

**INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION AND EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION FORUM**

**Capacity Building and ICT Policy, Regulatory and Legislative  
Frameworks Support for Pacific Island Countries.**

November 26-27, Novotel Hotel, Nadi, Fiji

**INAUGURAL ADDRESS**

**Honorable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum**

Attorney General Minister for Public Enterprises, Tourism and  
Communications

Officials of the ITU, participants of this forum, representatives of the  
ACP member countries, training experts, and representatives of other  
regional and international organizations,

Ni sa bula vinaka

At the outset, I would like to thank the ITU for this privilege to  
officiate on this occasion, the ITU-EC Project on "Capacity Building  
and ICT Policy, Regulatory and Legislative Frameworks Support for  
Pacific Island Countries".

On behalf of Government and my Ministry, I extend to you all our  
warmest welcome to our shores. For those visiting Fiji for the first  
time, I extend a special welcome and wish that your brief stay would  
be enjoyable and memorable.

Forums such as this one are essentially important for the countries in  
the Pacific as they present the opportunity for policy makers,  
regulators to interface and interact with one another and to discuss,  
in the global scheme of building human as well as institutional  
capacity in the field of ICT through training, education and  
knowledge sharing measures, and issues, those that are of common  
interest and relevant to developing island economies. My advice is

when considering such scheme we should be self-determinant about what options and decisions we make that are actually practical and relevant for us, with respect to realities we face.

Our reality here in Fiji poses challenges in balancing the public interest against the industry interest as we progress the transition to market liberalization. And the key components we will use in this transition are to place a New Policy Directions for Telecommunications to create a level playing field to all players in the market.

Amongst the challenges Fiji faces as we restructure our sector are –

- appropriate regulatory institution for competitive markets;
- rationalization of prices and tariff rebalancing;
- licensing and spectrum management; and
- USO matters and rural telecommunications development.

Government is currently undergoing a major sector restructure exercise and exploring strategies and actions that will steer in market liberalization and enable competition. As you all are aware, generally, when competition is introduced, benefits, particularly in terms of lowering costs of products and services, availing wider range of choices to the consumers and attracting new investments into the sector will surface. These amongst other benefits are what we expect will develop.

Since taking up office in Communications, Government has renewed and reaffirmed its commitment towards developing the telecommunications markets and the strategies that have been identified for national development as outlined in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and the National Export Strategy. The strategies that are identified for developments in the information and communications technology include –

- telecommunications services liberalization and competition;
- pricing and tariff rationalization;

- restructure of regulatory framework; and
- provision of access to all communities.

I need to emphasise the important role of developing policies to ensure healthy and sustainable competition in markets to deliver benefits to all communities in society. Competition is possible under a regulatory framework that is practical, appropriate and effective.

As participants in this forum I understand you have a role in identifying the actions to under take in order to formulate policies that would be appropriate for your island states.

In Fiji's case we plan to institute a regulatory framework that is structured to initially steer smooth competition amongst the industries and to adequately resource our regulatory institution to handle the related aspects of a competitive telecommunications industry. Amongst these aspects are –

- licensing;
- disputes resolution mechanism and arbitration;
- access and interconnection;
- pricing and tariff; and
- regulating dominance in markets.

Our intention is that, more regulation is administered in the liberalized sector, and we anticipate that as healthy and sustainable competition settles, more appearance of self-regulation within competitive markets will set in.

Our Telecommunication deregulation allows the expulsion of exclusive rights given to the telecommunication service providers, and this in turn allows for the implementation of relevant laws to allow the maximization of utilization of resources (frequencies). It also allows competition in telecommunication services especially in broadcasting, mobile communications and introductions of various technologies to bridge digital divide. Exclusive rights given to telecom service providers in Fiji has hindered development by the slow

introduction of new technologies, unavailability of infrastructure, and lack of industry commitment to share available resources (frequency) to allow introduction of new players into the market.

That has resulted in the recent enactment of our new **Regulation for National Frequency Spectrum**.

I note from the forum agenda that participants will share country experiences in policies and regulatory matters, either in form of presentations or general discussions. I also note the scheduled modular training programme to be delivered by ITU expert for the benefit of ICT policy makers in our Pacific region.

I thank the ITU and especially their resource officers for this generous contribution to the success of this forum, and I urge all participants to take full advantage of this special training opportunity.

In concluding, I wish that the participants to these two-days of deliberations and interactions will be fruitful and beneficial and that the knowledge and skills you will acquired from this forum will become useful in your respective line of work. I do hope that you will also find time to enjoy the Fiji hospitality and delights during your short stay here in Nadi.

I acknowledge and thank the ITU, for your initiative and effort in organising your two-day meeting and I look forward to the successful outcome of this forum.

Thank you again for extending this privilege to officiate on this occasion. I wish you well in your discussions and training and take pleasure in now declaring this ITU-EC Project on "Capacity Building and ICT Policy, Regulatory and Legislative Frameworks Support for Pacific Island States" forum officially open.

Vinaka vakalevu.