

**Third Annual PILON Cybercrime Workshop
27 - 31 May 2019, Vanuatu**

**International Cooperation to Share
Electronic Evidence and Combat Cybercrime**

Opening remarks

Cristina Schulman

Chair, Cybercrime Convention Committee of the Council of Europe

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Please let me extend our warmest thanks to the people and the authorities of Vanuatu for welcoming us in their beautiful country.

Last year, your Minister for Justice and Community Services participated in the Octopus Conference on Cybercrime at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, and praised the wonders of Vanuatu.

He did not exaggerate! This setting is certainly made to put us in a positive mood for the difficult topics we will need to deal with this week.

We are here this week to strengthen international cooperation on cybercrime and electronic evidence.

As we all rely on information technologies, cybercrime affects the core interests and fundamental values of all our societies, including human rights, democracy and the rule of law but also prospects for social and economic development.

Any type of crime may involve evidence on a computer system. Governments cannot protect their society against crime, if criminal justice authorities cannot effectively secure electronic evidence.

This is why the meeting this week is so important. It is not about fringe issues but about core matters of our societies.

Cooperation at all levels is the key to addressing this challenge. Inter-agency, public/private and international cooperation.

And this is why the meeting this week will make a difference. It will show us how we can cooperate even better in the future.

Actually, the meeting is already making a difference right now. Because it made us joining forces. The Government of Vanuatu, the PILON Secretariat, the Australian Government and the Council of Europe through its joint project with the European Union are jointly organising this event. And all of you, experts and participants from a large number of countries have come here to cooperate for better cooperation.

This workshop will permit us to arrive at a common understanding of challenges and solutions. It will enable us to come up with a coherent response. We need coherence and cooperation instead of fragmentation.

The meeting this week is not a single, stand-alone event but part of a process. A process that started some time ago and that will need to continue.

What are the benchmarks of this process? How can we measure whether we make progress?

From a criminal justice and rule of law perspective, one benchmark, if not the basis, is to have criminal legislation in place on cybercrime and electronic evidence. And such legislation should be consistent with international standards to permit cooperation.

Another benchmark is the ability of countries to cooperate with each other within their region but also internationally to investigate cybercrime and secure electronic evidence.

In both respects, domestic legislation and international cooperation, the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime of the Council of Europe is a most relevant tool.

In this region, the Council of Europe started to cooperate with Tonga some ten years ago. And about two years ago, Tonga became a Party to the Budapest Convention.

For this reason, Tonga is a priority country for capacity building under the joint project of the Council of Europe and the European Union on Global Action on Cybercrime (GLACY+).

And because Tonga is a Party, Tonga is also in the driver seat for the development of additional international standards on cybercrime. This includes the current negotiation of a new Protocol to the Budapest Convention.

We hope that other countries of the South Pacific will follow that example.

The Council of Europe is ready to support you in this process. We will be happy to give you all information you need in the course of this week.

Thank you for your attention.
