A Report on the Inaugural PACIFIC INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

"Developing the Future Together"

NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA

9 - 10 APRIL 2011
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Our Place in the World – Asia Pacific
United Nations Categorisation for New York based Member States – voting power

• Regional groupings and make-up at the UN for New York based member States differ from the regional makeup that we are familiar with in our respective regions.

• As at 16th June, 2011, the UN is recorded to have 192 members.

• **Asian Group:**
  - 53 voting members and 11 of these votes are from Pacific Island Countries. The 53 voting members include Arab States and Asian countries excluding Australia and New Zealand. Kiribati is a UN member State but it is not yet a formal member of a regional group, even though they have indicated an intention to join the Asian Group.
  - 28% of the UN voting bloc. Within the Asian Group, the Pacific Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) represent 21% of votes (Fiji, Samoa, FSM, RMI, Nauru, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga, Palau, Tuvalu).

• The Pacific is a strong bloc within the Asian Group and we are increasingly lobbied as a group for votes by countries who put forward candidates or seek support at elections.

• Australia and New Zealand are part of the “Western European and Others Group” (WEOG) when it comes to voting and regional grouping at the UN.
The Pacific in a Heart beat...

**Nation States and Territories**
- Asia is the largest continent in the world and is diverse
- The Pacific Region - **22 countries and territories**
  - American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, New Zealand, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna
  
  plus France and United States of America who control territories and protectorates.
- Of these **16 are independent nation states**.

**Population**
- Population sizes in some of the Pacific are below 1 million, ranging from as low as 1,170 to 839,324 (Source: UNFPA Pacific Office)
- Papua New Guinea has about 8 million people, New Zealand : 4.29million (Source: CIA World Fact Book 2011), Australia has 21.77 million (Source: 2011 Index Mundi)
Birth of the Pacific Regional IGF

• The diversity of Asia Pacific and the unique and shared challenges demanded the need for a PriGF which feeds into the APrIGF;
• The PriGF was organised by the Pacific Internet Partnership Incorporated;
• Whilst there have been numerous Pan Pacific ICT related events, the utilisation of the multi-stakeholder approach to dialogue was absent;
• PriGF in Noumea - 9th - 10th April, 2011 which was held at back to back with the ICT, Energy and Infrastructure Ministers Meeting (3rd -8th April, 2011) and the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association Annual Meeting (12th -17th April, 2011).
• 86 participants came from all across the Pacific to dialogue on internet governance issues in the Pacific in what was truly a multistakeholder forum;
• SPC which holds the mandate under the Pacific Plan to execute the Digital Strategy fully endorsed and welcomed the PriGF;
• Stakeholders also acknowledged and welcomed the PriGF.
The Need for Cooperation

The ITU Secretary General, the Chair of ICANN, the Director General of APNIC, the Director General of the SPC and closing remarks from the Pacific IGF Chair all focused on the need for cooperation – globally, regionally and locally.

“Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.”

Ryunosuke Satoro
Summary of Thematic Discussions

- **Setting Scene and providing a platform**
  - Multi-stakeholder approach to dialogue;
  - Internet as an enabler for development.

- **Bridging the Digital Divide**
  - Internet access for all
  - Challenges and Strategies

- **Public Policy**
  - Links between local, national, regional and global strategies;
  - The need to identify and address bottlenecks;
  - The need to have grassroots based, multi-stakeholder approach to devising policy and strategies to ensure relevance

- **Critical Internet Infrastructure**
  - Transition from IPv4 to IPv6;
  - DNSSEC;
  - Role of stakeholders;
Cont..Summary of Thematic Discussions

• **Emerging Issues**
  – Citizen Journalism;
  – Digital Observatories;
  – E-waste in the Pacific;
  – Critical Information Infrastructure Protection;
  – Regulatory challenges and impact on internet accessibility;
  – Civil Society collaboration on internet governance;
  – Internet to be accessible in Pacific languages;
  – Discussion on Internet Rights;
  – The need for representation at the global IGF forum.
Key Synergies formed

• Relationships were forged as stakeholders gathered around the table to discuss issues affecting them;

• MoU’s were signed between:-
  – SPC and NetSafe; and between
  – SPC and APNIC
Challenges

Representation to Internet Governance Forums

• **High Transportation Costs** in the Pacific make it next to impossible to attend regional or global forums;
• **Low prioritisation** as Governments and private sector have yet to be convinced that internet governance affects us all.
Observations and inferences

Lack of Understanding within countries of the issues

• General lack of understanding on how things are connected and how internet governance affects development amongst policy makers;

• The lack of political will within the countries to address the problem; despite commitments made by Ministers at the ICT Ministers Meeting and Digital Strategy;

• The current status of internet governance in the Pacific reflects this challenges as countries struggle to deal with huge internet costs and access;

• The need for capacity building for governments, private sector and all who are involved in the process within the Pacific.
Observations and inferences

Cohesion in Strategies and Policies

• Absence of statistics that are relevant for good policy making; Pacific Regional Telecommunications & ICT Resource Centre is currently being set up
• Regulatory challenges – building capacity within stakeholders to understand the issues;
• Inconsistent policies and laws – it is hoped that the multi-stakeholder process will help address these challenges;
• The need to be inclusive in strategy, planning, research and policy processes on all levels (regional, national etc) collaborative using the multi-stakeholder process
Strengths

The Pacific’s greatest strength is its people and strong sense of community and social responsibility;

• SPC and ITU have been working on equipping governments and policy makers to address the problems;