



More Seasonal workers off to New Zealand



In keeping with previous years' successes, this year more than 560 local Solomon Islanders will leave our shores to participate in the New Zealand Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) program, according to the Labor Mobility Unit (LMU) within the Department of External Trade

in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MFAET).

According to the LMU's officer Mr. Jack Waneoroa, 326 Solomon workers under the RSE have already traveled to New Zealand with more than 231 workers expected to travel in the next three months.

If farmers in New Zealand request more workers, we expect this number to increase meaning more jobs for our workers.

Solomon Islanders will be working on various farms in Wairarapa, Pick Hawks Bay, Wellington, South Islands, North Island and Bay of Plenty.



SOL TRADE MEANS

Newsletter



Issue 6

National Trade Development Council (NTDC) hold first meeting for 2016

The National Trade Development Council (NTDC) held its first meeting for 2016 on 9th February.

The NTDC, which meets on a quarterly basis, is a senior level forum for decision making and coordination of trade development policy in Solomon Islands including trade policy formulation and trade mainstreaming into national development plans.

It also ensures effective coordination amongst government ministries, private sector and civil society organizations.

Cabinet endorsed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MFAET) to facilitate the work of NTDC on December 20th 2012, comprised of representatives from various Government Ministries, private sector organizations and non-governmental organisations.

It is chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade and reports to Cabinet through the Minister as and when determined necessary by the Council, but not less than once in a year.

Speaking during the opening of the meeting, the vice chairman of the council



Acting Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MFAET) Mr. Joseph Maahanua and Vice Chair of the NTDC Mr. Riley Mesepitu during the meeting.

and Director for industries Mr. Riley Mesepitu told members that he was pleased to see the commitment of members to attend the NTDC meeting, which is a key forum to discuss and decide on important issues of Trade and development in this country.

“I am confident that the deliberation of this Council will enable us to maximize the benefits of global trading opportunities.

“I would also like to convey my sincere appreciation and deep gratitude for the support provided by our development partners particularly for trade and development of the country.

“As members of the NTDC, you’re to oversee and provide guidance and oversight on the issues relating to trade development processes including trade policy formulation and implementation, trade

mainstreaming into national development plans and ensure effective coordination and buy-in among various Government institutions, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, in Solomon Islands,” Mr. Mesepitu sad.

During the meeting, members of the council were given updates on the various trade negotiations Solomon Islands is a party to, such as EPA, MSGTA3, and Pacer Plus.

As the acting steering committee for the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), the council were also briefed on the ongoing work of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) tier two project which recently assisted SINU, SIVB, SIWIBA and four local eco-tourism operators. NTDC will also oversee the monitoring of implementation of EIF programmes and processes in country.



Supervising Officer for the Department of External Trade and EIF NIU Coordinator Mr. George Tuti giving his presentation during the NTDC meeting.

SOLOMON ISLANDS RAISES CONCERN ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN WEST PAPUA AT THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The Solomon Islands has raised concerns about the ongoing human rights violations in the Indonesian Province of West Papua at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Minister Counsellor and Chargé d’Affaires of the Solomon Islands Mission to the United Nations and the WTO in Geneva, Barrett Salato, told the Council on Monday 15th March 2016, that human rights violations in that region need urgent attention by the world community.

Mr Salato encouraged the Republic of Indonesia to establish a peaceful dialogue

with the West Papuan representatives and to fully cooperate with the Council by allowing UN special procedures planning to visit Indonesia.

In this regard, he highlighted the important request made by the Pacific Island Forum to allow for a human rights fact-finding mission to be dispatched to West Papua.

Whilst recognising Indonesia’s adoption in 2001 of the Special Law for Papua and appreciating the increased attention given by President Mr Joko Widodo to the issue of West Papua since his election in 2014,



Minister Counsellor and Chargé d’Affaires of the Solomon Islands Mission to the United Nations and the WTO in Geneva, Mr. Barrett Salato

Solomon Islands remains concerned by the arbitrary arrests, summary executions, torture, ill treatments and limitations of freedom of expression committed by Indonesian security forces on West Papuans.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 7



SOLOMON ISLANDS SIGNS MOU WITH AUSTRALIA ON SEASONAL LABOUR MOBILITY

Solomon Islands and Australia have committed to a new understanding to foster greater cooperation and increase joint efforts in seasonal labour mobility. The MoU between the Government of Australia and the Government of Solomon Islands in support of the Seasonal Workers Programme (SWP) was signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs & External Trade of Solomon Islands, Hon. Milner Tozaka and Minister for Tourism and International Education and Assistant Minister of Trade and Employment Senator, Hon. Richard Colbeck on 29th February at the margins of the 2nd High Level Pacer Plus Meetings in Brisbane.

Solomon Islands was initially invited to participate in Australia's labour mobility programme in 2012. Almost four years on, the SWP has evolved corresponding to Australia's shift in policy towards labour mobility for Pacific Island Countries (PICs). In June 2015, the Australian Government announced the removal of caps on the recruitment of workers from PICs under the SWP in the Horticulture sector and in February this year, the Government of Australia announced a further extension of the programme to other areas of the

agricultural sector, including livestock, cane, cotton and opening of labour markets for aquaculture and accommodation sectors.

The revised MoU hopes to provide a robust mechanism to effectively manage the SWP by implementing authorities of both Governments, moreover allowing for Solomon Islands to take greater advantage of the Programme's expansion.

Both Ministers highlighted that the Pacer Plus negotiations are progressing well and underscored labour mobility as a crucial component of the proposed comprehensive agreement. The arrangement on labour mobility is premised on genuine partnership and cooperation between Australia and New Zealand and the PICs.

In his remarks at the signing ceremony, Foreign Minister Tozaka acknowledged the support of the Government of Australia in maintaining its commitment to promote regional economic development through the SWP. He further expressed sincere gratitude to the Government of Australia for providing ordinary Solomon Islanders the opportunity to undertake seasonal employment in Australia.

Foreign Minister Tozaka, the lead spokesperson of the Forum Islands



Minister for Tourism and International Education and Assistant Minister of Trade and Employment Senator, Hon. Richard Colbeck shakes hands with the Minister of Foreign Affairs & External Trade, Hon. Milner Tozaka after the signing of the MOU.

Countries (FICs) is currently chairing the 2nd High Level Pacer Plus Meetings, in which updates on the progress towards the anticipated conclusion of negotiations on Pacer Plus is being provided to FICs by the Office of the Chief Trade Advisor (OCTA), based in Port Vila.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs & External Trade, Hon. Milner Tozaka was accompanied by Acting Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs & External Trade, Mr. Joseph Ma'ahanua, and Acting High Commissioner to Canberra Ms. Fiona Indu.

Work on Handicraft center design underway

Work on creating a potential design concept for Honiara's first craft centre is progressing well, according to the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Solomon Islands Tourism for Inclusive Development (SI-TIDE) project Assistant Coordinator, Mr. Eldine Devesi.

The SI-TIDE project is located within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) and is overseen by the EIF's National Implementation Unit (NIU) which is located within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MFAET).

According to Mr. Devesi, a tender notice inviting potential concept designs from the public was advertised in the local media in September last year.

Following submissions, a potential concept design was identified, the selection of which was based on a comprehensive set of criteria including artistic and quality features.

The EIF is contributing funds towards

the building design, consultations, and part of the construction phase.

The proposed location of the craft centre is the current Art Gallery compound and will also house an industry resource centre within it.



Sample design of the proposed Handicraft centre to be built at the Art Gallery.



SOL TRADE MEANS

Newsletter



Issue 6

National Trade Development Council (NTDC) remembers Late Jack O’oi

At the first National Trade Development Council (NTDC) meeting of 2016, held 9 February, members held a one minute silence in memory of the former Director of External Trade Mr. Jack O’oi who passed away in December last year.

The late Mr. O’oi was a very active member of the NTDC and was instrumental in its establishment.

He served in the Public service for more than two decades and was the acting Director of the External Trade Department within MFAET when he passed away.



Late Jack in Noumea, New Caledonia November 2015.

Solomon Islands loses prestigious senior Diplomat



The late Beraki Jino

Solomon Islands lost one of its most senior Diplomats, the late Beraki Jino, on 7th February 2016. The late Beraki served the Ministry of Foreign Trade Affairs and

External Trade with distinction over a period of 29 years of unbroken service.

The late Ambassador joined the Ministry in 1987 after graduating from USP

in 1986, at a time when the Solomon Islands had only one overseas Mission.

He grew up with the Ministry, and contributed to the broadening of Solomon Islands Foreign Policy.

The late Ambassador Jino served abroad as a young diplomat in New York during his early years in office, and later served in Brussels, Taipei and Canberra, before his final posting as Permanent Secretary here in Honiara.

The late Beraki Jino is survived by his

wife Ellen and his son and Daughter.



His Excellency the Governor General, Sir Frank Kabui and Lady Grace Kabui paying their respects to the late Beraki Jino during his funeral.

Touo Cultural center receives grant from EIF

The final recipient of last year’s EIF innovative tourism grant, Touo Cultural Center, finally received their grant of SBD \$100,000 on 4th February 2016.

The grant is part of the Solomon Islands Enhanced Integrated Framework’s (EIF) Tier two project titled “Solomon Islands Tourism for Inclusive development (SI-TIDE)”, the objective of which is to enhance eco-tourism activities throughout the country..

The EIF is a multi-donor program, which works towards a wider goal of promoting economic growth and sustainable development and, helping to lift more people out of poverty. Solomon Islands joined the EIF program in 2007.

Under EIF program, a project entitled ‘Solomon Islands Tourism for Inclusive Development (SI-TIDE)’ is currently in implementation.

The projects were advertised in 2014 with the objective to help enhance ecotourism activities throughout the country.

As part of SI-TIDE, four local projects were then selected in 2015 by the SI-TIDE Technical Working Group (TWG), which is the steering committee for the selection of recipients of the innovative tourism grant.

Since then the other three have already received their grants.

The SI-TIDE project is located within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT)

and is overseen by the EIF’s National Implementation Unit (NIU) which is located within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MFAET).



Three recipients of last Year’s EIF innovative tourism grant with their cheques.



Solomon Islands undertakes UPR

The Solomon Islands undertook its peer review in the Second Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on Monday 25th January 2016.

This review was held during the 24th session of the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland.

The UPR is a unique process which involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States and is conducted in four –year cycles.

It is a significant innovation of the Human Rights Council, which promotes equal and fair treatment for all, and provides an opportunity for all States to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and how they have overcome various challenges to guarantee the enjoyment of human rights by the whole population.

During the review, the Solomon Islands Government delegation, led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MFAET) Hon. Milner Tozaka, was successful in getting the UPR Draft report adopted by the Human Rights Council.

The adoption of our draft UPR report

signals that the majority of recommendations received during the review will be brought back for further consultations before the June plenary of the Human Rights Council.

The Solomon Islands has been preparing for the UPR since early last year. With the efforts of a multi-stakeholder National Working Committee (NWC) which includes the NGOs, three national consultations were held to discuss the recommendations received by the Government and accepted for implementation in 2011.

The consultations sought views from line Ministries, NGOs, UN Agency representatives, Provincial secretaries and respective officials.

The National Report was compiled drawing on the information gathered from these consultations and submitted to the UPR Secretariat in Geneva in October 2015.

This National Report shows the government’s progress in implementing law reform, institutional strengthening, human rights treaty/convention implementation and also how Solomon Islands has been cooperating with relevant regional and international

partners, as well as NGOs, to promote and advance human rights.

Before leaving for the UPR review the government delegation benefitted from a mock session held in Sydney simulating the actual review process to be held in Geneva. This mock session was funded and supported by the Regional Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) in Suva with support by a staff from the South Pacific Community (RRRT).

The government will make further appearances at the June 2016 Plenary session of the Human Rights Council on recommendations from this Second Cycle. The third reporting cycle for Solomon Islands will be in 2020.

Solomon Islands presented its first cycle report to the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 4th May 2011.

The government delegation was led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MFAET) Hon. Milner Tozaka, with support from officials from MFAET, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Number of Females working under RSE increases

The number of females working under the New Zealand Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) program this year has increased significantly from 2015.

According to the Labour Mobility Unit (LMU), the number of females travelling to New Zealand in 2016 increased to 191 which is a 10% increase from last year.

Mr. Jack Waneoroa from the LMU says that the RSE is attracting more females and this number is expected to increase significantly in the next season.

The increase is due to a high demand for workers in the pack houses and increase in production of berries which is fitting work for females.

“For this season the number of males is still high with 366 males expected to travel to New Zealand.

“However we are still working with our local agents so that more females can be sent over to work under the RSE program.

“Although the RSE program is still male dominated we can gladly announce that the number of females is gradually increasing and this is a positive sign for the RSE,” Mr. Waneoroa said.



Local woman working in one of the pack houses in New Zealand.



SI-TIDE host two days validation workshop

The Enhanced Integrated Frameworks (EIF) Tier Two project, ‘Solomon Islands Tourism for Inclusive Development (SI-TIDE)’, recently funded a two day validation consultation on the proposed National Tourism Policy and restructuring effort of the Tourism Department.

The EIF is a multi-donor program, which works towards a wider goal of promoting economic growth and sustainable development and helping to lift more people out of poverty. Solomon Islands joined the EIF program in 2007.

As part of the SI-TIDE project, four local consultants were engaged to undertake a review of the National Tourism Policy, develop Tourism Legislation & regulation, review and implement a restructure of the Tourism Department and analyse the potential linkages between tourism and other sectors of the economy.

Since July 2015, desk reviews and

consultation workshops have been organized in the provinces and draft reports of each have been compiled. The purpose of the workshop was to validate the draft reports from the four local consultants with a view to corroborating information, data and evidence.

The consultation brought together representatives from government ministries, tourism experts, tourism operators and other stakeholders.

The coordinator of the programme, Mr. Niniu Oligao, said the consultation was held to validate the important work done by four consultants in efforts to improve tourism development in the country.

The consultation was intended to give stakeholders an opportunity review the draft reports and discuss what has been produced so far.

In welcoming participants during the consultations, the acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Mr. Moses Tepai, said the consultation is aimed at validating the National Tourism policy, reviewing the structure of the Tourism Department, formulating Tourism Legislation and Regulation and studying the impact of linkages in the tourism sector.

He said that clear policy and legislation is instrumental in directing the pathway for tourism development tailored to the needs

of our people., Further, strengthening the linkages with ancillary sectors is pivotal to foster more collaborative approaches to align all efforts towards achieving common objectives for the country’s tourism industry.

Mr. Tepai added that the formulation of tourism legislation would provide a robust legislative framework to encourage sustainable tourism growth, as clearly translated in the DCC Government’s policy directives.

The Acting Permanent Secretary also acknowledged the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) SI-TIDE project for showing their support for tourism growth in Solomon Islands.



Coordinator of Solomon Islands Tourism for Inclusive Development (SI-TIDE) Mr. Niniu Oligao speaking during the validation Workshop.

Solomon Island highlighted in Nairobi conference

The work of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) in the Solomon Islands was highlighted at the EIF pledging conference held in the margins of the WTO 10th Ministerial conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

The EIF is a multi-donor program, which works towards a wider goal of promoting economic growth and sustainable development and helping to lift more people out of poverty.

Solomon Islands joined the EIF program in 2007 and currently in implementation is a project

entitled ‘Solomon Islands Tourism for Inclusive Development (SI-TIDE)’.

The SI-TIDE project is located within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT)

and is overseen by the EIF’s National Implementation Unit (NIU) which is located within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MFAET).

CONTINUES ON PAGE 7



The EIF team shooting parts of the Documentary at Dolphin View Beach.



Warning on Bogus Recruiting Agents for Work in Australia and New Zealand

The Labour Mobility Unit (LMU) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade is stressing to the general public the importance of verifying the legitimacy of Agents who recruit for the New Zealand Recognized Seasonal Employer scheme (RSE) and the Australian Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP). The Unit is making clear that people wanting to participate should never have to pay money to an individual promising to give them work under these schemes. If you need to verify whether an agent is licensed or require any other information relating to these schemes you should visit the LMU.

This announcement comes after reports of bogus agents falsely promising to send people to New Zealand and Australia. If an individual or agent is not authorized by

the LMU, they are unable to offer jobs under the RSE scheme; anyone claiming to be an agent who does not have a license is committing fraud and will be referred to the police.

The public is therefore advised that they must first enquire with the LMU to verify the authenticity of the recruiting Agents before proceeding with the recruitment process. This should avoid any misleading information being provided and prevent false expectations arising for seasonal job offers in New Zealand by those persons who dishonestly claim to be agents.

The LMU approved license required by agents to recruit workers for both the New Zealand RSE scheme and the Australian SWP is valid for one year only and all licensed recruiters are kept on file at the LMU, which is available to the public to

view. They also welcome any honest individuals who may wish to recruit for Australia or New Zealand through the proper processes to apply for a license.

Some of the conditions to become a licensed agent include having established a business relationship with an Approved Employer abroad and committing not to charge fees or collect money from potential workers without any formalized arrangement between the approved Employer, LMU and the approved recruiting agent.

A list of approved recruiting agents for the New Zealand RSE scheme can be collected from the LMU office within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade at Melanesia Pacific Haus. Enquires can also be made by phone 21250.

SOLOMON ISLANDS RAISES CONCERN ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN WEST PAPUA AT THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

FROM PAGE 2

Mr Salato also highlighted the high maternal mortality rate of 500 per 100,000 stressing that access to education and health services for the Papuans has deteriorated.

The situation represents a progressive decline of the indigenous West Papuan population that makes up an estimated 43% of the total population of the region.

Solomon Islands is the current Chair of

the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) and also a member of the Pacific Island Forum. In 2015, the United Liberation Movement of West Papua was admitted as an observer to the MSG while Indonesia was upgraded to an associate member.

The statement by Mr. Salato, made in the context of this important UN institution, will help to raise the awareness of the

international community and give visibility to the problems faced by West Papuans.

The Human Rights Council, the main United Nations body based in Geneva, deals with human rights issues around the world. The Council is holding its 31st regular session in Geneva, Switzerland, from the 29th of February to the 24th of March 2016.

Solomon Island highlighted in Nairobi conference

FROM PAGE 6

During the pledging conference a short documentary highlighting the assistance of the EIF to a local tourist operator was shown to those in attendance.

In the documentary the Director for the Ministry of Culture and Tourism Mr. Bunyan Sivoro talked about the benefits of the EIF project to the Solomon Islands and it also focused on Dolphin View Beach

resort which is one of the beneficiaries of the EIF Tier Two Project.

The EIF National Implementation Unit (NIU) coordinator Mr. George Tuti says that Solomon Island is lucky to have been selected out of the hundreds of other countries which also benefit from the EIF.

“To be among the four selected Countries from of other Countries which were showcased about their success to a

worldwide audience is an achievement for the small but hardworking EIF team in the Solomon Islands.

“It was also a free promotion for our tourism sector as the short documentary also featured shots of our islands and beaches.”

“All in all, the entire documentary has been a success for the EIF team,” Mr. Tuti said.



SOL TRADE MEANS

Newsletter



Issue 6

SI LMU INFORMATION

RECRUITING AGENTS

There are currently only 8 registered and valid recruiting agents under the Labor Mobility Unit (LMU). The eight agents are only for the New Zealand Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) program.

There are no current and valid recruiting agents for the Australia Seasonal Worker program. Seasonal workers who were sent to Australia last year are administered by the Labour Mobility Unit in collaboration with specific request from receiving employers and farmers.

For those interested to participate under the New Zealand RSE below is the list of approved agents.

List of Approved Agent for NZRSE and Contact

	NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL CONTACT	TEL IN SOLOMON ISLANDS
1	LORRAINE & SIMON	Seasonal Employment Agent	tari.simon@yahoo.com	677 7473170
2	NIXON ASUGENI	AMA Recruitment Agency	nixonasugeni@gmail.com	677 8495966
3	LOUISA FAKAIA INDU	AL Recruiting Agent	louisa.indu@gmail.com	677 7522402
4	JUNE AU RAMOSAEA	Psalms Employment Services	june.au.ramosaea@gmail.com	677 7637126
5	REMINGTON TAGINI & RUSSEL TAGINA	Island Agency	remingtontagini@yahoo.com rustagini@yahoo.com	677 7477804
6	MOSES OMEARO SAMO	SSEC Transit	staylor@ssec.org.sb	677 7479796
7	JACOB KANAI	Suhairato Recruiters	jmanepahanarato@gmail.com	677 7426102
8	CATHERINA SHEARDOWN	Pacific Islands Workforce	picworkforce@yahoo.com.nz cathy@phb.co.nz	64273355451 (nz)

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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & EXTERNAL TRADE

P. O. BOX G10
HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

PHONE: (677) 21250, 21252, 21253

FAX: (677) 20351

Website: www.mfaet.gov.sb

