

## **The Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA) comments to WSIS**

**Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (“PITA”) wishes to provide some input to the WSIS committee.**

**The PITA is a non-profit organisation formed to represent the interests of small island nations in the Pacific Region in the field of telecommunications.**

**The object of the association is to improve, promote, enhance, facilitate and provide telecommunications services within Member and Associate Member countries.**

**PITA Members are telecommunication entities in Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, Australia and New Zealand. Associate Members are suppliers of telecommunication equipment and services. Partner agencies are regional and international organizations with vested interest in telecommunications and its development.**

**PITA presently has 40 members and 41 associate members from 22 Pacific Island countries.**

**In view of the need to provide views to WSIS the following are the main points that PITA wishes to highlight.**

**Firstly PITA acknowledges the need to bridge the digital divide. This is acknowledged by the members of PITA but are at different stages of development. The cost of providing telecommunications infrastructure continues to be a major issue because resources, primarily funding sources have always been limited or inadequate.**

**Secondly PITA allows wishes to highlight the fact that there continues to be an unfair way of charging for International internet access globally and PITA notes that this will be a subject of further studies by ITU T Study group 3 on International charging and settlements. PITA wishes to bring this up to the attention of WSIS so that the International community will review the charging arrangements so that it is faired for SIDS.**

**(2) The high cost of international Internet access disadvantages SIDS and Governments should ensure a fairer charging regime for Internet access, particularly for the SIDS. Without fairer internet access costs, SIDS will be disadvantaged further as (1) Internet access remains unaffordable and (2) the higher cost of internet for business means that they are disadvantaged commercially when trying to sell products.**

**Thirdly PITA wishes to also highlight the fact that non traditional ways of calling such as refilling calls to island countries is a growing concern affecting business and quality of call delivered to SMALL island States (SIDS). Theses**

**same concerns were raised by Latin America countries when it was brought up at the 2002 Plenipotentiary meeting.**

**(1) The WSIS Draft Action Plan section 29 Market Environment: Market forces sometimes fail, particularly in very small economies and for those with no market power such as SIDS. In these cases Government must take an active role in order to support the market.**

**PITA wishes to formally make these submissions to the WSIS to be included in the Draft Action Plan**

**Peter Loko  
President  
PITA**