Concept Note

1. Title

Towards a more integrated telecom market in the Pacific: strengthening the statistical evidence for implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS).

2. Overview

An ESCAP study highlighted that 18 Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) member States, on average, had less than 2 per cent of their populations with fixed-broadband subscriptions in 2016. Out of the 18 countries, eight are Pacific island countries (45%). In the case of mobile-broadband subscription, 13 ESCAP member States, on average, had less than 20 per cent of their respective populations with access to mobile-broadband services in 2016. Six are Pacific island countries (46%).

The study highlighted that broadband adoption in Pacific island countries was influenced by several factors including economic development levels of countries; new demand created by access to e-government services; access to affordable electricity; access to affordable ICT devices; access to education for acquiring relevant skills; and investment in resilient ICT infrastructure. A key policy recommendation that emerged from these findings was the need to link the national efforts to a subregional mechanism for effective coordination of broadband connectivity development in the Pacific island countries. By doing so, Pacific island countries could aggregate small isolated national markets into one subregional market with enough bargaining power for future negotiations with private operators on infrastructure investment (such as satellite technologies or combination with fibre-optic connectivity).

In response, ESCAP through the AP-IS initiative Pillar 4 'broadband for all', the International Telecommunications Union and the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association are co-organizing this subregional workshop.

3. Objective

To strengthen the statistical evidence base for a more integrated telecom market in Pacific island countries.

4. Implementing and Collaborating Entities

The subregional workshop is led by ESCAP's Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division with support from ESCAP Pacific Office (EPO), in collaboration with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the Pacific Islands Telecommunication Associations (PITA).

5. Key Outputs

a) AP-IS Subregional plan for Pacific island countries developed;
b) Guideline developed on how to coordinate national ICT statistics for evidence-base policy making in Pacific island countries.

6. Venue and Date

a) Venue: Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, Fiji
b) Date: 19-23 November 2018