

13th Annual Conference of the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO)

“Knowledge, a Catalyst for Excellence in Customs”

Communiqué

1. The 13th Annual Conference of the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) was hosted by the Papua New Guinea Customs Services and was held from 2nd - 6th May 2011 at the Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby.
2. Delegates of Member Administrations from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Norfolk Island, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Fiji, Republic of Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga attended. Apologies were received from French Polynesia, Guam, Tuvalu and Wallis & Futuna for their non attendance. Timor Leste initially attended as an Observer.
3. Papua New Guinea and Samoa were elected as Chair and Vice Chair for the Conference.
4. A special warm welcome made by the Chair was extended to the Secretary General of the World Customs Organisation (WCO) Mr. Kunio Mikuriya for gracing the OCO Conference with his presence for the first time.
5. Invited representatives from Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), Regional Intelligence Liaison Office, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Centre for Customs & Excise Studies (CCES), United States Immigration & Customs Enforcement (US ICE), United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD), Pacific Immigration Directors Conference (PIDC), Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP), Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), World Customs Organization (WCO) Regional Office of Capacity Building for the Asia Pacific (ROCB AP), Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), Data Torque, Rangitisa Consultants also attended.
6. The Conference was officially opened by the Honourable James Marape, Minister for Education of Papua New Guinea. In his welcome remarks the Minister assured the Conference that PNG stood ready to help and learn from other regional partners. Making specific references to this year’s theme he said that knowledge was paramount if Customs organisations are to achieve their

objectives of protecting people and community and raising revenue for their respective governments.

7. In his address the Secretary General of the WCO thanked the OCO for extending an invitation to him to attend the 13th OCO Annual Conference. From his opening remarks he stressed that Customs organisations around the world can not deliver its mandate effectively without the support and co-operation from their political masters and other key stakeholders. Drawing the attention of the members to the theme he emphasised that partnership was vital if global, regional and national Customs administrations are to fully discharge their responsibility adding that cooperation between players in international trade is a key to economic growth and development. He then discussed the seven priority initiatives being developed by WCO to assist Customs to adequately meet the challenges and demands emanating from the rapidly evolving trading environment.
8. The Conference observed a minute of silence as a mark of respect for the former Comptroller of Customs & Excise for Solomon Islands late Mr. Daniel Rofeta who passed away in April 2011.
9. The Conference received and adopted the OCO 2010 Annual Report presented by the Secretariat. Copies were also circulated to all members and observers.
10. The Conference adopted the report of the Convenor for the Steering Committee relating to the outcomes of the Steering Committee Meeting held on the 30th April in Port Moresby. Key issues included:
 - a) The Report on the Review of the TOR of the OCO Steering Committee;
 - b) The proposal on OCO membership;
 - c) Funding assistance under Pacific Security Fund for the OCO projects; and
 - d) Funding support from Australian Customs & Border Protection for OCO ICT upgrade.
11. The members agreed to formally accept the admission of Timor Leste as the 24th member of OCO.
12. The Audit and Financial Reports for 2010 were received and adopted by the Conference. The OCO Budget for 2011 was also approved.
13. The Conference adopted the Financial Reporting System, Financial Policies and Procedures, Procurement Policies and the Administrative Policies.
14. The Conference adopted the OCO Work Plan for the 2011-2012.
15. The members agreed to embrace the new scale of membership contribution as proposed under Option 1 of the Paper relating to Review of Operational Fund.

16. The Proposed TOR for the PACP Steering Committee under the European Union EDF 10 Program was adopted with Papua New Guinea (PNG) elected as the first Chair.
17. The end of the Regional Trade Facilitation Program (RTFP) Report was noted by the Conference.
18. The Draft Regional ICT Framework to be used as a guide with the implementation of the automated system in the member administrations was adopted and it shall be considered with the study made by New Zealand in 2006/2007.
19. The Conference noted the following presentations and reports:
- PNG Customs Service highlighting the progress on organisational development particularly those relating to the operation of the User Pay Trust Account.
 - The updates from members on the current status of capacity building and reform and modernization projects being undertaken at the national level.
 - From Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu sharing the current trends in revenue and other commercial fraud and the measures being taken to address these issues.
 - From Vanuatu, FSM, Tuvalu, Samoa, Kiribati and Palau relating to the origin and value of exported goods.
 - From Centre for Customs & Excise Studies (CCES) of the University of Canberra outlining the development of the programs to support learning and development of opportunities for OCO members.
 - The updates from the OCO Secretariat on the progress of work currently being undertaken to implement the Pilot Mobile Post Clearance Audit (PCA) Unit and the developments of PCA in the Pacific Region by ROCB AP.
 - Activities of counter-part Regional Border and Law Enforcement Organisations, PIDC, PICP, SPC and PRIIP highlighting:
 - Law enforcement efforts in combating Transnational Organised Crime in the Asia Pacific Region;
 - Rising trend in irregular migration and trafficking with other Regional bodies and other Immigration Agencies;
 - The need for inter-agency partnership and cooperation in combating illegal trade in flora and fauna.
 - The intention of the OCO Secretariat to establish a Trade Statistics Database as mandated under the Pacific Plan to assist members with the compilation and analysis of external trade data for national planning, formulation of policies, valuation and trade.

- From Fiji outlining the developments on the establishment of the Regional Training Centre and the steps being undertaken to achieve WCO accreditation.
 - From US Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) highlighting the role of the organisation.
20. From the OCO Secretariat which discussed the strategies and other initiatives being developed to provide support to members in improving their capacities in the area of law enforcement and security.
 21. After an extensive deliberation the Conference decided to adopt Option 1 as put forward in the Steering Committee Review Report in principle with further consultation to be undertaken by Rangitisa Consultant to solicit the views of the members towards refining the option.
 22. The Conference noted the presentations from Fiji, Tonga and Niue outlining the anticipated implications of Free Trade Agreements on national revenue and the measures being pursued to mitigate the impact on customs revenue.
 23. The Conference noted the confirmation by American Samoa to host the 14th Annual Conference in 2012 in Pago Pago.
 24. The Conference also noted the offer by Tonga to host the 15th Conference in 2013.