



PIFS GVA/41-2022

To : Forum Island Countries (FICs)
Date : 2 August 2022
From : Mere FALEMAKA, PIF Permanent Delegation to the United Nations,
World Trade Organization, and Other International Organizations in Geneva
Subject: PIF-Geneva Update 2/2022

Please find attached, for your records, an update on the activities undertaken by the Pacific Islands Forum – Geneva Office (PIF-Geneva) in March-April 2022.

2. For further clarifications or follow-up on Trade Negotiations, please contact me on mere.falemaka@pifs-geneva.ch
3. For further clarifications or follow-up on Aid-for-Trade, please contact Dr Andrea Giacomelli (Mr), 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 Jodie Stewart, PTI Trade Commissioner to Europe on Jodie.Stewart@pacifictradeinvest.com

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 Island Countries (FICs) which are members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and coordinates their participation in multilateral negotiations. The Aft Section promotes the establishment of regional initiatives in the priority areas of the [Pacific Aft Strategy](#) and assists FICs, individually and collectively, to make better use of Aft opportunities.

Some non-trade work commenced in 2019 and is limited to support advocacy on selected regional priorities such as climate change, oceans, and COVID-19.

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

2. REPRESENTATION

Ambassador Mere Falemaka represented the Pacific at the [high-level session](#) on development cooperation of the [2022 eCommerce Week](#). During the same Week, the Secretariat organised a [thematic session](#) on regional approaches to e-commerce and spoke at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) [session](#) on cross-border paperless trade. and represented the ACP Group in Geneva to present an update on Fisheries Subsidies negotiations at the [ACP Fisheries Ministers Meeting](#) held in Ghana on 4-8 April. Dr Giacomelli supported regional approaches to enhance e-commerce readiness of the postal network at the Electronic Services Development Group meeting of the Universal Postal Union (UPU)'s [Postal Operation Council](#).

3. WTO NEGOTIATIONS

During this period, a strategic pause in negotiations was in place following the differences amongst Members on how to take forward the WTO Response to COVID-19 and the deteriorating situation in Ukraine. Members took this time to reflect on potential outcomes for MC12 and how to bridge differences in positions on these outcomes.

On [Fisheries Subsidies](#), no negotiating meetings were held but Members continued to engage bilaterally and with groups on the basis of the Chair's Draft Text of the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement (FSA) of 24 November 2021. Outstanding issues relate to non-specific fuel subsidies, territoriality, forced labour, reflagging of vessels, prohibition in the unregulated high seas, and special and different treatment provisions and transparency. During this time the Pacific Group worked closely with the ACP Group to review and refine its negotiating positions pending restart of negotiations.

On [Agriculture](#), two meetings were held in March and April to take stock of where Members' priorities are on the Chair's Draft Text for MC12 circulated on 23 November 2021. The Text included decisions on future work in seven areas (market access, domestic support, export competition, cotton, special safeguard mechanism, public stockholding, transparency), as well as a decision on the exemption of World Food Program purchases for humanitarian purposes. Members priorities continued to differ and were urged to find solutions. Members also started to discuss the emerging food and fuel crisis and related price increases arising from the situation in Ukraine which is a major exporter of grain and wheat and a possible response from the WTO including a Joint statement.

On [WTO response to COVID-19 pandemic](#), the strategic pause on negotiations continued. Members engaged bilaterally and in groups to continue discussions on the composite text and the text of the 278 proposal co-sponsors. On the TRIPS waiver, discussions continued in the quad (US, EU, Indian and South Africa) facilitated by the WTO Director General.

On the joint statement initiatives (JSIs) very little progress was made given the overall situation.

During this period, PIF Geneva issued 11 technical circulars on Agriculture including Food Security, WTO Response to COVID 19, TRIPS Waiver, reports of regular WTO bodies and ACP Group meetings. PIF Geneva also organized a Pacific Trade and Fisheries Officials Briefing on 12 April 2022 to review progress on Fisheries Subsidies negotiations and refine positions in preparation for MC12.

4. AID-FOR-TRADE

4.1 Projects

4.1.1 Implemented

Implementation of the [Pacific E-commerce Initiative](#) continued smoothly.

- Work accelerated on the Pacific E-commerce Portal, including website development, drafting of business toolkits, collection of E-commerce statistics, and review of submissions from the implementing agencies of the [Pacific Regional E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap](#)
- The regional training on E-commerce rules was successfully administered and 74 participants graduated – the graduation ceremony will take place in August 2022. The development of a self-paced version of the course commenced and will be included in the Pacific E-Commerce Portal.
- The first draft of the Samoa E-commerce Strategy was finalised and reviewed
- The [Pacific Islands E-Trade Dialogue](#) took place in March 2022 and four project ideas were unveiled for further scoping including on skills ([eCommerce Institute](#) and [DHL](#)), e-payment gateway ([MasterCard](#) and [ygap](#)), transport subsidies ([DHL](#)) and geolocation ([Google Plus code](#))

Work on the [Pacific Trade Facilitation Initiative](#) also progressed, including national consultations in Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

PIF Geneva continued to manage the consultancy team supporting the [Pacific Group](#) on World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations. The team prepared briefings on fisheries subsidies and the 'trade and health' issues for a virtual briefing session for Pacific trade officials which took place on 12 April, which was well attended and well received. The pace of negotiations began to pick up with the team monitoring the situation across all relevant areas.

4.1.2 Completed/Secured

The Trade Advocacy Fund 2 ([TAF2](#)) confirmed additional funding for about USD 60,000 to support the Pacific Group in the run-up and at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12).

4.1.3 Ongoing

Contacts between the PACER Plus Implementation Unit ([PPIU](#)) and the UPU were facilitated to identify a regional approach to boost E-commerce readiness of Pacific post operators.

A submission was made to the Australian Mission in Geneva seeking support for enhancing regional E-commerce statistics.

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

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

5. PTI EUROPE

This was a travel and trade show intense period for PTI Europe. The first of these was [Food Expo Greece](#) held in Athens. [Ranadi](#) and [Vaiwai](#) attended in person under our banner and the group worked together to identify and meet key buyers for Pacific products. These businesses are now each having discussions with European distribution companies following meetings held there.

UPDATE 2/2022 (MARCH-APRIL 2022)

PTI Europe also participated to the [International Food and Drink](#) Expo in London within a collaborative framework [ITC](#). This event was specific to promotion of PNG coffee and Fijian ginger. PTI organized the largest Europe-based distributor of Fijian ginger to attend, which increased both the level of expertise on the stand and the network of buyers attracted through his client connections. Opportunities were also identified for other Pacific products through PTI's participation and knowledge.

Off the success of the London International Food and Drink and again in collaboration with ITC, PTI Europe also represented Pacific products at the [Food and Drink Expo](#) in Birmingham. Liaising with all export-ready Pacific Islands businesses that could benefit from this promotion, information on pricing, supply capabilities, samples and brochures were collected. At the conclusion of the event, leads and follow-up recommendations were submitted to the businesses, with commercial results expected.

The other key focus for this period was the assistance extended to PIFS' Secretary General during his visit to UAE, which involved setting meetings and activities for his productive visit to [Dubai Expo](#). Key objectives achieved in this mission included visiting and acknowledging all Pacific Pavilions at the Dubai expo as well as meeting with Pacific Ministers and Ambassadors for briefings and discussion on regional priorities.