

Chair

Cabinet

**REPORT ON OVERSEAS TRAVEL: HON JUDITH COLLINS: CHINA & SINGAPORE:
20 – 25 OCTOBER 2013**

PROPOSAL

- 1 I propose that Cabinet note this report on my visit to China and Singapore.

SUMMARY

- 2 I visited Beijing and Shanghai, China from 20 – 23 October and Singapore from 24 – 25 October 2013.
- 3 Meetings in China with senior officials provided an opportunity to broaden and deepen our engagement on judicial and legal issues. I used the visit to underline New Zealand's commitment to the bilateral relationship with China, shared New Zealand's experience in building good governance institutions and conveyed New Zealand's willingness to support China's on-going judicial reform and anti-corruption initiatives.
- 4 Following a very successful meeting with Minister of Justice Wu Aiyong, I met with Secretary Meng Jianzhu, head of the Central Politics and Law Committee of the Communist Party of China and senior member of the Polit-Bureau to reaffirm the strength of the bilateral relationship with China after 40 years and to note New Zealand's pride in having several "firsts" in our relationship. I reaffirmed New Zealand's commitment to broaden our cooperation with China on areas of interest to both countries, including in areas of judicial and legal reform.
- 5 In Shanghai, I was invited to address the Chinese Executive Leadership Academy, Pudong (CELAP). The speech was entitled "*Building a Clean Government – NZ Model and Experience*". The new Premier of China, Li Keqiang, has identified fighting corruption and increasing transparency as top priorities – he has stated that, "Clean governance is the cornerstone for the credibility of a government, and it is expected by the people. Open and transparent use of power is the key to building a clean government." New Zealand's record as Transparency International's least corrupt country provides a sound basis for supporting China's anti-corruption initiatives.
- 6 At the conclusion of my visit to China, senior officials advised that Minister of Justice Wu had expressed an interest in visiting New Zealand in 2014 for more in-depth

help build professionalism and there were now more than 400,000 lawyers and judges sitting this exam each year. A new legal aid system was being introduced.

- 13 Minister Wu noted the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office for the Hague Conference in Hong Kong which is being supported by China and which she thought would be useful for resolution of international private law cases.
- 14 I shared with Minister Wu several innovations in New Zealand's legal arena including reforms in legal aid, criminal procedure, family court and the upcoming judiciary modernisation reforms. Minister Wu was particularly interested in New Zealand's experience in selecting and training judges and the roles of various government agencies that contribute to New Zealand's lack of corruption.
- 15 During the lunch, I discussed with Minister Wu, the case of Jane Duan, a New Zealander who was being held on fraud charges in Shenzhen for over 3 years since her trial with no decision. Minister Wu undertook to look into the matter. Since my return I have learned that there have been positive results for Jane Duan as a result of this intervention.
- 16 I then met with Secretary Meng Jianzhu, Head of the Central Politics and Law Committee of the CPC and senior Politburo member. I had met Secretary Meng on my previous visit in his former role as a state councillor. Secretary Meng welcomed discussions on greater judicial cooperation. He noted that, as our countries became more interconnected through trade and people flows, it was important to increase our cooperation to prevent crime. He also welcomed on-going cooperation around deportation and extradition to ensure criminals are held to account.
- 17 I also held separate meetings with Procurator-General Cao Jianming (responsible for overseeing investigations and public prosecutions in China) and Supreme People's Court Vice-President Jin Hanqiao who gave an overview of the court system in China and recent developments. Vice-President Jin noted the on-going development of the rule of law in China and the increasing pressure on courts as more commercial disputes were brought before the courts and public expected greater judicial impartiality and openness. I shared with them New Zealand's programme to modernise our courts and increase transparency by having decisions available online.
- 18 A further useful meeting was held with the Vice Governor of the People's Bank of China, Li Dongrong to discuss recent developments in anti-money laundering initiatives.
- 19 Partners in the firm of King & Wood Mallesons, one of China's largest law firms which is partnered to Mallesons in Australia, provided valuable insights into the more private perspective of law and justice in China and the challenges of engaging in the commercial legal environment. In addition, the New Zealand Ambassador, Carl Worker hosted a dinner at the residence attended by four Chinese academic legal experts who shared their thoughts on the current state of legal reforms in China including recent changes to China's labour laws and the impacts of urbanisation.

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