



**PACIFIC INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE 2023**

Pacific ICT Ministerial Declaration 2023

LAGATOI DECLARATION ON DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE PACIFIC

Hereafter to be referred to as 'The Lagatoi Declaration'

Underscoring the need to be united in our shared aspiration for a well-connected, prosperous and secure region, responsible Ministers met on 28 August 2023, in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, to consider and discuss significant regional ICT matters, in particular the state of play, challenges, success stories, lessons learnt, opportunities and pathways to advance the use of ICT and digital transformation in the Pacific, and to strengthen regional cooperation, and representation to address ICT and digital transformation development needs, and to build an integrated, secure and inclusive digital Pacific.

We, the Pacific Ministers for Information and Communications Technology:

Acknowledging the diverse stages of ICT and digital transformation development across the Pacific;

Aware of the existing connectivity gaps, the vulnerability of the Pacific due to cyber and environmental threats and the need to determine and fortify critical infrastructure including critical information infrastructure;

Emphasising the need to enhance our people's capacity and capability;

Noting the previous Pacific ICT Ministers Meeting in 2015 and the Pacific Regional ICT Strategic Action Plan for 2016 to 2020;

Commending the activities and initiatives led by individual Pacific Island Countries and Territories, including through regional cooperation and support of development partners, to bridge the digital divide in the Pacific;

Recalling the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, related declarations, and Pacific Island Forum (PIF) Leaders' commitment for a well-connected region that ensures inclusive, accessible secure and affordable ICT infrastructure and services;

Reaffirming our commitment to the International Telecommunication Union Connect 2030 Agenda and the 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including the Decade of Action for the United Nations and Small Islands Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway;

Reaffirming our commitment to the Boe Declaration on Regional Security emphasising cybersecurity as a component of strengthening regional security and combating cybercrime;

Emphasising the critical role, importance and opportunities presented by the use of ICTs and digital transformation to the Pacific Island Countries and Territories as primary enablers' of socio-economic development, inclusive governance and sustainable livelihood in a fast-changing world;

Calling for increased regional solidarity and commitment to address regional challenges and threats, to advance our objectives at all levels, and to leverage contributions by stakeholders through ICT and digital transformation;

In support of the achievement and delivery of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' vision, as outlined in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, we declare to:

(i) focus on the following six priority areas;

1. *Digital Transformation*

Digital transformation serves as a catalyst for social and economic empowerment and has far-reaching benefits to productivity, employment, skills, economic growth, trade, well-being and environmental sustainability.

We commit to creating an enabling environment and promoting universal and affordable access to connectivity for all to accelerate Digital Transformation.

2. *Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship*

The adoption of digital online services will create value for individuals and businesses in the Pacific, who can benefit from access to information, tools to improve production and improved access to ICTs and digital government services, including health and education.

We commit to promote digital government strategies, policies and programs to enable digital transformation of both public and private sectors, including micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the Pacific.

We commit to enable MSMEs to take full advantage of emerging technologies and facilitate their effective and meaningful access to digital platforms, as this will help enhance their competitiveness in an increasingly digitally connected world, facilitate their further integration into global value chains and support job creation.

3. *Digital Infrastructure*

Digital infrastructure underpins the delivery of digital services. Rolling out widespread, modern, and resilient infrastructure with sufficient capacity is key to development of the ICT sector in the Pacific.

We commit to increase focus on the availability and quality of telecommunication networks and supportive infrastructure.

We aim to increase coverage and penetration rates of high-speed meaningful broadband connectivity in order to accelerate the efforts to connect individuals and businesses in the Pacific.

4. *Digital Security and Trust*

The take-up of digital services can be promoted by providing a safe and secure digital environment. A key step in developing a thriving ICT ecosystem is to provide individuals and businesses in the Pacific with the confidence they need to navigate digital and/or online spaces.

We commit to establish trusted and secured systems which help create a stable environment supported by the development of conducive policy and regulatory frameworks, to facilitate the use of digital services.

5. *Digital Capacity Building and Skills Development*

For the Pacific to fully benefit from digital transformation and to develop a resilient ICT ecosystem, the support of a skilled ICT workforce and the promotion of necessary digital literacy and culturally sensitive user-protection is required.

We aim to provide ICT technical skillsets including dedicated training to targeted segments of the population to increase demand for digital services and grow the digital economy, develop digital literacy programs for all to participate in the digital economy.

We aim to promote capacity building efforts that go beyond technical skills, fostering an understanding of how people's behavior and cultural norms interact with technology.

6. *Regional Cooperation and Representation*

Successful digital transformation requires strong cross-border cooperation among Pacific Island Countries and Territories, and effective multi-stakeholder cooperation with United Nations agencies and other relevant global, regional and sub-regional fora, regional organisations, private sector, technical community, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

We intend to adopt a unified approach to set harmonised policy and regulatory frameworks; address common challenges; find solutions; mobilise resources more efficiently and enhance investment; and ensure shared accountability, commitment and values by Pacific Islands Forum Members.

- (ii) Support the work of the various existing regional governance structures that coordinate and cooperate on the development of ICT in the Pacific; and
- (iii) Call on the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and other development partners to strengthen understanding of, and engagement and presence in, the Pacific region, and invite those partners to scale up cooperation in resource mobilisation to support Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

Going Forward

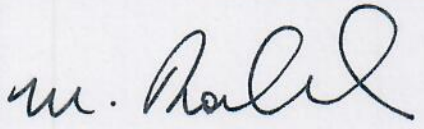
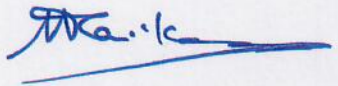




With this Declaration today, we re-affirm our ongoing commitment to our leaders' vision for a well-connected Pacific region through digital infrastructure and services. A new window of opportunity is opening before us. The digital technologies, underpinned by resilient digital infrastructure, services and capabilities, hold out the promise of yielding a better future for the Pacific. We are determined to work together in the spirit of a 'Smart Pacific, One Voice – Creating a Digital Future Together for the Pacific' and advance our common goals to promote inclusiveness, equality and security in a digitally connected era.


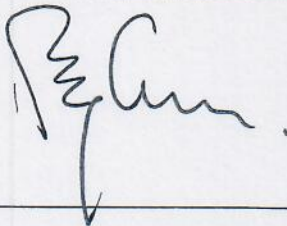

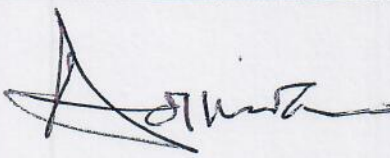
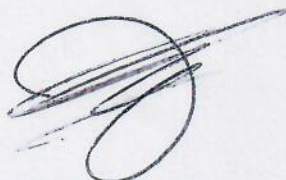
We resolve to strengthen the various existing regional governance structures that coordinate and cooperate on the development of ICT in the Pacific, including the dedicated Pacific ICT Ministerial Dialogue.

We instruct the Senior Officials to develop a Pacific ICT and Digital Transformation Action Plan, supported by a dedicated Secretariat. The Action Plan will be reviewed at the next Pacific ICT Ministerial Dialogue in 2025 to monitor progress and implementation.

This Declaration is made with respect to the jurisdiction of the respective signatory governments.

Endorsed by Pacific Ministers for Information and Communications Technologies at the Pacific ICT Ministerial Dialogue 2023, on 28 August 2023, APEC Haus, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea:

NO.	PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM MEMBERSHIP	NAME AND TITLE	SIGNATURE
1	Australia	Hon. Michelle Rowland MP Minister for Communications	
2	Fiji	Hon. Manoa Seru Nakasabaria Kamikamica MP Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, SMEs and Communications	
3	Kiribati	Mr. Tabotabo Auatabu Chief Legal and Licensing Officer	
4	New Caledonia	Hon. Vaimu'a Muliava MP Minister for Digital Transformation, Technological Innovation, Relations with French territories in the Pacific, the Public Service, and the Modernisation of Public Action Government	
5	New Zealand	Mr. Steve Hamilton Acting New Zealand High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	
6	Niue	Hon. Ricky Makani MP Member Assisting Minister for Finance & Infrastructure	
7	Palau	Mr. Stalin Pedro Director, Bureau of Communications, Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Industries	

8	Papua New Guinea	Hon. Timothy Masiu MP Minister for Information and Communications Technology	
9	Marshall Islands	Hon. Kessai H. Note MP Minister for Transportation, Communications & Information Technology	
10	Samoa	Hon. Toelupe Poumulinuku Onesemo MP Minister for Communication and Information Technology	
11	Solomon Islands	Hon. Ped Shanel Agovaka MP Minister for Communication and Aviation	
12	Tonga	Mr. Anitelu 'Andrew' Toimoana Director of Digital Transformation, Prime Minister's Office	
13	Vanuatu	Mr. John Jack Deputy Chief Information Officer and Current Chair of PRFP, Office of the Government Chief Information Officer	
14	Cook Islands	Mr. Tingika Elikana Associate Minister for ICT Member of the Parliament	
15	Federated States of Micronesia		
16	Tuvalu	Hon. Panapasi Nelesone Minister for Justice, Communication and Foreign Affairs	