

Foreign Affairs

HIGHLIGHTS

Labour will:

- Reaffirm our proactive and independent foreign affairs policy
- Build on New Zealand's specialist capability as a peace builder
- Strengthen our links with our traditional partners while developing strategic new alliances.

Our Vision

New Zealand prides itself as a country which thinks independently, has strong values and, notwithstanding our small size, makes a significant contribution to the world community as a good international citizen.

Our vision is for a world which is peaceful, secure, prosperous, democratic and socially just.

We support an international system which is rules-based rather than one where countries impose their will on others by virtue of their size and power.

We believe the path to achieve this must first and foremost be a multilateral one, working through and seeking to improve organisations such as the United Nations and World Trade Organisation.

We are committed to acting collectively to deal with problems which increasingly transcend national boundaries.

New Zealand in the World

New Zealand is noted for a number of features in terms of our international reputation:

Labour has always maintained an independent foreign policy.

New Zealand's structures and systems are respected for their transparency and lack of corruption.

We have recognised peace-making and peace-keeping skills which we have successfully deployed in many conflict zones.

Labour will continue its strong record on human rights and observance of international law while contributing to multilateral systems and decision-making.

We have a clean, green image which enhances both tourism and trade.

We will also strongly advocate for and protect the rights and fair treatment of New Zealand citizens and permanent residents by overseas governments, including Australia.

We will continue to strengthen the solid friendships with our longstanding international allies and will continue to develop close relationships with new trading partners and new alliances with regional groupings.

Labour will:

- Further develop our strategic relationships in keeping with the evolving multipolar world, strengthening relationships with our traditional allies and developing our newer ones
- Reinvigorate our commitment to multilateralism and participate fully in the reform of multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations
- Develop and pursue a reform agenda to respond to the excessive use the veto power of permanent members of the Security Council, which has frustrated international responses to conflicts such as that in Syria, including:
 - whether the scope of Security Council resolutions which are able to be vetoed should be narrowed
 - consideration of whether General Assembly mechanisms should be broadened.
 - the pros and cons of autonomous sanctions, given the ineffectiveness of the Security Council
- Advocate for and protect the rights and fair treatment of New Zealand citizens and permanent residents by overseas governments.

New Zealand in the Pacific

New Zealand has long-standing ties and a unique set of relationships with our Pacific neighbours. We have large Pasifika populations in New Zealand and important historical connections. Our aim in the Pacific is to work collaboratively to maintain peace and democracy, eliminate poverty, and assist the development of sustainable industries for the benefit of Pacific states.

Labour will:

- Improve trade relationships and development assistance with a view to creating sustainable industries in Pacific nations, protecting the environment as well as meeting Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals
- Work Pacific neighbours to promote democratic rule, equity, good governance and respect for human rights.

Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Preventing, resolving and recovering from conflict is one of the big challenges of our time. New Zealand has developed useful experiences and skills that could be used to shape a special new role as a promoter and builder of peace in the region. We are a small nonthreatening honest broker with an independent foreign policy with uniquely skilled people in both our diplomatic functions and armed forces. Our reputation in this area is second to none. We can build from our experience to develop our expertise and reputation further.

In Bougainville, Timor Leste, Afghanistan, Fiji and the Solomons we have built up experience of conflict resolution, peace mediation, peace keeping, and rebuilding institutions post-conflict.

Labour will:

- Enhance New Zealand's specialist capability as a peace-builder in the Asia-Pacific region drawn from our diplomatic, military, and aid agencies
 - this will draw on New Zealanders' experience in mediation and conflict resolution, peace-keeping, and post-conflict state building further develop expertise and common protocols in conflict resolution across different agencies and ministries explore the development of a rapid reaction disaster response capability to be deployed at short notice in the Asia-Pacific region.

Human Rights/United Nations

Labour is concerned that the importance attached to human rights issues has diminished over recent years.

Labour maintains a strong defence of human rights, both at home and abroad. We must continue to accept and look after refugees and play our part in the rescue of people who are fleeing oppressive regimes.

Labour also believes that strong multilateral bodies present the best possibility for the advancement of human rights and the resolution of conflict around the world. Where such organisations fall short, they need strengthening and reform in our view, not abandoning. To this end, we will engage with the United Nations and other multilateral fora to advance progressive policies with regard to human rights and conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution and peace education remain essential components of the education of young people in New Zealand, so that they might acquire skills early which can be put to good use both at home and overseas.

Labour will:

- Support closer links between the UN and the G20 countries, and encourage the UN to take a greater role in economic policies
- Develop an international human rights strategy and provide additional support to our participation in human rights fora, particularly at a regional level

- Work with countries to develop institutions which respect, promote and support the realisation of human rights, including gender rights, as part of our Overseas Development Aid commitment.

Broaden the focus of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

We will continue to have a distributed footprint for New Zealand's representation overseas with posts throughout the world. Labour is also committed to maximising regional arrangements such as the South Pacific Forum, APEC, ASEAN and the East Asia Forum. We need to ensure that the structure of MFAT is appropriate to the shifts in regional relationships which will occur in the foreseeable future. New Zealand also needs to ensure adequate representation in the World's emerging economies, including in Africa where development is occurring at a rapid pace.

Labour will:

- Ensure that MFAT works closely with other agencies to use international resources efficiently, including through co-location and improved use of technology
- Continue to support a career foreign service, while encouraging mid-career recruitment and the ability for staff to take sabbaticals to work in the private sector and other parts of the public sector
- Support a professional corporate services stream within MFAT, including in offshore posts.

