



April ~ June 2025

**Vision:** The OCO to be recognised as a dynamic Regional Customs Secretariat that collaborates with regional and global partners to develop and deliver high quality and sustainable outputs to Member administrations.

# OCEANIA CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION NEWSLETTER

## FOREWORD

### The Pacific is running out of time.



**D**rug cartels are moving deeper into our region, exploiting our vast borders and targeting our communities. What was once a transit route has now become a destination.

The signs are alarming—more seizures, more arrests, and more lives destroyed by addiction. This is our reality. And it's our fight.

Customs officers across the Pacific stand on the frontline of this battle. Every shipment inspected, every parcel screened, every alert acted upon is an act of protection. But the threats are changing. Criminal networks are using technology, drones, and encrypted communications to move drugs faster and smarter.

To keep pace, we too must evolve—through stronger coordination, better intelligence sharing,

and greater investment in training and modern tools.

Our greatest strength lies in unity. When we stand together—from Fiji to the Federated States of Micronesia—we send a clear message: the Pacific will not be an easy target.

This year, we are proud to welcome **Tokelau as the 24th member** of the Oceania Customs Organisation. Their inclusion strengthens our regional network and reinforces our shared commitment to protecting our islands and our people.

This issue highlights OCO's work in the second quarter of the year and reflections from our Annual Conference in Guam. A heartfelt *Vinaka vakalevu* to the **Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency** for hosting us and for their continued leadership. Fiji is hosting our next annual conference.

*Vinaka vakalevu.*  
**Nancy T. Oraka**  
*Head of Secretariat*

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## OUR MEMBERS



# April - June Highlights

## Oceania Customs Initiative Set to Cut Trade Delays & Boost Regional Economies

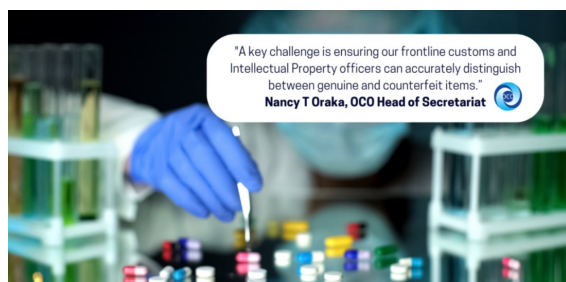


**T**he Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) Secretariat is implementing a World Customs Organization (WCO) initiative to reduce trade delays and boost economic growth across Pacific Island nations. The Time-Release Study (TRS) capacity-building program aims to tackle border bottlenecks that currently slow down imports and exports as well as driving up costs for businesses and consumers throughout the region.

The program, which took place in Apia, Samoa and ended on 11th April 2025, is a critical investment in the region's economic

infrastructure. By identifying and eliminating unnecessary delays in cargo processing, participating nations will enjoy economic benefits such as reduced business costs, improved supply chain reliability, and enhanced trade competitiveness. [Read more..](#)

## Customs Officials Trained to Detect Counterfeit Goods



"A key challenge is ensuring our frontline customs and Intellectual Property officers can accurately distinguish between genuine and counterfeit items."  
Nancy T Oraka, OCO Head of Secretariat

**C**ustoms administrations across 14 Pacific Island nations are intensifying their efforts to stem the influx of counterfeit products and protect Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) Head of Secretariat, Ms. Nancy T. Oraka said.

OCO, in partnership with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) last month launched an eight-week Brand Protection and Product Identification Workshop Series designed to equip frontline customs and Intellectual Property (IP) officers with critical skills to detect and intercept counterfeit goods.

The virtual training program started in February and ends on April 16, 2025. The workshop series brings together a coalition of global industry leaders. Representatives from Apple, Nike, Pfizer, Coca-Cola, and other major brands will provide hands-on training in identifying counterfeit versions of their products. The workshop aims to develop practical skills for customs and IP officials, build sustainable technical capacity, establish regional cooperation, and support stronger IP enforcement. [Read more...](#)

## Customs Officers Attend C3 Training



**T**he Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) launched a specialised five-day **Command, Control & Communications (C3)** training program for customs officers from across the Pacific region.

This was hosted in Nadi, Fiji from April 7-11, 2025. The training represents a milestone in strengthening border security capabilities across Pacific Island nations. The C3 training program, was delivered in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's Global Maritime Crime Programme (UNODC-GMCP), focused on enhancing decision-making, coordination, and leadership skills in high-pressure

situations unique to the Pacific's vast maritime domains. [Read more...](#)



# April - June Highlights

## OCO HoS Represents Pacific Customs at Regional Security Forum



pressing regional security challenges as an observer, representing OCO's member customs administrations. [Read more...](#)

Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) Head of Secretariat Ms. Nancy T. Oraka recently represented the region's Customs administrations at the **7th Joint Heads of Pacific Security (JHoPS)** meeting in Port Moresby. The forum held from March 18-20, 2025, brought together leaders from defense forces, police services, immigration departments, and customs agencies across the Pacific under the theme **"Align and Collaborate to Advance our Collective Security."** The three-day event held at the Stanley Hotel & Suites, Ms. Oraka attended discussions on

## Oceania Customs Organisation 27th Annual Conference in Guam



The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) held its 27th Annual Conference in Guam from May 19-23, bringing together customs leaders from across the Pacific region to discuss critical issues affecting regional trade, security, and cooperation.

Under the theme **"Driving Efficiency, Security and Sustainability: Strengthening Customs in the Pacific,"** the five-day conference focused on strategic priorities including digital transformation, gender equality, artificial intelligence applications, environmental protection, and collaborative efforts to combat transnational crime. The conference welcomed representatives from all 23 OCO member countries and territories, along with international partners including the World Customs

Organization, United Nations agencies, and regional organisations. The event began with a two-day Customs Chiefs Leadership Forum, followed by the formal OCO Heads Conference and conclude with collaborative sessions involving partners and stakeholders. [Read more..](#)

## Annual Conference Opens with Focus on Regional Communication



The 27th Annual Conference of the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) opened in Guam, with the Customs Chiefs Leadership Forum, focusing on strategic communications and digital transformation in the Pacific.

The closed-door forum, attended by heads of customs administrations from across the Oceania region, began with a strategic overview of the Pacific communications landscape, examining current challenges and opportunities in regional communications infrastructure and digital transformation.

"Effective communication is the foundation of successful customs operations and regional cooperation," said **Mr. Ike Q. Peredo, Director of the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency and Chair of the OCO Steering Committee.** "As we navigate increasingly complex trade and security environments, our

ability to share information efficiently and securely becomes ever more critical."

The morning session featured presentations on the current state of Pacific media and communications systems, key challenges in regional communications, digital transformation priorities, and a vision for integrated Pacific communications networks. [Read more..](#)

# April - June Highlights

## *Pacific Customs Administrations Sign Landmark GENDER EQUALITY Declaration*



**M**embers of the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) have signed the **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Declaration** during the organisation's 27th Annual Conference in Guam, committing to promoting gender equality, inclusive workplaces, and women's leadership development across regional customs agencies.

The morning session highlighted the **Pacific Women's Professional Development Program (PWPDP)**, a collaboration among the OCO, Australian Border Force, and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University.

[Read more...](#)

## *Tokelau Becomes 24th Member of Oceania Customs Organisation*



**T**he Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) welcomes **Tokelau Customs** as its 24th member during the organisation's 27th Annual Conference in Guam, marking a significant expansion of the regional customs body.

The admission of Tokelau, a non-self-governing territory of New Zealand was approved unanimously by existing members during the closed session of the Customs Heads Conference.

Tokelau, comprising three tropical coral atolls with a total land area of approximately 10 square kilometers and a population of about 1,500 people, has been working to develop its customs capabilities in recent years with support from New Zealand Customs and other regional partners.

"Joining the OCO represents a significant milestone in our development as a customs administration. We look forward to contributing to and benefiting from the collaborative initiatives, knowledge sharing, and capacity building opportunities that OCO membership provides," **said Liliu Penaia, representative of Tokelau Customs.**

As an OCO member, Tokelau will participate in regional operations, training programs, and policy discussions, while gaining access to technical assistance and support from fellow members and international partners. [Read more..](#)

## *Pacific Customs Leaders Embrace Digital Transformation*



**C**ustoms leaders from across the Pacific gathered at the 27th OCO Annual Conference in Guam to explore how digitalisation, getting ahead of illicit trade and transnational crime, and improving undervaluation can transform border management and trade facilitation in the region.

The day's sessions, marked the beginning of the conference's open segment with partners and stakeholders, focused on practical applications of emerging technologies in customs operations, with particular emphasis on the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the Pacific context.

"Technology is fundamentally changing how customs administrations fulfill their mandates," said **Capt.**

**Johnric Mendiola, Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency Executive Officer**, who moderated the morning

session on Customs Digitalisation and Data-Driven Customs Operations. "From automated risk assessment to contactless clearance processes, digital tools are creating opportunities to enhance both security and trade facilitation simultaneously." [Read more..](#)



# April - June Highlights

## OCO Conference Concludes with Commitment to Environmental Protection



The 27th Annual Conference of the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) concluded with a strong focus on environmental protection and a commitment to strengthening customs' role in combating environmental crime across the Pacific region.

The final day's sessions explored the concept of "Green Customs" – initiatives aimed at enhancing customs' capacity to monitor and control trade in environmentally-sensitive goods, including endangered species, hazardous waste, and ozone-depleting substances. [Read more..](#)

## OCO Offers Free Training Course for Customs Brokers

**CUSTOMS BROKERS**  
Online Course

**REGISTER NOW!**

- Starts in July
- Fully virtual format
- No cost

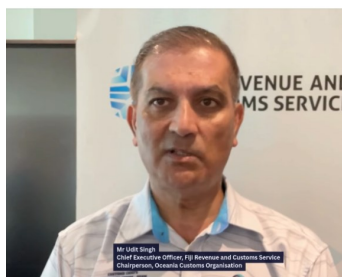
CONTACT:  
Sumnert5@ococoo.org  
Mr. Sumant Kishan Singh  
Chairman, Oceania Customs Organisation

The Oceania Customs Organisation is targeting professionals who handle the paperwork and procedures needed to get shipments cleared through customs. The course comes as Pacific Island nations continue to struggle with delays at ports and rising costs for imported goods. Better-trained customs brokers could help speed things up, OCO officials say.

"Customs brokers are the essential bridge between businesses and customs administrations," said **Ms. Nancy T Oraka, Head of OCO Secretariat**. "In our increasingly interconnected global economy, their role in navigating complex trade laws and procedures has never been more vital to our region's economic prosperity."

The program has already trained five groups of customs professionals since it started in 2022. This year's course will cover trade agreements, how to classify goods properly, and preparing documentation that customs officers can process quickly. [Read more..](#)

## OCO Members Target Drug Traffickers



Pacific nations must urgently strengthen maritime enforcement as criminal networks deliberately exploit geographic vulnerabilities, generating unprecedented trafficking drugs across the region. The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) says detection rates remain critically low amongst its 24 member countries, with organised crime generating NZ\$1.6billion(bn) (approximately US\$0.96bn) annually in New Zealand alone, of which NZ\$600million (m) or approximately US\$360m comes from drug trafficking.

"Criminal organisations specifically target our region because they understand our enforcement limitations across vast maritime territories," said **Mr Udit Singh, OCO Chairperson and Fiji Revenue and Customs Service Chief Executive Officer**. "Traditional enforcement methods cannot effectively monitor millions of square kilometres of ocean."

Methamphetamine sells for NZ\$135,000 (approximately US\$81,000) per kilogram in New Zealand markets compared to NZ\$12,470 (US\$7,500) in the United States—an 18-fold price increase incentivising trafficking networks to exploit Pacific routes. Criminal adaptability has accelerated since 2020 when supply chain disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic forced networks to establish new routes through previously secondary Pacific corridors.

Criminal networks employ semi-submersible vessels operating below surface radar, modified shipping containers with false compartments and systematic corruption of border personnel. [Read more..](#)

# OCO Secretariat News

## *Sandra Atalifo appointed as OCO Human Resources and Logistics Officer*



The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) welcomes Ms Sandra Atalifo as their new Human Resources and Logistics Officer., Ms. Atalifo joins OCO with 6 years of experience in the overall human resource management functions in a corporate organisation context that deals with effective strategic human resource management with associated risks, drafting human resource policies and procedures, human resources auditing, human resource reporting and change management. She is the representative member of the Human Resource Council meeting for Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation.

## *Sumeet Singh appointed as OCO Trade Revenue and Management Advisor*



The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) welcomes Mr. Sumeet Pratap Singh as new Trade Revenue and Management Advisor., Mr. Singh joins OCO with over 10years of experience in Trade and Investment. He has held senior advisory roles at Investment Fiji where he contributed to national policy reforms, investor facilitation and CRM system development. Mr. Singh is passionate about supporting regional economic integration, institutional strengthening and sustainable development across the Pacific.

## *OCO Secretariat Moves Office Location*



The Oceania Customs Organisation has relocated its office space.

We are no longer situated at 84 Harris Road, Walubay.

We are now stationed at New address is:

**Fiji Revenue & Customs Services Building 3 Level 1**

**Lot1, Corner of Queen Elizabeth Drive & Ratu Sukuna Road, Nasese.**

**Google Map [Link](#)**

Enter building 3 and come to level 1. Exit the elevator to the left and walk through the corridor till you come to the end. Our office is located there.

Our contact details are still the same and can be found [here](#).

# UPCOMINGEVENTS

July  
2025

RC Talanoa-IORIS Awareness	10 Jul
Pacific Management Development Program	14-25 Jul
Pacific Regional and National Security Conference	14-16 Jul
Pacific Islands Forum Trade Officials and Ministers Meeting (FTOM and FTMM) and the Pacific ACP Trade Officials and Ministers Meeting (PACPTOM and PACPTMM)	16-18 Jul
Forum Officials Sub-Committee on Regional Security	17-18 Jul
FISCO Meeting No. 2 of 2025	21 Jul
PACOMM Trade Database	31 Jul

August  
2025

Initiate Design of the OCO Customs Integrity Framework	04 Aug
Dialogue on AEO Development in the Pacific	11-15 Aug
Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police Pacific Conference	19-22 Aug

September  
2025

OCO Steering Committee Virtual (Qtr 1 /2026) Meeting	03 Sep
Meeting of Intelligence Contact Points	01-03 Sep
ISWG Meeting	10 Sep
Regional Training Course on Preventing Illicit Transfers of Toxic Chemicals—Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)	16-18 Sep
PITAA Annual Heads Meeting	22-26 Sep
PACCPM Database Workshop	22-26 Sep
WCO Master Trainer Program on Risk Management and PCA (WG3)	29 Sep - 03 Oct
8th Operational Meeting to Counter Trafficking of Synthetic Opioids, Dangerous Substances & Chemicals through Postal, Express Courier & Air Cargo Services	30 Sep - 03 Oct