

Meeting Minutes

Pacific Islands Digital Opportunity (PIDO) Committee Meeting

August 1, 2006

Sasakawa Pacific Islands Nations Fund (SPINF)
Tokyo - Japan

Attended Participants

- Professor Akio Watanabe <Chair Steering Committee, SPINF>
 - Dr. Brendan Barrett, UN University
 - Mr. Susumu Chida, Tokai University
 - Ms. Christina Higa, PEACESAT, Telecommunications and Information Policy Group, University of Hawaii
 - Mr. Kobo Inamura, Telecommunications Advancement Foundation
 - Dr. Toshio Kosuge, Digital Hollywood University
 - Professor Isao Nakajima, Tokai University Institute of Medical Sciences
 - Professor Norman H. Okamura, PEACESAT, Telecommunications and Information Policy Group, University of Hawaii
 - Professor Adam Peake, International University of Japan
 - Dr. Kader H. Pramanik, ICT Consultant
 - Professor Kenji Saga, Research Fellow, National Institute of Information and Communications Technology
 - Professor Takeshi Tamura, Kobe Institute of Commuting Graduate School of Information Technology
 - Dr. Masatomo Tanaka, Research Fellow, University of Electro-communications
 - Professor Kimio Uno, Emeritus Professor, Keio University
- <Observers>
- Mr. Tadateru Nakazawa, International Cooperation Division, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
 - Mr. Masaharu Sato, Oceania Division, Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 - Mr. Chikahiro Masuda, Transportation Team II and ICT Team, JICA
- <Secretariat>
- Dr. Yoshihiko Kono, Sasakawa Peace Foundation
 - Dr. Norio Ohto, Sasakawa Pacific Island Nations Fund
 - Ms. Rieko Hayakawa, Sasakawa Pacific Island Nations Fund

Kono, Sasakawa Peace Foundation appreciates the all participants who were able to attend this meeting and their continuing support for PIDO and SPINF.

1. Opening

Watanabe welcomes all participants as well as the observers. He explained that the last SPINF steering committee approved PIDO as the special committee under the SPINF steering committee under the article VIII of SPINF steering Committee managing regulation. Watanabe introduced Saga whom SPINF committee appointed head of PIDO special committee.

Watanabe opens the meeting with greeting and a review of the agenda.

2. Introduction of New Members – Saga

- b) **Dr. Brendan Barrett, UNU:** Environmental policy specialist by training; has been with the UN system since 1995, was involved with the a UN environmental program in Shiga prefecture, in 1997 joined the UN University, has worked on several ICT projects and was part of the initial team that established the UNU Media Studio.
- c) **Dr. Kader Pramanik:** Retired UN officer, lived in Japan since 1969, worked at the Tohoku University, in early 1980s join ITU, has been involved in planning, operations and advising in telecommunications for several years; involved with Japan's JSAT1 satellite; and worked with the University of the South Pacific as an ICT JICA expert.
- d) **Prof. Takeshi Tamura, Kobe Institute of Computing:** Professor of the Kobe Institute of Computing Graduate School of Information Technology; research areas include network technology, international communication; JICA instructor (taught via JICA network); other areas of interest include distance learning and eLearning and specifically opensource software.
- e) **Professor Susumu Chida, Tokai University:** worked in the WHO system for 16-years focusing in the Asia Pacific region.

3. Activity plans of the PIDO Special Committee – Saga

Ref. 3. - Saga explained new PIDO special committee. See Ref. 3

Mr. Ohto informed the committee that the budget for FY2006.

Ref. 3.1 – Saga presented a document outlining the contributions of PIDO in major policy activities and documents. These included the Leaders' Declaration: 'Okinawa Partnership for a more robust and prosperous Pacific Region' and a Fact Sheet on the Japan's assistance with Pacific Island Forum Member countries. The PIDO committee contributed recommendations considered by Japan MOFA and the Pacific Island Forum.

Inamura commented that the information on this special committee focused on the Pacific Island situation is very timely. He notes that globalization has been evolving from the beginning of the 1980s. International trade expanded dramatically, Internet and technologies proliferated quickly, all of which have serious negative impacts. Especially the Pacific Islands are impacted negatively by globalization. Inamura claims that the Pacific Islands are not benefiting from this growth. In this context he suggests that we should seek benefits for all not just limited to the sectors of telecommunications, health,

agriculture, etc. Inamura suggests that we seek a more balance approach, contribute greatly not only to Pacific Island countries but to the rest of the world including Africa, South East Asia, and even more prosperous countries.

The air pocket between those that are benefiting from globalization and those that are not should be filled immediately and quickly. Government and public institutions thought almost two decades ago that trade and privatization could overcome these problems but it did not. Inamura suggests that we need to seek new mechanisms to fill that gap and establish sustainability and security.

Okamura requested an update from Sato of MOFA on PALM meetings in Okinawa and other leadership and ICT program activities.

Sato expressed that he fully shares the views expressed by Inamura. Development issues should be looked at in a comprehensive way. ICT is one of the many factors to be considered. A view of the complete package is the starting point. This is why MOFA established the Okinawa partnership as part of PALM 4. Sato recommends that the committee read the documents found in Ref. 3.1: Leaders Declaration and "Assistance of Japan toward PIF Members".

ICT is one of the focal areas in the upcoming three years. The entire concept is to establish the complete framework within which the implementation is conducted in three years.

Five areas of need have been identified: (1) Economic Growth; (2) Sustainable Development; (3) Good Governance; (4) Security; and (5) People to People Communication and Exchange. MOFA has supported this kind of efforts for a long time and has achieved good results. At the same time to achieve better results we need better collaboration among every sector (private, universities, etc.) What is lacking is the networking of all the sectors. It is timely and important to have this kind of study group.

Okamura adding to Sato's comments, it is recognized that there are many activities in all of the sectors that ICT may help to provide the layer for support of the cooperation and collaboration. This is what PIDO has been supporting since the Okinawan Declaration in 2000.

All committee members agree to the proposed PIDO Plan and Saga will make minor changes that reflect comments from members.

4. Reports on ICT projects of SPINF

Ref. 4.1 Policy Reform of Micronesian ICT (Okamura, Higa)

Okamura introduces the Telecommunications and Information Policy Group of the University of Hawaii (UH TIPG). UH TIPG missions includes ongoing research in public service telecommunication, support, when requested, in policy development, design and implementation of networks; works with content development; and manages several networks. A major program focus is education and training in ICT capacity development within the region.

Project Background: Kosuge and Hayakawa had a major role in the development of the USPNetwork, where the initial funding request from USP was to SPF. In 2000 G8 countries established the Okinawa Declaration to help to support ICT development.

ePacifika program came about through the digital divide declaration through funding by Japan to the UNDP to assist in the development of Pacific Island country and regional strategies.

A major area of focus is in policy and regulatory reform. The Pacific Island countries are small and in most part utilize monopoly telecommunication structures today. All countries express desires to move forward in liberalizing the telecommunication environments but require individual and institutional ICT policy capacity development and assistance.

eMarshalls and eFSM plans in 2002 recognized the importance of ICT reform in economic and social development. In the RMI and FSM national ICT plans are moving forward. There has been introduction of legislation to implement plans. FSM has asked TIPG for assistance in helping to develop their legislative plans.

PIDO and TIPG supports this activity because if plans are development, there will be sustainability. During the planning workshops information provided by Saga, JICA (Mr. Makino) and JICA's policy plans and documents were very useful resources.

Report on SPINF Workshop in FSM and RMI: Workshops were held in FSM and RMI to work through national ICT strategies, liberalization and issues of capacity building.

Topics included basic telecom terms and concepts; regulatory issues in the Pacific Islands; review stakeholder needs; universal service options; ICT capacity development (technical, policy, regulation) and develop workshop recommendations.

The RMI workshop was held on February 15 and 16, 2006. There were 30-participants from different sections of the government, public and private sectors.

The FSM workshop was held on March 15 and 16, 2006. There were 66-leaders from national and state government, education and health care. The participation was very good with increased participation as the workshop proceeded.

The workshop recommendations – support from PIDO and TIPG to draft legislation over a two week period, one of the issues that was very important for FSM was the fiber optic connectivity.

The second part of the PIDO project is to support Local capacity development through the University of Hawaii Telecommunications and Information Resource Management (TIRM) graduate certificate program. There are 15-participants of which 7-are supported through the PIDO project. The course is delivered through the PEACESAT network using interactive video teleconferencing. The participants includes the IT Directors of the College of the Marshall Islands, College of Micronesia and the Communication Directors for the government of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and also includes the RMI Secretary of Transportation and Communication.

Ref. 4. 2 e-Health Training Project, Pacific Science Congress 2007 Okinawa (Nakajima)

ITU activities in e-Health fall within the framework adopted by the ITU Membership at the Third World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC). The initial framework for telemedicine was established in 1994 at the first WTDC held in Buenos

Aires. However during WTDC in 2002 in Istanbul, Turkey, a formal Action Plan was established that incorporated the assistance of developing countries and the implementation of telemedicine services. Each government was asked to promote telehealth using telecommunication and also promote the concept of universal service funding.

The Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) conducted four workshops in cooperation with the Japanese government. The next workshops will be held in Thailand and Okinawa.

The Pacific Open Learning Health Network (POLHN) was established by the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific. This project was funded by the Japanese Government in FY1998, \$2 million was provided to conduct and promote e-Health networks in the South Pacific.

There are still many places that are offline and depend on narrowband telecommunication links. In the future these areas may be served with broadband possibly using WINDS satellite. An application of broadband communication is mobile e-Health.

SPINF Invitation program: two researchers from the Pacific will take the 3-month ITU Telemedicine Expert Training Course. Contents of the class include basics of Internet, WiFi, NIVS, Mobile e-Health, development of Multimedia content, and clinical study related to emergency medical services.

Packet Radio Communication on HF – Near Vertical Inclined Skywave, originally developed by Russian military to support terrestrial communication when public lines were broken. This narrow band wireless communication system utilizes the ionosphere and can possibly be converted for applications in remote areas.

The classification of infectious disease projects provides information on AIDS, Malaria, airborne, waterborne and other diseases. It was created with student's multimedia content and distribute to Pacific Islands.

21st Pacific Science Congress is scheduled for June 13 – 17, 2007 will be held in Okinawa, Japan. There is a planned Asia Pacific Telemedicine Session sponsored by APT, MIC, SPINF on June 14-15, 2007.

Nakazawa expressed that he is proud of Nakajima's efforts for that past 5-years. Nakajima supported APT activities and many human rights development projects. Nakajima has established a good relationship with ITU-D and APT in the field of telehealth.

Ref. 4.3 USP Online course development for Law School (Kosuge, Hayakawa)

Hayakawa explained historical background of SPINF and ICT projects. In 1988, the late Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara the first Prime Minister of Fiji requested to the late Ryoichi Sasakawa for support to launch a communication satellite. This SPINF's first introduction to the project that later evolved into the USPNet. SPINF could not fund the satellite or technical network but provided advice and assistance in obtaining funding from the Japanese Government to support this effort.

SPINF supported the Pacific Islands with about \$2 million US dollars in the last 15-years. Documentation summarizing the support and activities will be created for the committee's review.

Currently SPINF is creating a grant for USP Law School in Vanuatu for developing online Master degree for the Environmental Law for three years (2006-2008). In 2002-2004, SPINF funded 13 million yen to establish 60 Bachelor level Law school courses.

Kosuge explained that originally the SPINF conducted the investigation and study of the USPNet from 1993.

The current network works very well even though the bandwidth is narrow. There are plans for implemented improved technology to expand the distance education system. A proposal was submitted after the network implementation for continued technical support and cooperation. Technical support through JICA was also requested. This was continued for three years and just was finished in August 2005. The evaluation of the project has been completed and it was found that the network significantly helped USP.

A current proposal is to establish the USP ICT Center. The original USPNet project is viewed as a successful Japanese aid project and so the ICT center should be considered. Japan, Fiji and related government negotiations are continuing. New projects are still pending. The Vice Chancellor's Office of USP would like to proceed but they did not receive a good response from the government of Fiji to open up the access of the project. It is possible that this month the new budget will be fixed at least before September 2006. PIDO should also support this project through complementing activities.

5 PIDO/Pacific role in the Internet Governance Forum (Peake) see Ref. 5

Adam Peake provided a summary of a program called the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). The World Summit on the Information Society meeting in Tunis, 2005, identified the importance of improving policymaking processes for Internet and ICT issues. The Pacific Islands are now represented and are active participants in the WSIS follow-up activities. The next stage is IGF, the first meeting will be held in Athens, 30 October – 2 November 2006.

Internet Governance was one of the most contentious issues in WSIS. The policy process and procedures on the use and management of the Internet were an important focus. Also issues concerning the operational and content layer of the Internet were discussed. Governments in Tunis Summit asked the UN Secretary General to convene a new multi-stakeholder forum where a dialogue on internet governance issues could begin, and to include participation of all stakeholders from all regions. This dialogue is called the IGF. IGF is not an annual meeting, it is a start of the dialogue and is intended to be continuous. Peake was asked to join the IGF Advisory Group.

Initially decided to look at four main issues: (1) Openness - access to knowledge, open source; (2) Security - spam, phishing, viruses, privacy and impact regarding trust in the network and ICTs; (3) Diversity - local content, multilingualism, internationalized domain names; and (4) Access -particularly relevant to PIDO- Internet policy, interconnection rates, interoperability and open standards. Need to encourage people to understand that the success of Internet comes through openness, do not need to get permission to start a new service.

The overall theme of IGF is Internet Governance for Development, a crosscutting theme is capacity building.

The paper contribution deadline is August 2nd (the day after the PIDO meeting).

Proposals for workshops are due on August 24th. All sectors and geographic regions should be represented.

There is no funding, unlike WSIS this is not within UN funding. There will be some Pacific Involvement (a representative from Samoa is part of the IGF secretariat).

The meeting will be free for entry but travel and accommodation must be covered by participants. Accreditation will be a typical UN standard and process. There are website references. It is expected and hoped that Kofi Annan will attend and the Greek Prime Minister and approximately 900 people are expected to attend.

6. Collaborative Development and Sharing of Open Educational Resources (Barrett) see Ref. 6

Barret's presentation focused on the notion of 'Open.' In this world we have two models – competitive and collaborative. The collaborative model is much more difficult.

The UNU is a member of the Global OpenCourseWare Consortium. The UNU believes in the need for an Information Society that is open to all. This means open educational resources, open source software, open networks and open standards. When ever possible this is integrated in how the UNU works.

Barrett provided some examples including: UNU MERIT FLOSS projects, UNU-IIST Global Desktop Project, and UNU Media Studio.

Creative Commons license allows the sharing of content more effectively over the internet.

With Web 2.0 the web evolved into a new creature. Explosion of social software (blogs, wikis, podcasting...), increases openness in licensing schemes, RSS feeds, web identity (taking one identity to different applications). The web has changed to be user driven rather than institution driven. There is a new theory that describes how the web is functioning.

Exploratory maps where people can see different content is very exciting and engaging. Some activities include building libraries of web content, course modules with added multimedia dimension. Shift to course module tools such as a blog for sharing views on various topics.

Open source software tools are used for facilitating projects. For example IP based video conferencing and chats, Google calendar, share all bookmarks, on-line project management tools, Skype, helps to coordinate and collaborate such activities. Most are free open source.

Massive web innovations are possible at very low cost – this includes web hosting with similar capabilities for only \$6.95/month (ICDSOFT.com). This makes it possible to move out of own institutional network to setting up your own web sites, blogs, etc.

There are interesting literature about the wealth of networks from Yochai Benkler, of how social production is reshaping markets to enhance individual freedom, cultural diversity, political discourse and justice.

We are in the early days – only about one percent of people using the Internet are creating content, 10 are synthesizers, and 100 consumers.

UNU hopes and has an objective to increase the active creators to a much larger group for the Internet to fulfill its potential.

Inamura made comments that the meeting agenda items, specifically 5 and 6 have more relevance to the program for the Pacific Islands.

7. Other matters

Saga explained and reviewed the Asia Broadband Program – new program will be endorsed this month. A clear description to strengthen Pacific Island countries involvement. As a member of the AB working group Saga participated in the discussions of redrafting the project plans. Perhaps the re-draft will be one of the first results of the PIDO special committee.

APT Human Resource Development joint research program, Saga is coordinating with Jorden Johnnyboy of FSM. They will look at how to create a development model for telecenters in the Pacific Island, remote island areas?

Saga expresses his thanks to participants that we could receive important information from our members. This is a good starting point of our new special committee. .

Uno explained that Regional Center of Expertise for Sustainable Development. Promoted by UNUAIS located in Yokohama. There are 20 RCEs in the world. The one focused in pacific, RIC Pacific based in Fiji. IT Center might be a counterpart. RCEs are focused on sustainable development. There is a commitment internationally with a lot of government support including Japan.

Uno's role is to promote content development. USP is supported by 12 island countries – based on content for sustainable development.

Saga: PICISOC meeting in Samoa August 2006 might be a good opportunity for Pacific Island leaders to discuss Internet Governance. Saga invites Adam Peake to provide him some information that he may share at PICISOC.