Article 17.16: Treaty of Waitangi

1. Provided that such measures are not used as a means of arbitrary or unjustified discrimination against persons of the other Parties or as a disguised restriction on trade in goods, trade in services and investment, nothing in this Agreement shall preclude the adoption by New Zealand of measures it deems necessary to accord more favourable treatment to Māori in respect of matters covered by this Agreement, including in fulfilment of its obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.

2. The Parties agree that the interpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi, including as to the nature of the rights and obligations arising under it, shall not be subject to the dispute settlement provisions of this Agreement. Chapter 19 (Dispute Settlement) shall otherwise apply to this Article. A panel established under Article 19.11 (Establishment and Reconvening of a Panel) may be requested to determine only whether any measure referred to in paragraph 1 is inconsistent with a Party's rights under this Agreement.

CHAPTER 18

INSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

Article 18.1: Meetings of the RCEP Ministers

1. The Ministers of the RCEP (hereinafter referred to as the "RCEP Ministers" in this Chapter) shall meet within one year of the date of entry into force of this Agreement, and every year thereafter unless the Parties agree otherwise, to consider any matter relating to this Agreement.

2. The RCEP Ministers shall take decisions on any matter by consensus.

Article 18.2: Establishment of the RCEP Joint Committee

The Parties hereby establish an RCEP Joint Committee consisting of senior officials designated by each Party.

Article 18.3: Functions of the RCEP Joint Committee

1. The functions of the RCEP Joint Committee shall be as follows:

   (a) to consider any matter relating to the implementation and operation of this Agreement;

   (b) to consider any proposal to amend this Agreement;

   (c) to discuss differences that may arise regarding the interpretation or application of this Agreement and to issue interpretations of the provisions of this Agreement as it may deem appropriate and necessary;

   (d) to seek expert advice on any matter within its functions;

   (e) to refer matters, assign tasks, or delegate functions to any subsidiary body established pursuant to Article 18.6 (Subsidiary Bodies of the RCEP Joint Committee) (hereinafter referred to as "subsidiary body" in this Chapter);