

17 April 2024

Joint Statement by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Prime Minister of New Zealand

1. On 17 April 2024, H.E. Mr. Srettha Thavisin, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand welcomed Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Prime Minister of New Zealand for his first official visit to the Kingdom of Thailand between 16 - 18 April 2024. The visit marks 68 years of diplomatic relations between New Zealand and Thailand, and almost 20 years of the Thailand-New Zealand Closer Economic Partnership.
2. The two leaders acknowledged the deep historical connections, warm cooperation between Thailand and New Zealand, and the two countries' shared regional and global interests. Prime Ministers Thavisin and Luxon noted the wide range of bilateral cooperation on political, security, economic, culture, education, people-to-people connection, science and technology and development issues.
3. The leaders reaffirmed their countries' shared respect for democratic values, the protection and promotion of human rights, good governance and the rule of law, as well as their unwavering support for multilateralism.
4. New Zealand Prime Minister Luxon was joined by the Minister for Climate Change and Revenue Hon Simon Watts, senior officials, a senior business delegation, and media. The extensive delegation confirms the two countries' shared commitment to deepening the relationship in all dimensions.

Thailand-New Zealand Strategic Partnership

5. Thailand and New Zealand look ahead to celebrating the seventieth anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2026. In recognition of this long-standing relationship and a mutual commitment to deepen and strengthen existing ties to realise the full potential in our cooperation, therefore, Thailand and New Zealand have agreed to elevate our bilateral relationship to a Strategic Partnership by 2026.
6. The Strategic Partnership will entail increased cooperation on areas of mutual interest, such as security, trade and investment, science and technology, culture, education, tourism, and closer people-to-people ties. The Strategic Partnership will be built on invigorating existing bilateral mechanisms, including, inter alia, the Senior Officials' Talks and the Thailand-New Zealand Joint Commission, and regular exchange of high level visits, reflective of the importance both sides place on strengthening and elevating the relationship. In support of this, Prime Minister Luxon announced the establishment of a Prime Minister's Fellowship, to make recommendations on enhancing the bilateral relationship, for each of the next two years leading up to 2026.
7. The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Prime Minister of New Zealand have directed the two Foreign Ministries to coordinate with the relevant ministries and agencies to collaborate on establishing a comprehensive Roadmap and Plan of Action for this Strategic Partnership.

Defence and Security

8. Prime Ministers Thavisin and Luxon welcomed existing bilateral defence cooperation between Thailand and New Zealand, noting the resumption of Bilateral Defence Talks, which took place in Thailand in August 2023.
9. In order to increase capacity and interoperability of our Defence Forces, aiming at enhancing cooperation on our shared interests, as well as addressing regional and global security challenges, the two Prime Ministers announced the progress of the New Zealand–Thailand Defence Cooperation Plan. This Plan will deepen engagement between our respective Defence Forces and Ministries of Defence.
- 10 Both sides reflected on the scourge of transnational organised crime and the harm such crime inflicts on individuals and communities at domestic, regional or global levels. The Prime Ministers noted the significant existing cooperation between Thailand and New Zealand on combatting transnational organised crime, including human and drug trafficking. The Prime Ministers committed to exploring more opportunities for cooperation, including cyber security, counterterrorism and violent extremism, intelligence sharing and exchange of good practices between relevant agencies, as well as a multi-year programme of law enforcement support and training to Thailand.

Economic Cooperation

11. The two Prime Ministers acknowledged the upcoming twentieth anniversary of the Thailand–New Zealand Closer Economic Partnership (TNZCEP) in 2025. Both Prime Ministers looked forward to seeing tariff-free entry for all Thai and New Zealand imports from 1 January 2025, and noted that bilateral trade has more than tripled in the 20 years since the TNZCEP has been in place.
12. On this note, within the TNZCEP framework, New Zealand Prime Minister Luxon announced a further two-year commitment to New Zealand’s long-standing “Thailand Dairy Development Programme”, which demonstrates New Zealand expertise being used to improve productivity and production in Thailand’s dairy industry.
13. Thailand and New Zealand are parties to the ASEAN–Australia–New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) Agreement and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which provide additional platforms for exporters to grow their markets. Both countries also have strong collaboration in Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF).
14. The two Prime Ministers acknowledged their countries’ existing trade commitments and concurred that both countries should fully utilise the existing comprehensive suite of trade instruments to maximise mutual economic growth and prosperity.
15. The two Prime Ministers agreed to look for opportunities to expand economic cooperation and increase two-way trade and investment, in areas of mutual expertise and interest, especially in the fields of science, technology and innovation, such as agri-technology, smart farming and food technology, as well as innovative areas such as digital, gaming, film production, animation, and precision medicine.
16. In recognition of our vast economic cooperation and potential, the Prime Ministers today announced a new ambitious joint goal of tripling two-way trade by 2045.

17. The two Prime Ministers acknowledged the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding between Thai and New Zealand companies, namely Charoen Pokphand Foods Public Company Limited of Thailand and two New Zealand companies - DSH Systems Limited and SEEN Safety Limited, which will play a role in enhancing food quality and sustainability.

Renewable Energy and Climate Change

18. The Prime Ministers agreed to collaborate on the advancement of renewable energy solutions, aiming to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and combat climate change, including cooperation to enhance Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) achievement under the Paris Agreement. This collaboration may include practical initiatives such as joint projects on renewable energy technology development and use of carbon markets, knowledge exchange, and capacity building. By leveraging Thailand's strategic location and commitment to renewable energy targets alongside New Zealand's expertise in sustainable energy practices, we are demonstrating our shared commitment to combatting climate change and building a more sustainable future for all, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

People-to-people links

19. In recognition of the already strong links between the people of Thailand and New Zealand, Prime Minister Thavisin and Prime Minister Luxon agreed to expedite the negotiation of a bilateral Memorandum of Arrangement (MOA) on Cultural Cooperation. The MOA sets out our mutual intention to promote arts and cultural exchanges to deepen understanding of our respective cultures. Activities envisaged under this MOA include encouraging: the study of our respective languages, literature, and arts; participation in events such as exhibitions and film festivals; and the translation of important literature and studies.
20. Education cooperation is a key strand of the New Zealand-Thailand relationship. New Zealand has long been an important destination for Thai students and scholars at both secondary and tertiary levels, which has forged deep personal connections between our countries as well as laid the strong foundation for our people-to-people relations.
21. Today Prime Minister Luxon announced two new teacher training initiatives, under which Massey University in New Zealand would conduct training for 40 Princess Chulabhorn Science High School teachers and 100 teachers from public schools under the supervision of the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), Thai Ministry of Education. The themes of the training will focus on engaging students in English language learning and steps to a more communicative and interactive classroom.
22. The two Prime Ministers emphasised the importance of further visa facilitation between Thailand and New Zealand, as well as possible cooperation between our tourism-related agencies, aimed at promoting environmentally-friendly and sustainable tourism. They also agreed to prioritise future resumption of direct flights between Thailand and New Zealand, noting the significant positive impact this will have on trade and people-to-people links. They set the goal of 100,000 tourists from New Zealand to Thailand by 2025, and 40,000 tourists from Thailand to New Zealand by 2025.

Regional cooperation

23. The Prime Ministers reiterated their shared commitment to an open, inclusive, rules-based and resilient Indo-Pacific region, which supports and promotes free trade and open markets.
24. Prime Minister Luxon noted Thailand's leadership role in ASEAN and in issues of mutual interest in the region. Prime Ministers Luxon and Thavisin reaffirmed the importance of ASEAN

Centrality, and agreed to continue to work closely with ASEAN in ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Regional Forum. The two Prime Ministers discussed New Zealand's intention to elevate its relationship with ASEAN to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, in recognition of 50 years of New Zealand's dialogue relationship with ASEAN.

25. In support of ASEAN's aim to promote regional peace and stability, Prime Minister Luxon noted the recent launch of the New Zealand-funded 'Amplifying Women's Peace and Security Actions in ASEAN' project (AMPLIFY). This NZ\$15 million, five-year project aims to reduce the negative impacts of conflict and human security threats on women in ASEAN, and to strengthen peace-building and conflict prevention processes across ASEAN through participation and leadership of women.
26. The Prime Ministers reflected on the almost 30 year history of New Zealand and Thailand partnering in the Mekong region, including the Mekong Institute jointly established in 1996.
27. Prime Minister Thavisin welcomed Prime Minister Luxon's announcement that New Zealand intends to join the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) as a Development Partner. Prime Minister Luxon noted that New Zealand looks forward to working alongside Thailand, other ACMECS member states and our fellow development partners to support the goals of ACMECS to create a more integrated and connected Mekong community.

Global developments

28. Prime Minister Thavisin thanked New Zealand for supporting Thailand's candidature to the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) for the term 2025 – 2027. The two Prime Ministers also discussed Thailand's request for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) membership.
29. The two Prime Ministers also exchanged views on regional and global developments, including the situation in Myanmar, Russia-Ukraine, Israel-Palestine and the South China Sea.
30. On the situation in Myanmar, the Prime Ministers emphasised the importance of a peaceful, stable and unified Myanmar and affirmed their strong support for ASEAN-led efforts in line with the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus and encouraged the international community to work together in a pragmatic and constructive way to support peace and stability in Myanmar.
31. The Prime Ministers reiterated their support for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine in accordance with the UN Charter. They noted their ongoing commitment to supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity as outlined in UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/1 of 2 March 2022.
32. In the maritime domain, the Prime Ministers reaffirmed the right-of freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the seas in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). They reaffirmed the need to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS. They affirmed the need to respect states' ability to conserve, sustainably develop, and effectively manage their maritime natural resources in accordance with international law, in particular UNCLOS. They reaffirmed their support for the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, and the development towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct for the South China Sea that is consistent with international law, including UNCLOS. They also affirmed the importance of acting consistently with the relevant instruments and conventions of the International Maritime Organization and

the relevant standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

33. The Prime Ministers expressed grave concern at the dire and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza and tragic loss of civilian life following the 7 October attacks. Prime Minister Luxon offered his condolences for the Thai migrant workers who lost their lives, and expressed sympathy for those that remain captive. The Prime Ministers reaffirmed their calls for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire to allow full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for those in need in Gaza. They also called for the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure and adherence to international law, including international humanitarian law. The Prime Ministers also called for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. The Prime Ministers reiterated their unwavering commitment to the vision of the two-State solution, where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, exist side by side in peace within secure and recognised borders, consistent with international law and relevant UN resolutions.

Bangkok, Thailand
17 April 2024