

Newsletter

Pacific Immigration Development Community

December Issue 2023



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Reflecting on 2023!

Warm Pacific greetings from the Office of the PIDC Secretariat. It is that time of the year when everyone looks forward to a well-earned and deserved break after a busy and hectic year. We are excited to also bring to you Christmas and New Year's holiday wishes.

2023 has been hectic with PIDC hosting a number of regional meetings and workshops across the membership culminating with our Regular Annual Meeting (RAM) in Vanuatu. The meeting was deemed a success with members endorsement of our 2023/24 Annual work plan and budget which we continue to work towards delivering before our next annual conference in June 2024.

PIDC continues striving to enhance, build and enable safe and secure movement of people, prosperity and successes for all our Pacific communities. We believe that through our collective efforts, the integrity of Pacific borders continues to be strengthened – as seamless and efficient secured border security measures are appropriately applied to facilitate safe and secure travelling. As core border control agencies, we contribute to international security, boost social and economic support and collaboratively build the capacity of our immigration agencies to manage the growing concerns about border security in the region.

PIDC has continued to deliver programs across the membership with member support central to our activities, engaged in continuous collaboration with regional and international partners to support the secure international movement of people in the region. Partnership engagements and coordination to advance the interests of our members have continued with members and also with regional and international organizations. Highlights of recent regional and international engagements included (i) the signing of the Declaration of Partnership Agreement to now include the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) to the traditional law enforcement partners of the Agreement – PIDC, PICP and OCO. The inclusion of FFA in the Partnership Agreement will act as a force multiplier and strengthen regional cooperation across law enforcement agencies; (ii) our participation at the 3rd JHOPs meeting in Palau in August, 2023; and more recently the 8th Asia Network for Document Examination (ANDEX) meeting and Bali Process Border Forum in December. PIDC continues to also actively engage in the Heads of Secretariat Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) Talanoa Forum with ongoing discussions on MDA development across the Pacific.

Strengthening of members national immigration agencies continues with a number of institutional support programmes being rolled out for members across the Pacific. The revamping and relaunching of the Vanuatu Immigration and Fiji Immigration websites were targeted at strengthening members visibility and service accessibility.



Solomon Islands hosted the Pacific Games in November, 2023 and in collaboration with PNGICA, launched the Hapi Island campaign for Immigration and border protection. Congratulations to the Solomon Islands for successfully hosting the largest Pacific Games and rolling out the red carpet for all sportspeople and officials of the Pacific. More importantly, Solomon Islands Immigration was able to successfully manage the movement of hundreds of athletes and officials quite seamlessly during the regional games.

There are a few exciting news articles highlighted in this edition of our Newsletter. While major developments in the immigration space across the Pacific has been reported widely across national and regional media platforms, members are encouraged to continually use the PIDC platform to share your success stories which immigration agencies across the Pacific can draw lessons from.

While gearing up for an exciting end to this year, we can anticipate a busy year ahead of us in 2024 with the scheduled National Contact Point and Profiling Group regional workshop, Information Sharing Working Group meeting and second Board meeting in March 2024 in Samoa and RAM in the Solomon Islands in June, 2024.

At the home front, here at the Secretariat, we can proudly report that the Secretariat is now fully staffed and all vacant Secretariat positions have been filled with the appointment of Mr Nanai Sovala Agaiva as the Deputy Head of Secretariat and Ms Niger Roebeck the Assistant Finance and HR officer who have both resumed employment from November and December respectively.

To conclude, I sincerely acknowledge with gratitude the continuous support from the Chair of the PIDC Board and Board members. We also treasure with much appreciation our member stakeholders and partners feedback, inputs and contributions which has enabled the Secretariat to accomplish its key objectives and plans for the last six months. To our Principal Donors; Australia and New Zealand, thank you, merci, malo aupito, tangkyu tumas, ke kmal mesaul.

To the honourable Prime Minister and Cabinet of our host country Samoa, faafetai tele lava.

To all our PIDC communities, the Secretariat wishes you a blessed Christmas and a prosperous and peaceful New Year.

Until 2024, Ni sa moce, Au revoir, Tofa soifua!

Akuila Ratu
Head of Secretariat
PIDC Secretariat

Collaborative Efforts in the Pacific: Regional Agencies Unite to Combat Transnational Crimes and IUU Fishing



OCO Head of Secretariat, Ms. Nancy T Oraka, PICP Executive Director, Mr. Nicolas Brown, PIDC Head of Secretariat, Mr. Akuila Ratu and FFA representative, Mr. Alan Rahari after the signing in Suva.

Suva, Fiji, November 25, 2023: Transnational organized crime (TOC) poses a significant and growing threat to national and international security, with dire implications for public safety, public health, democratic institutions, and economic stability across the globe. Accelerated globalization has significantly increased our Blue Pacific's exposure, creating an enabling environment for the proliferation of these crimes.

As a result, the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP) and the Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC) recently welcomed the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) into their Declaration of Partnership on Regional Security.

Combined efforts to jointly combat TOC will strengthen efforts to prevent and disrupt transnational organized crime groups taking advantage of the Pacific's extensive maritime boundaries, differences in governance, and varying law enforcement capacities. Illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fishing has detrimental effects on our people and the environment, and often has a nexus to TOC activities such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, and weapons smuggling.

The inclusion of FFA in the Partnership will act as a force multiplier and strengthen regional cooperation across law enforcement agencies. In practice, FFA members will be an additional set of eyes and ears collecting valuable information and intelligence for the Pacific Transnational Crime Network, as well as being able to access important criminal intelligence, to assist their IUU operations.



Combatting TOC therefore requires a collective approach, and this agreement sends a clear and strong message of our joint intent to strengthen law enforcement to combat TOC, by enhancing our security cooperation and partnerships. It will also greatly assist with coordinating collective efforts, consistent with the commitment of Pacific Leaders on strengthening the existing regional security architecture.

"Transnational organized crimes and IUU fishing pose significant threats to our sovereignty and the welfare of our people," FFA Director General, Dr Manu Tupou-Roosen said. "FFA's partnership with OCO, PICP and PIDC aims to address these challenges for a safer and more prosperous future for Pacific Islanders. It is imperative that we work together to leverage our collective strength and resources to combat these threats and protect the interests of our region."

The increased connectivity among the islands while increasing economic opportunities has also increased vulnerabilities. One significant consequence has been the rise in trafficking of methamphetamine, cocaine, and precursors with the Pacific also becoming a production site, giving rise to local drug markets, and increasing addiction rates.

Nancy Oraka, Head of Secretariat at OCO, emphasized the critical situation in the Pacific region, stating, *"OCO's partnership with PICP, PIDC and FFA is a crucial step towards addressing these concerns, securing our borders and safeguarding our nations' well-being," Ms. Oraka said. "We are the first line of defense for our Pacific Islands, and it is only right that we work together to combat these challenges that not only threaten our livelihoods but the future of our nations."*

PICP Secretariat Executive Director, Mr. Nicholas Brown emphasized the urgency of addressing transnational organized crimes and cross-border security challenges in the Pacific.

"This collaboration is pivotal in enhancing our collective efforts to reduce harm and combat the rising threats of drug trafficking, human trafficking, and other transnational crimes that exploit the vulnerabilities of our region. We stand united as Pacific Islanders to protect the safety and security of our communities," Mr. Brown said.

This partnership provides a formal foundation for partners to enhance border security in the Pacific, particularly through the Pacific Transnational Crime Network. This is done through the promotion of multi-agency Transnational Crime Units, collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information and intelligence, the delivery of joint training, strengthening inter-agency cooperation, and the development of regional assessments and reports.

PIDC Head of Secretariat, Mr. Akuila Ratu highlighted the importance of safeguarding borders and addressing the complexities of migration in the Pacific.

"PIDC recognizes the critical need for coordinated action to tackle transnational challenges affecting our borders, including illegal immigration and human trafficking. Our partnership with OCO, PICP and FFA signifies a commitment to fortify our Immigration systems, ensuring the integrity of our borders while upholding the rights and safety of those who seek refuge within our nations," Mr. Ratu said.

The collaboration between the partners includes enhanced surveillance and enforcement measures, intelligence sharing, capacity building, and joint operations. The commitment is to make a tangible difference in combating transnational organized crimes, illegal fishing, and cross-border security challenges.



FFA Director General, Dr Manu Tupou-Roosen and OCO Head of Secretariat, Nancy T Oraka after the signing of the agreement.

Article source: OCO, PIDC, PICP and FFA joint Press Release

PIDC attends Bali Process Border Forum

PIDC was invited to the Bali Process Border Forum, which was held in Thailand from 6th to 8th December, 2023. The Head of Secretariat participated with Immigration officers from Tonga Immigration, Solomon Immigration and Samoa Immigration. PIDC was invited to hold a session on information sharing.

In a panel discussion with the Pacific Immigration representatives, the Bali Process participants were given a virtual tour through the information sharing process of the Pacific Islands and the important coordinating and facilitating role of PIDC.

In addition, PIDC and partners continued to stress the validity of the Pacific and its huge contribution to any international related crime around the world, hence the reason why it should not be disregarded in any information sharing platform.



PIDC Board Meeting, Koror Palau



Board Members in Palau. (Photo: Jake Ramon, Palau Immigration)

Palau Immigration hosted the Immigration Directors from the 25th and 26th of October 2023, as PIDC Board members held its 54th meeting at Koror. This meeting is also the first of the Board's round of meetings for this financial year. The meeting was well attended by members comprising of Immigration chiefs and directors from Vanuatu as chairperson, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea as Vice Chair, Tonga as the representative of Polynesia, Fiji for the Melanesian group, Tuvalu for small island states and of course the host nation Palau for Micronesia. The meeting was also attended by the PIDC Secretariat Principal Donors, Australia and New Zealand. Samoa as the host country for the PIDC Secretariat also attended.

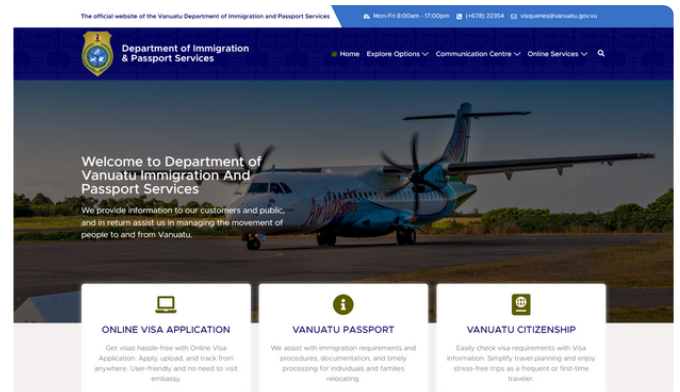
Mr. Jefferey Markson, PIDC Chair and Director of Vanuatu Immigration, in collaboration with the Secretariat led and coordinated discussions on crucial immigration issues affecting the Pacific region today. Increased mobilities and associated criminal activities, increasing threat of climate change and building resilience in these unprecedented times against the increasing challenges of transnational organized crimes were some of the key issues pondered and discussed by Board members.

Implementing the PIDC Strategic Plan 2022 to 2025 again serve as the basis of discussions on these pressing issues. The Outcome of the Palau Meeting is available from the PIDC Secretariat website and upon request.

Vanuatu Immigration's Website Revamped

Vanuatu Immigration Department (VID) was one of the two immigration authorities to receive website development support from PIDC. At the beginning of September, PIDC contracted Pacific BedBank Co. Ltd to revamp VID's website. With dedication and hard work, the website team completed and launched VID's new website on Friday, 15th December 2023.

The main objective of this project was to improve VID's website functionality and usability. The new website look and interfaces will lift the capabilities of the Vanuatu Immigration to provide efficient and effective services and processes for all its immigration related activities. The provision of online services including application for passports and visas are designed to strengthen security measures and build networks, ultimately enabling well secured and richly informed communities.



NZ Immigration Warns Visa Applicants about Scams

A strong warning was sent out by New Zealand Immigration to be cautious of scams that were targeting the Pacific Access Category and Samoan Quota residence visa applicants. The PAC resident visa schemes were annually drawn for selected Pacific Island countries, while the Samoan Quota gave 1100 Samoans the chance for New Zealand residency.

People were again reminded that "anybody wanting to work in New Zealand needs to be very careful that they are not being tricked out of their money and falsely offered jobs". Instead, they must all check any offer of employment, for genuineness and trustworthiness before handing over any money.

For more information on how to best protect yourself from immigration scams, please visit the following website: www.immigration.govt.nz/scams



New Deputy Head of Secretariat



The Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. (Nanai) Sovala Agaiaava as the new Deputy Head of Secretariat following an intensive selection process across the region.

Mr. Agaiaava resumed employment on Wednesday, 1st November 2023 at the PIDC headquarters located at the Development Bank of Samoa Building in Apia. The Head of Secretariat, Mr. Akuila Ratu welcomed the newly appointed Deputy Head of Secretariat on behalf of the Board, PIDC Members and staff of the PIDC Secretariat.

In announcing the appointment, Mr Ratu, stated "PIDC is quite fortunate to have recruited Mr Sovala as he comes with a great depth of knowledge and experience having more than 23 years of public service in the Samoan government. Mr Sovala's extensive experience and exceptional qualifications made him the ideal choice for the position. His background with the Samoa Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet as the Deputy CEO with responsibilities and oversight on national security and immigration gives us great confidence in his ability to drive PIDC's collective efforts and excellence in border security across the Pacific."

Mr. Agaiaava joined PIDC from the Samoa Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (MPMC), where he was employed as the Deputy Chief Executive Officer for four years. His responsibilities at MPMC included policy analysis and development, national security and immigration as well as serving the executive government of Samoa. Mr. Agaiaava is also bringing to PIDC more than 23 years of public services, where he had served in different capacities, ranging from education, youth and community development to local government, project management and economic development.

Mr. Agaiaava will work closely with the Head of Secretariat and the Board, PIDC Members, staff and partners of PIDC, in ensuring that PIDC delivers on its core vision "to secure international movement of people for safe and prosperous Pacific Communities."

New Fiji Immigration Website Launched to Attract Investors And Enhance Services

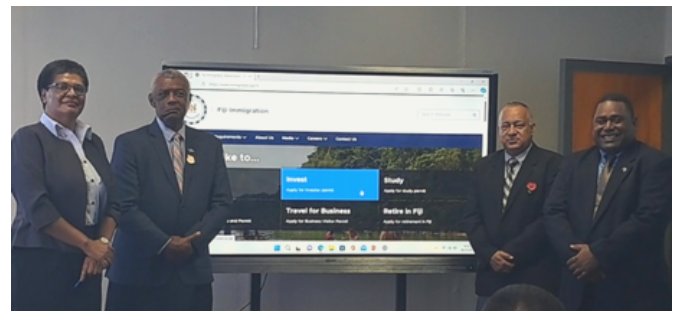
The Fiji Immigration Department today unveiled a brand-new website aimed at attracting investors, employers and business entities while enhancing the overall experience for applicants.

Launching the website, Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration Pio Tikoduadua says the website is designed to attract individuals with the skills and qualifications that the country needs.

The revamped website serves as a comprehensive "one stop shop" for information on all immigration services, providing easy access to application forms and reference documents to assist with the submission of applications.

One of the standout features of the new website is its capacity to facilitate interactions with immigration officers. Applicants will have the ability to track or follow up on their applications, especially if they have surpassed the expected timeline.

The website has also been crafted to incorporate a reporting mechanism for suspicious activities including indicators of transnational crime, human trafficking, exploitation and any form of violation of foreign workers rights."



Honorable Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration, Mr. Pio Tikoduadua (second from left) at the launching of the revamped Fiji website. (Photo: Josefa Kotobalavu (maitv))

Article source: Kotobalavu, Josefa, 06 November 2023, <https://maitvfiji.com/new-fiji-immigration-website-launched-to-attract-investors-and-enhance-services/>, Accessed 06 November 2023

Fiji Opens Doors to All Fijians (Diaspora) Residing Abroad

The Immigration Department and the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs have officially signed a memorandum of understanding that will allow Fijians living overseas who are registered under the Vola-Ni-Kawabula to work and live in Fiji visa-free.



The Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs and Immigration, Mr. Mason Smith highlighted that this follows the amendment by parliament to the Immigration Act of 2023 on July 24 this year.

All Fijians living overseas who are registered in the Vola ni Kawa Bula and those descended from Fijians but are living overseas, will qualify to enter, work, and reside in Fiji. This was highlighted by Immigration Minister Pio Tikoduadua at a press conference this afternoon. Tikoduadua says no longer will bureaucratic walls separate these Fijians from the land that they cherish, regardless of race. *"This process will work as a 'permit exemption' under immigration law. Of course, one has to apply for the exemption before entering Fiji but once you do enter, you are free to work, reside, open up a bank account, and do business in Fiji like any other Fijian."* Tikoduadua says descendants of Fijians, from 10th October, 1970, will qualify under the new permit exemption.

The Minister adds the specific process will be communicated through the Immigration Department.

Article source: Daucakacaka, Jale, Fijian Broadcasting Corporation Limited, 14 October 2023, <https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/news/fiji-opens-doors-to-all-fijians-living-overseas/>.

Tonga's Immigration Director Graduates with Postgraduate Diploma in Border Security

The Director of Tonga Immigration Mrs. Telesia Fakava Kaitapu has graduated from the University of the South Pacific with the Postgraduate Diploma in Border Security. Mrs. Kaitapu is amongst the recipients of PIDC scholarships that has completed studies for the Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Border Security in 2023.

The Secretariat congratulates all the Immigration 2023 graduates and wishes you all the best with the carrying out of your responsibilities and duties to your respective countries and the security of the Pacific region.



Immigration Director Mrs. Telesia Fakava Kaitapu on her graduation day. (Photo: Tonga Immigration)

Head of PNG Immigration Warns Foreigners After Arrest of NZ Citizen

PNG Post-Courier - Papua New Guinea's Chief Migration Officer (CMO) Stanis Hulahau has warned all foreign nationals in the country that the office will not hesitate to detain and expel them if found engaging in criminal and illegal activities.

CMO Hulahau issued the stern warning to all foreign nationals in the country that there would be "no room" for foreign criminals engaging in illegal activities. He gave this warning following a recent joint operation in Port Moresby by Immigration and police officers – based on intelligence – who arrested a foreign national, reportedly from New Zealand, for being in possession of methamphetamine implements. The foreigner had also overstayed his visa.

Hulahau cautioned all foreign nationals residing in PNG that they must abstain from the consumption of illicit substances and refrain from engaging in criminal activities. "I will not hesitate to detain foreigners and expel them from the country by way of deportation if your actions are a threat to national security," Hulahau warned. "We will not tolerate foreign criminals in Papua New Guinea." "I have noted an increasing number of foreign nationals being arrested and charged for consumption and being in possession of illicit drugs including methamphetamine, marijuana and related crimes including possession of illegal firearms, ammunition, operation of brothels and continuous breach of the migration and labour laws.

"I welcome foreign nationals to invest and work in the country but should you wish to abuse our laws and engage in illegal activities, I will show you the exit door," said Hulahau. He said PNG ICA (Immigration and Citizenship Authority) protected the borders from unscrupulous foreigners and would not hesitate to deport anyone who was formally charged by police and found guilty by a court.

Article source: Asia Pacific Report, 21 September 2023, <https://asiapacificreport.nz/2023/09/21/pngs-immigration-boss-warns-foreigners-after-arrest-of-nz-citizen/>, Accessed 21 September 2023.

Solomon Islands' Immigration Operation Hapi Isles for the PG2023 Closes

As reported by NHA Media before the 17th Pacific Games' opening on 19th November, 2023, Operation Hapi Isles was launched specifically to cater for the high influx of visitors to the Solomon Islands from around the world. Assisted through a MOU with Immigration Papua New Guinea, entries to the Solomon Islands were well facilitated without a fuss.



The 22 Solomon Island Immigration officers, with counterparts from PNG effectively managed the arrivals and departures at not only Honiara, but all its borders in both the eastern and western part of the country. With travelers frequently flying to and from the Solomon Islands, Honiara airport was active, accommodating and busiest than it has ever been for many years.

Acting Director Chris Akosawa stated before the Games that Hapi Isles is about effectively managing its borders, given the amazing positives the Pacific Games did for the Solomon Islands. Mr. Akosawa also stated that they were pleased to witness the increase in visitors since COVID 19.

The Campaign officially closes on 3rd December, 2023 with Immigration officers from PNG returning to Port Moresby.

Article source: Immigration Solomon Islands



SID Acting Director, Mr. Chris Akosawa and PNG ICA CMO, Mr. Stanis Hulahu. (Photo: PIDC Secretariat)

Fiji Launches IOM-Backed Immigration and Border Management Training Package



Photo: IOM UN Migration

The Assistant Minister for the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration, Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, unveiled Fiji's inaugural Immigration and Border Management Training Package, which was developed in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

This milestone initiative marks a significant step forward in enhancing the capabilities of Fiji's immigration officers. The launch event was attended by officials from the Fijian Immigration Department and the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration, underscoring the importance of the occasion.

The foundation of this comprehensive training package was laid through a capacity needs assessment conducted by IOM in early 2022. Part of the Strengthening Fiji's Border Management Capacity project, which benefited from funding by the IOM Development Fund, the training curriculum encompasses six modules. The modules encompass policy and legislation, analysis and reporting, information sharing, traveller assessment, client service, and border control. Designed to cater to a wide spectrum of professionals within the department, the training is strategically tailored for new officers, seasoned staff, and personnel at various hierarchical levels. Assistant Minister Vakalalabure commended the initiative, stating, that the Immigration and Border Management training package will upskill and empower Fiji's immigration officers with knowledge on the functions of an immigration agency.

"It focuses on building capacity for policy and legislation development including analysis and reporting, and areas that were identified from the capacity needs assessment." According to Fiji's first Migration Profile published by IOM in 2020, Fiji hosts more immigrants than any other Pacific Island nation apart from Papua New Guinea and attracts workers and students from the Asia-Pacific region. Along with the rest of the Pacific, Fiji is faced with migration challenges related to climate change and labour mobility, with migration trends indicating that inward and outward migration numbers will continue to grow.

Solomon Kantha, IOM Chief of Mission in Fiji, underscored the critical role of building the capacity of immigration and border officials in effectively managing migration challenges. "Immigration plays a key role in travel facilitation, border protection and revenue generation for the country and immigration officers therefore need to keep abreast with the changing migration trends in the region and on changes in policy, legislation, internal processes, and ICT systems including integrated border management systems. Training is therefore an essential part of immigration agencies."

Kantha added that the training package will be owned by Fiji Immigration Department where the department's staff identified as trainers will continue to deliver training to Immigration and partner border agencies whenever required."

Article source: International Organisation for Migration, 11 August 2023, <https://roasiapacific.iom.int/news/fiji-launches-iom-backed-immigration-and-border-management-training-package>. Accessed 11 August 2023.



Joint Communique of the Fifth Annual Joint Heads of Pacific Security



Participants of the Joint Heads of Pacific Security in Palau. (Photo: Island Times Palau)

Law enforcement, national security, and military leaders, including police, customs, and immigration from across the Pacific, met in Koror, Palau, for the fifth annual Joint Heads of Pacific Security (JHoPS) Meeting from 23-24 August 2023.

Members recognised the history of leaders' guidance including the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the Boe Declaration on Regional Security as their strategic guidance for prioritising security collaboration across agencies and the region.

Members reaffirmed the valuable role and leadership of existing regional security organisations, including the Forum Fisheries Agency, Pacific Fusion Centre, Pacific Security College, Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police, Pacific Immigration Development Community, Oceania Customs Organisation, and the South West Pacific Heads of Maritime Forces.

Members agreed that JHoPS will focus on the areas of cross agency cooperation and coordination between regional security agencies to address multidimensional security challenges. Members agreed that Palau, as 2023 JHoPS Chair, would bring the collective voice of the region's security practitioners to Pacific Islands Forum leaders to report and advise on shifting security challenges and jointly recommend regional security solutions. Members reiterated their commitment to the 2022 Denarau Outcome and agreed to establish an intersessional working group, to further strengthen relationships, solidify trust and reciprocity and to progress outcomes for ratification at the next Meeting, including;

- support for the Chair's engagement with the Pacific Islands Forum;
- a terms of reference or memorandum of understanding to clarify the JHoPS mandate, mission, and governance framework pursuant to Outcome 16 of the Denarau Outcome;

- consideration of a regional treaty framework to enable and enhance the collective ability of security agencies to respond quickly and effectively to regional security challenges, pursuant to Outcome 15 of Denarau Outcome; and
- recommendations for JHoPS delegates on the key areas of focus coming out of the tabletop exercise focusing on regional security challenges, national capacities, and capability gaps.

Members acknowledged the importance of coordination, information sharing, and interoperability and committed to sharing concepts of operations and best practices.

Members reaffirmed the importance of the JHoPS as a forum to enhance cooperation amongst security partners and to collectively address Pacific operational security challenges and welcomed Papua New Guinea's planned hosting of the next JHoPS Meeting.

Cook Islands registered their interest in hosting the following JHoPS Meeting.

Members offered their sincere thanks to the Government of Palau for their successful hosting of JHoPS 2023.

Article source: Australia Government Defense, 25 August 2023, <https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/releases/2023-08-25/joint-communicue-fifth-annual-joint-heads-pacific-security>. Accessed 25 August 2023.

Head of PIDC Secretariat Courtesy Visit to Samoa's Honorable Prime Minister, Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa

The newly appointed Head of Secretariat for the Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC), Mr. Akuila Ratu paid a courtesy visit to the Honourable Prime Minister – Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa, on Monday, 11th September, 2023.

Mr. Ratu acknowledged the assistance and support of the Government of Samoa as the host country to the PIDC since the establishment of its headquarters in Apia in 2016. Ratu also used the opportunity to discuss with the Prime Minister important matters relating to immigration and border security in the Pacific.

The PIDC, formerly known as the Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference was initially set up in Fiji in 1996. However, in 2016 the Organisation obtained its legal entity status as a regional organisation upon accepting Samoa's offer to host its headquarters in Apia. The organisation has grown in terms of its mandate and strategic objectives. In 2018, following its strategic review, the organisation's name was changed to 'Pacific Immigration Development Community' to reflect its mandate, and scope of its strategic architecture.



The PIDC connects Immigration Offices in 21 member countries across the region and fosters strong networks to discuss border issues of mutual interest. It serves to enhance regional cooperation on border security through facilitation of quality immigration and border management advisory support. The organization works closely with other regional law enforcement agencies including Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) and the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP).

Ratu is the longest serving staff of PIDC having worked with the Secretariat since 2007. He has worked closely with Immigration directors across the membership on fortifying partnerships, capacity and professional development, strengthening immigration legislation and immigration policy reform, and bolstering information sharing. Mr. Ratu was the Deputy Head of the PIDC Secretariat prior to his current role. He takes over from Maumalo John Alama who was the Head of PIDC Secretariat from 2016 to 2022. d him well in his role.

Mr. Akuila Ratu is Fijian and a graduate of the University of the South Pacific. He also holds a Master of Arts in Public Policy and Administration from the University of York in the United Kingdom.

The Honourable Prime Minister congratulated Mr. Akuila Ratu on his new appointment and wished him well in his role.



The PIDC Head of Secretariat, Mr. Akuila Ratu and Honourable Prime Minister, Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa. (Photo: Government of Samoa)

Article source: Government of Samoa. 13 September 2023
<https://www.samoagovt.ws/2023/09/press-release-new-head-of-pacific-immigration-development-community-paid-courtesy-visit-to-the-honourable-prime-minister-fiamē-naomi-mataafa/> Accessed 14 September 2023.

Upcoming Events

National Contact Points & Profiling Group Regional Workshop

The Secretariat has invited nominations from all the 21 member countries for the PIDC registered National Contact Points (NCP) and the Profiling Group (PG) Workshop. The Workshop will be held in Samoa on the week of 18th March, 2024. This workshop aims to assemble the selected senior Immigration officers to share information and discuss strategic approaches to all threats to migration in the region. The ultimate goal is to strengthen information sharing and intelligence capacities.

The key deliverables for this workshop will therefore enhance capacity building amongst agencies and stakeholders on information gathering, researching and analysing. The workshop hopes to also build and strengthen the profiling capabilities of our regional officers and practitioners while also identifying trends and key indicators of criminal related activities at the borders. The concerned immigration specialists and experts shall develop and recommend strategic directions and policies for PIDC to consider in its NCP and PG Work Plan. As of December 12th 2023, more than 30 participants have been nominated. The PIDC Board will convene a week before the NCP and PG Networking workshop.

USP Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate Online Application Closing Soon

Online applications for the Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Border Security at USP are now opened and will be closed on 31st December 2023. Late Applications are due on 13th January 2023.

Interested Immigration officers must confirm with their CEOs or Directors before submitting applications Directly Online on the USP portal. Please refer to PIDC Circular No. 10/2023 of 18th December 2023 for more information, but note the correction on the due date.

Remember that all applications are to be submitted to USP for reviews. PIDC scholarships are provided based on USP's independent evaluation of all applications, plus confirmation from your respective Immigration Offices.

Photo Gallery



PIDC Leadership Course, Canberra, Australia



Hakili Matagi courtesy call



PIDC Leadership Course, Canberra, Australia



Australia Home Affairs courtesy visit, and Samoa MCR CEO



Regular Annual Meeting 2023, Vanuatu



Bali Process Border Forum, 2023 - Pacific Delegates



Board Members 2023-2024, Vanuatu



RAM 2023, Vanuatu



RAM 2023, Vanuatu

We wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year



from your Secretariat