



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

DIGITAL CUSTOMS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO INCREASE TRADE IN REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

(3 MAY 2023, MAJURO) – The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is working towards boosting international trade by modernizing its customs procedures through the roll-out of the latest customs management system as part of the European Union (EU) funded Improving Pacific Islands Customs and Trade ([IMPACT](#)) Project.

ASYCUDAWorld, developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) is a digital platform for customs management that covers foreign trade procedures, and simplifies and harmonizes manifests and customs declarations, along with accounting, transit and suspense procedures.

A mobilization seminar was held in RMI on 3 May 2023, ahead of the roll-out to raise awareness among government agencies, traders and other key stakeholders on the functionalities and benefits of the web-based customs automation system.

The Secretary of Finance, Mr Patrick Langrine thanked the EU and UNCTAD for the timely assistance in modernizing RMI's customs administration.

"This is just the beginning of a long process which will contribute to the wellbeing of the RMI customs and traders. The ASYCUDA Project will help us to better understand our trading environment, improve our revenue collection, modernize our trade facilitation and most importantly improve the service for the traders."

Mr Langrine reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to supporting the RMI Customs Division in its initiatives to enhance trade facilitation.

The IMPACT Project is part of the EU's Pacific Regional Integration Support (PRISE) programme, which aims to increase the quality and the volume of goods traded intra-regionally between Pacific Island countries and internationally, including with the EU's 27-member States.

The Chargée d'affaires, acting Head of Delegation of the European Union for the Pacific, Dr Erja Askola said, "the European Union is not only a development partner but also a political and economic partner of the RMI as well as the rest of the Pacific. While we support RMI to improve its capacity to move goods in and out the country in a faster and transparent manner, we also welcome RMI and the other Pacific States who wish to do so, to join an Economic Partnership with the EU. This will aid in increasing the competitiveness and the know-how of companies."

Facilitating customs is essential for businesses to prosper and become more competitive on the international market. When implemented, the system will make it easier for businesses to grow and be involved in cross-border trade.

By ensuring that all processes are harmonized and simplified, items can be declared and proper duties collected online. ASYCUDAWorld will help RMI optimize its customs processes and increase government revenue.

UN Resident Coordinator for Micronesia, Mr Jaap Van Heerden stated that the roll-out of ASYCUDA in RMI is a critical step towards enhancing trade facilitation in a country that is heavily reliant on trade for economic development.

“With the support of EU, and led by UNCTAD in partnership with RMI govt, this project is a testament to the commitment of the international community to support RMI in its efforts to enhance its trade facilitation capacity.”

Mr Heirden encouraged the RMI Government to step into the digital era, take advantage of the opportunity to modernize its operations to the fullest capacity that ASYCUDA will enable, and support RMI's sustainable economic development.

Regional Coordinator for the ASYCUDA programme in the Pacific, Mr Jayvee Santos stated that UNCTAD's ASYCUDA programme has a mission to provide the latest cutting-edge technology to all customs administrations in the Pacific region.

“The ASYCUDA program makes sure that customs administration can stay up to date with using the most recent technologies so they may deliver services more efficiently and effectively,” Mr Santos added.

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