



# Trade Justice Now!

An update from the Pacific Network on Globalization

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@yahoogleroups.com](mailto:pactrade-subscribe@yahoogleroups.com)

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## **Lead Story**

### **Calls for greater emphasis on Melanesian traditional economy**

An international conference on The Traditional Economy got underway in Port Vila, Vanuatu this month.

Among the topics for discussion: how indigenous peoples in Melanesia can maintain control over their land, sea, water, air and resources through continued use of their customary tenure systems. PANG Coordinator, Maureen Penjueli and campaign assistant Lice Cokanasiga, attended the workshop in Vanuatu.

One of the organisers of the conference is the Director of the Vanuatu National Cultural Centre and independent MP Ralph Regenvanu.

*Presenter: Geraldine Coutts*

*Speaker: Ralph Regenvanu, Director of the Vanuatu National Cultural Centre and Independent MP*

**REGENVANU:** The traditional economy is what is otherwise known as the subsistence economy in Melanesia. It's the way in which the majority of the population of the countries of Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomons, Papua

New Guinea support themselves mainly through gardens and use of resources from their customary lands, satisfy most of their food requirements and other requirements from housing and so on through continued use of their customary lands and especially we're talking about the food gardens people have. And we call it nutritional economy. It's a new term we've developed over the last few years simply because it was not receiving any attention in policy. All government policy seemed to aim towards the cash economy, whereas in reality in the Melanesian countries, each traditional economy is the biggest economy. It's much bigger than the cash economy in terms of the numbers of people it supports and we need to start recognizing that in policy, because if we continue to talk about the cash economy as the economy, assuming there is no other economy in these countries, we are going down the road towards actually making a lot of policy decisions that force people of Melanesia negative in the long term. <http://www.abc.net.au/ra/pacbeat/stories/m1887696.aspx>

## PACER-Plus Updates

### Why other Pacific countries are invited to MSG summit

#### **SOURCE: RADIO AUSTRALIA/PACNEWS**

The other Pacific island countries have been invited to this year's Melanesian Spearhead Group meeting in Fiji because some of them want to be involved at a forum where Fiji is also present.

Interim Attorney general, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum said this as Fiji prepares to host the MSG meeting scheduled for the 22-23rd July. This year's MSG meeting is called MSG Plus and its participation has been expanded to include non Melanesian countries. So far, Kiribati is the only country to officially accept Fiji's invitation.

#### **Radio Australia's Presenter: Geraldine Coutts speaks with Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Fiji's interim Attorney General**

**SAYED-KHAIYUM:** Melanesian Spearhead Group meeting plus, in other words, other countries in the region may be also participating. One of the countries who recently in the form of Kiribati, the President of Kiribati paid a visit to the prime minister on Monday and he will participate in the MSG Plus meeting.

**COUTTS:** Why has Fiji on this occasion decided to expand the Melanesian Spearhead Group to include all comers around the Pacific?

**SAYED-KHAIYUM:** Because there was no request by some of the other Pacific Island countries who are not Melanesian countries to participate in the meeting or have a forum gathering where Fiji is also present.

**COUTTS:** And what do you draw from the fact that this one has been called MSG Plus and Fiji and a number of other Pacific Island nations are unhappy about Pacer Plus?

**SAYED-KHAIYUM:** Well, I don't want to pre-empt as to what will be discussed in the meeting. It is probably best to have this discussion after the meeting, but I think what the MSG Plus meeting is indicative of is that Pacific Island countries do feel the need to have a forum where they have Fiji present, which is in the hub of the South Pacific, where a number of regional bodies are located, to have discussions with Fiji, while the other Pacific Island countries are present. As you know that we have been suspended, but this provides the opportunity to engage with Fiji and what we look forward to and we're obviously encouraged on a platform where all sovereign states are treated equally and with an open mind.

**COUTTS:** Is it possible that this MSG Plus group if it gets off the ground will in fact compete with Pacer Plus and with the forum itself?

**SAYED-KHAIYUM:** Like I said, I don't want to pre-empt anything, I think we leave it best until after the meeting and see what the leaders come up with.

**COUTTS:** Whose idea was it to try and get this MSG Plus going?

**SAYED-KHAIYUM:** Well, I think it would appear the natural progression. It is like I said it provides the forum to have discussions in which Fiji is present with all Pacific Island countries being present and having open and frank discussions.

**COUTTS:** A question was raised by Mahendra Chaudhry, former prime minister and former finance minister in the interim government's Cabinet. He claims that there should be a referendum to ask the people when they want an election. Is that a possibility? How is the interim government regarding that comment.

**SAYED-KHAIYUM:** Well, as you know the prime minister set out the framework on one July last year, to what's going to happen leading up to the elections has been set for September 2014 and that is the date that is the election and that is what the focus is on and the focus obviously in particular from now until the next three to four years, is to build up the various institutions that need to be modernised, the economy needs to be liberalised, they need to get the official civil service in place and as you have seen from the various businesses that have been conducted by the PM, particularly to the rural areas, the areas outside of Suva that there is enormous support for the reformed, for the liberalising agenda that has the prime minister has undertaken to his country.

**COUTTS:** So there is no likelihood of a referendum then?

**SAYED-KHAIYUM:** The government is focused

on ensuring that the elections take place in September 2014 and preparations for the elections will be held accordingly.

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## AusAID scrutinised by Parliamentary committee

Australia's international development assistance agency, AusAID, has faced scrutiny before a Parliamentary committee in Canberra over its use of technical assistance in the delivery of aid. And while accepting a government decision to hold an inquiry into the issue, the agency's director general, Peter Baxter, has told the committee technical assistance has fallen to the lowest level in a decade, as a percentage of the overall aid budget. The same committee has also heard that China continues to refuse to join efforts by the Pacific Islands Forum to get better co-ordination between aid donors to the region.

*Presenter: Canberra Correspondent, Linda Mottram*

*Speaker: AusAID director general Peter Baxter; Opposition Liberal Senator, Helen Kroger*

Radio Australia, Pacific Beat:

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat/stories/201006/s2917615.htm>

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## Pacific trade ministers focused on growth and development

Increasing growth and development in the Pacific through trade and investment was one of the top priorities discussed by Pacific trade ministers in the Federated States of Micronesia. Trade ministers from all the Pacific Forum Island Countries progressed plans for the new regional trade and economic agreement, known as PACER plus.

<http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=53217>

## Pacific Trade ministers move on PACER Plus

Pacific Trade Ministers have set a timetable for new negotiations on the proposed PACER Plus free trade agreement and endorsed new measures to boost trade, investment and economic growth. At a meeting described by the Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia as critical to the region's economies, ministers decided to push ahead with initiatives to improve infrastructure and further investigate options for labour mobility.

*Presenter: Jemima Garrett*

*Speaker: Australia's Trade Minister, Simon Crean*

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat/stories/201004/s2887310.htm>

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## Simon Crean on PACER-Plus

The global financial crisis may seem like a strange time to launch negotiations on a new regional trade and economic agreement. But I am convinced that Pacific Islands Forum Leaders made exactly the right decision when they agreed in August 2009 – in the darkest days of the global financial crisis – to commence negotiations on a new trade and economic agreement known as PACER Plus. Forum Island countries have faced particularly difficult economic challenges over the past three years. The ongoing and significant long term economic development challenges, such as limited access to income earning opportunities, have been made worse by the global financial crisis. In addition, the September 2009 tsunami in Samoa and Tonga, flash flooding in Fiji and the Solomon Islands, and recent cyclones remind us how environmental factors can contribute to the Pacific region's challenges.

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1004/S00576.htm>

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## A Crisis in International Trade Options



(Simon Crean)

Australia's Trade Minister Simon Crean recently raised the point that in the wake of the global financial crisis it seems like a strange time to launch more negotiations about the liberalization of trade. Indeed Minister, it seems not to make much sense at all. The recent spate of crises, from food, to petrol, to financial has laid bare the logic of blindly pursuing trade liberalization. Bodies like the World Trade Organization as well as the signing of Free Trade Agreements, has seen the enshrining of a liberalized world of trade and investment that has long put the interest of investors ahead of communities. With some niceties on the sides, the Pacific Trade Agreement known as PACER-Plus is the latest in the extension of the prioritization of investors over Pacific Islanders. The global financial crisis has seen tourism remittances fall world-wide. For the Pacific that is no exception. Tourism and remittances play an important role for many Islanders as a means of accessing the cash economy and the decline in these has been felt throughout the islands. The inter-connectedness of the Pacific just through these areas has shown how vulnerable the Pacific can be to changes in the global economy. Whilst there are signs of recovery in the global economy, just how quickly the flow on effects will arrive in the Pacific remains to be seen. For full story go to: <http://www.pang.org.fj/49.html>

## Australia presses opportunities in Pacific trade agreement

The Australia-Papua New Guinea Business Forum the annual meeting of Australian and PNG business leaders last month attracted a record crowd to its meeting in Townsville. Australia's Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Bob McMullan talks about the challenges and opportunities offered by the proposed PACER Plus trade agreement.

*Presenter: Geraldine Coutts*

*Speaker: Bob McMullan, Australia's Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance*

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat/stories/201005/s2902232.htm>

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### EPA News in Brief

#### EPA voting postponed

The Papua New Guinea and Fiji interim EPA were supposed to be voted upon in June but this has been postponed to the end of the year because of agenda problems.

The likely timetable at the moment is:

28-29th September: exchange of views in the trade committee

25-26th October: consideration of draft report in committee

1st-2nd December: vote in committee

13-16th December: vote in plenary

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#### EU softens on EPA

The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) currently being negotiated between the European Union (EU) and the East Africa Community (EAC) has gained momentum following the former's agreement to include the development cooperation in deal, a trade

expert said Tuesday. The deal, which is meant to bring lesser stringent trade terms between the two economic blocs, had stalled owing to the EU's refusal to increase its regional funding over and above what is being provided through the European Development Fund (EDF). "This is a good step forward for the negotiations and it shows the commitment that both EU and EAC have towards making the deal fully beneficial to both parties before it can be signed," a Trade Economist said.

<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/index.php?issue=14245&article=28565>

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## Greater global access for Pacific island businesses

Forum Trade Ministers have launched a major initiative to boost the ability of businesses in Forum islands countries to compete in global markets. The 2010 Forum Trade Ministers' Meeting held in the Federated States of Micronesia endorsed reforms to enhance the work being done by the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat's network of Pacific Islands Trade and Investment Commissions (PITICs) in opening up opportunities for Pacific islands enterprises to market their products and services internationally. Under the reforms the PITICs, which to date have functioned as essentially stand-alone operations will be brought under a new umbrella – Pacific Islands Trade and Invest – and will establish a coordinated corporate strategy. The initiative also sees the existing Pacific Islands Trade and Investment Commissions, in Auckland, Beijing and Sydney taking on a new name, Pacific Islands Trade and Invest. "To date, the PITICs have worked relatively independently and have different names in Beijing and Tokyo. They operate under different structures, have no coordinated branding or corporate strategy, and have faced challenges connecting with each other," said Tuiloma Neroni Slade, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. In the past 12

months, work by Pacific Islands Trade and Invest in Auckland and Sydney helped drive a AU\$4.9 million increase in exports from Pacific Island nations in Australia and New Zealand, helped secure more than AU\$1 million of new investment into the region and provided advice and support to 340 firms. It also secured AU\$690,000 of bookings for small tourism operators in the Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and the Federated States of Micronesia.

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### **Trade officials agree to submit Identification Fiche**

Trade Officials from Pacific-ACP States agreed at a meeting in Nadi, Fiji last month to submit an Identification Fiche comprising two projects to the European Commission for consideration for funding under the Pacific Regional Indicative Programme financed under the 10th European Development Fund. The projects selected by Pacific-ACP States are being undertaken by the Office of the Chief Trade Advisor (OCTA) for PACER Plus and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat.

The European Commission has not yet agreed to fund either proposal. Both proposals have been under consideration by Pacific-ACP States since early 2009 and have undergone previous technical assessments. Should the Identification Fiche be approved, the two projects will proceed to a further design stage, at the completion of which funding may be awarded. If successful, the projects may receive funding in early 2011. These two projects are among other regional projects considered for funding under the Aid for Trade allocation under the Focal Sector 1 of the EDF 10 Regional Indicative Programme. <http://www.forumsec.org/pages.cfm/newsroom/press-statements/2010/pacp-states-submit-two-projects-for-funding-under-10-edf.html>

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## **Other News**

### **Tuvalu ready to trade under PICTA**

Tuvalu is the seventh Forum Island Country (FIC) party to the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) that has announced readiness to trade under PICTA terms and conditions. At the Forum Trade Ministers Meeting in Pohnpei Ministers welcomed Tuvalu's announcement of their readiness to trade under the PICTA and congratulated Tuvalu for making necessary domestic arrangements for PICTA trading. Ministers also noted the need for the FICs yet to announce readiness to trade under PICTA to do so with urgency.

"We are ready to facilitate imports and exports under PICTA," Hon. Lotoala Metia, Tuvalu's Minister for Finance and Economic Planning said. He noted with appreciation the support provided by development partners and regional organizations.

"I thank the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), AusAID and NZAID's support in assisting Tuvalu to undertake the reforms necessary to engage in the trade liberalization initiatives," Minister Metia stated.

"A comprehensive customs and fiscal reforms has been undertaken to ensure that Tuvalu is not adversely affected by engagement in PICTA trade," Hon. Metia explained.

Recognising Tuvalu's limitations in creating exports, Hon. Metia said that there are nonetheless significant benefits that can arise from increased regional trade.

"Improvements in the transportation infrastructure and increase in the variety of goods are examples of benefits that can result from PICTA trade," Hon. Metia added.

Secretary General of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, Tuiloma Neroni Slade welcomed Tuvalu's announcement of readiness to trade under PICTA.

<http://www.forumsec.org/pages.cfm/newsroom/press-statement/2010/tuvalu-ready-to-trade-under-picta.html>

## **Trade pact need for PNG**

PNG needs to ensure proper consultation is carried out with all relevant stakeholders before embarking on any trade agreements with other nations, Customs chief Gary Juffa said. He said agreements that tend to protect interests of the developed nations must benefit all parties concerned when these nations also promote the agreements. "Trade agreements signed without proper consideration of the ramifications and repercussions on a developing nation's economy, its business environment and its citizens resulted in growing poverty and financial misery for ordinary citizens. "Thus it is not being fair to them," he said. Mr Juffa made these comments when congratulating the director general of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) secretariat Rima Ravusiro, when he made a courtesy call to PNG Customs Services (PNGCS) during his visit to the country. During the stop-over Mr Juffa offered PNGCS expertise on issues relating to regional trade and security, noting that PNGCS already had its officers working in Fiji and Samoa in its effort to expand its contribution to the region. PNGCS had offered its officers to be attached at the MSG to assist it to develop regional trade and promote security amongst Melanesian member states. Mr Ravusiro said he was quite supportive of PNGCS efforts to have an attached officer at the secretariat in Vanuatu and would look forward to developing this possibility. "PNGCS is developing a pool of technical experts to ensure that we provide quality advice and information in regards to issues of transnational trade and security so that our leaders and those who require such information are given the best advice before a decision is made." Many nations in the developing world are currently suffering as a result of poor or ill-advised decisions which at times have been forced to be made by developed nations. "For PNG I believe that the

MSG is the way to go and we should all make an effort to support this true Pacific initiative whilst carefully examining the benefits of other trade agreements that are currently being considered," Mr Juffa said.

*SOURCE: THE NATIONAL/PACNEWS*

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## **PIANGO criticizes PIFS decision**

The Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO) has applauded comments by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) on its commitment to working with regional Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and its desire to "continue to engage with CSOs" via its various mechanisms. However, PIANGO's interim Executive Director, Emele Duituturaga-Jale has called the PIFS dismantling of the position of Non State Actor (NSA) Liaison Officer a regressive step for the Pacific Islands Forum and one which had severed CSOs ability to stay engaged with the Forum. "The dismantling of the post of NSA Liaison Officer in early 2009 has not helped as it was a CSO focal point within PIFS and its disestablishment has effectively prevented CSOs from any direct policy engagement with the Pacific Islands Forum," Ms Duituturaga said. "Having gained consultative status, PIANGO's efforts to seek accreditation (to the Forum) have been denied and PIANGO who is a member of the PRNGO Alliance (Pacific Regional Non Government Organisations) has not had any formal dialogue with the PIFS Secretary-General since he took up office, apart from a welcome morning tea by the PRNGOs hosted at the PIANGO offices.

"While PIANGO, as the regional peak body for NGOs in the Pacific region, is reassured by PIFS recent comments in the media re-stating its commitment to CSOs, we would very much like to see the post of NSA Liaison Officer reinstated and would welcome an open-door policy for CSO dialogue and engagement with

the Forum," she said.

Political Adviser and Press Secretary to the Tongan Prime Minister Mr Lopeti Senituli called the disestablishment of the position of PIFS NSA Liaison Officer "a backward step" for the Forum. Mr Senituli made the comments at a meeting of Pacific CSOs in Tonga, organised by PIANGO. He went on to say that he personally felt that the current Secretary General of the Forum should have been "the last person" to dismantle mechanisms which allowed CSOs access (to Forum processes) because as the former Ambassador of Samoa to the United Nations, he had done much to help CSOs gain access to a series of UN conferences ranging from the environment to human rights....PNS (ENDS

[http://www.islandsbusiness.com/news/index\\_dynamic/containerNameToReplace=MiddleMiddle/focusModuleID=130/focusContentID=19425/tableName=mediaRelease/overrideSkinName=newsArticle-full.tpl](http://www.islandsbusiness.com/news/index_dynamic/containerNameToReplace=MiddleMiddle/focusModuleID=130/focusContentID=19425/tableName=mediaRelease/overrideSkinName=newsArticle-full.tpl)

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## **Kiribati President to attend MSG to talk with Fiji**

Kiribati President Anote Tong says his government's position on engaging in dialogue with the military-led interim government in Fiji has not changed. He says that's why he has accepted an invitation by the regime to attend the Melanesian Spearhead Group leaders' meeting which Fiji is hosting next month. Mr Tong says he's keeping an open mind to the benefits or otherwise of the MSG Plus meeting. President Tong made the statement after meeting with Fiji's interim prime minister Commodore Frank Bainimaram earlier this week. Mr Tong says if a new MSG-Plus group is beneficial to Kiribati then he'll support it.

*Presenter: Geraldine Coutts*

*Speaker: Anote Tong, President of Kiribati*

<http://www.abc.net.au/ra/pacbeat/stories/m1888562.asx>

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## **McMullan sees opportunities for Pacific Islanders in PNG**

Australia's Parliamentary Secretary for Development Assistance, Bob McMullan, says the ExxonMobil gas project in Papua New Guinea offers enormous opportunities for Pacific Islanders. Thousands of jobs will soon become available constructing the project, and eventually, there will be more operating the gas processing plant and associated works. Late last week, PNG's Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare, made it clear he is willing to offer preference for workers from Melanesian Spearhead Group countries - but those workers must have the necessary skills. Australia is one of the donor countries working to improve technical and vocational education in the region. Mr McMullan told Jemima Garrett the ExxonMobil project holds a lot of promise for Pacific Islanders.

*Presenter: Jemima Garrett*

*Speaker: Australia's Parliamentary Secretary for Development Assistance, Bob McMullan*

<http://www.abc.net.au/ra/pacbeat/stories/m1883738.asx>

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## **Enhancing opportunities for regional migration in the Pacific**

The history of the Pacific is a history of migration. Yet modern barriers to migration impede development in the Pacific island countries facing degraded resources, high rates of natural population increase, low-lying geographies, and limited opportunities for international movement through citizenship or preferred visa status. The Pacific Institute of Public Policy (PiPP) has released its latest briefing paper by Brian Opeskin (Macquarie University) and Therese MacDermott (Macquarie University)\* that examines international migration in the Pacific, and argues there should be greater opportunities for the people of Pacific countries to migrate between their home states and the developed states of the Pacific rim.

## **Regional pacts must not sap Doha talks: WTO chief**

Regional trade negotiations are a good idea so long as they do not sap energy from the main Doha round of world trade talks, the World Trade Organization's head said.

Regional trade deals are gaining impetus while the WTO's Doha round has stalled. WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy said he was monitoring the progress of regional deals to make sure there was political momentum left for Doha.

"As long as it doesn't divert political energy, it's fine," he told Reuters when asked about the Asia-Pacific trade pacts. But this is something which we need to watch. The capacity of people to negotiate is not unlimited -- there is a capacity problem," Mr. Lamy said on the sidelines of a meeting of trade ministers of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Japan. "I am concerned. I am watching this carefully because we know that we need a quantum of political energy in these trade issues and we need a large part of that to conclude the round."

The Doha round was launched in 2001 to correct some of the imbalances in the global trading system and help poor countries prosper through trade.

Under a current draft deal, rich countries would lift barriers to their food markets and cut trade-distorting farm subsidies while developing countries, excluding the poorest, would open their markets to more products and services. However, agreement on an overall package has proved elusive, with the United States arguing that big emerging economies such as Brazil, China and India should do more to facilitate a deal.

*PACNEWS BIZ*

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## **Events & Resources**

### **Sub-standard Australian groceries found in Fijian shops**

An international supermarket chain has launched an investigation into how its damaged and expired products have ended up on supermarket shelves in Fiji. Aldi is alleging its exclusive products are being sold without its consent by Fiji's largest retail and wholesale organisation, Morris Hedstrom. Several groups many of whom are concerned that the products may pose a health risk are now trying to trace the supply chain.

*Presenter: Helene Hofman*

*Speakers: Premila Kumar, Head of Fiji's Consumer Council, John Webster, CEO of Australian food relief organisation Foodbank*

*HOFMAN:* The supermarket chain Aldi says it believes up to 30 containers of its products intended for the Australian market have ended up in Fiji without their authorisation. Most of the products appear to be either damaged or past their expiry date, and are being sold in Morris Hedstrom supermarkets in Fiji. It's not the first time that allegations of product-dumping have surfaced in Fiji. Last March, the Malaysian-based Consumer International Office conducted a survey of Fijian supermarkets and said it suspected many Asian countries were taking advantage of the more relaxed retail laws to sell sub-standard or near-expired products. It's something the Fiji Consumer Council, headed by Premila Kumar, has been working to highlight for months she says this latest development is concerning.

*KUMAR:* We are not very sure as to how these products ended up in Fiji. However, there is

one letter that we have received from Aldi and in that letter it's very clear. Aldi is simply admitting: 'Look, we have not sent those products to Fiji' but the question here is how did these products end up in Fiji. To some extent Aldi have got to be responsible because it is really their product and they have failed in their duty to ensure that their suppliers or whoever they deal with have not met to their requirements. How else would Aldi products of such quality end up on the Fiji market?

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat/stories/201006/s2914664.htm>

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## **Nestle under investigation**

Nestlé, the world's largest food company, is facing allegations of biopiracy after it applied for patents involving two plants found in South Africa without having negotiated permission to use them with the South African government. In what they have dubbed the "rooibos robbery," the Berne Declaration, a Swiss advocacy organisation, and Natural Justice, a South African environmental group, are accusing Nestlé of having violated South African law and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). At issue are two plants found in South Africa, rooibos and honeybush, both of which are commonly used to make herbal teas. Nestec, a Nestlé subsidiary, filed four international patent applications for using the plants or their extracts to treat hair and skin conditions such as acne, wrinkles, and hair loss. A fifth application sought patent protection for using rooibos as an anti-inflammatory. It is seeking patent protection in a large number of countries around the world, including South Africa.

Nestlé has rejected the accusations. According to a report in the South African newspaper Business Day, company spokesman Ravi Pillay said that Nestlé had neither sourced the plants in South Africa nor done research on them there. South African suppliers had provided rooibos and honeybush extracts and material to two Nestlé research facilities in

Switzerland and France, which then used it for basic research on active ingredients.

<http://ictsd.org/i/news/bridgesweekly/77411/>

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## **PNG law to shield resource giants from litigation**

The **Papua New Guinea Parliament has passed legislation that shelters resource projects from all litigation over the destruction of the environment, labour abuse or landowner exploitation.** The controversial amendments to the Environment Act, approved by 73-10, were driven by China's state-owned Metallurgical Construction Corp (MCC), the developer of the \$1.5 billion Ramu nickel mine, 8.56 per cent-owned by Brisbane-based Highlands Gold. The amendments come amid a major conflict between the legal system and the government, with Treasurer Patrick Pruaitch suspended by the Supreme Court over corruption charges placed by the Ombudsman Commission. Ramu landowners had won injunctions to stop the completion of the pipeline to slurry waste from the mine out to sea off Madang, once the mine is built. The government, led by Michael Somare, awarded Ramu an unprecedented 10-year tax holiday. MCC then became increasingly upset about delays to the project -- over labour conditions, displacement of landowners and environment impact. Mount Hagen-based lawyer Tiffany Nonggorr, who represented landowners in obtaining the latest injunction from judge David Cannings, told AAP at the time: "There are grave environmental concerns. The mine's proposal is just too risky. This injunction is a massive victory for us, definitely a David-and-Goliath struggle. Goliath has now fought back, backed again by the Somare Government". Ms Nonggorr said the new legislation meant that in case of an accident or disaster off PNG similar to the one involving BP off the US

coast, “(the company) would escape all liability for environmental damage”.

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## **Cameroon, EU ink deal to combat illegal timber trade**

After 31 months of negotiations, Cameroon and the EU have signed a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) aimed at ensuring that only legally harvested timber from the West African country enters the European market. Once implemented, the VPA will apply to all wood products harvested or produced in Cameroon, one of Africa’s largest exporters of tropical hardwood. Both government and civil society observers say that if implemented properly, the deal could end illegal logging in the heavily forested country. Cameroon has struggled with illegal and unsustainable logging for many years. From 1990-2005, 13.4 percent (3.3 million hectares) of the country’s forest cover was lost. Non-governmental organisations following the progress of the deal have praised the process of the negotiations for being “transparent” and “inclusive.” Observers say the bilateral process sets an excellent example for future negotiations, but caution that transferring the good intentions on paper into practice will not be easy.

<http://ictsd.org/i/news/bridgesweekly/76272/>

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## **Ecumenical youths visit PANG**

Ten youths from different Pacific Island countries were given an insight on the role of the Pacific Network on Globalization (PANG) in the Pacific when they visited the office as part of their ecumenical workshop. The youths were part of a group of 30 young men and women representing different religious denominations in the Pacific who attended a one week workshop on ‘Encounter with Pioneers on Ecumenism’ organised by the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC).

PCC’s Ecumenical Animator  
Environment/Climate Change, Good

Governance/Leadership, Reverend Francois Pihaatae said special sessions were organised where pioneers talked to the youths about Ecumenism in the Pacific. The speakers included Reverend Dr Tuwere Serati, Mrs Lorine Tevi, Reverend Akuila Yabaki and Bishop Pongo of the Solomon Islands.

“The idea behind this workshop is to create awareness on ecumenism and how we can work together despite our different beliefs,” he said.

The youths were divided into groups to visit organisations including PANG, WWF and FJN + (HIV) Office. Reverend Pihaatae said this was the first time PCC had organised such a workshop and hoped the youths would pass on the flame of ecumenism in their islands and countries.

Samoan participant Fiamatai Anesi said the workshop gave him a better understanding of the meaning of ecumenism and also helped pave the way for Christians to work together. He said the workshop was a good initiative which gave him the experience to mix with Christians of other denominations and he hopes to share what he has learnt during the one-week workshop with members of his congregation, youths and his community back in Samoa.

Vanuatu’s Sunday School Coordinator for the Vanuatu Presbyterian Church, Arera Ova said he was proud to be part of PCC’s Ecumenical workshop. He enjoyed learning more about the role of PANG and listening to speakers elaborate on ecumenism in the Pacific. He is grateful to PCC for this wonderful experience and has thanked God for this great opportunity.

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## **ACP exporters and EU importers discuss EU Generalised System of Preferences (GSP)**

The EU's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) is a trade arrangement through which the EU provides preferential access to the EU market to 176 developing countries and territories, in the form of reduced tariffs for their goods when entering the EU market. The present GSP Regulation expires on 31

December 2011.

The Public Consultation seeks comments from interested parties as inputs to the Commission's work to prepare a future proposal to the Council and Parliament on a successor Regulation. The consultation is aimed at all parties with an interest in the EU GSP scheme, including stakeholders within the EU and in third countries, including beneficiaries.

<http://www.eurocommerce.be/media/docs/inttrade/GSP2012EuroCommerce.doc>

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