

PICISOC FELLOW REPORT- Mele Tavake (TONGA)

DAY 1 Session 1: Opening Ceremony and Welcoming Remarks

- **Traditional Cultural Welcome:** The event started with a New Zealand cultural welcome, acknowledging indigenous traditions and the land's people.
- **Chair of PICISOC:** Stressed the importance of collaboration in addressing internet challenges across the Pacific, urging the Pacific community not to marginalize themselves due to limited resources.
- **Hon. Luamanuvao:** Emphasized respect, the role of migration in eroding Pacific knowledge, and the need for collective solutions.
- **InternetNZ Representative:** Highlighted the lack of indigenous voices in internet governance, advocating for the protection of traditional knowledge and addressing online harm.
- **CEO of auDA:** Spoke about multi-stakeholder collaboration, both locally and globally, as key to solving digital challenges.
- **APNIC Representative:** Acknowledged the geographical challenges of the Pacific and the need to blend traditional respect with modern advancements.
- **UNESCO Representatives:** Emphasized the internet's role in disaster response and highlighted projects aimed at enhancing digital skills across Pacific nations.

- ❖ *The opening session set the tone for the forum, focusing on unity and the need to strengthen collaboration in addressing the unique internet-related challenges faced by Pacific communities. Speakers underscored the importance of integrating traditional knowledge with modern technology while ensuring that the voices of indigenous people are heard in global internet governance conversations.*
- ❖ *I was very happy to meet stakeholders from all these relevant organizations to build a stronger network for when I return home with the work that I do.*



Session 2: Civil Society and the Role of the Internet

- **Dr. Rieko Hayakwawa:** Highlighted the Pacific Islands' role in global ICT development, emphasizing collective advocacy for the security and development of island nations.
- **Dr. Ellen Strickland:** Focused on inclusivity in internet use, stressing the importance of civil society in understanding the cultural context of technology for community empowerment.



- **Ian Thompson:** Shared Pacific digital strategy projects like rural connectivity and "One Laptop Project," discussing lessons learned from past project challenges.

- **Keith Davidson:** Pointed out successes, such as reduced internet access costs through deregulation, but also raised concerns about funding for internet governance and digital education.

- ❖ *This session explored the role of civil society in ensuring the internet is inclusive and tailored to the cultural and community needs of the Pacific. It emphasized the importance of both local and global collaboration in digital projects and the role of technology in empowering Pacific communities.*

- ❖ *Working for a NGO I was very much interested in learning from these CSO's and to see how much more we can get funds to help with our work, even more is how can we do more projects or collaborate with bigger organisations and what they do.*

Session 3: Digital Transformation Trends in the Pacific

- **Mele Tavake (TWICT):** Described efforts to empower women in Tonga through ICT, focusing on capacity building and digital inclusion. TWICT's future plans include expanding digital literacy programs across other islands.
- **Nancy Kanasa (PNG):** Discussed the absence of a national data governance policy in Papua New Guinea and efforts to develop a framework for effective data management and stewardship within government agencies.



- ❖ *This session delved into how digital transformation is progressing in the Pacific, particularly through capacity building and data governance. Women's empowerment through technology, as demonstrated by TWICT, is crucial to ensuring inclusivity in the digital economy. Additionally, the efforts to develop data governance frameworks signal the Pacific's growing awareness of data security and management in the public sector.*
- ❖ *I was nervous as this was much very first time to present at an international forum. But I was excited and delighted to present knowing that my fellow Board members from TWICT were in the room to support. I was great exposure and learning experience for myself not only for public speaking but for the experience of sharing to other fellow pacific islanders and experts in the room.*

Session 4: China IGF Overview

- **Dr. GUO Feng:** Explained that the China IGF was founded as a platform for internet governance discussions, promoting multi stakeholder participation. It focuses on local IG issues such as child online protection, digital inclusion, and data governance. It also contributes to international forums like the UN IGF.
- ❖ *The session provided insights into how China is actively participating in global internet governance through its IGF. By emphasizing multi stakeholders and focusing on pressing digital issues, China aims to contribute to global internet governance dialogues while addressing its own regulatory environment.*

Session 5: ccTLDs and Universal Acceptance

- **auDA Representative:** Discussed the benefits of using country code top-level domains (ccTLDs) to support local economies and explained the importance of Universal Acceptance (UA) to ensure that all domain names and email addresses are supported globally.
- **ICANN Universal Acceptance:** Detailed the technical challenges of ensuring that all email systems and applications fully support internationalized domain names and email addresses.
- ❖ *This technical session focused on how ccTLDs can benefit local economies and the global efforts to achieve Universal Acceptance of domain names and email addresses. Universal Acceptance ensures that all users, regardless of language or script, can access and use internet resources, making the internet more inclusive.*
- ❖ *I was very much interested to learn more on ccTLDs as this is something we have yet to focus and dwell on at TWICT.*

Conclusion of Day 1:

- Day 1 of the Pacific Internet Chapter Forum highlighted the key challenges and opportunities for digital inclusion and internet governance in the Pacific. The sessions covered a broad range of topics, including collaboration among Pacific nations, inclusivity, digital transformation, and technical advancements. The overarching theme was the importance of multi stakeholder collaboration and integrating traditional knowledge with modern internet governance efforts to build a stronger, more inclusive digital future for the Pacific region.



DAY 2:- Cybersecurity and Business Continuity

- As part of Tonga Women in ICT (TWICT), I attended Session 5, which focused on building internet resilience through community cyber security awareness and ensuring business continuity during disasters. Below is a summary of key points and insights from the speakers.

Speaker: Suetena Faatuuala Loia

Topic: Building Internet Resilience through Community Cybersecurity Awareness

Importance of Internet Resilience:

- The internet has become an integral part of our lives, and without it, access to essential information is disrupted. In the Pacific, this is particularly critical as the region is increasingly becoming a target for cyber-attacks.

Key Cybersecurity Threats:

The discussion covered common threats such as:

- Phishing
- Ransomware
- Malware
- Social engineering
- Power outages
- Unstable internet

These issues pose significant risks to our infrastructure and access to information.

Cybersecurity Hygiene:

- ❖ *Loia emphasized basic cybersecurity practices that are essential in protecting personal and organizational data:*

Strong passwords

- Two-factor authentication (2FA), Multi-factor authentication (MFA), Single Sign-On (SSO)
- Software updates
- Phishing awareness
- Safe browsing habits



- Community Collaboration:

- ❖ *In the Pacific, there's a strong culture of sharing, but this must be extended to cybersecurity. Loia proposed the establishment of digital community hubs to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration between schools, businesses, and organizations.*

Cybersecurity Education:

- ❖ Schools and businesses need to work together to build a safe and secure digital environment. This includes fostering cybersecurity awareness through both online and offline forums, with the support of government and private sectors.

Speaker: Ashutosh A. Maharaj

Topic: Effective Business Continuity through Business Continuity Planning (BCP)

Business Continuity Planning (BCP):

- ❖ Maharaj discussed the importance of having a strategy in place to ensure that businesses can continue operations during and after a disaster. He identified the key components of BCP:

- Risk Assessment
- Business Impact Analysis (BIA)
- Strategy Development
- Plan Implementation and Testing
- Role of ICT in BCP:



ICT plays a critical role in enabling communication, supporting remote access, and automating recovery processes during disruptions.

Strategies for Continuity:

Key strategies for ensuring business continuity include:

Data Backup (cloud-based solutions)

Cyber security measures (to protect systems from cyber-attacks)

Challenges:

A notable challenge discussed was the gap between technical IT solutions and the final decision-making processes, which are often delayed by non-technical stakeholders.

Additional Insights

GOOGLE CABLE to Fiji and GOOGLE DATA CENTER:

This infrastructure development has significant potential to improve connectivity and data accessibility in the Pacific region.

Conclusion DAY 2

- ❖ This session highlighted the critical importance of cybersecurity awareness and business continuity planning. As a representative of TWICT, I believe that building community resilience through education, fostering public-private collaborations, and adopting cloud-based solutions are key to ensuring digital safety and operational continuity in Tonga and the Pacific.
- ❖ I wish to build my capacity in Cyber Security and this is definitely one of the ways for this.

TWICT can play a leading role in promoting these cyber security practices and supporting local businesses in developing their BCP strategies to safeguard against disasters and cyber threats



17th September 2024

PacIGF Fellowship Program

The PacIGF Fellowship Program is a great initiative and opportunity that empowers the selected fellows from the Internet community, particularly from developing states, to enhance their skills and expertise in Internet governance, technical matters and policy development. The fellowship also actively promotes the participation of women and under-represented groups in PacIGF conferences and activities, fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment.

As a new fellow of the Program, my experience has been deeply enriching. The sessions have been a platform for our professional growth, facilitated valuable networking, and opened up unique opportunities for us to contribute to developing the Internet in our respective communities and institutions. It has also been an excellent forum to share my experiences and expertise in areas associated with Internet Governance.

Key benefits for fellows:

1. Exposure to global expertise whereby fellows gain invaluable insights from prominent professionals across the world, whether in person or online to actively contribute to discussions on emerging trends shaping the global Internet ecosystem.
2. The fellowship program is designed to equip participants with skills of capacity building and development through technical knowledge and expertise required to navigate the complex landscape of Internet infrastructure and governance.
3. It brought together a diverse group of individuals, fostering networking and collaboration among peers across the Asia Pacific region. This valuable aspect of the program has also allowed me to connect with professionals who share similar interests and challenges, establishing relationships that will extend beyond the event. The connections I have made through the Fellowship have opened up new avenues for potential collaborations and partnerships, which will undoubtedly drive regional Internet development.
4. It also provides platform for female professionals in the industry to voice their perspectives, engage in policy discussions, and develop their leadership skills. This commitment to inclusivity not only enriched my own fellowship experience but also contributed to the creation of a more diverse and collaborative Internet community. Through panel discussions, I gained deeper insights the needs of our Pacific community in diverse areas related to Internet.

Impact on the Communities:

1. I have actively shared the skills and insights I gained with my colleagues and local stakeholders. Through workshops, presentations, and informal knowledge-sharing sessions, I have been able to educate others and my Right to Information team at USP on the latest developments in Internet governance and encourage more informed participation in policy discussions.
2. By building capacity through the Fellowship, I and other fellows have become better positioned to contribute to the development of Internet infrastructure in our home countries and institutions. The program has helped us become more engaged in policy-making processes and advocate for policies that promote greater Internet accessibility and sustainability in developing economies.

3. It has contributed to my long-term aspirations for the region by providing me with more tools and networks in order to stay updated on global Internet governance trends, but also devise ways to help our people in the region. In particular, I am very much interested in adding a youth chapter to PacIGF, hence creating succession and development plans for the sustainability and growth of PacIGF.

Conclusion

The Fellowship Program has been a great opportunity to expand my expertise, enhance my professional networks, and actively contribute to the development of the Internet in our respective regions. I am confident that we will continue to work towards the shared goal of a more connected and inclusive Internet ecosystem.

Sincerely



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Reporting on the PACIFIC Internet Governance Forum 2024

September 2024

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About

This report summarizes the key discussions and insights from the PACIFIC Internet Governance Forum (PacIGF) 2024, held in Wellington, NZ, from September 2nd to 3rd. The forum brought together stakeholders from across the Pacific to discuss critical issues related to internet governance, digital transformation, and the future of the internet in the region.

Day 1: Connecting Islands, Interconnecting Communities

The forum commenced with a powerful opening address by Professor Luamanuvao Dame Winnie Laban, emphasizing the importance of "connecting our islands, interconnecting communities." This theme resonated throughout the day, highlighting the need to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to the internet's benefits for all Pacific people.

Session 1: Opening Plenary - The Pacific's Voice in Global Internet Governance

The opening plenary set the stage for the forum's discussions, focusing on the Pacific's role in shaping global internet governance. Key takeaways included:

- **Recognizing the Pacific's Journey:** Dr. Rieko Hayakawa highlighted the significant strides Pacific Island Countries have made in internet development, emphasizing their impact on bridging the digital divide.
- **Collective Action and Collaboration:** InternetNZ stressed the need for collective action and collaboration among Pacific nations to amplify their voice in international forums like the UN, ITU, and ICANN.
- **Protecting Pacific Values and Interests:** Concerns were raised about protecting Pacific languages, ancestral knowledge, and cultural identity in the digital age, particularly in the face of emerging technologies like AI.
- **Multi Stakeholder Engagement:** The importance of multi stakeholder engagement, involving governments, civil society, the private sector, and technical experts, was emphasized as crucial for inclusive internet governance.

Session 2: Round Table Discussion - Reflections from Pacific IGF Pioneers

This session provided valuable historical context and insights from Pacific IGF pioneers, reflecting on the evolution of internet governance in the region. Key points included:

- **Learning from the Past, Shaping the Future:** Dr. Hellen Strickland emphasized the need to learn from past experiences to strategically plan for the future, ensuring that internet development aligns with Pacific cultures and community needs.
- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** Ian Thompson highlighted the progress made in connecting rural communities through initiatives like the Rural Internet Connectivity Project. However, he stressed the importance of equitable distribution of benefits and addressing challenges like power supply in remote areas.

- **Transparency and Evaluation:** The need for greater transparency in ICT project implementation and evaluation was emphasized to ensure accountability and maximize impact.
- **Prioritizing Digital Transformation:** The session underscored the need to prioritize digital transformation, not just technological adoption, to fully leverage the internet's potential for societal development.

Session 3: Digital Transformation Trends in the Pacific Islands

This session focused on the latest trends in digital transformation across the Pacific, highlighting both opportunities and challenges. Key takeaways included:

- **Digital Inclusion and Capacity Building:** The importance of digital inclusion and capacity building, particularly for women and marginalized communities, was emphasized. Solomon Island Women in ICT shared their experiences and advocated for mentorship programs to support women in tech.
- **Data Governance:** Nancy Kanasa presented a data governance assessment report, emphasizing the need for robust data protection frameworks and policies to ensure responsible data use and protect privacy.

Session 4: Artificial Intelligence - Balancing Potential with Ethical Considerations

This session delved into the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) while acknowledging the ethical considerations and potential risks. Key points included:

- **The EU's Approach to AI Regulation:** The European Center for Not-For-Profit Law Stichting presented an overview of the EU Artificial Intelligence Act, highlighting its risk-based approach and efforts to balance innovation with fundamental rights protection.
- **AI in Education:** Fiji National University and the University of the South Pacific discussed the potential of AI in education, particularly in personalized learning and adaptive learning platforms.
- **Addressing Ethical Challenges:** Concerns were raised about academic integrity, transparency, accountability, and the potential impact of AI on employment. The need for ethical guidelines and frameworks to guide AI development and deployment was emphasized.

Session 5: Internet Resources in the Pacific Islands - Maximizing Local Presence

This session focused on maximizing the use of internet resources to support local businesses and communities in the Pacific. Key takeaways included:

- **Promoting Local ccTLDs:** Bruce from aUDA advocated for promoting the use of local country code top-level domains (ccTLDs) to support local businesses, enhance consumer trust, and strengthen the local digital economy.
- **Ensuring Universal Acceptance (UA):** Chapica from ICANN provided insights into Universal Acceptance (UA), emphasizing the importance of ensuring that all domain names and email addresses function seamlessly across devices and applications.

- **Building Capacity and Confidence:** The session highlighted the need to build capacity and confidence among local communities in utilizing internet resources effectively, including leveraging AI-powered tools for website creation and online presence.

Day 2: Deep Dive into Critical Issues

Day 2 of the forum featured in-depth discussions on critical issues related to internet governance, digital rights, and the future of the internet in the Pacific.

Session 6a: Technology in Enhancing Access to Information

This session explored the role of technology in promoting access to information and empowering citizens. Key takeaways included:

- **Leveraging the Right to Information (RTI):** Dr. Bibhya Sharma highlighted the importance of the Right to Information (RTI) as a tool for transparency and accountability. She shared success stories of using RTI tools, like the RTI Pacific App, to empower communities and improve access to information.
- **Addressing Digital Divide Challenges:** Elizabetha discussed the challenges posed by the digital divide in accessing information, including limited broadband connectivity, the affordability of devices, and the need for digital literacy programs.

Session 6b: Internet Resilience - Safeguarding Critical Infrastructure

This session focused on strengthening internet resilience in the Pacific, particularly in the face of natural disasters and cyber threats. Key points included:

- **Community Cybersecurity Awareness:** Suetena Faatuuala Loia emphasized the importance of community-based cybersecurity awareness programs to protect individuals and communities from cyber threats.
- **Business Continuity Planning:** Ashutosh A Maharaj highlighted the crucial role of effective business continuity planning and disaster recovery plans (DRP) in minimizing disruptions and ensuring business resilience.

Session 7: Group Discussions - Charting the Path Forward

The forum concluded with interactive group discussions, allowing participants to delve deeper into specific areas of interest and formulate recommendations for action. The discussions centered around:

- **Digital Infrastructure Development:** Exploring strategies to expand and improve digital infrastructure, including broadband connectivity, internet exchange points (IXPs), and submarine cable infrastructure.
- **Cybersecurity and Data Protection:** Discussing best practices, policies, and regional cooperation mechanisms to strengthen cybersecurity posture and protect personal data.

- **Digital Inclusion and Capacity Building:** Identifying strategies to bridge the digital divide, promote digital literacy, and empower marginalized communities through technology access and skills development.
- **Climate Resilience and Disaster Management:** Exploring the role of ICT in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, including early warning systems, communication infrastructure, and data-driven decision-making.
- **Policy and Regulatory Frameworks:** Discussing the need for harmonized and future-proof policies and regulations that foster innovation, protect digital rights, and promote a trusted and secure online environment.
- **AI, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship:** Exploring the potential of AI and emerging technologies to drive innovation, economic growth, and social development in the Pacific.

UNESCO Session

The forum also featured a dedicated session by UNESCO, highlighting their work in assessing internet development in the Pacific and promoting digital inclusion. Key takeaways included:

- **National Reports on Internet Development:** UNESCO presented findings from their national reports on internet development in five Pacific countries, providing insights into progress, challenges, and recommendations for action.
- **Promoting Open and Inclusive Internet:** UNESCO emphasized the importance of an open, inclusive, and accessible internet for all, advocating for policies and initiatives that promote digital equality and bridge the digital divide.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions and insights shared during the forum, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Develop a Pacific Regional Internet Governance Strategy:** Establish a comprehensive regional strategy that outlines a shared vision, principles, and priorities for internet governance in the Pacific. This strategy should be developed through a multistakeholder process, ensuring representation from governments, civil society, the private sector, technical experts, and academia.
2. **Strengthen Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity:** Prioritize investments in expanding and improving digital infrastructure, including broadband connectivity, particularly in underserved and remote areas. Explore innovative financing mechanisms, public-private partnerships, and regional cooperation initiatives to bridge the digital divide.
3. **Enhance Cybersecurity and Data Protection:** Develop and implement robust cybersecurity strategies, policies, and regulations to protect critical infrastructure, businesses, and individuals from cyber threats. Promote regional cooperation in cybersecurity information sharing, capacity building, and incident response.
4. **Promote Digital Inclusion and Capacity Building:** Implement targeted programs to enhance digital literacy, skills development, and access to technology for marginalized communities, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and rural populations. Foster digital entrepreneurship and innovation through incubation centers, mentorship programs, and access to funding.
5. **Harness AI for Good:** Develop ethical guidelines and frameworks for the responsible development and deployment of AI, ensuring that it benefits all members of society. Explore the potential of AI in addressing critical challenges in areas such as education, healthcare, climate change, and disaster management.
6. **Strengthen Regional and International Cooperation:** Foster greater collaboration among Pacific Island Countries, regional organizations, and international partners in internet governance, cybersecurity, and digital development. Leverage existing platforms like the Pacific ICT Regulatory Resource Centre (PIRRC) and the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA) to facilitate knowledge sharing, capacity building, and joint initiatives.
7. **Empower Youth and Future Leaders:** Engage youth actively in internet governance discussions and decision-making processes. Provide opportunities for mentorship, training, and leadership development to empower young people to become advocates for a safe, inclusive, and resilient digital future.

Conclusion

The PACIFIC Internet Governance Forum 2024 provided a vital platform for stakeholders to engage in critical discussions, share insights, and shape the future of the internet in the Pacific. By embracing a collaborative and multistakeholder approach, the region can harness the transformative power of the internet to foster inclusive development, strengthen resilience, and create a brighter digital future for all Pacific people.