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European Union delivers Final Symposium on Trade Related Assistance Project (Phase 2)

On 29th March 2018 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Port Moresby, the European Union will be delivering the Final Symposium on the Trade Related Assistance Project - Phase 2 (TRA 2). The four-year project commenced in December 2014 and has been implemented by the Trade Division of the Department of Commerce and Industry. The overall objective of the programme is to contribute, through an increase in international trade, to Papua New Guinea sustainable economic growth and development, ultimately leading to poverty alleviation. The purpose of the programme, in line with the PNG Development Strategic Plan 2010–2030 is to increase capacities to benefit from international trade and take advantage of export opportunities.

The programme has three components: Component 1 - Institutional reform and capacity development, Component 2 - Trade policy development and Component 3 - Trade facilitation. It is overseen by a Project Steering Committee that is composed of a wide range of stakeholders from public and private sector, as well as civil society.

On 29th March the European Union will be celebrating the excellent results of the project, which will shortly come to an end. The project, which has been supported by a long term Technical Assistance Team as well as by some 20 highly specialised short-term international experts, has achieved some major milestones, including the historic NEC decision for approval and launch of the National Trade Policy (NTP) and endorsement of the establishment of the National Trade Office.

In addition to these significant achievements, the project has delivered a number of key outputs that will help PNG in improving its ability to participate more effectively in global trade. These include the development of a National Intellectual Property Strategy; a Roadmap for the implementation of a National Single Window; legislation on Trade Defence Measures; a Strategic Implementation Plan for the NTP; a scoping study for an electronic data exchange between the National Fisheries Authority (NFA) fisheries information management systems and PNG Customs ASYCUDA software for the monitoring of imports and exports; a Cost Benefit Analysis study on the impact of the trade agreements to which PNG is party; a Handbook on Trade Negotiations Strategies; a guide to undertaking Sustainability Impact Analysis of trade agreements; an Export Guide to the European Union for coffee, cocoa and coconut oil; a Rules of Origin Handbook for export products to the European Union; a strategy for the establishment of a Single Food Safety Authority; a Trade Information Centre and an electronic trade agreements management system.

As a result of these very specialised interventions, a number of very critical pieces of work have emerged which would assist PNG even further in advancing its capacity to perform on an ever-changing global trading playing field. For example, the first step on the roadmap for PNG to move towards a Single Window environment would be to establish national e-commerce legislation. To this effect, arrangements are currently being finalised to extend the Technical Assistance support to June 2018 and provide an international trade lawyer skilled in drafting such legislation. Other potential interventions could include the operationalization of the above-mentioned electronic data interface between PNG Customs and NFA, as well as a mapping exercise of PNG laboratories against the new ISO 17025 requirements, and assessment of their needs to attain accreditation.

During the four years of the project, trade related training has been delivered to around 2,000 participants in 6 provinces, on a wide range of topics, with beneficiaries including organisations such as PNG Customs, NFA, National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology, National Agricultural Quarantine Inspection Authority, CODEX Alimentarius, Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, Department of Treasury, National Agricultural Research Institute, National Statistics Office, the Independent Consumer and Competition Commission, Bank of PNG, Intellectual Property Office, private sector and civil society organisations, inter alia.

The Symposium will see important addresses from the Minister of National Planning and Monitoring, Honourable Richard Maru (formerly Minister for Trade) and Mr Rudie Filon, First Counsellor, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the European Union Delegation to PNG. There will also be a roundtable discussion on the subject:

“Steering PNG through an Uncertain Global Trading Environment – how should PNG respond in the face of a looming global trade war”, as well as a small Expo of the project’s outputs.

The European Union is committed to supporting the sustainable development of PNG and greatly values the partnerships that have been established through the TRA 2 project.

More information about the project can be found at: www.pngeutra2.org.pg.

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The European Union (EU) is represented by the Delegation of the EU to Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby, headed by HE Ioannis Giogkarakis-Argyropoulos, Ambassador. The European Union has 28 Member States of which France and the UK are represented in PNG. Visit the EU Delegation website: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/papua_new_guinea/index_en.htm