



Foreign Affairs & Trade Bulletin

Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade

April—June 2017

PACER Plus Trade Agreement signed in Tonga



Samoa was among the ten Forum Island Countries present to sign the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus which was held in Nukualofa on 14 June 2017. PACER Plus is a trade and development agreement aiming to encourage economic development of Pacific Island Countries. The Agreement will be the platform to facilitate trade and build capacity of island economies to take advantage of not only Australia and New Zealand market opportunities but also other Pacific Island parties; and globally. The trading rules are more favourable than the existing arrangements such as Australia and New Zealand's SPARTECA; and the Forum Island Countries' PICTA.

The other nine countries/signatories of the agreement were Australia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. As part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's ongoing advocacy plans, the ministry had the opportunity to present on PACER plus at the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Forum held in Apia on the 22nd June and in Savaii on 13th July 2017, organised by SUNGO to update its members on new developments and initiatives of government.

United Nations Ocean Conference, UN Headquarters, 5th – 9th June 2017



Under the co-presidency of Fiji and Sweden, the United Nations Ocean Conference adopted as its Outcome Document a "Call for Action" to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), 14 - "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development" and a report containing the co-chairs' summaries of the partnership dialogues, as well as a list of **voluntary commitments** for the implementation of SDG 14.

A list of all the 1392 voluntary commitments can be found here - <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/>.

During the Ocean Conference, the Prime Minister delivered Samoa's statement during the plenary session. Additionally he was also a panellist in some of the following Sides. The honourable Prime Minister also had bilateral meetings with some of the delegations.

The Rt. Hon. Bill English, Prime Minister of New Zealand accompanied by his Good Lady, Dr. Mary English as Distinguished Guests for Samoa's Independence Day: 31st May – 2nd June 2017

The PM of NZ, The Rt. Hon. Bill English was one of Samoa's distinguished guests for the 55th Independence Day of Samoa. He was ac-

companied by his good lady who is of Samoan descent, Dr. Mary English and a delegation of 10 NZ officials. This is the first time that the NZ PM has visited Samoa as the Prime Minister.



Photo: Raising of the Samoan Flag during the 55th Independence: L-R: Afamasaga Rico Tupai, Minister of Communications and Technology, Hon Tuilaeapa Lupesoliaia Malielegaoi, PM of Samoa, Th Rt Hon Bill English, PM of NZ, Good Lady Dr Mary English

During this visit, Bill English spoke at a reception hosted by the NZ High Commission Office to mark 55 years of the Treaty of Friendship between Samoa and NZ where he reiterated that his government is working with the Pacific Communities to ensure they have the ability to participate in the same way as all other New Zealanders.

Bill English was also the fourth Prime Minister of NZ to receive a chiefly matai title. He was bestowed the title of 'Le uluai alii o tumua' from the village of Faleula and was made assure of the help from village matais in guiding him with the duties and role of a chief in the village

After which, he visited the Health Services and spoke with Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) Workers followed by a visit to Cocoa

Samoa.



Photo: Bestowal of the Leuluailiitumua Chief Matai Title by the Minister of Education, Sports and Culture, Hon Keneti Sio Loau during ceremony in Faleula. PC: Samoa Observer

3rd Session of the Preparatory Committee for Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond national Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

The third session of the Preparatory Committee for the BBNJ was held from the 27th March- 7th April 2017 at UN Headquarters, New York. Samoa through the Pacific SIDS group has engaged actively in the preparatory meetings to ensure that the special case of SIDS as well as the economic benefits for the Pacific and the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction are recognized and captured in whatever legal document that will emerge from these negotiations. The Mission has been representing Samoa in the preparatory meetings so far, together with Ms Anama Solofa, a Samoan national who is currently a researcher at the University of Maine and studying towards her thesis in Marine Policy. The Pacific Missions are being assisted in the negotiations by CROP agencies such as FFA, OPOC, SPREP and CSIRO.

Visa Agreement on Mutual Abolition of Visa Requirements with the Russian Federation Wellington, New Zealand signed on the 4th April 2017



Photo: Samoa and Russian Federation exchange documents after the signing of the Visa-Free-Agreement between the two countries.

The High Commissioner of Samoa to New Zealand, H.E Leasi Papalii T Scanlan signed the visa-free agreement on behalf of the Government of the Independent State of Samoa whereas the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Russia to New Zealand, H.E Mr Valery Yakovlevich Tereshchenko, signed on behalf of the Government of the Russian Federation. The documentations were signed in Wellington, New Zealand on the 4th April 2017.

The Agreement is aimed at strengthening the relations between the two parties by easing travel requirements for all passport holders (diplomatic/official/ordinary) from Samoa; and diplomatic and service passport holders from the Russian Federation. It provides visa free travel for Samoan nationals to enter into (stay in, exit from or transit) the Russian Federation for a stay of not exceeding sixty (60) days. This exemption does not apply to Samoan nationals travelling for the purpose of work, study or reside in the territory of the Russian Federation. The Agreement will enter into force 30 days after the date of the receipt of formal ratification from both parties and with this now in place, the date of entry into force is the 9th July 2017.

H.E Mr Leasi Papalii T Scanlan on behalf of the Government of the Independent State of Samoa thanked the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, H.E Mr Valery Yakovlevich Tereshchenko for this opportunity that will allow for visa-free travel between the two countries. This would be a positive contribution to the development of tourism and other priority sectors of mutual interest to Samoa and the Russian Federation.

Diplomatic Corps Reception to Farewell Hon. Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs on 10th April 2017



Photo: Hon Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, H.E Leasi Papalii T. Scanlan and Heads of Missions

and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade. H.E Leasi Papalii T. Scanlan made a brief speech on behalf of the Diplomatic Corp to officially farewell the Minister of Foreign Affairs wishing him all the best in his future endeavours. The Minister of Foreign Affairs responded to the Dean of the Diplomatic Corp to express his appreciation for the reception being organised in his honour and wished the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and members of the Diplomatic Corps the very best in their respective endeavours.

The Samoa High Commissioner and Dean of the Diplomatic Corp along with members of the Diplomatic Corps hosted a farewell reception in honour of the Hon. Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Wellington Club on Monday 10th April 2017. This reception was well attended by the invited dignitaries including representatives from the Minister's Office

MOU for the Establishment of the Centre of Excellence in Information Technology



An MOU for the Establishment of the Centre of Excellence in IT (CEIT) was signed on Wednesday 24th May 2017 at the Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva. The MOU was signed by Hon Fiame Naomi Mataafa, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural Resources and Environment on behalf on the Government of Samoa, whilst the Minister of State for External Affairs Gen (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd) signed for the Republic of India.

The MOU was signed in the margins of the India Pacific Summit on Sustainable Development which was attended by a number of Pacific Leaders and Ministers from the region. The President of Nauru and the Acting Prime Minister for Fiji also signed similar MOUs with the Government of India for the establishment of Centres of Excellence in their respective countries. The MOU on CEIT sets out the responsibilities of the parties for the establishment of the Centre of Excellence in Information Technology in Samoa. The implementing agency is the National University of Samoa and NUS has agreed to housing the Centre whereas the Indian Government is prepared to set up the IT Infrastructure, including course materials and reference books in order to deliver IT courses.

Church Service for Samoa's 55th Independence Celebration & Samoa Language Week on the 28th May 2017

A combined church service for Samoa's 55th Independence Day and the Opening of the Samoan Language Week under the theme "Ma'au i lou ofaga, Mau'a lou faasinomaga" translation in English means "Keep your identity Alive, to Thrive" was held at the Aufaga Hall in Porirua on Sunday 28th May 2017. The programme and procession of the service were put together by the Pastors of Wellington led by Rev. Tauinaola Tofilau. The Samoa High Commissioner, H.E Leasi Papalii T. Scanlan as keynote speaker stressed the importance and the significance of these important events in the lives of Samoans living in Aotearoa New Zealand. The event was well attended and concluded on a high note with the presence of Pastors from all across the Wellington region along with the Mayor of Porirua, Mr Mike Tana.

World Tuna Day Celebration 2 May 2017



In 2016, the United Nations General Assembly designated 2 May as World Tuna Day. This was in recognition of the important role of tuna in ecosystems, economies and cultures, particularly in the Pacific Islands. The Samoa Mission joined Pacific SIDS Missions in celebrating the World Tuna Day with the UN community.

Minister of Finance Official Visit to New Zealand from the 10th to 12th April 2017



Photo: Leasi Papali'i T Scanlan, Hon. Minister SiliEpaTuioti, Lavea Tupai'matunaIulai Laveaand Ms Naomi Ferguson, Commissioner of Inland Revenue

The Honourable Minister of Finance, Sili Epa Tuioti accompanied by the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Finance, Lavea Tupaimatuna Iulai Lavea were in Wellington and Auckland on an official invitation by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Murray McCully as a guest of government from the 10th to 12th April 2017. The Minister during his visit to Wellington from the 10th to 11th April 2017, held a number of meetings with key Government Departments including Inland Revenue, NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, NZ Customs, Ministerial calls to Minister of Communications, Hon. Simon Bridges, Minister of Finance, Hon. Steven Joyce, Minister of Trade, Hon. Todd McClay, Minister of Pacific People, Hon. Alfred Ngaro and luncheon with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Murray McCully.

The Minister also held meetings with Air New Zealand and Connect Global along with a meeting at the Samoa High Commission including the site visit of the existing Chancery building, the newly renovated staff apartments and the High Commissioner's residence. On the 12th April 2017, meetings were held in Auckland with representatives from the Pacific Cooperation Foundation, NZ Trade and Enterprise, Pacific Trade and Invest along with a site visit to Panuku Development Authority and Fero Manufacturing. The visit by the Minister concluded with a site visit to the new premises of the Samoa Consulate General Office in Mangere.

National Workshop on Trade Facilitation for Private Sector

The International Trade Centre (ITC) from Geneva conducted a workshop on Trade Facilitation for Samoa's private sector on 3 – 4 April 2017 at the SBEC conference centre in Apia. The programme is part of the ITC's current undertakings in the Pacific region to escalate the awareness of private sector and local stakeholders on the new World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The Trade Facilitation Agreement came into force earlier this year on 22 February 2017. The workshop was co-organized by the Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Samoa Speaker's Official Visit to Wellington, New Zealand from the 1st to 4th May 2017



Photo: Speaker, Hon. LeaupepeTaimaionoToleafoaFaafisi addressing the audience at Victoria University in Wellington

The Speaker of the Samoan Legislative Assembly, Hon Leaupepe Taimaiono Toleafoa Faafisi, visited New Zealand as a Guest of the New Zealand Parliament from the 1st to 4th May 2017. New Zealand's Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter, was delighted to host his counterpart as this high-level visit comes at an opportune time to discuss common interests in the Pacific region and beyond. The Samoan Speaker was accompanied by four members of Parliament (Toomata Aki Tuipea, Lea'ana Ronnie Posini, Toleafoa Vaafausuaga Poutoa and FaalogoIosefa Sopi), Ms Charlene Malele (Clerk of the Legislative Assembly) and H.E Leasi Papali'i T Scanlan (Samoa High Commissioner) attended all the official engagements whilst in Wellington.

During the four-day visit, Speaker Faafisi and his delegation also met with Minister for Pacific Peoples Hon Alfred Ngaro , Deputy Speaker Hon Chester Borrowes,

Assistant Speaker Hon Trevor Mallard, the co-chairs of the New Zealand-Pacific Parliamentary Friendship Group Hon Peseta Sam Lotu-liga and Aupito William Sio and members of the group and Pacific spokespeople from political parties. The delegation also attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) lecture by Sir Don McKinnon on Tuesday 2nd May 2017, hosted on behalf of the CPA's Pacific Region, following a meeting with the CPA Secretary –General.



Photo: Speaker, Hon. LeaupepeTaimaionoToleafoaFaafisi, Members of Parliament of Samoa along with the Samoa High Commissioner, H.E Leasi Papali'i T Scanlan and NZ Labour Party MP, Aupito William Sio (standing)

Minister for Revenue and Prisons Official Visit to New Zealand from 22nd to 24th May 2017



Photo: Minister of Revenue and Prisons, Hon. Tialavea Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt

The Minister of Revenue and Prisons, Hon. Tialavea Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt accompanied by Association Minister, Soalo Mene, the Chief Executive Officer of Ministry for Revenue, Ms Avalisa Viali-Fautualii, the Commissioner of Samoa Prisons and Corrections, Mr Frank Frederick Winterstein, officials from the two Ministries were in New Zealand from 22nd to 24th May 2017 on an invitation from the New Zealand Minister of Corrections, Ms Louise Upston.

In Wellington on the 22nd May 2017, the Minister and delegation held meetings with the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade along with NZ Customs and concluded with a site visit to Rimutaka Prisons in Hutt Valley to view the facilities. The Samoa High Commission attended to all the official engagements of the Minister and delegation whilst in Wellington.

In Auckland from 23rd to 24th May 2017, the Minister and delegation had the opportunity to view the Spring Hill Correction Facilities and at the Auckland Port, the x-ray machines being used to screen cargos when it arrives into New Zealand. There were detailed discussions on the training opportunities and programmes in place for Samoa through the funding support being provided by the Government of New Zealand.

National Workshop On WTO Notification Requirements



A national workshop focusing on the notification requirements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) was held in Apia from the 16th to the 19th of May, 2017. It attracted over 50 participants from both the private and public sectors, most of which represented line ministries who play a key role in the drafting of the notifications.

The workshop was organized and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), with the technical assistance of Mr. Serafino Marchese and Dr. Mukela Faustin Luanga from the WTO. It was coordinated and designed to build the capacity of line ministries and raise awareness of key stakeholders in the preparation and submission of WTO notifications as stipulated under the WTO Agreements.

One of the basic principles of the WTO addresses ‘transparency and predictability’, which looks at the degree to which trade policies and practices implemented by member governments, and the processes by which they are established, are open and predictable. To ensure that these principles are fulfilled, all WTO members are obligated to notify its respective trade-related laws, procedures, information, and any changes of those matters to the WTO Secretariat.

The workshop program started with a general session which provided an overview of all the notification requirements. This was then followed by dedicated sessions specific to the trade areas covered under WTO, namely Market Access for Goods, Agriculture, Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures, Technical Barriers to Trade, Services, Trade Remedies, Intellectual Property and Regional Trade Agreements.

The workshop concluded with the stakeholders understanding the important role they play in the preparation of WTO notifications and that information-sharing is key to ensuring that the notifications are effectively completed and submitted within the timelines provided by the WTO. A work plan on WTO notifications was drafted and it was agreed to be shared with line ministries for the preparation of the notifications that are currently outstanding. This capacity-building workshop complements Samoa’s work plan and preparations for its first trade policies review to be conducted by the WTO in 2019.

3rd Meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation

The FA-PT was adopted last year by The 3rd Meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group (IISG) on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation was held at the UNESCAP headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand from 23 – 24 March 2017. The meeting, which was attended by 26 UNESCAP members including Samoa, discussed final preparations for the signing of the Framework Agreement on Cross-border Paperless Trade (FA-PT) for the Asia Pacific region on 29 August 2017 in Bangkok.

UNESCAP at its seventy-second session, provides a unique opportunity for members to boost their trade and investment competitiveness and actively support the growth of their digital economy. The platform will enable the electronic exchange of trade related data and documents across borders amongst parties and is expected to benefit all participating members regardless of their current status on paperless trade.

Mr. Louis Jalesa Ofele of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade represented Samoa at the 3rd IISG.

Visiting VIPS

- ♦ **H.E. Mr. Jonathon Sinclair, British High Commissioner, Site Visit on Bio Gas Project and making aware of the availability of Chevening Scholarships: 9th – 12th April, 2017**
- ♦ **H.E. Mr. Rob Zaagman, Ambassador of Netherlands, Present Candidate for ITLOS Election: 16th – 18th April, 2017**
- ♦ **H.E. Mr David Vogelsanger, Ambassador of Switzerland, Official Visit and Transit to attend American Samoa’s Flag Day: 14th – 21st April, 2017**

- ♦ **Puleite Dr. Shin Young-Soo, WHO Regional Director, Site Visit and High Level Meeting with PM of Samoa in terms of bolstering commitment in achieving universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals through Health Programs such as PEN: 4th – 7th May 2017**

- ♦ **Mr. Zheng Zeguang, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, accompanied by a 6-people delegation, Courtesy/ Bilateral visit: 21st – 23rd May 2017**

Presentation of Credential

Ambassador of Israel: H.E. Dr Itzhak Gerberg: 29th March – 4th April 2017

Ambassador of Finland: H.E. Lars Erik Backstrom: 18th – 20th April 2017

Ambassador of Japan (with residence in Samoa): H.E. Mr Shinyo Aoki: 22nd April, 2017

Ambassador of Indonesia: H.E. Mr. TantowYahya: 26th – 29th April, 2017



*Presentation of Credentials: L-R Masiofo Filifilia Tamasese, Head of State, His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese, Ambassador of Israel, H.E. Dr Itzhak Gerberg
PC: Samoa Observer*



Credential Ceremony: Honorary Consul in Samoa, Seiuli Ian Black, Ambassador of Finland, H.E. Lars Erik Backstrom, Head of State, His Highness Tupua Tamasese Efi, Masiofo Filifilia Tamasese. PC: Samoa Observer



*Credential Ceremony: L-R Ambassador of Japan, HE Mr Shinyo Aoki, Head of State, His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese, Counsellor, Tuimaugaoli'i Kazumasa Shibuta
PC: Samoa Observer*



Presentation of Credentials: L-R 1st Counselor, Mr. Firdauzie Dwiandika; Ambassador of Indonesia, H.E. Mr. Tantowi Yahya, Head of State, His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese and First Secretary, Reza Abdulrojak