

IGF 2017 Reporting Template

- Session Title: Managing cloud computing in the United Nations system

- Date: 18 December 2017

- Time: 10:45-11:45

- Session Organizer: UN Joint Inspection Unit

- Chair/Moderator: Jovan Kurbalija, Director of DiploFoundation and Head of the Geneva Internet Platform

- List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:

- Petru Dumitriu, Inspector at the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit
- Prado Nieto, Chief Customer Relationship Management, International Computing Centre
- Christina Vasala Kokkinaki, Legal Officer, International Organisation for Migration

Session summary:

This is an adaptation of the summary on the GIP Digital Watch Observatory, originally written by Foncham Denis Doh:

The session organised by **Mr Petru Dumitriu**, Inspector at the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (UN JIU), and **Ms Barbara Rosen Jacobson**, Programme Manager, DiploFoundation, and moderated by **Dr Jovan Kurbalija**, Director of DiploFoundation and Head of the Geneva Internet Platform, examined the need for the United Nations Systems to take advantage of the expanding possibilities of cloud services. It also discussed the challenges facing cloud computing and cloud governance.

Dumitriu introduced the session by talking about research that is to be carried out by the UN JIU, which aims to gather information to help UN Agencies to design and implement policies and practices of cloud computing. He said that cloud computing is a governance method and that issues such as control over data, risk management, and the protection of privacy and confidentiality, must be handled accordingly. He indicated that the research would include the following elements:

- Establish the current situation of cloud computing
- Produce preventive policies and action that can help prepare for cloud services
- Establish how to fully use the power of cloud solutions

He continued that cloud computing can be a tool that can help an organisation gather resources and make concerted actions.

Ms Prado Nieto, Chief Customer Relationship Management, International Computing Centre started by introducing the United Nations International Computing Center (UNICC) as a center for providing ICT services to the UN systems. She explained that UNICC is already providing private cloud computing services to the UN but that there is a need to connect to the public cloud. Yet, she highlighted that it is necessary for the UN to understand the risks of connecting to the public cloud, which include:

- The risk that the cloud provider could misuse information
- The risk of state actors using legal means to access public cloud services

Nieto continued that the advantages of cloud computing are many, including:

- Quicker provision of services

- High performance with replicated data centers
- Standardisation with updated operating systems
- High innovation with experts versed with the latest technology
- Cost effectiveness, which is key due to UN's financial hardship

Despite these advantages, Nieto insisted that it is important for organisations to understand the challenges of cloud computing, such as security risks and resources. She concluded that the UN will ultimately connect to the public cloud, as it needs to provide high quality services with a minimum budget, although some information will be kept in the private cloud. UNICC is there to help UN agencies in this move. Kurbalija added that institutions are usually more concerned about data protection than cost, efficiency, risk avoidance and reliability.

Ms Christina Vasala Kokkinaki, Legal Officer, International Organisation for Migration, talked about the legal issues of cloud computing for international organisations. She said international organisations enjoy privileges and immunities, but they face challenges related to the location of the cloud server and the transmission of data. She added that the greatest challenge is that international organisations feel they do not have control over their data when connected to the cloud.

She stressed that the issue of jurisdiction is important, indicating the complex interplay with data protection laws in the host country of the organisation or the organisation's server. On data security, she indicated that encryption and access control authentication can be used to mitigate data security challenges, but that organisations also need to consider issues as data retention and the how to ensure the removal of personal data once an organisation has stopped using it.

During the discussion that followed, participants expressed concerns on the need for budget allocation and the environmental impact of cloud computing.