

Aotearoa New Zealand – Kuki 'Āirani The Cook Islands

Waka Hourua/Vaka Purua

2022-2025

He waka hourua, he waka eke noa

A double-hulled waka bound by a common purpose

***E vaka haurua, e vaka purua, e vaka taurua, e vaka tapu
Ka tito! tito! Tito taku vaka ki te patiki rangi, patiki rangi nekeneke...***

*A double vessel, a double vessel, a sacred vessel, an anointed vessel
indeed.*

*She will point her bow, and sink her brow earnestly to the horizon always
moving...*

Ngā Kupu Whakataki – Atui'anga Pou Toru – Preamble

Reconnecting mana-ki-te-mana, after successfully navigating the impacts of the COVID pandemic together, we re-acknowledge the significance of our 2001 Joint Centenary Declaration, and recommit to upholding one another's respective mana and sovereignty, reaffirming the commitments made by Aotearoa New Zealand and the Cook Islands in our Joint Declaration as equal States independent in the conduct of their own affairs.

We acknowledge our enduring relationship founded upon our shared past, whakapapa/papa'anga, people to people bonds and principles – codified through our special constitutional arrangements, whereby the Cook Islands is self-governing in free association with Aotearoa New Zealand.

We recognise our shared citizenry, cultures, languages and values, as well as our shared anchoring in Te Moana Nui a Kiwa/Kiva, and our shared national, regional and global interests. In this spirit, Waka Hourua/Vaka Purua affirms our joint ambition to elevate the relationship to a new level of expanded strategic cooperation in the years to come, with the aim of advancing the safety, prosperity and well-being of our respective peoples, the Pacific and international community.

To this end, we highlight the importance of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a shared horizon for our work in order to improve the lives of our peoples and our planet. In this context, our work will be guided by the vision for the next 100 years, and key development targets, outlined in the Cook Islands' strategy Te Ara Akapapa'anga Nui – NSDA 2020+. We also acknowledge Aotearoa New Zealand's goal of supporting a peaceful, stable, prosperous and resilient Pacific, and recognise the enduring principles underpinning its overall engagement with the Cook Islands:

- *Tātai Hono: Piri'anga Toto: The recognition of enduring whakapapa connections*
- *Tātou Tātou: Kia Okota'i: All of us together*
- *Whāia te Taumata Ōhanga: Arata'a Puapinga Motukore: Journey towards sustainable economic goals*
- *Touro Hawaiiiki: Ngā Kaveinga Mou: Navigating together*
- *Arongia ki Rangiātea: Akara ki Rangiatea: Focus towards excellence*

Ngā Mātāpono – Renga'anga Tango – Principles

The Cook Islands and Aotearoa New Zealand together affirm the following principles and understandings which, consistent with our 2001 Joint Centenary Declaration, we wish to guide and deepen our partnership:

- *Manaakitanga/Te Ko’u Mana*: We will engage in a mutually respectful way that uplifts one another’s mana, and supports each other’s aspirations;
- *Whanaungatanga/Piri’anga Toto*: Embracing our familial connections, we will engage in a respectful and supportive way, and kanohi-ki-te-kanohi as able;
- *Kotahitanga/’Okota’i’anga*: We will collaborate, share insights and consult one another for our mutual benefit;
- *Maia/Kia Ti’ama*: We will carefully listen, courageously share and seek to understand each other’s views, including when there are differences; and
- *Kaitiakitanga/Tiaki’anga*: We will act as good stewards of our environment, taking into account the interests of future generations, and partner on development cooperation activities that are inclusive, resilient, sustainable and effective.

Te Koronga – Au Tapao– Priorities

Under this Waka Hourua/Vaka Purua the Cook Islands and Aotearoa New Zealand will work together over the period 2022 to 2025 to advance our shared prosperity, security and wellbeing and to fulfil our responsibilities as kaitiaki. In these areas, we commit to:

Kimi’anga Puapinga – Tupu’anga Ruperupe – Prosperity

- Cooperating to support economic recovery and resilience in response to the impacts of COVID and climate change, including through the provision of budget support; investment in quality public infrastructure that stimulates the economy and strengthens resilience; targeted assistance to small-medium businesses; and support for economic transformation and diversification initiatives;

- Coordinating to sustain and improve the quality of core public services, and make progress towards a digital, innovative, inclusive and low emissions economy in the Cook Islands, including through the provision of predictable assistance to core sector agencies;
- Supporting the move towards a more sustainable approach to tourism;
- Fostering growth in the agriculture and marine sectors to support livelihoods, increase food security and grow exports, including by improving biosecurity, facilitating capability-building and supporting the creation of export pathways;
- Taking action to reduce barriers to trade within the Pacific by facilitating smoother trade processes inclusive of labour movement through implementation of PACER Plus, and associated customs, bio security and immigration systems; and
- Cooperating on initiatives to address labour force participation issues, and encourage population retention and return.

Hauora – Turanga Memeitaki – Well-being

- Continuing to prepare for and respond to pandemics through using past experiences to facilitate access to resources needed, including vaccines, as well as public health technical support;
- Consolidating health-health engagement, and cooperating to improve health services and outcomes, including a reduction in non-communicable diseases;
- Consulting on education reviews, and working to ensure a contextually appropriate but equitable standard of education between our countries, with a view to improving the quality of outcomes and better equipping the next generation;
- Cooperating to strengthen Māori to Māori engagement, including in the areas of economic development, business, environmental protection,

health, well-being, education and culture, for example collaboration to revitalise Te Reo Māori;

- Working together to promote gender equality, through an inclusive and rights based approach, the revitalised Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration, and in furtherance of the decision by the Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders Meeting to realise the rights of women and girls in all their diversity; and
- Collaborating to support the well-being of those most vulnerable and hard to reach in our communities, including by using development funding and support, such as Aotearoa New Zealand's Volunteer Service Abroad.
- Recognising an all-inclusive approach to supporting well-being through community involvement and civil society engagement.

Whakahaumarū – Paruru'anga Ipukarea – Security

- Cooperating to secure our land and maritime territories, borders, and Exclusive Economic Zones, including co-operation to address the common challenges that trans-border security issues, such as maritime security and transnational crime, pose to our communities;
- Continuing practical bilateral and regional cooperation in defence, policing, immigration and border security, maritime safety and cyber security, through deeper knowledge sharing, exchanges and shared training and exercises;
- Facilitating open dialogue on shared security challenges, pursuing our regional concept of security as outlined in the Boe Declaration¹;
- Strengthening the institutional capacity and capability of the Cook Islands' law enforcement agencies and the justice sector;

¹ This includes human security, humanitarian assistance, and environmental security including climate change resilience.

- Cooperating on improving good governance, including strengthening management systems to support the effective and efficient use of public finances and resources; and
- Protecting biodiversity and ecosystems, including through effective customs and biosecurity measures.

Taiao – Ao Natura – Environment

- Working together as proactive partners through national, regional, and international organisations to raise awareness of, and support collective action to combat climate change;
- Partnering to address climate change adaptation, mitigation, and resilience to minimise adverse effects on the environment and people and critical public infrastructure, including by drawing on Aotearoa New Zealand's climate financing;
- Progressing Mei Te Vai Ki Te Vai, a sewage reticulation and treatment system to address the environmental impact of septic leakage into Muri Lagoon; and ensuring the continued success of the Te Mato Vai water project for Rarotonga;
- Collaborating to ensure the development of strong environmental frameworks and protections, in line with our kaitiakitanga/tiaki'anga responsibilities and the precautionary approach, for our ocean resources; and
- Strengthening the institutional capacity of the Cook Islands in the areas of disaster risk management (including preparedness, response, and risk reduction) and recovery from natural or non-natural disasters.

Te Ara Whakamua – Te Ara Ki Mua – Our Approach

In order to give practical effect to our ambitions, Aotearoa New Zealand and the Cook Islands will hold each other mutually accountable under this Waka Hourua/Vaka Purua, ensuring a strong focus on results, with the shared understanding that we will:

- Hold an annual Joint Ministerial Framework (JMF) meeting, and periodic ministerial level talks, to advance and refresh the priority areas of engagement;
- Hold an annual JMF official-level meeting to monitor and advance progress on agreed objectives;
- Proactively consider the impacts of our respective policies on each other and consult one another about significant issues in a timely manner;
- Communicate openly and proactively, and work together to advance areas of mutual interest (domestically, regionally and globally);
- Working together through regional institutions, including the Pacific Islands Forum as the preeminent forum in our regional architecture, to promote Pacific interests, amplify our Pacific voice globally, and increase our region's capacity for collective action on regional and international challenges;
- Work together to implement the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*, as part of our efforts to build a strong and resilient Pacific, and to protect and secure our Pacific people, place and prospects.
- Support Cook Islands deeper engagement in international affairs and within the international community;
- Collaborate through international institutions to identify and prioritise issues, and deepen collective international action in areas of mutual interest;

- Consult on an evaluation of the bilateral development cooperation support programme, and make adaptations as necessary to improve its effectiveness;
- Support capacity and capability efforts to ensure our foreign ministries are centres of excellence, including through, upskilling and staffing exchanges;
- Following a stocktake of engagement, jointly develop a framework to monitor progress in the identified priority areas and deliver on mutual accountability requirements.

The Waka Hourua/Vaka Purua will take effect on the date of its signature. Any jointly decided amendment will be recorded in an exchange of letters.

He waka hourua ki te titiro ki te heke ma

A double-hulled waka helps when looking to the future.

Piri'anga toto, ka oki te toto, ka kimi i te toto

*Blood kinsmen, no matter how separated in time and place they be,
will always find each other.*

Signed in duplicate at Rarotonga on 13 October 2022

For New Zealand

For The Cook Islands

*The Honourable Nanaia Mahuta
Minister of Foreign Affairs*

*The Honourable Mark Brown
Prime Minister of the Cook
Islands
Minister of Foreign Affairs*