



PACIFIC IMMIGRATION DIRECTORS' CONFERENCE

NEWSLETTER

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA IMMIGRATION SUCCESSFULLY HOSTS 2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN PHONPEI	1
PNG IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP SERVICE HOSTS SECOND MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING	2
FIJI IMMIGRATION HOSTS SECOND OPERATIONAL SECONDMENT	3
PIDC FACIAL COMPARISON DETECTION AND DEPA COURSE COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY IN FIJI	3
PNG IMMIGRATION UNDERTAKES SIGNIFICANT REFORMS	4
FOUR PIDC MEMBERS ACHIEVE CATEGORY 2 IN 2011 US HUMAN TRAFFICKING REPORT	5
KIRIBATI DRAFT OPERATING PROCEDURES	5
PIDC OBSERVES VESSELS CLEARANCES IN FIJI	6
ADDRESSING EMERGING ISSUES OF CRIMINAL DEPORTEES	7
FORMULATION OF A NATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION/MOBILITY POLICY IN FIJI	7
PHOTO GALLERY	8



Delegates at the 15th Pacific Immigration Directors Conference

## FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA IMMIGRATION SUCCESSFULLY HOSTS 2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN PHONPEI

The 15th Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference (PIDC) was hosted by the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Immigration department in Pohnpei, FSM from 30th October – 2nd November 2011. The theme of the conference was "Good Governance, Strong Laws, Secure Borders". Delegates from 18 Pacific Island countries attended including Observer organisations from regional and international agencies involved in border control issues in the Pacific.

The conference chair, Mr Mohner Esiel in his opening remarks, stressed the strategic importance of Micronesia due to its rich tuna stocks and its visa-free status with the United States that makes it the target for irregular migration. FSM and other former US Trust Territories in the North West Pacific are the Pacific Island countries' window into Asia.

Stressing the importance of the Conference theme of "Good Governance, Strong Laws and Secure Borders," Mr Esiel said all governments have the fundamental right to determine who enters and who does not enter their countries. This principle is enshrined in the Pohnpean concept of "Roropwel" that ties a people of a given space with the land and a governance structure. It is also a principle established in Europe by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 that mapped out a system of sovereign states with demarcated borders and distinct zones of authority. This is the same system of sovereign states that governs the world today. Good governance requires states to

**2012 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- i. **1st Border Protection Committee Meeting: February**
- ii. **1st Management Board Meeting: March**
- iii. **2nd Management Board Meeting: July**

exercise some measure of control over their territory and some measure of control over the rules of entry and departure from their territorial space.

Mr Esiel applauded PIDC member countries who helped each other in the deportation of unwanted aliens, specifically referring to Papua New Guinea and Fiji aiding Samoa in the deportation of a Nigerian to whom the Samoan High Court had awarded \$103,000 in damages.

Canada spent C\$25 million to deal with 500 Tamil asylum seekers who arrived off the west coast of Canada on a freighter in August last year. The United States spends about US\$500 million each year dealing with illegal cross-border movements, and Australia spends A\$600 million each year on its 6,000

asylum seekers – roughly A\$100,000 per person. The total annual outlay of A\$600 million is about double the annual aid that Australia provides Papua New Guinea and about the same amount that it pays for the whole Pacific Islands region.

Pacific Island countries lack resources, political will and public patience for illegal migrants. The most cost-effective solution is prevention and mitigation. Annex 9 of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Convention should be used by Pacific Island states to hold transport carriers responsible for the detention and removal of persons refused entry at borders. Measures should include imposing fines on carriers for boarding passengers with false or altered travel documents or who cannot prove they are genuine visitors. ■

## PNG IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP SERVICE HOSTS SECOND MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

The 16th Management Board meeting of the Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference (PIDC), the second in 2011, was convened in Port Moresby, PNG on 13 and 14 July 2011 and attended by representatives from Vanuatu (Chair), Federated State of Micronesia (Vice Chair), Australia (Donor), Kiribati (Small Island States), Nauru (Micronesia), New Zealand (Donor), Papua New Guinea (Melanesia), Samoa (Polynesia) and the Independent Board Member.

The meeting was opened on 13 July by the acting Chief Migration Officer for PNGICS, Mr Joseph Nobetau, who welcomed members to PNG and expressed PNG's pleasure in hosting the 16th PIDC Management Board meeting. Mr Nobetau highlighted reforms and achievements of PNGICS since it was granted independent status in 2010. The organisation grew from a staffing base of 20 full time staff to more than 50 and is expected to grow to an organisation exceeding more than 160 officers. Some of the challenges highlighted by PNGICS included the need for recruitment of new staff, capacity building, challenging geographic environment, increased people movement and the need for a new border management system linking PNG diplomatic missions abroad and its border control points.

PNGICS recognizes the importance of bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation and values its involvement in PIDC. Through PIDC PNGICS has been able to access a range of regional support mechanisms.

The PIDC Chair; George Bogiri of Vanuatu, expressed the PIDC memberships' gratitude and appreciation to PNG for hosting the meeting. He acknowledged the hospitality and professionalism PNGICS provided to Board members in facilitating their attendance. The Chair also welcomed new representatives (New Zealand and Nauru) and urged the forum to seek positive solutions for challenges that lay ahead.

Discussions during the two day meeting centered on PIDC entity status, PIDC Strategic Plan, relocation of the Secretariat, change management process in PIDC, legislative work in the region, the 2011 annual Conference, Operational Secondment, tenure of the PIDC Chair and Vice Chair, PIDC Strategic Plan, PIDC hosting the 16th PACRIM Immigration Intelligence Conference and Border Protection Training in the region among other issues. ■



*PNG Immigration hosts second Board meeting*

## FIJI IMMIGRATION HOSTS SECOND OPERATIONAL SECONDMENT

Fiji Immigration with the support of PIDC for the second year running hosted a successful secondment programme for Officers in the region. In its first year in 2010, Fiji had hosted officers from Solomons, Kiribati and Samoa. Two senior officers from the Cook Islands and Solomon Islands Immigration attended this year's work attachment programme from September 19-23. Mrs Ngatokopouia from Cook Islands immigration and Mr Fereni of Solomon Islands Immigration. The Immigration Director in welcoming both officers to Fiji encouraged them to use the opportunity to learn Fiji immigration processes and systems and also exchange ideas and experiences with Fiji Immigration officers. Both Officers expressed their appreciation to Fiji Immigration and PIDC for providing them the opportunity to learn from Fiji's experiences. ■

*Fiji immigration officers verifying travel documents with the identity of a fishing vessel crew arriving in Fiji*



## PIDC FACIAL COMPARISON DETECTION AND DEPA COURSE COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY IN FIJI

The PIDC Secretariat with DIAC, INZ and the Pacific Island Forum held a two day facial image comparison detection training programme with a 3 day Document Examination Principles and Applications (DEPA) training provided by Australia's Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) from 12-16 September 2011 in Nadi, Fiji. The facial component of the training programme was being introduced for the first time and participants agreed that the facial comparison training was really relevant to their work. Immigration staff from Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshal Islands, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu attended this 1 week intensive course. As this was an advanced course nominees were expected to have had some basic document examination training and have the capacity to understand high level technical information. This course was run in Fiji in 2006, in Vanuatu in 2007 & 2008, in Samoa in 2009 and in Fiji in 2010. ■



*Participants at the 2011 DEPA training held in Nadi*

## PNG IMMIGRATION UNDERTAKES SIGNIFICANT REFORMS

*PIDC Management Board members attending the second board meeting hosted by PNG Immigration in Port Moresby*



2010 and 2011 has been a significant year of reform for PNG Immigration and Citizenship Service (PNGICS). Over these period PNGICS have become an independent, self accounting statutory authority. PNGICS have implemented significant organizational and processing reforms, deployed and consolidated an enhanced border management system (BMS) and increased their enforcement and compliance staffing capacity. At the same time, PNGICS have grown from a staffing base of around 20 full time staff to more than 50 full time staff and over time is expected to grow to an organisation exceeding 160 officers. This is indeed a significant transformation.

One of the most significant factors related to PNGICS new organizational arrangements is the establishment of a secure, stable and sustainable funding base for the organisation. Under the Immigration and Citizenship Service Act 2010 PNG Immigration and Citizenship Service now retains 50% of all revenue collections for the purpose of paying staff salaries and improving administration and effectiveness of Authority. Uncommitted or unspent funds will be returned to the consolidated revenue fund at the end of each year. This enhanced financial capacity is allowing PNGICS the ability to address a number of important and strategic issues, including investment in IT capacity, the placement of officers at key overseas missions and importantly, ensuring that PNGICS maintain adequate supplies of passports and visa labels to address an ever increasing demand for their services.

The implementation of the new border management system has allowed visa approvals to be electronically transmitted between PNGICS Head Office, Jacksons International Airport and missions in Australia, Malaysia, the Philippines and China. Visa approval transmissions are now occurring in real time, reducing delays in the visa application and approval process.

PNGICS have also implemented a range of internal organizational reforms, including increased staffing capacity in priority areas, streamlined passport application processes and enhanced provincial and regional engagement with law enforcement and border security agencies. PNGICS have also commenced an ambitious policy review process, which will see over time the development of a new legislative and policy framework for the future.

Despite PNGICS success over the last two years, many challenges remain. Challenges which are shared by their Pacific neighbors and include capacity constraints, the need for legislative reform, outdated policies and processes and challenges arising across agency collaboration. PNGICS is facing ever increasing public expectations. Globalization is leading the increased movement of people increasing the demands on border control systems regulating borders. PNGICS have addressed these challenges by putting in place new border management systems with an enhanced range of systems, practices and processes. ■

## FOUR PIDC MEMBERS ACHIEVE CATEGORY 2 IN 2011 US HUMAN TRAFFICKING REPORT

*Foreign vessels  
approaching Suva in the  
Fiji islands.*

The US State Departments issues a yearly report on human trafficking. The report examines the status of 184 countries looking at both human trafficking violations and efforts to stop human trafficking. Those efforts include passing prohibitive legislation, arrests of perpetrators and convictions following arrests. The report subsequently categories countries into 'tiers'. There are basically four tiers; tier 1, tiers 2, tiers 2 watch list and tier 3. Four PIDC members, Fiji, RMI, Palau and Tonga were recently graded to tier 2 countries under this US grading system in 2011. A sign of progress in the work against human trafficking networks for immigration agencies in these Pacific nations that have worked towards raising awareness and tackling human trafficking cases in the Pacific. However, the ranking is not a reflection of the amount of trafficking that takes place. ■

## KIRIBATI DRAFT OPERATING PROCEDURES

Immigration officers in Kiribati have a new resource to support them in their work after a manual setting out approximately 50 standard operating procedures was finalised in October.

The manual will act as a key reference document and a training resource. It will support the consistent application of immigration legislation, the training of new immigration officers, and the training of officers in new areas.

The final document is the result of the hard work and effort of Kiribati Immigration with support from the PIDC Secretariat.

The opportunity to take a step back and logically think through everyday immigration tasks was an important part of the process. Each task was given context, linked to legislation, and broken down into its component steps.

Where the task related to a decision, such as the granting of a visitor permit, the relevant criteria

were set out along with the options available to the decision-maker.

Key procedures were tested through group work and role plays with immigration officers.

It is hoped that an iKiribati translation will be published to improve accessibility to the document. The manual will also help to underpin the policy discussions that in turn may lead to legislative developments over the coming year. ■



*Kiribati Immigrations officers*



*Large foreign vessels berthing at the sea wharf in Fiji.*

## PIDC OBSERVES VESSEL CLEARANCES IN FIJI

A lot of focus is placed on border management at airports, and rightly so. They are usually the main ports of entry where most people cross the border – whether they are tourists, business people, other visitors or returning residents.

But, this is not the only point of arrival and the PIDC Secretariat welcomed the opportunity to accompany Fiji Immigration officers as they conducted immigration checks for crew members on vessels arriving in Suva's harbour.

In Fiji for 2009, there were estimated to be approximately 640,000 arrivals by air, and 26,000 arrivals by sea.

Although sea arrival numbers are smaller they are still significant, and the resources countries dedicate to arrivals by sea are vital to maintaining the integrity of borders.

It is also the case that the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, for example, while still welcoming the bulk of arrivals through airports, receive a much higher proportion by sea, with around a third of arrivals coming through their sea ports.

A large proportion of sea arrivals may be on cruise ships, but it can often be the smaller arrivals, whether they are tourists on yachts, or crew on container or fishing vessels that pose the risks for border management.

In October, a statement on human trafficking by the US Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs to the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human

Rights, demonstrated the importance of enforcement and border control operations at sea ports.

“East Asian and Pacific countries also face serious human trafficking problems within the fishing industries, where allegations of forced labor and abuses aboard commercial fishing vessels are frequent. In a 2009 survey from the United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP), more than half of the surveyed Cambodian migrants trafficked onto Thai boats said they had seen their captains killing one of their co-workers.”

“Most trafficked fishermen are placed on boats going to foreign waters, as it is easier to traffic workers who will be out to sea for longer periods of time.”

In Suva harbour, the Secretariat observed immigration procedures on three vessels – two container vessels and one fishing vessel. The multinational make-up of these ships was in strong evidence. One vessel was registered in China, captained by a Ukrainian and crewed mostly by Philippine nationals. The fishing vessel was registered in Vanuatu, but based in Suva, with a crew from China, Taiwan and Indonesia.

Fiji Immigration takes a risk-based approach to arrivals by sea. Generally, crew on container vessels are considered to be of lower risk as they tend to operate in secure and largely well-regulated environments, with short turnarounds in port and well-established agents onshore. In contrast, for fishing vessel crews the checks and requirements are in general more stringent for the opposite reasons.

The Secretariat would like to thank the Fiji Immigration Director, Nemani Vuniwaqa for granting permission to observe the checks, Naibuka Vuli for facilitating the arrangements, and Joe Mucunabitu for accompanying the Secretariat and ensuring nobody went for an unexpected swim. ■



*Fiji Immigration officers checking foreign vessel documents with shipping agents.*

## ADDRESSING EMERGING ISSUES OF CRIMINAL DEPORTEES

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and UNDP hosted a regional meeting on "Addressing the Emerging Issue of Criminal Deportees" at PIFS from 28-30 November 2011. The main focus of this meeting was to allow for key stakeholders to share knowledge, coordinate efforts and resources that will enhance domestic capacity and preliminary guidelines for processing and assisting criminal deportees upon arrival into their origin countries.

The meeting was attended by Samoa, Tonga, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), US Department of Justice, NZ Police, Marshall Islands, Pacific Islands Chief of Police (PICP), Australian Federal Police (AFP) and PIDC.

The meeting provided an overview of deportation in the Pacific to form a baseline understanding of the deportation experience. Deported individuals spoke of their experiences and identified primary issues such as stigma, lack of support and resources and disconnection within the community as obstacles

for smooth resettlement. PIFS highlighted that there was a number of information and data issues that needed attention by the individual countries and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs).

Three organisations provided an overview of their programs which looked at rehabilitation and reintegration programs for criminal deportees. This included 'Saili Matagi' program which sits within the NZ Department of Corrections, the Church program in Tonga and Samoa Returnees Charitable Trust program. ■



*Participants at the criminal Deportee workshop.*

## FORMULATION OF A NATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION/MOBILITY POLICY IN FIJI

Fiji Department of Immigration held a round table conference as part of its consultation process to formulate an Effective Integrated Labour Migration/Mobility Policy. This discussion was held in Suva on 7th December 2011 facilitated by Dr Peter Munro (Regional Technical Assistant at Intra-ACP Migration Facility). Mr Reg Sanday and Shirley Narayan represented PIDC at this discussion.

This forum was the entry point to the establishment of a working group of executive stakeholders who would spearhead the National Consultation Framework for the formulation of a National Labour Migration/Mobility Policy. The discussion was attended by Fiji's government officials, International Labour Organisation (ILO), PIDC and other stakeholders.

Fiji has experienced an increasing number of labour outflows, over the past decade, the major causes being, but not limited to, the slow growth rate of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), high unemployment and low wages. Fiji Department of Immigration in its presentation noted studies that proved how international movement of labour benefited both

the home country and the host including individuals. Therefore, it was timely to establish an Effective Integrated Labour Migration/Mobility Policy in Fiji.

The forum acknowledged that the lack of available data on the subject, illegal immigrants, exploitation of workers and high numbers of unemployed youths were some of the key issues to be considered for the next round of discussions in 2012. The Department plans to hold a number of consultations in 2012 and invite other stakeholders including Fiji Bureau of Statistics (BOS), Sporting bodies, Fiji Employers Federation (FEF) and recruiting agencies in order to assess the data and trends related to labour mobility in Fiji. ■



*Participant in discussion at the Fiji Labor Mobility Consultation Session*

