



United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management



INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT:

Licensing of Geospatial Information

10 – 13 April 2018

Tanoa International Dateline Hotel, Nuku'alofa
Kingdom of Tonga

“Strengthening National Geospatial Information Management”

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) recognized the need to develop mechanism to improve the capacity of national geospatial information authorities (national surveying and mapping agencies) to address the legal and policy considerations that have an impact on the availability, accessibility and application of geospatial information. The Committee of Experts is the peak inter-governmental mechanism to liaise and coordinate among Member States, and between Member States, international organizations and stakeholders, to foster better coordination and coherence in geospatial information management.

The opening of International Workshop on the morning of 10 April 2018 was officiated by the Acting Attorney General of the Kingdom of Tonga, Mr. 'Aminiasi Kefu and the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Tonga, Ms. Rosamond Bing, provided a welcome statement.

This International Workshop raise awareness among the 42 participants from 12 Member States and one Pacific Island Territory on the evolving and increasingly complex legal and policy environment that will impact the availability, accessibility and application of geospatial information to support and implement national development priorities, community level programs, regional development initiatives, and globally agreed development agenda including the Sendai Framework, the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Participants had expressed fairly similar challenges – the need to incrementally improve their legal and policy frameworks that are appropriate and relevant to their national circumstances, and collective desire to improve data sharing and coordination within their respective governments and national stakeholders, as well as with one another within the context of regional cooperation and strengthening of regional geospatial infrastructures amongst the Pacific Island States and Territories.

Thirty-one presentations were delivered over the four-day peer-to-peer learning event, fifteen of which were presentations by national agencies that provided rich content and context on national circumstances, challenges and approaches. These national presentations were provided by Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Sweden, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Niue. There were five presentations on regional perspectives including challenges to develop capacity in the region. The regional presentations were provided by UN-GGIM-AP Working Group 1 – Geodetic Reference Frame, Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council and Pacific Community (SPC – Geoscience, Energy and Maritime Division).



United Nations Secretariat for Global Geospatial Information Management supported by the Centre for Spatial Law and Policy, United States provided participants with a series of presentations and activities related to –

- (a) Legal and policy framework around geospatial information management - Highlighted the different types of laws and policies that impact the collection, storage, dissemination and use of geospatial information and provided examples of laws and policies around the world, and the impact that these laws and policies have on geospatial information management.
- (b) Role and options on licensing in geospatial information management - Explained the role of geospatial information license (nomenclature differs in different jurisdictions, and may include terms and conditions of use, memorandum of understanding, data sharing agreement, notices or administrative arrangements) and why licensing is critical in the availability and accessibility of geospatial products and services.
- (c) Key legal issues in geospatial information management - Discussed legal concepts and operational considerations that address and allocate rights, restrictions, responsibilities and risks within a geospatial information ecosystem that includes collectors, producers, custodians, customers and citizens.
- (d) Emerging legal and policy trends that will impact geospatial information management - Highlighted a rapidly evolving technological and communication environment with emerging and varied applications and markets, the need to address what kind of data is sensitive and what is harmless, where “geo” (location) is pervasive, where the geospatial information community have a proactive role in helping shape emerging legal and policy issues.

All the presentations provided rich context and content, stimulated discussions, thinking and consideration on feasible and practical approaches to address legal and policy issues and challenges in support of national efforts to improve coordination and data sharing and to strengthen national geospatial information management. Participants recognize the versatility and value of geospatial information particularly within national development context and regional development initiatives.

Group and open discussion segments were energetic, aided in improving awareness and appreciation of differing national contexts, the sharing of experiences, and encourages increase bilateral and regional exchanges and even assistance. Some participants shared unique circumstances, sought out experiences that they may consider, and elicit support for their efforts to address geospatial information and its legal and policy issues. A number of participants highlighted constraints they have to work, principally the lack of capacity and capability, outdated laws and regulations and for some, the absence of an appropriate legal and regulatory provisions within their jurisdiction. And yet a number of participants expressed being overwhelmed by the complexities and surmise their ability to sufficiently address the package of issues.



Participants –

- I. confirmed they gained and improved their awareness and understanding of legal and policy considerations needed to strengthen national geospatial information management including the collection, production and application of geospatial information. Participants expressed desire to improve their national approaches to share and disseminate information within national governments and stakeholders, including with neighboring countries and for regional initiatives.
- II. agreed that all are operating within a highly digital environment and that geospatial information should be digitized and made fit-for-purpose within this highly digital environment.
- III. acknowledged the need to for better technical, social and economic considerations including to –
 - (a) Better understand legal and policy issues and situation within their jurisdictions;
 - (b) Strengthen their national geospatial information management capacities including their national institutions and infrastructures;
 - (c) Explore and initiate national user groups or committees or councils to cooperate and coordinate geospatial information management within their jurisdiction;
 - (d) Develop roadmaps as a way forward that will lead to national policies towards realizing an enabling environment supported by appropriate and sound legal and policy frameworks;
 - (e) Leverage existing regional institution arrangements including PGSC and UN-GGIM-AP (through its WG-1) as well as regional initiatives and project currently undertaken by SPC; and
 - (f) ensure that geospatial information is applied widely and judiciously in support of national development priorities including community resilience programs, disaster risk management, climate change adaption and sustainable development.
- IV. urged the creation of an enabling environment to promote the best and highest use of geospatial information nationally, regionally and globally. The geospatial information management community should be proactive including taking the lead within their national governments to address legal and policy considerations that may not necessarily be legislation but could be policies, bilateral or multilateral agreements, administrative arrangements or instructions.
- V. urged the Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council and UN-GGIM-AP Working Group-1 together with regional partners to consider and develop practical approaches to address legal and policy issues, initially to disseminate and share data, in particular, geodetic data from permanent stations for regional initiatives. One practical approach may be to develop a document outlining essential elements of a licensing arrangement or terms and conditions of use or letter of understanding for data sharing and dissemination to improve the application of geospatial information. Another is to develop a methodology or template to undertake gap analysis.



- VI. urged the United Nations to develop practical mechanisms to engage, support and assist Pacific Small Island Developing States to strengthen its national geospatial information management with appropriate and sound legal and policy frameworks.

The participants congratulated Ms. Rosamond Bing, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Tonga and Ms. Meizyanne Hicks, Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, Fiji on their successful election as Chair and Vice Chair of the Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council at its fourth meeting that was held on the margins of the International Workshop. The Council is facilitated by the Geoscience, Energy and Maritime Division of Pacific Community (SPC) and launched its Strategy for 2017 – 2027 at special function officiated by His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga on 10 April 2018.

Participants felt most welcomed by the Government and people of the Kingdom of Tonga, expressed their appreciation to each other and their countries for contributing to a fruitful peer-to-peer learning event that was supported by the Regional Committee on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific (UN-GGIM-AP) through its Working Group-1, the Pacific Community (Geoscience, Energy and Maritime Division), the China Trust Fund Project on Global Geospatial Information Management, and the Centre for Spatial Law and Policy.

The International Workshop on Legal and Policy Framework for Geospatial Information Management expressed its heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga, its Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources for a very comfortable and conducive environment to discuss and deliberate, interact and exchange views, ideas, experiences and knowledge amongst one another, and for the generosity and warm hospitality. All participants expressed its gratitude and thanks to colleagues and staff from the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Tonga for their most professional and tireless efforts to deliver this four-day event.

Nuku'alofa
Kingdom of Tonga
13 April 2018

