



**Pacific Islands Forum
United Nations Member States**

Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Tonga to the United Nations
250 East 51st Street, New York, New York 10022
Email: tongaunmission@gmail.com

Telephone No.: (917) 369-1025
Fax: (917) 369-1024

PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

Statement on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum at the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communication Technologies for Criminal Purposes

Talking points for the Representative of the PIF troika

Friday 2 August 2024 (10am to 1pm)
Conference Room 3
UN Headquarters, New York

Madam Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum with presence here in New York, namely, Australia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my home country, Tonga.

The Pacific Islands Forum countries would like to offer our thanks to the Chair for your efforts to ensure that the Ad Hoc Committee on Cybercrime progresses its work in an inclusive and productive manner. We remain committed to continue working closely with you and other delegations to make concrete progress towards our shared goal of a consensus-based outcome for the prevention and combatting of cybercrime.

In the Boe Declaration, Pacific Islands Forum countries are committed to addressing the peace and security challenges in the region as one Blue Pacific Continent. This includes an emphasis on robust legal frameworks to combat cybercrime, sharing information and building capacity in the digital age. And this was further reiterated in the Lagatoi Declaration by the Pacific ICT Ministers, as informed by the overarching 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, as a key strategic goal. Our Leaders will meet in Tonga in three weeks' time to review this key goal, therefore, the completion of our negotiations here in

New York is critical for the deliberation of our Leaders in the Pacific, in view of the vulnerability of our region.

As you have heard in this committee, the Asia-Pacific region is one of the only geographic areas without a regional cybercrime treaty. We do see a lot of value in this draft convention and intend to use this as a strategic tool to enhance our fight against cybercrime.

In this regard, our Group supports a title that provides this clarity and simplicity to read – “UN convention Against Cybercrime”

Additionally, the security and protection of our peoples is essential to realising the vision of our region as set out in the Boe and Lagatoi Declarations – including our children. As such, the Pacific Island Forum Member States consider it important that our global cybercrime convention protects our most vulnerable communities, and universally criminalises online child abuse and exploitation. We therefore, support Article 14 as is drafted in your text Chair.

We also believe that security should not be viewed in isolation. Digital prosperity and the promotion of sustainable digital development and exercise of fundamental rights for all our communities are essential. In this regard, our Group supports the balance achieved in the Chair’s draft convention between effective measures to combat cybercrime and strong human rights safeguards.

Madam Chair, the Pacific Islands Forum countries acknowledge that this Convention is a crucial tool and therefore, there is a need to ensure that all member states are on an equal footing. Due to our varied capacities, time is needed, in particular for smaller economies, to undertake the necessary domestic processes to become a party to the Convention, develop the needed capacities in our criminal justice authorities and be in a position to undertake our global responsibilities under the Convention. It is for these reasons that increasing the number of ratifications to 60 member states before the Convention comes into force, is imperative.

We feel strongly that our priority should not be speed, but rather the inclusivity, sustainability, and purposefulness of the Convention. It is simply not possible for small island developing states like many of us, to ratify this treaty with the same speed as larger countries. In fact, we are all united in our aim for this Convention, to be a consensus instrument that reflects the views of all UN Members. Therefore, it is appropriate to assign the Convention into the hands of as many of us as possible, rather than into the hands of the few.

Thank you, Madam Chair.