



NEWSLETTER OF THE PACIFIC IMMIGRATION DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (PIDC)



VANUATU HOSTS THE 25TH PIDC REGULAR ANNUAL MEETING



Source: Vanuatu Immigration

Vanuatu Immigration hosted the 25th Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC) Regular Annual Meeting in Port Vila, from 20 – 22 June 2023 with discussions centred around the conference theme “Labour Mobility and Migration to Stimulate Economic Growth”. Sixty delegates from 17 Pacific Island member countries attended including Vanuatu (Chair), Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, New Caledonia, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna. The Annual Meeting was also attended by representatives of Observer organisations from the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Pacific Islands Fusion Centre (PFC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the Biometrics Institute.

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Issues Considered by the 25th PIDC Regular Annual Meeting

Secretariat's Report

The Secretariat Report Highlighted the Secretariat's work in 2022-23 including the (1) successful coordination of three Board meetings - 1 virtual meeting and two face to face meetings in PNG and Vanuatu, (2) approval of the PIDC External Auditors report for the 2021/22 Financial Year; (3) successful hosting of two annual conferences in this financial year – 2022 Regular Annual Meeting after three years of virtual meetings in August 2022 and the 2023 Regular Annual Meeting in June 2023; (4) completion of legislative review national consultations in Palau, Solomon Islands and Niue; (5) successful delivery of three regional workshops and training including (i) PIDC's National Contact Point and Operational Profiling Group regional workshop; (ii) BMS in the Pacific regional workshop with PNGICA; and (iii) PIDC leadership and Management training for emerging leaders across the PIDC Membership; (6) Engagement of the PIDC Information Sharing Working Group Committee in developing strategies to strengthening the PIDC intelligence network across the region; (7) Increased engagement and sharing of information amongst members through the PIDC intelligence network; (8) successful coordination of regional training programmes with partner organisations including the (i) Transnational organised crime course with the Australia Pacific Security College and (ii) Table Top Exercise across Tonga, PNG, Palau and Samoa with the APSC, OCO and PICP; (9) successful implementation of the PIDC COVID-19 communication package support for Members assisting members in the reopening of their international borders; and (10) website Development Support programme being rolled out to members.

PIDC Member Country Reports

Country reports were presented by Australia, Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Members agreed that there were commonalities on immigration issues challenging

members in the Pacific and the need to continue working closely together to monitor and protect their borders was crucial for the Members. Members agreed to address issues raised during the discussion through the PIDC Boards detailed analysis of the challenges and opportunities emerging from the country reports that can be supported and incorporated in PIDC's annual work programme.

PIDC Financial Update

The Head of Secretariat presented an updated financial report for 2022-23 showing expenditures, variances, an update report on the PIDC Members Subscription fund and the 2021-22 Audit Report. Members welcomed the detail and clarity to the financial report. Members agreed that the new financial reporting process under the new PIDC Financial Regulations promoted transparency and accountability within the organisation. The indicative budget for 2023-24 was also considered and endorsed by PIDC Members.

PIDC Funding

Members recognised the support Australia and New Zealand have provided for PIDC including Samoa's ongoing commitment as host to the PIDC Secretariat in Apia and thanked them for their continued commitment to the organisation.

PIDC COVID -19 Support Programme

The PIDC COVID-19 Support Programme funded by Australia was established in a PIDC Special General Meeting in July 2020 when COVID-19 began its global spread. It focused on three main areas including providing Members with (i) Communication Packages to help adapt to the new virtual communication reality, (ii) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) specifically for Immigration Officers as a backup stock; and (iii) policy development support integrating COVID-19 safe measures. Consequently, the three-year programme at its completion in June 2023 has to date engaged and supported 15 PIDC Members across these areas of support including, American

Trends and Emerging Labour Mobility Issues for Immigration Agencies

Members recognised the increasing numbers of Pacific Island workers participating in labour mobility schemes across the Pacific and the economic opportunities and benefits it was bringing to island communities especially in rural areas. Members discussed emerging movement trends relating to labour mobility including challenges of monitoring disengaged workers seeking repatriation and readmission of workers or returnees to respective home countries across the Pacific. Members noted the increasing opportunities provided through the Pacific labour mobility schemes and the vulnerabilities and challenges members were exposed too in regards to the increasing loss of skilled workers to various labour mobility schemes. Discussions centred on the need for centralised data base systems at the national level to support coordinated labour mobility compliance efforts.

Regional Coordination to Border Management in the Pacific

Members recognised how regional forums provided the platform to harness regional consultations and collaborative efforts. Members noted the progress in the development of a draft Pacific Regional Climate Mobility Framework and Pacific Regional Labour Mobility Framework through the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat governance approval process noting the responsibilities and obligations of immigration agencies in these regional mobility frameworks. Strengthening PIDC's Intelligence Network Conference delegates participated in a workshop session discussing issues related to the strengthening of the PIDC Intelligence network. Delegates shared experiences from around the region regarding best practices and standards that enhanced information sharing and coordination amongst border control agencies and partner law enforcement agencies sharing real time information. Members agreed that strengthening trust amongst immigration agencies across the membership through continuous consultations and strengthening of relationships was crucial to an effective PIDC immigration intelligence network.





Talofa lava and warm Pacific greetings from the PIDC Secretariat in Apia.

The PIDC Secretariat is excited about this financial year following the conclusion of this years Regular Annual Meeting in Port Vila as we work to deliver a number of important activities that are intended to develop and further strengthen the organisation and memberships operations. Vanuatu successfully hosted this years Regular Annual Meeting with the conference theme focusing on “Labour Mobility and Migration to Stimulate Economic Growth”. Labour mobility continues to raise interest and concern throughout the Pacific in different sectors with Immigration also recognising not only its impact but our facilitatory and gate keeping role in managing labour mobility across our borders. While members were able to draw discussions on major thematic areas impacting the region on the conference theme, it also provided the opportunity to identify new approaches and practices that Members could consider in addressing their respective border challenges as part of governments national approaches to managing labour mobility. In a first for the membership, the conference also set aside specific sessions for bilateral and multilateral discussions. The session recognised the value of bilateral and multilateral arrangements that members and partner organisations continue to engage with in the region.

While this new financial year looks to be another busy period, with competing regional and national priorities, PIDC seeks to engage with members in better coordinating the delivery of work programmes throughout the year.

Given the organisations relative stability with funding for this financial year, and the ongoing commitment and support from Members, Principal Donors and partner organisations the Secretariat looks to deliver on various work programmes and priorities Members endorsed at its 2023 Regular Annual Meeting. Consequently, the Secretariat encourages members to actively engage with the Secretariat and the wider membership.

PIDC has established WhatsApp forums and welcomes Members utilising these communication platforms to actively engage with your Secretariat and the membership on an ongoing basis. Members support to the Secretariat is critical to the growth and development of the organisation. This is your organisation and as owners of PIDC we need to collectively work together to further strengthen our footprint across the Pacific.

In this issue we hear of the important work being undertaken in the Solomon Islands as they undertake national consultations across the provinces to review their immigration legislation. We would like to share Members stories and importantly the work that immigration departments continue to deliver across their respective jurisdictions. In this regard, we invite Members to provide stories or articles on any new developments being undertaken in their respective jurisdictions. In this regard, we invite Members to provide stories or articles on any new developments being undertaken in their respective immigration agencies. Members would like to hear stories from the far northern Pacific to the ends of the South Pacific.

MR. AKUILA RATU APPOINTED AS NEW HEAD OF SECRETARIAT



PIDC is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Akuila Ratu as its new Head of Secretariat. Mr Ratu, a Fijian national brings with him more than 15 years of experience working with immigration agencies across the Pacific.

As a Pacific-based regional civil servant, Mr Ratu brings vast experience having working with immigration agencies across the Pacific and has played various roles with the PIDC Secretariat including the coordinatination and delivery of PIDCs capacity building programmes, information sharing and intelligence activities, research and modernisation programmes across the Pacific.

Mr Ratu has worked with various stakeholders across the Pacific from regional and international organizations, including people from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly those who are based in the Pacific region. His familiarity and cultural awareness of the Pacific operational environment is expected to strengthen his regional coordination responsibilities during his leadership tenure.

As the Head of the Secretariat, Mr Ratu will be responsible for overseeing and delivering the strategic direction and operations of the PIDC membership with a specific focus on the coordination of all specialist and support functions employed within the Secretariat. He will also be instrumental in ensuring that the PIDC remains at the forefront of migration discussions and forums through the development of innovative solutions to address and manage the challenges experienced by immigration services across the Pacific region. Members have full confidence in Mr Ratu's experience and expertise in guiding PIDC to achieve its strategic objectives under his leadership.

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The Conference was opened by the Honourable Hon. Rick Tchamako, Minister for Internal Affairs who extended a warm welcome to delegates and official observers. Minister for Internal Affairs – The Hon. Rick Tchamako, spoke to the 2023 conference theme “labour mobility stimulating economic growth” noting how the conference drew together Heads and representatives of immigration agencies and partner organisations across the Pacific to advance members national objectives of supporting labour mobility in the region through the development of effective and efficient border management processes and systems to facilitating bona fide labour mobility travel schemes without compromising Immigration agencies core responsibility of monitoring and managing cross border issues emerging in the Pacific today. He noted with pleasure the theme of labour mobility marking it as an important broadening of focus for the PIDC. He spoke about how Pacific countries could best position migration to achieve government objectives to support national development and economic growth. He highlighted Vanuatu’s investment in managing its labour mobility schemes as the highest provider of workers in the Pacific and the benefits it was bringing nationally. He highlighted the opportunity this annual forum presented to bring together highly experienced immigration officials to collectively steer the PIDC network as collective partners that can work together to support government labour mobility development objectives without compromising immigrations core responsibilities of protecting our shared borders in the Pacific.

PIDC BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED AT 2023 REGULAR ANNUAL MEETING



Source: Vanuatu Immigration

Members at the 2023 Regular Annual Meeting elected the 2023/24-year Board members comprising Vanuatu as Chair, PNG (Outgoing Vice Chair), Solomon Islands (Incoming Vice Chair), Palau (Micronesia), Fiji (Melanesia), Tuvalu (Small Island States), Tonga (Polynesia), Samoa (Host Country) Australia and New Zealand (Donors). The newly elected 2023/24 Board members bring together a diverse group of representatives from various Members in the Pacific region, with Vanuatu taking the helm as Chair. The Incoming Chair in his opening remarks during the conference had reaffirmed his commitment and support to continue building on the work that his predecessor the PNGICA CMO had established under his tenure and would work to fostering and strengthening membership collaboration and support to PIDC activities.

The diverse and dedicated group of Board representatives are aware of the need to address the pressing challenges facing the Pacific region and an evolving migration landscape that has changed since COVID-19. By fostering collaboration, promoting sustainable development, and upholding PIDCs values of inclusivity, the Board will strive to support immigration agencies core responsibilities in protecting our shared border in the Pacific.

PIDC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING COURSE HOSTED AT THE AUSTRALIA PACIFIC SECURITY COLLEGE

PIDC successfully hosted its leadership and management course at the Australia Pacific Security College in June. The development of the PIDC Leadership and Management course was a direct recognition of the value of emerging leaders who play an important role in sustaining immigration leadership capability across the Pacific. Through mentorship programs, training workshops, and networking events, PIDC intends to equip emerging leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge that will empower participants to have a lasting impact on their respective agencies.

The PIDC Leadership and Management course was subsequently held in Canberra from 26th-30th June 2023 in collaboration with the Queensland University of Technology and the Australia Pacific Security College with a vision to fostering leadership skills and creating a vibrant network of leadership professionals.

The intensive five-day course subsequently engaged participants in a range of interactive work-related activities, insightful discussions, and practical exercises designed to refine their leadership and management skills of participants. Led by Dr Danielle from the QUT and selected expert speakers with extensive experience, the program provided invaluable insights into effective leadership strategies tailored specifically for the Pacific immigration operational environment.



Participants developed a deep understanding of key leadership principles and gained practical tools to drive positive changes within their respective organizations. Networking played a crucial role throughout the program with participants having the opportunity to connect and collaborate with like-minded professionals from various immigration agencies across the Pacific.

PIDC remains steadfast in its commitment to investing in emerging leaders and fostering a culture of collaboration and inclusivity. In addition, PIDC intends to build a core group of future leaders across the Pacific through the creation of a Leadership Alumni network of PIDC trained leaders whom we intend to engage on post training programmes through ongoing online leadership capacity support programmes.

Together, we can build and strengthen immigration agencies across the Pacific region that thrives on strong leadership, innovation, and a shared vision for a better future.



Solomon Island Immigration and PNG Immigration Citizenship Authority completed a one week of 2nd bilateral working committee meeting in Honiara at Heritage Park Hotel



Source: Solomon Island Immigration

Heads of Solomon Islands Immigration (SI Immigration) and the PNG Immigration Citizenship Authority (PNGICA) conducting its second bilateral working committee meeting in Honiara from 20th – 24th March 2023. The bilateral meeting was intended to finalize border security cooperation, Pacific Games 2023 operation plan and formalizing Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) for Immigration operation during the Pacific Games 2023. PNGICA under the MOU arrangement agreed to provide technical assistance to SI Immigration Division to process and facilitate athletes, visitors and head of delegations of the participating countries. Immigration operation plan for the Pacific Games 2023 includes establishment of Travel App to process bulk passengers.

Deputy Secretary/Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration Mr Eric George Ongoia officially opened the one-week meeting. Mr Eric George Ongoia thanked PNGICA for supporting SI Immigration's preparation for the Pacific Games 2023. Head of PNGICA delegation Mr Wellington Navasivu assured Solomon Islands Government and SI Immigration Division, their commitment to support SI Immigration as key a agency to deliver Immigration services for the success of the Pacific Games.

PNGICA made commitment since October 2022 through an invitation to the Director of Immigration to discussing their bilateral relationship through a Draft MOU for border security cooperation between the two agencies with the finalized MOU approved for signing here in Honiara. The finalized MOU purposely provides support for ongoing security cooperation, PNG ICA support for SI Immigration for the Pacific Games 2023, joint operations, building capacity and exchange training and information.

Deputy Director of Immigration, Mr Christopher Akosawa thanked PNGICA for their second bilateral working committee meeting in Honiara. Mr Akosawa acknowledged PNGICA's technical and funding support for SI Immigration. Mr Akosawa confirmed that the one-week bilateral working committee meeting has been fruitful where the two agencies had finalized the MOU on border security cooperation, Immigration operation plan for the Pacific Games 2023, Standard Operational Procedures, operational documents, developing Technological Application's for passenger processing during the Pacific Games 2023, and training program and risk assessment for the Pacific Games 2023. Deputy Director of Immigration Mr Christopher Akosawa, also assured government that he was confident of the SI Immigration Division capability and were in a better position to support the government's responsibilities in hosting the Pacific Games 2023 in Honiara with the ongoing preparation and planning that was being coordinated with PNG ICA.



SAMOA IMMIGRATION OFFICERS GRADUATE WITH POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN BORDER SECURITY



Two Samoa Immigration staff members sponsored under the PIDC Scholarship Scheme graduated with a USP Postgraduate Diploma in Border Security (PGDBS) early this year at USP's graduation ceremony. Mr. Moemoe Tuiavii and Ms. Talifaia Fa'atonu from Samoa Immigration graduated with their post graduate diplomas in Border Security and acknowledged PIDC's support in providing them with the opportunity to obtain a recognised graduate qualification from a regional university at the University of the South Pacific. Both officers agreed that the course provided a better appreciation of the work they do in managing our shared borders across the Pacific and an in-depth understanding of regional and international security issues. Samoa Immigration is expected to benefit from the qualifications their staff as they are expected to strengthen operations across Samoa's borders.

The USP Postgraduate Diploma in Border Security was created through a joint collaboration between PIDC and USP, and officially commenced in January 2020.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Border Security aims to: (a) provide opportunities to PIDC Member Officers in academic training allowing them to obtain an academic award which now is often required to hold executive positions; and (b) strengthen the body of knowledge on Pacific Island migration concerns having input from the Pacific Islands immigration and border enforcement community.

Integrated Border Management System (IBMS) Workshop



Source: www.looppng.com

The Integrated Border Management System (IBMS) in the Pacific Workshop targeting immigration agencies across the Pacific was hosted by Papua New Guinea Immigration & Citizenship Authority (PGNICA) from 20-21 April 2023 at the Stanley Hotel and Suites, Port Moresby, PNG. The workshop aimed to foster collaboration among the participating nations to improve their border management systems and make them suitable for the specific needs of each country and the wider region.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Labour and Immigration of Papua New Guinea (PNG), John Rosso, opened the "Border Management Systems in the Pacific" workshop and welcomed the participation of Heads of immigration agencies and technical staff from over 13 Pacific Island States.

The main objective of the workshop was to discuss and promote good practices for procuring Border Management Systems (BMS) and encourage the sharing of experiences and challenges faced by Pacific Island Nations in implementing these systems. Minister Rosso emphasized the importance of effective border management in facilitating legitimate business, tourism, and traveller movement deterring potential threats to national security.

The PNGICA shared its experiences and lessons learnt in implementing its BMS, and expressed its willingness to provide technical advice and support to other Pacific Island nations in their efforts to enhance and develop their systems. The Chief Migration Officer, Stanis Hulahau, underscored the significance of bilateral and multilateral cooperation to effectively address various national security issues in the region with the regional workshop providing a platform for Pacific Island nations to exchange information, learn from each other's experiences, and work together towards improving border management systems to facilitate trade, investment, and national security in the region.



Source: www.looppng.com

Chief Migration Officer, Stanis Hulahau and Minister for Labour and Immigration, John Rosso

PALAU IMMIGRATION REVIEWS IMMIGRATION ACT



Source: Island Times

Palau Immigration is currently reviewing its Immigration Act through the support of PIDC. The work currently being undertaken in Palau mirrors similar projects completed for the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Independent State of Samoa (Samoa), Tuvalu, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kingdom of Tonga (Tonga), Solomon Islands (Solomons) and Niue. Each of the reviews undertaken in these countries has been based around the PIDC Model Policy and Legislative Framework with findings and recommendations for change to the countries immigration Act consequently customised to reflect each country's individual circumstances.

Similar to other countries supported through the PIDC Modernisation programme, Palau Immigration's legislation needed to support the evolving 21st century border management operational environment.

The Palau review involves four sequential processes: (a) a mapping of the Palau Immigration Act against PIDC's Model Policy and Legislative Framework (MPLF) as well as a range of other Palau legislation; (b) identifying a range of additional policy considerations based upon key national priorities and stakeholder

consultations; (c) identifying gaps with regional and international standards and best practice; and (d) the preparation of Drafting Instructions (DIs) for amendments to Immigration legislation to address these.

As part of this review process, Palau Immigration undertook national consultations on Koror between 24-28 April 2023. In his contribution to the consultations H.E. Surangel Whipps, Jr., President of the Republic of Palau stated that Immigration plays a key role in the overall economic growth of the country. Where borders can be protected more efficiently if immigration legislation is upgraded.

The national stakeholder consultations emphasized the need to review and strengthen the Act as well as to make sure that Palau remain receptive to shifting migration trends and patterns in the Pacific and beyond to protect the nation's borders.

The dialogue and national consultations took place as Palau prepares to handle an influx of visitors with the expansion of flight numbers. Major stakeholders' players in migration worked together to share their viewpoints on immigration and the methods for identifying national goals and managing our borders.

It is anticipated that the review will identify areas for improvement based on existing national priorities, discrepancies with regional and global norms, and procedures that would simplify the immigration process. Provisions in the Act will help the Republic of Palau make the necessary adjustments to its legislation and will facilitate the formation of a suggested set of new provisions.

PIDC SUPPORTS MEMBERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PLANS

The PIDC regional Strategic Plan Support Programme was established to support members modernise their operations through the development of department strategic plans, business plans or operational plans where none existed. The support modality provided members access to PIDC expert support in developing country specific strategic plan frameworks through an in-country PIDC consultation mission.

PIDC recently completed support towards the development of Strategic Plans for Fiji and Vanuatu has been a significant milestone in efforts to support member nations with effective and sustainable strategies.

The PIDC regional Strategic Plan Development support programme has been instrumental in assisting members in modernizing their operations. By facilitating the development of strategic plans, PIDC aims to align their efforts with international standards and best practices. This approach ensures that members are equipped to effectively execute their core functions. This initiative has proven invaluable in helping members navigate the uncertainties and challenges posed by the changing migration operational landscape against a backdrop of capacity and resource limitations.



Source: NZ Immigration

This was an opportunity for these staff to take ownership of the Immigration Core Elements and develop the skills to facilitate their own organisation's learning through coaching and mentoring. Hakili Matagi will continue to support the learning and the staff and ensure that the deliverable materials are regularly updated. The mentoring and coaching course intended to:

- Building capacity within Immigration to deliver ICE Training and Learning elements to work colleagues;
- Develop a genuine understanding of coaching and mentoring in a work environment to enable staff to meet organisational objectives and work at their best;
- Enhance skills relevant to Immigration for the purpose of shared learning and experience; Identify learning gaps and training needs internally within their organisation;
- Work and share with other Pacific Immigration staff learning and training needs.

Participants at the workshop expressed their appreciation in being trained with skill sets that would provide them with confidence to undertake the delivery of this specialised immigration training course and have inhouse capacity to sustain their respective nationals training process.

HAKILI MATAGI IMMIGRATION CORE ELEMENTS (ICE) COACHING AND MENTORING WORKSHOP

NZ Immigration hosted the Hakili Matagi ICE mentoring and coaching Workshop from 22nd - 26th May 2023 in Fiji. A total of 22 individuals took part in the ICE Coaching Training from Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Cook Island, Niue, Tokelau, Kiribati and the PIDC Secretariat.

'Networks of Insecurity', Transnational Organised Crime in the Pacific Course

The Australia Pacific Security College hosted a regional workshop on Transnational Organised Crime in Fiji from 9th-12th May 2023. The course was designed to address the security, governance, and development challenges posed by transnational organized crime in the Pacific region. It adopted a

layered approach, examining transnational organised crime at the regional, national, and local levels. Additionally, a global system approach was adopted to explore the modes and networks that facilitate transnational organised crime in the Pacific.

The course was intended to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of transnational organised crime in the Pacific, including key mechanisms and architecture. The course relied heavily on case studies and evidence-based research. Upon successfully completing the course, students gained knowledge and skills to:

- Engage with appropriate conceptual frameworks and perspectives for analyzing transnational organized crime in the Pacific;
- Conduct critical analysis of the significant trends, actors, and dynamics that propel transnational organized crime in the Pacific; and
- Critically evaluate existing approaches to combating transnational organized crime at both regional and national levels across the Pacific.

Consequently, participants developed a comprehensive understanding of transnational organised crimes and more importantly learning the necessary tools to analyze, assess and address the challenges associated with transnational organized crime. A total of 20 individuals representing various government ministries,



Source: Australia Pacific Security College

regional, and international bodies participated in the training.

The Pacific Island region has long been concerned with transnational organised crimes. The Honiara Declaration in 1992 acknowledged the increasing concern of regional states and enforcement agencies regarding the potential impact of transnational organised crime in the Pacific. It called for a comprehensive, integrated, and collaborative approach to counter these threats, recognizing that security is vital for the economic and social development of the region. The Boe Declaration on Regional Security in 2018 identified transnational organised crime as one of the key security challenges and emphasized the need to strengthen national capacities and coordination.

You can visit APSC's website on <https://pacificsecurity.net/program/strategic-analysis/> to explore other courses offered.



UNODC HOSTS MIGRANT SMUGGLING AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING FORUM



Source: University of the South Pacific

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) hosted a regional forum to address approaches of enhancing the collection of statistical data on migrant smuggling and trafficking from April 18–20 in Fiji. Dr Rebecca Miller, the UNODC's regional coordinator, emphasized the need for cooperation across sectors to address the widespread human trafficking and people smuggling cases emerging in Southeast Asia.

Community-based studies conducted in Fiji between 2017 and 2021 discovered 5,200 hidden victims of human trafficking. According to Marie Fatiaki, the Research Officer with UNODC's Crime Research Section “most of the domestic trafficking cases were in forestry, forced labour, construction, service & retail, and agriculture sectors”. Palau and Fiji were chosen by UNODC for the TIP research because of the ongoing reported cases of human trafficking and people smuggling emerging in their respective jurisdictions.

Ronald Ledgerwood from the Micronesia Legal Service Corporation in Palau believes that domestic violence receives more media attention than human trafficking. Migrant workers in Palau are vulnerable to plundering because of job loss, pressure, and ties to traffickers in their families.

Immigrant labourers from China, the Philippines, and Bangladesh have been exploited in the Solomon Islands and other Pacific islands, notably Vanuatu. The arrival of 400 members of a South Korean Christian group on investment visas is being investigated by the government of Fiji where some of them are believed to be Trafficking in Person victims.

Solomon Islands Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration sign MOU for Anti-Human Trafficking Advisory Committee membership for the SAFENET Carecom.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration (MCILI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SAFENET Carecom at Heritage Park Hotel in Honiara witnessed by other regional participants attending the UNDP regional workshop on Ending Violence against women and children. Deputy Director of Immigration, Chris Akosawa signed the MOU on behalf of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration. Solomon Islands Immigration Division, Office of the Director of Public Prosecution and the Hope Trust of Solomon Islands are three new members of the SAFENET network. SAFENET is a multi-stakeholder agencies network working to support and combatting gender-based violence against women, children and other vulnerable members of the society. Human trafficking and people smuggling has also been identified as gender-based violence against women, children and other vulnerable members of the society.

The crime is always committed in the forms of labor and sexual exploitations, which is an emerging crime in Solomon Islands and the region. During the signing ceremony, SAFENET Coordinator, Mr Nazilly Vozoto welcomed the MCILI as a new member and look forward to support trafficking in person victims and managing reported cases with Police, Immigration and members of the AHTAC. Cedric Alependava, Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Women, Youths, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) congratulated MCILI for the efforts to become a successful member of SAFENET. PS Alependava, welcomed MCILI as a new member to strengthen working partnerships with national and regional members to combat emerging transnational organized crimes.

Solomon Islands Immigration Division is coordinating the Anti-human Trafficking Advisory Committee (AHTAC) advocating and lobbying for the government supports for trafficking in person



Source: Solomon Island Immigration

in Solomon Islands. Solomon Islands Government has criminalized trafficking in person and people smuggling under the Immigration Act 2012 incorporating TIP in the Immigration legislation. Over the past years, Immigration has been supported by SAFENE through an adhoc arrangement. The recent signing further strengthened the AHTAC and SAFENET network at the national and provincial level. MCILI is committed to supporting the Immigration reform in which it has prioritized trafficking in person to become a standalone legislation. The Ministry in its efforts finalized a Cabinet paper for the government to accede to United Nation's convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary protocols in the second quarter of 2023.

Solomon Islands Immigration successfully host Immigration Act 2012 National Consultation in Taro, Choiseul Province.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration (MCILI) successfully completed two days' consultation for Choiseul Province in Taro from 1st – June 2023. The consultation review undertook consultations with Choiseul Province and representatives from Shortland communities on the new Solomon Islands Immigration bill. MCILI prioritized the Immigration legislation review and looking forward to complete review for Choiseul and Temotu Provinces in the Month of June 2023. The Ministry Expert Review team conducted the two days' review in capturing the views and inputs on the new Immigration bill of the Choiseul Provincial Government representatives, Heads of Provincial divisions, law enforcement, non-governmental organizations, churches, and community leaders.

PIDC as part of its legislation modernisation programme continues to support the Immigration

Act review with technical support and funding assistance. Solomon Islands Immigration continues to acknowledge PIDC's supports in the Immigration Act national consultation review programme.

Deputy Director of Immigration, Chris Akosawa discussed why the Immigration Act 2012 is under review with the intention to repeal the existing legislation and introduce a new Immigration legislation that is relevant to the new migration operational landscape. The existing Immigration Act 2012 is inappropriate and not fitting well for the purpose of border and national security. The review intends to address the legislative gaps and work comprehensively with other national laws including the Solomon Islands Foreign Investment, Labour, Customs, Bio Security and Environment Health legislations.

Deputy Secretary, Mr Hunter Masuguria, assured Choiseul Province that the new Immigration bill intends to strengthen existing traditional border relations and working in partnership with Choiseul Provincial Government and communities through the decentralisation of Immigration services. The consultation workshop concluded with Choiseul Provincial's participants outcomes welcomed the intention to strengthen the new Immigration bill and to give more powers to Immigration, Police and Customs under the new Immigration Bill.

Hon. Samson Takubala, MPA, Provincial Minister for Agriculture ad Lands and Member for Choiseul Bay Ward 8 supported the new Immigration bill to give more powers for Police, Customs and Immigration for seizing and forfeiting goods under illegal company operations. Immigration, Police, Customs and border security officers must be empowered to protect communities against exploitations of transnational organized crimes”.



SOLOMON ISLANDS IMMIGRATION UNDERTAKE IMMIGRATION ACT 2012 NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS IN LATA, TEMOTU PROVINCE.



Source: Solomon Islands Immigration

Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration concluded the Immigration Act 2012 review national consultations in Lata for Temotu Province from 28th – 29th June 2023. The Immigration Expert Review Team, a multi-agency stakeholder team consisting of Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Police, National Security, and Correctional Services. Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Ministry of Women, Youths, Children and Family Affairs, Customs, Royal Solomon Police Force and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration.

The Deputy Premier Honourable Nickson Lanoli MPA officially opened the consultation review workshop in Lata. The consultations captured Provincial inputs related to national border security in the proposed Immigration Bill. Hon. Nickson Lanoli MPA welcomed the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration and the Immigration Review Team to Temotu Province.

The Deputy Premier highlighted Temotu Province's challenges of emerging border security threats influenced by illegal unlicensed and unregulated fishing, transnational organized crimes and smuggling of drugs into Solomon Islands territories without detection. The contributing factors of the emerging security risks is the porousness of Temotu Provincial international borders. Temotu Provincial borders becoming vulnerable to criminal networks operating in the area to smuggle drugs, transnational organized crime and illegal, unlicensed and unregulated fishing operations that the Immigration bill can address. The Deputy Premier confirmed that the Temotu Province encouraged the national government improving infrastructures for Temotu Province to facilitate border trading, and tourism between Torres and Banks and Temotu Province. The Deputy Premier Nickson Lanoli MPA supported the governments redirection policy and Immigration reform under the Ministry of Commerce,

Industry, Labor and Immigration. The Temotu Provincial Government was pleased to see the governments redirection policy like the reform of the Immigration laws and other national laws supporting national border security and economic development.

George assured Temotu Provincial Government that their contributions and inputs were important to the new Immigration Bill. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration is fully committed to supporting the Temotu Provincial Government and its people and also pleased to see strong ambitions in engaging with Torres and Banks Province of Vanuatu for the proposed Tervau Basic Border Arrangement proposed for border trading and traditional movement," he said.

The Immigration Expert Review Team consisted of multi-agency stakeholders from the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Police, National Security, and Correctional Services, Office of the Prime and Cabinet, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Ministry of Women, Youths, Children and Family Affairs, Customs, Royal Solomon Police Force and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration. The recent Immigration consultation workshop participants included the Temotu Provincial Government Executive, Provincial Heads of Division, women, community leaders, Principal Magistrate, Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, Correctional Service, Customs, Provincial Health and Immigration.

COVID-19 SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The COVID-19 Support Programme is wrapping up after three years since it was established in 2020 to support PIDC Members' response to the COVID-19 impacts on immigration authorities' operations. Since 2020 the programme has engaged and supported 15 PIDC Members, including American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The support provided focus on three key areas:

- (i) supplying Members with Communication Packages;
- (ii) supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PEE) and resources to support operations specifically for Immigration Offices; and
- (iii) policy development support integrating COVID-19 safe measures.

In the last six months of the programme, PIDC continued to provide support through procurement of additional resources requested by the Members.

These additional resources included general cleaning materials to continue maintaining a safe and clean working environment for front liners.

Uniforms, ID makers and badges were also requested to better identify immigration officers at the borders. Request for queue stanchions and way finding signage to better manage passengers at the borders for processing were also



Tonga with their ID maker, lanyard and ID card supplies



Additional PPE supplies for Samoa Immigration



Niue with their new uniform and badges



Covered footwear & safety shoes of Kiribati Immigration Officers

requested and supplied under the programme. Also supplied per Member request office equipment further supporting immigration operations.

Members continued to be guided where relevant by the ABF Aviation COVID-19 Safe Guide in ensuring a safe and COVID-19 free working environment at the borders as international borders rapidly reopen, and immigration operations at the borders becomes normal again. Policy development support integrating COVID-19 safe measures are linked to other PIDC core activities, including the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Tuvalu, Samoa, Tokelau, Niue and Vanuatu, which will commence soon as core activities under the Organisation.

In retrospect, the COVID-19 Support Programme has assisted PIDC Members significantly during the post pandemic.



Queue stanchion for RMI Immigration Office

Members were able to meet their national obligations effectively as part of their multi-agency COVID-19 response with support provided under the COVID-19 Support Programme. Members adapted to online communication and continue to connect with the Secretariat and around the region during and after the pandemic. At the 2023 Regular Annual Meeting held in Port Villa, Vanuatu, Members showed appreciation and acknowledged the support provided by PIDC through its COVID-19 Support Programme.

SAMOA IMMIGRATION LAUNCHES NEW OFFICIAL UNIFORM



Source: <https://www.samoagovt.ws>

The newly introduced Samoa Immigration uniform for both male and female immigration officers serve as a visual representation of Samoa's dedication to professionalism and excellence. With this positive momentum, Samoa Immigration is poised to continue its vital role in safeguarding the nation's borders and facilitating seamless travel for all. The rank slides, identification badge, and official cap further emphasize the officers' authority to their duties. This standardized attire will undoubtedly contribute to a more organized and recognizable immigration service.

Prime Minister Fiame Naomi Mataafa highlighted the importance of the Samoa Immigration department in the country's overall vision and acknowledged the partnership between the Ministry of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC) who funded the uniform and also applauded the initiative. *"The essence of having a uniform epitomizes unity and identifies a group or an organisation that works together for a common goal. And while that is important, having a duty-bound workforce with a result driven spirit for the betterment of society, are of greater significance"*.

The Prime Minister urged Immigration officers to exercise increased vigilance while carrying out their assigned duties at the borders; *"the new uniform is your armor and a constant reminder to all who will don this uniform, about their calling to safeguard Samoa's national borders"*.

The CEO of the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Agafili Tomaimanō Shem Leo, underscored the importance of enhancing strategic focus and better aligning immigration efforts at formal border crossings to guarantee national security, travelers' safety, and timely detection of transnational offenses. Moreover, this new uniform will help improve visibility of Samoa Immigration at the borders, towards its preparations for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) that will be hosted by Samoa in October 2024.



NEW IMMIGRATION UNIFORM FOR SOLOMON ISLANDS IMMIGRATION OFFICERS

The Solomon Islands Immigration Service recently unveiled its set of new uniform for its officers, funded by the Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC).



Source: Solomon Islands Immigration

The new uniform would help to project a more professional image of immigration officers to the public and visitors entering the border. Improving immigration system is a priority given the increasing flow of people travelling to and from the Solomon Islands. This was an initiative developed to demonstrate the value of regional cooperation and more importantly to help PIDC Members improve their border security administrations.

