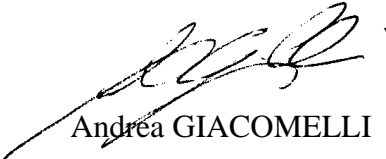


PIFS GVA/06-2023

To : Forum Island Countries (FICs)
Date : 15 April 2023
From : Andrea GIACOMELLI, Officer in Charge, PIF Permanent Delegation
to the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and Other International
Organizations in Geneva
Subject: PIF-Geneva Update 1/2023

Please find attached, for your records, an update on the activities undertaken by the Pacific Islands Forum – Geneva Office (PIF-Geneva) in January-February 2023.

2. For further clarifications or follow-up on Trade Negotiations, please contact Maxine Hunter on maxine.hunter@pifs-geneva.ch
3. For further clarifications or follow-up on Aid-for-Trade, please contact me 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



Andrea GIACOMELLI

Officer in Charge

**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 presented Pacific perspectives at the launching [event](#) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) [Digital Economy Report - Pacific Edition 2022](#).

3. WTO NEGOTIATIONS

During this period, the Chairs for the Negotiating Group on Rules (NGR) and the Committee on Agriculture – Special Session (COA-SS) were appointed on 27 January. The negotiations on Fisheries Subsidies and Agriculture could therefore resume.

On [Fisheries Subsidies](#), the WTO organised a second knowledge-building workshop on 31 January which focused on the data concerning the state of marine resources and on fisheries subsidies. This workshop included a presentation by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) on the status of tuna stocks within the Western and Central Pacific Ocean which are predominantly healthy. The newly appointed NGR Chair, Ambassador Einar GUNNARSSON of Iceland, commenced his work by conducting informal consultations, including with the Pacific Group. The Chair reported on the outcomes of his consultations during an informal Heads of Delegation (HODs) Meeting of the NGR held on 21 February 2023. Regarding the next steps, the Chair indicated his intention to hold four Fish Weeks between March and July 2023. Each fish week would be organised around a specific theme with the aim of addressing the outstanding issues at a conceptual level.

On [Agriculture](#), the newly appointed COA-SS Chair, Ambassador Alparslan ACARSOY of Türkiye, commenced his work with conducting informal consultations with interested Members, followed by an open-ended informal meeting. Divergent positions were reiterated, however, the issue of Food Security identified by all Members as a priority given the current food crisis. Work is also ongoing in the regular Committee on Agriculture to implement the work program agreed in 2022 and emanating from paragraph 8 of the [MC12 Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity](#). Discussions would continue in the coming months to expound on what outcome(s) could be delivered at MC13 given the absence of any outcome at MC12.

On the [TRIPS waiver](#), the first GC meeting of 2023 to be held in March 2023 would decide on the extension of the period for a decision on the waiver.

On [WTO Reform](#), the GC Chair held an informal meeting with Members on 1-2 February 2023 to discuss how the development issues could be addressed in the reform work. All Members reaffirmed that development, particularly special and differential treatment (SDT), plays an integral part in the WTO. Some Members also reiterated the need to restore a fully and well-functioning two-tier Dispute Settlement System and called on the ongoing informal process to be formalised.

UPDATE 1/2023 (JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2023)

Technical Support. During this period, PIF Geneva issued five circulars and briefs on the WIPO negotiations in the Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge, and Folklore; the WTO fisheries subsidies discussions and bilateral meetings; agriculture; E-commerce Work Programme; WTO Reform; the Japan Nuclear Wastewater issue; as well as email briefs on various issues and ACP positions. The Office also held a Pacific Informal Briefing on the WIPO IGC process on 14 February in preparation for 46th session of the IGC (IGC46). In addition, the Office organised a Pacific Ambassadors Meeting on 21 February to provide an update on priority WTO and UN issues. The Office also prepared nine Pacific Group statements and talking points for the: dedicated discussion on the E-commerce Work Programme on 21 February; open-ended informal meeting of COA-SS on 27 February; meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee and Heads of Delegation on 28 February; consolidated matrix of Pacific responses for the WIPO IGC45 in February; fisheries subsidies bilateral meetings held in February; and bilateral meetings on the Japan Nuclear Wastewater issue held in February.

4. AID-FOR-TRADE

4.1 Projects

4.1.1 Implemented

Under the [Pacific E-commerce Initiative](#), a contract was awarded for the development of the national e-commerce strategy of Papua New Guinea – work will commence in March 2023, with completion expected by November of the same year.

4.1.2 Completed/Secured

The PIF and Australia [signed](#) an AUD 84,000 grant agreement to improve E-commerce Statistics in the Pacific.

4.1.3 Ongoing

Numerous project proposals were submitted during this period, including (1) a proposal to support FICs with World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) negotiations on traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, and genetic resources; (2) a proposal to assess the impact of the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement on Pacific countries; (3) a concept note on options to engage the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) with the Pacific E-commerce Initiative.

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

Working closely with stakeholders and partners across the region, this period saw PTI Europe focusing on those businesses that have most export potential to UK and Europe. Extensive Zoom meetings with FIC businesses took place in January to map out action steps forward for the year. Eventually, all PTI Trade Commissioners attended a virtual PTI Advisory Board meeting to present their annual work plans and to answer questions and clarifications from the board members.

In February, PTI Europe conducted a mission to Dubai. The purpose of this business trip was to:

- Meet with a tuna importer distributor who has been growing steadily his spend with Solomon Islands for the past year to support and understand his forward projections and any barriers to achieving that.
- Visit [Gulfood](#) trade fair, the biggest food trade fare in the world, to scope the opportunities in this market for Pacific products.

UPDATE 1/2023 (JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2023)

The trip re-affirmed PTI Europe's value to business owners seeking information on opportunities in this rapidly emerging region.

PTI Europe is happy to track the following in the first 2 months of 2023:

- AUD 371,708 in assisted sales to Pacific Islands businesses.
- 25 services provided to Pacific Islands businesses.