

**14th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP-14)**

Virtual Meeting, 21 - 23 September 2021

**CONCEPT NOTE**

1. **Background/Context**

Most of the Pacific countries share challenges and opportunities and its unique characteristics with sparsely populated islands and expansive areas consisting of many remote islands. The common challenges include international connectivity, disaster management and climate change, etc. The policy and regulatory issues for telecommunication and ICT development faced by the Pacific countries are unique and require their own platform to discuss the issues.

The APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP) is a subregional platform to serve the purpose and it has become a premium event to address common challenges in Telecommunication and ICT Development issues of the Pacific countries. The 44th Session of the Management Committee of the APT approved to organize the 14th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for the Pacific (PRFP-14) in 2021.

COVID-19 brought a number of challenges to the ICT policy makers and regulators and the unprecedented level of its impact still persists and casts its shadow over the global economy. On the other hand, the use of telecommunication and ICTs during the COVID-19 pandemic has provided opportunities to the ICT policy makers and regulators to leverage the strength of ICTs.

As the digital transformation has been progressing due to the change in life triggered by COVID-19, it is expected that Pacific countries will also seize this opportunity to boost their own economic activities through the utilization of ICT technology and data. Now that various services becoming available online, it is more crucial than ever for island nations to secure stable and affordable broadband connectivity. The PRFP-14 will capture issues around advancing broadband connectivity including policy and regulatory aspects and the updates on submarine cable, satellite services and last-mile connectivity.

OTT services of video streaming and social media platforms, which have recently become popular all over the world, helped accelerate digital transformation process but at the same time, they brought along various issues related to infrastructure investment, competition, data traffic and the code of ethics, etc. The PRFP-14 will discuss the challenges of OTT and social media platform to ensure a level playing field and the right ecosystem for all stakeholders through appropriate policy and regulation.

Cybersecurity issues have been one of the key topics in the region, as many island nations rely more on activities in cyberspace. Dealing with increasingly complicated and sophisticated cyberattacks is the key concern to national growth and digital transformation. The forum will discuss how to build cybersecurity capacity in the Pacific through various efforts.

In 2020, island nations suffered enormous damage due to the level five cyclone which destroyed buildings and damaged crops by floods. Disasters deprived people's wealth, livelihoods, and economic infrastructures, further weaken the economic activities which has been further sluggish by COVID-19. Therefore, efficient disaster management including disaster preparedness, mitigation and recovery by utilizing ICT is essential to the Pacific. These aspects will be covered in the forum.

The PRFP-14 also can provide a closed session for policymakers and regulators in case it’s needed, so candid views and information on sensitive ICT issues in the Pacific can be freely exchanged and discussed.

In line with the APT's Strategic Plan for 2021-2023, PRFP-14 will focus on various relevant topics which are particularly important to the Pacific countries. Sharing knowledge, experience and best practices through PRFP-14 will contribute to the work of the policymaking, design of regulations and feasible collaboration among relevant stakeholders.

1. **Objectives**

The specific objectives for PRFP-14 are to:

* Update and discuss policy and regulation trends of the Pacific countries including Digital Transformation initiatives taken by Members to prepare post-COVID-19 era.
* Share the information on the latest connectivity issue in pacific region including its policy and regulatory aspect.
* Discuss how to build cybersecurity capacity and possible cooperation on Cybersecurity
* Update on the current status and development of OTT and share policy and regulation including best practices in OTT and social media platform
* Update on disaster management technology and project, share the experience of Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation, and Recovery Process through ICT and discuss policy and regulation relevant to disaster management including possible cooperation in this area
* Have a closed session among regulators in Pacific countries to share and discuss other ICT issues of common concern to the Pacific, if necessary.

1. **Expected outcomes**

This time, the meeting is conducted as a virtual meeting due to the COVID-19 and number of sessions is limited for the current policy and regulatory issues. The provisional agenda and tentative programme of the PRFP-14 are enclosed herewith and annexed to the concept note (See Annex A and B for more information).

Specific outcomes include but not limited to:

* Identified key policy and regulatory concerns of Member countries in the Pacific.
* Enhanced awareness of policymakers and regulators on the latest connectivity issues in the Pacific
* Cultivated understanding and discussion in various aspects such as policy and regulation and technology and explore possible solutions and cooperation on various topics of thematic sessions on Connectivity, Cybersecurity, OTT and social media platform, Disaster Management.
* Closed discussion among policymakers and regulators for in-depth understanding on sensitive topics.

1. **Timing**

The virtual meeting of the PRFP-14 will be a 3-day event from 21 to 23 September 2021. The meeting will be organised via Zoom meeting platform from 8:00 AM – 11:00 PM (UTC+7).

1. **Participation**

All APT Members, Associate Members, Affiliate Members, International/Regional Organizations, and eligible non-members can participate in the PRFP-14.

Participants will be provided with Zoom meeting link, meeting ID and password. Participants shall logon to meeting URL at the designated time and date. In order to have proper audio experience during the meeting, participants should be equipped with headset containing speakers and microphone. Please follow the guidelines in attending online meeting provided in an Introduction to APT Zoom meeting document.

1. **Contact persons:**

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| **APT Secretariat** |
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**Annex A**

**14th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP-14)**

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

1. Opening
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Outcomes of the 44th Session of the Management Committee of the APT relevant to PRFP
4. Implementation Status of the Strategic Plan of the APT for 2021-2023
5. Working Methods of PRFP
6. Roundtable onUpdates of Policy and Regulation in the Pacific
7. Thematic Sessions:
   1. Advancing Broadband Connectivity in the Pacific
   2. Building Cybersecurity Capability in the Pacific for trusted and secured cyberspace
   3. Recent development of OTTs and social media platform services
   4. Disaster management in the Pacific: Enhancing Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation, and Recovery Process through ICT
8. Closed Session for Policymakers and Regulators
9. Date and Venue for PRFP-15
10. Any other matters
11. Closing

**Annex B**

**14th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP-14)**

Virtual/Online Meeting, 21-23 September 2021

**Tentative Programme**

| TIME | PROGRAMME |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Tuesday, 21 September 2021** |
| 07:00-07:45  (UTC+7) | **Virtual Social Networking** |
| 07:30-08:00  (UTC+7) | **Registration** |
| 08:00 – 08:15  (UTC+7) | **Opening**   * Welcome Address – Mr. Masanori Kondo, Secretary General of APT * Address- Mr. John Jack, Chairman of PRFP   Group Photograph |
| 08:15 – 08:30  (UTC+7) | **Session 1** ***– Plenary***   * Adoption of Agenda * Outcomes of the [15th Session of the General Assembly](https://www.apt.int/2020-GA15) of the APT and the 44th Session of the Management Committee of the APT Relevant to PRFP * Review of the Working Methods of PRFP |
| 08:30 - 9:45 (UTC+7) | **Session 2 – *(Ministerial or Regulator Session)* *Roundtable on Updates of Policy and Regulation in the Pacific***  *COVID-19 brought challenges to the ICT policymakers and regulators. Unprecedented impact still persists and casts its shadow over the global economy.*  *The use of telecommunication and ICTs during the COVID-19 pandemic also has provided opportunities to the ICT policymakers and regulators to leverage the strength of ICTs to the other sectors. Effective cross sectoral policy and regulatory framework will accelerate the digital transformation, which will in turn contribute to socio-economic growth, innovation and better delivery of public services.*  *This Roundtable session will invite Ministers or Regulators in the Pacific to share insights, experiences, lessons learned, initiatives taken with regard to combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, including digital transformation which is one of the objectives in the Singapore Statement.*  ***Moderator:*** *(TBD)*  ***Topics***   * What are the challenges and opportunities brought by COVID-19 pandemic * What are the initiatives taken by Members to cope with the COVID-19 * Digital transformation initiatives taken by Members to prepare post-COVID-19 era   ***Speakers:***   * Honorable Ministers * Heads of ICT Regulators |
| 9:45 – 11:00 (UTC+7) | **Session 3 -** ***Advancing Broadband Connectivity in the Pacific***  *Broadband connectivity is the key to the development in the Pacific. Broadband connectivity is being built through fiber optics, international submarine and terrestrial cables, satellites, mobile and fixed networks, etc. There are various aspects in advancing broadband networks in order to build inclusive telecommunication/ICT infrastructures. These includes network reliability, security, resiliency, sustainability, and future readiness and adoption of green technology solutions.*  *During the COVID-19 pandemic, the crucial role of broadband connectivity has been witnessed. Therefore, it is imperative to provide broadband connectivity with affordability and quality of service to the unserved and underserved populations.*  This session w*ill discuss* *the recent updates on* international connectivity *as well as last mile connectivity which have been enabled by emerging technologies and collective efforts among stakeholders. The session will also discuss the challenges faced in delivering quality broadband connectivity on the Pacific.*  *Moderator : (TBD)*  Topics :   * Updates on ICT policy and regulation on Broadband Connectivity * Recent updates on Submarine cable projects in the Pacific region * Information sharing about various satellite technologies; Medium Earth Orbit (MEO), Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Satellites Communication, etc. * Success story of Last Mile Connectivity in the Pacific   Speakers:   * Member Administration in the Pacific * Affiliate Members |
|  | **Wednesday, 22 September 2021** |
| 07:00-07:45  (UTC+7) | **Virtual Social Networking** |
| 07:30-08:00  (UTC+7) | **Registration** |
| 8:00 - 9:20 (UTC+7) | ***Session 4* – *Building Cybersecurity Capability in the Pacific for trusted and secured cyberspace***  *Recognizing the vulnerability of the Pacific to cyberthreats, ICT policymakers and regulators shall develop and maintain secured, trusted and resilient telecommunication/ ICT networks and services.*  *Data protection, free and secure flow of information, resilient towards cyberthreats including cybersecurity vigilance are important to a trusted and secure cyberspace to ensure that people can engage in online activities with confidence.*  *This session is dedicated to discussing various aspects of security in cyberspace including latest updates of domestic or regional activities on cybersecurity, institutional arrangement such as CERT, awareness programmes, and human resource development programmes, etc.*  Topics:   * Updates of policy or regulations on Cybersecurity * Cybersecurity readiness of the APT Members in the Pacific * Updates on establishing or running the CERT/CSIRT in the region * Human resources development in the area of Cybersecurity   Panelist :   * Member Administration in the Pacific * Affiliate Members * A representative of PaCSON (TBC) |
| 9:20 – 9:40 (UTC+7) | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 9:40 - 11:00 (UTC+7) | ***Session5* - *Recent development of OTTs and social media platform services***  *Over-the-Top (OTT) applications and services open new horizon for innovative services. It also enables digital transformation and digital ecosystem. However, OTT applications and services also have an impact on the underlying telecommunication/ICT infrastructures with the imbalance in revenue and cost structure to the telecom operators.*  *This session provides updates on the recent development of OTT to find out any possibility of win-win solution among stakeholders. The session will also explore possible policy and regulatory approaches and real-life practices in ensuring level playing field to all stakeholders to spur innovation while maintaining the quality of service and network for the benefit of consumers.*  *Moderator : (TBD)*  Topic :   * Current Status and Development of OTT: Challenges and Opportunities * Possible Win-Win Model for OTT and Network Provider * Policy and Regulation and Practices towards OTT   *Panelist :*   * Member Administration in the Pacific * Affiliate Members |
|  | **Wednesday, 23 September 2021** |
| 07:00-07:45  (UTC+7) | **Virtual Social Networking** |
| 07:30-08:00  (UTC+7) | **Registration** |
| 8:00 – 9:15 (UTC+7) | ***Session6* - *Disaster management in the Pacific : Enhancing Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation, and Recovery Process through ICT***  *This session provides updates of policies and strategies for reliable and resilient telecommunication/ICT infrastructure and services to secure their availability during disasters, and to support all phases of disaster management, including dissemination of information for public safety, and enabling disaster communication and resource mobilization during disaster-relief effort and recovery efforts in the Pacific*  *recovery phase.*  *It also gives an opportunity to discuss possible areas of cooperation for disaster management in the Pacific by sharing experiences and lessons from the actual cause of a disaster.*  *Moderator : (TBD)*  Topic :   * Policy and Regulation for Disaster Management in the Pacific * Disaster Management related projects and relevant technologies in the Pacific * Best Practice of resilience against Disaster * Possible area of cooperation for policymaking and implementation on Disaster management in the Pacific   *Panelist :*   * Member Administration in the Pacific * Affiliate Members |
| 9:15 - 10:30 (UTC+7) | ***Session7* - *Closed Session for Policymakers and Regulators***  *This session is an exclusive session for exchanging candid views and information amongst Policymakers and Regulators on issues around ICT in the Pacific countries. The discussion topics will be decided by the participating countries.*  *Moderator:* ***Chairman of PRFP (TBC)*** |
| 10:30 – 11:00 (UTC+7) | **Session 8 - *Plenary - Way Forward and Closing***   * Approval of output document * Way Forward * Date and Venue of PRFP-15 * Any other matters   Closing   * Remarks by Secretary General of the APT * Remarks and closing by Chairman of PRFP |