

Press release - For immediate release

Rotuma Opens Doors to Digital Future with Launch of Smart Classroom

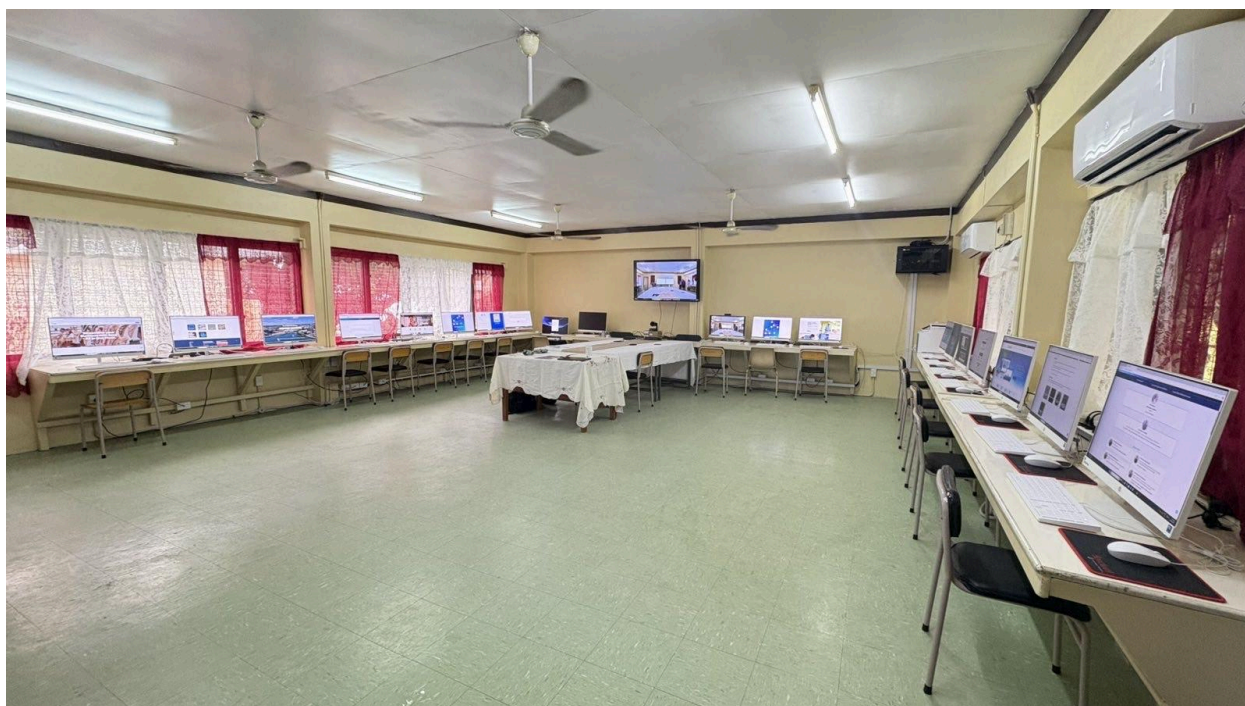
Rotuma, Fiji – 17 April 2025 – A new chapter in digital empowerment begins for the people of Rotuma with the official launch of a Smart Classroom at Rotuma High School, under the Smart Islands Fiji Programme (SIFP) funded by the Joint SDG fund. Spearheaded by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) through its Smart Islands/Smart Villages initiative, and supported by UNOPS, Asian Development Bank and the Ministry of Trade, Co-Operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises, and Communications, this milestone project aims to bridge the digital divide and unlock new opportunities for the island's more than 1,900 residents.

Rotuma has historically faced multiple barriers to digital inclusion, including unreliable power supply, limited network coverage, and a lack of digital skills among residents. The Smart Islands initiative responds directly to these challenges with a comprehensive approach to improving infrastructure, enhancing digital literacy, and fostering inclusive access to essential services—aligning closely with Fiji's National Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).





The Smart Classroom, equipped with desktop computers, video conferencing facilities, computer printers, and office productivity software procured by UNOPS, will serve as a central access point for digital services, training, and community engagement. It is designed to address longstanding connectivity challenges and provide the infrastructure necessary to promote e-education, e-health, e-government, and other vital digital services in Rotuma.



“We recognise that one third of the island has connectivity coverage, and your Government is committed to not only improving access to meaningful connectivity for the people of Rotuma but also to providing an enabling and business conducive environment for the people to thrive,” said the Hon. Manoa Kamikamica, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, MSMEs, and Communications.

Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau, remarked “The opening of the Smart Classroom in Rotuma marks a significant milestone in our shared commitment to digital transformation. More than just a classroom, it is a gateway to knowledge, skills, and opportunities for the community members of Rotuma, equipped with digital learning tools and connectivity. We thank the Government of Fiji, UNOPS, Joint SDG Fund, ADB, Rotuma Council, and the local community for their dedication and collaboration in making this transformation a reality. Together, we are building a future where no one is left behind.”



The project builds on months of consultations with the Rotuman community and relevant stakeholders to ensure the digital solutions meet the island's specific needs. From improved access to learning resources for students to digital training for community members and expanded public services, the Smart Classroom will play a pivotal role in accelerating the island's digital transformation.

Tokumitsu Kobayashi, UNOPS Pacific Small Island Developing States Advisor, stated, "We are glad to have supported this initiative by ensuring the procurement and delivery of essential digital infrastructure for the Smart Classroom. This is more than equipment—it is a foundation for opportunity. By connecting Rotuma to the wider digital world, we are helping to empower its people, support local development, and contribute to a more inclusive digital future."

The Smart Classroom in Rotuma is part of a broader regional push to build smart, connected, and resilient island communities. As digital connectivity becomes central to sustainable development, the Smart Islands Fiji Programme plays a critical role in bridging the digital divide. Today's launch brings essential tools and opportunities to one of the Pacific's most remote islands, helping ensure no community is left behind in the digital age.

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About UNOPS

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About ITU

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations agency for digital technologies, driving innovation for people and the planet with 194 Member States and a membership of over 1,000 companies, universities, civil society, and international and regional organizations. Established in 1865, ITU coordinates the global use of the radio spectrum and satellite orbits, establishes international technology standards, drives universal connectivity and digital services, and is helping to make sure everyone benefits from sustainable digital transformation, including the most remote communities. From artificial intelligence (AI) to quantum, from satellites and submarine cables to advanced mobile and wireless broadband networks, ITU is committed to connecting the world and beyond. Learn more: www.itu.int

About the Joint SDG Fund:

The Joint Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Fund is an innovative instrument to incentivize transformative policy shifts and stimulate the strategic investments required to get the world back on track to meet the SDGs. Read more: www.jointsdgfund.org