

ITU CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE NETWORK FOR ASIA PACIFIC REGION

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TRAINING ON

TELECOM STRATEGY FOR THE PACIFIC-THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

16 November 2015, Nadi, Fiji

Mr. Brahima Sanou, Director,

Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU

Dear Shiv, Ivan, Fred, Donnie, Ioane,

CEOs Of Ministries, Regulators and service providers

Distinguished participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

Bula and Good morning

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you today and to welcome you all to this senior management training on telecom strategy for the Pacific-the next five years under the aegis of the ITU ASP Centre of Excellence hosted by the Ministry of ICT (Thailand).

I would like to thank the Government of Fiji for hosting this training, PITA for co-organizing together with the ITU and the Department of

Communications and the Arts, Government of Australia for their support.

This training is very timely as ICT industry reinvents itself to become a critical backbone of socio-economic development.

You will remember that the Ministerial meeting held in Tonga in June this year clearly recognized that ICTs are an increasingly important tool for achieving development priorities under Sustainable Development Goals and the S.A.M.O.A Pathway.

The Ministerial Meeting also stressed the extreme importance of ICT as key tool for governance, disaster risk management and response, and cybersecurity.

I have instructed the Regional Office to focus on four priority areas in addition to our normal activities for the implementation of

SAMOA pathway and the outcomes of the ministerial meeting, namely:

- Access to and affordability of the submarine optical fibers in order to boost their utilization for development.
- Developing an emergency telecommunication ecosystem for the Pacific
- Cybersecurity
- Number misuse
-

I am also pleased to announce the “Development of satellite communications for development and emergency communication for the Pacific” is going well.

Moreover, I have secured US\$150'000 from BDT budget to close some remaining gaps of the ICT4PAC project.

I am fully committed to support the vision of the leaders of Pacific countries and I have had several important meetings in this regard during my current visit to three Pacific countries over the last 7 days.

Coming to the context of this senior management training, let me set the scene of this training with the trends of evolution of the ICT sector.

First, as a global trend, the landscape of policy, regulation and service provision have changed and will continue to change because we are living in an era of convergence of telecom/ICT infrastructure, services and service providers.

We are witnessing the emergence of new players without any regulatory or infrastructure legacy. We are also witnessing the displacement of revenues and changes in business models for

service provision. Everyday, innovation is bringing about disruptive solutions not only to the ICT sector but also to other sectors of the economy. Mobile banking is a good example. We need change other sectors from passive victims of ICT to active and proactive players.

The telecom/ICT industry will continue to broaden and diversify, but most importantly it will continue to change more and more rapidly. We are living in a sector where no matter what time you go to bed, when you wake up, your first question should be what has changed when I was sleeping? The second question should be what must I do to remain relevant?

Second, on the infrastructure side, we will have a combination of optical fiber, satellites and alike for backbone infrastructure. We should make sure that these technologies complement each other.

Mobile access, including satellite mobile, will be the first way to access broadband. 4G access technology, and soon 5G, will put unprecedented computing power in the palm of our hands.

The development of broadband in developing countries will heavily depend on the usage of broadband-enabled services for provision of basic services such as e-government, e-health, e-education, e-agriculture and e-commerce.

Cybersecurity will continue to be a big challenge as we embark on the Internet of everything where we continue to connect men-to-machine and machine-to-machine.

Third, on the consumer side, there is an ever-expanding variety of services and applications to serve our social, business and entertainment needs.

We will move from owning infrastructure and devices to the usage of them. We will be more inclined to pay for the usage than for the ownership. We will rely more and more on cloud computing.

The feeling of freedom of expression and interaction with an **unlimited** number of people in cyberspace will continue to outweigh the issue of privacy for the younger generations that are known as digital natives. It will be interesting to see how the debate on privacy will look like 20 years from now.

Fourth, despite the 7.3 billion mobile subscriptions worldwide, 4 billion people still don't have to access the Internet which is **the** public good of the digital economy. Connectivity, access and **affordability** will remain a challenge particularly for the Pacific countries confronted to geographic and population challenges.

In order to transform these challenges into opportunities we need, **now more than ever**, to embrace innovative approaches to policy, regulation and service provision. Each player needs to do a 360 degrees review of the it works and interact with other players.

We need to put in place **new policy and regulatory frameworks** that will embrace the new ICT ecosystem. For example, ICT regulation is not enough to regulate e-Health, e-education or e-banking.

We need to move from vertical silo policy and regulation to **collaborative** policy and regulation.

Capacity building will continue to be an issue. It is estimated that in the near future **95%** of the decent work will require ICT skills. This is a common challenge of the ICT ecosystem to be addressed particularly in developing countries.

Partnerships will be key to **any and every** success. We need to extend the public private sector partnership to include all stakeholders and build **cross-sectoral** partnerships.

For all this to happen, all stakeholders, governments, regulators, telecom/ICT operators and service providers, consumers, academia and civil society need to change the way they interact with each other in order to create a new environment and a **new deal**.

To conclude, I would like to **leave you with this**. The future of the ICT sector is bright but in order to tap into the full potential of ICTs, all the players and stakeholders of the ICT ecosystem need **to not only think innovation**, but more importantly **to innovate** their way of thinking. **Yes**, we need **to innovate** their way of thinking.

I hope that these 3 days of exchange of knowledge and experiences will lead to that. In order to make it more tangible, we have

commissioned a study on this topic with support from PITA and the Australian Government. I thank those who have provided their inputs.

I count on your support to realize these goals together and wish you all the best for successful discussions and sharing of experiences over the next three days.

Thank you for your attention and **VINAKA VAKALEVU**