



**APG Pre-Mutual Evaluation Workshop: Mutual Evaluation of Tonga
23 – 25th July 2019, NRBT Conference Centre**

Governor Kioa's Welcoming Speech

Tapu moe 'Otua Mafimafi 'oku ne 'afio he potu kotoape, pea 'oku ou haka 'i he langi kuo tau he'oku kei lakoifie 'a e Hau o Tonga, laumalie a Hou'eiki pea lelei e Tonga kotoa 'oku fa'afakatapua.

Fakamalo he ki he faifekau 'i hono tataki 'etau fakataha'aki ha lotu.

Ms Sandy Shum (Hong Kong Department of Justice), Mr Richard Lee (AUSTRAC) and Ms Connie Chu (Macao Financial Intelligence Unit) and the rest of the international experts on FATF assessment methodology, who have accepted to work with us to determine Tonga's levels of compliance with international AML/CFT standards.

Ms Michelle Harwood and Ms Marnie Campbell of the APG;

Hon Manakovi Pahulu (CEO for Justice), and the members of our Working Group on Serious Financial Crime;

Fellow colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning to you all and I wish thank our heavenly father for bringing us together here today.

It is with great honour that I welcome the team of expert assessors and the APG officials who are here for the Pre-Mutual Evaluation visit. I warmly welcome you to the Kingdom of Tonga. To the members of the Working Group on Serious Financial Crimes, thank you for availing your time to do what is expected of us by the country.

Since 2015, the law enforcement agencies started preparing for Tonga's mutual evaluation. To become familiar with the APG Mutual Evaluation methodology and procedure, we have sent relevant officers to attend Pre-ME workshops in anticipation of this year's assessment.

Tonga's first national Anti-Money Laundering risk assessment was initiated in May 2015 with assistance from New Zealand experts.

Efforts have also been engaged into reviewing and proposing legislative amendments that would bring Tonga's AML laws in line with international standards as well as the Egmont Group's standard. This work is still in progress and we hope to have a draft amendment by the time of the on-site.

The Reserve Bank is fortunate to have received assistance from APG on developing a Risk Based Approach to improve its AML supervision function. The TA completed this work in May and my team are excited to implement its revised supervision framework in the coming months.

Tonga's National AML Strategy is still being drafted by the members of the working group and this is to be finalised this month.

Over the past months, members of the working group have collaborated and endeavoured to complete the necessary requirements for Tonga's assessment to the best of their abilities.

I am certain that you will give the assessors the same support and effort you have shown so far.

I understand that over the next few days discussions with the expert assessors will be on:-

- clarifying and revising of the Technical Compliance annex report;
- providing feedback and flagging areas to improve on Tonga's effectiveness response;
- gaining an understanding of Tonga's AML risk assessment including areas of increased focus for the evaluation; as well as
- ensuring overall understanding of the Mutual Evaluation principles and processes in preparation for the on-site in October.

I implore members of the Working Group for your contributions, as you will be called upon by the expert assessors to make comments during discussion of these aspects of the evaluation.

I wish you a fruitful discussion over the next few days and I thank you all for your continued co-operation to make Tonga's Mutual Evaluation a success.

Malo 'aupito