

Minutes of the 2nd PIDO/PIPS JOINT STUDY

Date: 10:00 – 12:00 AM December 16, 2006

Venue: The Sasakawa Peace Foundation Conference Room
(Nippon Foundation Building 4th Floor)

Guest Speaker and titles of their presentations:

Mr. Jolden J. Johnnyboy,

Assistant Secretary

Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure, Federated States of Micronesia

“Information and Communication Technology in the Federated States of Micronesia”

Mr. Gordon Segal

Head of IT Department, College of Micronesia

“Information and Communication Technology at College of Micronesia: Present and Future”

List of Participants:

Professor Tsutomu Kikuchi, Head of PIPS, member of PIDO

Aoyama Gakuin University, School of International Politics, Economics, and Business, Department of International Politics, Tokyo, Japan

Professor Kenji Saga, Head of PIDO, member of PIPS

Research Fellow, National Institute of Information and Communications Technology, Tokyo, Japan

Dr. Pramanik Kader, member of PIDO, ICT Consultant

Mr. Tomonao Watanabe, Observer of PIDO,
Sector Strategy Development Department, JBIC

Observer:

Mr. Muhammad Athar Sadiq, Associate Professor, The Tokai University

Mr. Koredianto Usman, Staff Research Associate, The Tokai University

Mr. Jokatama Ravono, Ministry of Health, Fiji

Mr. Jone Tanivunamaravu Navale, Ministry of Health, Fiji

Secretariat

Dr. Norio Ohto, Program Officer, SPINF

Ms. Rieko Hayakawa, Project Coordinator, SPINF

Chair and Head of PIPS, Prof Kikuchi started the seminar. He welcomed the two speakers from FSM and asked Prof Saga, Head of PIDO who arranged their visit to Japan, to introduce them.

Saga: The purpose of their visit to Japan is to undertake part of a joint research project. The APT (Asia Pacific Tele-community) made a grant to the FSM to conduct a joint research study on the HRD Program for the Exchange of ICT Researchers and Engineers. This was originally funded by the Japanese Government. They have already spent one week in Japan, and have had a very busy day with a very intensive study program. Today is the last day of their visit (ref. 1 and 2).

Jonnyboy:

On behalf of the Federated States of Micronesia and the College of Micronesia we appreciate this opportunity provided by PIDO and SPINF, as well as the presence of today's distinguished guests.

I would like to present the ICT situation with a Power Point Presentation (ref. 3).

(Here summarized only what is not mentioned in Power Point materials. Secretariat)

My presentation is based on the current assessment by SOPAC. Mr Siao Si Sovaleni of SOPAC visited FSM for the assessment, and due to time limitations we intentionally conducted the study on only Yap and Pohnpei. These were selected because Yap is the middle of the development of ICT in the country,

and Pohnpei is the capital of FSM.

The geography of FSM is that each state is widespread with low concentrations of population. The challenge of telecommunication is how to connect these small islands. For education purposes, we adopted the HF voice and email network which was arranged by Bruce Best of the University of Guam and funded by SPINF. This system is the same as the People's First Network in Solomon Islands.

Country Profile and General Information:

National authority is limited because all lands are owned by States. The State also owns the shoreline up to 12 miles, and beyond that up to 200 nautical miles is under National jurisdiction.

We have more than 20 days as national holidays including the US and UN holidays. We islanders love holidays.

Regulatory and Telecom Structure:

Since 1996 when the Internet was introduced, lots of attention focused on Telecommunication. The responsibility of regulation and the development of ICT policy has fallen on the Division of Communication. The Division of Communication has only two staff, myself and a manager, but the managers position has been replaced frequently. This means I have to manage very complicated issues by myself, but I believe that we can manage.

Regarding FSM Telecom Corporate, when Government funds are needed for Universal Service to remote areas, we can not really afford this. So this is a tricky

area, however, so far we have decided not to interfere with FSM Telecom business decisions as government policy.

ICT User groups such as ICT society do not exist in the FSM so far. In the south Pacific, such as Samoa and Fiji, they have been very influential for ICT development. FSM may need this kind of group.

Regarding National Initiatives, we organized two workshops in 2002 and 2005 which was funded by SPINF and supported by PIDO, University of Hawaii and JICA. In 2002 we had 60 stakeholders, with the second one more focused on regulation and affordable access. These two workshops really gave us a good opportunity to move forward.

National ICT Plan: A National ICT committee is planned to implement the ICT plan from 2007.

Chair, Prof Kikuchi asked Mr Segal to make presentation.

Segal: Thank you for this opportunity today. I would like to focus on the COM and make presentation with my Power Point (ref.4)

(Here summarized only what is not mentioned in Power Point materials. Secretariat)

To meet the geographic and culturally diversity of the College we have recently

restructured the organization.

Q & A

Kikuchi: Thank you very much for your informative presentations. Now I would like to open the floor for discussions, comments, questions and etc.

Kader: With a monopoly telecom service you may not expect lots of service. What do you think? Can you expand your network more? Also what do you expect Japan and other donor countries.

Jonnyboy: So far the service is limited, but we can do more in the future with better services. We can do much more but we are limited by costs. What do we expect? We need more help with what is next – how to move forward, for instance in Policy direction. Policy direction is needed to develop in time to give us the guidelines to move forward. We lack in capacity areas, not equipment. We do not need support for equipment, but policy. Show us the way. We should be responsible for our equipment and operation cost and whatever. As an example, we have a plan to improve our government broadband connectivity linking the government, states and school. Capacity building guidelines as far as government policies are concerned.

Saga: regarding budget, the COM is funded by the National government not the state governments, is it right? So all the state campuses are funded by the

National Government? All students are provided with an Internet account? How about staff?

Segal: All students have an internet account, and they are paid US\$50 per semester for the account. We have 2 semesters a year, so that's US\$100 per year. We have about 2,000 students for all of Micronesia.

Kikuchi: Total annual student fee will be US\$ 200,000 and it will be just cover telecommunication cost.

Segal: Yes. Most of tuition fee goes to Telecom.

Hayakawa: If each campus of COM is connecting, do they implement Distance Education Courses among the campuses? How about distance education with overseas Universities and Colleges such as University of Guam, Palau Community college? If you do not, do you have any plan in the future?

Segal: We have a MOU with UOG to teach some of their courses but not using Distance Education method. We use local experts or invite UOG's instructors to teach or help with content of courses at our campus – but they teach at the same campus, not remote sites. Our bandwidth is too small to implement DE.

Hayakawa: Regarding the issue of China and the US, it my understanding you visited China before you came to Japan. What is China's interests in the IT development of FSM? Secondly, as part of the three Micronesian Free Associates States (Palau, FSM and Marshall Islands), you enjoy a special

relationship with the US. I heard that there is a plan to use US military telecommunication networks for FSM communication. What is going on with this issue? Also under the compact, respect of security issues and ICT, is there any interference from the US government on FSM IT regulation and etc.?

Jonnyboy:

We know the People's Republic China have an interest in an IT project. We visited China to meet a Chinese supplier company as part of this potential interest in the e-government project in FSM. We would like to proceed first with e-Government, then as a next step to upgrade the hospital network and the education sector. As part of the National ICT plan, we have not thought about overseas connections so far, but only the domestic network at this stage.

In terms of the US, we have concluded the fiber optics cable project. This connects Guam, only Pohnpei in FSM and Kwajalein. of RMI. There are two lines. One is for exclusive military purposes which connects from Guam to Kwajalein. The other connects Guam – Pohnpei – Majuro. The FSM would like to work with the RMI government and are looking for US Funds for this. Kwajalein. is a strategically critical site for the US military having a missile range - star wars technology. The CEO of FSM Telecom will discuss this further in January 2007.

Saga: Regarding funds for this network, do you go to the FSM Government or to Telecom?

Jonnyboy: We leave it to Telecom.

Tokai Rep.: What kind of courses are you offering for ICT

Segal: We have recently opened a Cisco academy for entry level. I would categorize our existing IT courses as introductory in programming and networking so not very advanced

Tokai rep.: Are they full time students?

Segal: They are full time students mostly from the FSM, although we have had the occasional Japanese exchange student from Waseda University.

Hayakawa: In terms of inter-linkage and collaboration, both FSM and Palau are not members of USP, but it is my understanding that USP has approached your countries to be a member or affiliate of USPNet and share their network.

Segal: It has been discussed, but I do not know current status. At this point they are weighing their options.

Jonnyboy: There is also an issue of licensing with FSM telecom which has a guaranteed monopoly. However, as far as educational purposes and the perspective of a Universal Service there is a possibility to issue a special license to USPNet. We are still working on regulation reform.

Kader: USP course is high level and the other issue is that USPNet is a closed network so it would be difficult to get access to it. Also USP has a British school

system or operations while FSM and Palau has a US school system, thus having different semester periods.

Saga: Annual budget is US\$300,000 for ICT of COM which includes salary?

Segal: Yes, and US\$180,000 is for telecom costs. We have to pay 10 personnel from the rest of the US\$120,000. Also we replace one lab every two of three year.

Tokai rep: Do you have any negotiations with your Government to reduce the price?

Jonnyboy: Government policy is not to interfere in Telecom business, however now we are working on policy reform and anything can happen in legislation. We can try can force special offer to school and health.

We could introduce open competition such as American Samoa and CNMI. At this moment FSM is not a member of NECA of US, because of our monopoly. However, in the future we may be a member of NECA and apply Universal Service Fund of US as a possible option.

Kikuchi Regarding the higher education population, where are they going to further their education?

Segal: Graduate student will go to the US for further training, but those that stay

behind are filling the managerial roles in FSM.

Jonnyboy: We do not need a VISA to go to the US, and we are eligible for the US Colleges, so many of the educated population are going to US.

Segal: I came back to FSM!

Ohto: On behalf of SPINF, thank you very much for your attendance today.