WELCOME

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Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of *e-talanoa*, a quarterly newsletter compiled by the Pacific Information and Communication Technology Outreach (PICTO) Programme, a newly established programme of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's (SPC) Economic Development Division (EDD).

The establishment of EDD in January 2010 is a result of the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF) process which has been underway in recent years as directed by Forum Leaders. The thrust behind the Leaders' decision was to rationalise the services of regional organisations for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery to Pacific member countries.

As a result of the RIF process, the ICT Outreach section of the Pacific Island Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) was relocated to SPC in April this year and merged with SPC's Outreach section to form PICTO. PICTO recently organised two high level regional meetings in Nuku'alofa, Tonga – the Pacific Regional ICT Officials' meeting from 16 – 17 June 2010 and the Pacific Regional ICT Ministers' meeting on 18 June 2010. An important outcome of the Ministers meeting is that SPC, through PICTO, coordinate the implementation of the new Framework for Action of ICT for Development in the Pacific in collaboration with the University of the South Pacific (USP) and other Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies and development partners (see article on the Tonga Declaration on page 4).

The *e-talanoa* newsletter will focus on ICT development in the Pacific, highlighting successful ICT projects, sharing relevant ICT news, and providing insights from various ICT partners and stakeholders on how ICT can address the challenges we face in the Pacific. This issue of the newsletter is dedicated to the two meetings in Tonga with a special focus on the outcome of ministerial meeting.

Pacific Regional ICT Ministers' Meeting, 18 June 2010, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Pacific Regional ICT Ministers' Meeting 2010:

Information and communication technology for development, governance and sustainable livelihoods of Pacific communities

Pacific ministers for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have committed to using ICT as a key tool for the development, governance and sustainable livelihood of the Pacific communities.

In a declaration made at the Pacific Regional ICT Ministers' Meeting on 18 June in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, they agreed to 'work together to support the advancement of Pacific countries through improved deployment and use of ICTs in our societies; and endorse the concept of 'many partners, one team' in progressing a more coordinated and coherent approach to ICT development.

Called the 'Tonga Declaration', the document notes ICT priority issues and development plans for the Pacific region.

The ministers also endorsed the Framework for Action on ICT for Development for the Pacific and requested Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to coordinate the implementation of the framework in collaboration with University of the South Pacific (USP), and other regional agencies and development partners. The framework acknowledges that national ICT policies and plans, and an integrated coordinated approach, are the principle means of steering ICT to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development. The framework emphasized that the sovereignty of PICTs is paramount and a regional framework cannot override national or territorial decisions.

The ministers agreed that the new framework of action should be reviewed before mid-2013, with a Pacific ICT ministers' meeting to be convened after the review to consider the findings and provide direction to the implementation of the framework.

Ministers also requested that SPC work with USP, development partners and Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) to develop a three year rolling Pacific Regional ICT Strategic Action Plan (PRISAP) that will be updated annually and to report back on targets set in the framework.

The ministers acknowledged the important role of ICT in meeting the Millennium Development Goals and recalled Resolution 64/187 of the UN General Assembly, which highlighted the importance of partnerships with stakeholders in enhancing access to ICT and its potential to provide new solutions to development challenges.

They noted that the Pacific Plan provides a basis for regional cooperation and integration between Forum countries and considered the unique challenges faced by Pacific small island developing states and territories in establishing ICT systems

Other documents taken into account at the meeting included the Wellington Declaration of the 2006 Pacific Islands Forum Communications Ministers meeting, the 2009 Pacific ICT Ministerial Forum Communiqué that was endorsed by Pacific member states of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the Cairns Communiqué.

Prior to the ministerial meeting, ICT government officials met from 16–17 June (also in Nuku'alofa) to discuss the issues at length and prepare recommendations for consideration at the Pacific Regional ICT Ministers meeting on 18 June.

The officials' meeting addressed important ICT issues such as partnerships and coordination; policy, legislation and regulatory frameworks; capacity building; infrastructure and access; international connectivity; cyber security and ICT applications; and the review of the Pacific Plan Digital Strategy.

Over 100 participants attended the officials' and ministers' meetings, including ministerial and official representatives from 20 PICTs, representatives of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies and development partners.

The meeting was organised by SPC's Economic Development Division, in collaboration with the Tonga's Ministry of Information and Communications with funding support from the European Union through the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP Group).

Princess Royal supports
new ICT policy framework for the Pacific

The Kingdom of Tonga pledged its support to moving ICT development forward in the region, with emphasis on the role of technology in promoting economic growth and improving education and health standards.

Speaking at the opening of the meeting of Pacific Regional Information and Communication Technology Ministers in Tonga, Her Royal Highness, Princess Salote Mafile'o Pilolevu Tuita, said she supported the vision behind the implementation of The Framework for Action on ICT for Development in the Pacific. Her Royal Highness stressed the importance of ensuring that ICT solutions are targeted at achieving benefits for people, especially in schools and health facilities.

Supporting her call, Dr Jimmie Rodgers, Director-General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), challenged the meeting to leave a legacy for future generations.

"I am sure you will agree with me that we would like to be remembered as the generation of leaders that took decisions that will help provide the benefits of ICT to all Pacific Island people, especially in the areas of education and health, improved governance and new opportunities for sustainable livelihoods," Dr Rodgers said.

He said that the success of the meeting would not be measured by the agreement on a new framework, which was only the beginning of the journey. Ultimately, it would be measured by the positive impacts and outcomes enjoyed by Pacific people in the future as a result of the decisions taken now.

"For a long time, the region has been short-changed in ICT development, mostly due to the dominance of monopolies. Poor access to communication technology because of prohibitive pricing or just simply lack of coverage has undermined opportunities for socio-economic development in many countries. The increasing liberalisation of the telecommunication sector in much of the region is a welcome development and we have already seen the beneficial impact of such policies in some countries," Dr Rodgers said.

The new framework provides a coordinated mechanism that will bring together all the different stakeholders in ICT and put in place a reporting mechanism based on one implementation plan and one monitoring and reporting plan for all partners in the ICT sector.

Dr Rodgers said the framework also allowed for lateral thinking including, for instance, the convening of a joint ministerial meeting on ICT, energy and transport to enable cooperative decision-making across the sectors that drive economic development in the region. An opportunity for such a meeting in 2011 will be discussed with members and partners in the next few months.

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Her Royal Highness, Princess Salote Mafile'o Pilolevu Tuita, speaking at the Pacific Regional ICT Ministers' Meeting

Easter Bruce

Director Information Technology

Department of Information and Telecommunications Technology

American Samoa

SPC CPS
SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY
SECRÉTARIAT GÉNÉRAL DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ DU PACIFIQUE

HE Bruce Hunt

High Commissioner to Tonga

Australia

John Tagabuel

Deputy Secretary for Public Health

Department of Public Health

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Hon. Apii Piho

Minister

Ministry of Justice, Health, Internal Affairs, Youth and Sports, Non Government Organisations

Cook Islands

Hon. Francis Itimai

Minister

Department of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure

Federated States Of Micronesia

Pacific Regional Information & Communication Technology (ICT)

Ministers' meeting

18 June 2010

Nuku'alofa, Tonga

ICT for development, governance and sustainable livelihoods

Tonga Declaration

We, the representatives of the Countries and Territories at this meeting in Nuku'alofa, Tonga:

Noting the important role of ICT in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);

Recalling the Resolution 64/187 of the UN General Assembly, of 21 December 2009 recognising the importance of partnerships with all relevant stakeholders in enhancing access to ICT and that ICT has the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges;

Recognising the unique challenges faced by Pacific Small Island Developing States and Territories in ICT development;

Noting that the Pacific Plan as endorsed by the Forum Leaders' Meeting in Madang, Papua New Guinea in October 2005 provides a framework for strengthening regional cooperation and integration between Forum countries;

Recalling the Wellington Declaration of the 2006 Pacific Islands Forum Communications Ministers meeting set priorities and identified challenges to be addressed in implementing the Digital Strategy;

Recalling the 2009 Pacific ICT Ministerial Forum Communiqué that was endorsed by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Pacific member states;

Acknowledging the important role of development partners in progressing ICT development in the Pacific region;

Noting that Forum Leaders requested in their Cairns Communiqué that the Digital Strategy, an essential component of the Pacific Plan, be reviewed and revised;

Acknowledging the review of the Digital Strategy by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS);

Acknowledging the development of the Framework for Action on ICT for Development for the Pacific by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in partnership with Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies and development partners;

Josiane Couratier

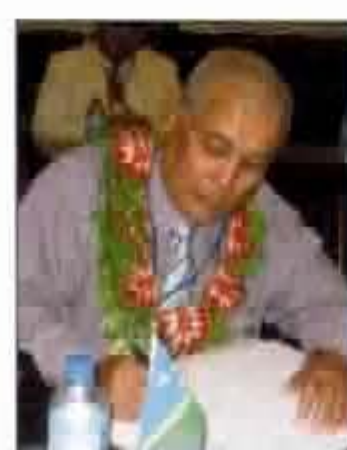Deputy Permanent Representative of France to SPC

France

Hon. Temate Kateintenang

Minister

Ministry of Communications, Transport and Tourism Development

Kiribati

Christopher Stephen

Secretary

Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications

Nauru

Anthony Sa'aga

Manager ICT Secretariat

Ministry of Communications and Information Technology

Samoa

Ashley Wickham

Advisor

Prime Minister's Office

Solomon Islands

Hon. 'Eseta Fusitu'a

Minister

Ministry of Information and Communications

Tonga

Hon. Taukelina Finikaso

Minister

Ministry of Communication, Transport and Tourism

Tuvalu

Emiliano Buletare

First Political Adviser

Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities

Vanuatu

Hon. Kenneth Kedi

Minister

Ministry of Transportation and Communications

Republic Of The Marshall Islands

Taina Tagicakibau

Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Public Enterprises, Tourism and Communication

Fiji

Hon. Jackson R. Ngiraingas

Minister

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Industries and Commerce

Palau

Declare that we:

1. Are committed to using ICT as a key tool for the development, governance and sustainable livelihood of the people of our countries;

2. Recognise that while ICTs have enormous potential for socio-economic development, they pose risks to our communities that need to be carefully managed;

3. Will work together to support the advancement of Pacific countries through improved deployment and use of ICTs in our societies; and

4. Endorse the concept of 'many partners, one team' in progressing a more coordinated and coherent approach to ICT development.

Accordingly, we:

(i) Endorse the recommendations in the Pacific Regional ICT Officials' Meeting Report and Outcomes;

(ii) Endorse the Framework for Action on ICT for Development for the Pacific;

(iii) Request SPC to work with USP, PICTs and development partners to develop the three year rolling Strategic Action Plan that will be updated annually, and to report back on targets set in the framework, and outline upcoming ICT activities in the region;

(iv) Request SPC to coordinate the implementation of the framework in collaboration with USP, and other CROP agencies and development partners;

(v) Agree that the Framework be reviewed before mid-2013; and

(vi) Agree to convene a Pacific ICT Ministers' meeting after the review to consider the findings and provide direction to the implementation of the Framework.

18 June 2010

Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Hon. Pokotoa Sipeli

Minister

Ministry of Post and Telecommunications

Niue

HE Christine Bogle

High Commissioner to Tonga

New Zealand

Hon. Patrick Tammur

Minister

Ministry of Communication and Information

Papua New Guinea

Regional framework to complement national ICT policies

18 Jun 2010, Nuku'alofa, Tonga ---- A new framework for the development of ICT in the Pacific was discussed at the Pacific Regional Information and Communication officials meeting in Tonga.

SPC staff with Her Royal Highness, Princess Salote Mafile'o Pilolevu Tuita. *Sitting (left-right):* Tanielu Atafa, Ian Thomson, Siaosi Sovaleni, HRH Princess Pilolevu, Dr Jimmie Rodgers (SPC Director General), Captain John Hogan (SPC EDD Director), and Vilisi Nadaku. *Standing (left-right):* Inise Rabukawaqa, Avnita Goundar, Patrick Delhaye, Alisi Tuqa and Ruci Mafi

The framework follows on from the Pacific Plan Digital Strategy and will complement existing national plans, said Dr Jimmie Rodgers, Director-General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

"The Framework for Action on ICT for Development in the Pacific provides a guide on how we at the regional and international level fit into national ICT plans. We know that ICT is heavily driven by the private sector and as such, commercial interests have tended to overshadow national development objectives and goals," Dr Rodgers said.

Using a 'many partners one team' approach, the framework will give stakeholders opportunities to harness their collective resources to further extend ICT outreach to communities and enhance prospects for sustainable livelihoods.

"What the framework aims to do is provide a coordinated mechanism that will bring together the different stakeholders and put in place a reporting mechanism based on one implementation plan and one monitoring and reporting framework that involves all partners in the ICT sector."

If such a plan is agreed on and implemented, then 'three years from now instead of having various stakeholders reporting on individual initiatives and projects, we'll have one report on the progress, status and development of ICT in Pacific Island countries and territories that clearly identifies how our partners' contributions have assisted individual countries from a financing or technical advisory perspective," Dr Rodgers said.

The framework, which has seven themes and 12 guiding principles, focuses on developing and improving ICT services to support development and governance and create new livelihood opportunities for communities in the Pacific.

The principles cover ICT policy direction; funding decisions and support for the implementation of national policies and plans; leadership, governance, coordination and partnerships; legislation and regulatory frameworks; capacity building; ICT infrastructure and access, including connectivity and cyber security; and ICT applications and financing, monitoring and evaluation.