

**OPENING KEYNOTE**  
**A VISION FOR GLOBAL NEW ZEALAND**  
**Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern**

*E ngā mana, e ngā reo*

Prestigious people, speakers of note

*Ngā kai-hautū, ngā kai-mana*

Organisational leaders, representative leaders

*O te mōtu, me tawāhi kē*

In New Zealand and abroad

*Tena koutou katoa*

Greetings to you all.

Sir Doug Kidd, President, New Zealand Institute of International Affairs – thank you for the invitation to speak.

Maty Nikkhou-O'Brien, Executive Director, New Zealand Institute of International Affairs – thank you for the welcome. I'd like to acknowledge the work you are doing through the Institute to expand the range of people participating in the debate about foreign affairs and New Zealand role in the world.

This is my first formal speech on issues relating to international relations, but not my first encounter with it. In fact, the relevance and importance of our place in the world, and the clues to navigating such significant global disruption, have always started at home.

I spent some of my early childhood during the 80s in a small town in the Bay of Plenty called Murupara, before moving to the dairy farming town of Morrinsville. It would be easy to feel isolated from the world, impervious to what was happening around you. But the size of the town has rarely isolated anyone from the reverberations of international events. The removal of tariff protections right through to the 1987 stock exchange crash all had their impact.

And just as globalisation has been felt through the past few decades, so too will the effects of next industrial revolution and the changing nature of work.

I raise this, not as an attempt to be a futurist, but because we ignore the interaction of global developments on our domestic population at our peril. Overseas experience, and our own, tells us that if we want to retain the values of being outward looking, engaged in global institutions, welcoming of trade and direct investment, we must build the social licence for that.

We're not alone in that thinking. The last APEC meeting in Viet Nam for instance had a strong focus on creating greater inclusiveness around the trade agenda. We want to take that a step further.

## **Trade**

Trade will always be an essential part of our engagement with other countries.

Better market access for our exporters and growing New Zealand businesses internationally are critical parts of our economic strategy. But how we develop and pursue that trade agenda also matters.

The CPTPP for instance will deliver benefits to the economy of up to \$4 billion a year, but we had to fight hard to carve out our investor screening from ISDS clauses and to also preserve our right to regulate the purchase of residential homes by foreign buyers.

The experience of watching the early interactions of TPP, and being part of the final negotiations taught me a lot. It reaffirmed my belief that trade has the ability to support sustainable, productive and inclusive growth IF that is the agenda you enter negotiations with. That is why you will see us establish a different framework for trade negotiations, one where we more openly pursue the interests of our regions, SMEs, Maori and women.

We are also focused on taking a more open and consultative approach.

Not only it is important that New Zealanders feel that open trade with the world delivers more benefits than harm, that has to be the reality too.

But this will be just one of the possible points of difference you'll detect in our approach to international issues.

Being a child of the 80s affected me in many ways (and unfortunately there are photos to prove it) and that included international events. Rather than just reading about the impact of apartheid in South Africa for instance, or nuclear testing in the Pacific, I saw instead each of these issues through the lens of our response. They weren't history lessons, they were lessons in our values, what mattered to us, and that our size bore no relation to the impact our voice could have.

I want the next generation to see that too, and there are two areas in particular where that feels important. The first relates to the ongoing threat of nuclear weapons.

## **Disarmament**

The pursuit of disarmament is as vital today as it was when Norman Kirk and David Lange proclaimed New Zealand's opposition to nuclear weapons and nuclear testing in the Pacific.

In a modern context, the greatest challenge comes from North Korea, situated right here in our region.

At a time when risks to global peace and security are growing and the rules-based system is under such pressure, we must recommit ourselves to the cause of non-proliferation and disarmament, and to the norms and rules which support those endeavours.

My government will be looking at the early ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which New Zealand signed last year, so that we contribute to its early entry into force.

We will also ensure New Zealand's voice is heard on other disarmament issues, such as chemical weapons and the spread of conventional weapons.

That is why today I am also announcing that I will reinstate the Cabinet position of Minister of Disarmament and Arms Control.

The portfolio responsibility will be given to Rt Hon Winston Peters, and is an acknowledgment of the emphasis this government places on our long held anti-nuclear stance, and the role we must play going forward.

### **Climate change**

The second area where I am keen to see New Zealand's advocacy strengthened, is climate change. We live in the Pacific, and with that comes a huge duty to both act, and speak on, the threat that climate change poses to our region.

And so this Government has made a start. At the Climate Change Conference last November, Minister James Shaw spoke as one with Pacific nations.

We have committed to the goal of becoming a net zero emission economy by 2050, with an interim step of making our electricity system 100% renewable by 2035.

We are not under any illusions that New Zealand can fix this on our own.

Climate change is a global problem that requires every country to make a contribution.

The science demands a low carbon world. For New Zealand this also represents one of the most valuable trade opportunities.

Safe, sustainable, low emission food production promises to be a valuable market proposition for New Zealand if we can get it right.

That is why you will see a strong focus from this Government on encouraging and incentivising innovation and investment to deliver a clean, green carbon neutral New Zealand.

### **The Pacific**

The strength of feeling I have around climate change is inextricably linked with my view of our relationship with the Pacific.

We are a member of the Pacific community. A community where prosperity is threatened by environmental issues and encroachment on fish stocks, as much as by isolation and size.

We have long and well established ties and are one of the most significant contributors to the region. Our asset base in the region has been strong – development assistance, the strengths and linkages afforded by our Pasifika community in New Zealand, the work of non-governmental organisations, the people of our Defence Force and Police, and so on.

But we can do better, and we will.

Thanks to his experience, Winston Peters already has a deep knowledge of, and enduring friendships with, the region.

Mr Peters will be outlining more detail on the Government's plan in this area this Thursday. And next week, he and I will visit the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tonga to build our partnerships there even further.

I also expect that an important aspect of my discussions with Malcolm Turnbull on Friday will be how we can work with the region's external partners to ensure we are all contributing to a shared goal of a resilient, prosperous, secure Pacific. One where Pacific voices continue to be vocal, but we do our part to amplify them.

## **Friends**

Both of these areas of focus also demonstrate two important principles in New Zealand's foreign policy approach – the importance to us of 'rules' and the importance of friends.

Small countries need friends. We will look to strengthen partnerships with long-standing friends who share our values.

Australia is our only ally and closest friend. As in any relationship, we will have our differences. But unquestionably Australia constitutes a vital source of resilience for our economy and is our key partner for New Zealand in the wider world.

New Zealand's relationship with the United States is also fundamental. For over seventy years, the values and interests of New Zealand and the United States have intersected more often than not. The sheer size and dynamism of the world's biggest economy, America's capacity for ideas and the energy of its people give it enormous scope to help shape a better world.

But the real strength of any important relationship lies in its breadth and ability to encompass difference. For example, we were disappointed at the United States withdrawal from the Paris agreement and some of its positioning on trade. But our relationship with the US is certainly robust enough to withstand those differences.

We also have a special relationship with the United Kingdom. I know through experience that travelling to the UK for most young New Zealanders has become a rite of passage. It also draws our two countries closer together. I am eager to start

negotiations on a NZ-UK FTA and see this as an opportunity to model what an inclusive trade agenda could look like.

Finally this year marks a decade since the last Labour Government concluded the FTA with China. A runaway success for both countries, the FTA has been enormously beneficial for New Zealand.

China's global influence has grown along with its economic weight. Its leadership on issues like climate change and trade liberalisation could add momentum to our collective efforts in those areas.

Naturally, there are areas where we do not see eye to eye with China. My government will speak honestly and openly with our friends in Beijing. Whether it is about human rights, pursuing our trade interests, or the security and stability of our region.

Taking that approach isn't about singling countries out, but about taking a consistent approach on the issues and principles that matter to us.

## **Rules**

Rules play many important roles for a nation of our size. In an unpredictable world, the case for strong agreed rules governing the global system speaks for itself. But the trend increasingly seems to be for these rules to be challenged.

The UN machinery, the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organisation, the disarmament and arms control architecture – are all still there and still serve us well. But there is no question that global power is now more contested.

The world is more multi multi-polar, more challenged, more volatile.

You know the headlines as well as I do.

A horrific war in Syria.

Terrorism causing suffering and fear.

Cyber intrusions which risk our economic interests.

Rising protectionism with G20 economies alone introducing trade barriers at a rate of 6 per month.

Challenges to maritime rules and norms.

These both underscore the importance of the rules-based system and to the importance of us maintaining our focus on that which should define us both domestically and abroad. Our values.

I learnt these lessons well before I came into Parliament.

In my 20s I was elected to the board of an international political youth organisation called IUSY.

This umbrella organisation held consultative status with the UN, and was the largest international political youth movement in the world with 150 member organisations across 100 countries.

The job was intense. I saw the realities of global conflict, foreign policy failures and witnessed first-hand the distance between the need of many and the ability of the world to help.

We were one of few organisations for instance that had youth representatives from both Fatah in Palestine and Young Labour from Israel, all sitting at the same table.

I learnt about conflict, peace and change.

I visited refugee camps from Algeria to Nepal.

I travelled through Israel and Palestine, struggling to move through checkpoints that were patrolled by men that were younger than me, but that looked just as anxious.

On one occasion I visited Lebanon to participate in a seminar on engaging young people in political institutions and campaigns. I remember meeting up with a counterpart of mine – he was a youth leader for a political party and lived in Beirut.

As we walked through the streets he pointed to the locations where various political leaders over the years had been assassinated. It could have been a tour grounded in history had we not passed his own apartment. He stopped me in order to point to the exterior walls near his apartment window. Bullet holes were peppered around the edges. He talked about the night it happened in a matter of fact way, with an air of familiarity and the kind of ease we might talk about an All Black test match.

It was a profound demonstration to me of just how rare and precious this country is. The freedom to move, vote, speak, associate with others. All of these are underpinned by a set of values and frameworks which we have also promoted internationally, and must continue to do so.

It is a legacy that many of you in this room have worked so hard to build.

I'd like to acknowledge the careful and deliberate contribution that so many of you have made to that effort.

Today, we have developed an approach to engaging with the world we call our own.

And so in this uncertain world, where long accepted positions have been met with fresh challenge – our response lies in the approach that, with rare exceptions, we have always taken. Speaking up for what we believe in, standing up when our values are challenged and working tirelessly to draw in partners with shared views.

This government's view is that we can pursue this with more vigour - across the Pacific, in disarmament and in climate change, and in our defence of our friends and the things that matter to us.

Ultimately, my hope is that New Zealanders recognise themselves in the approach this Government takes.

We want an international reputation New Zealanders can be proud of. And while we are navigating a level of global uncertainty not seen for several generations, I remain firmly optimistic about New Zealand's place in the world.

Our global standing is high: when we speak, it is with credibility; when we act, it is with decency.

Long may that continue.