
REPORT 4
(1215/11/IM)

OVERSEAS TRIPS TO USA, JAPAN AND KOREA

1. Purpose of Report

To provide details of and to seek Council approval for the Mayor to undertake visits to the USA in August and the Republic of Korea in late September/early October, and for the Deputy Mayor to undertake a visit to Japan in late July/early August.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Agree that the Mayor will undertake visits to the USA in early August and to the Republic of Korea in late September/early October and that the costs will be met from the International Relations budget (COST02 C145).*
3. *Agree that the Deputy Mayor will undertake a visit to Japan in late July/early August and that the costs will be met from the International Relations budget (COST02 C145).*
4. *Agree to appoint a Councillor as the Acting Deputy Mayor for the period during which the Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be absent from New Zealand in August 2005.*
5. *Agree that the Mayor can endorse the joint statement issued following the 7th Review Conference of the Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (attached as Appendix 1) to confirm the Council's stance on nuclear disarmament.*

3. Background

The three proposed visits covered by this report are the subject of invitations issued to the Mayor by the Mayors of San Francisco, Seoul and Hiroshima to attend various events in their cities. Because two of these events clash timing wise, it is being recommended that the Deputy Mayor attend one on the Mayor's behalf.

4. Purpose of visits

San Francisco, USA

Tourism New Zealand, in collaboration with Toi Maori, is mounting a major promotion of New Zealand in San Francisco, commencing on 4 August 2005. A series of key events are planned to showcase New Zealand tourism opportunities and its indigenous arts and culture. Prominent organisations and figures on the West Coast of America, including the Mayor of San Francisco, have been targeted with this promotion.

Mayor Gavin Newsom of San Francisco has reciprocated by formally issuing a personal invitation to Mayor Prendergast, as Mayor of New Zealand's capital city, to join him at the event. He has also suggested her attendance would provide an excellent opportunity to explore ways in which the links between the two cities can be broadened, particularly given the recent introduction by Air New Zealand of a regular service between Auckland and San Francisco. While the idea of a sister city relationship with San Francisco has been mooted before it now appears to have the wider support of the Government and, with the introduction of a direct air link, it may be an opportune time for the Mayors to discuss this possibility.

It is the intention that the Mayor would use the opportunity of the trip to give a presentation to the San Francisco chapter of the Kiwi Expat Association, similar to that she gave to the London chapter when she attended the London Job Expo last year. Its purpose will be to market Wellington as the ideal "live, work and play" destination for returning New Zealanders, particularly those currently working in the strong ICT sector based in and around Silicon Valley. There is a strong push nationally to recruit ITC professionals from overseas and this is an ideal opportunity for Wellington to promote its pre-eminent position in this sector of the economy.

Hiroshima, Japan

New Zealand and Wellington has a long history of support for the anti-nuclear proliferation movement. In recent times, the influence of the movement has gained momentum worldwide primarily as the result of the campaign efforts of Mayor Tadatashi Akiba of Hiroshima. He was the driving force behind the mounting of the moving exhibition of photographs and artefacts in the Michael Fowler Centre last year, facilitated by the City Council, as a reminder of the devastating effects of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

This year marks the 60th commemoration of those historic events and Mayor Akiba has organised a world conference of Mayors for Peace to take place during the commemoration from 4 to 6 August. In recognition of Wellington's commitment to the cause, he has issued a personal invitation to Mayor Prendergast to attend both the commemorative events and the conference. Because of her provisional acceptance of the Mayor of San Francisco's invitation, she is not able to travel to Hiroshima and has put forward the Deputy Mayor to attend on her behalf.

The proposed trip to Japan affords the Deputy Mayor the opportunity to visit the World Expo at Aichi and help promote New Zealand and Wellington to a Japanese audience, and also to call on the Mayor of Sakai, who last year attended the 10th anniversary celebrations in Wellington of the sister city relationship. It is therefore being proposed that his proposed trip be extended to accommodate these opportunities.

Seoul, Republic of Korea

The current Mayor of Seoul has gained a reputation worldwide for his strong advocacy and promotion of improved urban development by his decision to demolish a freeway running through the centre of Seoul and to regenerate the watercourse previously flowing beneath it to create a more liveable and harmonious inner city environment. The Cheon gye cheon Restoration Project has since gone on to receive the global prize for best public administration project at the 9th International Architecture Biennale in Venice.

To commemorate completion of the project, Mayor Lee Myung Bak has organised a world Mayors Forum in Seoul focussing on urban development. In recognition of Wellington's standing and efforts in this field, he has issued an invitation to Mayor Prendergast to attend the event, to be held on 30 September and 1 October. Her attendance would provide the opportunity to discover and discuss the initiatives that other cities around the world are undertaking and which may have relevance for Wellington.

5. Other relevant matters

5.1 Timing

The itineraries covering the USA and Japan trips are still being organised and, while every attempt will be made to minimise the period of time that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are both away from Wellington, there will be some overlap. There are no planned Council meetings at the end of July/early August and no official commitments will be entered into during that time.

There is precedent for the absence overseas at the same time of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. In these circumstances, officers propose, however, that as a matter of good practice the Council should appoint an Acting Deputy Mayor for the period during which both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are absent from New Zealand. This proposal, if agreed to, will mean that the Acting Deputy Mayor can act in those situations where the Mayor would be called on (eg. to exercise the Mayor's role in a Civil Defence Emergency). Under the Local Government Act 2002, the Deputy Mayor, or in this case the Acting Deputy Mayor, can act for the Mayor in the Mayor's absence.

The period for which this appointment will apply will be confirmed when itineraries have been finalised, assuming the Council gives approval for the trips to proceed.

5.2 Cost

The approximate cost for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to undertake these visits is estimated as follows:

USA	Japan	Korea
\$8,960	\$8,310	\$6,670

These costs would be met from the International Relations (COST02 C145) budget.

5.3 Council approval for joint statement

A roundtable of world Mayors and Parliamentarians attending the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference at the United Nations in New York in May finalised a joint statement concerning nuclear disarmament. This, together with a list of current signatories (which includes a number of New Zealand MPs but as yet no NZ local government representatives), is attached as Appendix 1. The Mayor has been invited to add her signature to the joint statement by way of endorsement.

In keeping with the recommendation supporting attendance at the Mayors for Peace conference in Hiroshima, it is also being recommended that the Council give its approval for the Mayor to attach her endorsement of the joint statement on behalf of the City of Wellington. This endorsement can then be conveyed at the Hiroshima event.

6. Conclusion

Council approval is required for the proposed visits to the USA, Japan and Korea by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to allow the relevant arrangements to be confirmed.

There is good basis for these visits in terms of fit with the City Council's international relations commitment and its strategic direction related to economic and urban development.

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