

Kia Orana tatou katoatoa i te aroa manaana o to tatou atu ko Iesu Mesia.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources Mr Paula Cirikiyasawa, Director General of the Pacific Community, Dr Stuart Minchin, Members of the Pacific Geospatial & Surveying Council, Distinguished Delegates and Experts, the Partnership Desk Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council I welcome you all and including our virtual participants to the **Expert Consultation and Meeting on Enhancing Geospatial Information Management Arrangements and Accelerating the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals together with the Sub-regional Workshop on United Nations Integrate Geospatial Information Framework for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories**

Our theme for this meeting: Identifying Problems, Finding Solutions

The Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council, also known as the PGSC, is an independent regional advisory body that provides a forum for Pacific Island geospatial information and survey authorities to discuss and address regional challenges.

In November 2014, a group of Pacific regional surveying and geospatial experts met in the margins of the annual Pacific Geospatial Information Systems and Remote Sensing (GIS/RS) User Conference in Suva, Fiji. It was at this meeting that the Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council (PGSC) was first envisaged and a charter governing its mission and objectives was developed.

- Building the capacity of regional surveyors
- Improving and standardising geospatial information gathering and dissemination
- Maximising economic growth and alleviating poverty
- Informing natural resource management, disaster risk management and climate change adaptation

As Pacific Islands Countries and territories we continue to combat with the increasing climate crisis and environmental degradation, deepening inequalities, and an uneven and uncertain global economic outlook, achieving the SDGs and building resilience remain our best way forward.

The Pacific Islands and territories communities must strengthen its efforts to address these crises and understanding the challenges, opportunities, capacities and capabilities.

Our efforts providing critical Geospatial information can play a pivotal role.

Our country geospatial needs and priorities are primary example, geospatial information is crucial for identifying how Pacific Island countries and territories communities could be impacted by changing climate and hazard events. This is key for assisting policymakers to make informed decisions and shape government priorities that support national resilience, adaptation, and mitigation.

Through the work of the PGSC, SPC and UN-GGIM Committee of Experts strengthened geospatial information management programme, the PGSC is in a better position to support Pacific Countries and territories implement the common Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and produce the geospatial information you need, and we must leverage the playing field and ensuring no one is left behind.

Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council members in this meeting will provide 'status reports', the prevailing country circumstances, perspectives, views, aspirations and needs, and discuss key elements of national efforts and priorities towards enhancing their geospatial information management arrangements, resources, capacities and leadership, and to address their challenges and opportunities.

We must have access to the high-quality geospatial information and services provided by UN-GGIM and other regional and international institutions. PGSC and SPC must take the lead to developed training programs and creating meaningful impact through capacity-building and knowledge-sharing.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank you for all your participation, contributions to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and we must keep the momentum to achieve goals.

We also need to identify opportunities to strengthen the capacities and capabilities of climate-vulnerable Pacific Islands country and Territories to operationalize the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework at the country level.

Therefore, our Pacific Islands countries and territories need the tools and resources to apply integrated geospatial information to guide policy development and operational strategies for protecting coastal communities, marine biodiversity, disaster risk management and climate resilience.

We will not be able to achieve our countries priorities if we fail to engage with regional and international partners, not only as a source of investment but also for technical advice on sustainable business practices and responsible innovation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council, SPC, UN-GGIM, Regional and International partners Together, we must work towards creating a resilient, sustainable future that leaves no one behind. Effective use of geospatial information can help to get us there.

Allow me to end with a word of thanks, meitaki ma'ata and gratitude to the Government of Fiji, UN-GGIM and SPC, our hosts and co-organizers of this meeting for their continued partnership and support to enable us to travel and participate in this important meeting to advance our global geospatial information needs and priorities and for their wonderful hospitality.

I wish everyone in here and our virtual participants a productive, engaging, and inspiring meeting.

Thank you and meitaki ma'ata