



**PACIFIC
IMMIGRATION
DIRECTORS'
CONFERENCE**

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**PACIFIC IMMIGRATION DIRECTORS' CONFERENCE
ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga
10 –12 September 2003

COMMUNIQUÉ

The Seventh Pacific Immigration Directors Conference (PIDC) was convened in the Kingdom of Tonga, from 10-12 September 2003.

There were forty-five participants at the Conference. Delegates from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Niue, Norfolk Island, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, the Kingdom of Tonga (Tonga), Tuvalu and Vanuatu attended the Conference along with observers from Australian Federal Police (AFP), APC Secretariat, Canadian Immigration, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Tonga Customs, Tonga Police, Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference (SPCPC), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Three private sector firms, the Canadian Bank Note Company, Express Electronics and Informatics made commercial presentations.

Official Opening

Following the opening prayer by Reverend 'Alifeleti 'Atiola His Royal Highness, Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, the Prime Minister of Tonga, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Principal Immigration Officer, officially opened the Conference.

In his address, His Royal Highness spoke of the issues facing the Pacific Region today. He highlighted the difficulties for Pacific Nations addressing the needs of immigration due to the scattered nature of island nations and the lack of financial resources.

H.R.H noted that immigration is complicated further because it is a fine balancing act between the individual's human rights and the rights and benefits of collective groups of states. H.R.H highlighted the turbulent times in which we live with terrorism, people smuggling and trafficking and illegal migration a growing problem. He stressed the importance of the need to work together to address these issues and reflected happily on the strong working relationship with our sister organisations the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) and South Pacific Chiefs of Police (SPCPC).

Mrs. Fekita 'Utoikamanu, Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Immigration, The Kingdom of Tonga was elected to chair the Conference and Niue was elected Vice-Chair.

Issues considered by the Conference included:

- Secure Information Communication systems;
- Advanced passenger information;
- Contingency plans for mass arrivals;
- Repatriation of illegal migrants;
- Model legislative provisions;
- Integrity in immigration;
- Institutional strengthening;
- Passports;
- People Smuggling, Trafficking and Illegal Migration;
- Immigration crime and identity fraud;
- Seaports;
- Training; and
- Regional Law Enforcement Cooperation.

Reports were presented and/or tabled by:

- All delegates on immigration related developments in their own countries;
- PIDC working group on development of an Integrity Programme and a Model Legislation for Refugee Determination;
- Law Enforcement Advisor from the Pacific Forum on secure communications system, model legislation, identity fraud and regional law enforcement cooperation;
- Secretariat on illegal migration;
- Australia on running processing centres and Advanced Passenger Information;
- IOM on their roles and functions internationally and in the region;
- Fiji on capacity building for staff in immigration;
- Samoa on their institutional strengthening programme;
- Law Enforcement Training Officer from the Pacific Forum Secretariat on training initiatives for Pacific law enforcement;
- Tonga on immigration issues at seaports, the Tongan experience of changing from a manual system to a computerised system and the security features of their new passports;
- APC on their role and functions in the Asia Pacific Region;
- OCO on their recent activities and role in the Pacific Region;
- SPCPC on their recent activities and role in the Pacific Region;
- UNHCR on its activities and role in the Pacific region; and
- Canadian Bank Note Company, Express Electronics and Informatics made commercial presentations.

Issues resulting in decisions on future action by PIDC included:***Advanced Passenger Information***

The Conference received a presentation on Advanced Passenger Information and the benefits to immigration and other border law enforcement processing that this can present. It was decided by the Conference that Advanced Passenger Information could be a very beneficial tool for the use of immigration processing for the Pacific Region. PIDC have determined to research the parameters of a standardised advanced passenger information system that can be used by all Pacific Nations.

Regional Law Enforcement Training Initiative

A strategy for structured and accredited law enforcement training for the Pacific Region was presented to the Conference. PIDC endorsed this proposal and have committed to participating in a working group to further this concept and assist in the development of a training programme.

PIDC Integrity Programme

Following a decision by the 2002 Annual Conference the PIDC Working Group Meeting of 2003 developed a comprehensive Integrity Programme for Immigration Agencies and presented it to the Conference. The Conference endorsed the Programme and tasked the Advisory Committee with the responsibility for the carriage of this programme for PIDC Members.

MOU with UNHCR

PIDC and UNHCR entered negotiations to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in 2001. At this years Annual Conference the UNHCR delegate presented copies of the MOU signed by Michel Gabaudan, Regional UNHCR Representative for Australia, NZ, PNG and the South Pacific to the Conference. Mrs. Fekita 'Utoikamanu, the newly elected Chair of PIDC signed the MOU on behalf of PIDC.

Closing

The Conference accepted the offer by Palau to host the 8th PIDC in September 2004. Fiji indicated that with Government approval they would like to host the PIDC Annual Conference in 2005.

Delegates expressed their gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga, H.R.H Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, the Prime Minister of Tonga, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Principal Immigration Officer and to the Chair, Mrs. Fekita 'Utoikamanu, Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Immigration, The Kingdom of Tonga, who had been instrumental in making this a most successful and enjoyable Conference.

Delegates also acknowledged the valuable contribution the observers made towards the success of the Conference.

Tonga
12 September 2003