

Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting its participation at the Bilateral Visit to New Zealand and Samoa

Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (APC)

Auckland and Wellington, New Zealand and Apia, Samoa
March 1 to 10, 2019

Report

A delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association visited New Zealand and Samoa from March 1 to 10, 2019. Ms. Yasmin Ratansi, M.P. and Chair of the Canadian Branch, led the delegation, which also included the Hon. Vernon White, Senator, Mr. Richard Cannings, M.P., and Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal, M.P. Mr. Rémi Bourgault, Secretary of the Canadian Branch, accompanied the delegation.

The Association's constitution encourages visits between member countries with the objective of giving parliamentarians the opportunity to discuss matters of common interest in bilateral relations and issues involving the Commonwealth organization as a whole. The purpose of the visit to New Zealand and Samoa was to strengthen ties with our partners in the Commonwealth's Pacific Region and exchange ideas in areas of mutual interest.

Numerous subjects were covered during the bilateral visit, including the state of parliamentary democracy in relation to the Westminster system, the challenges of climate change, security, trade and investment, gender-based violence, and relations with Indigenous peoples.

VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND

Geography

New Zealand is an island state located in the South Pacific Ocean, southeast of Australia. Its landmass is 264,537 square kilometres – more than twice the size of Newfoundland island. It consists of two main islands to the North and South as well as a number of smaller islands, though the majority of New Zealanders live on the North Island. In July 2018, the population of New Zealand was estimated at 4.5 million. More than 70% of the country's population is of European descent, though 14% are Māori (Indigenous group). New Zealand has two official languages: English (89.9%) and Māori (3.5%). The capital of New Zealand is Wellington and the largest urban area is Auckland; both are located on the North Island. New Zealand claims a section of the Antarctic continent¹. While the South Pacific island group of Tokelau is administered by New Zealand, Niue and the Cook Islands are self-governing states in free association with the country.

Political context

New Zealand is a constitutional monarchy with a unicameral parliamentary system of government. The power to legislate is held by the Executive and the Legislature.

The executive branch consists of Ministers (both inside and outside Cabinet) and government departments. The head of the Executive is the Prime Minister. The current Prime Minister is the Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern.

¹ A number of countries that have a territorial claim on the Antarctic have signed the Antarctic Treaty, including New Zealand. The Antarctic Treaty puts aside the potential for conflict over sovereignty by providing that nothing that occurs while the Treaty is in force will enhance or diminish territorial claims. Treaty Parties cannot make any new claims while the Treaty is in force.

The Legislature consists of the House of Representatives and the Governor General whose role is similar to that of the Governor General of Canada: opening and dissolving Parliament and giving Royal assent to bills passed in the House of Representatives. The Governor General is appointed by the Prime Minister.

All Members of Parliament (MPs) sit in the House of Representatives. MPs are elected on three-year terms. Since 1996, they have been elected through a Mixed Member Proportional (MPP) system. Basically, voters make two choices on their ballots: one for the MP (electorate seat) and another for a party (party list). The former is used to select an MP in 70 constituencies – including seven Māori constituencies – on a first-past-the-post basis, while the latter is used to select a party and determine the total number of seats for each party in parliament. All parties receiving more than five percent of this vote (or with at least one electorate seat) are entitled to further seats based on the proportion of the party votes cast. Normally 50 members are party MPs, but that number can be increased (increasing the total number of seats in parliament for the term) when a party wins more electorate seats than it is entitled to according to the party vote. That happened for the first time in September 2005, when there was a single Māori Party 'overhang' MP².

Māori membership in the House of Representatives has increased over the years. In 1867, four seats were allocated to Māori people. When New Zealand switched to the MPP system, however, the law was changed so that the number of Māori electorates³ could vary according to the size of their electoral population, using a similar quota used to determine the number of general electorates. There are currently seven Māori seats⁴.

The most recent election in New Zealand took place on 23 September 2017: 120 MPs were elected to the House of Representatives: 49 members were elected from the party lists (Table 1 below contains the composition)⁵. The National Party gained the greatest number of seats but the Labour Party formed a coalition government with support from the New Zealand First Party and the Green Party⁶. Turnout for the 2017 election was more than the two previous elections combined:⁷ Of the 3.2 million people registered to vote, 2.6 million (79.01%) cast their ballot⁸. Voting in New Zealand is not compulsory⁹.

Economy

New Zealand has a developed economy with a gross domestic product (GDP)¹⁰ of US\$205.85 billion (US\$42,496 per capita)¹¹. New Zealand's economy is heavily reliant

² The Commonwealth, New Zealand: Constitution and Politics.

³ Electoral Commission, *Māori Representation*.

⁴ The Commonwealth, New Zealand: History.

⁵ The Commonwealth, New Zealand: Constitution and politics.

⁶ New Zealand Parliament, *Labour Party*.

⁷ The Commonwealth, New Zealand: Constitution and politics.

⁸ Electoral Commission, Voter Turnout Statistics.

⁹ Electoral Commission, New Zealand's System of Government.

¹⁰ The gross domestic product (GDP) measures of national income and output for a given country's economy. The gross domestic product (GDP) is equal to the total expenditures for all final goods and services produced within the country in a stipulated period of time. See: Trading Economics, <u>New Zealand GDP</u>.

¹¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], <u>New Zealand – Economic Forecast summary (November 2018)</u>.

on agriculture, especially meat, dairy products, fruits and vegetables¹². Its primary trading partners include China, Australia and the United States (U.S.), while other countries in East and Southeast Asia, including Japan, are also important¹³. New Zealand has been trying to "grow and diversify its economy by finding new markets and new products (such as wine and paper products), expanding its manufacturing base, and entering into or supporting free-trade agreements."¹⁴ It ranked first overall in the Word Bank Group's 2018 Ease of doing business ranking. By comparison, the U.S. ranked 6th while Canada ranked 18th¹⁵.

Canada-New Zealand Trade Relations

According to Global Affairs Canada, New Zealand and Canada share a modest level of trade and investment:

In 2017, bilateral merchandise trade with New Zealand totalled \$1.2 billion, a 6.6 percent increase from the previous year. Canadian exports (mainly machinery and equipment, wood, printed material, fertilizers, and meat) reached \$494 million while imports (mainly meat, and beverages – primarily wine) increased to \$708 million. Two-way investment between Canada and New Zealand is a key component of the bilateral relationship, with Canada becoming New Zealand's largest source of new foreign direct investment over the three-year period ending in 2016. ¹⁶

Canada is one of New Zealand's top-20 trading partners. New Zealand views Canada as a high-value market, particularly for its food and wine exports, specialized manufacturing, and information communication technology (ICT)¹⁷. Frozen beef is New Zealand's number one merchandise goods trade item exported to Canada, and "growth in beef exports over 2015-16 was 32.8%. Wine exports to Canada are also very strong, surpassing \$100 million for the first time in 2016." ¹⁸

New Zealand also sees opportunities in the Canadian market for "health IT, wood and building products, agile technology including specialized manufacturing and clean technology, specialty food and beverages, and agritech." At the same time, however, New Zealand views Canada's supply management policies as a trade irritant. Their dairy exports to Canada are subject to quotas and out of quota tariff rates of 250–300%. ²⁰

Canada expects trade relations between Canada and New Zealand to grow under the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

¹² Trading Economy, New Zealand GDP; The Commonwealth, New Zealand – Geography.

¹³ The Economist, *Intelligence Unit – New Zealand*.

¹⁴ Britannica, New Zealand – Economy.

¹⁵ World Bank Group, "Doing Business 2018: Reforming to Create Jobs," 2018, p. 4.

¹⁶ High Commission of Canada in New Zealand, Canada—New Zealand Relations.

¹⁷ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Canada*.

¹⁸ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, <u>Canada</u>.

¹⁹ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, <u>Canada</u>.

²⁰ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, <u>Canada</u>.

Delegation meetings in Auckland, New Zealand

Meeting with representatives of the Pacific Cooperation Foundation

The Pacific Cooperation Foundation is a non-governmental organisation which develops and implements public / private sector economic development and socio-cultural initiatives in the Pacific region. The foundation was established as an independent entity by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs 17 years ago. It works with 16 Pacific island nations. The region's main industries are agriculture, sugar cane, fishing and mining. The delegation was impressed that with the outreach done to engage the islands despite the travel constraints.

Delegation meetings in Wellington, New Zealand

Meeting with the Rt. Hon. Trevor Mallard, Speaker of the House of Representatives

During the meeting, the Speaker stated that parliamentarians needed to do more to help people understand the system. Very often, the only thing people see on television is conflict. That is why he is taking part in the Parliament Engagement Strategy. The strategy is the outcome of a research study that showed that many people did not understand how Parliament works. The Canadian delegates discussed their outreach and the fact that due to the "constituency" system available to each MP, their outreach is more robust, with MP's visiting schools, events and conducting civic classes. As well the Speaker and the delegates compared the way voting is done in the Parliament of Canada and New Zealand. In New Zealand, for example, proxy voting is allowed; votes are not deferred. In terms of gender issues, both parliaments allow women to take parental leave.

The Speaker is looking forward to visiting Canada next year for the meeting of Commonwealth speakers.

Meeting with the Hon. Andrew Little, Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations, and the Hon. Kelvin Davis, Minister for Crown/Māori Relations

The meeting was to discuss the issues of reconciliation and compare notes on the Canadian experience and New Zealand experience. In that regard, the delegates met with two ministers responsible for **Māori** issues. The two ministers provided some historical background on the treaty that allowed land claim settlement. In 1990, two major tribes settled their claims. About 80 claims have been settled, but there are still some left. According to the ministers, it is important to look to the future and form partnerships with the various groups. The ministers also noted that it is important to increase the groups' representation in police services.

Parliamentary committees

The delegates met with members of several parliamentary committees to discuss issues of common issues: the Environment Committee; the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee; the Finance and Expenditure Committee; and the Governance and Administration Committee.

Environment Committee

Committee members raised a number of subjects, including climate change adaptation, New Zealand's commitment to eradicate mammals such as the opossum and rats by 2050, management of the population of sheep and cow which is seven times that of the human population, greenhouse gases, agriculture, electrification of transportation, and renewable energy production.

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee

During the meeting, the delegates discussed New Zealand's position on 5G, free trade agreements, climate change and its impact on Kiribati, and fisheries poaching.

Finance and Expenditure Committee

This meeting provided an opportunity to learn more about the new vision in the Well-Being Budget, introduced earlier this year by the Prime Minister. The budget covers issues such as child poverty, mental health, the transition to a more sustainable economy, the digital age in New Zealand, and Indigenous skills.

Governance and Administration Committee

One of the topics discussed by the parliamentarians was the division of the tax base between local governments and the central government in New Zealand.

Miscellaneous

In Wellington, the delegation was officially recognized in the House of Representatives and attended Question Period. In addition, at a luncheon, the delegation met with Mr. Clayton Mitchell, M.P., New Zealand's representative on the CPA International Executive Committee, and members of the New Zealand-North America Parliamentary Friendship Group. The delegation also attended a round table on recent developments in parliamentary procedure and a round table on foreign policy, trade, the Pacific region and climate change, and met with officials of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. In addition, the delegation toured an exhibition at the National Library. Ms. Ratansi and the Executive Secretary also met with members of the Steering Committee of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians of New Zealand and discussed how the women of the two parliaments can work for a better synergy.

Acknowledgements

The delegation would like to thank the dedicated staff of the New Zealand Branch of the CPA for preparing a comprehensive itinerary.

VISIT TO SAMOA

Geography

Part of the Oceania region, the Independent State of Samoa (Samoa), which was called Western Samoa until 1997, is a group of two main islands – Savai'i and Upolu – and seven other islets in the South Pacific Ocean between New Zealand and Hawaii. With a land area of 2,821 square kilometres, Samoa is just over half the area of Prince Edward Island. In 2019, the population of Samoa was estimated at 198,000.

System of Government

Samoa's system of government is a parliamentary republic modelled after the Westminster system with a cabinet-led government. As outlined in its Constitution of 1962, Power is divided among the executive, legislative and judicial branches.

Samoa's head of state is the Chieftain of the Government – the *O le Ao o le Malo* – who is appointed by the party in government for a five-year term with no term limits. The position is largely ceremonial and by custom it is usually given to one of the four paramount chiefs. In July 2017, Afioga Tuimalealiifano Vaaletoa Sualauvi II, the current head of state, was sworn in, succeeding Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi.

Samoa's head of government, the prime minister, is elected by the legislative assembly (the *Fono*). The current Prime Minister, Tuila'epa Sailele Malielegaoi, also serves as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and has served as Prime Minister since 1998.²¹

Including the Prime Minister, the cabinet has 15 ministries with 13 ministers, two of whom are female – the deputy Prime Minister, also serving as the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, and the Minister of Women, Community and Social Development.²²

Samoa has a unicameral legislative assembly – called the *Fono* – which usually has 49 seats, but currently has 50 seats. Members are elected, by citizens 21 years of age and older, using a first-past-the-post voting system for five-year renewable terms. Forty-seven seats are reserved for ethnic Samoans and two seats are open to members of other non-indigenous ethnic communities. The most recent general elections were held in March 2016. The governing Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) – which has been in power since 1979 – and independents who support it won 46 of the 49 seats. A constitutional amendment in 2013 mandates that at least 10% – 5 seats – of the legislative assembly must be held by women. In the 2016 general elections, only four women won seats, therefore an additional seat was added for another female member, also an HRPP candidate, bringing the total number of seats in the legislative assembly to 50. The next elections are scheduled for 2021.

Economy

Samoa's economy is traditionally dependent on development aid, family remittances, agriculture, fishing and tourism. The country was affected by the global financial crisis of 2008 and a number of natural disasters. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, "the key challenge for the government is to bring the public finances under control while boosting economic grown and eventually weaning Samoa off overseas assistance." In August 2017, Yazaki Samoa, an automotive parts manufacturer that had been the largest private employer in Samoa closed, with many of the more than 700 employees thereafter

²¹ Official Web Portal of the Government of Samoa, *Prime Minister – Palemia*, 2018.

²² Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, <u>Cabinet Secretariat</u>; and Official Web Portal of the Government of Samoa, <u>Cabinet Ministers – Minisita o le Kapeneta</u>.

seeking employment with two other firms, including the New Zealand company Sleepwell.²³

Current Political Issues

In 2008, the government implemented the *Land Titles Registration Act*, allowing for the Minister of Natural Resources to lease communally held customary lands for third party use without the consent of all landowners. This law has faced opposition from various groups and, in 2017, the government introduced the Alienation of Customary Land Amendment Bill to update it, notwithstanding the criticism²⁴. Ongoing protests have attracted hundreds calling for the repeal of this law, with protestors arguing that it alienates land owners from their own property.²⁵ In July 2018, a new political party was registered, the Samoa First Party, which has campaigned to have the Act repealed, calling it illegal.²⁶ In August 2018, the Samoa Solidarity International Group Global filed a lawsuit that questioned the constitutionality of the act.²⁷

As a small island state that has experienced multiple natural disasters, Samoa is vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The government's "ongoing policy priority will be to increase natural-disaster and climate-change resilience in both qualitative and quantitative capacities, through, for instance, the extension of drainage networks and the dissemination of disaster response sills at local level." ²⁸

The Prime Minister has effected significant changes to bring Samoa closer to New Zealand and Australia, moving away from traditional links with American Samoa and the United States. In 2009, he unilaterally decreed that Samoa would switch to driving on the left-hand side of the road. Despite significant opposition and a huge public demonstration, the switch was safely orchestrated and has opened the local market to cheap used vehicle imports from Japan and New Zealand. In 2011, Tuilaepa's government introduced a bill to shift Samoa west of the International Date Line to facilitate economic relations with New Zealand, Australia and Asia, by ensuring that Samoa would no longer be one calendar day behind those countries. This went into effect on December 31, 2011. American Samoa remains on the eastern side of the Dateline.

Canada-Samoa Bilateral Relations

Samoa is eligible for assistance through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) administered through the High Commission of Canada in Wellington. Through the CFLI, Canada has contributed over CAD \$393,750 to organizations implementing local projects in Samoa since 2012. In 2018-19, Canada has contributed \$108,750 to projects

²³ "Yazaki Samoa employees work final shift after 25 years in business," Radio New Zealand, 24 August 2017

²⁴ Joyetter Feagaimaali'i-Luamanu, "<u>Govt. tables Alienation of Customary land Amendment bill,</u>" Samoa Observer, 4 February 2018.

²⁵ Hundreds gather in Samoa to protest about land rights," Radio New Zealand, 11 April 2018; "Protest held against land law," Economist Intelligence Unit, 20 December 2017; and Joyetter Feagaimaali'i-Luamanu, "Protest march calls on Govt. to repeal land law," Samoa Observer, 15 December 2018.

²⁶ Meriana Johnsen, "Samoa First leader aims to stop customary land leasing," Radio New Zealand, 17 August 2018

²⁷ <u>"Samoan PM sued over Land Titles Registration Act,"</u> Radio New Zealand, 22 August 2018.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 10.

addressing issues related to climate change adaptation, nutrition, water and women's business development.

Delegation meetings in Apia, Samoa

Meeting with Mr. Aiono Mose Pouvi Sua, Chairman of the Public Service Commission

The Chairman noted Canada's commitment to Samoa over the last number of years. He told the delegation that the public sector in Samoa has about 9,000 employees, some of whom are public service employees (under 5,000) and others government enterprise employees (about 4,500). The public service provides services that the country needs, but limited resources are an issue. He noted that most employees are managed by the ministries, but if employees are dissatisfied, they contact the Commission. Recruits are mainly young people educated in Samoa. However, recruitment is more difficult for jobs that require technical knowledge with a higher level of education. He noted that retaining employees, especially younger employees, was a challenge for a number of reasons, including the attraction of neighbouring countries. In response to questions from the delegates, the Chairman stated that there is no harassment training, but that all employees are informed of the rules, including respect for co-workers. However, the Commission has to manage harassment complaints. Since the meeting took place on International Women's Day, he noted that a great deal of work has been done to combat domestic violence, and that in the public service, complaints are taken very seriously.

Meeting with the Hon. Nafoitoa Talaimanu Keti, Deputy Speaker of Parliament and Pacific region representative on the CPA International Executive Committee

The Deputy Speaker began by noting Canada's contribution to ongoing support for members and employees of Parliament, including through the CPA program with McGill University. He mentioned a number of Parliament's needs, such as procedure training for new parliamentarians and a portable recording system for public hearings. Parliament normally has 49 seats, but under the Constitution, 10% of the seats must be held by women, and therefore one extra seat was added. He noted that Samoa is being seriously affected by climate change. A law banning plastic bags was passed recently, which has had a positive impact in garbage management. The Deputy Speaker was a police officer before becoming a politician in 2016. He said that Samoa has about 700 police officers, 170 of whom are women.

Meeting with the Hon. Fiame Naomi Mataafa, Acting Prime Minister

According to the acting Prime Minister, the Canadian delegation is probably the largest delegation to visit Samoa since 1985. As it was International Women's Day, a number of subjects relating to women were discussed, including the representation of women in Parliament. She noted the threshold of 10% women, which is not a ceiling but a work in progress. The law allowed the number of seats to be increased so that there would be five women. The political system, including funding, can also make it difficult to increase the representation of women. With regard to climate change and contributing to the Paris Agreement, the top priority for the Pacific islands is renewable energy sources. Electricity generation costs are very high, because fossil fuels are used. Samoa recently tackled the plastic problem, but waste management in general is also an important issue.

Project tours

The four projects that the delegation visited in Samoa have received funding from the Canadian government, mainly through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives.

Faleu Village Council – Faleu Development Committee (CAN\$18,500)

Improving the adaptive capacity of Faleu Village residents to cope with the effects of climate change by building a pavilion for boat passengers and installing an upgraded waste recycling and containment system

This two-year Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) project has enabled the building of a wharf on Samoa's Manono Island and made it safer and more secure through repairs to a fronting seawall and a railing. The seawall ensures safety at the wharf for passengers getting on and off boats, especially school children who travel 20 minutes to classes on the main island. More than 240 people who live on the island will benefit from this upgrade to the wharf.

Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG) (CAN\$30,000)

Sustainable Income Generation and Self-Employment of Nofotane Women

The CFLI supported workshops and mentoring for 400 *nofotane*. *Nofotane* are women who marry outside their village, which carries a heavy social stigma and reduces employment opportunities.

Sixteen workshops were presented, with an emphasis on financial skills such as budgeting, saving and marketing. These workshops were provided by financial institutions in the region, including Bank of the South Pacific and Samoa Commercial Bank. The two banks offered their small business development loan program to 300 of the nofotane. The SVSG held consultations with Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI) and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce to establish market connections for 386 nofotane.

At the conclusion of the project, a market day was held on International Women's Day (March 8) to give the nofotane an opportunity to sell their products. The delegates were impressed that these women were able to convert garbage into consumable goods and helped by purchasing items.

Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI) (CAN\$35,000)

Upgrading a computer application and a server to record appropriate international organic standards data by improving existing digital technologies

Through this CFLI project, WIBDI upgraded its software and server to ensure it could record appropriate international organic certification data. The organization purchased new laptops, a more powerful server and up-to-date office software.

A total of 23 employees received training in computer management and proper file storage as part of ongoing activities to improve the organization's sustainability. The project will indirectly benefit the many agricultural sector representatives (more than 1,300 individual farmers) who work with WIBDI and are involved in the organization's value chain and processes. These value chain processes have been very successful as the organization has been able to do export contracts with various big name brands.

WIBDI's work on organic farming is included in Samoa's Strategic Development Plan.

Poutasi Development Trust (CAN\$30,000))

Installation of a commercial/training kitchen for the preparation of healthy meals

The CFLI helped the Poutasi Development Trust expand the village's memorial hall to incorporate a commercial/training kitchen. The kitchen will be used to teach community members how to cook healthy food using local ingredients.

The healthy food and beverages are also sold in local schools.

Acknowledgements

The delegation would like to thank the dedicated staff of Samoa's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Samoan Branch of the CPA for preparing the visit itinerary.

Conclusion

The delegation would like to thank Canada's High Commissioner to New Zealand, Mr. Mario Bot, and the dedicated staff of the High Commission for preparing a very comprehensive itinerary and contributing to a successful visit. In addition to the staff of the High Commission, the delegates would like to thank the representatives of Global Affairs Canada and the Library of Parliament who helped to prepare the necessary background information.

Respectfully submitted,

Yasmin Ratansi, M.P.
Chair of the Canadian Branch of the
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary

Association

ACTIVITY Bilateral Visit to New Zealand and Samoa

DESTINATIONAuckland and Wellington, New Zealand, and Apia,

Samoa

DATES March 1 to 10, 2019

DELEGATION

SENATE Hon. Vernon White

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Richard Cannings, M.P. Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal, M.P. Ms. Yasmin Ratansi, M.P.

STAFF Mr. Rémi Bourgault, Association Secretary

TRANSPORTATION \$47,407.00

ACCOMMODATION \$6,401.62

HOSPITALITY \$33.99

PER DIEMS \$5,923.08

OFFICIAL GIFTS \$795.16

MISCELLANEOUS \$0.00

TOTAL \$60,560.85