

### UN APCICT Press Release, 7 July 2009

Forum brings together managers and policymakers from ICT and disaster risk reduction sectors to address challenges in making communities safer in the Pacific Islands.

Representatives of 12 Pacific Island Countries attended the Forum which was from 7-9 July 2009 in Apia, Samoa.



The Forum was followed by a joint SOPAC/APCICT Academy workshop on the 10th July covering linkages between ICT and MDGs, ICT for Development Policy, process and governance. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to reduce the risks associated with natural disasters is the focus of a United Nations meeting that gets underway today in Samoa.

Delegates to the “Using ICT for Effective Disaster Management Pacific Forum 2009,” held from 7 to 9 July in Apia, include a wide range from the public sector, industry and civil society. The event is co-organized by the UN Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT), the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation, Commonwealth Secretariat, International Telecommunication Union, Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association and Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC).

The Pacific Forum is the sixth in a series that promotes across the Pacific Islands knowledge sharing and understanding of policy/regulation development of all the phases of the disaster management cycle – from response to preparedness and mitigation. Since 2000 previous have been held in Sri Lanka, Jamaica, Fiji, Tanzania and Mauritius.

According to the APCICT, information and communication technologies can play a pivotal role in lessening the risks brought on by disasters through early warning, coordinating and tracking relief activities and resources, and raising awareness and educational campaigns related to risk reduction.

“The challenge is identifying the appropriate mix of ICTs to address vulnerabilities in the different contexts throughout the Pacific,” said APCICT Director Hyeun-Suk [?](#) Rhee. “APCICT is committed to enhance the capacities of policymakers in making informed choices towards safer communities and has initiated the development of a new training module on ICT for Disaster Risk Reduction.”

In one of the interactive sessions at the Forum, APCICT will showcase its flagship programme, the “Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders.” Together with SOPAC and Samoa’s Ministry of Communications, APCICT will conduct a one-day Academy training workshop on 10 July for policymakers and heads of department of various government ministries from Samoa,

as well as Forum delegates. The training will cover modules 1 and 2 of the Academy that focus on the linkages between ICT and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and on ICT for development policy, process and governance. In addition, there will be presentations on Samoa's progress in reaching the MDGs and its ICT policy.

The MDGs are a set of ambitious pledges made by world leaders in 2000 to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger, combat AIDS, promote gender equality, and tackle other global ills, all by 2015.

The Academy workshop will be the fourth organized in the Pacific following those held in the Cook Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. Additional programmes are being planned by SOPAC, which is leading the Academy roll-out in the Pacific Islands.

SOPAC will, on behalf of APCICT, conduct a needs assessment for the new Academy module on ICT for Disaster Risk Reduction to incorporate a Pacific voice. The Academy currently has an eight-module curriculum, with two additional modules in the pipeline that focus on disaster risk reduction and climate change. The results of the training needs assessment will be presented at a conference in August on "Building Local Resilience to Disasters: Challenges and Opportunities," co-organized by APCICT, the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and Incheon Metropolitan City.