



Secretary General

### **WELCOME ADDRESS**

Honourable Poasi M. Tei, Minister for Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications, Government of the Kingdom of Tonga,

Ms. Unutoa Fonoti, Chairman of the APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP),  
Mr. Criden Appi and Mr. John Jack, Vice-Chairmen of PRFP,  
Reverend Tevita Tapueluelu, Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga,  
Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Speakers and Delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 12th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP-12) to be held from 1 to 3 October 2019 here in the capital Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga. I am delighted to be back here again since the last PRFP-8 in 2015.

First of all, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and all delegations to this meeting, I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Honourable Minister Poasi M. Tei, for presiding over this opening ceremony. It is indeed a great honour and privilege for all of us here.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC), Government of the Kingdom of Tonga, for hosting PRFP-12. I am truly grateful for the excellent arrangement and warm hospitality.

I would also like to thank the Department of Communications and the Arts, Australian Government, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Government of Japan, for the support to this forum through Extra Budgetary Contribution.

Distinguished delegates,

On 12 September 2019, while we were having the 16th APT Telecommunication/ICT Development Forum (ADF-16) in Cambodia, I am truly saddened upon hearing the news on the sudden passing of Honourable Samuela 'Akilisi Pōhiva, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga. On behalf of the APT, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincerest condolences and deepest sympathies to the Government and people of the Kingdom of Tonga as well as the family of the late Prime Minister.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Pacific is a very important sub-region for the APT. Realizing its unique challenges and difficulties, we have put effort and continuously provided assistances through various programmes. PRFP is one of the annual high-level meetings held to address specific needs of the region in the area of policy and regulation. For over a decade, PRFP has grown from its humble inception to become a true platform for exchange of information, experiences, and viewpoints on issues of relevance to the Pacific.

The programme of PRFP for this year has been designed in line with the five Strategic Pillars of the Strategic Plan of the APT for 2018-2020 considering its relevance to the unique need of the Pacific.

Apart from the Strategic Plan of the APT, the programmes of this PRFP also bring in the vision of “Co-creating Connected Digital Future in the Asia-Pacific.” as agreed by the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting in June in Singapore.

The programmes include the roundtable of high-level policy makers and regulators will lively discuss issues and trends in policy and regulation in the Pacific. There will be thematic sessions that capture broad topics including Digital Transformation, Digital Inclusion, Connectivity, Telecommunication Industry Issues, Cybersecurity, E-Application, and Disaster Management.

A closed session for policy makers and regulators will be for candid and in-depth discussion on emerging issues in the Pacific. This PRFP will be further enriched by a panel discussion on future outlook, which will provide the opportunity for the Pacific to voice out their concerns and stimulate the collaboration and possible initiatives on the way forward.

Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to mention that this year the APT celebrates the 40th Anniversary of its establishment. All work programmes of the APT in this year including the PRFP join the celebration.

The Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting in Singapore that I had mentioned earlier was one of the highlights of the celebration. Ministers from APT Member Countries and Associate Members gathered in Singapore on 25-26 June and adopted the Singapore Statement on Co-creating Connected Digital Future in the Asia-Pacific. The Singapore Statement provides strategic guidance and the pathways to the development of telecommunication/ICT in the Asia-Pacific region for the next five years. Next year, the new Strategic Plan of the APT for 2021-2023 will take the Singapore Statement as the guidelines of the plan.

I truly hope that the insights and information sharing from PRFP-12 will help resolve policy and regulation issues in your countries, be transformed into real practice, and finally contribute to the sustainable ICT development with safe and trusted environment in the Pacific as envisioned in the Singapore Statement. I humbly encourage your active participation to make the PRFP-12 a fruitful meeting. The APT Secretariat will remain at your disposal to do the needful should you have any request on the forum.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To conclude, I wish to extend my deepest appreciation once again to Honourable Minister Poasi M. Tei for being with us to inaugurate the forum today. To our host, Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC), Government of Tonga, I am very much impressed by the preparations, the generosity and support. I would also like to thank the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and speakers for the contribution to the Forum. Lastly, I would like to thank all participants for your presence here.

And on that note, I would like to end my address. I wish you all a lively and successful forum.

Thank you very much.

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