

New Zealand Waitangi Day Special

Celebrating continuing ties, forging new ones

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Today New Zealand commemorates the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi 179 years ago between representatives of the British Crown and Maori chiefs in Waitangi, a coastal town on

New Zealand's North Island. The treaty is the founding document of New Zealand and effectively gave Britain sovereignty over New Zealand in exchange for promising Maori certain rights.

Waitangi Day engenders mixed emotions in New Zealand. For some, it is New Zealand's de facto national day; for others, it is a day of protest against colonization. In 1975 a commission of inquiry, the Waitangi Tribunal, was established to settle alleged breaches of the promises made by the Crown in the treaty. Successive governments, respecting the tribunal's recommendations, have worked with New Zealand's Maori to address and provide compensation for past wrongs. This process is ongoing.

Waitangi Day is therefore a day when New Zealanders reflect on our history. But it is also

a day when we celebrate the independent, vibrant and multicultural country that New Zealand has become.

New Zealanders can be proud of many achievements. In 1893 we became the first country where women won the right to vote. In 1938 we were one of the first countries to introduce a "cradle-to-grave" social welfare system. In the 1970s we protested successfully against nuclear testing in the South Pacific. From the 1980s we introduced major economic reforms that transformed our highly protected economy, including the agriculture sector. We became champions of free trade, pioneering the Trans Pacific Partnership, which recently came into force as the CPTPP.

New Zealand has long been a close and reliable partner of Japan. Our country has provided Japan with safe, high-quality agricultural and fish products, raw and processed timber, as well as aluminum. In return, New Zealand has benefited from Japan's technology, machinery and vehicles.

The bilateral ties continue to evolve in the face of new opportunities and challenges. While our traditional economic bonds will be given new impetus by the CPTPP, New Zealand is also a technology partner for Japan in areas such as robotics, renewable energy, advanced foods and digital technology.

New Zealand has committed to elevating its relationship with Japan in trade and economic relations, as well as the development of renewable energy, including hydrogen. New Zealand and Japan are working together with the island countries of the South Pacific to address issues such as development, climate change and security.

We are also strengthening our people-to-people relationships, particularly in sports, as we look forward to Japan's hosting of the Rugby World Cup later this year, the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics in Tokyo and the World Masters Games in 2021.

This year, the New Zealand government will present the world's first "well-being budget." This will draw on ideas developed by OECD and the International Monetary Fund, which encourage countries to define success not only in terms of economic growth, but also to focus on living standards and human, social and natural capital, setting targets and tracking progress.

As New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said at the World Economic Forum in Davos last month, the next New Zealand budget will have five priority areas. These are transitioning to a sustainable and low-emissions society; supporting mental well-being; benefiting from the digital age; lifting Maori

and Pacific incomes, skills and opportunities; and reducing child poverty.

This is based on principles such as kindness and what is known in the Maori language as *kaitiakitanga*, or guardianship, including guardianship of the land and environment.

New Zealand looks forward to exchanging ideas and experiences with Japan on these and other issues, as much as we look forward to the excitement of the Rugby World Cup.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern speaks on the veranda of Te Whare Runanga (the House of Assembly) on the Waitangi Treaty Grounds on Feb. 5, 2018, in Waitangi. GETTY IMAGES

Congratulations on Waitangi Day



Congratulations on the 179th Anniversary of Waitangi Day



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