



**United Nations**

Department of  
Economic and  
Social Affairs



## Capacity Development and Consultation Workshop on the Samoa National Data Governance Framework

Tanoa Tusitala Hotel, Apia, Samoa  
8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024

### Speakers' biographies

#### OPENING SPEAKERS

**The Hon. Mr. Toelupe Poumulinuku Onesemo**  
**Minister for Communications and Information Technology, Government of Samoa**



Toelupe Poumulinuku Onesemo is the Minister for Communications and Information Technology.

Toelupe holds a Master of Engineering Science as well as a Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) from the University of New South Wales, Australia. He also holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of the South Pacific, Fiji and a Diploma in Education majoring in Mathematics and Science from the Secondary Teachers College, Samoa. Toelupe has over 15 years of work experience both in Government, private sector and the community. He served recently as the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure and was an Assistant Chief Executive Officer for the Planning and Urban Management Division (PUMA) under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

**Ms. Noriko Horiuchi**  
**Chargé d’Affaires, U.S. Embassy, Samoa**



A career member of the Department of State’s Foreign Service, Supervisory Special Agent Noriko Horiuchi arrived in Samoa to serve as Chargé d’Affaires at U.S. Embassy Apia in October 2022. Previously, Noriko served as Regional Security Officer at U.S. embassies in Santiago, Chile and Lomé, Togo. She was knighted Order of Mono of the Republic of Togo for her work in combatting wildlife trafficking.

Noriko has also served at the U.S. Missions in Geneva, Switzerland; Kabul, Afghanistan; and Baghdad, Iraq. In Washington D.C., she served as the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and Department of State’s senior liaison at the Central Intelligence Agency’s Directorate of Operations. Noriko was the lead U.S.

government major events security coordinator for the 2015 Pan-American Games in Toronto and the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Before joining the State Department, Noriko was a project manager for turn-key projects with an emphasis on large transportation projects including airports and railway systems. She speaks Japanese, Spanish, and French.

**Mr. Themba Kalua**  
**United Nations Resident Coordinator for Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau**



As Resident Coordinator, Themba Kalua heads the Samoa Multi-Country Office and coordinates UN development operations in Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. Mr. Kalua brings more than 20 years of experience in sustainable development, development coordination, strategic planning, environment and climate change, gender equality and women’s empowerment, and humanitarian action.

Prior to his appointment in Samoa, he served as the UN-Women Country Representative in Papua New Guinea, where he led efforts to address high levels of gender-based violence, promote women’s political participation and economic empowerment, and established and chaired the donor coordination mechanism

for gender equality and women’s empowerment. He also chaired the inter-agency core design team that led the drafting of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Papua New Guinea. During the 2022 national general elections in Papua New Guinea, Mr. Kalua served as Resident Coordinator ad interim, successfully leading the United Nations’ coordinated engagement with the newly elected Government.

Before moving to Papua New Guinea, Mr. Kalua was the Senior Development Coordination Officer at the United Nations Development Coordination Office’s Regional Office for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In this role, he supported the delivery of the United Nations development system reform in Africa and provided policy and advisory services to resident coordinators in 54 African countries, contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Between 2013 and 2019, Mr. Kalua held various senior positions at the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). These included Deputy Representative in the South Africa Multi-Country Office and liaison to the Southern African Development Community (SADC); Head of Programmes, Strategic Planning and Coordination Specialist for East and Southern Africa based at the regional office in Kenya; and United Nations System Coordination Adviser at UN-Women headquarters in New York.

Before joining UN-Women, Mr. Kalua worked with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP) on various sustainable development issues at the country, regional and headquarters levels.

Mr. Kalua holds an Executive MBA from the University of Cape Town in South Africa, a master's degree in strategic management from the University of Derby in the United Kingdom and a Bachelor of Science in environmental science and technology from the University of Malawi.

**Ms. Atsuko Okuda**  
**Regional Director**  
**International Telecommunications Union**



Ms Atsuko Okuda was appointed as the Regional Director in April 2020. She leads ITU's support to the region's digital transformation and manages the Bangkok and Jakarta offices to cover 38 member countries in Asia and the Pacific. Prior to the new assignment, she was the Chief of the ICT and Development Section of the ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in Bangkok, Thailand from 2015 to 2020. At ESCAP, she promoted the development of regional broadband connectivity and inclusive broadband through the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) initiative. Before joining ESCAP, Ms Okuda served the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut as the Chief of the Governance and State-building Section and the Chief of the Strategic Planning and Monitoring Section which managed the ESCWA's programme and projects. Prior to it, she contributed to the Umoja project, the UN Secretariat ERP initiative, in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Management, UNHQ for 2 years. From 2002 to 2010, she was responsible for promoting a wide range of ICT for development initiatives at ESCAP and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) as Senior IT Officer. She started her UN career in the area of ICT for Development at the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, the Bureau for Development Policy, and UNDP Country Office in Bhutan from 1997 to 2002. Ms Okuda obtained a BA from Kyoto University (Japan), MA from Helsinki University (Finland), and has currently been enrolled as a research fellow at the United Nations University – Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT) in the Netherlands. Her doctoral thesis is entitled "Towards e-compliance: Anti-corruption and e-governance initiatives in the case of Bhutan", to be defended in 2021. Her academic articles on broadband, AI, and Digital Transformation were published by the Lee Kwan Yew School of Public Policy and the Druk Journal. Among other publications and research papers, she was the author of a chapter on e-resilience in the 2018 UNDESA E-government Survey and several blogs published by ITU.

**Mr. Juwang Zhu**  
**Director, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government; Acting Director, Division for Sustainable Development Goals**  
**Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations**



Mr. Juwang Zhu is currently Director of the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government/DESA. In that capacity he leads a team in normative, analytical and capacity-building work in promoting inclusive, effective, accountable institutions that are well equipped to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 16. This is the second time Mr. Zhu coordinated the work of the Division - he served as its Director in

2014-2015. Among his various assignments at the UN Secretariat, Mr. Zhu served as Chief of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General/DESA (2008-2013). In that capacity he advised the Under-Secretary-General on a range of policy and management issues. During this period, Mr. Zhu also coordinated the Department's substantive advice to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General on development issues and on the restructuring of DESA's capacity building programme. Mr. Zhu was Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and in that capacity assisted in coordinating support for the Conference. He also contributed to the departmental support for Rio+20 follow-up, including work on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs (2013-2014). As Director of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (Jan 2016- February 2019), Mr. Zhu coordinated the Secretariat support for the High-level Political Forum, the UN Ocean Conference, and the Global Sustainable Transport Conference. Prior to his reassignment to DESA in 1993, Mr. Zhu had previously worked as a policy analyst in the secretariat of the UN World Food Council and in the UN Office in Geneva. He joined the UN Secretariat in 1985. Born in Shanghai, August 1961, Mr. Zhu graduated from the Shanghai International Studies University in 1982 and did post-graduate studies in Beijing Foreign Studies University. He has an MSC in financial economics from University of London and an MA in international relations from Webster University.

## **PRESENTERS**

### **Mr. Leaso Ronnie Aiolupotea, Deputy Chief Executive Officer/Chief Cybersecurity Officer, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT)**



Ronnie has more than 20 years of experience applying people, process, problem solving and technical skills to improve individual, team and organisational performance. He has designed, developed and implemented policy and technical infrastructure that led to organisations being distinguished in the public sector. I am an impassioned team leader who mentors with purpose and understands the strong working relationships to create great teams and produce exceptional results.

### **Mr. Samuel Danaa Capacity Development Expert United Nations Project Office on Governance**



Danaa currently works as an Associate Capacity Development Expert with UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA. Prior to joining UNPOG, he worked as a Development Officer with the Local Government Service under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development in Ghana. Previously, he had engagements with NGOs such as Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA-Ghana), and ADRA-Ghana. His interest includes promoting digital transformation, data governance, risk-informed governance for DRR, partnerships, gender, energy governance, and leveraging digital/frontier technologies for innovative service delivery.

Danaa holds a PhD in Public Administration and an MA in Community Development from Yonsei University, Republic of Korea. He also has a BA in Integrated Development Studies from the University for Development Studies, Ghana.

**Mr. Shivendra Deo**  
**Digital Government Lead**  
**USAID Pacific Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity**

*bio pending*

**Mr. Wai Min Kwok**  
**Senior Governance and Public Administration Officer, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, UN DESA**



Wai Min Kwok joined the United Nations Secretariat in 2008. Before that, he spent over ten years in the energy and information technology sectors as an engineer and a technopreneur. In UN DESA, he has been entrusted with a portfolio of roles, including as one of the lead authors for selected editions of the UN E-Government Survey and the World Public Sector Report. His areas of expertise span a range in sustainable development, public policy, public administration and management, digital government, digital transformation and Internet governance. For three consecutive years in 2011-2013, he was the Secretary of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. Wai Min Kwok was formerly a Lee Ka-Shing graduate scholar and Mobil Oil scholar. He has a postgraduate master's in public administration with the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and an honours degree in electrical engineering at the National University of Singapore.

**Mr. Andrew Lalor**  
**Assistant Secretary Data Policy and Assurance**  
**Department of Finance, Government of Australia**



Andrew is the Assistant Secretary, Data Policy and Assurance at the Australian Government Department of Finance where he leads whole of government public sector data policy, strategy and governance; cross jurisdictional data and digital ministerial engagement; implementation of the Department's data strategy and analytics; and assurance of the Australian Government's high-cost and high-risk projects and programs. Previously Andrew worked at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet where he oversaw whole of government public sector data policy and supported the Australian Government's digital transformation agenda. Andrew also worked at the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science where he led the Data Management and Analytics Taskforce. Andrew has also held senior roles relating to skills policy and programs, aviation security, broadband infrastructure and innovation policy.

**Ms. Anju Mangal**  
**Chief of Party**  
**USAID Pacific Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity**

*Bio pending*

**Mr. Malaeulu Jobenz Marcus Tamatoa Manoa**  
**Consultant, UN DESA**  
**Managing Director / Lead Pen Tester, WebSafe Samoa**



Jobenz Manoa is the Managing Director of WebSafe Samoa and serves as the Vice President of the Samoa IT Association. With extensive experience in the Information Communication Technology (ICT) industry, Jobenz specializes in Cybersecurity, Computer Networking, and Troubleshooting. Holding a Master's degree in Cyber Security from The University of Waikato, he possesses a deep understanding of digital protection. Passionate about simplifying cyber security, Jobenz plays a vital role as the National ICT Expert for the Smart Island Project at ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Samoa, where he focuses on designing and supporting pilot programs. With a strong commitment to enhancing digital security, Jobenz's dedication is further evident in his contributions as the Principal ICT Officer at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Labour. As the Vice President of the Samoa IT Association, he actively works towards advancing the IT landscape and promoting cybersecurity awareness, making him an invaluable asset in the field.

**Hagai Mei-Zahav**  
**Senior Cybersecurity Expert, The World Bank**



Hagai Mei-Zahav is a Senior Cybersecurity Expert working with the World Bank's Digital Development Global Practice. His focus is on promoting cybersecurity global initiative, working collaboratively across sectors and regions, and addressing World Bank's client growing demand. He is also supporting World Bank's operational teams advising governments on advancing their cyber resilience, designing and implementing strategies, and deploying cyber solutions.

Prior to the World Bank, Hagai worked as a Director for International Cooperation at Israel's National Cyber Directorate, leading Israel's business development on cybersecurity with Europe and Asia-Pacific regions. Hagai is a professional diplomat. He served as Israel's Deputy Ambassador to Hungary and Israel's Deputy Consul-General to Sao-Paulo, Brazil. He holds Bachelor of Science in Information Management, and master's in business administration.

**Ms. Tagiilima Neemia**  
**Assistant Chief Executive Officer, IT Division**  
**Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of Samoa**

*Bio pending*

**Mr. Faasootauloa Sam Saili**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Skyeye**



Sam is a Samoan business systems and ICT professional. He has 22 years of experience in establishing information and business management systems, and developing innovative solutions to business challenges in Samoa, Vanuatu and Tonga.

Sam started in the Samoa Ministry of Finance as a senior business data analyst helping to set up the Samoa Financial Management System, Samoa Debt Management System and the first Samoa National ICT Policy. From 2005 to 2016 he helped Samoatel/BlueSky to setup and manage their Customer Care and Billing Systems, led the roll out of the nation-wide WiFi Hotspot network system, and administered the migration from analog to IP base telephony for

corporate communications.

Since 2016, Sam helped to establish SkyEye as an innovative and socially responsible company with a regional and global profile receiving international, regional awards and grant funding including; the 2017 DFAT Frontier Innovators Award, the 2018 GSMA Ecosystem Accelerator Award, the 2019 UNCDF FinTech grant funding and the Pacific Islands Financial Inclusion Program Grant.

Sam is a recognized Pacific business and ICT expert and advocate having represented SkyEye and the Pacific in regional and global ICT and ecommerce events. These include; the 2017 Pacific Wave Conference, the Barcelona 2019 Mobile Congress, the 2019 Global Entrepreneurship Summit in the Hague; the 2019 Pacific Connect China Conference; the 2019 Hong Kong Venture Capital Forum, the Samoa Champion for the DFAT GSMA 2020 Startup Challenge; 2020 Pacific Digital Conference on private and public partnerships, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat's 2021 Webinar on Resilience of Pacific Businesses to COVID-19; the 2021 UNCITRAL Law & Business Forum on MSME in the digital age; Expert Panel UNDCF 'Leveraging Digital Payments for Financial Inclusion in the Pacific'; and APEC Indigenous Workshop on technical barriers and considerations. Under his leadership SkyEye has secured close to \$500,000 USD in grant funding for development and scaling operations for SkyEye in the Pacific.

Sam is a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts, Manufacturing and Commerce, the President of the Samoa Information and Technology Association(SITA), the Secretary of the Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, former Secretary for Samoa Umbrella Non-Government Organization (SUNGO), Board Member and Treasurer for Goshen Trust Mental Health Services an alumni of the Emerging Pacific Leaders, Samoa Leadership Program and was one of Samoa Observer's People of the Year in 2017 and 2019. He has a Bachelor of Commerce, Economics and Information Management Systems from Deakin University, Australia and is a Certified CISCO Network Associate 1-4.

### **Ms. Ili Faleula Fereti Sakaria**

**Assistant Chief Executive Officer for Corporate Services**

**Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Government of Samoa**



Ms. Sakaria graduated from the University of Canberra, Australia with her Masters Public Administration in 2020. Prior to Master's Degree, she held a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Management from the University of South Pacific in 2015. Prior to her appointment in the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Ms. Sakaria served in the Samoa Public Service for more than 12 years in three different ministries.

### **Mr. Leota Aliielua Salani**

## **Government Statistician, Government of Samoa**



With 30 years as a public servant, Leota Aliielua Salani brings a wealth of experience. This includes 14 years as Assistant Chief Executive Officer and 10 years at the Ministry of Finance.

Leota led numerous undertakings which includes, coordination of statistics strategies, national and regional capacity building programs, statistical surveys, and major improvements in the production, analysis and dissemination of Macro-economic statistics, especially national accounts and government finance statistics, as well as the development of a Composite Indicator that monitors

and evaluates the performances of the various sectors of the economy.

Mr Salani is also recognized in the region, evident in his leadership role as the Chair of the Pacific Island National Accounts Compilers and Local Experts Committee, Vice Chair of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board, a member of the ESCAP Regional Steering Group on Economic Statistics (SGRPES), a member of the United Nations Experts Group on Economic and Environmental Accounts (UNCEEA) as well as the Pacific Island Statistics Development Group for the South – South initiative helping other PICs in the development of Statistics.

**Dr. Tagaloa Robert Thomson**  
**Acting Director General, Ministry of Health**  
**Government of Samoa**

*Bio pending*