

Oceania Customs Organisation Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Declaration

PREAMBLE

RECOGNISING the pivotal role that Customs administrations play in national development, trade facilitation, community protection, revenue collection, and national security, we, the undersigned, commit to advancing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) within Customs operations and policies.

AFFIRMING that GESI is aligned with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948) and is essential for achieving sustainable development and inclusive growth, we draw upon the values enshrined in international and regional frameworks, including:

- The World Customs Organisation Declaration on Gender Equality and Diversity (2020);
- The World Customs Organisation Gender Equality Organisation Assessment Tool 2023 (GEOAT);
- The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal Number 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls;
- The Pacific Island Forum's 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, particularly the People Centred Development pillar and the Revitalised Pacific Islands Forum Gender Equality Declaration;
- The Secretariat of the Pacific Community Pacific Platform for Action and Women's Human Rights (2018-2030) to a rights-based approach.

RECOGNISING that structural and underlying social, cultural, and economic barriers adversely impact the participation of women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups, we commit to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment within Customs that reflects the diverse society we serve.

ACKNOWLEDGING that GESI is fundamental for the performance, quality of service, and integrity of Customs administrations, we commit to embedding GESI considerations in decision-making processes at all levels and to continuously monitoring and evaluating progress towards GESI goals.



DECLARATION

We, the leaders and members of the Oceania Customs Organisation hereby declare our commitment to the following principles and actions:

1. **Non-Discrimination:** We will adopt and enforce policies of non-discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, disability, or any other grounds, ensuring that all Customs staff are treated fairly and awarded equal opportunities in hiring, promotion, salary, benefits, disciplinary measures, and other employment practices.
2. **Inclusive Work Environment:** We will foster a work environment that promotes work-life balance, offers flexible work arrangements, and supports the professional development of women, persons with disabilities, and other under-represented groups through targeted initiatives such as mentorship programs and leadership development opportunities.
3. **Prevention of Harassment:** We will implement robust measures to prevent and address all forms of harassment, gender-based violence, and discrimination within Customs, ensuring a safe and respectful workplace for all employees and the public they serve.
4. **GESI in Service Delivery:** We will ensure that our services, including interactions with traders and travellers, are inclusive and sensitive to the needs of diverse populations, particularly women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. We will work to eliminate any barriers to accessing our services and ensure that all stakeholders are treated with dignity and respect.
5. **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing:** We will collaborate with other government agencies, private sector stakeholders, and civil society organizations to share best practices and experiences in implementing GESI policies and to foster a coordinated approach to promoting GESI in Customs operations.
6. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** We will continuously monitor and evaluate our progress towards GESI goals by collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated and disability-inclusive data, and by regularly reporting on our efforts to advance GESI within our administrations.
7. **Leadership and Advocacy:** We will advocate for the integration of GESI principles in all areas of Customs operations, including policymaking, enforcement, and service delivery. We will ensure that GESI considerations are central to our organizational culture and decision-making processes.
8. **Commitment to Continuous Improvement:** We commit to regularly reviewing and updating our GESI policies and practices to reflect evolving best practices, legal requirements, and the needs of the populations we serve.



Conclusion

By adopting this Gender Equality Declaration, Oceania Customs Organisation commits to creating a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse workplace and environment for our people and our stakeholders. We believe that promoting gender equality is not only a moral imperative but also essential for achieving our organisational goals and serving our community effectively.

Signatories

This Declaration was agreed and signed by the representatives of the OCO Membership at the 27th OCO Annual Conference in Guam in May 2025.