

**Welcome Speech on the Occasion of the International Customs Day  
Celebration at Secretariat of the Pacific Community  
delivered by the Acting GM Border Control on behalf of the Chairman  
Oceania Customs Organisation and FIRCA Chief Executive Officer**

**On 26<sup>th</sup> January 2007**

Mr Robert Taylor (Head of the Oceania Customs Secretariat)  
Deputy Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Community Mr. Falani  
Aukuso  
Staff and Management of FIRCA  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good morning to you all.

I am delighted to welcome everyone here this afternoon on behalf of the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) and Fiji Islands Revenue & Customs Authority to celebrate the International Customs Day with the theme “**No to counterfeiting and piracy**”.

We are extremely delighted for the OCO to be the co-sponsor of this celebration. We see this as a reflection of OCO’s commitment and, indeed, your strong support for the work undertaken by Customs.

Distinguished Guests, you will be aware that the date of January 26 refers to an established practice of the Customs community to celebrate International Customs Day.

There are three reasons for having an International Customs Day. The first is historical, as customs is one of the oldest institutions in the world.

Secondly, customs is part of the globalisation process that enables citizens from throughout the world to travel and discover the planet. Each year there are hundreds of millions of travelers. Globalisation and liberalisation of trade form the credo of economies and customs administrations have to adapt to this new environment.

Thirdly, customs administrations worldwide face, and solve, a certain number of challenges. These include issues such as ensuring the smooth and rapid movement of goods and travelers, while carrying out necessary controls to ensure security, and adapting to electronic commerce while being alert to the growth in cyber crime.

Counterfeiting and piracy are growing and increasingly dangerous phenomenon. The business of fake goods is growing at an alarming rate and has reached an excruciating magnitude, not only in size and value but also with respect to the selection of products available on the market. Anything from white goods to baby food is being illegally manufactured. And of course, the abundance of fake medicines that are flooding society.

On this note, I would like to take this opportunity to extend a special welcome to, Head Of Secretariat, Oceania Customs Organisation, Mr. Robert Taylor.

I am sure that the Mr. Taylor needs no introduction to many of you.

Mr. Taylor joined the OCO last year March after the Secretariat moved from moved to Suva from Noumea.

Prior to his appointment he was the Manager for the Enforcement/Policy/Legislation Directorate of the New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS). He was head of the management of a headquarters policy unit responsible for legislation, enforcement policies, including legislative research analysis, development and advice to operational business units in NZCS and to external agencies on enforcement matters.

He has thirty years of Customs experience and also has an extensive knowledge of Customs business from an operational and policy perspective. In recent years Mr. Taylor has represented the OCO on expert working groups co-ordinated by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat involving the drafting of counter terrorism illicit drug and transnational organised crime legislation.

Mr. Taylor, we now invite you to address the forum.