

Pacific Regional Security Information Sharing Workshop

17-19 April 2018, Honiara

Outcomes Statement

Context

Pacific Islands Forum Leaders recognise that the security environment in the Pacific is constantly evolving, becoming more complex and increasingly challenging. It is acknowledged that no one country and no one agency can meet all of these challenges on its own. These challenges affect national and regional security through the maritime domain, including transnational crime, illegal unreported and unregulated fishing, human trafficking and people-smuggling, marine pollution, environmental harm, sea and air transport safety, and humanitarian and disaster response.

Maritime threats are growing in scope and complexity, particularly with respect to cyber security, health and climate change. Within this context, much progress has been made in addressing illegal unreported and unregulated fishing through strengthened maritime domain awareness, and there is considerable scope to build on this to address other transnational crime.

Sharing information is critical to combating a range of regional threats, vital for more effective use of domestic law enforcement capability, and contributing to enhancing security and stability across the region, including maritime security, safety and environmental protection.

The Pacific Information Sharing Workshop co-hosts and participants share a commitment to strengthening security information sharing and enforcement of maritime, fisheries and transnational crime laws. These laws are critical to both regional security and realisation of the Pacific's sustainable development objectives for improved livelihoods, wellbeing and sustainable use of the environment. Partners are interested in exploring practical options to build on existing mechanisms, strengthen cooperation and support Pacific Island countries to increase maritime domain awareness and promote sovereignty.

The workshop was convened to facilitate a strategic discussion with a view to inform the development of a new *Biketawa Plus* regional security declaration. It was intended to develop broad regional consensus around information sharing for improved maritime domain awareness, information analysis and law enforcement, which may provide a guide to wider regional information sharing.

Participants were drawn from PIF member countries, technical experts, a cross section of national agencies (foreign affairs, fisheries, law enforcement) and regional organisations with an interest in Pacific information sharing (as attached).

PARTICIPANTS OF THE INFORMATION SHARING WORKSHOP:

RESPONDING to the call by Pacific Islands Forum Leader to strengthen information sharing, particularly in the Honiara Declaration (1992), Aitutaki Declaration (1997), and Vava'u Declaration (2007), and most recently in their 2017 Communique;

RECOGNISING that collaboration between law enforcement agencies at the border is critical to national security;

RECOGNISING existing mechanisms and systems for exchanging information, including the Niue Treaty Information System, Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) Regional Information Management Facility, Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre (PTCCC), All Partners Access Network,

Automated System for Customs Information and Customs Enforcement Network, and the proposed Declaration of Partnership between the Oceanic Customs Organisation, Pacific Immigration Directors Conference and Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police;

FURTHER RECOGNISING the considerable capacity for operational information management and analysis in regional organisations, particularly in the FFA Regional Fisheries Surveillance Centre and PTCCC;

DETERMINED to continuously strengthen regional cooperation in law enforcement, including through information sharing;

FURTHER DETERMINED to cooperate to support the development of a new *Biketawa Plus* declaration; and

EXPRESSED gratitude to the FFA, PIF Secretariat and Australia for hosting the workshop and to the people and government of Solomon Islands for their hospitality.

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

Pacific Islands Forum members have strong national and regional interests in:

1. Enhancing their collective security and building on a history of working together to achieve this objective.
2. Sharing information where possible, noting that exchange, aggregation and shared analysis contribute to stronger regional security and law enforcement.
3. Strengthening coordination, and identifying and addressing gaps to build a more comprehensive common operating picture to inform regional and national security decision making.
4. Enhancing coordination and use of available information to improve law enforcement efficiency and effectiveness, and leveraging strengths to respond to regional security threats.
5. Working together to address new and emerging threats through greater exchange and analysis of information, including with respect to strengthening regional maritime domain awareness.
6. Promoting, at both the regional and national levels, stronger voluntary utilisation and integration of information within agreed protocols to:
 - a. better respond to requests for information related to specific security challenges;
 - b. routinely exchange information for the respective purposes of the organisations;
 - c. share analysis and threat assessment based on joint data; and
 - d. align data security classifications and standards.

Principles of regional information sharing

7. The purpose of greater information sharing is to strengthen regional security and inform better use of existing scarce resources. Information sharing is not the end point, rather, it is a foundation to better awareness of the 'Blue Pacific' and its ongoing security challenges.

8. Information is a national asset and remains under national ownership. The trend to greater information sharing does not displace information ownership, which is recognised as a fundamental principle of expanded regional information sharing.
9. Information owners define the users that have access to their information and how access can be granted to users, including third parties.
10. National governments and regional organisations have distinct policy and operational mandates that constitute components of a common regional operating picture; collectively those mandates provide a basis for greater collaboration to address regional and domestic security challenges.
11. Protocols for data security exist and should be maintained and regularly reviewed to ensure information security. Existing protocols should be the starting point for expanded information sharing.
12. Any new procedures for granting access to information should be collectively developed and recognise existing procedures, the principle of reciprocity, the need for consultation, opportunities for engagement and should recognise the domestic and regional implications of new initiatives.
13. Information should be shared where exchange, aggregation and analysis of information contributes to stronger maritime domain awareness, regional security and law enforcement.

Recommendations

Participants recommend that these outcomes be considered by the Forum Officials Committee in 2018 for conveyance to the Forum Foreign Ministers and, in parallel, be considered by national governments and regional organisation governing councils. Participants recommended they:

1. Consider the principles identified in this outcomes statement in the *Biketawa Plus* consultation and negotiation process being managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.
2. Consider the following elements that could become part of an action plan under *Biketawa Plus*:
 - a. Renewed commitment and discussion on regional information sharing, with an initial focus on strengthening and leveraging maritime domain awareness and transnational crime information, with a view to piloting approaches for wider regional information sharing and analysis;
 - b. Identifying initial opportunities to strengthen maritime domain awareness and collaboration between regional organisations, including sharing best practice, that are within the existing mandates of the organisations and their respective memberships;
 - c. Regional agencies that already hold security information and have existing processes to share and use that information should form a cross agency technical working group, including appropriate representation from their membership, to advance enhanced information sharing for maritime domain awareness, including:

- i. Linking information security protocols, national and regional legal frameworks, and system requirements for data fusion and analysis
 - ii. Exploring direct avenues, respecting the mandate of each agency, for data fusion, analysis and exchange;
 - b. Consider appropriate governance, management and oversight arrangements for new information sharing that is outside the existing mandates of regional organisations. This could include regular information sharing dialogues, project based shared analysis teams, a dedicated information sharing network and/or a fusion centre; and
 - c. Working in concert with members and regional partners, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat should develop a strategy that considers the roles and potential for engagement with other stakeholders, including the private sector, international organisations and NGOs.
- 3. Consider options for resourcing this action plan (and wider actions under *Biketawa Plus*), and developing achievable timeframes for specific actions.