

Foreign Affairs & Trade Bulletin



Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA

SAMOA CONCLUDES WTO BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

What's Inside

Samoa has concluded bilateral negotiations with the EC on Samoa's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). The conclusion was marked by the signing of the bilateral agreement held on 1 June 2010 at the EU premises in Geneva. Mr. John Clarke, Acting Head of the EU Delegation in Geneva signed on behalf of the EU while Mr. Auelua Samuelu Enari, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, signed on behalf of the Government of Samoa.

The bilateral agreement contained Samoa's services commitments and the schedule of goods concession that Samoa will implement upon accession to the WTO. The EU is the sixth WTO Member to have concluded bilat-

eral negotiations with Samoa. The remaining bilateral negotiations to be finalized are with the United States of America, Ukraine and Canada.

An Informal Working Party Meeting on the Accession of Samoa was also held in Geneva on the 2nd of June 2010. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Kuni Sato of Japan and attended by WTO Members including Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America, Japan, China, Canada, Ukraine, Dominican Republic and Zambia. As the coordinator of the LDC grouping at the WTO, the delegation of Zambia called upon WTO members to accord flexibilities to Samoa as an LDC; to restrain from excessive demands from Sa-

moa; and for the Members to ensure Samoa's early WTO membership by implementing the Guidelines for the Accession of LDCs as agreed by Ministers in 2006.

The delegation from Samoa, headed by Mr. Enari, included the CEO of the Ministry of Finance, Afioga Tupai Iulai Lavea; Deputy CEO of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Faalavaau Perina Sila; Assistant Attorney General, Donald Kerslake; ACEO of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; Pelenato Fonoti; Assistant CEO of the Ministry for Revenue, Komisi Koria; and Nella Tavita-Levy of MFAT. Samoa's delegation was funded by the International Trade Centre (ITC) in Geneva and the Integrated Framework for LDCs.

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS ON PACER PLUS

PACER was first signed in 2001 as a framework agreement aimed at developing trade and economic relations between the 14 Forum Island Countries and Australia and New Zealand. Articles 5 and 6 of the PACER Agreement are specific in triggering negotiations on PACER Plus. PACER Plus is a Free Trade Agreement that Samoa, together with other Forum Island Countries, is set to negotiate with Australia and New Zealand.

In October 2009, the Forum Trade Ministers agreed that extensive national consultations need to take place before any draft consolidated legal text on PACER Plus is to be tabled. The Ministers identified the following as priority areas for consideration in light of PACER Plus negotiations: *Rules of Origin, Trade Facilitation, Labour Mobility*

and *Development Assistance*, focusing on physical infrastructure for trade, trade development and promotion. They also identified as other priority issues for discussion Services, including Health, Education, Telecommunications, Shipping and Aviation, Investment, Economic Cooperation and Environment including Renewable Energy.

In following this mandate, MFAT began Samoa's first round of national consultation in March 2010. To date, a total of 32 ministries, professional organizations, private sector organizations and civil society have been included in the first round of national consultations. This round is essentially aimed at giving participants a brief introduction to PACER and PACER Plus as well as gauging initial ideas from stakeholders on possible areas,

they feel, should be included in such an Agreement. An overview of the key priority areas as identified by the Forum Ministers for initial discussions was presented and commented upon at these consultations.

As the Ministry prepares for further consultations with various stakeholders, we encourage written submissions on any issue a company, organization or individual may feel is valid for consideration of Samoa's national interests under such an Agreement.

Submissions may be emailed to Henry Tunupopo at henry@mfat.gov.ws or Reina Wilson at reina@mfat.gov.ws of our Trade Division.

FORUM TRADE MINISTERS MEET TO ENABLE PROGRESS ON PACER PLUS

Forum Trade Ministers met in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) from 29 - 30 April 2010. Samoa's delegation was headed by the Deputy Prime-Minister also Minister for Trade Negotiations and accompanied by Ms. Aida Savea, A.C.E.O Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Mr. Stephen Musubire, Trade Policy Analyst Commonwealth Secretariat (Hubs and Spokes project).

The meeting also attracted Trade Ministers from: Australia, FSM, Kiribati, New Zealand, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Tonga. Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea and Tuvalu were represented at Senior Officials level. Observers at the meeting comprised representatives from the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) and the University of South Pacific (USP). Also present at the meeting was the Chief Trade Adviser (CTA) to the Forum Island Countries (FICs) on PACER Plus Negotiations, Dr Christopher Noonan. The Meeting was chaired by Honourable Alik L Alik, Vice President of the FSM.

The meeting was convened to consider and make decisions on the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus related issues, which include the establishment of the Office of the Chief Trade Adviser (OCTA) as well as the schedule of PACER Plus related meetings. Ministers also considered the forward strategy for the Pacific Islands Trade and Investment Commissions (PITICs), an update on Aid for Trade (AfT) Programmes, future funding arrangements for the Forum World Trade Organisation (WTO) Office in Geneva and developments relating to Traditional Knowl-

edge and Intellectual Property-related issues.

Whilst a number of issues were deliberated upon, critically, Ministers noting the fundamental importance of shipping, aviation, telecommunications and water infrastructure to increased trade in goods and services between Member Countries, agreed that these were priority negotiating issues to be considered under PACER Plus negotiations.

The importance of having a fully functional and operational OCTA to assist FICs in preparation for and in undertaking national consultations in preparations for PACER-Plus negotiations was discussed and it was agreed that ample time be given to Members to consider recommendations on the legal structure of the OCTA.

Issues pertaining to Rules of Origin are fundamental to any meaningful Trade Agreement. This is especially so since the origin of goods is crucial if goods are to enter foreign Markets on Preferential terms. Samoa is not new to the concept of rules of origin since it has been benefitting from a derogation of SPARTECA ROO to enable meaningful operation of Yazaki wire harnessing industry. Nonetheless rules of origin are a complex concept that need early deliberation, discussion and understanding. Hence the Ministers in Pohnpei thanked Australia for offering to support a Rules of Origin and Customs Procedures Workshop on PACER Plus, and also agreed that the Workshop take place in the week commencing 30 August 2010, with a possibility of other technical issues being considered at the Workshop.

On standards and conformance which is another crucial aspect when it comes to commodities being granted access into foreign markets especially, Ministers considered a

revised approach to implementing regional Standards and Conformance (S&C) activities in the region noting that the work on S&C needed to be prioritized at the national level before work could progress, including the identification of the sectors. The Ministers also directed the PIFS to table the revised concept paper on S&C at the regional meeting of trade officials, development partners and implementing agencies for further consideration once the regional status analysis of trade facilitation work in the region is complete.

Developments relating to Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) related issues were also discussed and Ministers welcomed the launch of the Traditional Knowledge Action Plan in December 2009 and thanked the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) for its ongoing support for work on Traditional Knowledge. Ministers also welcomed the proposal to progress and finalise the MOU for the establishment of a regional trademark system, and stressed the need for it to include capacity building.

The possibility of the FIC workers accessing the Guam labour market to benefit from the employment opportunities was also discussed and it emerged that though no Pacific Island country had been included on the U.S visa category list to tap into this opportunity, there was still room to negotiate for the inclusion of Pacific Island countries on a special visa list initially. Hence Ministers noted that the FICs need to ensure that their workers are able to meet the accreditation and certification requirements to be able to access the Guam employment markets, and that discussion between individual FICs and relevant authorities would be necessary.

SEMINAR ON ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHINA

Globalization describes the ongoing global trend toward the free flow of trade and investment across borders and therefore the integration of the international economy. One of the main mechanisms for this phenomenon is through Regional Cooperation in the form of free trade areas, customs unions and common markets. Initially with globalization it was argued that developing countries often struggle to compete with developed countries and that the benefits of globalization could often be described via North-South Regional Cooperation.

However, evidence shows that there is a rise in the number of South-South Regional Cooperation (i.e. developing countries assisting other developing countries), that are also contributing towards shaping development globally.

In early May, Samoan officials participated in a two week seminar in Wuhan, China. The seminar held was extremely timely, given the unprecedented expansion in South-South trade, investment and aid

flows that has taken place in recent years in which China has played a key role in being the major driving force. Despite implementing liberal economic policies since 1978, China continues to maintain heavy protections on most of its domestic giant industries and most importantly, its financial markets. Their protection over the latter has proved beneficial for China in mitigating the effects of the recent global financial crises, which has already seen detrimental effects on most of the developed world. Notwithstanding this is the fact that despite being the world's fastest growing economy with an annual GDP growth of 9.3% per annum, China is still a developing country.

As an emerging major aid and investment player in the Pacific, China has indicated strong capacity to support Samoa's development policies. Earlier this year, China and Samoa signed a "Framework Agreement on the Provision of Concessional Loan" which will see the Chinese government granting Samoa a concessional loan equivalent

to \$75 million tala.

Letters of exchange between the two countries were also signed in May 2010 guaranteeing 4721 of Samoa's products being exported to China duty free. This is the initial step to further liberalization of up to 95 percent of Samoa's products exported to China. In addition, China has also constructed many government buildings in Samoa and the sporting facilities for the 2007 South Pacific Games.

For decades, South-South cooperation has been a slogan full of lofty vision but short on concrete substance. China and other developing countries now have the opportunity to reinforce the development process from the South. Trade and investment to and from developing countries are rapidly growing. The challenge now is to ensure that this important development in South-South partnership is equitable and aimed at elevating poverty.

HARMONIZATION SCHOLARSHIPS

March to June has proven an extremely busy time for the Scholarships, Training, and Bilateral Division. Interviews for Open Category awards have been completed and the interview process for New Zealand Short Term Training Awards will commence in mid-July. Foundation student's scholarship allocations will also be convening shortly.

The Open Category Awards operate on a tripartite harmonisation basis with direct involvement from NZAID, AusAID, and the Government of Samoa. Awards under the Open Category are tenable in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, with five (5) scholarships offered by the Australian Government for Distance

Flexible Learning (DFL). AusAID has now announced that they have increased Australian Development Scholarships from five to seven, therefore bringing this year's total number of scholarships to twenty-seven (27) awards offered under the Open Category. The application process began on 14 March, 2010. Applicants are given a month to apply through a preliminary form, prior to completing a Common Application form.

Interviews for the finalists were completed on 8 July, 2010. Short Term Training Award interviews tenable only in New Zealand will commence on 15 and 16 July.

For the Foundation Students at the National University of Samoa, scholarships are allocated on the basis of a student's marks, primarily English and best three subjects for the first semester.

The First semester scholarship allocations are **tentative** and whether or not a student maintains their scholarship, is highly dependent upon their end of year results. The Scholarships division at current, is awaiting results from the National University of Samoa before allocations can commence.

PACER PLUS FORUM TRADE OFFICIALS MEETING, 14-15 APRIL, Port Vila

The PACER Plus Trade Officials met on 14-15 April following a meeting of the Forum Island Countries (FICs) Trade Officials with the Chief Trade Adviser, Mr. Christopher Noonan. The meeting was chaired by the Government of Vanuatu, and convened at the Melanesian Hotel. The objective of the informal meeting was to discuss priority issues directed by Trade Ministers from their meeting of October 2009. They are, Rules of Origin, Trade Facilitation including Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Standards and Customs Procedures, Development Assistance and Labor Mobility. All FICs were present except for Fiji.

Discussions over the course of the two days focused on papers tabled by Australia and New Zealand (ANZ), on the key issues mentioned above. It was also agreed overall at the meeting that each of the FICs had a substantial amount of preparatory and ground work to do, and that it would pursue national consultations after the meeting. A summary of some of these issues is captured below:

RULES of ORIGIN (RoO):

There was general agreement that an assessment of RoO in existing Trade Arrangement needed to be made, and for FICs to consider what method was most suitable and could deliver the most benefits.

SPS and TBT needed to be considered with RoO for effective market access of FICs products into ANZ. ANZ need to take note of the different levels of development of the FICs. Technical and financial assistance is needed from ANZ/other development partners to assist FICs with Customs Harmonized Systems (noting current work by OCO).

TRADE FACILITATION (SPS, TBT, Customs Procedures):

The meeting noted that provisions under P+ would need to be consistent with relevant WTO Agreements, and that obligations of non-members were also discussed.

The FICs put emphasis on putting in place meaningful and simple SPS and TBT measures under P+ that were easy to implement and adhere to.

Many FICs lack institutional frameworks as well as legislations in these particular areas, that technical assistance is crucial to address these concerns.

LABOR MOBILITY:

FICs all agreed that Labor Mobility should be an integral part of P+, and that benefits derived can offset balances created by revenue loss, adjustment and implementation costs.

The Officials also noted that there is potential for inclusion of skilled and semi-skilled laborers under current schemes such as RSE to be considered.

FICs also considered that labor mobility should not just focus on FICs to ANZ, but also amongst the region. Skills development, qualifications recognition and education/training be considered also.

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE:

Officials recognized a general view that technical assistance in all priority areas was a crucial building bloc for FICs to address the various costs that will be incurred.

FICs discussed the need for physical infrastructure at both national and regional levels tied into P+.

The capacity of FICs to implement SPS, TBT and other important areas cannot be possible without capacity building and development assistance.

The OCTA will also stand ready to assist FICs with their national consultations for P+.

Since this meeting, a Rules of Origin workshop to build trade/customs officials understanding of RoO is scheduled tentatively for September this year. The details are being discussed at the moment and have yet to be confirmed.

DATA TOOLSETS DEVELOPED FOR PACIFIC ACP COUNTRIES

Data toolsets have been developed for Pacific countries of the Pacific African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) region, to assist in developing their market access offers under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations with the European Union (EU). In fact, the new data tool is a revision of the initial data tool developed in 2006 for the same purpose. This new version contains more updated trade data as well as the incorporation of the HS 2007.

While there still remain some technical issues to be finalised, the first seven PACP countries that have had their data tool revised, including Samoa, welcome this initiative. A training for Trade and Customs officials from the region was held in Suva in mid June 2010.

WTO REGIONAL SEMINAR ON NAMA NEGOTIATIONS FOR PACIFIC ECONOMIES

The Seminar on Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) Negotiations was convened to enhance and strengthen the participants' understanding of the current discussions and proposals on the elements of the modalities of the negotiations. Also in the workshop, participants were briefed on the implementation of the Customs Harmonised System (HS) currently present in the Pacific, particularly used in regional trade negotiations.

Government officials were enabled to deepen their knowledge in market access negotiations for non-agricultural products. The opportunity especially enabled training for tabling market access offers for the next round of Pacific ACP (PACP) – European Union (EU) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations.

WTO NAMA Specialist, Mr. Xiaobing Tang, highlighted the importance of trade liberalization in

promoting international trade. Discussions focused on the implications of on-going NAMA negotiations at the WTO for Forum Island Countries (FICs), as developing nations, including the implications of sectoral negotiations. Negotiation at a multilateral level for PACP was agreed to be the safer option than bilateral negotiations. WTO Specialist for Economic Research and Statistics, Ms. Andelina Mendoza, touched base on the modalities of NAMA negotiations, and the uses and accessing of WTO tariff and trade databases for trade and customs officials.

Ms. Alicia Greenidge, an independent WTO Consultant, discussed the challenges and opportunities of dealing in NAMA negotiations, and what trade officials of Small and Vulnerable Economies (SVEs) should look out for when negotiating with bigger economies. *“Now is the time to join forces with other countries! Such as the PACPS...”* As a consultant with wide ranging experience in the NAMA ne-

gotiations of larger developed nations, Ms. Greenidge urged FICs trade and customs officials to demand that more offers be tabled in multilateral trade negotiations. The consultant highlighted existing NAMA Non-Tariff Barrier (NTB) proposals made by developing nations.

According to customs data, non-agricultural products exported from Samoa made up 90% of the total exports value in 2007.

As a joint initiative of PIFS and the WTO to address the need for capacity building on trade policy issues, the two related workshops were held in the same setting.

Samoa was represented at the seminar by Ms. Sina Laumea-Meredith (Customs), Ms. Reina Wilson (MFAT), Ms. Nella Tavita-Levy (MFAT) and Mr. Stephen Musubire (MFAT).

CHINA'S ZERO-TARIFF TREATMENT SCHEME

In 2006, the First Ministerial Meeting of the China-Pacific Island Countries Economic Development and Cooperation Forum was held in Nadi, Fiji. It was attended by China and the Forum Island Countries including Samoa.

During the Forum, it was decided that a list of goods will receive zero-tariff treatment. Recently, the Premier of China, in response to the requests by countries after the Forum, decided to include more coun-

tries and more products to the zero-tariff treatment scheme. This initiative will see 95 percent of Samoan products to China receiving zero-tariff treatment. This will take place over a two-stage timeframe. The first stage will start within 2010 with 60 percent of our exports to China starting to receive zero-tariff treatment.

This first stage commenced on 1st July 2010 after the signing of the letters of exchange between Samoa

and China in early May 2010. There are 4721 products eligible for zero-tariff rates in Stage 1.

During the second stage, the list of products will increase up to 95 percent receiving zero-tariff treatment. A definite timeframe for Stage 2 to commence is yet to be determined by the Chinese government.



POLITICAL, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PROTOCOL

High Level Visits

A number of high level dignitaries visited Samoa for official purposes in the past three months.

World Health Organization: Dr Shin Young-Soo

The Regional Director for Western Pacific of the World Health Organization (WHO) was in Samoa from 11 to 14 April 2010. Dr. Young-Soo gave the keynote address at the Health Symposium entitled "Attaining Food Security, Quality and Safety through Primary Health care" which was held at Orators Hotel on 14 April 2010. During his visit he met with the Head of State, Prime Minister, Minister of Health and the United Nations and WHO staff in Samoa. He also visited the National Health Services headquarters and the Oceania University of Medicine.

Japan: Honourable Chinami Nishimura

The Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Honourable Chinami Nishimura visited Samoa from 29 April to 1 May 2010. Hon. Nishimura led the nine member delegation which included the Ambassador of Japan to Samoa H.E Mr Toshihiro Takahashi, the Director of the Oceania Division of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Mr. Keiichi Ichikawa and other officials from MOFA. While in Samoa the Vice Minister met with the Head of State and the Prime Minister, and attended the handing over ceremonies of the following projects under Japan's Grassroots Human Security Grant Aid programme:

- Fire Engines for the Fire & Emergency Services and Airport Authority
- Ambulances for the National Health Services
- Faletolu Primary School

H.E. Mr Toshihiro Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan to Samoa returned in June to meet with government officials and to sign with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment the Exchange of Notes for the Forest Pres-

ervation Programme.

People's Republic of China: Honourable Mr Liu Peng and Sports delegation

The Chinese Sports Minister and President of the Chinese Olympics Committee, Honourable Liu Peng and delegation were in Samoa on 2nd and 3rd May to visit the Samoa sports facilities and to further promote the bilateral sports exchanges between Samoa and China. The Minister also met with the Prime Minister and Minister of Natural Resources and Environment during this visit.

European Commission: H.E. Mr Wiepke Van Der Goot

The Ambassador of the European Commission Delegation for the Pacific was in Samoa from 11-15 May 2010 to sign a development cooperation programme which provides support to the water and sanitation sector in Samoa for 2010-2013. The signing ceremony took place at the ACC building and Hon. Misa Telefoni signed on behalf of the Government of Samoa. Ambassador Van Der Goot also celebrated the National Day of the European Commission with the local staff and invited local guests at the Sails Restaurant on Friday, 14 May 2010.

During the 48th Independence celebrations the following high level dignitaries travelled to Samoa for this prestigious occasion:

His Majesty King George Tupou V

The King of Tonga was accompanied by His Serene Highness Prince Tungi, Lord Tu'ivakano & government officials.

Honourable Togiola Tulafono, Governor of American Samoa

The Governor was accompanied by First Lady Mary Anne Tulafono and officials from the Government of American Samoa.

Faipule Kuresa Nasau, Ulu-O-Tokelau

H.E. Mr David Huebner, Ambassador of USA

While in Samoa for the Independence celebrations, Ambassador Huebner met with several local and government dignitaries. He visited projects under the Women In Business organisation and officially presented Grants on behalf of the US Government to the following successful NGOs:

- Pan Pacific South East Asian Women Association (EAP/PD),
- Women In Business Development Incorporated (EAP/PIDF)
- O Le Siosiomaga Society Incorporated (EAP/ PIDF)
- Siumu Community Center-Internet Café (EAP/PIDF)

Pacific Island Forum Secretariat: Mr Tuiloma Neroni Slade

The Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat attended the CROP meeting of Executive heads held at the SPREP Headquarters in Apia from 9-10 June 2010. While in Samoa the Secretary General also called on the Prime Minister and the CEO for Foreign Affairs.

Newly Accredited Ambassadors

The new Ambassador of Slovak Republic and High Commissioners of Cyprus and India travelled to Samoa in the past months for the presentation of their credentials.

Slovak Republic: H.E. Ms. Eva Ponomarenkova

The Slovak Republic's first accredited Ambassador to Samoa, H.E. Mrs Eva Ponomarenková arrived in Samoa on Saturday, 8 May 2010, to present her Letters of Credence to His Highness the Head of State and to meet with Government officials and representatives of the Diplomatic Corp. The presentation of Credentials took place on 11 May 2010 at the Head of State's residence at Tuaeufu. Ambassador Ponomarenková was accompanied by her husband, Mr Igor Ponomarenko and they are based in Canberra, Australia.

Cyprus: H.E. Mr Yannis Iacovou H.E Mr. Yannis Iacovou arrived in

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Samoa on Monday 14th June and presented his credentials to His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese on Tuesday 15th June. The credentials ceremony was followed by a meeting in the afternoon with the Prime Minister, Hon. Tuilaepa Lufesoia Sialele Malielegaoi. High Commissioner Iacovou holds a Bachelor of Science in Economics and a Masters in Diplomatic Studies. He is also the Cyprus High Commissioner to Australia based in Canberra and is also accredited to New Zealand.

India: H.E. Mr Suresh Mehta

H.E Admiral Sureesh MEHTA was in Apia from 20 to 23 June 2010 for the purpose of presenting his Credentials, officially accrediting him as the High Commissioner of the Republic of India to the Independent State of Samoa. The presentation of credentials ceremony took place at the Head of State's official residence at Vailele on Tuesday, 22 June 2010 at 10am. The Honourable Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua, Speaker of Parliament presided over the ceremony on behalf of His Highness, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi. He is also India's High Commissioner to New Zealand and is based in Wellington, New Zealand.

Farewell Calls

British High Commissioner: H.E Mr. George Fergusson

His Excellency Mr. George Fergusson was in Samoa from 8 to 13 April to bid farewell at the completion of his term as the British High Commissioner to Samoa. He was High Commissioner to Samoa since August 2006 and he will be replaced by Ms. Victoria Treadell.

New Zealand: H.E Ms. Caroline Bilkey

Her Excellency Ms Caroline Bilkey completed her term as High Commissioner of New Zealand to Samoa in June 2010. Ms Bilkey took up the post in June 2007. During her three year term, Ms Bilkey has worked closely with Government in promoting issues of mutual importance to the development and prosperity of both Samoa and New Zealand. Ms Bilkey will be succeeded by Mr Nicholas Hurley and he will take up the post in August this year.

Visiting Vessels

Australian Defence Force Aircraft AP3C was in Samoa from 22 to 27 May 2010 in order to participate in the Tui Moana Operation.

Australian Navy ship HMAS KANIMBLA made a routine stop in Samoa from 15 to 18 June 2010.

Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

The Government of Samoa formally established diplomatic relations with the following 3 countries:

- ◆ **Monaco on 4 May 2010**
- ◆ **United Arab Emirates on 11 May 2010**
- ◆ **Cambodia on 18 May 2010**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Appointments

Ms. Miriama Betham-Malielegaoi, Senior Foreign Service Officer has joined the Political International Relations and Protocol Division Team after completing her term as First Secretary of the Samoa High Commission in Wellington.

**WTO TRADE FACILITATION:
NATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND PRIORITIES
FOR SAMOA**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) under their Technical Assistance Programme on Trade Facilitation conducted a workshop on "National Self Assessment of Needs and Priorities for Samoa" that was held at the Development Bank of Samoa from 11 – 14 May 2010. The assessment was undertaken by WTO experts in partnership with the Oceania Customs Organization and the Government of Samoa through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade and the Ministry for Revenue.

This assessment was based on Articles V, VIII and X of the GATT Agreement. The study focused on

identifying the main trade facilitation areas where technical assistance and capacity building required by Samoa at the national level. The overall objective was to further expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit through simple customs and border procedures as well as to enhance the access of traders in Samoa to the trade related laws and regulations of their trading partners in a more predictable and transparent manner.

The workshop brought together more than 30 representatives from Government Ministries and Private Sector to specifically discuss the needs and pri-

orities for Samoa and how effective capacity building assist trade facilitation. The workshop focused on identifying ways to streamline and simplify trade procedures to allow for easier flow of goods and trade at the border; taking into consideration the fundamental trade facilitation principles of transparency, non-discrimination and simplification and how these measures can be put into best practice at the national level.

Publisher:

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade
P.O. Box L1859
Apia, Samoa
Ph: (685) 21171
Fax: (685) 21504**

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