

The WTO's annual Public Forum will this year have a session on PACER-Plus and regional integration in the Pacific. See below.

http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum10_e/programme_e.htm

SESSION 18: REGIONALISM'S ROLE IN INTEGRATING THE PACIFIC INTO THE GLOBAL TRADING SYSTEM

**Organized by: Institute for International Trade,
University of Adelaide**

Date: Thursday, 16 September, 14:15 – 16:15

Meeting Room: E

ABSTRACT

Following decisions taken by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in August 2009, negotiations are under way towards achieving a comprehensive, reciprocal regional agreement covering the Pacific islands region – commonly known as PACER Plus (Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations) – to deepen trade and economic cooperation between the Pacific island countries (PICs) and Australia and New Zealand. PACER Plus builds on previous trade agreements within the Pacific region (South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (SPARTECA), Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA), etc). These, and several other recently concluded bilateral and plurilateral trade agreements in the wider region (such as the Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Australia and New Zealand) may also have significant implications for the possible shape and content of a future PACER Plus agreement.

This session will discuss the aims of PACER Plus to assist the long-term economic development of the PICs through closer integration with two neighbouring developed

countries, as well as the implications of their integration into the global economy, and reinforcing existing WTO disciplines with potential added value. The session will include expert speakers from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), the University of Adelaide's Institute for International Trade (IIT), and the Australian Ambassador in Geneva, Mr Tim Yeend.