

COMMUNIQUÉ

Meeting of the South Pacific Legal Metrology Forum (SPLMF)

15–16 November 2001

Officials from trade measurement and legal metrology authorities in Cook Islands, Kiribati, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga met together on 15 and 16 November 2001 to discuss regional cooperation in trade measurement and legal metrology in the Pacific Region.

The officials had attended the 8th Meeting of the Asia Pacific Legal Metrology Forum (APLMF) held in Auckland on 13–15 November which had discussed harmonization of legal metrology requirements in the Asia Pacific region in support of the APEC free trade agenda.

Officials noted that most Pacific nations have established trade measurement (weights and measures) systems that focus on consumer protection, however an effective trade measurement system can provide significant economic benefits and greatly assist the efficient operation of markets. Benefits would include:

- Consumer protection;
- Provision of a “level playing field” for commercial transactions;
- Reduced disputation and transaction costs;
- Effective stock control;
- Full national benefit is obtained for commodity exports; and
- Full collection of government excise and taxes based on measurement.

There was a need to develop their systems to support a wider range of trade transactions including international trade and government excise collection.

In addition, there was a need for the legal metrology system to support a wider range of government regulatory measurements particularly those used for:

- Environmental control to ensure sustainability of logging and fishing operations, and monitoring the impact of global warming; and
- Health and safety, e.g. radar speed devices, breath analyzers, occupational noise level measurements.

Officials noted that APEC had established a sub-committee on standards and conformance to har-

monize technical requirements on the region in support of free trade. The Asia Pacific Legal Metrology Forum, comprising twenty-three Pacific Rim economies, has been harmonizing legal metrology requirements in the region in support of the APEC Leader's Agreement.

Officials agreed there would be value in establishing a regional cooperation program in the South Pacific on trade measurement and legal metrology which would assist the efficient development of the national systems, harmonies requirements, ensure consistency of measurement in the region and support regional and international trade.

Areas of cooperation would include:

- Harmonization of metrology legislation requirements, including the completion of the introduction of the metric (SI) system of measurement;
- Development of specialized test and measurement facilities;
- Development of a regional training program in trade and legal metrology for government officials and industry; and
- Development of policy capability to respond to the challenges arising from new technologies, expanding scope of metrology, changing role of government and globalization.

It was agreed that before deciding on a detailed program of regional cooperation a sectoral and institutional analysis and needs assessment should be undertaken and to seek funding for such a study from Australia and New Zealand.

The purpose of the study is to prioritize the development of the national and regional systems to maximize economic and social benefits. In this regard the Papua New Guinea official noted that in his country:

- “Mineral products constitute 70 % of PNG export income and 17 % of government revenue;
- PNG has recently changed its taxes on alcohol and tobacco from an *ad valorem* tax to taxes based on weight and volume; and
- There is a proposal to develop the PNG natural gas deposits and export the gas to Australia by a high pressure gas pipeline.

All of these sources of government revenue and national income rely on accurate and consistent measurement”.

To support the development of regional cooperation the meeting requested that the Cook Islands should act as the interim coordinator, Samoa to provide Secretariat support and Tonga to act as interim regional training coordinator. The meeting further requested that, when this is confirmed, advice be forwarded to regional (APLMF) and international (OIML) organizations.

Officials attending**Economy**

Cook Islands
Fiji
Kiribati
Papua New Guinea

Samoa
Solomon Islands
Tonga

Official

Mr. David A Greig
Mr. Satish Lal
Mr. Takabea Barantarawa
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Organisation

Director for Labor & Consumer Services
Ministry of Commerce, Business Development & Investment
Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism
Director General, National Institute of Standards & Industrial
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Assistant Secretary, Department of Trade, Commerce & Industry
Principal Consumer Officer, Ministry of Commerce & Primary Industries
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