

**Subject:** s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

**Importance:** High

[SEEMAIL] [IN CONFIDENCE]

Hi Alex,

As discussed just now – please find attached the original report from the WHO-convened team.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Cheers

**Peter Ranger**

Foreign Policy Officer

United Nations, Human Rights and Commonwealth Division

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M s9(2)(a)

E [peter.ranger@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:peter.ranger@mfat.govt.nz)

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**From:** BECKETT, Kathryn (UNHC) <kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz>

**Sent:** Thursday, 15 April 2021 6:56 pm

**To:** ....FISHER, Heath (Inet) <heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz>; ...GUERMANOFF, Guergana (Inet) <guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz>

**Cc:** GEELS, Deborah (DS MLG) <Deborah.Geels@mfat.govt.nz>; RAMSDEN, Mark (UNHC) <Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz>; RANGER, Peter (UNHC) <Peter.Ranger@mfat.govt.nz>; SINCLAIR, Mark (DS AAG) <Mark.Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; WILSON, Paula (NAD) <Paula.Wilson@mfat.govt.nz>; GOULD, Jacinta (NAD) <Jacinta.Gould@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (NAD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; MACPHERSON, Taha (AMER) <Taha.MacPherson@mfat.govt.nz>; WOODLEY, Jocelyn (AMER) <Jocelyn.Woodley@mfat.govt.nz>; O'SHAUGHNESSY, Michael (AMER) <Michael.O'Shaughnessy@mfat.govt.nz>; ....SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz>; LAURENSEN, Amy (CEO Office) <Amy.Laurenson@mfat.govt.nz>; MACKEVICS, Wendy (ENV) <Wendy.Mackevics@mfat.govt.nz>; KAY, Richard (DS MLG Office) <Richard.Kay@mfat.govt.nz>

**Subject:** RE: World Health Organisation-Convened COVID Origins Study

[RESTRICTED]

Kia ora korua,

Please see below updated reactive media points for MFA and the PM to be drawn on if the statement is agreed to and once it is released. MOH and MPI will also pass these points on to relevant Ministers.

If the statement is amended the points will need to be revised.

Because this is a scientific report there are a number of technical points also provided to be drawn on if needed.

Ngā mihi,

Kathryn

**General points:**

- New Zealand experts have analysed the WHO-convened report on the origins of COVID-19 and see it as a useful step forward.
- The terms of reference given to the WHO experts were focussed on trying to do as much as possible on how the pandemic originated so all countries can collectively better prepare to prevent or better manage possible new or emerging threats.
- New Zealand considers this an important report, and a key step in work to understand the origins of COVID-19. We appreciate the WHO's role in this critical work and the efforts of the independent experts, who had a difficult task.
- Many questions remain unanswered as to exactly how the virus was first introduced to humans.
- It is still not known exactly where or how the human variant of the virus arrived.
- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
- While the exact mechanism for the original cross over may not have been found, what we do know is that once in the human population human-to-human transfer has and continues to amplify its spread throughout the world.
- However, perhaps more importantly, the report highlights a range of further technical work that the global community needs to do to better prepare individual countries and the global community for any future pandemics.
- We will look forward with interest the WHO Director-General sharing proposed next steps for further work with Member States and we have indicated that New Zealand stands ready to assist any way it can.
- New Zealand remains fully committed to working with the WHO and Member States on the critical issue of global health security.
- We have indicated our willingness to contribute to further work on the origins of COVID-19.

**Technical points:**

- *[Only If specific questions on New Zealand's analysis are raised s9(2)(g)(i)]*
  - We share the same concerns about the limitations around access to early samples and related data, and support WHO Director-General Tedros's expectation that future collaborative studies include more timely and comprehensive data sharing.
  - The report helpfully highlights the critical importance of the One Health approach between human health and animal health regulatory agencies, shining a spotlight on an area that deserves greater attention.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Released under the  
Official Information Act

- We emphasise that outcomes from work on the origins of COVID-19 need to link to the ongoing and complementary work of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response.
- Good connections between the two are critical to ensure we most effectively learn from COVID-19 to better prevent or respond to the next pandemic.

**From:** ....FISHER, Heath (Inet) <heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Friday, 16 April 2021 12:10 pm  
**To:** BECKETT, Kathryn (UNHC) <kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz>; ....GUERMANOFF, Guergana (Inet) <guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** GEELS, Deborah (DS MLG) <Deborah.Geels@mfat.govt.nz>; RAMSDEN, Mark (UNHC) <Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz>; RANGER, Peter (UNHC) <Peter.Ranger@mfat.govt.nz>; SINCLAIR, Mark (DS AAG) <Mark.Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; WILSON, Paula (NAD) <Paula.Wilson@mfat.govt.nz>; GOULD, Jacinta (NAD) <Jacinta.Gould@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (NAD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; MACPHERSON, Taha (AMER) <Taha.MacPherson@mfat.govt.nz>; WOODLEY, Jocelyn (AMER) <Jocelyn.Woodley@mfat.govt.nz>; O'SHAUGHNESSY, Michael (AMER) <Michael.O'Shaughnessy@mfat.govt.nz>; ....SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz>; LAURENSEN, Amy (CEO Office) <Amy.Laurenson@mfat.govt.nz>; MACKEVICS, Wendy (ENV) <Wendy.Mackevics@mfat.govt.nz>; KAY, Richard (DS MLG Office) <Richard.Kay@mfat.govt.nz>; MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: World Health Organisation-Convended COVID Origins Study

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Can you help with these please?



**Heath Fisher**

Senior Foreign Affairs Advisor | Office of Hon Nanaia Mahuta MP  
 Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister of Local Government | Associate Minister for  
 Māori Development

M: s9(2)(a)

Private Bag 18041 Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

[Seemail Restricted]

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**From:** ....SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Friday, 16 April 2021 12:51 pm  
**To:** RANGER, Peter (UNHC) <Peter.Ranger@mfat.govt.nz>; BECKETT, Kathryn (UNHC) <kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz>; RAMSDEN, Mark (UNHC) <Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** ....FISHER, Heath (Inet) <heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** s6(a)  
**Importance:** High

Hi All

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

[Redacted content]

Released under the  
Official Information Act

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

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**From:** BECKETT, Kathryn (UNHC) <kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz>

**Sent:** Friday, 16 April 2021 4:03 pm

**To:** ....SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz>; . .GUERMANOFF, Guergana (Inet) <guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz>

**Cc:** ....FISHER, Heath (Inet) <heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz>; RANGER, Peter (UNHC) <Peter.Ranger@mfat.govt.nz>; RAMSDEN, Mark (UNHC) <Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz>

**Subject:** RE: s6(a)

[RESTRICTED]

Hi Alex and Guergana,


s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Thanks,

Kathryn

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

The content of this page is redacted with five horizontal yellow bars. The first bar is the longest, starting from the left margin and extending almost to the right margin. The second bar is shorter, starting from the left margin and ending about 10% before the right margin. The third bar is the same length as the second. The fourth bar is the same length as the second. The fifth bar is the shortest, starting from the left margin and ending about 20% before the right margin.

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**From:** ....SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Friday, 16 April 2021 4:27 pm  
**To:** BECKETT, Kathryn (UNHC) <kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz>; ....GUERMANOFF, Guergana (Inet) <guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** ....FISHER, Heath (Inet) <heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz>; RANGER, Peter (UNHC) <Peter.Ranger@mfat.govt.nz>; RAMSDEN, Mark (UNHC) <Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: s6(a)

In terms of our Office process, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Alexandra Smithyman

Private Secretary (Minister of Foreign Affairs)

s9(2)(a)

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**From:** ....GUERMANOFF, Guergana (Inet) <guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz>

**Sent:** Friday, 16 April 2021 5:26 pm

**To:** BECKETT, Kathryn (UNHC) <kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz>; ....SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz>

**Cc:** ....FISHER, Heath (Inet) <heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz>; RANGER, Peter (UNHC) <Peter.Ranger@mfat.govt.nz>; RAMSDEN, Mark (UNHC) <Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz>

**Subject:** RE: s6(a)

[SEEMAIL][RESTRICTED]

Hi all

Just to confirm that the PM approved s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

[Redacted content]



s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Thanks for all the effort!

Guergana

**Guergana Guermanoff**  
Foreign Policy Advisor  
Policy Advisory Group  
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

M s9(2)(a)  
E [guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz)



**DEPARTMENT OF THE  
PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET**  
TE TARI O TE PIRIMIA ME TE KOMITI MATUA

---

**From:** ....SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Friday, 16 April 2021 5:38 pm  
**To:** BECKETT, Kathryn (UNHC) <kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz>; ....GUERMANOFF, Guergana (Inet) <guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** ....FISHER, Heath (Inet) <heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz>; RANGER, Peter (UNHC) <Peter.Ranger@mfat.govt.nz>; RAMSDEN, Mark (UNHC) <Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: s6(a)

Sorted with Little's office – good to go

POLI-258-408

**Alexandra Smithyman**

Private Secretary (Minister of Foreign Affairs)

s9(2)(a)

[SEEMAIL RESTRICTED]

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**From:** RAMSDEN, Mark (UNHC) <Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz>

**Sent:** Friday, 16 April 2021 5:46 pm

**To:** BECKETT, Kathryn (UNHC) <kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz>; ....GUERMANOFF, Guergana (Inet) <guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz>; ....SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz>; ROWE, Jessica (NAD) <Jess.Rowe@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (NAD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; GOULD, Jacinta (NAD) <Jacinta.Gould@mfat.govt.n >; O'SHAUGHNESSY, Michael (AMER) <Michael.O'Shaughnessy@mfat.govt.nz>; WOODLEY, Jocelyn (AMER) <Jocelyn.Woodley@mfat.govt.nz>

**Cc:** ....FISHER, Heath (Inet) <heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz>; RANGER, Peter (UNHC) <Peter.Ranger@mfat.govt.nz>; GEELS, Deborah (DS MLG) <Deborah.Gee s@mfat.govt.nz>; SINCLAIR, Mark (DS AAG) <Mark.Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; MACPHERSON, Taha (AMER) <Taha MacPherson@mfat.govt.nz>; WILSON, Paula (NAD) <Paula.Wilson@mfat.govt.nz>

**Subject:** RE: COVID origins Statement

[RESTRICTED]

Awesome work everyone – extending the chain (and the thanks wh ch go with it) to NAD and AMER colleagues, and the Media team.

s9(2)(g)(i) once the statement is up on the website this evening, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)  
We will ask that any offshore media inquiries be directed to Wellington and we will work out who is best to respond (Ministry or Minister's office) as we go, based on the points Kathryn has consulted and is finalising now.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)( )

Cheers

**Mark Ramsden** (he/him)

**Divisional Manager**

United Nations, Human Rights and Commonwealth Division  
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

**M** s9(2)(a)

**E** [mark.ramsden@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:mark.ramsden@mfat.govt.nz)

---

**From:** BECKETT, Kathryn (UNHC) <kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz>

**Sent:** Friday, 16 April 2021 6:03 pm

POLI-258-408

**To:** ....GUERMANOFF, Guergana (Inet) <guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz>; ....FISHER, Heath (Inet) <heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz>; ....SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz>

**Cc:** GEELS, Deborah (DS MLG) <Deborah.Geels@mfat.govt.nz>; RAMSDEN, Mark (UNHC) <Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz>; RANGER, Peter (UNHC) <Peter.Ranger@mfat.govt.nz>; SINCLAIR, Mark (DS AAG) <Mark.Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; WILSON, Paula (NAD) <Paula.Wilson@mfat.govt.nz>; GOULD, Jacinta (NAD) <Jacinta.Gould@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (NAD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; MACPHERSON, Taha (AMER) <Taha.MacPherson@mfat.govt.nz>; WOODLEY, Jocelyn (AMER) <Jocelyn.Woodley@mfat.govt.nz>; O'SHAUGHNESSY, Michael (AMER) <Michael.O'Shaughnessy@mfat.govt.nz>; ....SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz>; LAURENSEN, Amy (CEO Office) <Amy.Laurenson@mfat.govt.nz>; MACKEVICS, Wendy (ENV) <Wendy.Mackevics@mfat.govt.nz>; KAY, Richard (DS MLG Office) <Richard.Kay@mfat.govt.nz>; MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>

**Subject:** RE: World Health Organisation-Convended COVID Origins Study

[RESTRICTED]

Evening all,  
Please see below additional media points for MFA/PM. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

We will now put the final agreed statement up on the MFAT website and send out an FM alerting the system.

Thanks,  
Kathryn

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

- New Zealand experts have analysed the WHO-convened report on the origins of COVID-19 and see it as a useful step forward.
- The terms of reference given to the WHO experts were focussed on trying to distil as much as possible on how the pandemic originated so all countries can collectively better prepare to prevent or better manage possible new or emerging threats.
- New Zealand considers this an important report, and a key step in work to understand the origins of COVID-19. We appreciate the WHO's role in this critical work and the efforts of the independent experts, who had a difficult task.
- Many questions remain unanswered as to exactly how the virus was first introduced to humans.
- It is still not known exactly where or how the human variant of the virus arrived
- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
- While the exact mechanism for the original cross over may not have been found, what we do know is that once in the human population human-to-human transfer has and continues to amplify its spread throughout the world.
- However, perhaps more importantly, the report highlight a range of further technical work that the global community needs to do to better prepare individual countries and the global community for any future pandemics.
- We will look forward with interest the WHO Director-General sharing proposed next steps for further work with Member States and we have indicated that New Zealand stands ready to assist any way it can.
- New Zealand remains fully committed to working with the WHO and Member States on the critical issue of global health security.
- We have indicated our willingness to contribute to further work on the origins of COVID-19.

**Technical points:**

- *[Only if specific questions on New Zealand's analysis are raised s9(2)(g)(i)]*
  - We share the same concerns about the limitations around access to early samples and related data, and support WHO Director-General Tedros's expectation that future collaborative studies include more timely and comprehensive data sharing.
  - The report helpfully highlights the critical importance of the One Health approach between human health and animal health regulatory agencies, shining a spotlight on an area that deserves greater attention.

- COVID-19 is a respiratory virus, noting that there is a large amount of evidence that disease spread almost exclusively requires direct human-to human-transfer.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

- We emphasise that our work on the origins of COVID-19 need to link to the ongoing and complementary work of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response.
- Good connections between the two are critical to ensure we most effectively learn from COVID-19 to better prevent or respond to the next pandemic.

---

**From:** BECKETT Kathryn (UNHC) <kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz>

**Sent:** Friday, 16 April 2021 6:33 pm

**To:** ....GUERMANOFF, Guergana (Inet) <guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz>; ....FISHER, Heath (Inet) <heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz>; ....SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz>

**Cc:** GEELS, Deborah (DS MLG) <Deborah.Geels@mfat.govt.nz>; RAMSDEN, Mark (UNHC) <Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz>; RANGER, Peter (UNHC) <Peter.Ranger@mfat.govt.nz>; SINCLAIR, Mark (DS AAG) <Mark.Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; WILSON, Paula (NAD) <Paula.Wilson@mfat.govt.nz>; GOULD, Jacinta (NAD) <Jacinta.Gould@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (NAD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; MACPHERSON, Taha (AMER) <Taha.MacPherson@mfat.govt.nz>; WOODLEY, Jocelyn (AMER) <Jocelyn.Woodley@mfat.govt.nz>; O'SHAUGHNESSY, Michael (AMER) <Michael.O'Shaughnessy@mfat.govt.nz>; LAURENSEN, Amy (CEO Office) <Amy.Laurenson@mfat.govt.nz>; MACKEVICS, Wendy (ENV) <Wendy.Mackevics@mfat.govt.nz>; KAY, Richard (DS MLG Office) <Richard.Kay@mfat.govt.nz>; MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>; ROWE, Jessica (NAD) <Jess.Rowe@mfat.govt.nz>

**Subject:** RE: World Health Organisation-Convened COVID Origins Study

POLI-258-408

**[RESTRICTED]**

And to confirm the statement has now been uploaded:

[New Zealand statement on WHO-convened global study of origins of COVID-19 | New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(mfat.govt.nz\)](#)

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**From:** UNHC <DM-UNHC@mfat.govt.nz>

**Sent:** Friday, 16 April 2021 6:38 pm

**To:** s6(a)

**Cc:** UNHC <DM-UNHC@mfat.govt.nz>; AMER <DM-AMER@mfat.govt.nz>; CPCD <DM-CPCD@mfat.govt.nz>; NAD <DM-NAD@mfat.govt.nz>; EUR <DM-EUR@mfat.govt.nz>; DS MLG <DM-DSMLG@mfat.govt.nz>; DS EMA <DM-DSEMA@mfat.govt.nz>; DS AAG <DM-DSAAG@mfat.govt.nz>; CEO <DM-CEO@mfat.govt.nz>; DCE <DCE@mfat.govt.nz>; BEIJING <BEI@mfat.govt.nz>; CANBERRA <CBA@mfat.govt.nz>; OTTAWA <OTT@mfat.govt.nz>; TOKYO <TKY@mfat.govt.nz>; ADDIS ABABA <DM-AUE@mfat.govt.nz>; AMER <DM-AMER@mfat.govt.nz>; ANKARA <ANK@mfat.govt.nz>; APECPOL <APECPOL@mfat.govt.nz>; ARD <DM-ARD@mfat.govt.nz>; AUS <DM-AUS@mfat.govt.nz>; BANGKOK <BKK@mfat.govt.nz>; BEIJING <BEI@mfat.govt.nz>; BERLIN <BER@mfat.govt.nz>; BRIDGETOWN <BRG@mfat.govt.nz>; BRUSSELS <BRU@mfat.govt.nz>; CANBERRA <CBA@mfat.govt.nz>; CCD <DM-CCD@mfat.govt.nz>; CEO <DM-CEO@mfat.govt.nz>; DCE <DCE@mfat.govt.nz>; DS AAG <DM-DSAAG@mfat.govt.nz>; DS APEC NZ <DSAPECNZ@mfat.govt.nz>; DS EMA <DM-DSEMA@mfat.govt.nz>; DS MLG <DM-DSMLG@mfat.govt.nz>; DS PDG <DSPDG@mfat.govt.nz>; DS TEG <DM-DSTEG@mfat.govt.nz>; ECO <DM-ECO@mfat.govt.nz>; ENV <DM-ENV@mfat.govt.nz>; EUR <DM-EUR@mfat.govt.nz>; HAGUE <HAG@mfat.govt.nz>; ISED <DM-ISED@mfat.govt.nz>; JAKARTA <JAK@mfat.govt.nz>; LGL <DM-LGL@mfat.govt.nz>; LONDON <LON@mfat.govt.nz>; MEXICO <MEX@mfat.govt.nz>; MOSCOW <MOS@mfat.govt.nz>; NAD <DM-NAD@mfat.govt.nz>; NEW YORK <NYK@mfat.govt.nz>; OTTAWA <OTT@mfat.govt.nz>; PACREG <PACREG@mfat.govt.nz>; PARIS <PAR@mfat.govt.nz>; PHM <PHM@mfat.govt.nz>; ROME <ROM@mfat.govt.nz>; SEA <DM-SEA@mfat.govt.nz>; STOCKHOLM <SKM@mfat.govt.nz>; SUVA <SVA@mfat.govt.nz>; TND <TND@mfat.govt.nz>; TOKYO <TKY@mfat.govt.nz>; VIENNA <VNA@mfat.govt.nz>; WASHINGTON <WSH@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.Health Ministry (Seemail) <trade@health.govt.nz>; FM.P/S Health (Seemail) <FMPSHealth@mfat.net.nz>; FM.P/S MFA (Seemail) <PS.MFA@mfat.net.nz>; FM.DPMC (FPA) (Seemail) <DPMC@mfat.net.nz>; FM.MPI (Seemail) <mfat.messages@mpi.govt.nz>; COVID-19insights@dpmc.govt.nz; s6(a) FM.Treasury (Seemail) <merlin@treasury.govt.nz>; FM.MBIE Formal Messages (Seemail) <cables@mbie.govt.nz>; BEIJING <BEI@mfat.govt.nz>; CANBERRA <CBA@mfat.govt.nz>; HAGUE <HAG@mfat.govt.nz>; LONDON <LON@mfat.govt.nz>; OTTAWA <OTT@mfat.govt.nz>; TOKYO <TKY@mfat.govt.nz>; BERLIN <BER@mfat.govt.nz>

**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: WHO COVID-19 ORIGINS MISSION REPORT: NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT

**[RESTRICTED]****HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS**

MoH: Megan McCoy, Mikey Smyth

MPI: John Roche, Bill Jolly

**RĀPOPOTO – SUMMARY**

New Zealand officials have concluded analysis of the Joint Report of the World Health Organization (WHO)-convened Global Study of Origins of SARS-COV-2. The report is a useful step in the work on the origins of COVID-19 and highlights areas for further work. It is clear however that many questions remain unanswered about how the virus was first introduced to the human population. New Zealand shares the concerns of others at the limitations around access to early samples and related data; and supports WHO Director-General Tedros's expectation that future collaborative studies include more timely and comprehensive data sharing. Ministers have now approved a New Zealand statement on the Report, which has been [released on the Ministry's website](#) and is appended below.

**HOHENGA – ACTION**

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

**Other posts:** for information.

Please direct any media enquiries to Wellington.

**PŪRONGO – REPORT**

Further to UNHC's formal message of 8 April and subsequent reporting (not to all), officials have now provided advice to Ministers based on expert analysis of the report by Ministry of Health and Ministry for Primary Industries.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

It made a useful start against phase one (initial studies) as originally envisaged in its terms of reference. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) useful commentary and analysis on the potential origins of the current pandemic, and identified lessons learned to help improve efforts to prevent and respond to future pandemics. Officials were also encouraged by and support in general the report's recommendations for further studies. The report highlighted the need for heightened future work (in coordination with the rest of the international veterinary / animal health community) in the One Health area and especially with respect to the need to have ongoing monitoring of new and emerging zoonotic diseases.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

New Zealand shares the concerns of others s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) at the limitations around access to early samples and related data; and supports WHO Director-General Tedros's expectation that future collaborative studies include more timely and comprehensive data sharing. 4 Ministers have approved a statement on the report, [released on the MFAT website here](#) and appended at the end of this message. Also appended FY only, are reactive media points if needed (please direct any media inquiries to Wellington – Media and UNHC).

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

**Statement text****New Zealand Statement on WHO-convened global study of origins of COVID-19 16 April 2021**

New Zealand considers the recently released WHO-convened global study of origins of COVID-19 an important report, and a useful step in the work on the origins of COVID-19, in particular when human to human transfer may have first started to occur in a range of countries. We appreciate the WHO's role in this critical work. The report is valuable in highlighting areas where further technical work is required to make sure we can prepare better, as individual countries and as a global community, for any future pandemics. The report has identified further areas for data collection and research into the origins of COVID-19, particularly as it applies to the original, and or continuing, presence of wildlife reservoirs of the virus. It has helpfully highlighted the critical importance of the One Health approach between human health and animal health regulatory agencies, shining a spotlight on an area that deserves greater attention.

It is clear many questions remain unanswered as to exactly how the virus was first introduced into the human population. New Zealand considers that, regardless of how the initial spill over occurred, it is clear that once this respiratory virus was introduced into the human population human-to-human transfer has almost exclusively accounted for the global spread thereafter. The risk of transmission from close contact with animal products from clinically infected susceptible (wild) animal species should not be confused with trade in safe traditional food from non-susceptible species.

New Zealand notes there is still more work to be done globally to look at potentially emerging zoonotic disease threats associated with the trade in, the farming of, or the harvesting of animal products, from what are traditionally wildlife species. We encourage all countries to collaborate further in how the trade in animals or products from such non-traditional food species is managed so as to be assured that the potential zoonotic risk profiles are known and can be appropriately managed.

New Zealand supports the WHO's proposals for further work, including future collaborative studies and comprehensive data sharing between all members on the endemic presence of strains of the virus in susceptible wildlife species. We share the regrets of others at the limitations around access to early samples and related data. We support WHO Director-General Tedros's expectation that future collaborative studies include more timely and comprehensive data sharing. We look forward to the Director-General sharing with Member States proposed next steps for further work.

We emphasise that outcomes from work on the origins of COVID-19 need to link to the ongoing and complementary work of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response. Good connections between the two are critical to ensure that we most effectively learn from COVID-19 to better prevent or respond to the next pandemic.

New Zealand remains fully committed to working with the WHO and Member States on the critical issue of global health security, including engaging on work regarding the origin of COVID 19. We are happy to contribute to further work, noting our unique approach in pursuing an elimination strategy means we have been able to document and characterise the role that inflight and aerosol transmission of particles can play. Finally, New Zealand would like to acknowledge the difficult task asked of the independent experts and thank them for their efforts.

**Reactive Media points (for information only)**

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)



s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

**General points:**

- New Zealand experts have analysed the WHO-convened report on the origins of COVID-19 and see it as a useful step forward.
- The terms of reference given to the WHO experts were focussed on trying to distil as much as possible on how the pandemic originated so all countries can collectively better prepare to prevent or better manage possible new or emerging threats.
- New Zealand considers this an important report, and a key step in work to understand the origins of COVID-19. We appreciate the WHO's role in this critical work and the efforts of the independent experts, who had a difficult task.
- Many questions remain unanswered as to exactly how the virus was first introduced to humans.
- It is still not known exactly where or how the human variant of the virus arrived
- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
- While the exact mechanism for the original cross over may not have been found, what we do know is that once in the human population human-to-human transfer has and continues to amplify its spread throughout the world.
- However, perhaps more importantly the report highlights a range of further technical work that the global community needs to do to better prepare individual countries and the global community for any future pandemics.
- We will look forward with interest the WHO Director-General sharing proposed next steps for further work with Member States and we have indicated that New Zealand stands ready to assist any way it can.
- New Zealand remains fully committed to working with the WHO and Member States on the critical issue of global health security.
- We have indicated our willingness to contribute to further work on the origins of COVID-19.

**Technical points:**

- *[Only if specific questions on New Zealand's analysis are raised s9(2)(g)(i)]*

- We share the same concerns about the limitations around access to early samples and related data, and support WHO Director-General Tedros's expectation that future collaborative studies include more timely and comprehensive data sharing.
- The report helpfully highlights the critical importance of the One Health approach between human health and animal health regulatory agencies, shining a spotlight on an area that deserves greater attention.
- COVID-19 is a respiratory virus, noting that there is a large amount of evidence that disease spread almost exclusively requires direct human-to-human-transfer.
- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
- We emphasise that outcomes from work on the origins of COVID-19 need to link to the ongoing and complementary work of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response.
- Good connections between the two are critical to ensure we most effectively learn from COVID-19 to better prevent or respond to the next pandemic

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**From:** RAMSDEN, Mark (UNHC) <Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz>

**Sent:** Sunday, 18 April 2021 4:23 pm

**To:** ....FISHER, Heath (Inet) <heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz>

**Cc:** RANGER, Peter (UNHC) <Peter.Range@mfat.govt.nz>; GEELS, Deborah (DS MLG) <Deborah.Geels@mfat.govt.nz>; SINCLAIR, Mark (DS AAG) <Mark.Sinclair@mfat.govt.nz>; MACPHERSON, Taha (AMER) <Taha.MacPherson@mfat.govt.nz>; WILSON, Paula (NAD) <Paula.Wilson@mfat.govt.nz>; BECKETT, Kathryn (UNHC) <kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz>; ....GUERMANOFF, Guergana (Inet) <guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz>; .. SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz>; ROWE, Jessica (NAD) <Jess.Rowe@mfat.govt.nz>; EVANS, David (NAD) <David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz>; GOULD, Jacinta (NAD) <Jacinta.Gould@mfat.govt.nz>; O'SHAUGHNESSY, Michael (AMER) <Michael.O'Shaughnessy@mfat.govt.nz>; WOODLEY, Jocelyn (AMER) <Jocelyn.Woodley@mfat.govt.nz>

**Subject:** RE: COVID origins Statement

[RESTRICTED]

Kia ora Heath,

Responding to your request below, there has s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) media to the statement.

Cheers

**Mark Ramsden** (he/him)

**Divisional Manager**

United Nations, Human Rights and Commonwealth Division  
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

M:s9(2)(a)

E [mark.ramsden@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:mark.ramsden@mfat.govt.nz)

**From:** ....FISHER, Heath (Inet) <[heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:heath.fisher@parliament.govt.nz)>

**Sent:** Friday, 16 April 2021 5:56 PM

**To:** RAMSDEN, Mark (UNHC) <[Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Mark.Ramsden@mfat.govt.nz)>; BECKETT, Kathryn (UNHC) <[kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:kathryn.beckett@mfat.govt.nz)>; ....GUERMANOFF, Guergana (Inet) <[guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:guergana.guermanoff@dpmc.govt.nz)>; ....SMITHYMAN, Alexandra (Inet) <[Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Alexandra.Smithyman@parliament.govt.nz)>; ROWE, Jessica (NAD) <[Jess.Rowe@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Jess.Rowe@mfat.govt.nz)>; EVANS, David (NAD) <[David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:David.Evans@mfat.govt.nz)>; GOULD, Jacinta (NAD) <[Jacinta.Gould@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Jacinta.Gould@mfat.govt.nz)>; O'SHAUGHNESSY, Michael (AMER) <[Michael.O'Shaughnessy@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Michael.O'Shaughnessy@mfat.govt.nz)>; WOODLEY, Jocelyn (AMER) <[Jocelyn.Woodley@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Jocelyn.Woodley@mfat.govt.nz)>

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**Subject:** RE: COVID origins Statement

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Thanks for the work, all.



**Heath Fisher**

Senior Foreign Affairs Advisor | Office of Hon Nanaia Mahuta MP  
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister of Local Government | Associate Minister for  
Māori Development

M: s9(2)(a)

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

[Seema | Restricted]

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## AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND FOREIGN MINISTERS' CONSULTATIONS

April 21-23 2021



**NEW ZEALAND**  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE

Released under the  
Official Information Act

All pages apart from 112 and 113 removed  
as out of scope



s6(a)

**Background**

*The Joint World Health Organization (WHO) – China team study report*

The Joint World Health Organization (WHO) – China team study report was publically released on 30 March. Although the report was unable to reach definitive conclusions about the timing or place of origin of COVID-19 nor its original transmission pathway to humans, it was a useful step in determining the pandemic's origins.

2. s6(a) (through a US-led joint statement), and the European Union made public comments s9(2)(g)(i) s6(a)

s6(a)

4. Subsequent to the delivery of the US and EU statements, New Zealand has provided two statements on the report. First, s9(2)(g)(i) through our Permanent Mission to the WHO in Geneva (8 April), supporting WHO work in this area and calling on the WHO Director-General to set out a timeline for further work on COVID-19 origins. Second, New Zealand delivered s9(2)(g)(i) on the report (released on the MFAT website on 16 April). The second statement noted that New Zealand shared the regrets of others at the limitations around access to early samples and related data; and welcomed the calls for further work into the origins of COVID-19, whilst expressing our expectation that future studies include more timely and comprehensive data sharing.



22 April 2021

Minister of Foreign Affairs

For information by

29 April 2021

## Weekly Report – 22 April 2021

BRIEFING

Overview Submission

PURPOSE

This is a weekly product to update you on current and emerging international events, negotiations, and political developments. It includes a list of forthcoming Cabinet papers.

All points aside from no.14  
removed as out of scope

## Tukunga tūtohua – Recommended referrals

Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs	For information by	30 April 2021
Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control	For information by	30 April 2021

## Taipitopito whakapā – Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	MOBILE PHONE
Amy Laurenson	Chief of Staff	Office of the Chief Executive	s9(2)(a)

Amy Laurenson  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

## Tūtohu – Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- |   |  |                 |
|---|--|-----------------|
| 1 | <b>Note</b> the contents of this report  | <b>Yes / No</b> |
| 2 | <b>Refer</b> a copy of this submission to:   | <b>Yes / No</b> |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs</li> <li>• Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control</li> </ul> |                 |

Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Date     /     /

WHO COVID-19 Origins Report: New Zealand Statement

**14. On 16 April New Zealand released a statement on the MFAT website regarding the World Health Organization-convened, global study of the origins of COVID-19. This followed an expert review by officials from the New Zealand Ministry of Health and Ministry for Primary Industries.** The statement notes the study was a useful step in the work on the origins of COVID-19; that many questions remain unanswered about how the virus was first introduced to the human population; it shared concerns at the limitations around access to early samples and related data; and supported WHO Director-General Tedros's expectation that future studies

include more timely and comprehensive data-sharing. s6(a)

**Reactive media lines have been provided to your office.**

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