

10 April: Securing Financial Connections: Reimagining Correspondent Banking in the Pacific

Welcome Remarks **DG Leah (5 minutes maximum):**

Good morning, Governor August Letlet of Reserve Bank of Vanuatu and Governor Tatafu Moeaki of National Reserve Bank of Tonga, distinguished guests, esteemed colleagues, and participants. With great pleasure, I welcome you to today's workshop, **"Securing Financial Connections: Reimagining Correspondent Banking in the Pacific."** Your presence underscores our collective commitment to addressing the pressing challenges of correspondent banking de-risking in the Pacific – a region which is of particular importance to me having worked in this region for over five years.

The Pacific economies have faced hurdles for many years in maintaining robust correspondent banking relationships, which are vital for enabling cross-border transactions and fostering economic growth. The more recent de-risking trend has not only strained these connections but also impacted financial inclusion in our Pacific communities. Recognizing the serious impacts of this issue, today's gathering aims to foster dialogue, share insights, and collaboratively explore innovative solutions.

Our agenda today is structured to build on key discussions from recent events, including the "AI Technology to Mitigate Correspondent Bank De-risking" roundtable held at the Insight Forum in Japan last month, the Pacific Island Forum held in July last year, as well as ongoing efforts led by Pacific Islands and their development partners. By exploring policy frameworks in greater depth, strengthening regulatory capabilities, and evaluating technological innovations, we aim to identify practical strategies to ensure sustainable and secure financial connectivity across the Pacific region.

Your active participation is invaluable. Together, we can shape strategies that address immediate concerns and lay the groundwork for resilient and inclusive financial systems in the future.

Once again, welcome, and I look forward to the fruitful discussions ahead.