

India - New Zealand Joint Statement (New Delhi, 17 March 2025)

17 March 2025

1. At the invitation of the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, is on an Official Visit to India on 16-20 March 2025. Prime Minister Luxon, who is on his first visit to India in his current capacity, is visiting New Delhi and Mumbai, and is accompanied by Hon. Louise Upston, Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, Hon. Mark Mitchell, Minister for Ethnic Communities, and Sport and Recreation, and Hon. Todd McClay, Minister for Trade and Investment, Agriculture, and Forestry, and a high-level delegation comprising of officials, and representatives of businesses, community diaspora, media and cultural groups.
2. Prime Minister Luxon was accorded a warm and traditional welcome in New Delhi. Prime Minister Modi held bilateral talks with Prime Minister Luxon. Prime Minister Modi will inaugurate the 10th edition of the *Raisina Dialogue* on 17 March 2025 in New Delhi with Prime Minister Luxon as the Chief Guest delivering the Inaugural Keynote Address. The Prime Minister laid a wreath at Raj Ghat Mahatma Gandhi Memorial and also called on President Droupadi Murmu.
3. The Prime Ministers reaffirmed their shared desire to further strengthen the growing bilateral relationship between India and New Zealand which is anchored in shared democratic values and robust people-to-people ties. Both leaders recognized that there remains significant potential for further growth in the bilateral relationship and agreed to cooperate closely in diverse areas, including trade and investment, defence and security, education and research, science and technology, agri-tech, space, mobility of people and sports.
4. The Prime Ministers exchanged views on regional and global developments of mutual interest and agreed to strengthen multilateral cooperation. The Prime Ministers recognised that we face an increasingly uncertain and dangerous world. They noted that, as maritime nations, India and New Zealand have a strong and common interest in an open, inclusive, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific, where the rules-based international order is upheld.
5. The Prime Ministers reaffirmed the right of freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the seas in accordance with international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Prime Ministers reaffirmed the need to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, particularly UNCLOS.

6. The Prime Ministers noted with satisfaction the strong connections between the people of the two countries, with Indian-origin people making up almost six percent of New Zealand's population. They appreciated the significant contribution of the Indian diaspora in New Zealand and their positive role in facilitating people-to-people ties between the two countries. Both leaders agreed on the significance of ensuring the safety and security of the Indian community, including students, in New Zealand, and of New Zealanders in India and visitors to India.

Cooperation in trade, investment and financial matters:

7. The Prime Ministers welcomed sustained trade and investment flows between India and New Zealand and called for further exploring the potential to expand bilateral trade. They encouraged businesses on both sides to cultivate links; explore emerging economic and investment opportunities to build upon the complementarities of the two economies.
8. The Leaders called for greater two-way investment, reflective of the ongoing strong momentum in bilateral cooperation.
9. The Prime Ministers agreed to enhance the trade and investment relationship between India and New Zealand to realise its untapped potential and to contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth.
10. The Prime Ministers welcomed the launch of FTA negotiations for a balanced, ambitious, comprehensive, and mutually beneficial trade agreement to achieve deeper economic integration. The Leaders agreed that a comprehensive trade agreement offers a significant opportunity to enhance trade and economic cooperation. By leveraging each country's strengths, addressing their respective concerns, and tackling challenges, a bilateral trade agreement can foster mutually beneficial trade and investment growth, ensuring equitable gains and complementarities for both sides. The Leaders committed to designate senior representatives to steer these negotiations to resolution as soon as reasonably possible.
11. Within the context of FTA negotiations, the Leaders agreed to discussions between respective authorities on both sides to explore early implementation of cooperation in the digital payments sector.
12. The Prime Ministers welcomed the signing of the *Authorized Economic Operators Mutual Recognition Arrangement* (AEO-MRA) under the aegis of the Customs Cooperation Arrangement (CCA) signed in 2024, which would facilitate easier movement of goods between the two countries by our respective trusted traders

through close cooperation between customs authorities, thereby boosting bilateral trade.

13. The Leaders welcomed new cooperation on horticulture and forestry, including: the signing of the *Memorandum of Cooperation on Horticulture* which would enhance bilateral cooperation by promoting knowledge and research exchanges, development of post-harvest and marketing infrastructure; and the signing of a Letter of Intent on Forestry Cooperation that encourages policy dialogues and technical exchanges
14. The Leaders recognized the positive role played by tourism in generating economic growth, increasing business engagements and generating greater understanding between people of the two countries. They welcomed the growing flows of tourists between India and New Zealand. They appreciated the update to the India-New Zealand Air Services Agreement and agreed to encourage their carriers for commencement of direct (non-stop) flight operations between the two countries.

Political, defence and security cooperation:

15. The Prime Ministers recognised the significance of parliamentary exchanges and encouraged regular visits of parliamentary delegations between the two countries.
16. The Prime Ministers acknowledged the shared history of sacrifice of Indian and New Zealand service personnel who fought and served alongside one another around the world over the past century.
17. The Prime Ministers welcomed sustained progress in defence engagements, including through participation in military exercises, staff college exchanges, regular port calls by naval ships, and exchange of high-level defence delegations. They recalled that the Indian Naval sailing vessel Tarini made a port call at Lyttelton, Christchurch, New Zealand in December 2024. They also referred to the upcoming port call in Mumbai by the Royal New Zealand Navy Ship HMNZS Te Kaha.
18. Both Leaders welcomed the signing of the *India-New Zealand Memorandum of Understanding for Defence Cooperation*. This will further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation and establish regular bilateral defence engagement. Both sides noted the need for ensuring the safety and security of sea lanes of communication and agreed there needs to be regular dialogue to discuss enhancement of maritime safety.
19. New Zealand welcomed India joining the Combined Maritimes Forces. Both Leaders welcomed advancement in defence ties during New Zealand command of Command Task Force 150.

20. Both Leaders appreciated the regular training exchanges of officers, including at Defence Colleges on reciprocal basis. Both sides agreed for enhanced capacity building cooperation.
21. Prime Minister Luxon expressed New Zealand's interest in joining the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI). Prime Minister Modi welcomed New Zealand into this partnership with like-minded countries which seek to manage, conserve and sustain the maritime domain. Further cooperation as maritime nations is also being explored between India and New Zealand with discussions taking place between experts on the *National Maritime Heritage Complex* (NMHC) which is being established at Lothal, Gujarat.

Cooperation in science & technology and disaster management:

22. The two Leaders noted the significance of research, scientific connections, technology partnerships and innovation as an important pillar of the bilateral partnership and called for exploring such opportunities in mutual interest. Both sides stressed the need for stronger collaboration to develop and commercialize technologies in identified areas through closer collaboration between businesses, and industries.
23. The two sides recognized the challenges for their economies presented by climate change and the transition to low emissions climate resilient economies. Prime Minister Luxon welcomed India's leadership in the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and reiterated New Zealand's strong support as a member since 2024. Prime Minister Modi welcomed New Zealand joining the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), which aims at making systems and infrastructure resilient in order to achieve the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
24. The two Leaders welcomed work towards a Memorandum of Cooperation on earthquake mitigation cooperation between relevant authorities of India and New Zealand, which would facilitate *inter alia* exchange of experiences in earthquake preparedness, emergency response mechanism, and capacity building.

Education, mobility, sports and people to people ties:

25. Both Prime Ministers agreed that there exists great potential to further strengthen the growing education and community links between India and New Zealand. They encouraged academic institutions of both countries to build future-oriented partnerships focused on areas of mutual interest including in areas of science, innovation, new and emerging technologies.

26. The Leaders encouraged the creation of further opportunities for Indian students seeking quality education programmes in New Zealand. They noted the significance of skill development and mobility of skilled personnel to support expanded engagement in sectors, including science, innovation, and new and emerging technologies. The two Leaders agreed, within the context of the trade agreement negotiations, which the Leaders have agreed to launch, to also launch negotiations on an arrangement facilitating the mobility of professionals and skilled workers between the two countries, while also addressing the issue of irregular migration.
27. The Leaders welcomed the signature of the refreshed Education Cooperation Arrangement between the Indian Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Ministry of Education. This Arrangement will facilitate the continued exchange of information on India's and New Zealand's respective education systems as the basis for strengthening the bilateral education relationship.
28. The Leaders noted that India and New Zealand enjoy close sporting links, particularly in cricket, hockey and other Olympic sports. They welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation on Sports to foster greater sporting engagement and collaboration between countries. They also welcomed the "Sporting Unity" events planned in 2026, to recognise and celebrate 100 years of sporting contact between India and New Zealand.
29. The Prime Ministers acknowledged the importance of robust systems of traditional medicine in India and New Zealand, and welcomed discussions between experts, including science and research experts, on both sides to understand and explore possible areas of cooperation, including through sharing of information and best practices and visits of experts.
30. Both Prime Ministers noted the growing interest among New Zealanders in Yoga and Indian music and dance, as well as the free observance of Indian festivals. They encouraged further promotion of bilateral ties including through music, dance, theatre, films, and festivals.

Cooperation in regional and multilateral fora:

31. Both Prime Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to supporting an open, inclusive, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific where sovereignty and territorial integrity are respected.
32. The Leaders noted cooperation between India and New Zealand in various regional fora, including ASEAN-led fora such as the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus and the ASEAN Regional Forum. The Leaders reaffirmed the importance of these regional bodies and ASEAN centrality for furthering

security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region and emphasised the importance of all parties maintaining peace and stability in the region.

33. Both Leaders emphasized on the importance of an effective multilateral system, centered on a United Nations that is reflective of contemporary realities, as a key factor in tackling global challenges. The two sides stressed the need for UN reforms, including of the Security Council through expansion in its membership, to make it more representative, credible and effective. New Zealand endorsed India's candidature for permanent membership in a reformed UN Security Council. The two sides agreed to explore the possibility of extending mutual support to each other's candidatures at the multilateral fora.

34. Both Leaders emphasized the importance of upholding the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and acknowledged the value of India joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group in context of predictability for India's clean energy goals and its non-proliferation credentials.

35. Both Leaders reaffirmed their firm support for peace and stability in the Middle East and welcomed the agreement for the release of hostages and ceasefire of January 2025. They reiterated their call for continued negotiations to secure a permanent peace, which includes the release of all hostages and the rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Gaza. Both Leaders stressed the importance of a negotiated two-State solution, leading to the establishment of a sovereign, viable and independent state of Palestine, and living within secure and mutually recognized borders, side by side in peace and security with Israel.

36. The Leaders exchanged views on the war in Ukraine and expressed support for a just and lasting peace based on respect for international law, principles of the UN charter, and territorial integrity and sovereignty.

37. The two Leaders reiterated their absolute condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and the use of terrorist proxies in cross-border terrorism. Both stressed the urgent need for all countries to take immediate, sustained, measurable, and concrete action against UN-proscribed terrorist organizations and individuals. They called for disrupting of terrorism financing networks and safe havens, dismantling of terror infrastructure, including online, and bringing perpetrators of terrorism to justice swiftly. The two leaders agreed to cooperate in combating terrorism and violent extremism through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms.

38. The two Prime Ministers noted with satisfaction the progress in ongoing bilateral cooperation and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen

and deepen the bilateral partnership for mutual benefit as well as for the benefit of the Indo-Pacific Region. They called for exploring the potential to deepen bilateral engagement and explore new avenues of cooperation, including in the fields of green and agriculture technologies.

39. Prime Minister Luxon thanked Prime Minister Modi and the Government and the people of India for the warmth and hospitality extended to him and to the members of his delegation during his Official Visit to India. Prime Minister Luxon invited Prime Minister Modi to undertake a reciprocal visit to New Zealand.

New Delhi

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