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## **Trade Justice Now!**

**An update from the Pacific Network on Globalization**

**March/April**

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PANG is a regional fair trade organization based in Suva, Fiji. *Trade Justice Now* is a monthly e-newsletter providing analysis on trade and globalization issues in the Pacific. See [www.pang.org.fj](http://www.pang.org.fj) for further information.

To subscribe to the Pacific Trade Information Network, simply send a request e-mail to: [pactrade-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:pactrade-subscribe@yahoo.com)

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### **Message from PANG Coordinator**

Bula vinaka and greetings from the Pacific Network on Globalisation in Suva. As the first edition of the Trade Justice E-Newsletter in 2010 it is appropriate to reflect on the year 2009 before we move ahead into 2010 which is already proving to be an interesting year on the trade negotiation fronts.

At the end of 2009 PANG said farewell to Wesley Morgan who was the Information, Education and Communication Officer. Wesley was instrumental in contributing to PANG's successes in 2008/ 2009 and will be missed by the staff and the Steering Committee. Wesley is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Political Science at Melbourne University. We wish him all the best in his endeavours.

2009 also marked the end of a crucial 6 year partnership between PANG and Kairos. The support received by PANG during its crucial stages of development as a new NGO has made PANG a much stronger organisation to take on new challengers in the Pacific.

In particular and on behalf of the Steering Committee of PANG I would like to thank Connie Sorio who was responsible for this partnership for her tireless support during the partnership.

We hope that there will be opportunities in the future for PANG to work again with Kairos and its member partners in Canada. As we closed the chapter in the partnership with Kairos a new opportunity and a life line was thrown to PANG from EED. In this edition we are pleased to announce that a new partnership between PANG and EED was signed in January 2010. The new partnership has meant that for the first quarter of 2010 PANG has been recruiting new staff. We now have a team of both local and overseas staff who will now get on with the challenging job of implementing the Trade Justice programme in earnest.

On the trade negotiation front, at the end of 2009 only two PACP countries – Fiji and PNG had signed the Interim EPAs, while Pacific Forum Leaders had agreed to launch negotiations on PACER-Plus. The Forum Trade Ministers at their special meeting in October agreed that during the preliminary stages of negotiations will focus on consolidating the Office of the Chief Trade Advisor (OCTA), intensifying national consultations and undertake meetings at the Officials level to deepen understanding on common priority issues. At this meeting Dr. Chris Noonan was hired as the Chief Trade Advisor.

In true hallmark of PANG's Trade Justice E-Newsletter we continue to shine a spot light on the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relation Plus (PACER-Plus) negotiation, as well as the Economic Partnership Agreement. The lead story for this newsletter looks at the debacle surrounding the contract for the Chief Trade Advisor for the region Dr. Chris Noonan. Amongst the many stories in this edition we also profile a new report by One World Action and the Commonwealth Secretariat which found that trade agreements do not help poor women.

If you have any information regarding upcoming trade meetings or events in your country or stories that you would like to share with PANG please feel free to send the details so that we can post it in our next newsletter. In a new move we are also inviting offers to contribute articles. These can be sent directly to Gillian Hicks at [media@pang.org.fj](mailto:media@pang.org.fj) I hope you find this edition informative. As always PANG welcomes feedback.

Vinaka vakalevu and wishing all our partners and supporters from around the Pacific and beyond our shores a successful 2010.

**Maureen Penjueli**  
**Coordinator**

## **Solomons lashes Australia on PACER-Plus: Negotiations gets underway in Vanuatu**

As PACER-Plus negotiations get underway in Vanuatu, the Solomon Island's Foreign Minister William Haomae has lashed out at Australia for not listening to Pacific Island countries on the timetable for talks on the proposed PACER-Plus free trade agreement. The Forum Island Countries Trade Ministers Meeting (FTMM) is being held in Port Vila, Vanuatu on 9 April followed by a two-day FIC Trade Officials Meeting on 12 and 13 April. The Pacific Agreement on Close Economic Relations (PACER) Plus Trade Officials Meeting (FTOM) is also scheduled to take place from 14-16 April in Vanuatu. Mr Haomae is the lead negotiator representing the 13 Pacific Island nations that are involved in PACER-Plus. The meetings come barely a month after the Pacific's new Chief Trade Advisor (CTA) Dr Chris Noonan finally took up his post in Vanuatu end of March after much controversy surrounding his contract. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat had sought in their proposal for the establishment of the position, that the key activities of the Chief Trade Advisor would be under the direct control of the Director of Economic Governance, former AusAID Trade Official Dr Chakriya Bowman. But Forum Island Trade Ministers had made it clear that PACER-Plus negotiations should not start until an independent Office of the Chief Trade Adviser (OCTA) had been established. The Pacific Islands are yet to meet together with Dr Noonan to discuss PACER-Plus negotiations and what the potential impacts could be. And still there are concerns among Pacific governments that Dr Noonan may not have the resources he needs to do his job. With few Pacific Island countries having started their national consultations, there are concerns also that the Pacific Islands may not be in a position to engage properly. The objective of the PACER-Plus Trade Officials Meeting is to consider issues of Rules of Origin, Trade Facilitation including Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, technical Barriers to Trade, Standards and Customs Procedures, development procedures focusing on physical infrastructure for trade, trade development and promotion and Regional Labour Mobility (beyond Mode 4). The meeting will be updated on the outcomes of consultations undertaken with Fiji subsequent to the Special Trade Ministers Meeting in October 2009. Dr Noonan will also update the meeting on progress made towards the establishment of the Office of the Chief Trade Adviser.

*Presenter: Jemima Garrett*

*Speaker: William Haomae, Solomon Islands' foreign minister*

- **Listen:**
- [Windows Media](#)

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat/stories/201003/s2861575.htm>

## **Fiji suspends Part Two of PACER, seeks redress from Vienna Convention**

Pacnews

**Suva, Fiji:** Fiji will not be party to what it calls Part Two of the regional trade and co—operation framework agreement, known as PACER. The suspension becomes effective in three months time if there is no objection from the other PACER Parties. The Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER), signed and ratified by Fiji in 2001, is a framework agreement which sets out the basis for future trade relations of the 14 Forum Island Countries with Australia and New Zealand. PACER Parties include Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga. Fiji says it has exhausted all means of redress available under the PACER Agreement and has today sought remedy from Article 60 of the Vienna Convention. <http://pacificbusinessonline.com/fiji/story/14600/fiji-suspends-part-two-pacer-seeks-redress-vienna-convention>

### **Other News:**

#### **New partnership signed between EED/PANG**

In January this year PANG signed a new partnership with German based EED (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst). This new partnership has seen the recruitment of new staff both locally and overseas who will in turn take on the challenging role of implementing the Trade Justice programme. This partnership also allows PANG the opportunity to continue to play its role of Pacific regional people's watchdog on trade issues. PANG also works against the imposition of WTO trade rules and regional FTAs in the Pacific island countries. (see [www.pang.org.fj](http://www.pang.org.fj)).

PANG Coordinator Maureen Penjueli has thanked Canadian-based *Kairos* for its six-year partnership with PANG which ended last year. Penjueli said the support received by PANG during its crucial stages of development as a new NGO has made PANG a much stronger organization to take on new challenges in the Pacific. On behalf of the PANG Steering Committee she thanked Connie Sorio who was responsible for this partnership and for her tireless support during the partnership. Penjueli said she hopes there will be opportunities in the future for PANG to work again with *Kairos* and its member partners in Canada.

## **PANG campaigner attends Thailand training**



*Ms Cokanasiga (right) deep in discussion with other participants*

PANG's Trade Justice Campaign Assistant Lice Kiti Cokanasiga joined 30 other participants from civil society organizations from the Asia-Pacific and Australia in a seven-day training programme held in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 22-28 March. The training was organized by the Diplomacy Training Program (DTP), affiliated with the Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. The program aimed to strengthen the capacity of Indigenous advocates from the Asia Pacific region and Australia to respond effectively to existing and emerging human rights challenges that they face.

The program had a special focus on the challenges that domestic government and global climate change policy may have on the human rights of indigenous peoples. The training also involved an examination of issues such as the effect that increased reliance on bio-fuels and hydro-electricity will have on indigenous land rights.

## **PANG welcomes new staff**

This month PANG welcomes on board four new staff.

Adam Wolfenden, an Australian campaigner, activist and advocate, joins PANG as its Trade Justice Campaigner. Mr Wolfenden is currently a member of the AID/WATCH Management Committee and prior to that worked for the Australian Fair Trade Investment Network (AFTINET) as Trade Justice Campaigner. He has vast experience in trade justice campaigns and has performed duties such as planning, leading and evaluating campaigns on a number of trade agreements, focusing most recently on PACER-Plus. He has lobbied Pacific Trade Ministers and advisors at official functions such as the Pacific Islands Forum Trade Ministers Meeting and has researched and published fact-sheets and briefings for diverse audiences on the impacts of PACER-Plus in a range of sectors. He has also instigated and coordinated networking of Sydney-based organizations and individuals interested in Pacific campaigns and coordinated and hosted public outreach activities to raise awareness and support campaigns against trade agreements. Mr Wolfenden has also worked for the Cancer Council of New South Wales as Advocacy Projects Coordinator and as Student Environment Activist Network Co-Convenor for the New South Wales' National Union of Students. Mr Wolfenden is currently working from Australia and will take up office in June.

Ms Lice Kiti Cokanasiga joined PANG in 2008 as a research volunteer and is now PANG's Trade Justice Campaign Assistant. Ms Cokanasiga has previously worked for other NGOs including the Pacific Centre for Public Integrity (PCPI) and Greenpeace as Administrative Assistant. She also spent four months with the University of the South Pacific's Hatchery Laboratory. Ms Cokanasiga is currently researching the impact of free trade on customary land rights.

Ms Viriseta Rabuatoka joins PANG as Administrator and Accounts Clerk. She has previously carried out similar responsibilities with the Pacific Centre for Public Integrity (PCPI), a non-government organization. Ms Rabuatoka has also had stints with the Westpac Bank and Grants Waterhouse in Suva.

Ms Gillian Hicks joins PANG as its Communications Consultant. Ms Hicks has a background in journalism and has worked mainly for print media for over 10 years. She has done freelancing for public relations companies and the Fiji National University's Media and Journalism Program. Prior to joining PANG, Ms Hicks worked for the Suva City Council as its Public Relations Officer.

## **Resources:**

### **Washing machine wars: Trade agreements not helping poor women, study claims**

*February 2010*

New research calls for holistic approach at negotiating table. It is commonly argued that cheaper imports reduce poverty in a country because they enable the poor to spend, which in turn boosts the economy. But new research has cast doubt on this argument, with findings indicating that the majority of women, especially the poor, are unlikely to be able to take advantage of imports resulting from the new [Economic Partnership Agreements](#) (EPAs). Carolina Gottardo, Head of Policy and Advocacy at One World Action, which conducted the study with the Commonwealth Secretariat, explains that at first glance cheaper imports – including washing machines and gas cookers - “seem like a fantastic idea, especially for women who bear the brunt of most household duties in the developing world.”

<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/news/34580/34581/220567/250210genderandtrade.htm>

### **Small states face numerous constraints in international trade negotiations, recent study reveals**

A recent study contained in a new publication titled: *Maneuvering the Margins: Constraints Faced by Small States in International Trade Negotiations* has revealed that of enduring concern to small states are the numerous constraints they face in international trade negotiations. John Odell of the University of Southern California, who wrote the book, said this study provides evidence that small states can still have an important influence over the outcomes of negotiations if they successfully identify and tackle these underlying constraints. For more information read:

<http://publications.thecommonwealth.org/manoeuvring-at-the-margins-782-p.aspx>

### **Trading Stories: Key links between trade, gender and economic development**

Through twenty regional and country case studies, *Trading Stories* pulls together the key links between trade, gender and economic development. Ten case studies focus on the gender impacts of trade policies, detailing differential consequences on men and women; and ten focus on linking women with global markets – including Fair Trade, organic, niche and mainstream markets – through a range of best practices involving government, NGOs, people’s organisations and associations, private sector and international agencies.

[Download a PDF with additional information for this publication](#)

### **Events**

#### **PACER Plus- Should we be worried?**

A Forum on Trade and Health issues in the Pacific was held in Melbourne, Australia on April 12 and 13. This follows concerns by a number of organisations and individuals in Melbourne (and across Australia) about the potential outcomes of a new free trade agreement currently being negotiated between Australia and New Zealand and the 13 Pacific Island countries (PACER Plus). Following regular meetings, the concerned organisations and individuals decided to organise a public forum to discuss PACER Plus and also discuss their concerns about the potential impacts of PACER Plus on health in the Pacific. The Forum brought together researchers, activists and health professionals from Australia and the Pacific to consider a wide range of health issues at stake in the current negotiations of the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) as PACER plus. Expert speakers from Australia and Pacific Island Countries will make presentations on health issues including:

- Nutrition and health in the Pacific
- Tobacco and alcohol exposure
- Implications of foreign investment in health care
- Labour mobility and ‘brain drain’
- Economic development and health
- Gender Inequality

The forum immediately followed a conference organized by the Australian Association for the Advancement of Pacific Studies.

#### **ODN Conference discusses needs of Pacific Island People**

The Oceania Development Network’s Biennial ODN Conference 2010 titled: “Regionalism and Service Delivery: Meeting the needs of the Pacific Island People” was held at the Naviti Resort in Suva, Fiji from April 14-15.

The Oceania Development Network (ODN) invited development researchers, academics, policy analysts and others working for universities, government and non government organizations, and regional and international institutions and others involved in social and economic development to participate in their 2010 conference.

The ODN conference focused on recent changes in global aid policies and practices have had significant implications for both governance and service delivery in Pacific Island countries. There have been changes in relationships amongst donors, regional institutions, government and civil society and new priorities accorded to different types of government services such as education, health and infrastructure. The conference addressed the question of how these changes have raised important issues for Pacific Island governments, civil society and communities. Themes for discussion included the changing situation: issues, gaps, successes and challenges, implementing new approaches: governance, economic downturn and consequences and development challenges to Pacific Island countries.

#### **FTOMM to be held in FSM**

The Forum Trade Officials and Ministerial Meetings will be held in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia from the 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> April to discuss PACER Plus issues.

#### **Pacific ACP trade meeting deferred to June**

A meeting of Pacific ACP trade officials and ministers scheduled to be held from 23-26 March has been deferred to the first week of June in Nadi, Fiji Islands to allow for more time to complete the required preparatory work needed in fisheries, customs-related provisions and market access offers.

#### **41<sup>st</sup> Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Meeting set for August**

The 41<sup>st</sup> Pacific Islands Forum and related meetings will be held in Port Vila, Vanuatu from 3-6 August, 2010. The dates have been confirmed following consultations between the Government of Vanuatu and other members of PIF. The schedule includes Smaller Islands States Leaders' Meeting, Pacific ACP Leaders Meeting, Forum Leaders Retreat and 22<sup>nd</sup> Post-Forum Dialogue Partners' Plenary Session. The Smaller Islands States (SIS) Officials, Pacific Plan Action Committee (PPAC) and the Pre-Forum Officials Committee (FOC) Meetings are also confirmed for 12 July, 13-14 July and 15-16 July respectively. These meetings will be held at the Forum Secretariat in Suva, Fiji.

#### **Further Information**

Resources on trade and economic justice issues in the Pacific are available at [www.pang.org.fj](http://www.pang.org.fj) and <http://pactrade.wordpress.com>.

To subscribe to the Pacific Trade Information Network, for regular email updates, simply send a request email to: [pactrade-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:pactrade-subscribe@yahogroups.com).

The Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG) plays the role of the Pacific regional 'peoples' watchdog on trade issues. PANG was established in 2000 by regional NGOs concerned that Pacific civil society was being left out of the debate on trade liberalization and that the free-trade agenda lacked a focus on key goals on human development and poverty reduction. PANG is a research, education and advocacy organization.

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