



Fiji Revenue and Customs Authority

PRESS RELEASE

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MSG Customs & Quarantine Sub-Committee meets to strengthen MSGTA

The Melanesia Spearhead Group (MSG) Sub-Committee on Customs and Quarantine is currently meeting in Nadi to discuss a range of issues relating to the MSG Trade Agreement (MSGTA). The meeting is chaired by Mr. Jitoko Tikolevu (Chief Executive Officer, Fiji Revenue & Customs Authority) and is attended by senior Customs and Quarantine officials from MSG members namely Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

The main objective of the three day meeting which started today is to focus on strengthening the MSGTA implementation in particular, the tariff reduction commitment of members, addressing the inconsistencies between the MSGTA and other regional trade agreements in terms of coverage and the extent of tariff reductions, as well as to discuss ways in which MSG Customs & Quarantine officials could work together towards the effective implementation of the Agreement.

The three day meeting will also consider initiatives to improve implementation through new Rules of Origin verification procedures and a Handbook on MSGTA Rules of Origin. In addition, the meeting includes a 1 day visit to Lautoka Customs & Quarantine Offices to observe clearance procedures as well as visits to two local factories to observe the production processes on some goods that are exported under the MSGTA. The factory visits will allow customs officials to see how Fiji customs certify the goods under the MSGTA.

The meeting was a mandate of the recent MSG Summit Meetings in March 2011 which called for meetings of the subcommittee and the Trade & Economic Officials to work immediately towards strengthening the implementation of the MSGTA as the basis for deepening the MSGTA in future.

The MSGTA was concluded in 1993 based on a few products (canned tuna, tea and beef). It was revised in 1998 and expanded to 180 products. The MSGTA was revised again in 2005 to a negative list approach.

The meeting will conclude on Friday, 27 May and the outcomes of this meeting will be considered by the Trade & Economic Officials Meeting in late June 2011.

Jitoko Tikolevu
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

May 26th, 2011

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