

Confidential

Office of the Minister for Conservation

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Eugenie Sage

1. I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Sharm el Sheik, Egypt over the period 10 - 20 November 2018 to attend the United Nations Biodiversity Conference 2018.

Report

2. I visited Egypt to attend the Ministerial High-Level Segment (HLS) of the United Nations (UN) Biodiversity Conference 2018 on the theme of “Investing in Biodiversity for People and Planet.” The HLS preceded the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the major global agreement committing parties to the conservation of biodiversity. I was accompanied by Dr Kayla Kingdon-Bebb (Principal Advisor – Conservation). Also representing New Zealand at the meeting were officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Conservation.
3. The HLS culminated in the adoption of the Sharm el Sheikh Declaration, which calls for parties to accelerate action towards biodiversity targets and to show ambition in the development of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Declaration also commits parties to continue efforts to mainstream biodiversity into their national economic, institutional, and regulatory frameworks.
4. During the HLS I co-chaired a ministerial roundtable session on mainstreaming biodiversity into the manufacturing and processing sectors, together with Egypt’s Minister of Trade and Industry (Amr Nassar). Many interventions presented at the roundtable focussed on efforts by parties to make improvements in waste reduction and reuse, with several focussing on efforts to transition to circular economy principles. My statement emphasised New Zealand’s ambition for working collaboratively with the productive sectors and others to move away from our current ‘take, make and dispose’ economic model. I highlighted the engagement of the tourism sector in biodiversity efforts, the growing recognition of the economic value of preserving biodiversity, and strong public support behind progress towards effective action on single use packaging and products. I also emphasised the importance of collaboration across a wide range of stakeholders as necessary for achieving biodiversity goals.
5. In the margins of the HLS I undertook several bilateral meetings, including with the head of the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat (former

Romanian Environment Minister Dr Cristiana Pasca Palmer); the Executive Director of UN Environment (former Norwegian Environment Minister Erik Solheim); Egypt's Minister for the Environment (Dr. Yasmine Fouad), the Canadian Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (Sean Fraser MP); and the Director General for Environment for the European Union (Dr Daniel Calleja Crespo). A strong theme across these meetings was shared priorities and ambition in the development of a new Post-2020 global biodiversity framework to succeed the Aichi targets. Those I met with expressed a high level of interest in my recent announcement that New Zealand is commencing a review of our National Biodiversity Strategy.

6. During the HLS, the New Zealand delegation also hosted a dinner for Pacific representatives. The Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa (Fiame Naomi Mataafa), Director-General of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (Kosi Latu), and Principal Assistant Secretary of Tonga's Department of Environment (Ta'hirih Hokafonu) attended and participated in a wide-ranging discussion of Pacific aspirations for a new Post-2020 global biodiversity framework and regional conservation issues and priorities.

Other meetings in London, United Kingdom and Vancouver, Canada

7. Whilst in London on 11 November, I represented New Zealand at commemorative events marking the centenary of Armistice Day, including a wreath-laying at the New Zealand War Memorial and the National Service of Thanksgiving held at Westminster Abbey. The following day, I met with the UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Thérèse Coffey MP), and senior officials at the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs. The focus of these discussions was on waste minimisation and biodiversity protection. I also undertook meetings with representatives from the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (at the London Wetland Centre). My brief stopover in London culminated in an event hosted by the New Zealand High Commission and Commonwealth Secretariat at the New Zealand-sponsored Oceania exhibit at the Royal Academy of Arts. The event promoted the Commonwealth Blue Charter and I spoke alongside the UN Special Envoy for the Ocean. My remarks highlighted the work of the New Zealand-led Blue Charter Action Group on ocean acidification.
8. Whilst in Vancouver on 16-18 November, I met with British Columbia's Minister of Environment (Hon George Heyman) and discussed emerging approaches to environmental impact assessments as well as the Province's engagement with First Nations on marine protection and protected areas management. I also met with the Deputy Mayor of Vancouver (Adrienne Carr) and senior officials to discuss Vancouver's Green City initiative and commitment to becoming waste-free by 2040. During my time in Vancouver I undertook meetings and site visits with representatives of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, the Mayor and Councillors of Bowen Island Municipality, and the Islands Conservancy Trust.

9. I wish to acknowledge the support provided for this trip by officials at the Department of Conservation, Ministry for the Environment, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Proactive release

I propose to release the paper within the required 30 business days.

Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Eugenie Sage

Minister for Conservation