

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

Telecommunication Development Bureau



Closing Remarks

BY

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Honorable Dr. Sevele, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga,

Honorable Mr Marurai, Prime Minister of Cook Islands,

Honorable Ministers,

Partners,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As our meeting comes to a close, above all, I would like to express my gratitude to you, Prime Minister. Your personal leadership has been essential to the success of this meeting and its outcomes. I would also like to thank the many Member States and partners here this week for their support and participation. I sincerely appreciate

your enthusiastic response to ITU's invitation and your high level of engagement and commitment.

The closing of this forum represents a new beginning. It is the start of many deeper and richer partnerships between all of us here this week. To me, that is the most important outcome.

Upon reviewing the communiqué, I was pleased to see that Pacific Island States have clearly stated their objectives and priorities. I believe that it is now our job, all partners working together, to help them achieve their aspirations.

In this context, I am offering my personal commitment and that of the International Telecommunication Union to help deliver real results for the Pacific Island States.

Geneva may not be next door, but I am always just a phone call or email away. In addition, Dr Eun-Ju Kim, the Head of the ITU Asia-Pacific office, is located in Bangkok. Dr Kim and her team of experts are available to follow up with Member States and partners on a more regulator basis.

In particular, thanks to the Government of Australia's Department of Broadband Communication and the Digital Economy, our Bangkok office has an expert dedicated to supporting Pacific Island States

with their needs in areas such as ICT governance, security and emergency communications.

And, as I announced earlier, we will soon have an expert located in Fiji, thanks to the support of the European Commission to provide assistance to countries on policy and regulatory issues.

Looking ahead, I encourage Pacific Island States to participate in the Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for next WTDC to be held in Malaysia in May. This meeting will be an opportunity to shape ITU's development activities for the next four years, including priority actions for the Pacific.

Honorable Prime Ministers, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, let me leave you with this last thought.

The unique challenges in the Pacific mean that we must work together to achieve our objectives.

I firmly believe that success will come if countries band together to implement Pacific-wide solutions for connectivity, emergency planning and response, and human capacity building as well as harmonizing policies and regulations.

By moving in the same direction, Pacific Island States can achieve greater economies of scale to attract industry investment, as well as

establish larger-scale and higher impact public-private partnerships, involving international and regional organizations as well as financing partners and industry.

As we close our meeting, I leave the Kingdom of Tonga this evening with a sense of optimism about a future connected Pacific. This will not happen overnight. But, with each step along the way, I can assure you that ITU will be there by your side as a dependable and trusted partner.

Thank you again for your participation and I wish you all a safe journey home.