



Secretary General

**WELCOME ADDRESS**

**Ms Areewan Haorangsi**  
**Secretary General, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT)**

Honorable Siaosi Sovaleni, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications, Kingdom of Tonga,

Vicar General, Fr. Lutoviko Finau,

Mr. Shivnesh Prasad, Vice Chairman of the APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific,

Mr. Ioane Koroivuki, Regional Director, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Malo e laumalie and a very warm greeting to you all from the APT!

It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome all of you to the 8th APT Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific (PRFP-8) in this beautiful city of Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga.

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Honourable Siaosi Sovaleni, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) of the Kingdom of Tonga, for graciously agreeing to give the Inaugural Address despite your engagements and busy schedule. It is a great honour for us all.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation through the Deputy Prime Minister to the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga, in particular, the Ministry for Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications for hosting this Meeting and for the excellent cooperation from the Tongan officials. We are also impressed on the warm hospitality extended to us since our arrival.

I would also like to thank the Department of Communications, Government of Australia, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Government of Japan, for their financial support for this Meeting.

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the first PRFP meeting after I have taken office as the new Secretary General of the APT since 9th February this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank APT Members for electing me as Secretary General of the APT and placing the trust in me.

I would like to emphasize my intention and commitment to make the APT a community which is accountable and approachable for all by ensuring transparent governance and work efficiency while mobilizing resources and motivating people inside and outside the organization.

I believe that through our extended promotion and partnership and especially our engagement with all relevant stakeholders, the APT will gain more visibility and recognition in the area of ICT/ Telecommunications. I wish to gain your full cooperation to fulfill my objectives and goals as Secretary General of the APT.

Distinguished Delegates,

Unfortunately, Mr. Charles Punaha, the first Chairman of the PRFP who had been elected at the PRFP-7 last year at Nadi, Fiji, is unable to be with us here. However, I would like to congratulate the first Vice Chairman of the PRFP, Mr. Shivnesh Prasad who was also elected at the 7th PRFP who will be the Acting Chairman for this meeting.

Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the first PRFP meeting since the APT held the Ministerial Meeting in Brunei Darussalam last September. The PRFP-7 last year had provided initiatives to be the input for the preparation of the Ministerial Meeting. This year, one important element of the discussions will be the outcomes of the Ministerial Meeting and how the members of APT can work together to achieve the vision of “Building a Smart Digital Economy through ICT” as agreed by the Ministers.

An important part of achieving that vision is the development of ICT in the Small Island Developing States of the Pacific. The PRFP is the principal Forum in which to discuss the policy and regulatory issues and to share information and best practices that will help support ICT development and economic prosperity in the Pacific.

The PRFP is now in its 8th meeting and the APT is committed to supporting the Pacific through this Forum and through development projects such as the E-Disaster Communication Network project that was completed here in Tonga in 2011 and 2012; and the project now planned for Vanuatu to assist it in the recovery of ICT infrastructure. I would like to take this opportunity to communicate our sincere sympathies and express our continuing support for Vanuatu following the devastation of Cyclone Pam earlier this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The PRFP recognizes that the policy and regulatory issues faced by the Pacific are unique and require a Forum devoted to their consideration and to the advancement of solutions that best support the needs of the Pacific. Those issues include the effective use of ICT in disaster management, the strengthening of cybersecurity in the region, the role of ICT in sustainable economic development and preparations for the World Radiocommunication Conference to be held in Geneva in November later this year.

This year’s programme will include a number of very interesting presentations from Members, ICT experts and organisations at the cutting edge of communications technology. There will be a closed regulator’s session tomorrow. The Forum will conclude with a panel

discussion to summarise the steps ahead towards achieving the vision of the Brunei Darussalam Statement and the Strategic Plan for the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity for the period 2015-2017 that had been adopted by the 13th Session of the General Assembly for the APT held in Yangon, Republic of the Union of Myanmar last November.

Instead of having 3-day meeting, the PRFP-8 will be from today until 17 June morning session in order to provide more time for the Pacific ICT Officials' Meeting to prepare for the Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting on Friday. Therefore, this Meeting will also formulate inputs to the Pacific ICT Officials' Meeting and Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting.

Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude, allow me once again to express my gratitude to the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications, the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga for hosting this important meeting.

Finally, on behalf of the APT Secretariat, I assure you that we will do our best to provide support to all participants that require assistance during the meeting. Please do not hesitate to ask us for any assistance that you may need.

I wish you all a successful meeting and enjoy your stay in Tonga.

Thank you.