The Hon. Inia B. Seruiratu
Minister for Foreign Affairs

The Rt Hon. Winston R. Peters
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

JOINT STATEMENT

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Winston Peters and Minister for Foreign Affairs Inia Seruiratu met today in Suva and renewed their commitment to strengthen the friendship and partnership between Fiji and New Zealand, building on our common historical, cultural, political and people-to-people links.

The Ministers agreed it was time to take the Fiji-New Zealand relationship to a new level based on common interests, shared prosperity and security that binds us together. New Zealand is committed to the establishment of two new positions in its High Commission in Suva to boost the heightened engagements anticipated as a result of these renewed relations.

Fiji acknowledges New Zealand's 'Pacific Reset' and the shift in its engagement with the Pacific to a relationship built on values and equal partnerships. New Zealand is allocating new resources for development assistance in order to leverage new opportunities, address common challenges and strengthen New Zealand's relations with Fiji and the region.

In demonstration of the commitment to this reinvigorated relations, the Ministers agreed to hold more regular high level engagements. Fiji and New Zealand are committed to the convening of joint ministerial consultations to consolidate relations further and effectively progress issues. The meeting will be complemented by regular multi-agency officials' level talks.

Fiji is appreciative of the support received from the New Zealand Government in various sectors including private sector development, good governance, gender equality, security and defence, climate change and disaster resilience, labour mobility, and education. Going forward, Fiji and New Zealand will jointly work on enhancing engagements in these areas.

Ministers committed to continued strengthening of collaboration in the area of defence, particularly on peacekeeping and border security. This includes a package of support from New Zealand to the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) including in peacekeeping and leadership development. The Ministers committed to intensifying cooperation in the area of policing and border control to ensure security for both countries to combat transnational organized crime.

The Ministers also committed to growing relations in trade and investment, and remain open to discussing issues surrounding PACER Plus. New Zealand has committed to targeted assistance to improve opportunities for businesses and investment in Fiji.

Fiji acknowledged New Zealand's support for good governance and democracy including the recent study visit for eight of its women parliamentarians to New Zealand.

New Zealand will continue to build resilient communities in Fiji and is committed to strengthening Fiji's disaster resilience through a partnership with the National Disaster Management Office.

In recognition of opportunities in the education sector, the Ministers discussed collaboration in the development of a research institute, reviewing of Fiji's school curriculum, developing human resources and addressing skills shortages.

On labour mobility, Fiji welcomed New Zealand's commitment to strengthen the existing Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme and to explore opportunities to lift the participation of Fijian workers in the scheme.

At the regional level, New Zealand acknowledged Fiji's leadership on climate change, and commended it for being the first Pacific island country to be elected to the Human Rights Council.

2019 marks the year of Fiji's re-engagement at all levels within the Pacific Islands Forum, including this year's Leaders' Meeting to be hosted by Tuvalu. Ministers welcomed the inclusion of climate change as a priority issue. New Zealand recognised the successful completion of Fiji's COP23 Presidency and

the increased focus that Fiji's leadership has brought to the region, and noted Fiji's hosting of the upcoming Climate Action Pacific Partnership in April 2019.

New Zealand congratulated Fiji on its hosting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Annual Meeting in Nadi in May 2019. Fiji accepted New Zealand's offer to provide assistance for the successful delivery of the event.

The Ministers look forward to taking the Fiji-New Zealand relationship to new heights as friends, neighbours, and equal partners. Furthermore, they committed further exploring opportunities to collaborate for mutual prosperity, security, and wellbeing for our countries, and for the benefit of our region.

Wednesday 27 February 2019