NGĀ TOKI WHAKARURURANGA

April 2, 2025

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Chief Negotiator, NZ India FTA
Deputy Secretary
Trade and Economic Group
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Cc Bede Corry
Secretary
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Charlie Rahiri
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Tēnā koe e kara e Vangelis

Please know that Ngā Kaihautū, our governing body met at Te Manukanuka o Hoturoa Marae in Tamaki Makaurau yesterday for our three monthly in-person hui.

The forthcoming negotiation for a free trade agreement with India was a major item on the agenda. There is strong enthusiasm and commitment from Ngā Kaihautū for Ngā Toki Whakarururanga to play a proactive role in these negotiations from the very start, so as to maximise the opportunities to build on areas of common interest with India and develop innovative approaches that will be a win-win for everyone.

Potential areas that we have identified to inject into the negotiations, and on which we have leading Māori experts, include:

(i) Traditional knowledge
(ii) Intellectual property rights and the Convention on Biological Diversity
(iii) Ayurveda and rongoā
(iv) Organics, plant variety rights, seeds, huā parakore and GMOs
(v) Data sovereignty and digital governance
(vi) Generic medicines and health products
(vii) Creatives and culture.

Our pūkenga have been instructed to draft a Toka Tūmoana to discuss with your officials that can create a framework for us to engage positively and proactively on this kaupapa.

Following from the successful interaction between our digital experts and the negotiators from the United Kingdom, we will especially be looking to engage directly with India's officials and negotiators.

Our kaihautū and pūkenga also have strong connections with traditional communities and civil society groups in India, so we will be engaging actively with them on this kaupapa as well.

Ngā Kaihautū made it very clear that they want this to be accorded priority in our forthcoming work. Consequently, we are seeking the opportunity for a discussion with you regarding this at the earliest opportunity, especially before you finalise the scope of the mandate and establish processes with India.

It may be useful to include a preliminary discussion on this at the meeting with Bede Corry next week, so we can get the process moving forward at pace.

E tā te kōrero: Titiro ki ngā taumata o te moana.

Pita Tipene

(Co-Chair)