joint meetings on climate change;

4. Invites the IPU Secretary General to establish within the Secretariat a unit
tasked with facilitating the transfer of information between our parliaments in
order to coordinate effective parliamentary action, in fulfilment of the objective
of the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change and, to that end, of the
goals to be agreed upon at the forthcoming COP21 session in Paris.
Appendix 4 – Emergency Item Resolution adopted unanimously by the 133rd IPU Assembly, 20 October 2015

THE ROLE OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION, PARLIAMENTS, PARLIAMENTARIANS, AND INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN PROVIDING NECESSARY PROTECTION AND URGENT SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO HAVE BECOME REFUGEES THROUGH WAR, INTERNAL CONFLICT AND SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

The 133rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Expressing its utmost concern about the humanitarian tragedies caused by the recent worsening of the refugee crisis, which has itself led to a rise in the number of refugees to over 30 million, a significant increase which makes this refugee crisis, in the wake of the deterioration of the political and military situations in some Middle Eastern and African countries, the worst since the Second World War,

Deeply troubled by the deaths and the suffering recently endured by thousands of refugees from some Middle Eastern and African countries from exposure to severe weather or lack of food or shelter,

Noting with concern that the United Nations estimates that many thousands of refugees and forced migrants from some Middle Eastern and African countries have been registered daily over the last three months of this year and that a significant portion of the population of those countries are at risk of becoming refugees, particularly those from the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, Somalia and Libya, a situation which exacerbates the humanitarian disaster for refugees even further,

Cognizant of the fact that a lasting solution to the problem of refugees is to be found through negotiation, and particularly through the peaceful settlement of internal conflicts,

Emphasizing the vital role of regional organizations in helping countries and warring factions to reach peaceful settlements to internal conflicts,

Underlining the seriousness of the conditions reported by the International Labour Organization with respect to the social and economic pressures arising from the deterioration of the refugee crisis over the last three months in host countries and in view of rising levels of unemployment in those countries, of refugee child labour, of the lower chances of benefiting from public services, and of their worsening quality, as well as of lower social cohesion between refugees and local communities,

Stressing the responsibility of regional organizations and the international community, in particular donor and neighbouring countries, to render support in order to help increase the capacity of host countries to deal with refugees, provide a humanitarian environment and solve the problems associated with refugees,
Taking into consideration the United Nations Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which acknowledge that all people, without discrimination, should be able to enjoy their basic rights and freedoms, and which advocate the enhancement of international cooperation for the resolution of humanitarian problems,

Recalling the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its Protocol (1967), which provide that refugees shall enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms, and which emphasize the social and humanitarian nature of issues relating to refugees, without any discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, gender, age or country of origin,

Also recalling the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their additional protocols of 1977, particularly as regards the preferential treatment of refugees,

Emphasizing the need to protect refugees from persecution and fear, as well as to provide the necessary protection to women and child refugees and to other vulnerable groups,

Referring to the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1950) and United Nations General Assembly Resolution 51/73 (1996) concerning the exploitation of women and child refugees and their use as soldiers or human shields in armed conflicts, as well as of other actions which endanger their safety or threaten their personal security,

Stressing that children, adolescents and young people constitute particularly vulnerable groups and are over-represented among migrants and refugees, and face specific challenges that include isolation, exclusion, discrimination and insecurity,

Recognizing that women refugees are especially vulnerable to trafficking, abuse, exploitation, discrimination, unpaid work and gender-based violence, including sexual violence,

Renewing its commitment to the principles of international humanitarian law, international law on refugees and international human rights law to ensure international protection for refugees, whether through provisional or permanent measures, so as to safeguard their legal and social rights,

1. Calls on parliaments to cooperate with governmental and non-governmental national organizations, as well as with regional and international organizations, to identify the reasons for refugee flows;
2. Also calls on parliaments to cooperate with the relevant national organizations and regional and international parliamentary organizations, and with the regional and international governmental organizations, in the preparation of work programmes and projects for spreading the culture of tolerance and moderation and the principles of common international values, and for combating backwardness, illiteracy and fanaticism of any kind whatsoever;
3. Regret that efforts made by a number of developing countries are hampered by the policy of imposing sanctions through unilateral measures, and considers that such a policy directly affects the welfare of ordinary people and contributes to the escalation of the flow of refugees;
4. Re-emphasizes the compliance of United Nations Member States with the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other nations, respect for national sovereignty, peaceful settlement of disputes and the non-use of force or threats of
force, so that the peoples of the world may escape the ordeals of combat and war and the movement of populations from their home countries;

5. **Acknowledges** the principle of the “common international responsibility” of the United Nations and other regional and international organizations to protect refugees from harm through providing urgent humanitarian aid and support by host countries, ensuring that refugees enjoy their internationally recognized human rights, thereby expediting the implementation of international and regional programmes on international cooperation for sustainable economic development;

6. **Calls on** the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and national and international non-governmental organizations to bear their responsibility and provide humane conditions for refugees;

7. **Invites** Member Parliaments, regional and international parliamentary organizations and the international community to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and all other international and regional organizations concerned with refugee affairs, in order to facilitate the task of monitoring the application of international rules for protecting refugees and providing them with accommodation and in order to ensure that the rights granted to them under international conventions are guaranteed;

8. **Reminds** all countries hosting refugees of the need to comply with the principles of international humanitarian law and international law on refugees with respect to providing them with the necessary care and prohibiting hostilities against their lives or any abuse offensive to their dignity, or the handing down of judgments without trial, while taking all precautionary measures to save the lives of refugees, and being mindful that every refugee must comply with the legal obligations and measures to preserve public order to which they are subject in the host country;

9. **Calls on** parliaments and governments to develop and implement special measures and gender-sensitive policies for women refugees, especially mothers who must take care not just of themselves but whole families, as well as young women and girls;

10. **Also calls on** parliaments and governments to address the special needs of young refugees, especially those separated from their families and without parental guidance, to take special action to tackle xenophobia, stereotypes and discrimination, and to give children and young people access to age-appropriate information on safe migration and the dangers of trafficking;

11. **Calls for** full respect for the principle of “international relief” contained in international conventions concerning the protection of refugees and emergency and long-term support for health care, food and other supplies, as well as education for children and young people;

12. **Calls on** countries which are occupying territories to undertake not to deport or displace civilian populations to other territories, and to ensure the safety and security of civilians according to the principles of international humanitarian law and international conventions;

13. **Also calls on** host countries not to deport refugees or expel them to the border of another country in which their life would be threatened for ethnic, religious or nationality reasons, membership of a certain social category or political opinions; and **notes that** States are required to enable refugees to obtain the right of temporary residence in the event that they are not able to obtain permanent residence pending resettlement in another country;
14. *Invites* Member Parliaments, regional and international parliamentary organizations and the international community to cooperate in sharing the burden of refugees and associated costs with host countries;

15. *Calls on* the United Nations and all countries that are active at the international and regional levels both to settle military conflicts in the Middle East in compliance with resolutions adopted by the international community in order to establish political and military stability in the region and also to avoid threats to international peace and security, drawing attention to the fact that the failure of the international community to deal with the problems of refugees results in other problems of migration and human trafficking;

*Also calls on* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the IPU, the international community and national and international non-governmental organizations, to declare a year of refugees.
Appendix 5 – Address to the General Debate by Dr Kennedy Graham MP

We are debating the goal of a fairer, smarter and more humane migration in today’s world. The debate presumes the goal to be a moral and economic imperative.

I agree that the relocation of people is a moral imperative when the country of origin is in crisis or unable to safeguard human rights. That is the product of pure practical reason, as our philosophers say.

And its significance is not limited to abstraction. In the over-heated world of 21st-century politics, that moral imperative translates into the practical requirement to take in refugees, streaming out of one region into another.

The moral imperative for accepting refugees is clear, but we have a way to go to perfect its legal and institutional expression. As the International Organisation for Migration noted earlier, there is no global political process for solving the refugee problem. The doctrine of responsibility to protect, embraced by the General Assembly and informing the Security Council, has potential to illuminate the debate in the IPU.

So the acceptance of refugees is a moral imperative and each of our countries must do more to resolve the global crisis. In 2010, 16 million individuals were refugees; today there are 20 million.

Yet that is only a quarter of the numbers fleeing conflict or repression. We now have the highest forced migration on record – 60 million people, up from 51 million. The moral imperative encompasses them too.

The number of economic migrants is five times that – some 300 million, about 4 percent of the global population. What is the nature of our political responsibility here?

Sir, I am less persuaded that economic migration is an imperative. I’m not sure there is any such thing as an economic imperative, although I am aware that, in the modern fever of globalisation, there is a belief to that effect.

We should judge economic migration according to transactional logic, not moral reasoning. We should not confuse the two. I propose that we regard refugees and forced migration as an issue of morality, and economic migration as a matter of rationality.

A rational approach puts migration in the context of the broader global crisis. The driver of economic migration is the structural one of sustainability – population pressure, resource depletion, excessive waste. The planetary boundaries we must live within, as responsible global citizens in the Anthropocene, of which climate change is but one threat, increases the various threats to peace. Conflict causes refugee flows; resource pressure causes migration.

So the distinction between refugees, forced migrants, and economic migrants is critical. Different policies are required – fairer policies for refugees and forced migrants, smarter policies for migrants.

As parliamentarians, we should ensure that the debates in our own legislatures on this subject are clear, reasoned, and compassionate. To ensure this, we need to be clear in our perception of what we are debating.
Appendix 6 – Address to the General Debate by Barbara Kuriger MP

Migration is the rubric of humanity: from our tangible origins to the present, migration has proven itself to be an integral aspect of existence. Migration can be a complex, and often divisive issue when brought up in discussion. Yet platforms such as this IPU Assembly enable parliamentarians from 135 countries to speak on such divisive issues.

Globalisation has led to the breakdown of the rules around geographical borders, with more issues being transnational and affecting the entire world. As a result of this, the interconnectedness of this world means migration is ever increasing in scale, scope, and complexity. Rarely are news headlines signalling the open arms with which governments welcome migrants, nor do migration reforms scrape the surface of global journalism. Instead we are constantly hearing of the tragedies that occur with helpless refugees and migrants, of late particularly in the Mediterranean Sea. But this is not without significance. The numerical value on what a state can do, will never be enough. Until every global citizen lives freely, the response to migration will never be absolute. But what we can do is attempt to mitigate the migration issues of the 21st century, particularly those we are seeing today.

Human security is about people, not states. All dimensions of life are encompassed under the rubric of human security; ultimately human security is about being able to live in a safe domestic environment - free from violence and coercion. The right to exercise civil and political rights, the right for access to food, sanitation, education, and health, to be free from discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, and religion. Arguably one of the key dimensions of human security is the right to live in a safe domestic environment. But the current climate shows that this is lacking.

As global consumers and investors, we are all linked to global supply chains and investment. We are linked whether we like it or not; conflict, whilst geographically far away, knocks right on our front door. We will all agree I’m sure, that the current migration issues facing the world as we know it have an impact on all nations. The number of people seeking refuge in Europe is unprecedented in numbers not seen since the Second World War, and has been increasing since 2011. More than half a million refugees have entered the EU this year. 2014 saw a staggering 19.5 million refugees worldwide. The numbers are simply astounding. The state has a responsibility to protect, not only its borders, but its people. Subsequently, the international community has a responsibility to provide assistance to help states protect their civilian populations. Today, states have a more open and tolerant attitude towards cultural, political, and economic interactions. This stems from the attitude that opening economies, societies, and politics to a wider range of interactions is good for both prosperity and security.

We support building strong international trade and investment connections with those countries on our doorsteps. This is important to help diversify our economy. Our connectedness with the world also encourages highly skilled people to live and work in our nation. The migration measures New Zealand has in place are about achieving a better balance of migrants and skills across the country. Recent reform has seen changes in some of our immigration settings to improve connectivity to our regions, to ensure better access to skills, people and capital. The Government believes that migrants bring global skills and talent, which help to make local firms more productive and globally competitive. Business investor migrants and entrepreneurs bring commercial nous, international linkages and networks to boost the economy. Migrants also help fill labour shortages, particularly in
hospitality, dairy, and agriculture. The New Zealand Government agreed in September to accept 750 Syrian refugees over the next two and a half years. It is up to all states to play a part in the alleviation of this global issue, and each state has the prerogative to make a difference.

Parliamentarians have a role, nay, an obligation to be a part of the solution of the issues facing the current international arena. The more comprehensive our approach to analysing and understanding security needs, the more likely we are to achieve those needs. It is under the light of democracy with which almost 700 parliamentarians from 130 nations can come together to discuss such issues as migration, and pave the way forward for fairer, smarter, and more humane solutions to the problems we face.
Appendix 7 – Declaration adopted by the 133rd IPU Assembly, Geneva, 21 October 2015

THE IMPERATIVE FOR FAIRER, SMARTER AND MORE HUMANE MIGRATION

We, parliamentarians from over 135 countries gathered in Geneva at the 133rd IPU Assembly, debated *The moral and economic imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration.*

International migration in today’s world presents multi-faceted challenges and opportunities. It has become an increasingly complex global phenomenon, which involves mixed migration flows comprising migrant workers, asylum-seekers and individuals who move for a combination of reasons, as well as those who are known as “survival migrants”.

The root causes of forced migration are often foreseeable. These include armed conflict, violent extremism, extreme poverty, food insecurity, climate change, forced enrolment in State and non-State armies and militias, harmful traditional practices and gender-based violence. These complex and sometimes novel challenges result in additional risks, especially human trafficking and migrant smuggling, with more and more people found in distress at sea and in deserts. Girls are subjected to particular risks, such as torture, sexual slavery, forced labour and other forms of abuse, both in transit and in destination countries.

This situation calls for action. This action must be guided by the principle that migrants are not numbers, but human beings. As rights-bearers, they are to be treated with dignity and with respect for their human rights, regardless of their motive for leaving their homes or their status as regular or irregular migrants.

We recall that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development urges us to ensure that migration is regulated in an “orderly, safe, regular and responsible” manner. For this purpose, governments must adopt well-managed migration policies that enable migrants to fully develop their potential to contribute to human and economic development.

Migration is an opportunity. We recognize that migration yields significant benefits for host countries and countries of origin, as well as for individuals, families and communities. Destination countries benefit from the diversity that migrants bring: new skills, a much-needed workforce, new contributions to their economies and the opportunity to counter the economic challenges posed by ageing populations. But host societies also face challenges in ensuring fair working conditions for all, as well as social cohesion through appropriate schemes of integration. As far as countries of origin are concerned, they benefit from remittances, investments from diaspora networks and from the newly-acquired skills and experiences of returning migrants, but they also have to cope with the challenges of “brain drain” and separated families, which may result in children being left without proper care.

Migration should be safe. Persons fleeing persecution require special legal protection as refugees. In a context of mixed migration, it is important to ensure that asylum-seekers have an opportunity to lodge their claims and be duly heard. The return of persons whose asylum claims have been rejected after a full and fair hearing, and of irregular migrants, must be conducted in a safe and humane manner, with due respect for the principles of *non-refoulement* and prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or...
punishment, while also upholding the best interests of the child and the right to respect for private and family life.

Similarly, migrant women and children require particular attention and protection from abuse, exploitation and violence. Migrants working in the informal sector require particular social and legal protection, given their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse in such situations.

Migration must be constructive. The social integration of migrants and refugees is best ensured when host countries provide children and young adults with unhindered access to education, and ensure access to employment, health and social services to all, while authorizing family reunification is made possible. Mutual respect for cultural differences is a shared responsibility of host societies and migrants, on the understanding that everyone is bound to respect the laws of the land and is entitled to enjoy his or her human rights. We must recognize the contribution of migrants to our societies, and must enact specific legislation to prohibit discrimination and combat xenophobia.

Migration is a reality. An understanding of the push and pull factors of migration calls for expanding safe and regular channels of migration. In addition, the current situation in the Mediterranean and in other parts of the world and the prevalence of migrant smuggling and human trafficking, as well as xenophobia, call for urgent, coordinated and robust action to save lives, show solidarity and mitigate the effects of sudden and large migration flows.

We parliamentarians have a particular responsibility in this area. We must demonstrate political leadership, listen to and voice the concerns of our constituents, raise awareness, oversee government action and support it, inter alia, by adequately resourcing the responsible bodies. We must also promote the common interest and respect for human dignity and rights above all considerations. This will require redoubling efforts and commitments, and working together across regions, countries, political parties and communities to ensure fair and concerted responses to this global phenomenon.

As parliamentarians, we commit to working towards fairer, smarter and more humane migration, Including through the following action:

**Building and implementing a protective legal framework**

- Ratify, and ensure the implementation of, conventions protecting the rights of migrants and refugees. These include:
  - The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families,
  - The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its Protocol (1967),
  - The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its Protocols on trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants,
  - The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,
  - The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance,
The Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (ILO Convention No. 97),
• The Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (ILO Convention No. 143),
• The Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (ILO Convention No. 181),
• The Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (ILO Convention No.189),
• as well as other relevant regional and international instruments;

• Encourage legal responses, whether globally or nationally, to address gaps and grey areas in the legal protection of migrants and refugees. These can include, inter alia, the law of the sea on the responsibility for searching and rescuing persons found in distress at sea, and the laws on responsibility for persons fleeing environmental disasters;
• Oversee the implementation of laws and policies and their impact on migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees from a human-rights perspective, with a particular focus on refugee protection, gender equality and the rights of the child;

Ensure fairness, non-discrimination and respect for the human rights of migrants

• Revise existing legislation so as to remove any obstacles to access to basic services such as education, health care and social benefits for all migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, regardless of their status;
• Promote and monitor coordination among States in the areas of migration and asylum through bilateral, regional and international procedures, including through consultation mechanisms on responsibility-sharing in hosting refugees, ensuring that migration agreements comply with human rights and international labour standards, and the prosecution of human traffickers;
• Design and implement effective regulation of recruitment, particularly of low-skilled migrant workers, and promote fair recruitment practices;
• Promote safe, regular channels for migration, including legal entry and residence schemes for study, work, humanitarian and family reunification purposes in a fair and responsible manner that does not discriminate against unskilled or low-skilled migrants, women and young men, and that aims to benefit all concerned, i.e. migrants themselves, the host country’s population and the economy of both the country of origin and the country of destination;
• Ensure the right to decent work for all, and in particular that non-discriminatory labour standards and the rights enshrined in fundamental ILO Conventions, as well as effective labour inspections, apply to sectors of the economy employing mainly migrant workers, and in particular migrant women, such as domestic work and caring services;
• Protect all migrant workers from discrimination and abuse, such as sexual and other forms of gender-based violence and forced organ-harvesting;
• Revise legislation so as to ensure access to justice for any person on our territory, regardless of nationality and migration status;
• Seek alternatives to the administrative detention of undocumented migrants, and especially of unaccompanied or separated children or entire families, and refrain from criminalizing irregular migration;
Work for social cohesion, and peaceful and inclusive societies

- Lead by example, by speaking out against xenophobia and racism, recognizing the contribution of migrants to society and refraining from referring to migrants in an irregular situation as “illegal” or “clandestine”; challenge and combat stereotypes relating to migrants, in particular migrant young men;
- Build empirically-based knowledge and foster balanced public debate on the causes, challenges and benefits of migration, so as to inform national policies; promote the inclusion of migrant perspectives in political and public fora, including the participation of migrants, civil society groups and social partners in parliamentary discussions, inter alia in public and committee hearings;
- Take the lead in communicating rationally and factually on migration, while bearing in mind the human dimension of the issue;
- Promote anti-discrimination legislation, including the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of nationality and migration status, as well as criminal legislation against hate speech in line with the UN-led Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial and religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, aiming to strike a proper balance between freedom of expression and the vital need to protect individuals and communities from discrimination and violence, as enshrined in international law;
- Support and enhance the contributions of the diaspora, inter alia by facilitating their remittances and investments and by ensuring their participation in national decision-making;

Promote implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the existing migration-specific goals (target 8.8 on the protection of the rights of migrant workers, in particular women and those in vulnerable situations, and target 10.7 on planned and well-managed migration policies), and the systematic disaggregation of data by migration status.
Appendix 8 – Geopolitical groups to which New Zealand belongs

**Asia-Pacific Group**

Afghanistan, Australia  
Bangladesh  
Cambodia, Canada, China  
Democratic People’s Republic of Korea  
India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of)  
Japan  
Lao People’s Democratic Republic  
Malaysia, Maldives, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Myanmar  
Nepal, New Zealand  
Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines  
Republic of Korea  
Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka  
Thailand, Timor-Leste  
Viet Nam

**Twelve Plus Group**

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria  
Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria  
Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland, France  
Georgia, Germany, Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy  
Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg  
Malta, Monaco, Montenegro  
Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway  
Poland, Portugal  
Romania  
San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland  
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey  
Ukraine, United Kingdom

**Observers:** Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, European Parliament.
Appendix 9 – Delegation media statement

New Zealand advances relations with global parliamentary community

14 October 2015

Speaker of the House of Representatives

A New Zealand delegation will join with members from across the world when the 133rd Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly takes place in Geneva, Switzerland from 17 to 21 October 2015. Hon Annette King MP will lead the delegation that includes Dr Kennedy Graham MP and Barbara Kuriger MP.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt Hon David Carter MP said that the IPU, as the global organisation of national parliaments, is an important forum for political dialogue and positive democratic change.

“Twice a year the IPU brings members representing a variety of political systems and political colours of the world together to enhance parliamentary cooperation”, said David Carter. “New Zealand is an active participant in the Assembly, I am pleased that our members are able to bring the priorities of New Zealand and the Pacific region and advance a parliamentary dimension to international affairs.”

Dr Kennedy Graham and Barbara Kuriger will both speak in the general debate on the theme of the moral and economic imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration. Hon Annette King will contribute as acting President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, which will debate and adopt a resolution on democracy in the digital era and the threat to privacy and individual freedoms.

They will bring New Zealand’s perspectives to panel discussions and workshops on climate change, the protection of cultural heritage, the international response to terrorism, promotion of human rights, and the work of the United Nations and the International Court of Justice. The delegation will also meet with Pacific parliamentarians, to discuss regional issues including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and parliamentary capacity building.

The SDGs, migration, and climate change are likely to be topics of discussion when the delegation visits the Parliament of Austria, following the IPU Assembly. The delegation will hear about the conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry on Strengthening Democracy, parliamentary accessibility, and reform. They will also discuss Austria’s tripartite or social partnership approach on trade, economic and social policy.

The delegation will take place 17 to 22 October 2015.

ENDS

30 August – 2 September 2015

Rt Hon David Carter
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Fifty-first Parliament

Presented to the House of Representatives
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30 August – 2 September 2015

Background

The Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from Monday, 31 August to Wednesday, 2 September 2015. It was convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in cooperation with the United Nations (UN). This gathering of Speakers of Parliament from across the world occurs once every five years and is a unique forum for dialogue and cooperation between parliaments at the highest level. Speakers of the House, because of the position they hold, have the ability to open doors in international relationships. My participation in the World Conference was a flagship event in the official parliamentary relations programme for New Zealand in 2015. Speaker-led diplomacy makes an important contribution to advancing New Zealand’s national interests by fostering understanding and promoting international cooperation between members of Parliament, countries and parliaments.

The overall theme of the conference focused on peace, democracy, and development seen through the parliamentary lens. The conference was part of a series of high-level meetings leading up to the UN Summit in late September 2015, at which the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were formally adopted. At the end of the conference, participants adopted an outcome document (Declaration), which was then presented officially to the UN Summit.

Above: Speakers of Parliaments gather at the United Nations Headquarters.
All arrangements for the event were made under the guidance of a Preparatory Committee composed of some 30 Speakers of Parliament, including New Zealand, which met three times in the lead-up to the conference.

**Introduction to the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

Established in 1889, the IPU is the international organisation of parliaments of sovereign States. It is a centre for parliamentary dialogue and diplomacy among legislators representing a wide range of ideological, economic and social systems. Through resolutions and reports, the IPU expresses its views and the positions of the world parliamentary community on issues of international interest, with the aim of bringing about parliamentary action. The IPU works for peace and cooperation among peoples, the defence and promotion of human rights and the firm establishment of representative democracy. It supports the efforts of, and works in close cooperation with, the UN (whose objectives it shares) and provides a parliamentary dimension to UN work. It also cooperates with regional inter-parliamentary organisations, as well as with like-minded international, inter-governmental, and non-governmental organisations.

New Zealand is a very active member of the IPU and regularly participates in IPU events. Furthermore, I was very pleased to host the IPU Secretary General Mr Martin Chungong in New Zealand in June 2015.

**Introduction to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

The agenda, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, encompasses the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are the successors to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of goals initiated by the UN to halt extreme poverty, which had a particular focus on developing nations. The MDGs were originally set in 2000, and expired at the end of 2015. The SDGs seek to build on the MDGs and complete what they did not achieve.

In 2014, the UN General Assembly’s Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals forwarded to the Assembly its proposal for a set of SDGs that consider economic, social, and environmental dimensions to improve people’s lives and protect the planet for future generations. The proposal contained 17 SDGs with 169 targets covering a broad range of sustainable development issues, including ending poverty and hunger, improving health and education, making cities more sustainable, combating climate change, and protecting oceans and forests.

The UN General Assembly undertook negotiations on the SDGs between January and July 2015. The goals were formally adopted at a Summit of Heads of State held between 25 and 27 September 2015. During the negotiations, New Zealand advocated for the agenda to respond to the needs of vulnerable States (Small Island Developing States, Land-locked Developing Countries, Least Developed Countries and fragile and conflict-affected countries). New Zealand also sought to bring a stronger focus on sustainable economic development to the UN’s work and advocated for issues of key interest such as agriculture and food security, oceans, and energy.

More so than during the development of the MDGs, the UN had welcomed efforts to inject a parliamentary dimension into the work of the UN and had worked in partnership with the IPU, who facilitated interaction with member parliaments. The UN saw that parliaments would play a role in defining and implementing the United Nations post-2015
development agenda and that parliamentary input would be the key to ensuring strong national ownership of the new SDGs, most significantly through the accountability and scrutiny functions of the legislatures.

The IPU took a keen interest in the process leading up to the adoption of universal Sustainable Development Goals. The President of the IPU, Mr Saber Chowdhury, noted that the SDG process “opened a new window of opportunity to change the course the global community has been on for too long. Defeating the scourge of poverty once and for all, tackling growing inequalities and setting the planet on a sustainable path must guide decision-makers everywhere … ‘business as usual’ is not an option anymore”.

Goal 16 of the SDGs and its associated measures concerned governance issues. In its progress report of July 2014 the UN General Assembly’s Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals noted that:

Governance, including open and effective and accountable institutions, participatory decision making and transparency were identified as key enablers of sustainable development. Action in this area could promote public access to information and enhance openness of government, as well as fostering trust in government institutions. Promoting participatory governance, including inclusive economic governance and equity, can also contribute to the emergence of peaceful and resilient societies, conflict prevention and dispute resolution.

The IPU contended that the new development framework must contain a goal directly related to “democratic governance”. It was proposed that this should be a comprehensive goal that includes, but is not limited to, the capacities and functions of parliaments. As a universal goal to be applied to both developed and developing countries, it would have to strike a common denominator high enough to be meaningful to all but low enough to be reachable by all. It should be accompanied by a set of targets as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators to help track progress. Elements of democratic governance should also be integrated in all the other goals of the new development framework.

Because parliaments are increasingly recognised as playing a crucial role in the achievement of democracy and good governance, a large number of organisations are involved in parliamentary capacity building, especially the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, and the IPU. It is recognised that many new parliaments have emerged from conflict situations, are still quite fragile and often lack adequate resources. Even within the Commonwealth, where countries share similar governance systems, largely due to their common heritage, many member countries are grappling with weak public service institutions as well as human resource and knowledge constraints limiting their capacity to sustain development, reduce poverty, and achieve the global goals.

Parliaments have a role in helping to secure lasting peace, the rule of law and sustainable development. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, noted that “Parliamentarians are the bridge between the local, national and international. You have your finger on the pulse of people’s concerns”. For this reason, there has been a concerted effort by the UN and IPU to partner more effectively and this underpinned the Fourth World Conference of Speakers and IPU activities in the lead-up to it.
Preparatory Committee for the World Conference of Speakers

I was invited to be part of the preparatory committee for the conference. The committee comprised selected Speakers and senior representatives of the UN and the IPU. We were tasked with agreeing on the location and overarching theme and making detailed preparations of the papers and the framework of the Declaration. I was pleased to attend the second meeting in November 2014 and the meeting on the eve of the conference at the UN Headquarters and to feed into the deliberations remotely when prior commitments precluded my attendance.

We agreed that the conference would have an overarching theme of peace, democracy and development seen through the parliamentary lens. We agreed that we would provide updates of the existing reports on the implementation of major recommendations of previous Speakers’ Conferences, *Challenges facing parliaments today*, and *Parliaments and the United Nations*. We asked that two new reports be produced: one on gender mainstreaming and another on parliamentary involvement in the run-up to the launch and implementation of the SDGs.

At the second meeting, I gave a background discussion paper to feed into the report *Challenges facing parliaments today*. I was very pleased to have been appointed as a rapporteur for the presentation of the conference report on *Challenges facing parliaments today*. Parliamentary diplomacy is important and more established parliamentary democracies have a duty to support fragile and emerging democracies. My own experiences supporting the Parliament of Fiji have revitalised my commitment to this and I am proud of the relationships the New Zealand Parliament has built with its Pacific Island neighbours. I believe the IPU, as the community of world parliaments, provides an excellent platform to provide assistance, institutional knowledge, and best practice within a culture of exchange rather than imposition.

Another particular point that has resonated with me is the importance of engaging young people in inclusive and democratic institutions. The post-2015 development agenda commits us to building strong public institutions, including parliaments, with the ability and capacity to ensure accountability for results. However, I suggested that this noble aspiration would falter in parliaments that do not have systems promoting fiscal responsibility and transparency. I urged all legislatures to create a culture of financial probity and implement anti-corruption strategies immediately. I accept it is not an easy task for some to make...
regular disclosures, but we owe it to our citizens to account for our public spending and behaviour.

Following the second preparatory committee meeting in November 2014, I made the most of my time at the UN and attended the annual Parliamentary Hearing held on 19 and 20 November 2014. Every year during the autumn session of the General Assembly the IPU organises this hearing as an opportunity for members of parliaments to exchange views with United Nations officials, representatives of the United Nations diplomatic community, as well as scholars and leading academics. The meeting is usually opened by the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the IPU.

Originally designed as a briefing session on a variety of topics, the hearing has evolved over the past few years into a substantive and interactive debate on the main issues on the international agenda. The conclusions and recommendations of the hearing provide parliamentary input into the work of the relevant bodies of the United Nations. The role of the hearing as ‘a regular feature of the programme of events held at United Nations Headquarters on the occasion of the sessions of the General Assembly’ has been highlighted in a resolution of the UN General Assembly.

This year’s hearing, entitled *Ensuring a people-centred approach to the new SDGs: A shared responsibility*, provided a further opportunity to help inform the collective thinking of parliamentarians about the proposed SDGs. The intention is to put the spotlight on people as both actors in and beneficiaries of the new sustainable development agenda. The hearing highlighted the need to align the SDGs with the international human rights framework.

Some 200 parliamentarians attended the hearing, which was opened by the President of the UN General Assembly. In his opening remarks President Kutesa spoke of a people-centred approach to development embodying fundamental principles of social justice, human rights, solidarity and equality, and the common good as preconditions to human development and well-being.

The hearing presented another opportunity to advocate for a goal on democratic governance. The IPU recommended that draft Goal 16 remain in the final agreement in some form, making it clear that effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions, including parliaments, will affirm the fundamental right to inclusive participation in decision-making and enable the other goals to come to fruition successfully. The President of the IPU also
asked that Speakers advocate for this with their Foreign Ministers. Upon my return to New Zealand I undertook to do so.

During the hearing, I made several interventions to contribute a New Zealand perspective. Several participants in the hearing emphasised the place of special measures to increase the number of people representing vulnerable sectors of society in political offices. In addition to special measures to increase the actual number, the overall culture of Parliament as an institution needs to provide incentives and enablers for representatives of underrepresented groups to participate in the political sphere. I provided the example from our Parliament of aligning the House sitting calendar to the school term schedule, in an effort to make Parliament more family friendly and assist women parliamentarians to participate.

**Fourth World Conference of Speakers**

**Final meeting of the preparatory committee**

On Sunday, 30 August 2015, a final meeting of the preparatory committee was held. This afforded us the opportunity to fine tune the draft Declaration. One of the most contentious issues, interestingly, was around the need to protect fundamental human rights in the online environment. I spoke in support of the German President of the Bundestag, Professor Norbert Lammert, when he asserted that democratic freedoms should not be limited online.

We also discussed an important issue about the assurance of any host country of an IPU event to issue visas to all member parliaments and not impede participation. We acknowledged that it could be a difficult issue and asked that the IPU inform the plenary of the visa issue and correspond with the affected member country to offer an opportunity to deliver a speech via video link.

**Overview**

The Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament centred on a General Debate on the overall theme of *Placing democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development: Building the world the people want*. It also included two panel discussions, one on parliamentary oversight and another on translating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into action. One-hundred-and-fifty Speakers of Parliament and heads of regional and other parliamentary organisations addressed the plenary. The IPU President, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the UN General Assembly and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation’s (UNESCO) Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation delivered opening remarks. The Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UN Women also addressed the General Debate.

**Opening ceremony**

The conference was formally opened on the morning of Monday, 31 August 2015 by the IPU President Saber Chowdhury, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the President of the UN General Assembly Sam K Kutesa.

Forest Whitaker, artist, humanist and UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation, then delivered a keynote address. In his address, he emphasised the duty of parliamentarians to speak for the most vulnerable in society and to seek to re-engage with those who have become disengaged and disfranchised.
You – the most powerful lawmakers and leaders in your nations – you have the ability to change this. The word parliament comes from the French verb parler, “to speak”. You need to speak for people all around the world who are not being heard – for former child soldiers in Uganda, South Sudan, and Myanmar; for gang members in Mexico and the United States; for orphans in Syria and many other countries round the world. You have to help these people find their way so they can stand strong in their identities. You have to demonstrate that everyone matters, and that every person in your democracy has power and efficacy. You have to convince them to hope again.

**General Debate**

A General Debate was held in plenary, punctuated by the delivery of a number of reports on key themes as identified by the preparatory committee.

The first report to be presented was the *Implementation of major recommendations of previous Speakers’ Conferences and the growing parliamentary dimension to international cooperation* by Rt Hon Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda. This reflected on the progress that had been made on commitments made during the previous three conferences since 2000. We found that great strides had been taken to improve the strategic partnership between the IPU and the UN. The UN General Assembly has encouraged a parliamentary component to major UN processes and conferences, which the IPU is now providing in multiple areas (including climate change, financing for development, post-2015 SDGs, gender equality, and nuclear disarmament). The IPU has also suggested that member States are encouraged to include parliamentarians in national delegations to major global conferences, and parliaments are given the opportunity to be directly involved in monitoring the implementation of international commitments (mechanisms are in place in particular vis-à-vis the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review mechanism).

There has been a gradual shift in how the United Nations system approaches cooperation with parliaments at the national level. Although much remains to be done, UN Country Teams are paying more attention to their relationship with the national parliament, while also seeking greater coordination with other development partners. New Zealand, for example, works closely with UNDP in the Pacific region on parliamentary capacity building activities.

The second report, *Mainstreaming gender equality into the work of parliaments*, was co-presented by Santi Bai Hanoomanjee, Speaker of the National Assembly, Mauritius and Professor Norbert Lammert, President of the Bundestag, Germany. It was noted that gender equality is at the heart of democratic processes. The IPU highlighted the direct link between democracy and the balanced participation of men and women in politics, in particular in parliament. The IPU championed the need for democracy to include half of the world’s population and respond to the needs of both men and women as only then could democracy be considered truly representative and sustainable.

At the second plenary, the IPU President presented the report *Parliamentary involvement in the shaping and implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals*. The IPU explained its workstreams to support the implementation of the MDGs, and how it would do so with the SDGs. The President explained that the IPU itself will need to mainstream the SDGs in all its operations to avoid compartmentalisation and maximise synergies between
activities. With regard to parliaments, the President noted that the IPU may need to retool in order to pursue two parallel approaches: one to help parliaments institutionalise the SDGs in all of their deliberative processes (beginning with the committee system), the other to help them advance specific goals in respect of which the IPU may have a specific comparative advantage or expertise, such as gender equality, health or climate change. These changes would invariably require additional resources and political support for the IPU.

**Challenges facing parliaments today**

I then presented the report *Challenges facing parliaments today*. This detailed both the challenges we face and, more importantly, the solutions. The IPU’s recommended actions to strengthen parliament and democracy include:

- promoting the development of democratic culture in society, and underscoring the importance of political tolerance in the parliamentary arena;
- investing more in civic and political education for children in schools;
- making concerted efforts to encourage people, especially young people, to vote;
- making a public commitment to the core values of a democratic parliament – one that is representative, open and transparent, accessible, accountable and effective – and putting these values into practice;
- ensuring that parliament is gender-sensitive in its rules, processes and legislative work;
- enhancing the power and ability of parliament to oversee the Executive on behalf of the people;
- systematically monitoring public perceptions of parliament, seeking to understand the reasons for such perceptions and how they can be improved;
- adopting special measures to ensure the composition of parliament is more reflective of the composition of society as a whole, notably with regard to the number of women in parliament;
- insisting on the need for vibrant internal democracy within political parties;
- experimenting with new forms of public participation in decision-making and budgeting;
- providing more and better support to parliaments that wish to build institutional capacity, in line with the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments;
- democratising the system of international relations, enhancing the role of parliaments vis-à-vis the issues that are high on the global agenda, and further developing the parliamentary dimension of the work of the United Nations.

I offered some reflection about how, in New Zealand, we had recognised that effective parliamentary scrutiny actually enhances government outcomes. Although the New Zealand Parliament is one of the longest continuous parliaments and internationally regarded as a well-functioning democratic institution we have continued to evolve and recently strengthened the financial and legislative scrutiny functions of our parliamentary committees.

Following this, I was pleased to hear from former New Zealand Prime Minister, Rt Hon Helen Clark, now Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). She spoke of the myriad activities UNDP undertakes in support of parliamentarians and the institution of parliament.
Across the six plenary sessions the General Debate was held with Speakers offering perspectives on democracy, the role of parliaments, sustainable development, violence and terrorism, governance, and other issues. My address to the General Debate is attached as Appendix 3. I spoke of the need to support developing and fragile democracies, drawing on my experiences with Pacific parliamentary capacity building, New Zealand’s desire to see UN Security Council reform, and a voice for the smaller States. I also suggested that the ambitious post-2015 agenda would fail if legislatures were not transparent and if those in power lacked integrity.

Many of us shared the situation of democracy and development in our own countries and regions. Well-established democracies needed to support ongoing democratic development in emerging and fragile democracies. In particular, they must encourage fragile States to take leadership of their processes and to commit to the future of their citizens. Several Speakers described the advent or return of democracy in their countries after a period of authoritarian rule. In the Pacific region, New Zealand and Australia work closely with Pacific parliaments to build capacity and resilience, including working with Fiji to support its return to democracy.

It was argued that democracy must be promoted by ensuring that it was participatory and inclusive, making a difference to the lives of vulnerable sections of society. Furthermore, and this is a matter I made clear in my address, Parliament must ensure that appropriate structures were in place to prevent the abuse of power and its ensuing corruption. In New Zealand, we take pride that members’ expenses and activities are regularly disclosed and

Above: Speaker Rt Hon David Carter delivers the report “Challenges facing parliaments today”.
media and the public have broad access to parliamentary proceedings. If this did not occur, citizens would rapidly lose confidence in members and voters would not return them to Parliament at the next election. Ultimately, this could be a very destabilising force, with citizens losing confidence in Parliament’s ability to oversee the Executive.

Parliamentarians were tasked with promoting democratic reform in countries, ensuring a secure and just world, eradicating religious extremism, terrorism and violence, reinforcing law and governance, promoting tolerance and intercultural/interfaith dialogue, and ensuring youth participation and gender equality.

Several Speakers described the achievements of their countries in the context of the MDGs and shared the lessons learned. Many noted that the MDGs had been successful in lifting many people out of extreme poverty, reducing child and maternal mortality rates significantly, and increasing the number of children going to school in developing regions.

However, there was much still to be done. One of the main criticisms of the MDGs was the lack of consultation on their creation. Generally, there was very little involvement of developing countries and civil society constituencies in the process. This resulted in a set of goals designed primarily to address the development priorities of sub-Saharan Africa and then applied to all developing countries. Some MDG indicators were therefore not considered by some to be relevant for Pacific Islands or were unmeasurable. There has been much wider consultation regarding the SDGs.

Speakers from a number of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including those from the Pacific region, expressed appreciation for the inclusion in the sustainable development agenda of their particular concerns, namely climate change, global warming, and the resultant sea-level rise. Some saw the risks of climate change as being as grave as the recent Ebola crisis, and called for the same level of urgent attention to the problem. All hoped for concrete and meaningful progress as the outcome of the Climate Change Conference in Paris (COP 21) taking place in late 2015.

Agreement on the SDGs was an ambitious starting point that the world undoubtedly needed, but many Speakers pointed out that the key to success would be maintaining momentum. Parliament would have a role to play in keeping the attainment of the goals on track, in passing legislation, making the required budget allocations, and holding governments to account. Many spoke of the role that parliamentarians would play in public discussion on the SDGs and their implementation.

Peace and security were also components of sustainable development, and it had to be recognised that one of the main threats to sustainable development was the rise of terrorism and extremism.

Many Speakers felt that in order to successfully improve all of those areas, good governance was imperative. It was noted that the current draft of the SDGs, especially Goal 16, contained strong references to governance. Good governance was both an enabler and a driver of development. Inclusive participation, together with good governance, would promote peace and sustainable development.

Some Speakers commented on the complementary roles of the IPU and the United Nations. The latter was seen as the cornerstone of multilateralism and global cooperation, and the IPU was playing an important role in terms of developing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the UN. A new agreement on cooperation between the two bodies was being prepared, and it was to be hoped that the UN–IPU partnership would be
further enhanced and placed on a stronger footing. This partnership was particularly relevant in the context of implementation of the major international commitments of 2015: the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the post-2015 development agenda with its SDGs, and the Climate Change Agreement hoped for in December 2015. Those interlocking and mutually reinforcing processes, coupled with respective means of implementation, were critical for the future the people want.

Several Speakers also called for reform in the way that the Security Council operated, and more generally for greater accountability and transparency in the work of the United Nations. New Zealand has long been a proponent of strengthening the United Nations through substantive structural, administrative and financial reform. New Zealand recognises reform of the Security Council as a critically overdue element of the UN reform agenda and remains committed to reform of the council to make it more effective and representative of the 21st century.

Panel discussions

During the conference, two panel discussions were held. The first was on Parliamentary oversight: Challenges and opportunities. The panel was moderated by Professor Robert Nakamura of the University at Albany, State University of New York, and featured the Speakers of the Parliaments of Barbados, Belgium, Chile, Kenya, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom.

During the panel, participants exchanged experiences of the oversight and scrutiny mechanisms in their parliamentary systems. The panel touched upon many of the different dimensions of oversight, including probity, efficiency, effectiveness and adequacy. The discussion would contribute to the second edition of the joint IPU and UNDP publication Global Parliamentary Report on Parliament’s power to hold government to account: Realities and perspectives. The report aims to stimulate discussion and change in parliaments, leading to better parliaments and stronger democracies.

In opening statements on the role of the Speaker of Parliament in oversight, Speaker Bercow of the House of Commons noted that in the United Kingdom (and Westminster system legislatures, including New Zealand) the Speaker was a “referee” whose role was to ensure a level playing field for all parties and members. The Speaker has powers to shape what is discussed by controlling access to the floor and by ruling on members’ requests to put urgent questions to Ministers or to suspend regular business for urgent considerations. In New Zealand, the Business Committee, chaired by the Speaker, has a significant role in ensuring the smooth transaction of business in the House.

Participants in the panel also discussed the challenges to effective oversight. The poor image of Parliament in the public eye acts as a constraint, since a lack of public confidence can undermine Parliament’s legitimacy to carry out its basic functions. Many shared methods such as codes of conduct for members and regular disclosure of expenses, and pecuniary and other interests (as we do in New Zealand) that are intended to enhance public confidence. Efforts are being made to improve the reputation of parliaments by removing them from decisions that directly benefit members, for example, the setting of members’ salaries and entitlements.

We explored how the balance between Parliament and the Executive can be problematic. There may be difficulties in obtaining appropriate and timely information from
government or in ensuring Ministers appear in Parliament to answer questions. In some parliaments the opposite is true, notably in Small Island Developing States, where the presence of a large number of Ministers limits Parliament’s ability to exercise oversight. The Executive may sometimes seek to ignore the findings of parliamentary oversight committees, or demonstrate a basic mistrust of parliamentary motivations and competence in its oversight role. A shortage of time and limited staff support are common issues, as oversight of the effectiveness and efficiency of complex budgetary and policy matters requires expertise that is often unavailable to Parliament.

Translating the SDGs into action

The second panel, Translating the SDGs into action, was moderated by the President of the IPU and featured the Speakers of Parliament from Germany, El Salvador, Jordan, Rwanda, Seychelles, Tanzania and Viet Nam, as well as the President of the Latin American Parliament, and the Deputy Director of the UN Millennium Campaign. The panel was organised in two parts, the first focused on the relationship between parliaments and citizens and how it can help build national ownership of the goals, while the second considered the institutional mechanisms for parliaments to mainstream the goals and track progress.

We heard that national ownership is key to implementation of the SDGs and how each country will need a sustainable development plan to apply the global goals to the national context. In many countries, Parliaments are not able to participate in the crafting of the national plan because of a lack of capacity or legal authority. As a result, the Executive branch is often in control of the process. This need not be the case in all instances, however. Several parliaments around the world do have the authority to contribute to the national plan and to request regular progress reports through one or more committees. It was also suggested that a dedicated committee or advisory council for the SDGs may support policy coherence between portfolio committees.

Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction

On Tuesday morning, a breakfast meeting of selected guests was convened by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and the IPU. The UNISDR was established by the UN to implement the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, an effort to shift from the traditional emphasis on disaster response to disaster risk reduction, and in effect seeks to promote a culture of prevention.

Again, we emphasised – a point raised by the United Kingdom House of Commons Speaker John Bercow – that Speakers do not get involved in political decisions. Parliaments do, however, have a role to play in the passing of budgets for disaster preparedness and scrutinising the public agencies with whom responsibility lies.

A range of personal experience was shared. Speaker Jiko Luveni of the Parliament of Fiji emphasised how sensitive the Pacific region was to climate change and how seriously the region took integrated disaster risk reduction and climate protection. In Fiji, there had been implications from reclamation work, the degradation of coastal areas, and diverted waterways.
President Marco Antonio Nunez Lozano of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile shared the experiences of the most powerful earthquake ever recorded and the ever-present risks of earthquakes and tsunamis. The President remarked that the concept of prevention was new to many. In Chile, this had meant thinking about legislation, budget and regulations for building standards, health and sanitation.

I shared my experiences of the severe earthquakes that struck my own home city of Christchurch in 2010 and 2011. I explained that we could not afford to be complacent, there were a large number of fatalities and injuries and we did resolve to “build back better”. I noted that initially the Parliament did come together across party lines but that did break down over time and Opposition scrutiny of Government actions became more pronounced. I also took this important opportunity to acknowledge the significant support provided by the international community.

Other meetings
Throughout the conference I was able to meet both formally and informally with a number of my counterparts from legislatures around the world.

IPU working lunch
During the conference I took part in a working lunch convened by the IPU. This allowed for a more detailed discussion of the work and outcomes of the conference with my colleagues, including from Tonga, Lithuania, South Africa, Luxemburg, and Bhutan. We discussed how parliaments could track the implementation of the SDGs, what the role of the Speaker could be and, finally, whether more funding should be made available to the IPU to hold parliaments to account for SDG implementation.

I acknowledged the diversity of our group and recognised Tonga as the newest member of the IPU. Likewise, Bhutan noted it had only been a member of the IPU for three years. We concluded that as all of our parliaments had standing committees (such as New Zealand’s Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee) it would be the role of such a committee to examine international treaties and commitments. We acknowledged that implementing the SDGs was largely a government responsibility, once finalised at the UN, and each country needed to develop a national plan. However, in all our cases, such foreign affairs matters were for the most part non-political – there was a close alignment and cooperation.
between government and Opposition parties to achieve the best outcomes. We acknowledged that the SDGs were not currently well known by our constituents or by our members of Parliament for that matter.

We were cautious about providing more funding to the IPU to assist with or monitor the implementation of the SDGs, and thought there would be a need to realign programme work and to cooperate with other international organisations. We agreed nevertheless that the IPU was a sound organisation offering the best opportunity for parliaments to exchange knowledge and best practice.

I concluded our exchange with a recognition that the ‘life span’ of a Speaker was limited and we all had a responsibility to put in place mechanisms so that the institution passed seamlessly from one Speaker to another.

Meeting of Pacific Speakers

On Tuesday, 1 September, New Zealand coordinated a meeting of Pacific Speakers and delegates from the Marshall Islands, Fiji, Tonga, Tuvalu, Federated States of Micronesia, and Samoa. We were joined by the IPU Secretary General at the opening of the meeting, who spoke of the importance of all parliaments’ voices being heard on the global stage. Those present at the meeting welcomed better coordination in the region and an association of the Speakers. They welcomed opportunities to meet during IPU and other inter-parliamentary events. Amongst the issues raised was the opportunity to strengthen the separation of powers, including the independence of the legislature, its staff and its budget.

The meeting also considered a draft Pacific Statement on the Sustainable Development Agenda and the Declaration of the World Conference of Speakers. Speaker Luveni of Fiji and Speaker Laauli Leuatea Polataivao of Samoa asked that the document reference Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Outcome of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS Conference) held
in Samoa in 2014. The final statement was delivered to the IPU Secretary General, and is attached as Appendix 4.

**Meeting with the President of Liechtenstein**

As I was unable to attend the side event convened by Liechtenstein and the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) on *The role of parliamentarians in criminalising illegal and aggressive war making*, I sought a call with the President of the Diet, Albert Frick.

The President noted that Liechtenstein had initiated the event with PGA to generate awareness and understanding of the Kampala Amendments on the crime of aggression, to increase political will towards ratifying these Amendments, and to highlight the role of parliamentarians in supporting the prohibition of the use of aggressive armed force under international criminal law. New Zealand has been a longstanding supporter of the International Criminal Court and an active participant in the Kampala negotiations.

Our exchange was useful, and I undertook to convey to the Minister for Justice and the Attorney-General Liechtenstein’s desire to see New Zealand ratify the Kampala Amendments. The President conveyed his respect for New Zealand’s conduct on the Security Council, and noted our reputation for being great and courageous despite our size and isolation.

**Declaration**

The final action of the conference was adoption of the Declaration. Many Speakers praised the final Declaration of the conference – adopted by acclamation – as a document that would provide substantive policy guidance to parliaments and the IPU for years to come. It was agreed that to live in a world of peace, democracy, prosperity and happiness was the legitimate desire of each and every person on the planet. To translate such an aspiration into reality, members of parliaments had to fulfil their responsibility as the highest representatives of the people. Parliamentary leaders were confident that the conference Declaration would reflect the commitment of parliaments and parliamentarians to place democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development, and help build the world the people want. The Declaration is attached in full as Appendix 1.

The conference closed with remarks from the IPU President and the incoming President of the UN General Assembly.
Conclusion

It was a privilege to have such an involvement in the preparation and delivery of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers. Parliaments play an important role in foreign policy, promoting international cooperation and democratic values. Parliamentary diplomacy is evolving as an effective channel for fostering goodwill and understanding amongst nations by advancing people-to-people contacts.

I was delighted to have the opportunity to meet with so many of my counterparts from around the world. What was very clear is that the New Zealand Parliament remains of great interest and is respected internationally for its open legislative system, its active select committees, and the way in which minority governments have worked. Our discussions on the SDGs and wider UN reform demonstrated to me that New Zealand is also admired for being a fair-minded, transparent, multilateralist and progressive country. New Zealand is well regarded for being active on the global stage and as a promoter of peace and security.

I was very pleased to have such substantive opportunities to present a New Zealand and Pacific regional perspective on a range of issues, including ways in which representative democracy and good governance can contribute to peace and stability, and the attainment of global goals.

The Fourth World Conference of Speakers was a highlight in my programme of inter-parliamentary diplomatic engagement and built upon the relationships I have formed through a number of years of bilateral visits to and from New Zealand.

I would like to acknowledge the delegation secretary from the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Wendy Hart, and the support and expertise of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, particularly His Excellency Gerard van Bohemen and his team in New York, Phillip Taula, Deputy Permanent Representative, Angela Hassan-Sharp, Counsellor, and Consul General Leon Grice and his team in Los Angeles, particularly Ingrid Burrowes.

Rt Hon David Carter MP
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Appendices

Appendix 1 – Declaration of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

Placing democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development: Building the world the people want

(1) We live in extraordinary times. We need equally extraordinary efforts to build a world where every man, woman and child is safe from war and conflict, free from poverty and hunger, where they are able to meet their needs and realize their human potential while preserving our planet for future generations, and where their rights, freedoms and dignity are fully respected.

(2) Parliament is the central institution of democracy through which the will of the people is expressed. We, the Speakers of the world’s parliaments, have convened at the United Nations in New York to give voice to their concerns and demonstrate our resolve to play our part in meeting the global challenges before us.

(3) As we adopt this Declaration we are mindful of the unique responsibilities and constitutional mandates of our parliaments to make the laws that implement international agreements and to hold governments and international institutions to account for their full realization. Cognizant of our diverse traditions and unique parliamentary histories and practices, it is our ambition to provide a concrete democratic dimension to collective efforts aimed at creating a better world.

Our world today

(4) In spite of progress in the areas of democracy, peace and development, we continue to live in an unstable world. War and conflict, often characterized by extreme brutality, are a daily reality in many places. Millions of people, primarily women and children, die are injured and displaced or forced to flee in dramatic conditions. In some regions of the world, we still witness democratic backsliding.

(5) Peace and security are prerequisites for democracy and sustainable development. We call for much greater efforts to be deployed in solving conflicts through political dialogue and negotiations, with full respect for international law and by addressing the root causes of the conflict. We offer to place more emphasis on parliamentary diplomacy, which has demonstrated its ability to provide impetus to efforts aimed at resolving differences and conflicts.

(6) We witness horrendous terrorist acts in every part of the globe. New terrorist groups are emerging with substantial resources at their disposal. Unfortunately, many of these terrorist acts are perpetrated by fundamentalist groups purporting to act in the name of religion. We condemn all forms and manifestations of terrorism, irrespective of their perpetrators and motives, as well as radicalization, violent extremism and their means of financing.
(7) Our parliaments will do their utmost to enhance effective cooperation and support implementation of all relevant UN resolutions and international conventions and agreements to combat terrorism and contribute to the adoption of a coherent security policy at the international level. We pay tribute to the innocent victims of barbaric terrorist acts throughout the world and express our solidarity with them.

(8) Much more needs to be and can be done to prevent and reduce the risk of violence. We call for greater efforts to achieve a nuclear weapons free world. We want to see a real reduction in the proliferation of all weapons. We call for urgent action, including robust legislation, to tackle new security threats and to combat organized crime linked to human trafficking, drugs and the illegal arms trade, kidnappings and extortion, and associated money laundering and corruption.

(9) Millions of women and girls in every region of the world are subjected to all forms of violence, including physical, sexual and domestic violence, every day. We call on all countries to prioritize the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence now. There is an equally urgent need to put an end to widespread hatred and discrimination in all forms. We urge all countries to foster intercultural dialogue and to focus on promoting tolerant and inclusive societies where people are respectful of each other’s culture, religion and traditions. This should not run counter to efforts aimed at combating gender-based discrimination.

(10) Migration, whether forced or voluntary, is a fixture of today’s world. People can and will move to other places in search of a better life. When they are forced to do so because their life is under threat the international community has an obligation to provide support. We are appalled at the countless human tragedies unfolding as people flee wars, conflict, natural and human disasters. We call on all States to protect refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants and to help build stable and prosperous societies in their countries of origin. In this context, it is important to work together to curb human smuggling and trafficking, as well as to strengthen cooperation to address the root causes of migration.

(11) Despite global advances in technology, health, knowledge and material wealth, longstanding economic and social disparities are increasing. There are vast inequalities in terms of income and living conditions in the world and billions of people are living in poverty, which erodes the social contract that is essential for democratic life and human progress everywhere. We are witnessing a steady degradation of our environment and climate change is today a reality. We urge our countries to reach agreements that take fully into account the Rio principles, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

(12) These agreements should ensure a shared prosperity while protecting our environment and effectively addressing climate change. They should focus on both adaptation and mitigation and be coupled with sufficient resources for effective implementation. Our parliaments stand ready to support the implementation of these agreements, as we do with respect to the commitments on disaster risk reduction and promoting a culture of prevention and risk resilience.

(13) The Internet is strongly influencing our world, spurring innovation and communication within and between countries. It is also a vital tool to foster citizens’ participation in the democratic process. Cooperation between all stakeholders – Internet
users, the private sector, civil society, the technological community, governments and international organizations – has helped foster an online environment in which all societies stand to benefit. However, too many people, especially women, still lack access to the Internet and more must be done to bridge the digital divide and ensure our citizens are able to harness the benefits of connectivity. We must also strive to ensure that rights are respected on the Internet and that it remains a space for debate and discussion, free from excessive commercialization and undue regulations aimed at limiting fundamental freedoms agreed internationally.

(14) In all of this, we need to rededicate ourselves to the rule of law. Our parliaments should assist in ensuring that the rule of law is upheld and all have equal access to justice. We call for greater commitment to international law and propose to pay particular attention to respect for human rights and international humanitarian law while supporting international justice mechanisms and efforts to end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes.

Democracy

(15) We reaffirm the principles of the Universal Declaration on Democracy. In this sense, our parliaments are sovereign and independent national institutions. They are marked by the history and cultural heritage of our countries and each one is different. Yet, they share the same ambition to ensure that the will of the people forms the basis of government. Participation in political life and public decision-making is an entitlement and is crucial to development. When people are left voiceless or excluded, their well-being is undermined and democracy is left wanting.

(16) We call for greater efforts to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls with a view to achieving their empowerment and making gender equality a reality. Development of our societies and economies hinges on the enjoyment, by women and men, girls and boys, of full and equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. We must rededicate ourselves to the full realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2030. We deplore the excruciatingly slow progress in securing a greater presence of women in parliament and commit to redoubling our efforts to reach, as a global average, the internationally agreed target of 30 per cent of women members in parliament by 2020.

(17) There is an apparent disconnect between the way we do politics and the way people live today. The connectivity and immediacy that characterize their lives seem far removed from national political processes. Young people in particular are calling for greater engagement, openness, transparency, accountability and effectiveness in politics. We must be ambitious and halt the tide of young people opting out of civil society and democratic institutions; we must better harness their energy and creativity in the service of communities and societies as a whole. We have seen how young people have been at the forefront of many pro-democracy movements.

(18) We pledge to do our utmost to make politics genuinely open to young people and to facilitate their election to parliament in greater numbers. We also pledge to address youth marginalization by engaging youth in politics and facilitating their access to education throughout their lifetime and to the job market. These may prove to be effective ways of
also preventing them from turning to violence and conflict and from being recruited by terrorist groups.

(19) Minorities and indigenous peoples are the most vulnerable members of many of our societies and remain excluded from making decisions that affect their lives and the future of our countries. We affirm that they have an inalienable right to full and equal membership of each of our nations, which has to be translated into public policies that are sensitive to their situation, needs, and aspirations and accompanied by sufficient resources. We call for measures to be taken to ensure their effective participation at all levels of public life.

(20) We recognize the multiple challenges facing many of our parliaments today. We are concerned by public scepticism and a disconnect with politics, an unequal power relationship with the Executive, difficulties in influencing decisions that are increasingly taken in international forums or outside government, and limited means at our disposal to increase institutional capacity in parliament. Supporting the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, we commit to working to tackle these challenges, respecting the role of traditional media, making greater use of social media and modern information and communication technologies (ICTs), and rendering our parliaments fit for purpose for the 21st century.

(21) We will do our utmost to bring parliament closer to the people and we renew our pledge to make our parliaments ever more representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective, enabling the diverse components of society to participate in politics. To this end, we reiterate the importance of free and fair elections held at regular intervals, on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot. We also reiterate the importance of creating and maintaining, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment for civil society. We recognize the progress that is being made by many parliaments towards democratization, as well as the setbacks experienced in several other countries, and we commit to continuing to assist each other in further promoting parliamentary democracy. We commend the recently adopted Common Principles for Support to Parliaments and recommend that all parliaments and relevant organizations endorse and be guided by them.

(22) We encourage the constitutional and institutional reforms underway in countries in transition to democracy. We underscore the importance of providing political and economic support to these countries in order to ensure that democracy, good governance, respect for human rights and social justice take root in a sustainable manner. Supporting economic development is indispensable for fledgling democracies to succeed, including through the conversion of these countries’ debts into investments.

Sustainable development

(23) The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have provided a welcome focus for global efforts to improve peoples’ lives. However, progress has been uneven between regions and countries and wide gaps remain. Some countries have reached many of the goals while others have for a variety of reasons fallen short of the targets. Many people’s lives have been saved and improved, data has been collected, techniques and tools developed and many important lessons learned. Today, the global community is poised to launch a post-2015 development agenda that is broader in scope and that builds on the
experience of the MDGs, tackling both poverty eradication and sustainable development, and applied universally to all countries.

(24) We welcome the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that has emerged with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Poverty eradication is the overarching objective of this new agenda, alongside the promotion of economic, social and environmental development. These objectives can only be achieved by changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, building resilient infrastructure, fostering innovation, protecting and better managing natural resources, as well as revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development.

(25) We applaud the ambition of this agenda to be transformative and leave no-one behind, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. Indeed, to be successful, sustainable development has to place human beings at the centre of decisions. It has to aim at achieving their well-being with full respect for environmental limitations. It needs to be owned by the people and it requires their full participation. People are individuals endowed with rights and responsibilities towards each other and towards the environment. We must all invest in them as our most important resource.

(26) We welcome the goal and call for greater efforts to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, as well as the goal to address inequalities. We applaud the inclusion of a goal calling for urgent action against climate change that also encompasses disaster risk reduction. We welcome the broad-based goal on the means of implementation – finance, trade, technology, capacity building and systemic reforms – that must be mobilized in support of the new agenda.

(27) We commend the inclusion of a goal to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Good governance at all levels is an enabler of development and an objective in its own right for all countries. We commit to reach this goal in our countries and in our parliaments. In the process, parliaments will need to enhance their ability and capacity to ensure accountability for results, including in terms of promoting greater financial responsibility and transparency.

(28) While governments are finalizing the new agreements on sustainable development, financing for development, climate change and disaster risk reduction, we underscore the importance of achieving one harmonious global agenda. It is fundamental to the success of the endeavour. Without it we will not be able to achieve coherence and complementarity among the many actors who will be called upon to take part in the implementation process at the local, national and global levels or guarantee the most optimal use of available resources.

(29) We recognize the important responsibilities that are incumbent on parliaments to ensure implementation of the new SDGs. As Speakers, we are ready to do everything in our power to facilitate the consideration of relevant legislation and allocation of budgetary resources, and to hold governments accountable for the attainment of the goals. We will draw from a vast catalogue of actions to help build public awareness and national ownership, strengthen coherence within and between national and local administration and parliament, facilitate citizen involvement and evaluate and report on progress.
International cooperation

(30) We are convinced that the United Nations must remain the cornerstone of global cooperation and we take this opportunity to renew our solemn pledge in support of the Organization as it celebrates its 70th anniversary and the victory of the world over fascism and Nazism. The UN embodies the ardent hope of people around the world for peace and development. Its 70th anniversary therefore provides an important opportunity for the international community to reflect on its history, look ahead to the future and move forward, in order to turn the vision of the UN Charter into reality.

(31) We call on UN Member States to equip their Organization for the challenges of the 21st century. We commend the many reforms that have taken place over the past decade. Important challenges remain, however, that require urgent action. We remain concerned over the ability of the Security Council to better deliver on its primary responsibilities of maintaining international peace and security under the UN Charter. We believe that the effectiveness of the Security Council can only be improved through urgent reform to reflect contemporary global realities.

(32) Fifteen years ago, our First Speakers’ Conference took place on the eve of the Millennium Summit. On that occasion we presented our vision for providing a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation. We take pride in the considerable progress that has been achieved since then; clearly, there is today growing interaction between the United Nations and the world of parliaments.

(33) We remain convinced that parliaments can do more to help bridge the democracy gap in international relations and secure global democratic accountability for the common good. We reiterate the recommendations we formulated at our conferences in 2005 and 2010. We regard the post-2015 development agenda as a unique opportunity to enhance substantially the cooperation between parliaments and the United Nations. We encourage UN Member States to set out an ambitious vision for this cooperation in the final documents.

(34) We reiterate that our cooperation must be firmly rooted in the work we carry out in our national parliaments, much of which relates to ensuring accountability. Our parliaments must be more active in international affairs by contributing to and monitoring international negotiations, overseeing the enforcement of agreements that have been reached by governments and ensuring national compliance with international law. Similarly, parliaments must be more vigilant in scrutinizing the activities of international organizations and providing input into their deliberations.

(35) We take pride in our Organization – the Inter-Parliamentary Union. We reiterate that, as the world organization of parliaments, the IPU is the international body best suited to help build the relationship between parliaments and the United Nations. We have confidence in the IPU, which is playing this role increasingly. We recommend that its capacity be strengthened to cope with the substantial responsibilities that come with the post-2015 development agenda.

(36) We encourage the IPU and the United Nations to continue to expand their cooperation, particularly in implementing the agreed Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the post-2015 development agenda to be adopted in September 2015 and the
Climate Change Agreement to be concluded in December 2015. These interlocking and mutually reinforcing processes, coupled with respective means of implementation, are critical for the future the people want. We express the hope that both organizations can conclude a new cooperation agreement that reflects the gains that have been made since our first Conference and provides a firm footing for our future work together.

(37) We remain optimistic about the road ahead. The negotiations to secure agreement on a new development agenda are ample proof of a shared global commitment to address today’s global challenges. Here is a unique opportunity for all of us to work together. We will support strongly in each of our countries the necessary action by all relevant authorities to establish mechanisms for tracking and monitoring progress and we call on the IPU to facilitate the achievement of this objective and ensure reporting.

(38) We, in our parliaments, will do our part by placing democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development for the world the people want.
Appendix 2 – Speech: Plenary

Challenges Facing Parliaments Today

Good afternoon

I have the honour of presenting the report ‘Challenges Facing Parliaments Today’. Parliament, through which the will of people is expressed in a properly functioning democracy is an important institution – but it can be a fragile one.

I am pleased to be here amongst my fellow Speakers and parliamentarians.

I acknowledge the great diversity of our parliaments and our circumstances, particularly, the differences between developed and developing countries.

I recognise the challenges that smaller and developing democracies have. I see that the institutional capacity of the stronger more established parliaments must be made available and shared with these countries.

We have a responsibility to work with our neighbours, in my case in the Pacific region. Gathering here, as we reflect on a new development agenda to end poverty in all its forms, reminds us of the tremendous but not insurmountable challenges that we face together.

One of the roles of Speaker I most value is being an advocate for the Parliament. The role of Speaker is interwoven with the place itself – my authority and standing are dependent on the respect with which the public hold the institution of Parliament.

You have the paper before you – this describes some common challenges and opportunities, including:

- public scepticism, sadly deserved due to the actions of some politicians;
- declining voter turnout, a global trend we must all address;
- the capacity of parliament, and its ability to reform and make use of technology;
- the composition of Parliament, particularly gender balance and the participation of indigenous people; and,
- Executive dominance, a particular challenge for the smaller democracies.

In New Zealand, we have started a significant conversation about how effective parliamentary scrutiny actually enhances government outcomes. The New Zealand Parliament is one of the longest continuous parliaments and internationally regarded as a well-functioning democratic institution. I don’t want to get complacent.

No Parliament can afford to stand still, and we have recently strengthened the financial and legislative scrutiny functions of our parliamentary committees.

Promoting a strong and open democracy is high on my list of priorities. Public respect for the institution will grow when the public is informed about what Parliament is doing and is able to participate.
The relevance and legitimacy of parliaments is at stake if we do not move with the fast pace of communications and technology. A well-functioning democracy relies on openness and transparency of information; indeed it is core to making any Parliament as an institution more effective.

I am proud that my Parliament is open, transparent, and accessible. Proceedings are broadcast through a variety of media, and a huge volume of information, including evidence and advice provided to select committees, is routinely published. Committee hearings are open to the public and public input is nearly always invited. Information on the expenditure on parliamentary travel and entitlements is released at regular intervals and all members are required to disclose pecuniary and other specified interests annually.

At the heart of this is maintaining public confidence by being open about expenditure of public money, enabling the public to hold elected representatives to account; and allowing for informed public debate.

I challenge you all; shine the light on your parliaments. Do not stand for any sniff of corruption or complacency – because your citizens certainly will not. Share both your successes and your challenges with your people. Be honest and the public perceptions of politicians and the standing of your parliaments will be better for it.
Appendix 3 – Speech: General Debate

Placing democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development: Building the world the people want

Good afternoon

It is heartening to be here at the United Nations, and it is reflective of the closer working relationship between the IPU and the UN. Because of the status of our office, we Speakers have an extraordinary opportunity here to enhance peaceful relations between parliaments and hence our countries.

The Sustainable Development Agenda articulates a vision for developing and developed countries, recognising we do not all start from the same point and taking into account different national realities, capacities and priorities, cultures and traditions.

The agenda states that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. New Zealand views its own peace and security as innately linked to the prosperity and stability of our whole region, the Pacific.

I am immensely proud of the work New Zealand parliamentarians do to promote peace and democracy in our region and beyond. I have made it a priority to facilitate IPU engagement with the Pacific and to promote the value of democratic governance in our region. I take this opportunity to thank the IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong for his recent visit to the Pacific.

New Zealand is a small country of 4.5 million, with a small unicameral Parliament with 121 members, but we are held in high regard internationally.

We were one of the founding countries who committed to preserving peace through international cooperation and collective security by establishing the United Nations in 1945, and currently sit on the Security Council.

We have a reputation for being practical, positive and constructive.

We engage on the full spectrum of the multilateral agenda, including international security, law and disarmament, environment, human rights, health, United Nations reform, and sustainable development. During the development of the Sustainable Development Agenda, New Zealand’s priorities reflected issues of importance to Pacific countries and other Small Island Developing States. This included advocating for a stand-alone goal on oceans and energy and the importance of sustainable economic development. New Zealand viewed gender equality and women’s empowerment as a critical element of the new agenda.

I advocated that the agenda specifically recognised the central role of parliaments in ensuring governments effectively implement these commitments.

Parliamentarians, in their role as representatives of the people, will also be instrumental in communicating the agenda to their constituencies.

As this conference concludes, let us consider what we each will do to translate the agenda into action.

The role of Speaker is by necessity a non-partisan one, but we have an indispensable part to play in promoting legitimacy and public trust in inclusive and democratic institutions.
We set the tone and guide the Parliament. I implore all Speakers to ensure that parliamentarians act with integrity – we have many tools at our disposal.

The Sustainable Development Agenda is simply too critical to be distracted by corruption and conflict. All of us here today will be fundamental in the success of meeting these ambitious goals.
Appendix 4 – Message from Pacific Region Speakers to the IPU Secretary General

We, the undersigned Speakers of Pacific Parliaments, welcome the Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Declaration of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers.

Parliament is the central institution of democracy, through which the will of the people is expressed. We support the ambition of the Inter-Parliamentary Union member parliaments to provide a concrete democratic dimension to collective effort aimed at creating a better world.

The proposed goals of Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development articulate a vision for developing and developed countries, recognising we do not all start from the same point and taking into account different national realities, capacities and priorities.

The Pacific has made significant progress in reaching some of the targets of the previous Millennium Development Goals, but there is still much that can be achieved. As we shape the post-2015 development agenda, it is important that the needs of the Pacific Small Island Developing States are recognised and integrated. In this regard, we welcome the Outcome Document of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) – the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A.) Pathway and urge its effective implementation as the sustainable development road map for SIDS.

Reducing poverty and achieving gender equality remain amongst our challenges, but we are confident we can make significant gains as we embark on the new sustainable development agenda, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We welcome the new goals proposed on climate change, oceans and marine resources. In our Pacific region, we face the decline in fish stocks, sea level rise, ocean acidification, increasing demand for space, land-based impacts, and loss of marine biodiversity. This threatens the health, livelihoods, homes, and food security of our Pacific people.

We ask that our fellow parliaments be mindful of the challenges faced by Pacific SIDS and appreciate what vulnerability and security means for small isolated States with limited resources, who are susceptible to natural disasters.

We welcome the new goals proposed on inclusive economic growth, fostering peaceful inclusive societies and building capable responsive institutions that are based on the rule of law. We will do all in our parliamentary remit to ensure diversity in our parliaments.

We therefore support the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments and encourage more established parliamentary democracies to support fragile and emerging democracies. The IPU, the community of the world parliaments, provides an excellent platform to provide assistance, institutional knowledge and best practice, within a culture of exchange rather than imposition.
Appendix 5 – Media statements

Speaker to advocate for democratic governance at United Nations

Advocating for democratic governance to be part of the post-2015 development agenda will be the focus of an upcoming visit to the Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations in New York by the Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter.

The Speaker will attend the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s Second Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, of which the Speaker is a member. The meeting will examine progress on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, challenges facing parliaments across the globe, as well as practical considerations for the conference to be held in 2015.

The Speaker will also attend the Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations. The hearing will provide a further opportunity to help inform the collective thinking of parliamentarians about the future Sustainable Development Goals. It is intended that the post-2015 development agenda reflect the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

“I believe that democratic principles, values and institutions should underpin the post-2015 development agenda. The full involvement of parliaments to implement the agenda and to attain its goals and targets is imperative,” the Speaker said. “Speakers are well placed to advocate for democratic ideals of transparency, accountability and oversight, as we lead the institutions of parliament that are pivotal to democratic governance.”

“I am very pleased at the substantive cooperation between the United Nations, the IPU and member parliaments over recent years. I trust we will maintain regular and systematic interaction between parliamentarians and United Nations officials, as we have a significant role to play in reviewing the implementation of international commitments and facilitating closer ties between countries. In order to achieve the vision of the post-2015 development agenda, greater global cooperation will be required and parliaments are integral to this.”

The visit will take place from 17 to 20 November.
Speakers gather to promote global peace and democracy

Next week the New Zealand Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter, will join more than 130 fellow Speakers at the Fourth World Conference of Speakers being held at the United Nations in New York. This unique forum is part of a series of high-level meetings leading up to the United Nations Summit in September and the adoption of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 17 goals, which underpin the post-2015 Development Agenda, focus attention on what needs to be done globally to achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

The conference is an opportunity for the Speaker to assert New Zealand’s and the Pacific region’s perspectives and priorities on a global stage. This includes promoting international cooperation and sharing of our democratic values.

“Speakers are well placed to advocate for democratic ideals of transparency, accountability and oversight, as we lead the institutions of parliament that are central to democratic governance,” said David Carter.

As well as discussing the role of parliaments in implementing the SDGs, the Speaker will present one of the key reports on the challenges and opportunities faced by parliaments. “There is great diversity in our parliaments and differences between developed and developing countries. Coming together, as we reflect on a new development agenda to end poverty in all its forms, reminds us of the tremendous but not insurmountable challenges that we face,” said David Carter.

“I recognise the challenges that smaller and developing democracies have and I see that the institutional capacity of the stronger more established parliaments must be made available and shared with these countries. We have a responsibility to work with our neighbours, in our case in the Pacific region. For this reason, I am also bringing together attending Pacific Speakers during the conference.”

The World Conference of Speakers takes place from 31 August to 2 September. The final meeting of the preparatory committee, of which the Speaker is a member, will take place on 30 August.
Appendix 6 – Membership of the Preparatory Committee

PRESIDENT
- Mr Saber H Chowdhury, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

PRESIDING OFFICERS OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS
- Mr Zhang Dejiang, Chairman of the National People’s Congress of China
- Mr Mogens Lykketoft, Speaker of the Folketinget of Denmark
- Ms Gabriela Rivadeneira, President of the National Assembly of Ecuador
- Mr Guy Nzouba-Ndama, President of the National Assembly of Gabon
- Mr Norbert Lammert, President of the Bundestag of Germany
- Mr Einar K Gudfinnsson, Speaker of the Althingi of Iceland
- Ms Sumitra Mahajan, Speaker of the Lok Sabha of India
- Ms Laura Boldrini, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy
- Mr Atef Tarawneh, Speaker of the Majlis Al Nuwaab of Jordan
- Mr Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Chairperson of the Senate of Kazakhstan
- Mr Ekwee Ethuro, Speaker of the Senate of Kenya
- Mr Luis Miguel Gerónimo Barbosa, Speaker of the Senate of Mexico
- Mr David Carter, Speaker of the House of Representatives of New Zealand
- Mr David Mark, President of the Senate of Nigeria
- Mr Radoslaw Sikorski, Marshal of the Sejm of Poland
- Ms Valentina Matviyenko, Chairperson of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation
- Mr Moustapha Niasse, President of the National Assembly of Senegal
- Ms Anne Makinda, Speaker of the Bunge of United Republic of Tanzania
- Mr Wade Mark, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Trinidad and Tobago

MEMBERS OF THE IPU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
- Ms Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda
- Mr Rashid Al Shariqi, Member of Parliament, United Arab Emirates
- Ms Ivonne Passada, Member of Parliament, Uruguay

SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION
- Mr Martin Chungong
# Appendix 7 – Programme

**SUNDAY 30 AUGUST 2015**

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.00pm –</td>
<td>Final meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Fourth World Conference of</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.00pm</td>
<td>Speakers of Parliament</td>
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**MONDAY 31 AUGUST 2015**

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>10.00am –</td>
<td><strong>Opening ceremony in the presence of:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.45am</td>
<td>• Mr Saber Chowdhury, IPU President</td>
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<td>• Mr Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Mr Sam K Kutesa, President of UN General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00am –</td>
<td><strong>Plenary sitting I</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.00pm</td>
<td><strong>Presentation of report:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implementation of major recommendations of previous Speakers’ Conferences and the growing parliamentary dimension to international cooperation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rapporteur: Ms Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda</td>
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<td>3.00pm –</td>
<td><strong>Plenary sitting II</strong></td>
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<td>6.00pm</td>
<td><strong>Presentation of report:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Parliamentary involvement in the shaping and implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>Rapporteur: Mr Saber Chowdhury, President of the IPU</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.30pm</td>
<td>Bilateral meeting with President Frick of Liechtenstein</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.30pm</td>
<td>Reception hosted by IPU President, Mr Saber Chowdhury</td>
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TUESDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2015

8.30am – 9.45am
UNISDR/IPU Breakfast Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction

10.00am – 1.00pm
Plenary sitting III
Address by Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women
Continuation of general debate: Placing Democracy at the Service of Peace and Sustainable Development: Building the World the People Want
Panel discussion: Parliamentary Oversight: Challenges and Opportunities

1.15pm – 3.00pm
Inter-Parliamentary Union working luncheon

3.00pm – 6.00pm
Plenary sitting IV
Continuation of general debate: Placing Democracy at the Service of Peace and Sustainable Development: Building the World the People Want
Panel discussion: Translating the SDGs into Action

4.00pm – 5.30pm
Meeting of Pacific Speakers and delegations

6.30pm
Reception hosted by United Kingdom Mission

WEDNESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2015

10.00am – 1.00pm
Plenary sitting V
Continuation and conclusion of general debate: Placing Democracy at the Service of Peace and Sustainable Development: Building the World the People Want
Presentation of reports from the panel discussions

3.00pm – 6.00pm
Plenary sitting VI
Adoption of the Declaration
Remarks by IPU President and incoming President of UNGA
Mr Saber Chowdhury and Mr M Lykketoft (former Speaker of the Parliament of Denmark), respectively
Closing of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament