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Office of the Minister of Agriculture

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Damien O'Connor

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to London, Rome and Cairo from 18 June to 28 June 2019 to represent New Zealand at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Ministerial Conference; and make bilateral calls in London and Cairo.

I intended to also travel to Sydney for the Australia New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation in my capacity as Minister for Food Safety. Unfortunately this Forum was postponed prior to my arrival in Sydney.

Report

Rome, Italy and the FAO Ministerial Conference

- 1 I visited Rome for the 41st General Conference of the UN Food and Agricultural Ministerial Conference (FAO), and the election for a new FAO Director-General in which Dr Qu Dongyu of China was elected against candidates from France and Georgia. In the margins of the Conference I held bilateral meetings with counterparts from the European Commission, France, Germany, Ireland, China, Mexico and Indonesia, and co-hosted (with Australia) a lunch for Heads of Delegation from participating Pacific island countries. During these meetings, and in my statement to the FAO General Conference, I highlighted a range of priority issues for New Zealand, including climate change, the needs of Pacific island states and the importance of adequately resourcing the FAO's standard-setting work.
- 2 Progress in EU-New Zealand FTA negotiations was the main focus in discussions with the EU Agriculture Commissioner. Across all meetings strong interest was expressed in dialogue and cooperation with New Zealand on efforts to address climate change in the agricultural sector.

London

- 3 I visited London for a series of bilateral calls with a focus on climate change and agriculture, Brexit and the UK's future agricultural policy, and to hear industry insights from UK and Europe-based exporters.

- 4 I met with Dr Myles Allen and Dr Michelle Cain from Oxford University's Climate Dynamic Group to discuss their proposed alternative methodology for the measurement of Global Warming Potential of global greenhouse gases (GWP 100*); specifically, the separate treatment of methane as compared to the currently recognised GWP 100 and the implications of the modified approach for methane emissions under the Zero Carbon Bill.
- 5 I also met with UK and Europe-based exporters from the meat, wine and dairy sectors, to confirm New Zealand's domestic priorities and get an update from industry regarding preparations for Brexit.
- 6 I had a successful meeting with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Under Secretary David Rutley MP, who reiterated the UK was undergoing a huge transformation in preparation for Brexit. We discussed a wide range of topics in areas of mutual interest including the future Agriculture Bill and New Zealand's experience of agricultural change, animal welfare, climate change, zero carbon bill and the one billion trees programme.
- 7 I shared a positive meeting with Neil Parish Chair Environmental and Rural Affairs Committee, and took the opportunity to explain how New Zealand is able to export to multiple markets while meeting exacting standards. A meeting meet Lord Deben, Chair of the Committee on Climate Change, presented further opportunity to gain insight into our respective climate change policies and the dynamics surrounding the UK's 2050 net zero target.

Cairo, Egypt

- 8 The purpose of my visit to Cairo was to underscore the importance of our bilateral agricultural relationship with Egypt and to help address Egyptian concerns over the trade imbalance with New Zealand.
- 9 During my visit I signed a joint statement with my counterpart HE Ezz el-Din Abu-Steit, Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, announcing future cooperation in epidemiology; progress towards finalising market access for Egyptian oranges to New Zealand; and confirming a process for registering red meat slaughterhouses, streamlining New Zealand meat exports to Egypt.
- 10 While in Egypt I travelled to Borg Al Arab (outside of Alexandria) to visit the Sakr processing factory. Sakr has been a partner of Fonterra for thirty years and provided an opportunity for my delegation to view first-hand the processing of the Anchor brand of butter for distribution to the Egyptian market. Fonterra, via Sakr, enjoy an 80% market share of Egypt's butter market.
- 11 I also met with key Egyptian politicians and industry responsible for agriculture policy. This was my first visit to Egypt and an opportunity to highlight opportunities for trade growth across both Egypt and North Africa generally.

Proactive release

- 12 This paper will be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO (18) 4, on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website. Proactive release is subject to redaction as appropriate under the [Official Information Act 1982](#).

Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Damien O'Connor

Minister of Agriculture