



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



The calendar year is fast closing upon us and we can reflect on what we have achieved this past year during difficult times that have once again forced us to work from home.

The staff have continued to deliver on the core customs training modules that are so important to building local knowledge in your organizations, knowledge that can only lead to sustainable capability. We had a very high success rate throughout these modules and move into the Cert IV training to develop local trainers and will provide your own national training point for your needs.

We held a very successful workshop on transnational crime and helped facilitate a multi agency , multi nation desk top exercise on law enforcement, prepared administrations for HS2022, completed the rules of origin training for Pacer Plus, and delivered several IPR awareness courses along with scoping of computer forensics needs. The Pacific small craft application has been backed up with data funding and search kits and we are seeing a high level of information sharing between nations as we track yachts around the Pacific; this was the ideas born from a decade of meetings and many years of development of the app and we are now just at the start of seeing its potential and will continue to evolve its use throughout our membership.

Through the good media work we have undertaken our regional profile has grown and we were very pleased to deliver our women in customs articles that gained much attention.

In the background we have developed a new Moodle

platform and a new web site which we hope to present early next year to the membership and this will house your training modules moving forward. We will work to obtaining regional proficiency as an accredited adult education service provider to ensure the courses are certified and accredited.

Last week we watched Asycuda world go live in Kiribati and Tuvalu signaling the commencement of automation being delivered far and wide across our region into the Pacer Plus countries and if the UNCTAD engagement with OCO is accepted , we hope to provide that data platform to the rest of our membership thereby harmonizing the Customs entry requirements across the pacific, which in turn allows for traders to have certainty in their compliance and facilitation requirements.

I must thank the steering committee including the late chairman Mr. Salvador Jacob who's passing was most unexpected, and welcome back Mr. Xavier Mitchell into the chair ; the work of the committee has helped guide us through uncharted territory in regards to virtual service delivery which would not have occurred if it were not for the incredibly hard working staff of the OCO Secretariat who have continued to advise, correct, coach and support my efforts whilst they delivered very high standard outputs across the work program. I cannot thank this little team enough and continue to be amazed by how much they can do with so little. We look forward to working with you all in 2022.

Have a safe and happy Christmas and may God be with you and your families.

Richard Brennan
Head of Secretariat

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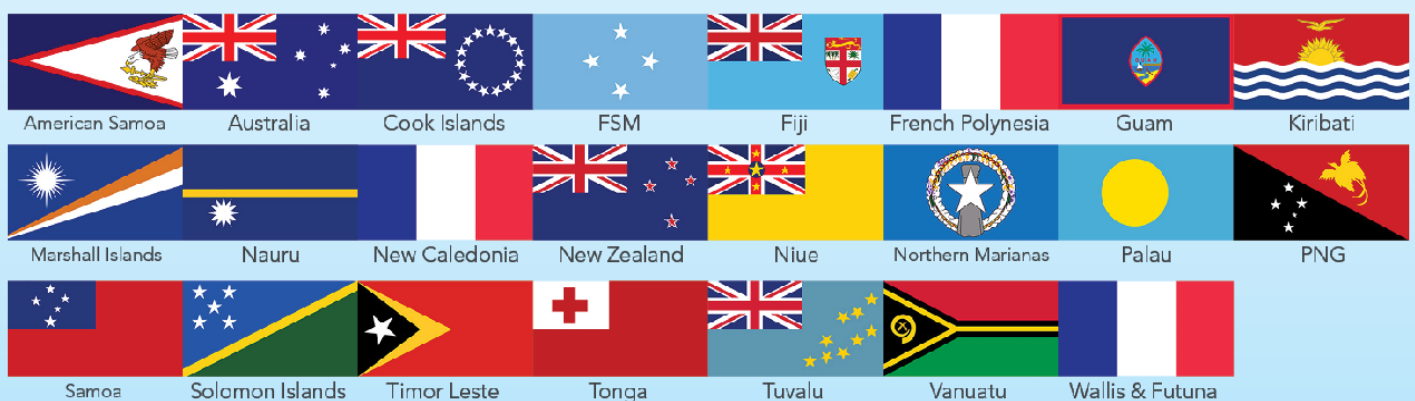
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OUR MEMBERS



Oct - Dec Highlights

OCO and WHO Stand Against Illicit Trade of Tobacco

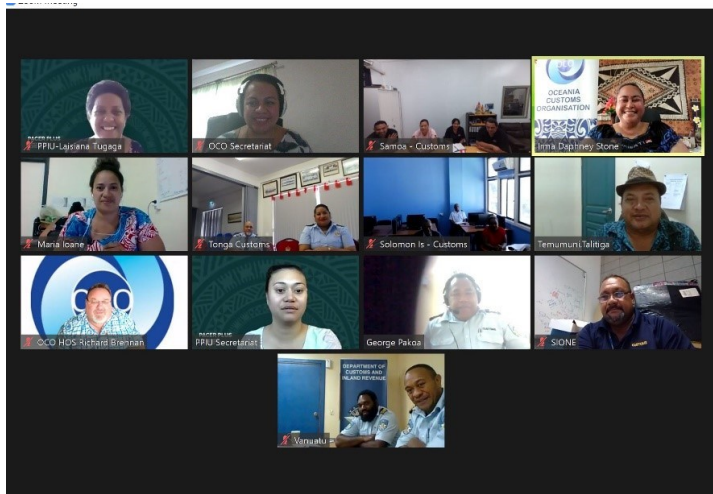
A joint operation by the Oceania Customs Organisation and the World Health Organization codenamed “**Operation EXIT**” is expected to provide insights into how the region can combat the illicit trade of tobacco, which continues to be a major concern for the Pacific.

During the operation, participating countries will strengthen their targeting and profiling efforts on suspicious trade, identify the modus operandi of the traders of illicit tobacco and share this information for a regional data base. [Read More..](#)



Preparing Customs administrations for natural Disasters response

Customs administrations and border agencies in the region shared experiences and learned best practices on how to respond better to natural disasters and infectious diseases through a four-day workshop facilitated by the World Customs Organization and the Oceania Customs Organization. [Read More.](#)



PACER Plus Countries Build Capacity to Improve Implementation of Agreement

Almost a year since the PACER Plus agreement came into effect, countries met to discuss opportunity areas in the implementation of the trade tool.

Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) and the PACER Plus Implementation Unit (PPIU) convened a virtual workshop of trainers this month from Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu to review the capacity of these islands in the implementation of the Rules of Origin (RoO) of the PACER Plus agreement. [Read More..](#)



In the spirit of the season, wishing you and your family a blessed Merry Christmas and prosperity for the New Year





Millions of Pacific Islanders at Risk of Counterfeit Items

Tonga's Ministry of Revenue and Customs CEO, Kelemete Vahe has called for more regional commitment towards the protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) to protect millions of Pacific Islanders from receiving counterfeit items, which could pose economic, social and health hazards.

Mr. Vahe made the comments at the IPR Legislative Framework Dialogue organised by the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), happening this week to discuss the progress of Pacific Island countries' implementation of IPR laws. [Read More](#)



OCO members supported with mobile phones and search kits

As borders around the Pacific region prepare for re-opening, Customs administrations are also leveraging their capacity in border security.

Ten OCO member countries- American Samoa, Cook Islands, Guam, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu- are recipients of mobile phones and search kits provided by the Australia Border Force to leverage their efforts in using the small craft app. [Read More](#)

OCO SECRETARIAT NEWS



OCO Trade and Revenue Management Advisor, Mr. John Sam

OCO Secretariat recently appointed Mr. John Sam as the new Trade and Revenue Management Advisor. Mr. Sam hails from Manus Province, North of Papua New Guinea. He was born at Nonga Base Hospital, Rabaul, East New Britain Province and moved a lot around PNG since his dad was a Police Officer.

John joined the PNG Bureau of Customs and Excise as a Postal Assessor in Port Moresby in 1992, where his responsibility was to ensure all incoming parcels comply with PNG Laws and assessing duties on the parcels. He later moved on to the Invoice Room, where Invoice Examiners do checks on import entries to ensure correct classification and valuation is done on goods and correct customs duties are collected.

Further down the line, he was offered a scholarship fully funded by PNG Customs to undergo a Bachelors' Degree program with the Divine Word University in Madang.

In his 29 years with PNG Customs, John has gained experience from all aspects of the Customs processes and procedures. His interest was in the area of classification and valuation and that's where his expertise lays and has also conducted trainings in classification and valuation over the years for Customs officers both in PNG and within the region.

Head of Customs Interviews



Sione's vision for Niue Customs

As head of one of the smallest Customs administrations in the region, it comes as no surprise that Sione Sionetama is well known in Niue. But that doesn't make his work any easier as he also becomes the unpopular guy when it comes to tax collection. Mr. Sionetama is one of the experienced Customs officers in the region, who has been around even before the Oceania Customs Organisation was established. With a Masters in Customs Administration from Charles Stuart University, he likes to leisure in reading, fishing, hunting, gardening, and watching sports. [Read More..](#)

[French translation](#)

Christine Stevenson leads New Zealand Customs Service through COVID-19

Christine Stevenson is the Comptroller and Chief Executive of New Zealand Customs Service (NZ Customs), which is the country's oldest government department. Ms. Stevenson has had a long career in the public sector and has worked for the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Justice and the Department of Corrections, and took up her current position about the same time the COVID-19 virus reached New Zealand. The pandemic has kept her busy but on rare days when she has free time, you may catch her hiking, kayaking or even fishing. [Read More..](#)

[French translation](#)



Chief Commissioner Towe outlines plans for PNG Customs Service

It's almost a year since Mr. David Towe was appointed as the Chief Commissioner of Papua New Guinea (PNG) Customs Service. Mr. Towe, a holder of a master's degree in International Law and Customs Administration, started his professional career as a Customs officer in 2000 working up the ranks and eventually was appointed as Deputy Commissioner in 2011. His decision to leave PNG Customs Service in 2012 to join the private sector has given him valuable experiences which he believes is helping him in his role as the leader of PNG Customs Service.

[Read More..](#)

[French Translation](#)

Sutton's Modernisation Plans for Solomon Islands

Jim Sutton is the head of Solomon Islands Customs and is one of the most experienced Customs officers in the region with 45 years of Customs work experience in Australia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Liberia, Ghana, Angola, India, Vietnam, East Timor, and Papua New Guinea. Even with his vast experience and despite the fact he holds three master's degrees in Customs, International Revenue Administration, and Project Management, Jim says one is never too old to stop learning- he is completing a graduate program in Information Technology and a few other courses. [Read More..](#)

[French translation](#)



Tanneau's vision for French Polynesia

In the last two years, Jean-François Tanneau has been the head of French Polynesia Customs. With his sailing background and having managed coast guard services in France, being sent to the idyllic tropical paradise of French Polynesia was an opportunity he did not want to give up. But while French Polynesia may be a smaller operation than what he is used to, it certainly has offered some tough challenges such as the fight against drugs and COVID-19. [Read More](#)

[French Translation](#)



The Oceania Customs Organisation Secretariat together with the Federated States of Micronesia bid farewell to a Colleague and dear friend, Mr Salvador Jacobs in the month of November. Mr. Jacobs was the Head of the Tax and Customs Division for FSM as well as the Deputy Chairperson for OCO Secretariat.

Mr. Jacobs joined the Customs and Tax division in 2008 and had served in various roles within the division. He is known for his excellent leadership and modern approach to border management and security.

He was a family man at heart who loved spending time with his wife and children.

Rest In Peace Dear Friend



UPCOMINGEVENTS

January
2022

Risk Management Level IV 24 Jan-14 Feb
Regional Workshop on Advance Rulings 24-27 Jan
ISWG Third Quarter Meeting 25 Jan

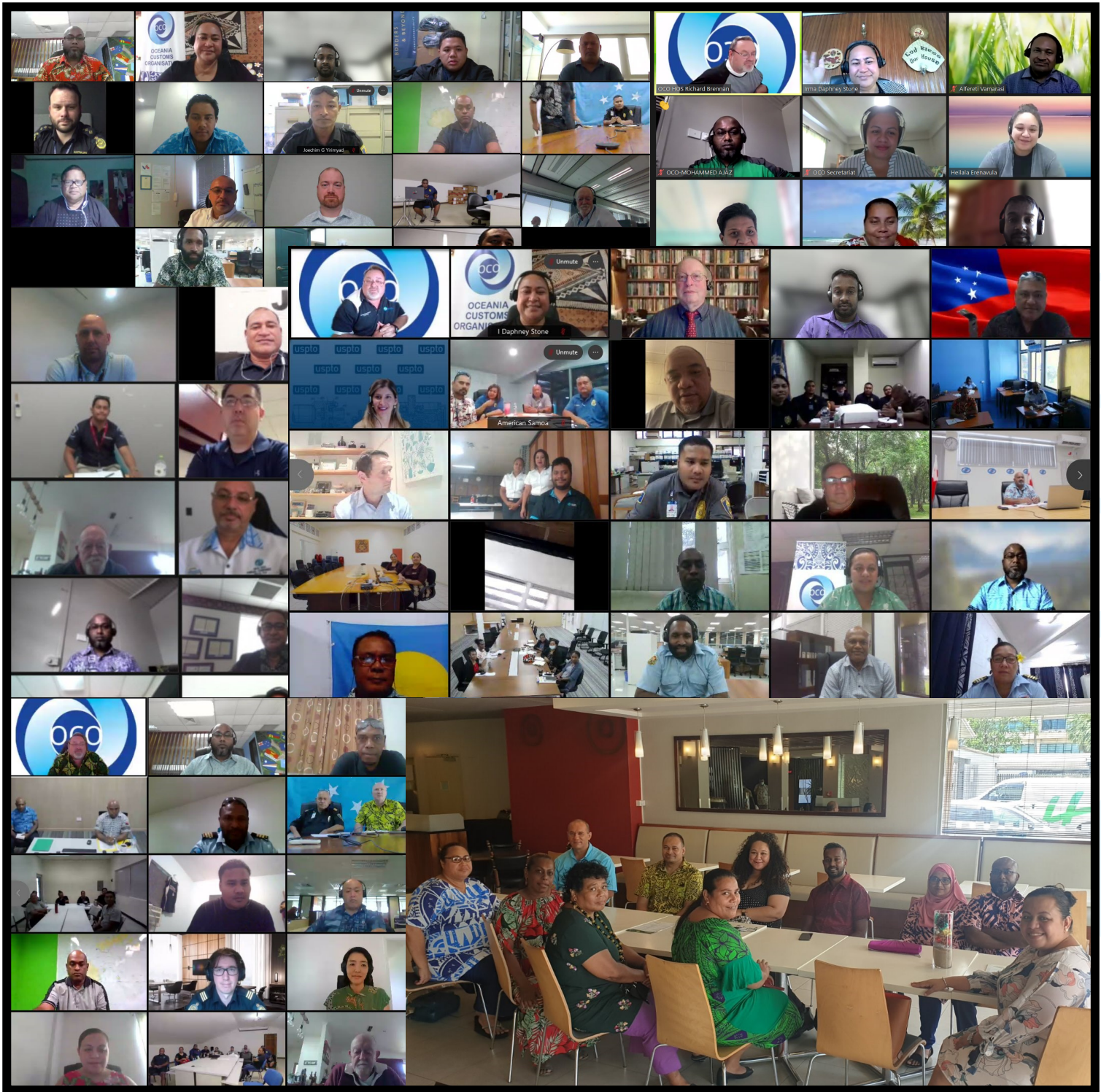
February
2022

OCO-ICP Meeting 2 Feb
Begin 2nd part of mentoring 8 Feb
Gender Equality Framework assessment workshop 15—17 Feb
Ethics and Governance Level IV 21 Feb-14 Mar
Regional Workshop on PCA 22-24 Feb

March
2022

OCO-ICP Meeting 2 Mar
IWD Celebration 8 Mar
Enforcement and Compliance Level IV 21 Mar-11 Apr
Pacific Law Enforcement Group Exercise 15, 17, 19 Mar

GALLERY



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