

**JOINT STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTERS OF NEW ZEALAND AND
THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SINGAPORE-NEW ZEALAND
ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP**

On 17 May 2019, New Zealand and Singapore established an Enhanced Partnership to elevate our relations. The Enhanced Partnership – based on the four pillars of trade and economics, security and defence, science, technology and innovation, and people-to-people links – has seen the long-standing relationship between our countries strengthen over the past twelve months.

To commemorate the first anniversary of the establishment of the Enhanced Partnership, we convened a virtual summit via videoconference on 27 May 2020. We reaffirmed our dedication to the continued implementation of the Enhanced Partnership as we seek to reinvigorate our existing cooperation with new initiatives that are meaningful and valued by both countries.

Our very close relationship, cemented by the Enhanced Partnership, is evident as we stand together during the global COVID-19 pandemic. As we face a less predictable and more economically volatile international environment, we continue to work together to support a collective and collaborative international response to COVID-19.

We remain ready to help each other by facilitating access to food products, goods, services and essential supplies (including medicines, medical and surgical equipment), and through the sharing of experiences and information. More importantly, we remain ready to help each other as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

To enhance our mutual prosperity and strengthen our trade and economic connections, our two countries successfully upgraded the Agreement between New Zealand and Singapore on a Closer Economic Partnership (ANZSCEP), which came into effect on 1 January 2020. The upgrade of this free trade agreement modernised the 2000 agreement, incorporating new provisions on e-commerce, regulatory cooperation and enhanced food safety cooperation, among other measures.

Our countries, along with Chile, successfully concluded negotiations for a ground-breaking Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA), which we hope Ministers will virtually sign soon. We understand the role enhanced digitalisation will play in enabling international trade. Furthermore, we also recognise that enhanced digitalisation will be important for assisting our economies not only recover more quickly from COVID-19, but become more resilient to the effects of global pandemics in the future.

We will look to expand our cooperation on the digital economy to develop best practice and align our approaches to facilitate digital trade flows between us, with a particular focus on FinTech cooperation. We will also explore opportunities for further

cooperation on cyber-security and explore the possibility of expanding to new areas of digital cooperation, such as digital health.

New Zealand and Singapore have worked throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic to guard against protectionism and ensure supply chains remain open. Together we have led or supported a range of initiatives, including issuing a Joint Ministerial Statement with nine other countries undertaking to maintain supply chains and connectivity for essential goods.

Through the Declaration on Trade in Essential Goods for Combating the COVID-19 Pandemic, signed on 15 April 2020, we took concrete steps to address trade disruptions affecting essential supplies in the face of COVID-19. The Declaration stands as a world-leading initiative in support of a rules-based international trading order. It remains open, for like-minded partners dedicated to preserving the global trading system during times of crisis, to join.

We have also worked with various other partners to maintain supply chain connectivity, such as through the Port Authorities Roundtable Declaration to ensure that port operations can remain undisrupted, the Joint Ministerial Statement on Action Plans to Facilitate the Flow of Goods and Services as well as the Essential Movement of People, and other Ministerial Statements in the WTO, UN and APEC.

Looking beyond the immediate response to COVID-19, we will continue discussions on the effects of the global economic downturn and explore options to build resilience into our economies for the well-being of all our peoples.

We will continue to build on our long-standing defence relationship to further strengthen bilateral defence and security cooperation, through high level dialogues, training exercises and professional exchanges. We will continue our strong history of cooperation in multilateral fora, including the Five Power Defence Arrangements and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus.

We will look to cement our relationship in agri-food sector development as food security partners and deepen collaboration in agri-food technology, which can contribute to Singapore's plan to produce 30 per cent of its nutritional needs by 2030. We will also explore opportunities for further regulatory alignment to increase the flows of food between our two countries.

We will advance opportunities for bilateral, regional and international collaboration on sustainable climate change initiatives as we pursue efforts towards our Paris Agreement goals, enhance our energy security through renewable means, and to revitalise our economies in the wake of COVID-19 as we transform to a low-carbon future. We will enhance cooperation on low-carbon technologies and solutions, including low-carbon hydrogen and collaboration on carbon markets with high environmental integrity. We will also continue to work together to support regional and global climate action, including cooperation on capacity building for the region on topics such as market-based measures and implementing the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework.

We will explore the possibility of cooperation on the procurement of pharmaceuticals in order to obtain essential medical supplies for our peoples. We will also cooperate multilaterally on vaccine development, as well as improving access and distribution to ensure our populations are protected from further COVID-19 outbreaks. We will support efforts to make a vaccine, once developed, readily available for all countries, including developing countries in Asia and the Pacific.

We agreed to commence discussions on the development of common standards, systems and phasing, for the safe and gradual re-opening of borders to each other when the time is right and within the context of safe travel zone commitments, with the aim of restoring connectivity, facilitating trade and enabling essential business and official travel between the two countries.

Working collectively is paramount. We recognise the importance of multilateralism as essential for global post-COVID-19 recovery, for peacebuilding and prosperity, and for addressing other critical global issues, such as climate change. We remain dedicated to strengthening regional and international organisations, including the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and ASEAN-led processes, particularly the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the United Nations (UN) and associated bodies.

We maintain our shared interest in a stable and peaceful Asia-Pacific and in the preservation of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We reaffirmed our support for the maintenance of peace, stability, safety and security, unimpeded lawful commerce, as well as the freedom of navigation, freedom of overflight, and other internationally lawful uses of the sea and airspace. We also remain dedicated to countering terrorism and violent extremism in the region and to collaborating to achieve this goal.

This Joint Statement, marking the one-year anniversary of the Enhanced Partnership, reaffirms the New Zealand-Singapore relationship and signals our intent to continue to grow and deepen our engagement. We will continue to seek opportunities to work closely together for the common peace, stability and prosperity of our countries, the Asia-Pacific region and the world.

27 May 2020