Kingdom of Tonga

Expedited Clearance to Facilitate the Import of Vaccines

Presented by: Lorraine Kauhenga, Ministry of Trade & Economic Development
to WTO Trade Facilitation Committee Meeting

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Photo: Trade Week 2021
### The Context

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<th>Kingdom of Tonga</th>
<th>Trade Facilitation</th>
<th>Health</th>
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<td>• 169 Islands across ~700,000 square kilometres EEZ</td>
<td>• Tonga TFA Roadmap completed</td>
<td>• 2 x ICU beds</td>
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<td>• 2 x International airports &amp; seaports</td>
<td>• Time Release Study completed</td>
<td>• National Covid Planning</td>
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<td>• Population 100,651</td>
<td>• Asycuda World under development</td>
<td>• Infrastructure for Covid vaccine in place</td>
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<td>• WTO Member since 2007</td>
<td>• MOU with Tonga Chamber of Commerce &amp; Industry</td>
<td>• Government major importer of pharmaceuticals</td>
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Population statistics 2016 census
Expedited Shipments – The Approach

Observations

• Walk through of the end-to-end approval, import clearance and logistics processes was invaluable for the Lead Team

• Agency coordination and understanding for the regulatory requirements enhanced and enabled quick mobilization for expedited clearance of the first consignment of covid vaccines (completed within 3 hours)

• Fact Sheets for Commercial Importers and Private Importers will be useful for donors

• Consultation further enhanced the engagement that was commenced during the development of the TFA Roadmap.
Communications & Outcomes

1. Import Procedures for Vaccines, Medicines and Medical Products: Guideline relating to the importation of critical vaccines, medicines, and medical products in response to Covid-19 preparedness, critical humanitarian and relief shipments and in strengthening the resilience of Tonga’s national and international pharmaceutical supply chain

2. Commercial Import Fact Sheet of Medicines, Vaccines, Therapeutics and Pharmaceutical Goods

3. Private Import Fact Sheet of Medicines, Vaccines, Therapeutics and Pharmaceutical Goods

Implementation of further facilitation measures including AO for trusted importers, improved coordination within Ministry of Health
Lessons Learned

- Establishing a small multi-agency lead team was a key success factor
- Establishing a structured schedule of working group sessions with outcomes for each activity ensured focus
- Ministry of Health were key participants and identified improvements within their agency
- Physical walk through and observation of each border organisation process identified points of connection for improved coordination and a real understanding of the logistics procedures to support timely delivery of vaccines
- Private sector requested published procedures for clearance and contact points – this led to the development of the Fact Sheets

Lead Team
Trade, Customs, Health, Quarantine (Plant & Animal)

Border Organisations
Port, Airport, Air Cargo Operator, Customs Broker, Freight Forwarder, Transport ministry
Questions
Thank you

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