

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE USE

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**NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES OPERATIONS IN THE PACIFIC
HIGHLIGHTED**

The Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association (PITIA) began a two-day workshop for its members in Auckland today, to discuss issues and concerns about the sustainability of fisheries operations in the region.

It comes a day after PITIA, together with the Pacific Cooperation Foundation, held a successful Investment Forum that brought together its members with potential investors, in order to explore future partnership opportunities.

PITIA chair Charles Hufflett says the day highlighted the need for Pacific nations to work together for the benefit of fisheries operations in the whole region, including New Zealand.

“The value of Pacific fisheries to national economies is huge, so PITIA therefore has a vested interest in making sure that it remains viable and sustainable throughout the entire region through closer collaboration of relevant stakeholders.”

Ensuring that industry in the Pacific maintains strong rights over its operations was one of the major themes to emerge from the day’s discussions, Mr Hufflett added.

“Our members were keen to discuss the progress of the Economic Partnership Agreement that is currently being negotiated with Europe, and highlighted the need to secure access to this market to ensure viability.”

“They also wanted to stress that these negotiations give due consideration to the complexities presented by the Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary requirements being pursued and seek assistance where possible to breach gaps in this area.”

In addition to sustainability of industry, members also expressed concern about the sustainability of PITIA as an organisation representing their interests.

“There is some anxiety about the financial security of the association,” Charles confirms. “Today we looked at various funding models that combine internal industry support with external donor assistance and support from national governments as well.”

“We will continue to look at options to ensure that PITIA remains able to continue its work supporting the interests of tuna fisheries in the Pacific.”

PITIA works on behalf of members from the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Tima Tupou
Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association
Email: secretariat@pitia.org
P.O Box 1704, Nuku'alofa Tonga

ABOUT PACIFIC ISLANDS TUNA INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (PITIA)

With its membership covering 14 Pacific Island countries and several national industry associations, the Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association (PITIA) provides information and services to its members to encourage information and engagement of industry in key policy decisions affecting their businesses. www.pitia.org