



NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS



1 February 2018

Minister of Foreign Affairs

For action by

5 February 2018

Guest of Government: Former United States President Barack Obama

BRIEFING General Purpose

PURPOSE To seek approval to grant Guest of Government status for the visit to New Zealand by Barack Obama, from 20-23 March 2018.

Recommended referrals

Prime Minister	For information by	9 February 2018
Minister of Foreign Affairs	For approval by	9 February 2018
Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services	For budget approval by	9 February 2018

Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE	MOBILE PHONE
Richard Kay	Acting Divisional Manager	Americas Division	s9(2)(a)	
James Waite	Lead Adviser	Americas Division		

Minister's Office comments

Minister Peters approved 1/02/18.

Key points

The NZ-US Council has invited former US President Barack Obama to visit New Zealand on 20-23 March. Mr Obama has accepted the invitation and his speakers' bureau that manages his commercial interest is contracting with the Council.

Mr Obama's programme is likely to focus on innovative youth leadership initiatives in New Zealand, with an emphasis on vulnerable Māori and Pasifika communities. He will have private time to pursue his sporting passion - golf.

The former President's visit will provide an occasion for reflection on the positive state of New Zealand's broader relationship with the United States.

Officials recommend that Mr Obama's programme include a formal welcome from the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister.

The Council has obtained corporate sponsorship to fund the visit from Air New Zealand, Westpac and MasterCard. The programme will include a paid speech at the Viaduct Events Centre.

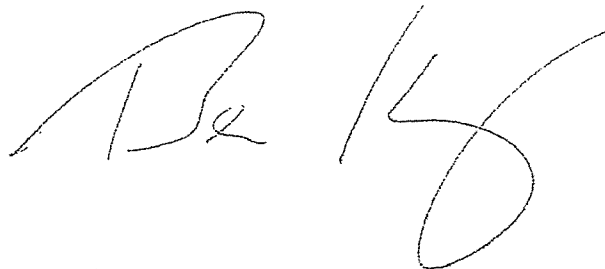
Extending a limited Guest of Government status to this visit would enable New Zealand to assist with security, ground transport, and some hospitality. The Council's sponsorship will fund accommodation and flights.

At this stage Michelle Obama has no plans to travel to New Zealand.

The Council will announce the visit in early February.

Budget

The Visits and Ceremonial Office anticipates that this visit will cost approximately \$38,500. This does not include New Zealand Police costs for providing security or MFAT support costs.



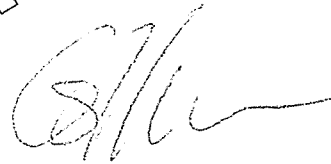
Ben King
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- 1 Note that Mr Obama will visit New Zealand from 20-23 March, before travelling to Australia for a one day programme. Yes / No
- 2 Agree that limited Guest of Government status is granted for Mr Obama's visit, allowing for assistance with ground transport and logistics, security, and interactions with the Prime Minister and Ministers. Yes / No
- 3 Refer this submission to the Prime Minister for her information and to the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services for his approval of budget availability. Yes / No

Pr Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs



Chris Hyden
Ministerial Services

Report

1. Former US President Obama plans to visit New Zealand, 20-23 March. The visit is a private initiative led by NZ-US Council Chair Leon Grice – formerly Consul General in Los Angeles and currently an MFAT employee. The NZ-US Council is contracting with Mr Obama's speakers' bureau to support a paid speech in Auckland, and separately working with his private office to build a policy programme for the period he is in New Zealand.
2. The former President will focus on innovative youth leadership initiatives in New Zealand, with an emphasis on vulnerable Māori and Pasifika communities. It is proposed that he will meet with the Māori women's network Wanine Toa, engage with the Southern Initiative – a successful South Auckland youth leadership and community development programme – and visit Tamaki School – a highly successful decile one primary school. Mr Obama will also undertake related activities in Northland. The NZ-US Council is still considering the Northland programme.
3. Given that this is a private visit and Mr Obama has left office, it would be inappropriate for Ministers to have official government-government meetings with him. However, it would be completely appropriate for the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to welcome the former President and meet with him at Government House in Auckland. The NZ-US Council are also interested in exploring a possible visit to the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, perhaps hosted by the relevant New Zealand Ministers.

4. s6(a)

Mr Obama usually meets with leaders during his foreign visits. For example, he met President Xi in December 2017. The former President's staff have indicated that he does not want the visit to play into US domestic politics in any negative sense.

5. s9(2)(g)(i)

His Administration energetically continued the process of relationship strengthening with New Zealand that began in 2007. As such, the visit will provide an occasion for reflection on the positive state of New Zealand's broader relationship with the United States – of our shared democratic values and heritage, vibrant economic relationship, and long history of cooperation.

6. The former President's presence in New Zealand will help to profile and encourage various youth initiatives, which will be able to leverage the occasion to attract support from the commercial sector. It would also be a good opportunity to announce a New Zealand funding increase to the Fulbright New Zealand programme.
7. Commercial sponsorship and a paid speech at Viaduct Events Centre will cover most of the cost of the visit, notably air travel and accommodation. However, the security requirements will be significant and draw heavily on New Zealand Police. US Secret Service agents will also accompany the former President.

Given the security requirement and Mr Obama's status, limited Guest of Government status is appropriate. This would also allow for the Visits and Ceremonial Office to coordinate logistics and ground transportation.

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OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT