



July - Sept 2021

Vision: To be recognized as a world class regional Customs Organization that collaborates with regional and global partners to deliver high quality services and sustainable solutions to Member Administrations

OCEANIA CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION NEWSLETTER

FOREWORD



This is the first newsletter following the Annual conference which was again held virtually, and the secretariat extends its appreciation to the outgoing chairman Mr. Salvador Jacobs of FSM and the steering committee for assistance in shaping that meeting. We welcome back Mr. Xavier Mitchell from the Cook Islands and if the improvements in the vaccine roll outs continue, we should be all able to once again meet in the Cook Islands in face to face and experience the wonderful hospitality they are famous for.

As for the secretariat, this financial year we commence by saying goodbye to Mrs. Laisiana Tugaga and wish her well in the Pacer Plus implementation unit, and to Mrs. Heilala Erenavula who will head to the SPC.

We are well under way in progressing the work plan approved by members in the AGM and have begun to develop a new website that will have interactive features for members, including Moodle and we hope that the customs officers who continue with the CCES courses will utilize this facility to its full extent.

We hope to continue our work with the PIDC and PICP in holding exercises designed to combat transnational organised crime and note the WCO's recent focus on this topic with Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, WCO Secretary General, addressing "Europol-Customs cooperation" and "Intelligence Sharing in Investigative Analysis and Customs Risk Profiling" in the context of Customs-Police cooperation. Clearly we are well placed in addressing the issues of information sharing in the Pacific both from a

regional standpoint and a national one through the use of APAN and the OCO Pacific Small Craft Application in which we have focused on building up regional coordinators and national contact points whilst continuing to roll out the application to members.

The development of the Customs Brokers course is well under way and through the use of regional experts from several member administrations the module will be keenly awaited and hopefully used well into the future for building the Customs to Business pillar critical to the SAFE concept and becoming another cog in Trade facilitation with a balance toward securing the Pacific.

By all accounts the lockdowns we have all endured seem to be easing and it is pleasing to see discussion on borders opening up in December taking place, this hopefully assists your nations in economic recovery however as a Customs collective we must remain vigilant regarding the safeguarding regional supply chains, particularly in the illegal movement of medicines and vaccines which has seen an increase on other parts of the world. We hope to be presenting a workshop on safeguarding supply chains with the WCO and ABF and will communicate that more formally at the appropriate time.

God Bless and keep you safe.

Vinaka Vakalevu.

Richard Brennan
Head of Secretariat

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OUR MEMBERS

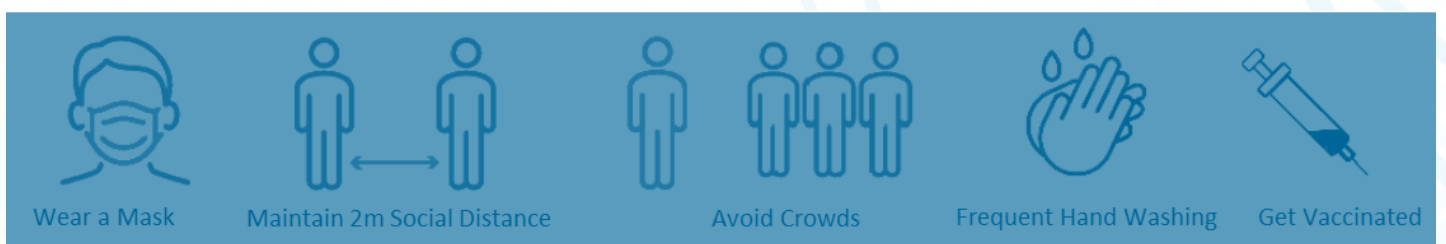


OCO ANNUAL HEADS MEETING



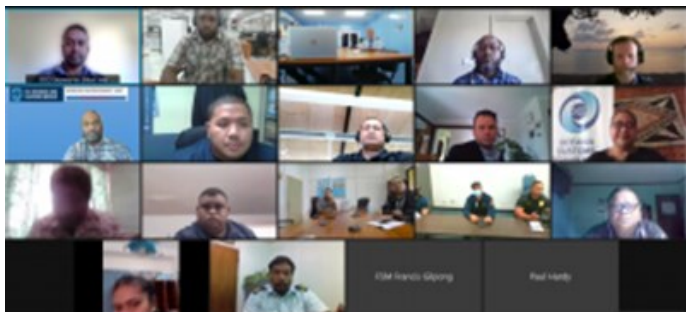
The Oceania Heads of Customs annual meeting was held virtually on the 26th of August with representatives from 21 of its member countries in attendance. Despite border closures and reduced air and sea travel because of COVID-19, Customs administrations in the region say threats in the Pacific remain high from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing fleets – as well as threats from illegal movements of people, drugs and weapons, which are often facilitated by trusted insiders. The Outgoing OCO

Chair and Head Customs of the Federated States of Micronesia, Salvador Jacob highlighted that though individual administrations don't have ample resources, working together and resource sharing will enable them to carry out their work more effectively. An example of such an initiative is the Australian-developed Pacific Small Craft Application, which was launched last year to increase information sharing and enhance border security practices.



Covid-19 Prevention Tips

OCO and ABF host third OPSCA Regional Coordinators Forum



The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) with support from the Australian Border Force (ABF) held the third OCO Pacific Small Craft Application (OPSCA) Regional Coordinators Forum as part of its ongoing efforts to improve the region’s capabilities in border security.

The 26 regional coordinators who are being trained have been nominated from 14 countries and are managing the administrative needs of the OPSCA app and will also train Customs officers on the use of the app in their own administrations. [Read More..](#)

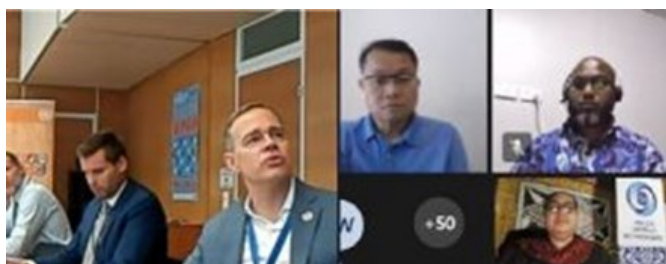
OCO 21st Annual Meeting – Transnational crimes require regional collaboration



Despite border closures and reduced air and sea travel because of COVID-19, Customs administrations in the region say threats in the Pacific remain high from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing fleets – as well as threats from illegal movements of people, drugs and weapons, which are often facilitated by trusted insiders. The issue was discussed at the Oceania Heads of Customs annual meeting last Thursday (August 26), held virtually with 21 of the 23 Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) members attending. [Read More.](#)

[French Translation](#)

OCO joins global meeting to address illicit trade of dangerous substance



The Oceania Customs Organisation was part of the INCB 4TH Annual International Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the Trafficking of Dangerous Synthetic Opioids, Fentanyl and Related Precursors through Postal, Express Mail, Courier and Air Cargo Services held last week.

OCO Manager Operations, Mrs. Irma Daphney Stone also presented at the meeting, sharing the latest trends of interception of illicit drugs and non-scheduled drugs by OCO members for the one-year period from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. [Read More](#)

AP Master Trainer Programme Launched Virtually



Six OCO members who are also members of the World Customs Organisation will receive training on the Harmonized System classification and Customs Valuation following the launch of the Master Trainer Programme (MTP) earlier this month. The six countries are Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor Leste, Tonga and Vanuatu. The MTP is a joint program by the World Customs Organisation (WCO), Japan Customs, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), WCO's Regional Office for Capacity Building – Asia Pacific (ROCB-AP) under the WCO Small Island Economies initiative, which aims to train Customs officers from Pacific Islands to become trainers in their own administrations.. [Read More](#)

Train the Trainers Workshop on APAN

The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) and All Partners Access Network (APAN) Community recently held an APAN Train the Trainer (TtT) workshop to improve the usage of the information sharing tool by Intelligence Contact Point (ICP) members. [Read More](#)

OCO Members Discussed the Adoption of PACHS2022

There is a general agreement in the Oceania Customs Organisation members of the importance of the Pacific Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (PACHS) 2022, the internationally recognized upgraded system of classifying goods promulgated by the World Customs Organisation (WCO), which comes into effect on January 1, 2022. [Read More](#).

MEMBERS NEWS



Palau celebrates Customs Officer

Every training that Customs officers go through must be applauded because it means a notch up in our abilities to protect our borders, to protect families, communities and nations from being infiltrated with illicit drugs, human trafficking and other illegal activities. Palau's Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (BCBP) recently celebrated one of their own, Alomar Kumangai for completing a three-month K9 Training course, which makes him a qualified dog or K9 handler. [Read More](#).

Godart Heads New Caledonia Customs

The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) Secretariat congratulates Benoit Godart on his recent appointment as the Director for the French Customs in New Caledonia. Mr Godart comes with great experience as the former interim regional director of Customs in Perpignan, France. He also was the Head of Europol's Regional Office for Asia and was the attaché to the EU Delegation in Singapore and security advisor to the EU Ambassador to ASEAN. [Read More](#).
[French translation](#)



Head of Customs Interviews



An Interview with Xavier Mitchell, OCO Chair and Head of Cook Islands Customs Service

The newly appointed chairperson of the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), Xavier Mitchell is your typical islander with a great love for fishing, in particular game fishing. But what many would not know is that the head of Cook Islands Customs Service and Inland Revenue also has a passion for the adrenaline rush of drag racing and American muscle cars. The father of three has set his eyes on acquiring a 1968 Dodge Charger if his wife, Erin will allow him. However, for now he is driven to lead the Cook Islands Customs Service and the OCO through one of the most trying times our region and the world has faced. [Read More..](#)

[French translation](#)

An Interview with Salvador Jacobs, FSM Head of Tax and Customs Division

If he is not busy as head of the Tax and Customs Division in the Federated States of Micronesia, Salvador Jacobs would be out fishing with families and friends. Or you would find him playing baseball. But the current Oceania Customs Organisation chairman is a typical family man, who loves to spend time with his wife, four daughters and son and four grandchildren. Jacobs was appointed as head of the customs and tax administration in 2013. [Read More..](#)



[French translation](#)



Mafnas Shares Vision for CNMI Customs

If he is not busy as head of the Tax and Customs Division in the Federated States of Micronesia, Salvador Jacobs would be out fishing with families and friends. Or you would find him playing baseball. But the current Oceania Customs Organisation chairman is a typical family man, who loves to spend time with his wife, four daughters and son and four grandchildren. Jacobs was appointed as head of the customs and tax administration in 2013. [Read More..](#)

John leads Palau's Border Protection Efforts

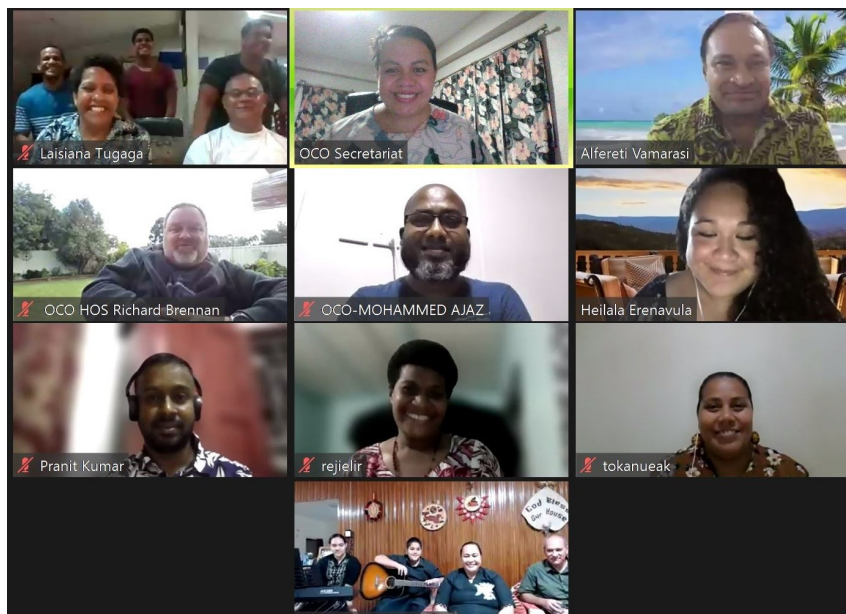
On weekends you will find John Tarkong Jr either out at sea fishing or in his “rest home” away from the noise and the hustles and bustles of city life, probably strumming his guitar and singing a note or two over a few beers. Sometimes he is just building things around the home. The father of two sons and a daughter is the head of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection in Palau, a role he has had for over two decades. [Read More..](#)

[French translation](#)



Farewell to OCO Trade and Revenue Management Advisor, Laisiana Tugaga

The OCO Secretariat bid farewell to Laisiana Tugaga, one of their longest serving staffs last month. Laisiana served in the role of Trade and Revenue Management Advisor for a number of years before taking up an exciting new opportunity to further her customs journey. Given the restrictions at the time, the team gathered virtually to share the final toast and wish Laisiana the best for her new endeavor. In addition to being a colleague, she proved to be a great friend at work and was always keen to help and empower everyone. Finally, the OCO Secretariat on behalf of its members and staff would like to thank Laisiana for her contributions to OCO and wish her and the family the very best for the future.



Coming Soon



The Oceania Customs Organisation Secretariat will soon be launching a new look website to further strengthen its Virtual presence amidst this Global shift online. The new website is expected to be launched within the next couple of months and is being developed by a local company after it was awarded the tender following a rigorous Tender process.

The launching of the new site will allow the Secretariat and its members to more effectively collaborate and share information and news of regional and global interest.

The OCO Secretariat in collaboration with a group of Regional Experts is currently working on designing and developing an Online learning platform for OCO to conduct Regional Customs Brokers Training.

The overall goal of this exercise is to enhance the quality of the customs brokers' capacity building program in the region and adapt it to modern learning and teaching styles.

Through this technology, learning participants will be able to access course information, presentations, activities, tests, quizzes as well as be part of presentations and class discussions without the need to travel.



UPCOMINGEVENTS

October
2021

Cargo and Travelers: Processes and Procedures III-Enforcement	27 Sept - 25 Oct
OCO-ICP Meeting	6 Oct
Communications Skills Training	13 Oct
Mentoring Program Launch	20 Oct
WCO OCO Protocols, Humanitarian Disaster & COVID 19 workshop	19-21,26 Oct
ISWG Second Quarter Meeting	19 Oct
WHO-OCO Joint Ops on Illicit Trade on Tobacco Products	22Oct-05Nov

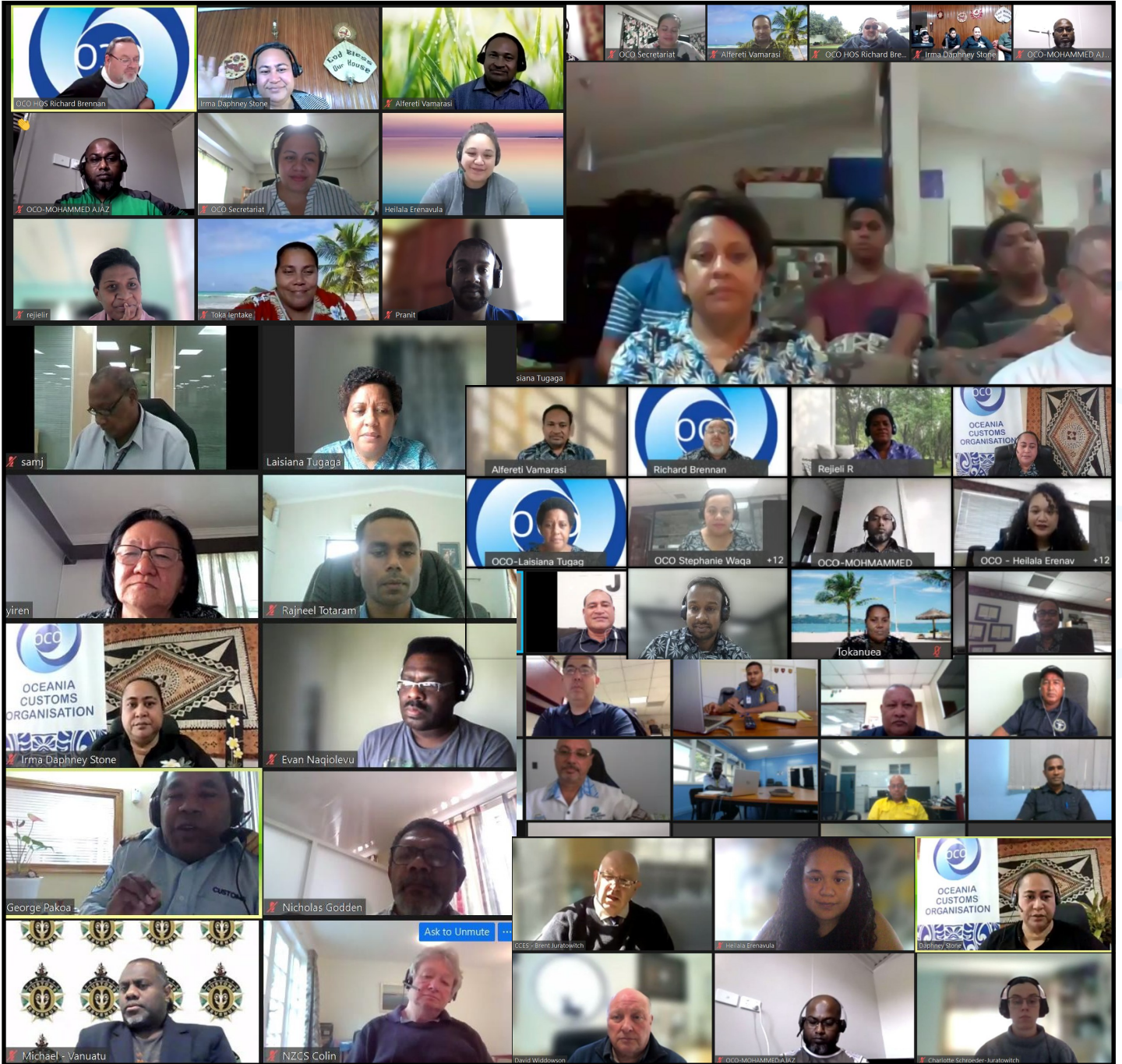
November
2021

Regional Customs Brokers Course	1-19 Nov
OCO Steering Committee	3 Nov
OCO-ICP Meeting	3 Nov
Trade Facilitation III - Revenue	8 Nov - 6 Dec
Maritime Enforcement III - Enforcement	8 Nov - 6 Dec
IPR Forum/Dialogue	16-18 Nov

December
2021

OCO-ICP Meeting	1 Dec
GRIDS Training	8 Dec
End of the first part of Mentoring	15 Dec

GALLERY



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