



Secretary General

WELCOME REMARKS

Hon. Hua'akavameiliku, Prime Minister of Tonga,

Hon. Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu, Minister for Ministry of MEIDECC,

Mr. John Jack, Chair of APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP),

Excellencies,

Distinguished Speakers and Delegates,

Good morning.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 17th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP-17).

I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC), Tonga, for the excellent arrangements in hosting this hybrid meeting and the warm hospitality extended to all of us.

My sincere gratitude goes to the generous contributions from Australia's Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts and Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Last year, the Pacific ICT Ministerial Dialogue adopted a “Lagatoi Declaration” on the theme “Smart Pacific, One Voice-Creating a Digital Future Together for the Pacific”. Since then, Pacific member countries have developed an Action Plan as a follow-up and will make efforts to implement this plan by 2030. In response, APT will actively participate in and support the efforts and enthusiasm of these Pacific members.

As part of our efforts, PRFP-17 will continue to organize its sessions based on the Lagatoi Declaration's priority areas to support the development of telecommunications and ICT policies in Pacific countries and provide an opportunity to share policy and regulatory trends, as well as enhance their capacity to address emerging opportunities and challenges. Its sessions will address topics such as digital transformation, digital infrastructure, trust and security, digital capacity building and skills, and disaster management, all of which are strategic pillars of the APT's Strategic Plan for 2024-2026 and they are also in align with the "Lagatoi Declaration".

Today, I am pleased to inform you that there are more than 00 registered participants from 00 countries, not only from the Pacific but also from other countries in the Asia and the Pacific region.

I hope the presentations and the discussions by experts and specialists in each session will stimulate participants' insights and provide something new to learn.

Distinguished Delegates,

We commend the collaborative and coordinated efforts of Pacific member countries in tackling shared challenges. APT remains committed to advancing these initiatives through substantive measures, including discussion platforms, capacity-building programs, pilot projects, and beyond. This PRFP itself is one of the commitments APT has been promoting in the Pacific.

I hope this PRFP-17 will be a valuable opportunity for all participants.

Thank you very much.
