

## National Consultation in preparation for the 22<sup>nd</sup> OCO Conference

The OCO Secretariat visited Cook Islands on 27-30 January, 2020 to undertake preparatory discussions with the Cook Islands Customs Service and their stakeholders regarding the forthcoming 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual OCO Conference. The OCO Annual Conference will be convened in Cook Islands on 20-23 July 2020 and will bring together 23 Heads of Customs Administration in the Pacific Region and international and regional partner organizations to discuss relevant customs issues, address regional challenges and strengthen cooperation between OCO members and key partner organizations.



L-R: Cook Is Chief of Customs Officer, Ngapoko Ngatamaine, OCO Trade & Revenue Mgmt Adviser Laisiana Tugaga, Head of Secretariat Richard Brennan, Cook Is Senior Customs Officer Maria Ioane and Collector, Comptroller & Director Cook Is Customs, Xavier Mitchell.

"This year's conference is particularly important," said OCO Head of Secretariat, Mr. Richard Brennan. "Our Pacific Leaders have reaffirmed the need for strengthened collective actions to effectively manage the regional security environment and the OCO members are mandated and positioned at the borders to contribute to this regional aspiration. We are seeing emerging threats within the Customs environment, trade of counterfeit goods, illicit financial flows, trafficking of people, drugs and weapons and money laundering to name a few. The OCO Conference will provide the platform for discussions on how Customs can effectively work to secure our "Blue Pacific" through collaboration with our key partners. An equally important but new issue the Conference will be discussing is the promotion of gender equality within Customs.



OCO Secretariat and Cook Islands Customs Service team meet with Cook Islands Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Hon. Mark Brown

"It has been 18 years since Cook Islands last hosted an OCO Conference and having it back here provides us with an opportunity not only to showcase the Cook Islands and our unique culture but also to reflect on how far the Organisation have come, added OCO Chairman, Mr. Xavier Mitchell, Comptroller of the Cook Island Customs Service. Cook Islands was the host of the first Customs Heads of Administration Regional Meeting (CHARM) in 1986. Although the Customs role since our beginning have remained the same, scope and

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the threats have broadened in the past three decades and therefore Customs administration need to be responsive to these global changes and challenges.”

For any further information on the 2020 OCO Conference please email [info@ocosec.org](mailto:info@ocosec.org)



OCO Secretariat meeting with Cook Islands Law Enforcement Agencies

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Cook Islands Customs Service

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