



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release
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Lagolago appointed Head of PACER Plus Implementation Unit

Samoan-New Zealand National Roy Lagolago has been appointed Head of the PACER Plus Implementation Unit.

He will take up an initial two-and-a-half-year term to guide the implementation of the region's most comprehensive trade and investment agreement.

Mr Lagolago takes up the role as the Pacific region has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pacific Island Countries are increasingly looking towards regional collaborative approaches to support recovery from the impact that COVID-19 has had on Blue Pacific economies, and to build a more prosperous and resilient future for the Parties.

The decision was welcomed by PACER Plus Ministers, via communique on 30 June 2021.

"We welcome the appointment of ... Mr Roy Lagolago, who has extensive experience in supporting trade facilitation in the Pacific. We look forward to working with him to ensure all PACER Plus members make the most of the Agreement in the pursuit of economic integration and cooperation in the region."

PACER Plus, as a regional development-centred trade and investment agreement, will play a central role in Pacific Island countries accessing regional and global trade.

Speaking after the Virtual Trade Ministers' Meeting on 7 July 2021, Mr Lagolago said: "I feel very honoured as a Pacific Islander to have been given the opportunity to serve and guide the implementation of PACER Plus. I look forward to working with the Parties' governments, Island business communities and investors to maximise opportunities for growth, creating jobs in the Pacific. In a time of many challenges, I hope to create a platform for Forum Island Countries to deepen their relationships further and work together towards greater prosperity for the region." Mr Lagolago has already begun in his role heading the Implementation Unit.

The PACER Plus agreement entered into force on 13 December 2020. Eight countries are currently Parties to the Agreement: Australia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga.

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