



## Quarterly Newsletter

### Welcome to the 3rd Issue of the OCO Newsletter

Greetings and Bula vinaka!

I hope this newsletter finds you all safe and well. It has been over two months since I was given the privilege to lead the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) as the Interim Head of Secretariat and as you will see from this newsletter our team has been very busy. I have been impressed with the way the Secretariat team has been able to manage the challenges and complexity of the environment that our members operate within despite our limited resources and I commend their efforts. We have also had a lot of interest from various international organisations exploring opportunities to partner with the OCO to improve the economic prosperity and security in the Pacific region which we welcome and appreciate. Recently the OCO, PICP and PIDC signed a 'Declaration of Partnership' which will see the three regional organisations collaborate on initiatives and activities to identify and address the emerging security challenges in the region. This aligns with the signing of the BOE declaration whereby ministers from around the Pacific made a commitment to strengthening the existing regional security architecture inclusive of regional law enforcement secretariats and regional organisations.

Once again thank you to our members, donors and global partners for all your support this year and if there is anything that the Secretariat team can assist with please feel free to get in touch with us.

Until next time, stay safe and take care.

Sincerely,

Roy



Head of Secretariat– Roy Lagolago



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### OCO 20th Annual Conference, Canberra, Australia

The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) 20th Annual Conference commenced on 11th June, 2018 in Melbourne, Australia, hosted by the Australian Border Force (ABF) with the theme "Strengthening regional connections to support a safe and prosperous Pacific".

The Conference was opened with statements from ABF Commissioner, Mr. Michael Outram and the World Customs Organisation (WCO) Secretary General, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya. The annual conference is attended by 16 of the 23 OCO customs administrations and key partners including the WCO, ROCB Asia Pacific, Statistics New Zealand, IMF Pacific Financial and Technical Assistance Center (PFTAC), Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference (PIDC),



Japan Customs, Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre (PTCCC), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), World Bank Group, Her Majesty's Customs and Excise, Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency, Asia Pacific Group on Money laundering, Statistics New Zealand, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, United States Coast Guard, US Secret Service and JIATF West. At the conference members witnessed three milestone achievements;

1. Memorandum of Understanding on Customs Cooperation
2. Kiribati's accession to the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention
3. Launch of the PACH 17



*WCO Secretary General, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya presents Kiribati Minister of Justice, Hon. Natan Teewe with instrument of accession to the RKC*



*Customs Heads of Administration at the signing of MOU on Customs Cooperation*

*Launch of the PACH 17  
L-R: ABF Commissioner, Mr. Michael Outram, SPC  
Adviser, Mrs. Nilima Lal and WCO Secretary  
General, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya*



## OCO supports a Sub-regional approach in the Implementation of Harmonised System (HS) 2017



*Participants at the Sub-regional Workshop on HS 2017 in Guam*

The OCO in collaboration with the New Zealand Customs Service facilitated a Workshop on the WCO Revenue Package with focus on the HS 2017 for customs administrations in the Micronesia region. The Workshop was hosted by the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency from 16-20 July, 2018 and attended by seventeen (17) participants from five OCO member states, Commonwealth of the North-

ern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau and Guam.

The workshop benefited from the NZ Customs experience on some of the key customs issues and implementation. The WCO Tools and instruments developed to assist users of the HS and other trade facilitation initiatives were provided to the participants.

## PACER Plus Rules of Origin (ROO) Train-the-Trainers Workshop

Under the sponsorship of the PACER Plus Readiness Package, the OCO in collaboration with the Centre for Customs and Excise Studies, Charles Sturt University (CCES) have jointly organized the PACER Plus ROO Train the Trainers (TTT) Workshop from 23-27 July, 2018 in Nadi, Fiji and 18 Customs Officials from 11

member countries took part.

The PACER Plus ROO TTT program is based on a blended learning format consisting of four phases with the overall objective of the Program being to ensure sustained improvement in the capacities of each PACER Plus party to implement ROO provisions.



*Participants at the Rules of Origin Train-the-trainers Workshop in Nadi, Fiji*

## OCO attends the APEC Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures (SCCP) Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) SCCP meeting was held on 10-12 in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and attended by delegates from 16 APEC Member economies, SCCP APEC Program Director (PD) and representatives from the World Customs Organization (WCO) and Oceania Customs Organization (OCO) participated as observers. The OCO was granted three-year guest status in the SCCP in July 2018. The meeting was opened by the Chief

Commissioner for PNG Customs Service, Mr. Ray Paul OBE and chaired by Mr. James Kombuk Bire, Commissioner for Trade and Corporate Services of PNG Customs Service. The OCO was represented by the Chairman, Mr. Jose Mafnas, Director of Customs of Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands and the Trade & Revenue Adviser. The OCO made presentations on "Trade Facilitation in the Oceania Region" and "Narrowing the Development Gaps in the OCO Region".



Third & fourth from left: OCO Trade & Revenue Management Adviser, Mrs. Laisiana Tugaga and Steering Committee Chairman, Mr. Jose Mafnas

## Regional Law Enforcement Organizations for Customs, Police and Immigration Strengthen Collaboration to combat Security Threats to the Pacific



L-R: OCO Operations Manager, Mr. Tevita Tupou, Fiji Director Immigration Mr. Nemani Vuniwaqa, PIDC HoS, Mr. Ioane Alamam and PICP Executive Director, Mr. Carl McLennan.

In a show of unity and solidarity, the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC) and Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP) representing over 60 national Pacific Islands law enforcement agencies have signed a Declaration of Partnership to enhance cooperation between the three organ-

isations. The Declaration, signed by the respective Chairs Fiji (PIDC), the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (OCO) and Guam (PICP) on behalf of the Members of their organisations, provides a formal foundation for collaboration to combat transnational and organised crime and enhance border security in the Pacific. Building upon existing regional law enforcement arrangements established by the Pacific Islands Forum, it is envisaged that the Declaration of Partnership will guide the development of collective initiatives to support and implement the Boe Declaration on Security recently endorsed by Forum Leaders at their 2018 meeting in Nauru.

## OCO meets Korean Customs Service (KCS) Business Process Re-engineering

OCO met with officials from the Korean Customs Service (KCS) Team who were in Fiji to undertake the 2nd phase of the Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) and Information Strategy Planning (ISP) for the Fiji Revenue and Customs Authority. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss about the OCO work program in the region and also explore collaboration activities with KCS.



*OCO Head of Secretariat, Mr. Roy Lagolago and Trade & Revenue Management Adviser Mrs. Laisiana Tugaga in discussion with FRCS & KCS representatives in Suva, Fiji.*

## Private Sector Dialogue Preparatory Meeting Auckland, New Zealand



*Participants at the Pacific Wave Forum, Auckland, New Zealand*

The OCO was represented at the Pacific Wave Forum's Private Sector Dialogue Preparatory Meeting held at the Pullman Hotel in Auckland, New Zealand from 6-7th August, 2018. One of the key objectives of this meeting was to allow the private sector to tackle some of the emerging issues confronting our region from which they have an important role to play. This forum allowed the OCO to provide technical details of the PACER Plus Agreement for better understanding of specific provisions including trade facilitation and the impact it will have on

businesses across the region.

Recognizing the central role of the private sector in regional trade agreements including the PACER Plus Agreement, the meeting provided an opportunity to hear from regional experts on trade facilitation. Furthermore, engaging in panel discussions with private sector and chambers of commerce representatives elaborating on the work conducted regionally by the OCO in relation to the implementation of the PACER Plus Project and other related work programs. Such a platform has developed a network between the OCO, Pacific Cooperation Forum, PIFS, PIPSO and regional private sector organizations for regular engagement on key issues affecting the region.

## PACER Plus Project Updates

# PACER PLUS

PACIFIC AGREEMENT  
ON CLOSER ECONOMIC  
RELATIONS PLUS



### ◆ HS 2017 Implementation

The capacity building for the nine signatory member for the implementation of the HS 2017 have been completed. The summary of the work carried out are as follows:

Review and update of the present HS (in-country) which entails the migration process to 2017 HS realigned with PACHS17 and national subdivisions. Consultation with private sector and government agencies on Pacer Plus issues and seek their input and comments to assist in the updating of the 2017 products coding. Information session with Customs officials and private sector stakeholders on the HS 2017 changes. To date, seven of the members have implemented HS 2017.

### ◆ Launch of the PACHS 17

In partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, OCO launched the Pacific Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System 2017 (PACHS 17) on 11th June, 2018.

The PACHS17 is a multipurpose goods nomenclature that forms the basis for Customs Tariffs and International Merchandise Trade Statistics. The main objective of the PACHS17 is to establish uniformity in the classification of goods amongst members. PACHS17 has enabled all OCO members that are at different levels of implementing HS17 adopt a common benchmark and better reflect goods exported and imported by the Pacific region using a standardized system of names and codes.

### ◆ Assessment on PC Trade completed

On 29-31 May, 2018, the OCO facilitated PC Trade Validation Workshop where the user countries assessed and validated the country reports provided by the Consultant and deliberated a way forward for PCT in terms of HS 2017 implementation and for the future. In the Report, PCT users agreed to a two-prong approach, which in the long term included the alignments of the customs information system with international standards and to include basic customs functionalities that are not in the current system. The OCO Secretariat are in consultation with Stats NZ and MFAT on the medium-long

term automation solutions for current PC Trade users in particular as it relates to the implementation of HS 2017.

### ◆ Technical Guide on Transposition of Tariff Schedule and PSR

The work on the formulation of Guidelines for the transposition of the Tariff Reduction Schedules and Rules of Origin Product Specific Rules (PSR) from HS 2012 and HS 2017 is now underway. The Guidelines that will provide some general principles of the transposition will be discussed with members in November and thereafter members can use to effectively manage their respective HS transposition process.

### ◆ PACER Plus Rules of Origin Capacity Building

The first phase of the ROO Training program, the TTT Core Workshop was held from 23-27 July, 2018 in Nadi, Fiji. Eighteen Customs Officials from eleven member countries took part. All of the PACER Plus signatories were represented. The aim of the TTT Core Workshop was to promote the knowledge of how to effectively educate others and develop the training technique skills that a trainer will require to achieve this. The program utilizes a series of theoretical presentations in a workshop atmosphere in which the active involvement by participants is essential.

Over the next two months prior to their participation at the next Workshop in October, 2018, participants will be expected to undertake an obligatory online course to ensure a common level of technical knowledge on the Pacer Plus ROO and Verification Procedures.

### ◆ PACER Plus Signatory Trade Officials Meeting

The OCO Secretariat participated at the PACER Plus Signatory Trade Officials Meeting held in Samoa on 12-13 July, 2018. It was an opportunity to apprise the Trade Officials with the project activities and timelines. The information provided by the Trade Officials also will assist the OCO to inform the Project activities going forward. The meeting also provided opportunity to meet with other providers, Chapman Tripp and UNCTAD and to find synergies between different work program.

## UPCOMING EVENTS: OCT-DEC 2018

Date	Activity	Location
1-5 October	National HS Workshop	Cook Islands
8-12 October	PACER PLUS ROO Train-the-Trainers Workshop	Canberra
15-19 October	National HS Workshop	Nauru
29-2 November	MSG sub-regional Workshop on Regional Integration & TFA Implementation	Vanuatu
5-9 November	National HS Workshop	Samoa
12-16 November	National HS Workshop	Vanuatu
19-23 November	Workshop– Guideline for Transposition of Tariff Schedule and PSR	TBC
3-7 December	National HS Workshop	Niue



*OCO Conducting National Workshop on HS 2017 in Solomon Islands*



*L-R: OCO Steering Committee Chairman, Jose Mafnas and Trade & Revenue Management Adviser, Mrs. Laisiana Tugaga and guest at the APEC SCCP, Port Moresby, PNG*



*OCO represented at the Forum Trade Officials Meeting and PACER Plus Signatories meeting, Apia, Samoa*



*Tevita Tupou presenting at the ROO Train-the-trainers Workshop in Nadi, Fiji*

## Meet your OCO Secretariat Team



*L-R: Accountant- Leonaitasi Taukafa, Human Resource & Logistics Officer– Kalei Dugu, Finance & Corporate Services Manager– Gibson Wekina, Head of Secretariat– Roy Lagolago, Executive Assistant– Stephanie Waqanivalagi, Operations Manager– Tevita Tupou (Inset: Trade & Revenue Management Adviser– Laisiana Tugaga)*



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