

MINISTRY OF REVENUE & CUSTOMS



WELCOME TO OUR

Bi - Monthly Newsletter



Highlight

Tri - Ministry Week was held on the 15th - 18th July, 2024 at Falemasiva Hall. These Ministries include Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Revenue & Customs and Tonga Statistics Department.



In this newsletter you will find:

Media Release, workshops, and more. Keep Reading!

Tri-Ministry week 2024

Theme: "Building the Foundation for Sector-Driven Economic Growth and Sustainability"



Photo above: Rev. 'Alifeleti 'Atiola, Hon. Minister Tiofilusi Tiueti, CEOs and staff of Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Revenue & Customs and Tonga Statistics Department

It was an honor for the Ministries to have the then-acting Prime Minister, Hon. Samiu Kuita Vaipulu to launch this important week with its theme "Building the Foundation for Sector-Driven Economic Growth and Sustainability." Events included the release of the "2021 Population and Housing Census Volume 2 Report" by the Tonga Statistics Department and the Talatalanoa Presentation for representatives of the following sectors: Retailers & Wholesalers, Local government, Non-Governmental organizations, High schools, Tourism, Agriculture, and Fisheries, as well as Public Enterprises. The CEOs of these three ministries participated in a panel discussion at the end of the week, with attendees including leaders from the construction, manufacturing, and informal sectors.

Photo above L-R: Kuli Fakalolo, Lesieli Namoa, Dr. Ngongo Kioa, Liz Cowley, Teisina Fuko aka Seaukamea, 'Etimoni Palu



Photo above L-R: Mr. Michael Cokanasiga, Mrs. Kilisitina Tuamei'api, Hon. Tiofilusi Tiueti, Mr. Sione Lolohea

Photo above: Hon. Tiofilusi Tiueti & Executive officers

Photos above: Guest of Honor and Distinguished guests



Morning devotion and Thanksgiving for the completion of 2023/2024 Fiscal year

A morning prayer and thanksgiving program was held at Customs Fe'ao mo e Ngalu building to commemorate the successful completion of the 2023/2024 fiscal year. CEO, Mr. Michael Cokanasiga thanked and congratulated staff of the Ministry for their efforts throughout the last fiscal year, highlighting that their achievements would not have been possible without putting God first and working together as a team.

Despite the many challenges faced in the last financial year, the Ministry was able to meet many of its targets set by the Government and more importantly it was able to continue to deliver its vital services to its stakeholders and the general public.



Cook Islands PM calls for Collaboration across Oceania Customs agencies at 26th Annual Conference



With a call for creativity and cooperation amongst Customs agencies around Oceania, the 26th Annual Oceania Customs Organization (OCO) conference got underway on the 29th July, 2024. Prime Minister Mark Brown of the Cook Islands emphasized the importance of regional cooperation in securing the future of the area.

“Customs agencies play an indispensable role in promoting and facilitating trade, safeguarding our borders, and generating revenue for our governments,” said Prime Minister Brown.

PITAA/PFTAC Regional workshop on Tax Registration

A week-long workshop on taxpayer registration was held by the Pacific Technical Financial Technical Assistance (PFTAC) and the Pacific Islands Tax Administrators Association (PITAA).

Tax administrator from the 15 Pacific Member Countries actively participated in this session, networking, and sharing their experiences.

Mr. George Mow (RIP), the then PITAA Head of Secretariat spoke at the inauguration ceremony and emphasized the four major components of a typical tax system: registration, filing/lodgment, reporting/returns and payment. According to Mr. Mow, registration is the first step in the process, and if it is inaccurate, the three sectors cannot operate efficiently.



Debriefing meeting with agencies, hosted by the UNODC Mission

To examine the mission's outcomes and potential future cooperation with the UNODC for support, the UNODC Mission convened a debriefing discussion with the agencies that met over the week on August 2, 2024.

Mr. Collie Brown, Pacific Advisor for the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime said, “Tonga, like many countries in Pacific Islands Countries, is experiencing an upsurge in the scale of illicit trafficking (arms and weapons) into and through the country, often linked to transnational organized crime groups.

The need to strengthen health and criminal justice institutions and to enhance national, regional and interregional cooperation could not be more urgent.”

All government, non-governmental, and religious officials who attended the debriefing meeting were thanked by HM Prisons for contributing priceless insights to the conversation.



PITAA/PFTAC REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON TAX REGISTRATION

26 TO 30 AUGUST, 2024
NADI, FIJI



Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting

The Ministry of Revenue and Customs had actively collaborated with other agencies and stakeholders in the Airport Facilitation Committee for the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, themed “Transformative Resilient Pasifiki.”

As the leaders of the Airport Facilitation Committee, we take great pride in our role as border security agency. We are proud to introduce e-0arrival and departure cards for VVIPs, VIPs, and other delegates on both commercial and special flights.

We are dedicated to serving as airport facilitation and ensuring a positive and memorable experience for all visitors to our beautiful island nation. We appreciate your continued support!



Consultations

Paotoloaki on E-Tax platform

We have completed a fruitful training in July 2024, due to these kind taxpayers who agreed to sit in with our officers to tackle some issues with our E-Tax platform.

Thank you very lot to;

- Tonga's Catholic Diocese
 - Skills & Employments for Tongans (SET Project)
 - Attorney General's Office
 - Tonga Prison Department
- are among the organizations involved



Customs Broker Meeting



A monthly meeting with the Custom Brokers was held to discuss issues and clarify processes related to the release of consignments of importers under Customs control. The meeting included 'Alipate Tupou from Royco Ports and the Manager of Ports Security, Mr. Brisbane Lokotui, who attended to provide clarification. Following this meeting, a significant agreement was reached, and several loopholes within our service were identified that need to be addressed. there was strong emphasis on ensuring compliance at all levels and on maintaining due diligence processes within the Ministry and among Customs agents.



Participant Testimonial

Regional Workshop on Navigating
Complex Tax Technical Audit Issues

17 - 21 June 2024

Holiday Inn Hotel, Suva, Fiji

Ms. Losaline Mahe

Principal Revenue Officer - Audit & Investigation
Ministry of Revenue and Customs
TONGA



"The workshop exceeded my expectations. The setup was highly engaging, allowing participants to share thoughts and collectively discuss similar issues. It was insightful to see different perspectives and approaches, and the facilitators guided us step-by-step on tackling these matters. I gained a deep understanding of complex tax technical issues and fostered valuable relationships with tax officials from other Pacific countries."