



CORRUPTION WORKING GROUP MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday 3rd September 2021

12.00pm Nauru time

1. **Welcome:** - Corruption WG Chair – Ronald Talasasa – Director Public Prosecution Republic of Nauru.

2. **Present:**
 - ii. Johnson Asher – Assistant Attorney General, FSM
 - iii. Annabel Maxwell-Scott – Deputy Solicitor General – Cook Islands
 - iv. Meg Rudder - – Senior Legal Officer, Australia AGD
 - v. Sarla Hallock – Legal Officer, Australia AGD
 - vi. Sasae Walter – Coordinator, PILON
 - vii. Rosy Fogatia – Assistant Coordinator, PILON

Chair welcomed back Mr Johnson Asher, Assistant AG FSM, to the WG, and mentioned that Mr Asher was a pioneer member of this WG and he worked with Asher for many years since 2010 under the chairmanship of several colleagues who have moved onto other callings.

Apologies:

Rachel Olutimayin – DPP Solomon Islands

3. Matters for Discussion:

1. Minutes 9 February 2021

Members approved the minutes of 9 February 2021. Chair made a motion and seconded by FSM.

Meg informed members that Australia regrets to advise that due to resourcing and very strict covid lockdown, the live round table discussion as a follow up from the whistleblower webinar will not go ahead, and they are unable to progress this activity this year.

4.2 – Whistleblowing webinar Series.

The webinar series has concluded, the three webinars have been produced on whistleblowing and have been uploaded on the PILON website. Work is progressing on the animated video of whistleblowing and it should be available to members to access towards the end of the year.

4.3 - Update of Framework for Prosecuting Corruption Booklet.

The updated Corruption Booklet has been printed, and the hard copies will be sent out by AAGD to all PILON members. It will also be uploaded onto the PILON website so every member can access and read about the experiences and the challenges that prosecutors have experienced when prosecuting corruption in the Pacific.

2. Annual Meeting 5 November 2021

Date – Friday 5 November 2021

Time - 2.00pm – 4.00pm Samoan time

Registration:

About 13 member countries have registered and have indicated their heads of delegation. Some member countries are attending with 3 to 4 other delegates.

Country Reports:

Members have been reminded that the due date for submission of Country Report is Thursday 30th September.

Agenda:

All members have been sent an invite to the AM with relevant documents including the Draft Agenda.

The Chair of the Corruption WG will be given 5 minutes to present in the AM. He will update members on the work and activities of the WG and also present a workplan for the next year, 2022.

3. Way Forward: WG Workplan 2022

Training for prosecutors and police investigators with a focus on:

i. Mutual assistance to obtain evidence:

Meg shared that the work this year was mainly on whistleblowing, and the webinar series is now completed with the exception of the animated videos that is yet to be finished. Next year, perhaps we can turn the focus on training for prosecutors and police investigators on Mutual Assistance to Obtain Evidence. She mentioned that feedback was received informally that the upskilling of prosecutors on this area is very much needed.

ii. Prosecuting corruption using digital evidence:

Meg also shared that they've received some very positive feedback for some training done in 2020 on how to use and analyse financial evidence, bank statement etc, in prosecuting corruption. She mentioned that feedback was received that more training in this area would be very useful.

She also suggested that this can be a joint activity with the PILON Cybercrime working group, they're a very large and very active WG and have a lot of resources to draw from.

Chair added that these matters are very relevant to what is happening now, and gives his full support to the areas nominated for training.

Asher agreed and supported the trainings on the mentioned areas as a focus on next year. He approved the trainings and upskilling of prosecutors especially training on using digital evidence is very important in upgrading capacities of our prosecutors.

Maxwell supported the suggestions for trainings and informed the WG that the Cook Islands have the NZ Police assisting with their corruption investigations and they provided helpful training to the Cook Islands Police. Part of the training include downloading and analysis of digital information on phones. She also mentioned that they can share their experiences especially since, this case they're dealing with is perhaps the first corruption case they've dealt with so far. She also raised some very interesting questions on prosecution of corruption cases on:

- i. What the experiences of other nations are in the previous years, and
- ii. What sort of relevant cases that are getting through and being presented?

3. Update of Framework for Prosecuting Corruption Booklet.

Australia thanked everyone who sent in updates on their legislative reforms and the cases they've had over a number of years since the first version of the booklet was produced. The information presented indicated where the members are up to in legislating the UN Convention against Corruption related Offenses.

Hardcopies will be sent out to members of the WG and PILON members as well. We will also be including this resource in the presentation for the Annual meeting.

4. **Other Matters:**

Chair welcomed on board Miss Sarla Hallock, Legal Officer AAGD who will be assisting the Corruption WG.

5. **Next Meeting:** Friday 8th October 2021

6. **Meeting Closed:** 1.46 Nauru time

Minutes for 8th September 2021, endorsed on 7th October 2021