



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

FORUM INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES MINISTERIAL MEETING

30 March 2006

Wellington, New Zealand

Wellington Declaration

We, the representatives of the Countries of the Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Wellington, New Zealand:

Noting that the *Pacific Plan* as endorsed by the Leaders' Meeting in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea in October 2005 provides a framework for strengthening regional cooperation and integration between Forum countries;

Recognising that the Leaders have requested that a regional Digital Strategy be developed as an essential component of the Pacific Plan, with a view to improving the uptake and use of information and communication technologies in the region;

Recalling that Pacific Islands Forum Communications Ministers 2002 meeting requested that a Pacific ICT survey 2002 be conducted; and

Noting that the survey identified a range of priorities including:

- Human resource development (including training, and the establishment of systems to assist HRD);
- Price reductions of telecommunications services;
- USOs/telecommunications services (telephone and Internet) to outer islands/outer lying areas;
- ICTs in education – ensuring school students have access to computers and the necessary teaching methods;
- Infrastructure development;
- Improved networked economies through e-government and e-commerce; and
- Development of policy and regulatory frameworks.

Declare that:

1. We are committed to the advancement of our countries through pursuing the four Forum goals of economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security;
2. We recognise that information and communication technologies (ICTs), while not an end in themselves, have a key role as a basis for economic development, while also promoting and enhancing social cohesion, cultural enrichment and environmental conservation;
3. While the Pacific region faces a number of obstacles to the effective deployment of communications and other infrastructure, we acknowledge that the region also stands to benefit enormously from the effective use of ICTs;
4. Therefore we pledge to work together to support the advancement of Forum countries through improved deployment and use of ICTs in our societies.

Accordingly, ***we declare our intention that:***

The Digital Strategy be further endorsed by the Communications Ministers. Ministers considered the proposed Digital Strategy Roadmap and agreed to form a taskforce to consider implementation of key roadmap components through using a stepladder approach to ICT development.

The focus in the first year be:

- a. The taskforce should develop qualitative and quantitative indicators which will assist with establishing each country's progress towards agreed goals.
- b. Countries are encouraged to provide data and to participate in a stock-take to determine the e-readiness of their country, which would include assessment of infrastructure, services, platforms and user capacity and costs.
- c. Countries are encouraged to develop or refine their ICT Policies with particular emphasis on increasing stakeholder engagement and provide a copy of their ICT Policy to the Forum which will arrange them to be put up on the web for use by other countries.
- d. Countries are encouraged also to provide at least e-mail capacity to Government agencies and a basic web site to gain experience in e-government.
- e. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat approach the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other agencies such as ICANN with a view to provision of regulatory and policy capacity development.

- f. The taskforce investigate options and make recommendations to governments for a regional approach to the purchase of bulk lease or purchase arrangements for satellite capacity to increase affordability of access by remote communities.

- g. Communication Ministers recognise that greater involvement in the global information society brings both economic and social benefits and also policy and regulatory challenges. Strong national ICT policy and legislative frameworks and effective enforcement regimes are crucial to protect our citizens, our networks and our reputation from spam and other e-security threats. We recognise that these are global concerns and that regional cooperation is also necessary to strengthen capacity to deal with spam and wider Internet security concerns. We agree to develop complementary anti-spam policies and legislation at the national level and cooperate regionally to combat the growing problem of spam.

That a meeting of ICT/Communications Ministers be convened in the first half of 2007 to review progress on the Digital Strategy and to guide further developments of the Roadmap and Ladder to meet short term goals and develop long terms goals for the region.

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