



PIFS GVA/25-2019

To : Forum Island Countries (FICs)
Date : 18 September 2019
From : Mere FALEMAKA, PIF Permanent Delegation to the United Nations,
World Trade Organization, and Other International Organizations in Geneva
Subject: PIF-Geneva Update 3/2019

Please find attached, for your records, an update on Trade Negotiations and Aid-for-Trade activities undertaken by the Pacific Islands Forum – Geneva Office (PIF-Geneva) in May-June 2019.

2. For further clarifications or follow-up on Trade Negotiations, please contact Mr. Alex Kerangpuna, Trade Policy Officer, on alex.kerangpuna@pifs-geneva.ch
3. For further clarifications or follow-up on Aid-for-Trade, please contact Mr. Andrea Giacomelli, Trade Policy and Aid-for-Trade Adviser on andrea.giacomelli@pifs-geneva.ch
4. For further clarifications or follow-up on PTI Europe, please contact Ms. Robyn Ekstrom, Trade Promotion Adviser on robyn.ekstrom@pifs-geneva.ch

Mere FALEMAKA

Ambassador

**PIF Permanent Delegation to the United Nations,
World Trade Organization, and Other International Organizations in Geneva**

1. BACKGROUND

The Pacific Islands Forum Geneva Office (PIF Geneva) comprises two sections: Trade Negotiations and Aid-for-Trade (AfT). The Trade Negotiations section provides policy and technical advice on multilateral trade issues to Forum Islands Countries (FICs) which are members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and coordinates their participation in multilateral negotiations. The AfT Section assists FICs, individually and collectively, to make a better use of AfT opportunities provided by Geneva and Europe-based organisations.

In addition, PIF Geneva hosts the Europe desk of Pacific Trade Invest (PTI Europe). The desk focuses on the development and promotion of Pacific Island exports across international markets in Europe and the United Kingdom.

2. REPRESENTATION

Ambassador FALEMAKA represented regional trade instances at major events, including at the [WTO Third Symposium on Trade and Natural Disasters](#). In preparation to the Symposium, PIF Geneva advised the WTO on suitable Pacific speakers, and provided extensive comments to inform the [Pacific study](#) on macroeconomic and trade impacts of natural disasters. A briefing on the linkages between trade and natural disasters was provided to Pacific delegates at the [2019 Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction](#) in Geneva.

This period saw the conclusion of preparations for the 2019 [Aid-for-Trade Global Review](#) (AftGR). As a result of this work, FIC representatives will appear as panellists in 11 sessions, or about 13% of total events. These include two Pacific Ministers, Hon. Lautafi PURCELL from Samoa and Hon. Atarake NATAARA from Kiribati, who will speak in plenary sessions on, respectively, fishery subsidies negotiations and Least Developed Country (LDC) graduation. Ten FICs and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) submitted responses to the global Aid-for-Trade questionnaire. This compared favourably with 2017 (only two responses), and increased the visibility of Pacific needs in the [Aid-for-Trade at a Glance 2019](#), the bi-annual publication of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the WTO.

The [Samoa Intern](#) completed his six-month Internship programme with the Office and his performance was commended.

3. TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Two Fisheries Subsidies cluster meetings were held in May and June. A delegate from Papua New Guinea attended the June cluster meetings. PIF Geneva worked closely with the FIC Geneva Missions and Capital-based officials to ensure effective representation of regional interests, including through a Pacific Joint Statement and through input into the proposals of the Africa Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Group. Ambassador FALEMAKA also presented a Pacific perspective at the Senegal-PEW Symposium on Fisheries Subsidies on 8 May.

Agriculture negotiations continued based on the work program adopted by WTO Members. Discussions were undertaken in different [Informal Working Groups](#), covering elements of Agriculture negotiations such as reduction in domestic support, permanent solution on public stockholding, and special safeguard measures. Limited progress was recorded.

WTO Members engaged actively on the new issues (e-Commerce, WTO Reform, Investment Facilitation), as well as on Services Domestic Regulations, whilst reaffirming their commitment to the core [Doha Mandates](#), particularly Agriculture, Services and Development. Members continued to express concerns at the impasse in the Appellate Body process and continued working to resolve this.

Papua New Guinea held its fourth WTO Trade Policy Review (TPR) from 8-10 May 2019. PIF Geneva provided a technical briefing to the PNG delegation prior to the Review and coordinated support from the Pacific WTO members through a Joint Statement delivered at the TPR.

During this period the Office issued four circulars covering the main areas under negotiation and key WTO meetings (Informal Trade Negotiations Committee meeting, Committee on Import Licensing meeting, update on e-Commerce negotiations, and update on Services Domestic Regulations negotiations).

4. AID-FOR-TRADE

4.1 Projects

4.1.1 Implemented

The Office continued managing the project assisting PNG with its [WTO Trade Policy Review \(TPR\)](#). The TPR process was successfully concluded, and PIFS' support publicly [acknowledged](#) by the PNG head of the delegation, His Excellency Joshua KALINOE.

PIF Geneva coordinated assistance by the consultants supporting the Pacific Group through the Trade Advocacy Fund (TAF). Under output 1 (Geneva Week support), a written briefing was provided covering fisheries subsidies, WTO reform, agriculture, e-commerce and services. This was accompanied by a face-to-face briefing on fisheries subsidies negotiations. Under output 3 (technical advice), work continued on a comprehensive legal text on fisheries subsidies, including presentation of the Pacific cap concept to the WTO membership.

In late May 2019 work commenced on the [e-Commerce Readiness Assessment for Tonga](#). The project, supervised by the PIF Geneva Office, draws upon the well-tested UNCTAD methodology, as enhanced to take into account the country's specificities.

Preparations intensified towards the Pacific Quality Infrastructure workshop. A circular announcing the workshop was released by the PIFS, together with a Quality Infrastructure survey to be completed by Members in advance of the workshop.

4.1.2 Completed/Secured

The Office leveraged USD 64,000 during this period, including USD 50,000 of World Bank support towards conceptualisation of an Electronic Single Window in Solomon Islands, and USD 14,000 towards participation of Solomon Islands and Palau to the 2019 Aid-for-Trade Global Review.

4.1.3 Ongoing

A project proposal was submitted to the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) to support Forum LDCs' participation to the Pacific Quality Infrastructure workshop.

4.2. Apply! Demand-driven Aid-for-Trade facilities accepting applications

(1) [Trade Advocacy Fund II](#) (2) [Standards Trade and Development Facility](#) (3) [Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation](#) (4) [Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility](#)

5. PTI EUROPE

5.1 Projects

5.1.1 Implemented

PTI Europe managed the successful delivery of the PTI booth at the European [Coffee, Tea and Soft Drink Expo](#), 21-22 May, London, which featured two Pacific producers and exporters, namely: [Banz Kofi Fektori](#) (PNG, coffee pods); and [Pleass Global's VaiWai](#) (Fiji, water). Discussions are ongoing with 20 potential buyers met at the exhibition.

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Post-event exhibitor feedback was very positive, with companies indicating that they view the cost of taking part (AUD 5,000 to 7,000) as a valuable marketing investment and that they will continue to take part in any PTI Europe trade platform offered.

In May, informal reassessment was undertaken about market attitudes to kava via attendance and interviews with industry representatives at the [Vitafoods Europe 2019](#) trade fair in Geneva. Intelligence indicates that the attitude, while softening, is still quite negative and will require a systematic market and consumer education process.

The Office disseminated eight market intelligence reports and articles to 67 PIC private and public sector recipients.

5.1.2 Completed/Secured

During this period, PTI Europe clients reported AUD 223,895 (about USD 153,000) in new sales directly attributable to the work of PTI Europe.

5.1.3 Ongoing

Preparatory work was undertaken for the PTI mini-pavilion booth at [World Food Moscow 2019](#), 24-27 September, which will feature six Pacific export companies. This included food and beverage branding, confirmation of exhibitors, and booth build tendering process.

Preparations also continued for the Aid-for-Trade Global Review, notably the PTI presentation at the side-event organised by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and the serving of [Tanna Coffee](#) in the foyer of the WTO venue during the event.

Specific product sourcing, profiling and introductions were undertaken to develop links between Pacific producers and exporters and between a French/Swiss importer and distributor of premium products.

6. NON-TRADE WORK

Apart from the trade work, and at the request of the Pacific Missions, PIF Geneva organised a briefing/talanoa session for the Pacific Health Ministers on 19 May in preparation for the World Health Assembly.

The Office received a courtesy visit and provided a briefing on its work and on International Geneva to the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, HE Hilda HEINE, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon John SILK, and her delegation on 24 June.

The Embassy of the RMI was officially opened on 21 June which along with the Mission of Nauru have brought to five the number of Pacific Missions in Geneva.