Minutes of Meeting Geospatial Think Tank Meeting
Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2020
Time: 1030 – 1130 hrs
Venue: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Attended by:

1. Kiran Kumar
2. Dr. Shailesh Nayak
3. Lt. Gen. Girish Kumar
4. Vinit Goenka
5. Agendra Kumar
6. Dr. K J Ramesh
7. Jagdeesh Rao
8. Dr. V K Dadhwal
9. Rajesh Pant
10. Anoop Singh
11. Raj Alla
12. Pramod Kaushik
13. Srinibas Patnaik
14. Rajan Aiyer
15. Kaushik Chakraborty
16. Vishnu Chandra
17. Dr. Debpriya Dutta
18. Arun Bhardwaj
19. Pankaj Mishra
20. A K Singh
21. Sanjay Kumar
22. Lt Gen Ajay Chandele
23. Prashant Joshi
24. Anamika Das
25. Anusuya Datta
26. Megha Datta

Apologies from:

1. Dr. Mohan Reddy
2. Kamal Kishore
3. Shambhu Singh
4. Subhash Ashutosh
5. Amit Ghosh
6. Nikhil Kumar
7. Raj Khatri
8. Arabinda Mitra
9. V Uday Kumar

Minutes:

The Context
1. There are several national and state level initiatives in terms of tracking and monitoring patience and suspected patients, information on relief services and health facilities, but what is needed is a clearinghouse at NDMA/NIC/NITI Aayog level to coordinate various relief efforts
2. Govt efforts are mostly directed to health, but not as much for economic stability for now
3. Most of the village level relief interventions are being provided by CSOs
4. Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), like many other organizations works directly with the migrant workers, villagers and other marginalized communities to ensure

proper relief measures reach them in time. However, they feel more coordinated efforts are needed between donors, govt and CSOs

5. Information on slums and informal settlements is also not updated or readily available for crisis like the COVID-19, but the same can be assessed using satellite imagery and Artificial Intelligence
6. Broadly speaking we are working in silos and more synergies and pooling in of data by state actors, as well as CSOs and industry is needed
7. We also have to be wary that we not only solve yesterday's problem, but that of tomorrow's as well

Discussions

Govt Initiatives
1. Lt Gen Rajesh Pant, National Cyber Security Coordinator informed that govt has created 11 empowered groups on 29 Mar 2020 of which Gr 9 is focusing on data and technology, comprising of:
   a. Ajay Sawhney, Secy, MEITY
   b. Anshu Prakash, Secy, DoT
   c. G S Toteja, ADG, ICMR
   d. N Yuvraj, DS, Health
   e. Bharat H Khera, JS, Cabinet Sect
   f. Pratik Doshi, OSD/Manharsinh Yadav, DS/Hardik Shah, DS, PMO
2. We should give our consolidated suggestions to this group and Lt Gen Pant can help us doing that
3. Availability of different datasets to be integrated, like
   a. Schools and hospitals near highways, which can be effectively used for converting as relief and healthcare centers with FES
   b. Geocoded urban datasets with the election commission
   c. Several PoI related to COVID-19 with MapMyIndia
   d. 10,000 data layers is available from NDMA to state disaster agencies
   e. AICTE written to all colleges to ask how their facilities can be used
4. It was acknowledged that SoI as nodal agency developing the integrated geospatial platform is open to extending any kind of support for the initiative. The platform already has large inventory of data on schools, health care centers, hospitals etc, more data collaborations is welcome
5. NIC has taken several steps like making Bharat maps available to states, embedding geospatial services, citizen grievances & COVID details, clustering villages as per COVID issues and generation of portals for CMs
6. A portal on govt verified migration information is being developed in the next 2 days for Min of Labor and Employment, which will offer workflow to District Administration and state nodal officers

Challenges
7. Integrating different datasets has always been a challenge. If there is some template provided by the empowered group or NITI Aayog, it could help
8. It was also suggested to formulate a data model in open source/open access, made available in cloud platform

9. Even when data sharing between govt and others is a challenge, they are open to incorporating data from non-state actors too, specifying the layers that are being made available by CSOs or the private sector
10. Another challenge with the integrated geospatial platform was that at the backend, Data from Min of Health and Family Welfare was not available and they needed different types of linkage, while at the front end, integrating data on migration or social data was a challenge, as it often comes from non-state actors
11. How we can link these to expert group 9?
12. Interoperability of data is always an issue to be addressed
13. Lt Gen Ajay Chandele opined that the ultimate person implementing any intervention is a district level officer, who is well aware of the infrastructure and buildings in his territory, but what he needs is medical equipment/gears and relief materials. Hence, we should not have a top down approach, but a bottom up one
14. From the private sector side, software is being offered for free to govt or CSOs for a certain time period, but they face the challenge of whom to approach to extend help
15. In summary, the issue currently is - how do we give authentic information to people who need it the most

Need
1. To anticipate community level responses through predictive analytics at District levels
2. To assess if interventions are meeting requirements of the needy or not
3. To generate strategic guidance to the govt depts at district level through NDMA leveraging offers from the think tank
4. One of the mutually agreed point was that the efforts of organizations like FES are undertaking are important and should be helped immediately, rather than going in for the ideal
5. We need to develop a phased plan including short term, medium term and long-term strategy for developing a geospatial approach to address the current health crisis and upcoming economic one

Action Plan:

Three key action plans were zeroed upon.

1. In the short-term (within this month), the task force will develop a repository or metadata of
   a. What kind of data is available with whom (govt/CSO/pvt sec) and how are they accessible?
   b. What tools are available for what purpose?
   c. What apps are being developed?
   d. Who can help who?

2. In medium-term (by end of May 2020)
   a. We need to develop a structure of how to make use of an integrated geospatial platform for predictive modelling

3. In longer-term (June/July 2020) we need to look ahead post COVID-19 and get into a recovery and rehab mode, looking at economic dimensions too
   a. Develop a strategic report on growing and evolving role of geospatial knowledge infrastructure for rehabilitation and recovery from COVID-19, looking specifically into sectors like agriculture, rural development, health and well-being etc.
   b. Looking at likely geospatial apps for rehabilitation and redevelopment program