

Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting

Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 19 June 2015

OUTCOME OF PACIFIC ICT MINISTERIAL MEETING

Preamble

The Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting (the Meeting), organised jointly by the University of the South Pacific (USP) in its capacity as Chair of the Council of Regional Organisation of the Pacific (CROP) ICT Working Group and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), was held on 19 June 2015, in Nuku'alofa, Tonga. The meeting was opened by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala and attended by ministers from Tonga, Niue, Samoa and Solomon Islands, and official delegates from 13 countries, members of the CROP ICT Working Group and observers from 11 organisations.

The meeting thanked USP, ITU and the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga for organizing the Meeting, as well as partners, particularly the Australian Government Department of Communications, Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT), United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA), Tonga Communications Corporation (TCC), Tonga Cable Limited (TCL), Internet Society (ISOC) and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

Pacific ICT Ministers, at their meeting on 19 June, acknowledged with appreciation the efforts of many development partners in the region.

The list of participants at the meeting is at Appendix A.

Benefits of ICT's for the Pacific

Pacific ICT Ministers noted the many benefits of ICT, including, but not limited to:

- ICTs have enormous potential for socio-economic development as a key tool for the development, governance and sustainable livelihood of the people of the Pacific;
- ICTs are an increasingly important tool for achieving development priorities under the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals and the SIDs Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway, among others.
- ICTs are essential for sustainable development, disaster risk management and response, and cybersecurity.

Challenges facing the Pacific

The Pacific ICT Ministers also noted a number of challenges, including those identified through the review of the Framework for Action on ICT Development in the Pacific (FAIDP), undertaken by the CROP ICT Working Group and considered by this meeting:

- Lack of coordination and information around ICT initiatives within the Pacific region countries by countries, donor agencies and international organisations that could benefit from common approaches, standards, resources and infrastructures in ICT that could provide the force multiplier effect through cooperative development scaling and multi-purposing of technical resources. This includes human resource development and harnessing of available expertise and resources.

- Lack of common knowledge and supporting data to facilitate decision-making in countries of the Pacific around ICT initiatives and ICT support for sustainable development. A central regional repository that shares common knowledge and public domain data from various regional and international sources would foster common perspectives and approaches to benchmarks, targets and planning objectives.
- The need to ensure a Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) capability for the region into the future.

Outcomes of the Meeting

Pacific ICT Ministers agreed to:

1. Endorse the FAIDP Review undertaken by the CROP ICT Working Group and supported by this meeting;
2. Progress agreement of the PRISAP, as the action plan which will follow-on from the FAIDP, and which identifies key themes including policy and regulatory frameworks, cybersecurity, human capacity building, infrastructure and universal access, gender equality, leadership and governance, disaster risk management etc. to enable its finalization and adoption ahead of its implementation from 2016 to 2020; and
3. Encourage Pacific countries to engage with the CROP ICT Working Group and other relevant partners, such as the ITU and the Pacific ICT Regulatory Resource Centre (PiRRC) to develop an effective mechanism for coordination and data collection on ICTs that will enable improved decision-making, investment and assessment of progress against ICT Pacific objectives.
