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Tonga strengthens effective efforts against emerging financial crime through regional collaboration

The Kingdom of Tonga today welcomed a high-level delegation from the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) to agree on strategies and ongoing collaboration to strengthen efforts to combat the financial aspects of serious and organised crime.

The Governor of the National Reserve Bank of Tonga, Governor Tatafu Moeaki, initiated the visit as an important milestone in Tonga's continued actions to implement the global AML/CFT standards set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

The APG Co-Chair, Japan's Deputy Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs, Mr. Mitsutoshi Kajikawa said *"the APG is working with its Pacific member governments to improve conditions for correspondent banking relationships by enhanced system integrity and financial crime risk management."*

"It is important to recognise the strength of Tonga's inter-agency leadership and improving operational results to take action against money laundering and the proceeds of drugs, online scams and other crimes."

"The expansion of organised crime into the Pacific underscores how quickly criminal networks can shift operations and exploit loopholes to conduct financial crime," Deputy Vice Minister Kajikawa said.

"APG welcomes the proactive efforts of Tongan authorities, the commercial banks and remittance companies to tackle money laundering risks and to implement systems and programs to guard Tonga against the evolving financial crime threats."

Governor Tatafu Moeaki said "Tonga's continuing efforts to improve compliance and enhance the effectiveness of its AML/CFT is reinforced by its national priorities where, our Parliament in 2025 passed the new Money Laundering and Proceeds of Crime Act now enacted to counter the increasing risks and Tonga's exposure to financial crimes, support correspondent banking relationships and access to finance, while promoting investor confidence in the Kingdom."

"More important, to place stronger focus on protecting our communities from profit-driven crime, strengthening the integrity of our financial system, safeguarding public revenue through asset recovery. These measures are design to deliver real, practical outcomes, increasing transparency, accountability and stripping organized crime of the profits that harm our people," Governor Tatafu Moeaki said.

The Attorney General Linda Folaumoetu'i further added stating that "Tonga's continued actions to implement the global AML/CFT standards further complements Tonga's national commitments. Tonga's new legislation enhanced the supervisory powers, strengthen confiscation and asset recovery mechanisms and introduced firmer accountability provisions. Together with recent operational enforcements, these reforms ensure that crime does not pay and those involved are identified held accountable."

Tonga remains committed to working closely with the APG and other regional and development partners to improve legal frameworks, government systems and private sector know-how to stay ahead of emerging financial crime risks. These efforts reinforce the country's commitment to safeguarding communities, securing public resources, and maintaining a resilient and trustworthy financial system.

Further information about Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering can be found on <https://apgml.org/> or follow the APG Secretariat at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/apg-secretariat/>.

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