

Submission to  
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee on NZ Aid to the Pacific

To Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee  
Date 30 August, 2019

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I am happy to appear before the committee to speak to my submission.

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### **Tēnā koutou katoa**

Ko Rangituhi te maunga  
Ko Moana Nui a Kiwa te moana  
No Nga Pu Toru ahau  
Ko Tepari te enua  
Ko Koumu toku tipuna  
Ko Te Ruki Rangi a Tangaroa toku ingoa

### **Key point**

Contemporary relationships between Māori and Pacific peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand are defined by the Tiriti of Waitangi and by shared cultural practices. Mātauranga and whanaungatanga are concepts that Māori and Pacific peoples share. They recognise the origins of places, the connections between places and the critical values of respect between peoples, knowledges and environment that are embedded in these connections. These concepts need to be more deeply embedded into the consideration of aid to the Pacific.

Let me touch on some of the terms of reference for this inquiry

#### **1 Different Models of Aid**

It has been well documented that charity inspired models of aid emanating mostly from former colonial countries provided important gains in health and education. However these were ‘low hanging fruit’ and despite improvements in these areas, ‘sustainable development’ in the Pacific is still elusive. Shifting to models of aid that insist on ‘sustainable economic development’ did no better. Aotearoa New Zealand has struggled to develop a model of aid that taps into the unique relationship we have with the Pacific. Yet as other modes of aid from non-traditional aid donors take root in the Pacific, Aotearoa New Zealand needs to be bolder and more innovative in articulating the founding principles of its aid programme. This includes finding a better balance between achieving security, equity and prosperity by also including mātauranga, and whanaungatanga.

#### **2. Aotearoa New Zealand’s past and present models of aid in the Pacific**

Human rights based approaches to development aid have offered effective ways of addressing enduring inequalities between people in the Pacific – especially in terms of addressing gender inequality. Without the protection of human rights, the freedom to develop

is partial. Over the last decade, aid for human rights based work has been greatly reduced. Yet human-rights based approaches to development clearly signal that ‘sustainable development’ also includes dealing with transgressions of fundamental human rights. Aotearoa New Zealand and countries in the Pacific have signed and ratified some powerful international human rights treaties and instruments. The gradual realisation of these ambitions need to be hastened. They provide well developed tools for governments; cover many people who have been marginalised and impoverished – like women, children, workers, refugees - and contribute to shifting mindsets and norms – the like of which perpetuate inequalities like gender based violence.

Gender based violence is widespread in the Pacific (and in Aotearoa New Zealand) – and has multiplier and intergenerational effects. Much more needs to be done than dealing with the effects. More work is needed that begins with pre-school and continues throughout the education system.

### **3. Pacific Reset**

The Pacific Reset signalled a welcome policy break from the previous years of self-interested disengagement, but the self-interested enlightenment of the Pacific Reset, has not been a circuit-breaker. We need to work alongside our Pacific colleagues to realise the ambition of resetting for the future. This may mean slowing down at times (such as with the trade agreements), in others assisting with leaping ahead (such as reducing carbon emissions), but always in close contact with each other. We know that the wellbeing of the Pacific affects the wellbeing of Aotearoa New Zealand so rather than a plain package tonic, let’s see all the ingredients – and hope they balance concerns over security, equity, and prosperity with mātauranga and whanaungatanga.

### **4. Environmental sustainability**

Climate change is widely acknowledged to be a multiplier of many development problems, including long-standing environmental problems related to changing consumption patterns. This ranges from the use of plastic bags and pesticides, to the increasing cost of imported food and fuel. Investing in sustainable agriculture with the aim on ensuring future food security, has long been overlooked in aid programmes from Aotearoa New Zealand. Considerable investment in agriculture for food security would go a long way to achieving environmental sustainability in the face of increasing intensity and frequency of extreme climatic events.

### **5. Social licence or Social contract**

I support scholarly suggestions that the notion ‘social licence’ (emanating originally from the mining sector) has overstated value. Rather I suggest the need to examine the social contract between governments, civil society and the private sector in Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific. Since the Global Compact in 2000 that invited the private sector into the development space, the proliferation of private sector players has risen while support to civil society has stalled. The philanthropic impetus of the private sector is welcome but so too should human-rights based civil society activities.