



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



Pacific Greetings!

I am delighted to be sharing with you our Quarterly Newsletter for April - June 2023 detailing key activities and programs for this period with the latest news from our Members and planned activities lined up for the year. This past quarter has been nothing short of eventful as we look to wrap up financial year 2022-2023. There were regional workshops conducted on topics of regional interest ranging from transnational crime detection and prevention, gender equality and workplace

diversity for Customs administrations, ABF X-ray image training for Fiji and Kiribati Customs officials and customs modernisation for regional customs administrations.

We welcomed the appointment of two new staff under the EDF11/UNCTAD IMPACT Project to the Secretariat team, they are expected to deliver on the project's workplan activities over the coming months which will in turn benefit members. More noteworthy updates include preparations for our 25th OCO Annual Conference which will be held in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia after a three year gap since the last conference. We are hopeful for a good turnout of members and partners at this annual event. Also, international partners, USPTO, conducted a regional workshop on food fraud. Furthermore, UNCTAD, conducted a regional workshop on Trade facilitation, Digitalization and Digital Transformation in the Republic of Marshall Islands.

We look forward to working with you and please reach out, connect with us and let us know how we can better serve you as your regional customs secretariat.

Vinaka Vakalevu and Thank you.
Nancy T. Oraka
Head of Secretariat

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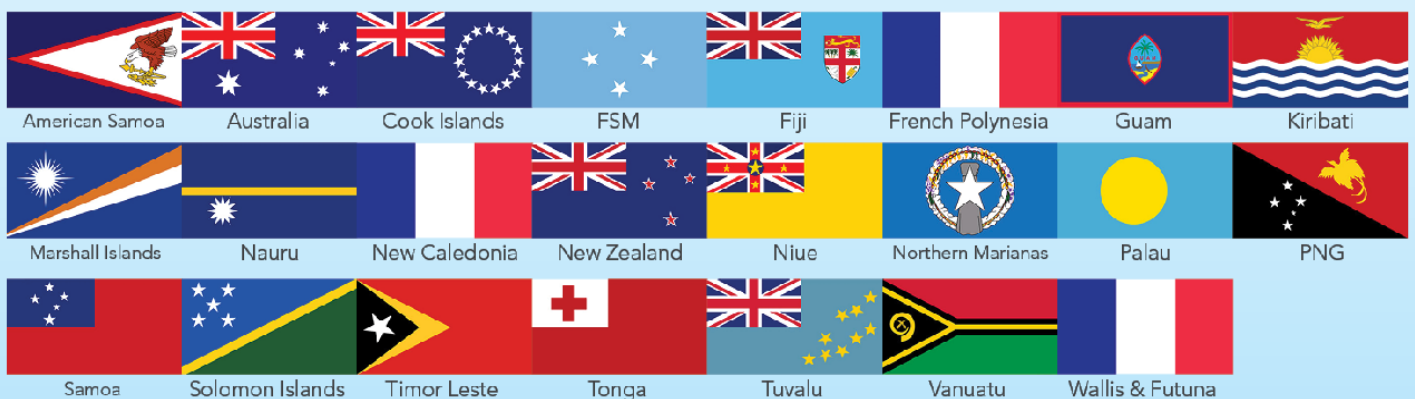
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OUR MEMBERS

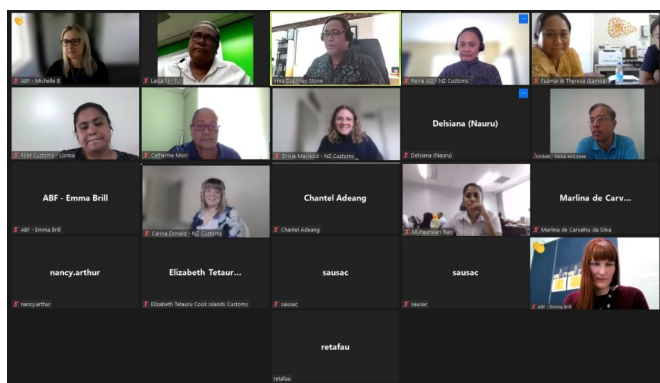


Apr - Jun Activity Highlights

X-Ray Image Training

The ABF in partnership with OCO conducted an X-Ray Image training for Fiji and Kiribati Customs Officers. This was a National training for Fiji Border Agency x-ray operators but ABF, being the facilitators invited OCO to fund the participation of Kiribati Customs Officers. Five participants from Kiribati attended with one officer being trained to become the Subject Matter Expert. The training was held in Nadi, Fiji from 19-24 April 2023.

Gender Equality Dialogue



The OCO held a 2-hour Gender equality and workplace diversity dialogue on 26th of April. There were 25 participants during the dialogue representing 9-member countries.

The program included an OCO gender equality activities update, an update from NZC on its APEC program and an update from ABF on its support for PWPDP. The dialogue was able to build awareness among members on OCO's gender equality program and upcoming activities and participants were also appraised on members' implementation progress of the gender equality framework. Participants were also made aware of the WCO Gender Equality Framework and the available Gender equality.

Customs Administrations Work Towards Modernisation

Resource strapped Customs agencies in the Pacific are also racing against time to modernize their administrations to be on par with the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC), which sets the international best practices for Customs.

Nine members of the Oceania Customs Organisation – Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu have acceded to the RKC convention, a blueprint for modern and efficient Customs procedures in the 21st century to facilitate trade. [Read More](#)



Naivalurua's Journey of Perseverance and Commitment in Customs



Risk management is a crucial role of Customs officers at our borders-before an international flight lands at the Nadi International Airport, Customs officers would have profiled cargo and identified potential "risks". The exercise is necessary to prevent importation of illegal substances or objects. Laisa Kubuabola-Naivalurua leads the cargo profiling team at the Nadi International Airport, the team whose work daily aims to disrupt criminal activities and protect Fiji's communities. Recently, she graduated top of the first cohort of Customs officers in the Pacific completing the Certificate IV in Customs Studies from the Center for Customs and Excise Studies of Charles Sturt University, Australia. [Read More](#)

Food fraud a priority in border protection

Customs administrations in the Pacific are taking food fraud seriously, which could cause serious health risks to the region and harm economic wellbeing. Oceania Customs Organisation Head of Secretariat, Nancy T Oraka says food fraud is not an issue that is widely discussed in the region but poses serious consequences considering that the region also has the highest rates of non-communicable diseases in the world.

"How sure are we that the foods we are importing are genuine and do not contain ingredients that will harm human or animal health?" Ms. Oraka said. [Read More](#)



OCO Members Attend Training on Transnational Crimes

Five Customs officers from the region recently completed a training by the Australia Pacific Security College in Nadi, Fiji aimed at improving the detection and prevention of transitional crimes in the Pacific. The course, Networks of Insecurity-Transnational Organised Crimes, was also attended by Immigration and Police agencies. “We are grateful to the APSC for continuing to support Customs, Immigration and Police agencies and our work in the prevention and detection of transnational crimes in the Pacific,” said Ms. Nancy T Oraka, Head of Secretariat, Oceania Customs Organisation. [Read More](#)



Gender Equality and Workplace Diversity Workshop



The Oceania Customs Organisation secretariat has urged the male dominated Customs administrations in the region to improve gender diversity in their workplaces as they would gain social and economic benefits. OCO Head of Secretariat, Nancy T Oraka, who is the first female head of the organisation in its 24-year history said the Pacific covered many of the most gender unequal countries in the world even though there were huge benefits of being gender diverse and equal. “It is a proven fact that low female labor force participation hinders Pacific organisation’s in their already challenging search for skills and a productive workforce. [Read More](#)

Regional Tabletop Exercise on Transnational Organised Crime

The OCO and its DoP partners PIDC, PICP collaborated with Australia Pacific Security College to run a Tabletop Exercise on transnational organised crime. The Customs, Immigration, Police (TCU), Marine, Communications participants of Palau, PNG and Tonga participated in this second regional exercise.

The Exercise was virtually coordinated from Samoa, PTCCC office. The training comprised of fictitious scenario based on transnational organized crime, however, resembling the true happenings in the Pacific region.

The participants in 3 countries analysed and evaluated the TNOC threat and learnt to work as a coordinated border management agency in combating the threats. The exercise highlighted the importance of data collection, analysis, information sharing and coordinated team approach to the TNOC threats.



Meeting with the US Customs and Border Protection



The OCO met the visitors from the USCBP who were in the country to make arrangements to conduct a workshop on “ Emergency Relief Goods Clearance workshop”. The OCO and US CBP are both in agreement to partner in conducting the workshop in September (25-29) 2023.

Member & Partner News

Digital Customs Management System To Increase Trade In The Republic Of The Marshall Islands

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is working towards boosting international trade by modernizing its customs procedures through the roll-out of the latest customs management system as part of the European Union (EU) funded Improving Pacific Islands Customs and Trade (**IMPACT**) Project. ASYCUDA World, developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) is a digital platform for customs management that covers foreign trade procedures, and simplifies and harmonizes manifests and customs declarations, along with accounting, transit and suspense procedures. [Read More](#)



Tonga Customs Seeks Internet Connectivity Solutions for its Traders



The Tonga Ministry of Revenue and Customs is looking to collaborate with fellow government agencies and local internet service providers to discuss options for dedicated and affordable internet access to traders who are using the ASYCUDA-World automated customs management system.

This was shared by the Chief Executive Officer of Tonga Customs, Mr. Michael Cokanasiga during the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) regional workshop in Fiji on *Supporting Trade Facilitation, Digitalization and Digital Transformation in the Blue Pacific*. [Read More](#)

UNDP Advances Joint Border Risk Assessment in Vanuatu

Kiribati labour mobility workers benefit from PACER Plus training

Trade officials have talanoa for first time in Niue

Niue welcomes first yachts since Covid-19

OCO SECRETARIAT NEWS

OCO Appoints Sereana Rakai as Finance and Admin Assistant

Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) has appointed Ms. Sereana Rakai as the new Finance & Program Assistant under the EDF11 project. Ms. Rakai comes with vast professional and industry experience having worked for a number of regional organizations during her 15 year career in Finance.

Sereana was born in Fiji and attained her Diploma in Accounting from FNU and is currently pursuing her Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in Accounting and Management.

Ms. Rakai will be based at the OCO Secretariat in Suva under the Operations Division.



Darryl Iqbal joins OCO as Project Coordinator



The Secretariat in the month of June recruited Mr. Darryl Iqbal as Project Coordinator for the EDF 11 project. Mr. Iqbal comes with over 10 years of experience; having served on a variety of projects while employed with the Tuvalu department of Trade. His area of expertise include Trade, E-Commerce and Project Management.

Born and educated in Fiji, Darryl holds a Diploma in Project Management and is accredited as an International Trade Specialist. He also holds a Diploma in International Business & Trade and is the recipient of an Executive MINI MBA.

Darryl will be based in Suva within the Operations Division.

UPCOMINGEVENTS

July
2023

1st Mission - Construction of New Tariff (HS 2022) - Guam Modernisation Project	3 - 7 Jul
Annual Conference	18 - 20 Jul
2nd Mission - Capacity Building Awareness & Consultation on Legislation Roll Out - Guam Modernisation	24 - 28 Jul
Assessment to Carry Out Tariff Requirements - Guam Modernisation Project	31 - Jul

August
2023

Forum Economic Ministers and Related Meetings	8 - 11 Aug
Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders Meeting	17 - 18 Aug
Gap Analysis on Customs Related WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement & FTA Measures (including IEPA) - EDF11	21 - 25 Aug
UNEP Consultation with Contact Points	23 - 25 Aug
HS Capacity Building Awareness - Guam Modernisation Project	31 Aug

September
2023

ISWG 1st Qtr Meeting	05 Sep
Smaller Island States Officials Meeting	5 Sep
Pacific ACP Officials Meeting	5 Sep
Pre-Forum Session of the FOC	5-6 Sep
Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting	8 Sep
6th Operational Meeting - SINCB	11-15 Sep
Train the Trainers Workshop with CCES - EDF11	11-15 Sep
Complete Final Report - Guam Modernisation Project	15 Sep
SINCB Workshop	18-22 Sep
Emergency Relief Good Clearance Process	25-29 Sep

GALLERY



Oceania Customs
Organization



Private Mail Bag,
84 Harris Rd,
Suva,
Fiji Islands

Phone: (679) 331 3110
E-mail: info@ocosec.org

www.ocosec.org