

**APEC BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC PRIVATE DIALOGUE ON RE-OPENING BORDERS FOR SAFE AND  
SEAMLESS TRAVEL  
3 MAY 2021**

**CONCLUDING REMARKS  
RACHEL TAULELEI  
ABAC CHAIR 2021**

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā rangatira ma, tēnā tātou katoa.

It's a great pleasure for me to offer some concluding remarks to what has been an excellent public-private dialogue.

I'd like to first thank our friends at ABAC Singapore and ABAC Hong Kong for their initiative in organising such a worthwhile event and to all those expert speakers and panelists who participated, as well as all of you online.

This year has been a year like no other – and I know we said that last year too!

As we have worked on our ABAC agenda of “People, Place and Prosperity” it has become very clear that we cannot realise our aspirations for a more inclusive, sustainable and inter-connected region unless we first address the immediate crisis before us.

The pandemic continues to have a long tail and to be a top-of-mind issue for business colleagues around the world.

It is appropriate for us to recall that many are still struggling to come out from under the pandemic's grip and that includes some economies in APEC as well as in the broader region.

For others starting to see light at the end of the tunnel, our ability to begin the work of economic re-opening and recovery at the regional and global level will mean we will have to start travelling and interacting again.

That means that our economies will need to work together to ensure inclusive access to vaccinations and safe and equitable resumption of travel and cross border activities.

Restoring essential business travel under the right conditions will be also be a means of boosting business confidence to resume investing and hiring, and reviving demand and employment in the badly affected sectors of travel, tourism and hospitality.

ABAC has a key role to play here.

First, by ensuring that the critical issues are kept before Ministers.

We have certainly done in this in the advice we have prepared for Ministers Responsible for Trade meeting 4-5 June.

We also have a planned informal dialogue with Finance Ministers on 25 June and the opportunity to engage with Structural Reform Ministers on 16 June.

As was the case during Malaysia's host year last year, you can expect our annual Report to APEC Economic Leaders to bring together the priority recommendations arising from this PPD and to make the case for careful change.

Second, we can develop ideas and share best practice about how best to move towards border re-opening and safe and seamless travel.

Within our Regional Economic Integration Working Group, the Re-opening Borders Task Force has already done some excellent preparatory work and today's PPD is another example of their leadership.

I'd like to thank our colleagues Ho Meng Kit and Lam Yi Young of ABAC Singapore and Nicholas Ho of ABAC Hong Kong for their inspiring work to date.

I welcome also the participation and presence today of the APEC SOM Chair, my friend Vangelis Vitalis, APEC Senior Officials, APEC Executive Director Tan Sri Dr Rebecca Santa Maria, ABAC Members and experts from around the region.

One of the great qualities of our APEC family – or whānau as we say here in Aotearoa - is our ability to come together to find solutions to pressing problems.

These problems cannot be solved by working in isolation or in silos.

That's why we at ABAC are committed to working with APEC to address the impacts of the pandemic and working towards global economic recovery.

As we say here: "Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari kē he toa takitini".

Success is not the work of one, it is the work of many.

Thanks again to all and let's keep up the good work we are doing together to make a difference in our region.