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OCO Signs Three Year Grant Funding Agreement with New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade



HE Mark Ramsden, NZ High Commissioner to Fiji and Mr Seve Paeniu – OCO Head of Secretariat

The Oceania Customs Organisation signed a three year Grant Funding Agreement for FJ\$2.49 Million with the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT NZ), on 9 June 2017.

The OCO, represented by Head of Secretariat, Mr Seve Paeniu, and MFAT NZ, represented by New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji, HE Mark Ramsden, signed the funding agreement at a signing ceremony at OCO Headquarters today.

HE Mark Ramsden noted that New Zealand was a founding member of the OCO, and was pleased to support the important work of the OCO in facilitating trade in the Pacific, particularly as the Pacific embarks on the Pacer Plus trade agreement. He also acknowledged the excellent progress that OCO has made in addressing recent challenges under the leadership of Mr Paeniu.

Mr Paeniu noted that the Grant Funding Agreement marked a significant milestone in moving from an annual funding arrangement to a multi-year arrangement, which was a demonstration of confidence by New Zealand in the OCO. He also discussed OCO's recently approved 2017-2022 Strategic Plan and particular areas of interest to New Zealand it contained of Pacer Plus and Customs Leadership, and noted that MFAT NZ's funding would provide critical resources to the OCO to enable delivery of the plan.

The funding covers the three years from 2017/18 to 2019/20, and is provided under the New Zealand Aid Programme to the Pacific.