



January-June 2020

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



I am writing this piece from home as most of our Pacific border have remained closed.

We began this year with a lot of energy and determination to implement the remaining six months of our work program activities. And just as we had good traction, the COVID-19 pandemic happened which put a halt to our activities for a good three months. All of our regional and national activities involving face-to-face meetings were cancelled.

At the very onset of regional disruption, the OCO Secretariat was heavily involved

providing support to the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in the development of the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on Covid-19 (PHP-C). It was important that there was a consistent approach on Customs to ensure smooth transition and facilitation of health personnel and relief supply responses under the PHP-C.

Covid-19 and with borders remaining closed does not mean we will stop our efforts in providing support to our members. The pandemic has required the Secretariat to revamp itself working remotely with our members and partners. We've had to organize virtual meetings and this is going to be our new modality for work.

Richard Brenan
Head of Secretariat

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OUR MEMBERS



JANUARY 2020



National Consultation in Preparation for the 22nd OCO Conference

The OCO Secretariat visited Cook Islands on 27-30 January 2020 to undertake preparatory discussions with the Cook Islands Customs Service and their stakeholders regarding the 22nd Annual OCO Conference. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, the Annual Conference has been postponed.

February 2020



Regional Workshop on Customs Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Enforcement

In collaboration with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), the International Trademark Association (INTA), the Pharmaceutical Security Institute (PSI), the OCO successfully organized a Regional Workshop on Customs IPR Enforcement in Nadi, Fiji

Preceding this Workshop an information sharing platform training was conducted by OCO together with the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) on the APAN as well as the IONICs information sharing platforms. The workshop was attended by 16 senior customs staff from 13 OCO member countries.



Pacific Fusion Centre Anchoring Strategic Intelligence Analysis

OCO participated with PILON, PIDC, and FFA and with 9 member countries from different border agencies in the training provided by the Pacific Fusion Centre in collaboration with the Pacific Security College on anchoring strategic intelligence analysis. The training included analysis and writing fundamentals, collecting and collating open-source intelligence information for decision makers' use.



Information & Intelligence Sharing, PIDC Regional Workshop National Contact Points,- Samoa

OCO participated in the PIDC Regional workshop for national contact points on information and intelligence sharing. OCO discussed the OCO APAN system and its current structure generating discussion in information collection, storage, analysis and alignment to regional and international standards. The workshop allowed networking and establishing relationship in information sharing between law enforcement partners recognizing that national contact points and regional contact points partnership is critical for a successful information sharing outcome.



63rd session of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs 2020

The Head of Secretariat represented the OCO at the 63rd session of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs 2020 held in Vienna. The meeting provide the opportunity to discuss the issues facing the OCO members and how we can leverage the support of some of the INCB members.

June 2020



National Rules of Origin Workshop -Fiji

The OCO co-facilitated with the national ROO Trainer, a two-day Rules of Origin Training for the FRCS held in Suva, Fiji About 29 Customs Officers participated in the Workshop, 14 of whom virtually from Lautoka and Labasa. The objective of the workshop was help the participants understand the major concepts on Rules of Origin and the application of origin procedures under the different Free Trade Agreements.

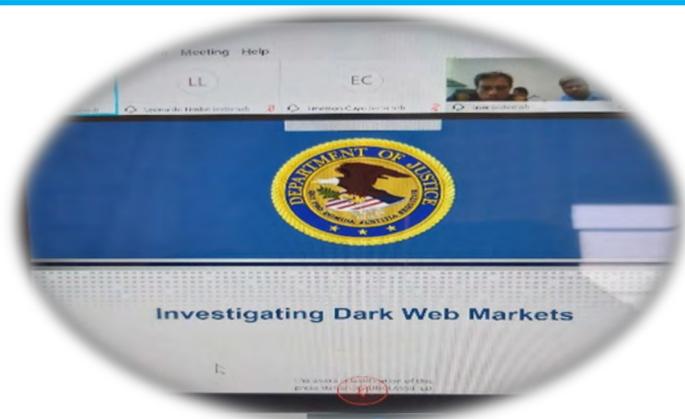
March –June 2020 Online Activities



OCO and Fiji participated in the INCB interactive webinars series for 1 week. This was a practical response to the current COVID-19 pandemic, to raise awareness of new trafficking trends and provide practical approaches for law and regulatory enforcement focal points around the global.



Due to the Covid-19 travel restrictions, the OCO conducted its meeting with Tariff Officers in the region remotely by videoconference. The meeting took place on 4th June, 2020 with 14 participants from nine of the OCO member countries. The meeting included a presentation from OCO on the overview of the HS 2022 amendments, current work done to update the Pacific Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding (PACHS) and the proposed regional work plan for the implementation of HS 2022. .



OCO and its members - Confederates States of Northern Mariana, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Niue, Solomon Islands, and Tonga participated in the US Department of Justice (USDOJ) - International Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property (ICHIP) and the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) webinars series on COVID-19 crimes as well as a series on the Dark Web. These are 2 separate webinar series which runs for 1 hour each.

On 11 March 2020 the WHO characterized the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as a pandemic. As countries around the world began to take action to reduce the spread of the virus, the OCO member customs administrations began to also institute measures at the national level to prevent and fight the spread of COVID-19.

What has OCO done to help members deal with the Covid-19 Pandemic ?

- OCO is part of the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 (PHP-C), providing regional leadership, direction and coordination to enable the provision of medical and humanitarian assistance from regional and international organisations in a timely, safe, effective and equitable manner. Specifically, we've helped put together the Customs Protocol
- Dissemination to members the WCO instruments and tools to assist members to facilitate continue to facilitate, not only relief goods, but goods in general during the pandemic
- Formulated guidance material that supports medical and humanitarian cargoes for Customs in the Pacific.
 - <https://www.ocosec.org/oco-covid-19-information/>

News from Members

On 26 January, 2020 OCO members joined Customs Administrations around the world and celebrated this years International Customs Day on the 25th of January 2020. This years theme for International Customs Day 2020 is "Customs fostering Sustainability for People, Prosperity and the Planet"



Cook Island Customs celebrates ICD



ICD Celebrations in Fiji



ICD Celebrations in Tonga

Vanuatu implements the ASYCUDA Sanitary and Phytosanitary Module

Vanuatu officially launched and rolled out the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (ASYSPPS) module developed by UNCTAD, the ESWS Project Team and Biosecurity that would streamline and automate the application, processing, payment and issuance of SPS import permits and export certificates



Other Events



The OCO staff joined the international community in celebrating the International Women's Day with the theme "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights" in March 2020.

The OCO in December 2019 have included "gender equality" in its work and capacity building program. The OCO recognizes the important contribution women make to their national customs administration and remain committed to supporting the advancement of gender equality amongst our members.



OCO Staff joined the Pacific Islands Tax Administrators Association (PITAA) Secretariat celebrating their 3rd year anniversary. PITAA is the regional tax body based in Suva which is aimed to provide countries with a forum for networking and continual improvement of their tax administrations.

Given that 38% of the OCO members are revenue authorities, OCO works in collaboration with PITAA to strengthen the cooperation and exchange of information between Customs and Tax authorities in the Pacific.



Staff Movement

- ◆ Ms Heilala Erenavula commenced in the role of HR & Logistics Officer in Feb 2020 for a term of 3 years.
- ◆ Ms Asenaca Masiwini from the Fiji Revenue & Customs Service completed a 5 months Secondment as the Assistant Accountant in April &
- ◆ Mr Kelemedi Gukirewa from the Fiji Revenue Customs Service completed a 12 month Secondment as the Technical Assistant—APAN in June.

UPCOMING EVENTS

July
2020

- **OECD Webinar series- Managing Financial Investigations (Intermediate) Programme**
Jun—August 2020
- **PACER Plus Guideline National Training—Cook Islands, Tuvalu,**
- **OCO Steering Committee Meeting .**
21st July

August
2020

- **OECD International Academy for Tax Crime Investigation, Conducting Financial Investigations (Foundation) Programme**
3rd—12th August
- **WCO/JICA Sub-Regional Master Trainer Programme Introductory Virtual Seminar (Webinar) for the Pacific Islands**
5th August
- **Forum Economics Officials Meeting**
4th—5th August
- **Forum Economics Ministers Meeting**
11th—12th August

September
2020

- **OECD Webinar series- Managing Financial Investigations (Intermediate) Programme**
7th—18th September

GALLERY



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