



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

MAJURO, MARSHALL ISLANDS 96960

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Republic of the Marshall Islands Updated Report on the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA)

NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF BPOA+10

Name of Country: REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

1. SOCIO ECONOMIC CONTEXT: Key characteristics, challenges and responses

- ***Key Characteristics:***

- a. *Geography and Climate*

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is a nation of 29 coral atolls and 5 islands which form two vast parallel chains scattered over 822,779 square miles of the Central Pacific. The Marshall Islands' 29 atolls and 5 individual islands make up a total of 70 square miles of land and are located between 4° and 19° North latitude and 160° and 175° East longitude. There are over 1,225 islands and 870 reef systems in the Marshall Islands with over 800 species of fish and 160 species of coral.

Temperatures in the Marshall Islands range from an average of 81-89°F with an average rainfall of 12-15” per month. The year-round tropical climate makes activities like aquaculture and tourism ideal for the Marshall Islands.

- b. *Population*

The total population of the Marshall Islands at present is estimated at 56,000. The annual growth rate is approximately 3%.

- c. *Government and Administration*

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is a self-governing democracy in free association with United States of America. The legislative body consists of a 33 member Nitijela (Parliament) who elects the President by majority vote. From the Nitijela, the President appoints his 10-member Cabinet. An 11-member Council of Iroij (Chiefs) presides over traditional and customary matters. The Constitution ensures equal rights of all citizens, and grants visitors full protection under the law.

Key Challenges: What are the key socio-economic challenges facing your country and what are some of the constraints your country faces with respect to these challenges? (The list below identifies some areas for your consideration. You may add additional areas if necessary):

i. Majuro – The Capital

Majuro is the capital of the Marshall Islands and is where the National Government is located and also the main business center. A significant portion of the population reside in Majuro with around 23,676 or 46.6% of the total population of the Island Nation and remains the most densely populated atoll in the country with a population density of 6,300 people per square mile. Much of the development of infrastructure for the nation was carried out in Majuro.

Health services are provided mainly by the Government through the Ministry of Health with main headquarters on Majuro. An upgrading of the hospital on Majuro is currently being carried out. This will help improve the level of health care services to the people. The upgraded facilities for the hospital should assist the Ministry in undertaking some of the diagnosis and treatments for which overseas referrals are currently required.

Solid waste is described as one of the most important environmental issues on Majuro and has been a topic of discussion particularly in the last few years. Small projects on can recycling are being piloted in some communities over the next 2 years. The system for waste management include collection of waste bins at designated areas and overseeing the land fill station at the airport. Despite some progress, a great deal of work needs to be done on reducing waste in Majuro. This would help improve the quality of health in communities as well as address tourism development.

ii. Ebeye – The Second Urban Center

Ebeye, the other major urban center in the Marshall Islands, has witnessed improvements in recent years in the provision of electricity and water supply and a sewage services. The construction of a new hospital facility has just been completed. This will help ensure that health problems that are prevalent on Ebeye are addressed internally. The management of the power plant has recently been privatized and the new management has made considerable progress in terms of collecting arrears of revenue. Moreover, the Causeway between Ebeye and Gugeegu Island is halfway completed and part of the excess population from Ebeye has been able to move out to Gugeegu as planned. This has helped reduce the congestion on the island of Ebeye. The telecommunication services have improved significantly. Extension and improvement in the water supply and sewage system is in progress and should be completed before the year is over. Renovation of the Desalinization Plant has been undertaken and once completed, will

lead to a considerable improvement in the water supply situation. In regard to education, the College of the Marshall Islands had established a second Campus on Gugeegu and has been successful in its operations for the last six years. More people in Ebeye have been able to find employment in the U.S Military Base in Kwajalein. The number of person so employed increased from 1100 in 1988, to over 1800 in 1999.

Despite the above progress, much more needs to be done on Ebeye to improve the quality of life. For example utility services including power, water and sewage are still far from adequate. Although the National Telecom Authority (NTA) has improved significantly, difficulties still exist in providing telecom services due to constraints such electric power shortcomings, amongst others. Education and health care services are still largely unsatisfactory and needs further strengthening. Many of the houses are congested and are of poor quality. Therefore, Solid waste management still significantly needs greater attention and improvement. Greater improvement is also much needed in Income distribution.

All of these challenges are barriers to improving life for the people of Ebeye. Thus, Ebeye still lacks good human capacity in almost all sectors. Hence, there is an urgent need for greater local capacity building and training of personnel, particularly in the health, education and environmental sectors. Furthermore, planning, management and better administrative skills, are some of the key crosscutting areas that Ebeye would need to considerably strengthen in order to better address the challenges it has been facing to date.

iii. Outer Islands

While the Capital has developed fast at a relatively fast speed, the developments in the Outer Islands have lagged behind. First of all, the infrastructure facilities in the Outer Islands have developed only slowly. For example, diesel generated electricity is available to all the households in Kili for lighting and to some extent in Jaluit, solar energy is used by a limited number of families in 16 other Outer Atolls. Most households in the Outer Islands use kerosene and firewood for cooking. Piped water is not available in almost all the Outer Islands. Although the quality of houses in the Outer Islands has improved to some extent, such progress has not matched that of Majuro. There are no private telephones in Outer Islands: common radio communication systems serve this need in the Outer atolls. Similarly, land, sea and air transport systems to the Outer Islands are still inadequate. Most of the Outer Island runways are not paved as yet resulting in a high degree of wear and tear for the Air Marshalls aircrafts, which supplies the domestic air services.

iv. National Population Trends and Health Status

Despite a significant reduction in population growth, the population is still young with over 41 percent of it being under 15 years. This phenomenon resulting from High growth rates in population and the labor force, poses two great challenges to the nation. Firstly, as a result of a high proportion of the population being made up of young dependents, RMI will need to continue spending a significant proportion of its resources on consumption. Secondly, when these youngsters grow up they will add to the already rapidly growing labor force and more jobs will have to be created to absorb them. It is also important to note that over the period under consideration the internal migration has also abated. Whereas the urban population increased from 33 percent in 1958 to 67 percent in 1988, in the intercensal period 1988-99 it increased only slightly to 68 percent. Compared to the 57 percent growth of the urban population in the intercensal period of 1980-88, the growth of such population in the intercensal period 1988-99 was only 19 percent.

Despite the drop in the *growth rate* in urban population, over two thirds of the people are living in the two urban centers of Majuro and Ebeye. The adverse consequences of such heavy population pressure are acutely felt in both these population centers, especially in Ebeye. In particular, the demands on housing, infrastructure and on essential services like health and education have been heavy and not adequately met. Overcrowding in many homes on Majuro and Ebeye has increased the incidence of communicable diseases such as TB, leprosy, conjunctivitis and skin diseases. Insufficient income to buy nutritious food for everyone in the home has perhaps led to the increase in the incidence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and hypertension.

A major problem associated with the massive internal migration is the fact that large numbers of youth idle in the urban centers without being involved in productive activities. They are not only unemployed but also live on the incomes of their extended families. The pressures on the environment and on the natural resources such as the plants and marine resources (reef fish) are another problem that has intensified, due to the urban concentration of the population. Social tension also is on the rise as people compete for land, space and money, thus leading to increasing frequency of land disputes between various owners, which further lead to discouragement of potential investors. Due to the major structural changes in RMI's economy over the past four decades, the people have come to depend heavily on imported food. The favor of non-nutritious imported food is one of the causes of malnutrition among children and obesity among adults.

RMI's health status has improved significantly over the last 10 years. Most indicators of health status have improved. However, there are still many challenges

in this area. The challenges include the need to reduce the incidence of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, leprosy, gastroenteritis, typhoid, scabies, conjunctivitis, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), influenza and diarrhea. Another challenge is that of non-communicable diseases or “life-style diseases” which include, diabetes, hypertension, heart diseases and cancer. Due to the high incidence of these lifestyle diseases combined with inadequate healthcare facilities on Island to treat them, many of the patients are sent off-Island for treatment. Currently the hospital facilities in the capital are still being upgraded. When the facilities are completed, some of the treatments that are done through the referral program would be addressed on Island. Until then, the referral program is still required for treatment. It is important therefore that the hospital is greatly strengthened and the completion of the upgraded facilities are given high priority in order to ensure treatment and diagnosis done overseas could be carried out on island to decrease the cost out to the referral program.

Many of the RMI citizens still continue to suffer from radiation-related types of cancers, tumors and thyroid problems traced to the adverse impact of nuclear testing programs in Bikini and Enewetak over fifty years ago. The Nuclear Claims Tribunal established under the first Compact Agreement to determine and award compensation for victims of nuclear testing program had by 1999 made 1656 individual awards. The Tribunal has, however, exhausted the funds allotted for payment of such compensation.

v. Employment and Unemployment

Total employment in the economy increased from 6698 in 1980 to 10056 in 1988 and to 10141 in 1999. Job growth declined over the second half of 1990s mainly due to the reduction in force program of 1995-97 under the Public Sector Reform Program, which had a downward spiraling effect on the level of the Private Sector employment level¹. However, due to the rapid increase of the labor force the economy was unable to provide enough jobs resulting in an increased unemployment rate. Apparently most of the unemployed were those who had high school education.

The dependency ratio, or the number of dependents per 100 working age populations has fallen from 109 in 1988 to 78 in 1999. But the ratio is still high and exerts a considerable strain on available resources. The fast growing labor force is the other significant challenge facing the Government. The labor force will grow by an amount of 800-900 new entrants per year for the next ten years. This means that with about 200-300 people retiring from jobs the Government will have to find jobs for about 500 to 600 job seekers every year. In the past, the Government was not able to create so many jobs. In fact many jobs were lost due to the Public Sector Reform Program in the late 1990s. As a result, the average unemployment rate for the country as a whole including both urban and rural areas, increased from 12.5 percent in 1988 to 30.9 percent in 1999.

vii. Skills and Training

A common dilemma confronting most of neighboring countries in the Pacific has been the lack of a clear direction and imperatives on non-formal education. This is the same for the RMI, although it had recently addressed this dilemma in the reinforcement of the National Training Council (NTC) by reviving its Board of Directors. The execution of the ADB Program Loan on Skills and Training is also already addressing a range of critical issues on non-formal training. It is apparent that non-formal education and training is important for those students who could not meet up to the formal academic requirements and for the unemployed adult population. Already there is an excessive rate of unemployment in the RMI, and the challenge for the next 15 years is to assist the population of the unskilled people to gain productive skills through a dynamic non-formal education and training program. The lack of appropriate non-formal training programs has been compounded by the lack of adequate financial resources and thus the need for the Government to ensure that adequate funding is allocated for non-formal education and training to ensure early and effective implementation of the national vocational training programs.

Regardless of considerable constraints in non-formal education, there is clear and increasing progress within some of the community programs in the RMI. These programs have encouraged and strengthen the will of not only a number of young people, but communities as well to be productive citizens:

- a. The Waan Aelon in Majel Program (Canoes of the Marshall Islands) or WAM is a non-profit, non-governmental agency (NGO), non-formal vocational training program, focusing on entry-level workforce development and employment preparation through the use of traditional Marshallese skills for men and women. WAM has been successfully serving Marshallese at-risk youth for the past 15 years. Through long-standing elements of the Marshallese culture – canoe building, traditional and contemporary boat building, sailing and navigation, woodworking, and weaving – the WAM Program is demonstrating that sustainable economic and cultural development, national cohesiveness, and strengthening self-identity and worth are not only important to nation building, but are essential and achievable. Since the last National Economic and Social Summit in 2001 with the coming of Vision 2018, The WAM program added to its focus the critically needed vocational training and capacity building of Marshallese youth, the majority of which are at-risk. With the building of WAM's vocational training center, the program began systematic workforce development training, generating employable and employed graduates, a first in the Marshall

Islands. The core of the training initiative for young men and women focuses on canoe building technical skills and the more contemporary and much needed skills in boat building and fiberglass technology, which now is a National training Council certified course of training. In the past year, the program has been systematically developing benchmark curriculums in the fields of woodworking, carpentry, cabinetmaking and furniture making, with the overall emphasis on work skills and life skills essential for meaningful and sustained employment in any field of endeavor. WAM has received modest support from the United States, Germany, Australia, Canada, UNESCO, Asian Development Bank (ADB), etc., none of which are sustained. Even with variable funding, WAM has continued the expansion of its program, training, infrastructure, and graduation of employable youth. As the only traditional skill development program in the Marshall Islands, WAM offers an enormous opportunity to provide culturally appropriate knowledge to its youth, creating responsible, employable citizens to promote a peaceful society. While accomplishing these initiatives, WAM assists in resolving the consequences of under-served at-risk youth, a common challenge in all developing nations which, by resolve, removes the conditions, attitudes and perceptions that allow space for negative and destructive ideologies to exist.

- b. Other NGO groups who have excelled in the areas of non-formal education are the Youth to Youth in health who works in the field of health and family planning.
- c. The Marshall Islands Council of NGOs (MICNGO's) is a good human resource source for collaboration.

It is important that more government and non-government collaboration come about in order to address these important needs. There still remains the lack of adequate financial resources and thus the need for government to ensure that adequate funding is allocated for this type of non-formal education and training.

viii. Marine and Coastal Resources

With over two million square kilometers of ocean, the Republic of the Marshall Islands is blessed with a wide variety of marine resources. The value of the annual catch of Distant Water Fishing Nations (DWFNs) vessels within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is estimated to be around US\$50 million annually. To date however, the potential of the sector for the development of sustainable and more substantial income earning opportunities in the RMI has been under-utilized.

Currently, the RMI has been primarily generating foreign exchange earnings mostly in offshore fisheries. The income-generating opportunities in the near-shore fisheries are vast and have not been properly utilized.

An alarming emerging trend in most fisheries worldwide is the near depletion of fisheries resources due to over-harvesting and unsustainable harvesting methods. Marine resources are one of the main means of sustenance and livelihood in the Marshall Islands. To preserve and manage the valuable resource in a sustainable manner, for the present and future generations, the RMI must develop sustainable resource management plans based on fisheries stock assessment and scientific evidence.

Total exports from the fisheries sector have been declining over the years. This is mainly due to the closure of Ting Hong Fishing Company. The company was involved in the management and operation of Majuro Fish Base and exported fresh-chilled tuna to overseas markets.

MIMRA wishes to extend the resource identification study as well as to conduct stock assessments in all the atolls in the Republic of the Marshall Islands in the future.

MIMRA is yet to design comprehensive monitoring programs for coastal and marine resources, including wetlands, in order to determine shoreline and ecosystem stability and also document and apply, as a basis for integrated coastal zone planning and decision-making, traditional knowledge and management practices that are ecological sound and include the participation of local communities. Catches of fish and shellfish are believed to have declining in lagoons and inshore reefs of many island countries in the Pacific region including the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Reasons for this decline are known to include over-exploitation and use of destructive fishing methods. In the Marshall Islands, over-exploitation has resulted from a combination of increasing size, and the use of overly efficient, and some times destructive fishing methods. The use of modern materials such as monofilament nylon for gill nets, for example, has made fishing effort more effective. In some cases, destructive fishing methods include the use of explosives and chemicals such as bleaching agents have caused damage to the marine environment and kill many small fish and marine organisms. Other activities such as wharf and near shore infrastructure development have affected the marine habitats for millions of tiny marine lives.

ix. Freshwater Resources

The capacity of the Majuro water supply to meet dry-weather demand is inadequate and its technical and commercial viability remain problematic. Most of the households in the outer islands, including household on Majuro and Ebeye use mainly rainwater catchments for drinking water. Other sources of drinking water for households are wells. Additionally, household water tanks have been widely installed, reducing the demand for the piped (and chargeable) supply during rainy periods. On Ebeye, the Kwajalein Atoll Joint Utilities Resources has been in charge of the potable water system. The source for

freshwater is an artificially constructed area dedicated to collecting water. Given the low rainfall in Ebeye freshwater is supplemented by desalination of saltwater.

Several areas which have been neglected to date and that require attention from the RMI Government funding or from alternative resources are: incorporating and enforcing rainwater harvesting into building design, promotion of water efficient appliances, training and capacity building of EPA in Majuro and Ebeye (financial and human resources), training and capacity building of the Water Supply Operator in Majuro and Ebeye, assessment, management and protection of the Laura groundwater lens, promotion of large scale and household rainwater harvesting, and the water and sanitation on Ebeye.

Procedures to monitor and respond to the impacts on water resources of natural and environmental hazards, in particular the impacts of climate change and climate variability, including drought and sea level rise is minimal and is therefore an area that needs to be further developed.

EPA has gathered data on water quality for MWSC, Ebeye water distribution system, and some water quality data for the Outer Islands. However, there is the need to include water quality monitoring to the Outer Islands water resources periodically.

x. *Land resources*

Imports into the RMI have grown rapidly and increasingly outstripping the slow growing exports. The widening trade deficit from this situation has been financed from the Compact of Free Association with the United States and other foreign economic assistance and to some extent with borrowing. The influx and consumption of less nutritious imported food have induced the prevalent health problems for “life-style” diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity and gout among the Marshallese population.

The production of locally processed food and supplements has not been fully developed in the RMI. Locally processed food and supplements such as *nin* juice, breadfruit chips, coconut cooking oil, tuna jerky, preserved giant clams, fish, and breadfruit and so forth have the potential to generate supplemental income, food security, and foreign exchange earnings for the nation.

Mitigation measures to minimize the adverse impact of natural disasters to the agricultural crops and livestock are equally important and must be taken into account. In addition, emergency response plans and training programs aimed at controlling and eradicating pest and diseases that infest food and commercial crops will be formulated and implemented.

A serious review into the future of copra as it has always been the mainstay of the lives of the Marshallese people also needs to be undertaken.

xi. Biodiversity Resources

The Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) has developed a National Action Plan which accounts for all the policy measures and strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial and marine Biodiversity, in particular endemic species, including protection from the introduction of certain non-indigenous species and the identification of sites of high biological significance for the conservation of biological diversity and/or for eco-tourism and other sustainable development opportunities. What is important now is to ensure that the “blueprint” is translated into action.

Research on biological resources is minimal and in its early stages. Currently there is some information on the RMI National Biodiversity Report to the Convention on the Biodiversity Secretariat, however, this is an area that needs to be further developed and continuously updated.

Generating and maintaining buffer stocks or gene banks of biogenetic resources for reintroduction into their natural habitats is an area that has not been developed yet.

There are currently no mechanisms in place in the RMI addressing the protection of local communities and their intellectual property rights. There is a need for the RMI Government to develop a legislative framework on biological diversity that would include access to genetic resources, benefit sharing, the protection of traditional knowledge and intellectual property rights.

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- *urbanization and natural disasters*
- *The impact of urbanization and natural disasters is apparent and greatly affects the economic overview of the RMI. Devastating impacts on urban areas due to natural disasters also impact on the welfare of a community.*
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- *national security and crime, including issues pertaining to EEZ’s (drugs, pollution, poaching, etc.)*

Current challenges pertaining to our EEZ include illegal and unreported fishing activities. The RMI still lacks capacity in monitoring and surveillance and is trying to address this with the assistance of regional partners. However, its vast EEZ and limited technical and human resource expertise. Pollution is also a challenge being dealt with at the national level. Pollution particularly relating to fishing fleets in the Majuro Harbor or within the RMI waters polluting or not complying with the current environmental regulations. The impact of this greatly affects the coastal communities by exacerbating public health issues.

2. NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (SD)

Give a brief description of any comprehensive national SD policies and national SD mechanisms/frameworks that have been put into place to address sustainable development issue since the inception of BPOA in 1994.

There are sectoral policies that have existed before and since the inception of BPOA 1994 addressing sustainable development issues. However, information on comprehensive mechanisms is still an area needing attention. There exists a framework on sustainable development. The Vision 2018 is a broad framework that identifies a general way forward for strategic planning. The framework still has to work out its final details.

All legislation and policies in the RMI in general are intended to contribute to the overall implementation of sustainable development. These are examples of some of the sectoral legislations and/or policies:

1. MIMRA Act 1998 – conservation of environment/coastal and oceanic, while optimizing of resources
2. EPPSO Act 2002 – Dealing with macroeconomics, Economic planning and statistics
3. EPA Act 1984 – mainly to protect the environment and regulate activities
4. OEPPC Act 2003 – policy and planning on long-term strategies for Climate change/sea level rise, Biodiversity, land degradation, etc

The RMI has a National Commission on Sustainable Development and the working groups, including committees for projects under the Convention issues such as Climate Change/Kyoto Protocol, Biodiversity and Cartagena Protocol, etc.

The RMI national framework on sustainable development was initially developed during our 2001 national economic and social summit. The product of the findings was developed into what is now called “Vision 2018”. As part of its commitment to implement the goals of this Vision, the Government has strengthened its efforts to integrate environmental, economic and social considerations to policies. The government seeks to strengthen crosscutting issues such as the following:

1. human development
2. pride in our culture and values
3. better education system for children as well as adults
4. children first as part of the Convention for Children
5. better living conditions for the people
6. improved transportation in order to serve the outer island communities
7. invoke traditional conservation methods

8. participate fully in the negotiations of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biodiversity, Trade issues, and overall sustainable development issues.

3. NATIONAL PROGRESS MADE & PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BPOA: Sectoral and Cross-Sectoral Areas

3.1 SECTORAL AREAS: Progress Made and Problems Encountered

3.1.1 Climate Change and Sea-Level Rise

Date of Ratification/Signature of Framework Convention on Climate Change and/or Kyoto Protocol:

- The RMI became a signatory to the UNFCCC June 12, 1992. Ratification went into effect October 08, 1992

-The RMI signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1998 and ratified it March 17, 2003. The instrument has been deposited to the UN July 2003.

- *List relevant national or sub-regional projects related to the Convention on Climate Change & Kyoto Protocol. (Please indicate if there are linkages or cross-cutting projects/reports, for example climate change and biodiversity)*

I. Projects passed and current:

1. PICCAP (1998-June 2001)

Under the Pacific Islands Climate Change Assistance Programme (PICCAP), funds for activities to carry out the following were made possible:

- a. RMI's Initial National Communication to the UNFCCC submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat 1999
- b. Vulnerability assessment simulation exercise
- c. Review of GHG emission report
- d. Mitigation workshop
- e. Capacity building for international negotiations
- f. Awareness programme for government (department heads) carried out by the Country Team
- g. Awareness for community on climate change (Ebeye and Majuro)
- h. A Climate Change Team was formed to advise on the implementation of the programme, as well as assist make decisions and awareness programme

Part of the current and cross cutting issues that the RMI encounters are the matters of capacity building in human development in the areas of advisory on policies and understanding the climate science as well as its policies and negotiations.

In addition, public education is an issue that the RMI continues to tackle with by identifying and formulating public awareness for different levels of audience. Capacity building and institutional strengthening of Climate change centers is a major challenge. The RMI needs financial and technical assistance to strengthen our climate change center.

2. PIREP (start August 2003)

RMI has joined other PICs in taking part in the Pacific Islands Renewable Energy Project (PIREP), which commenced May 2003. It is an 18-month project. The main goal of the project is to remove barriers to the development and commercialization of renewable energy (RE) systems in the PICs that influences country efforts to reduce the long-term growth of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from fossil fuel uses, especially diesel. The purpose of the project is the acceleration of the adoption and commercialization of feasible and applicable renewable energy technologies (RETs).

Part of the current and cross cutting issues that the RMI encounters are the matters of capacity building in human development in the areas of advisory on policies and understanding the climate science as well as its policies and

3. Regional projects related to Climate Change dealing with physical scenarios include:

- a. SOPAC environmental vulnerability index (EVI) – regional
- b. Vulnerability and adaptation simulation under PICCAP

II. Pending National Proposals related to Climate Change

- a. ADMIRE (please, see section on energy for further details)

ADMIRE had originally been proposed to UNDP roughly around the same time that PIREP was being proposed as a regional project. UNDP had wanted to wait for the outcome of decisions on PIREP before proceeding with ADMIRE. In May 2003 after the approval of PIREP and following discussions with UNDP and other informal discussions (on the basis that all Parties to the UNFCCC Convention have the right to design national projects) , UNDP informally notified RMI to proceed with ADMIRE with the view not to duplicate PIREP. At some instance, RMI knows clearly what is needed for the interim while PIREP is a study on barriers. The following are listed as the priority needs to the current situation:

The key concept of ADMIRE is to compliment the current work the RMI government has accomplished through its bilateral and regional efforts for renewable energy solar power installation in the area of capacity maintenance and community awareness, and the use of technology transfer and sustainable development.

ADMIRE also addresses aspects of adaptation and mitigation.

b. Climate Change Awareness Programme

As PICCAP progressed, the area most needing continued support and attention were the public education and awareness of climate change. With the shortage of human resources, other objectives of PICCAP such as the deadlines to submit reports and community activities were given more focus. In addition, since climate change was a new issue at the time, there was a need to focus on training of trainers or educators.

3. Climate Change 2nd National Communication (Guidelines to be issued at the COP9 in Milan, Italy December 2003)
 4. energy efficiency use in the RMI
 5. conservation of water resources and greening in the RMI in the Outer Islands
 6. Women protecting and conserving the environment and its natural resources
- *Please use the first national communications your country has submitted to the Climate Change Convention and/or any other relevant national reports, to provide a summary of key constraints related to the implementation of the Convention's objectives*
- a. The following are crosscutting issues identified in major reports nationally and regionally. These are also major national concerns:
 - b. Limited human resources and human development are identified as one of the main constraints and cross cutting issues amongst government sectors as well as NGO's and institutions
 - c. Financial constraints to carry out activities identified as part of the adaptation and energy efficiency towards reduction of greenhouse gases and sustainable development.
 - d. Institutional strengthening is posts as an important issue to eliminating barriers
 - e. Infrastructure development
- *Provide a brief summary of national progress made and problems encountered in the area of adaptation needs relating to the adverse effects of climate change, sea level rise and climate variability.*

National progress made towards adaptation needs have been dialogues between government and the public. For instance, queries raised about what the nation can do

within the time frame of 20-100 years predicted for sea level rise. In addition, the discussion of global warming prompts dialogues on the change of weather patterns to increase the probability of more typhoons hitting the RMI. These discussions have prompted the RMI to include climate change and adaptation measures and strategies as part of our high priority issues the nation needs to deal with as soon as it can. Additionally, RMI will negotiate international treaties for climate change taken into account the serious issue of greenhouse gases, which need to be reduced by the industrialized countries. The RMI has studies being conducted by the regional organizations such as SOPAC on the Environmental Vulnerability Index (EVI).

The RMI has already begun its action for adaptation by the effort it is currently placing on integrating economic/social issues with environmental issues or sustainable development. The political level of support has increased to the highest of levels in the national government, thereby, creating and transferring MEAs such as the UNFCCC to the newly created Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination (OEPPC) under the Office of the President. The Office was created by Cabinet in early 2003 and further established by legislation September 1, 2003. The Office is currently establishing its physical existence in order to take on to its portfolio, the Conventions on Climate Change, Biodiversity, Land Degradation and so on. The Office is now the Center responsible for Climate Change policies and advice to the National Government. The general needs are the following:

CAPACITY BUILDING

1. Limited human resources
2. Financial constraints for implementation and assistance with development of public awareness, strategies and adaptation strategies
3. Infrastructure limitations
4. strengthening of policy advice

3.1.3 Coastal and Marine Resources, including coastal and marine biodiversity resources

- *Date of Ratification/Signature of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (and other related agreements), the Convention on Biological Diversity and/or Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety*
 - UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Ratified 9 August 1991)
 - Implementing Agreement, UNCLOS Straddling Fish Stocks (Ratified 19 March 2003)
 - Convention on Biological Diversity (Ratified 8 October 1992)
 - Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Ratified 27 January 2003)

- *List relevant national, sub-regional and regional projects related to the sustainable use, management and conservation of coastal and marine resource. (Please indicate linkages or cross-cutting projects/reports, for example land degradation and sea level rise/saltwater intrusion)*

1. Jaluit Conservation project
2. Traditional Environmental Management Strategies Project
3. Biodiversity project

Regional projects related to Climate Change dealing with physical scenarios include:

1. SOPAC environmental vulnerability index (EVI) – regional
2. Vulnerability and adaptation simulation under PICCAP
3. PIREP

- *Key national constraints:*

With respect to constraints in relation to sustainable management of land resources, forests and terrestrial biodiversity, cross-cutting issues are identified with other reports such as the RMI initial national communication, RMI National Environmental Strategies and RMI's Vision 2018 and the Biodiversity National Strategies. The main constraints cutting across many sectors are the following:

1. lack of expertise or limited human resource in key areas such as adaptation planning
2. limited or lack of financial resources to address key areas/whole
3. political will and support should be strengthened
4. proper type of awareness programmes
5. effective coordination of information between governments

- *Please discuss the extent to which the use of diverse approaches and tools, including the ecosystem approach, the elimination of destructive fishing practices, the establishment of marine protected areas have occurred in your country.*

In the RMI, there are 2 sectors of Fisheries: Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries. The following information will only touch up on the matters of Coastal Fisheries since there are some information gaps.

Under the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) Act 1997, there is a provision whereby MIMRA delegates the responsibility to each local government so that they can manage and protect their own marine resources within their 5 miles zones. In fulfilling this act, the Authority is currently implementing a coastal resource management program in two atoll communities, Mejatto and Likiep communities.

The aim of this project is to assist each atoll communities in setting up their fisheries management plans and fisheries management ordinances.

As can be noted from recent studies, most coastal communities in the Pacific islands countries including RMI have shown that their marine resources and environment have been seriously damaged in recent years, and catches of fish and shellfishes are very low. These have resulted from the existing problems such as over-population and over-exploitation of these resources. With these in respect, destructive fishing methods, such as usage of chemicals, dynamite, poison and inefficient net fishing methods are most commonly practiced by the fishermen.

The coastal resource management program is intended to assist the atoll communities to carefully examine their present and past practices and develop strategies and plans that will deliver best practices for conservation and management of coastal marine resources. This project also seeks to establish a community fishing practices, which results in the maximum productivity and sustainability of marine environment. Examples of the Fisheries Management Plans for these Atolls include the establishment of community-owned Marine Protected Areas, seasonal catches and size limit catches etc as intended in the MIMRA Act 1997.

3.1.4 Land Resources, including terrestrial biodiversity

- *Date of Ratification/Signature of the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants*

RMI signed the UNCCD June 17, 1994 and ratified it June 02, 1998

The RMI will begin its National Action Plan (NAP) as required under the UNCCD when the available support and assistance is provided by the UNCCD and the Global Mechanism this year. These include:

Financial assistance to begin the NAP as the National Government is already constrained by limited human resources and financial needs.

Since 2002, RMI has supported the work of working groups and negotiations, in particular, issues of land degradation and droughts.

- *List relevant national, sub-regional and regional projects related to the sustainable use, management and conservation of land resources including terrestrial biodiversity*
 1. Jaluit Conservation project
 2. Traditional Environmental Management Strategies Project
 3. Biodiversity project
 4. SOPAC environmental vulnerability index (EVI) – regional
 5. Vulnerability and adaptation simulation under PICCAP

- *Based on the first national report your country has submitted to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and any other relevant national or regional reports prepared, please provide a summary of key national constraints related sustainable management of land resources, forests and terrestrial biodiversity.*

No report for the UNCCD has been done by RMI due to financial and human resource constraints. Additionally, the lack of a stronger support from the UNCCD Secretariat had been ongoing. Recently, stronger ties between RMI and the UNCCD are developing. However, from previous national and regional reports the following are key constraints:

1. Limited human resources
2. financial constraints to properly implement projects or Convention
3. limited land areas
4. waste management
5. coastal erosion
6. population density increasing
7. technical know-how
8. limited information in key areas

3.1.5 Energy

The major players in RMI's Energy Sector are the Ministry of Resources and Development (MRD), the Marshalls Energy Company (MEC) and the petroleum companies.

MRD houses the Energy Planning Unit that coordinates the energy sector. It is responsible for, amongst other focal areas, the formulation of the Outer Islands Energy Policy (OIEP) and the management of the RMI government's PV Supply Program. This OIEP is not restricted only to solar PV but it also applies to MEC's supply of electricity and LPTG to the Outer Islands.

In July 1994, the RMI Cabinet approved that the objectives of its OIEP are to:

- a. contribute to the social and economic development of the Outer Islands through the provision of reliable energy services;
- b. encourage the use of low emission technologies and native energy resources for the production of energy on the Outer Islands of the RMI;
- c. ensure that the provision of energy services is based on both a least cost development strategy and on technically and commercially proven technologies that utilize decentralized alternative energy options without ruling out grid connections when such connections are the economically viable option; and
- d. quarantine full cost recovery from consumers for the provision of energy services while making explicit budgetary provisions for Government and Non-Government assistance when such assistance is socially justified.

The policy guidelines for RMI's OIEP deal with five major areas. They include the tariffs and fees, subsidize funding, operations and expansion, conservation and efficiency programs and safety and the environment.

- *List relevant national, sub-regional and regional projects related to development and provision of sustainable energy resources and systems, including energy efficiency and conservation and new and renewable energy sources. (Please indicate linkages or cross-cutting projects/reports, for example energy and natural resource management)*

In light of the issue of Climate change, RMI puts emphasis on sustainable development and renewable energy technologies. To date, RMI is now participating in the following national and regional projects:

1. Pacific Islands Renewable Energy Project –Regional
2. solar powered telephone systems in the out islands –National
3. PV projects in the outer island schools – National
4. PV systems in five (5) Outer islands – National
5. Marshall Islands Energy Company which provides virtually all electricity service in the Capital Island

Pending projects

6. ADMIREPDFA Activities
7. energy conservation and efficiency
8. use of biofuel to assist the Outer Islands have better living conditions, contribute further to sustainable development

- *Based on all relevant national or regional reports prepared, please provide a summary of key national constraints (technical and institutional capacity, lack of financing, market distortions etc) related to the planning, production and distribution of sustainable energy resources and systems.*

1. serious financial constraints
2. limited human resources and expertise
3. serious transportation constraints from island to island
4. limited public understanding
5. most barriers not yet identified

3.1.6 Management of Wastes & Provision of Water and Sanitation Service

- List relevant national, sub-regional and/or regional projects related to the management of wastes and the provision of sanitation services. (Please indicate linkages or cross-cutting projects/reports, for example waste and energy)

Management of Waste

Waste management is a probable in the RMI due to many constraints. Amongst these constraints, are limited land areas, land tenure issues, serious financial constraints to buy the necessary equipment and trash cans, including people to manage the dumps. Due to our very limited land areas, there is nowhere to put the trash. Our far distances from other countries by ocean make transportation of goods very difficult. Landfills are one way the RMI has identified rid the waste. However, technical assistance and financial assistance is very much needed.

RMI has some programs in place or to be in very small scale:

1. recycling of cans
2. separation of waste

A Pacific regional project to do a pilot project for areas in the capital island of Majuro is undergoing public awareness. The project “International Waters Programme” is funded through the General Environmental Facility (GEF) under various Conventions. However, constraints still arise in promoting the project. These largely include:

1. constraints with regional bodies
2. limited human resources
3. constraints with national financial processes which take too long under MOF

3. sustainability of project

Provision of water, waste and sanitation services

Currently, the Majuro Water and Sewer Company (1997) provides water services to the residents of the Capital City – Majuro Island, which has the most population. MWSC is an Agency managed in conjunction with the Majuro Energy Company (MEC).

MWSC manages only the capital island water distribution and monitoring of water quality in the catchment and main wells for the residents of Majuro. The catchment capacity is 35 million gallons.

MWSC distributes 3 days a week for residents and commercial and every day for capital building and hospital.

MWSC also maintains and manages sewer and salt and apply national regulations for quality monitoring.

Once a year, a national training is held funded from outside sources to strengthen the further build and strengthen the overall operations of the agency by holding training in all aspects of the organization. These are:

- 1. training of MWSC employees in the areas of education and awareness of utilities*
- 2. office administration*
- 3. improving of system*
- 4. human resource development*
- 5. as team effort*
- 6. institutional building and strengthening*

- Please describe the progress made and constraints encountered in developing integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans in your country.*

- 1. serious financial constraints*
- 2. limited human resources and capacity in technical issues and planning*
- 3. lack of coordination between government agencies*
- 4. limited land for infrastructure*

3.1.7 Tourism

List relevant national, sub-regional and/or regional projects related to development and implementation of sustainable tourism practices and services. (Please indicate linkages or crosscutting projects/reports, for example tourism and ecosystem management).

- 1) Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Micronesia Chapter sponsored Best Sustainable Practices poster project.
- 2) Jaluit Atoll Conservation Area (JACA), sponsored by SPREP, includes eco-tourism development as an alternative income generation source given that the JACA project establishes traditional *mo*, or “restricted” areas.
- 3) Rongelap Atoll Local Government offers endemically pristine Ailinginae Atoll environment for National World Heritage Committee consideration. Maintaining Ailinginae’s pristine state will be a major advancement in global education and formulating viable eco-tourism for coral atolls.
- 4) AusAID sponsors mooring buoy project initiated by the Marshall Islands Visitors Authority in Majuro Atoll, with similar project for Arno Atoll pending. Installation of mooring buoys in the first project has been successful in increasing awareness about importance and fragility of coral in the Marshall Islands.
- 5) Rongelap Atoll Local Government installs 25 mooring buoys throughout Rongelap Atoll for recreational dive site preservation.
- 6) Bikini Atoll Local Government declares area surrounding Bikini Atoll dive sites as a national park. Such sites include the world’s only diveable aircraft carrier (the USS Saratoga) and the flagship of the Japanese World War II armada (the fNagato).
- 7) Mili atoll establishes a community-based, non-profit organization called Mili Atoll Nature Conservancy, which oversees the atoll’s conservation area. A research station within the resulting conservation area will be open to researchers seeking pristine coral atoll environments, as well as other types of visitors to the atoll.

Please provide a brief summary of any community-based initiatives on sustainable tourism aimed at building capacity necessary to diversify tourism products, while protecting culture and traditions and effectively conserving and managing natural resources.

- 1) Workers Investment Act (WIA), a US federal program, sponsored WWII tour guide training in Maloelap Atoll in 2002, proposed by local WWII tour guide Matt Holly. Maloelap is one of several atolls in the Marshall Islands with extensive WWII heritage.
- 2) JACA incorporates the training of coral survey and monitoring techniques into its program. Such training took place early 2003.
- 3) JACA incorporates mangrove walks, WWII tours, traditional canoe tours, and culture tours through Imiej Island.
- 4) Amimono Association (“Handicraft” Association) actively participating in promotion and development of Marshallese arts and crafts through regional trade and art festivals and national competitions.
- 5) Waan Aelon in Majol (Canoes of the Marshall Islands) Program, with support of WIA, graduated its first two trainees under its Traditional Canoe Building and Sailing Training curriculum, aimed at promoting traditional canoeing and navigational skills as a means to employment.

- 6) Several hospitality and tourism-related training seminars sponsored by the Marshall Islands Visitors Authority (MIVA), such as tour guiding and food serving since 1999.
- 7) Similar seminar being coordinated by MIVA and Marshalls Billfish Club for jigging and/or flyfishing guides.
- 8) Similar seminar being coordinated by MIVA for kayaking guides in Majuro. As the islands, which would be part of the kayaking tour, are by traditional custom privately owned, MIVA is working closely with the traditional landowners of the islands within Majuro atoll.
- 9) The Laura Farmers Association, in collaboration with MIVA, is developing the first-ever guided tour package for visitors to the Laura farms

3.2 CROSS-SECTORAL AREAS

3.2.1 Financing and Investment for SD

List national, sub-regional and regional initiatives in the areas of financing and investment for sustainable development that are related to your country.

Identify the key problems and constraints encountered in securing financing/investment for SD at the national level.

Mobilizing savings to finance development initiatives has continued to be a challenge for the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The Banking Sector, which has an average system-wide deposit of \$75 million, has been disinclined to underwrite loans for commercial and for development purposes, primarily because of the lack of ‘bankable projects’. Close to 90% of the lending made by the commercial banks are for consumer loans.

The primary lender for development purposes is the Marshall Islands Development Bank, which has for some time now been looking at the practicality of micro-financing for the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

3.2.2 Capacity building and Coordination

- *List national, sub-regional and regional initiatives in the areas of institutional capacity and coordination for SD that are related to your country, such as membership in national and regional organizations and mechanisms.*

The RMI gains strengths through work done in partnership with regional and international organizations on sustainable development. Membership include: SPREP, FORUM Sec, SOPAC, FFA, SPC, FAO

- *List national, sub-regional and regional initiatives in the area of human resources (capacity) development for SD that are related to your country, such as cooperation between national mechanisms and regional and inter-regional mechanisms.*

National initiatives in the areas of institutional capacity

Capacity Building, as stipulated in the “Vision 2018” of the RMI government, is one of the major goals, which provides further education through formal and non-formal training opportunities for high school graduates, high school drop outs, civil servants, private employees, and other qualified Marshallese citizens. This then, will build and enhance the initiative to acquire skills essential to contribute to the country’s economic success.

For this reason, the National Training Council, as the premiere organization to coordinate training in the country has identified three goals that will enhance and secure this objective.

➤ **New Skills and attitudes**

Long life learning – The rapid pace of change, the exponential growth of knowledge, the creation of new technology and new jobs demand that employees continue learning during their lives.

Marshallese citizens should demonstrate through their actions a commitment to long life learning. These people continue their formal and non-formal and informal education and learning throughout their careers.

Abstract thinking

It is an ability to make connections between different concepts and ideas. It is the capacity to discover patterns and make meaning out of chaos. Abstract thinking is important in order to make sense of increasing amounts of information to which we are exposed.

Styles of learning solely on memorization of isolated facts are no longer appropriate or adequate. Instead it is important for people to develop the skill of learning to learn.

System thinking

It is the ability to think of the problems in the context of a whole system with interrelated elements. The whole is seen to be greater than the sum of its parts. In systems

thinking, the interaction between interconnected components is seen to contribute to the whole.

This facilitates deeper analysis and understanding of situations, thereby enabling more creative, and sometimes surprising solutions.

Collaborations

The capacity to work collaboratively with others is increasingly important Teamwork rather than competition is increasingly valued. Good communication skills contribute significantly to effective teamwork and collaboration. The rising importance of this group of skills is evident to increasing numbers of job advertisements. (Margaret Darcy, Labor Market and National Training Report, 2002 p33, 34)

➤ **Building the Capacity of Existing Employees**

Consultation with Stakeholders and the Chief Secretary made it clear that NTC work with training providers such as Ministry of Education, CMI, SBDC, FNTC, and the new NVTI to develop strategy to:

- Build the unique skills of specific occupational groups e.g. teachers and nurses.
- Upgrade training programs or develop new programs that will build skills required across all occupational categories e.g. computer literacy, office management, planning and evaluation.

Capacity building requirements

Leadership

- visions and values
- decision making
- communication structures and processes
- performance measurement
- empowerment
- networking

Planning and evaluation

- strategic planning
- data and information management
- evaluation tools and techniques
- quality insurance

Policy development

- policy research
- community consultation
- policy writing

Human Resources Managements

- employee performance management

	-recruitment -training and development -occupational health safety -grievance procedures
Office management systems	-time management -dairy skills -filing
Communication skills	-listening -writing -oral communication -negotiation -self insight
Computer literacy	-proficiency in word processing, spreadsheets, databases, email and internet use
Technical competency	-data, information and knowledge Management -industry knowledge
Accountancy	-budgeting -book keeping -journal entry
Para-legal	-legal studies -research skills

➤ 9 Specific Occupations that will in some way address the future unemployment situation. Enable Marshallese citizens to compete internationally for employment

- Teachers (Professionals)
- Information and communication technologist (Technical Science)
- Nurses and other medical staff (Technical Services)
- Tourism and traditional cultural skills specialists (Services)
- Small business managers and entrepreneurs (Managerial)
- Fisheries project workers (Agriculture)
- Farmers and home gardeners (Agriculture)
- Renewable energy specialists (Technical/Science, Technical Production)

- Maintenance employees (Technical Production, Construction)

Mutual cooperation by Training and Educational Organizations will support the objectives of these activities. This will help spearhead these activities in terms of its Capacity Building (Human Resources) visions.

Identify key problems and constraints encountered in the areas of institutional capacity and coordination and in the area of human resources development for SD at the national level and describe any experiences in the exchange of information with other countries or regions.

4. TRADE, INVESTMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING AND COOPERATION AND THE STATUS OF SIDS VULNERABILITY

- *Please identify key trade related concerns and needs faced by your country, focusing particularly on trade concerns/vulnerabilities related to sustainable development:*

At this time, we do not believe there is any imminent threat to the welfare of the Marshall Islands when it comes to trade. There is, however, a growing concern that some industries are fueling what we believe to be short-term gains but eventually will lead to long-term adverse effects. Foreign fishing fleets fishing in the Marshall Islands are an example of this un-sustainable development. These fleet fish within our Exclusive Economic Zone without any consideration to the conservation of our fish stocks. They are also major polluters to the lagoon of Majuro Atoll where their mother ships are anchored. Of course the country is benefiting from license fees that the fishing companies pay to the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority but these payments cannot outweigh the adverse effects that will come about from careless business activities. Depletion of fishing stocks will be felt and health of the environment will be jeopardized. Another threat that we believe will lead to an unhealthy future of the environment of the Marshall Islands is our incapability to manage or dispose un-operational automobiles. These vehicles are left near the streets or in people's backyards to rot and they can be sore sites as well.

- *Please provide a brief summary of any national level or community-based initiatives related to trade practices and services, including those that aim to diversify exports, and/or improve national competitiveness:*

Some capacity building workshops on trade practices and services are being held by the Ministry of Resources and Development. More work needs to be done in this area. Therefore, the RMI continues to seek assistance from partners to help strengthen and coordinate more workshops for the local people.

- *Please identify key investment related concerns and needs, focus in particular on investments, concerns/vulnerabilities related to sustainable development:*

The major problem in the Marshall Islands when it comes to foreign direct investment is the lack of coordination amongst government agencies to work together to promote foreign investment. There is absolutely no dialogue between those promoting foreign investment and the regulators of foreign investment activities. We have been advertising a post within the Ministry of Resources and Development entitled Foreign Investment Promotion Officer and we are still waiting to get more applicants. The applications are slow in coming in.

- *Please identify/list specific sub-regional or regional cooperative mechanisms or programmes related to sustainable development and vulnerability concerns, in particular any national sub-regional and regional initiatives which are currently underway to consider trade-related constraints of SIDS (university studies, PACER, PICTA, FTAA, etc) or the ensure that full account is taken of SIDS in the World Trade Organization work programme on trade in small economies and within the context of the Doha development agenda, including the area of capacity building and training:*

The Marshall Islands will be a beneficiary to assistances from Australia and New Zealand on the Regional Trade Facilitation Program that will be coordinated by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. The purpose of these assistances is to make the system flow more smoothly. There will be upgrades to harmonization systems conducted by Customs Division. Better documentation and collaboration between relevant government agencies will be more calibrated, etc.

5. MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDG's) AND SD IN SIDS

5.1 Poverty Eradication, 5.2 Education and reduction of child mortality, 5.3 Gender equality and empowerment of women, 5.4 HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

are described below:

5.1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Significant disparities in income exist between rural and urban areas and also among the outer islands
- People on the outer islands have a significant disadvantage in relation to access to basic social services, especially education, health, water and employment opportunities

- The population growth rate outstrips economic growth and not enough employment opportunities can be created, causing unemployment to rise
- In 1997, approximately 27% of children fewer than five years were considered underweight (National Nutrition Pilot Study). There is also serious malnutrition caused by consumption of poor quality junk food. This affects the particularly lower income urban families who cannot produce their own food.

5.2a Achieve universal primary education

- There are high drop out rates particularly in secondary schools and falling performance rates. Results from the Pacific Islands Literacy levels tests (covering English, Marshallese and numeracy) show that achievements are low in comparison to other Pacific Island nations and that there has been little overall improvement since 1994.
- The quality of the public schools and many private schools is low and the quality of instruction in the classroom remains a problem, particularly on the outer islands.
- While literacy rates from the 1999 Census are high, they should be treated with caution. Literacy rates for those 15-24 year s in 1999 was estimated at 90%

5.2 b Reduce child mortality

- Under –five and infant mortality rates (per 10,000 lives births) have fallen significantly. Less than five mortality fell by almost half from 93 in 1988 to 48 in 1999 and infant mortality from 63 to 37 in the same period. Despite these improvements, rates are comparatively high
- In 2001, 80% of the general population had been vaccinated against measles compared to 70% in 1998
- Strong cultural and government support for initiatives and public awareness such as “no child should be left behind”

5.3 Promote gender equality and empower women

- Slightly lower literacy rates for female students. Differences in enrollment ratios for boys and girls are insignificant.
- The percentage of women among the economically active working population was 31% in the 1999 census
- Only one of thirty-three parliamentarians is a woman. Few women occupy senior administration and managerial positions.

List of national efforts and initiatives related to gender equality and empowerment of women:

- Small Business Development Center – Ministry of R/D
- National Vocational Training Institute, WIA, WAM – Ministry of Education
- Youth to Youth in Health – Ministry of Health
- WUTMI, Youth Empowerment Fund, Mobile Team – Ministry of IA
- Marshall Islands Handicraft Associations

5.5 Environmental Sustainability

A. Outer Islands

1) Household Water Catchments

After the El Nino event of 1997 – 98, the RMI received assistance from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) for the provision of household water catchments to the outer islands. This FEMA program distributed 1,068 fifteen hundred gallon household water catchments to the outer islands during 2001 and 2002, however, according the 1999 Census there were a total of 2,352 homes on the outer islands. The RMI government appropriated \$500,000 in the FY 2002 budget for the further provision of 760 catchments of the same type. During FY 2003 the RMI government appropriated an additional \$250,000 for catchments, as well as receiving a further \$125,000 from FEMA and \$25,000 from the Canada Fund. It is expected that at the end of the calendar year 2003, only 25 – 30 homes on the outer islands will be without a water catchments.

2) Household Solar Program

The government of RMI recognizes that the provision of a cost-effective and a sustainable source of electricity to its outer islands is a key to the improvement of the standard of living of its people. Providing good public services such as clean water, power and telecommunications to these populations is also viewed as a major tool to reduce urban drift from the outer islands into Majuro and Ebeye and its impact on the countries welfare. The RMI government, in its commitment to the global effort to reduce GHG emission while ensuring sustainable development for its people believes that for the remote and scattered outer islands populations, stand alone solar systems represent the best technical and economic solution to supply electricity on the outer islands. Three solar photovoltaic projects for outer islands are currently being implemented with

funding from Secretariat of the Pacific Community/PREFACE, France and United Nations development fund for a total of \$600,000. These systems will be installed in 11 health centers and 200 households on the outer islands. The government has also allocated in FY2002 an additional \$1,000,000 from the national capital projects budget to supply and install an additional 500 household solar systems. This represents 700 homes scheduled for 2003 - 2004. In addition the government has appropriated an additional \$500,000 from the FY 03 capital budget to continue expansion of this program. By engaging in these highly important projects, the RMI government would like to ensure that the barriers to the sustainable and widespread application of renewable energy, in particular solar photovoltaic, are removed thus ensuring that this total 1.6 US\$ million investment will effectively promote win-win activities in its renewable energy sector.

In 2001 the Republic of the Marshall Islands became a signatory of the Cotonou Agreement. Under the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) the RMI has allocated approximately \$400,000 to support the Household Solar Program. This funding will cover a period of 5years. This will be combined with the \$1.5 million already appropriated by the RMI to the project.

According to the 1999 Census of the Marshall Islands over two – thousand homes on the outer islands use kerosene for both lighting and cooking. The price for kerosene on the outer islands is over \$2 per gallon. It is also dangerous as most homes on the outer islands are constructed of wood or local materials. Use of solar systems should be cheaper for the average household and reduce some of the dangers of using petroleum products and open flame in small wooden or thatch dwellings. The monthly fee for the solar systems will be in the range \$8 - \$12 per month.

After scrutinizing various management approaches utilized throughout the Pacific region and fully comprehending the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches used, the Energy Office in the Ministry of Resources and Development, with approval from the Cabinet, is opting to gradually turn over the installation and maintenance of the Outer Island Electrification Project to MEC (Marshalls Energy Company – the electricity utility on Majuro atoll). The success of MEC has been borne of its diligent and well established management and accounting systems. Furthermore MEC has a customer-oriented approach that enables people to see that their payments are translated into a service. In addition MEC has several trained technicians and electricians to oversee substantial technical elements of this project.

3. Manual Cement Block Making Machines

One of the major roadblocks for community development on the outer islands is the lack of access to construction materials. All materials have to be shipped in from either Majuro or Ebeye. The shipping of these materials to the outer islands from these two urban areas is expensive and subject to irregular schedules. This places an added burden on these people and communities where cash income is already relatively scarce. A 4-inch wide cement block will cost \$1.10 each, then the cost for shipping must be added. This can make even the most modest of construction or housing projects extremely expensive for people and communities with little cash.

One of the challenges is locating appropriate materials or tools that can make a difference in these cash poor communities. The average budget for outer island local governments is between \$15,000 - \$20,000 and average household incomes are between \$500 - \$1,500. A partial solution has been the introduction of manual cement block making machines, particularly in areas that do not have access to power. These machines will drastically reduce the cost of new/improved housing, pigpens and other community or public projects. The cost of the average block from this machine is \$.30 cents, translating into a savings of over 70% per block. These machines can make the outer islands less dependant on resources from the urban centers, stretch the limited incomes in a very effective manner and improve the quality of life in these isolated communities. To date these machines are in operation on Ebon, Mili, Arno, Likiep, and Wotje atolls and Mejit Island.

4. Increased Technical Assistance from the National Government

Since mid – year of 2000, it has been a policy of the government and the Ministry of Finance, to assist local governments in preparing grant applications for a wide variety of bi-lateral and multilateral donors. Most mayors have limited knowledge of the types of programs and assistance that is available to them; many local government officials are not comfortable working in English and are not experienced in using computers or the internet. Staff from the Ministry of Finance have presented information to the annual Marshall Islands Mayor Association meetings (MIMA) as well as help research and write grant proposals. These proposals have covered projects from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide agriculture training directly in the outer islands. Japan Grassroots Grants for the construction of dispensaries, school buildings and cultural centers. U.S. Department of Agriculture has assisted with construction of medical dispensary, solar powered water pumps, and pick – up trucks for the outer islands. USDA has also been very active in housing loans for low-income households throughout the RMI.

B. Ebeye Island, Kwajalein Atoll

Ebeye is a small island (0.36 square km) located on the eastern side of Kwajalein atoll, which is considered the largest atoll in the world. Ebeye is the second largest urban center of the RMI after the capital Majuro. It is located 441 km northwest of Majuro, and is only 6.5 km from the U.S. military base located in the same Kwajalein atoll. The near shore environment of the atoll has a significant impact on the populations, as it provides food and frequently bathing facilities. The 1999 RMI Census indicated a population of almost 11,000 people. Ebeye is already one of the world's most densely populated areas with nearly 33,000 per square km. Ebeye is a highly urbanized community with a relatively high proportion of immigrants from the outer islands. The quality of life on Ebeye has been very poor.

The number of people with medical disorders caused by high density living and crowded living quarters had been growing until a joint Asian Development Bank/U.S. Department of Interior and RMI Ebeye Health and Infrastructure Project was implemented beginning in 1999. This project contained the following components:

- Completing the unfinished Ebeye Hospital in the fall of 2002

- Increasing the fresh water supply and upgrading the saltwater sewerage and effluent disposal system; this work is on going, but the fresh water system was brought back on line in 2000 and is being expanded. New distribution pipes were also installed. Plans are in development to complete improvements in the distribution system island wide and the sewage treatment plant.
- Expanding and improving the power generation and distribution system for safer and more efficient operation, this included privatization of utilities management. Old generator sets were rebuilt and new units were installed in May of 2003. The distribution system was placed underground in 2000 – 2001.
- Improvements to the solid waste system have included new equipment for collection, equipment at the landfill, with plans for landfill expansion, fencing and recycling.
- Supporting primary health care and outreach programs including youth health, health education, and family planning
- Improved street drainage systems were completed in 2002, greatly easing the problem of standing water that was prevalent along most of the road system.
- Much needed renovations and repairs of the public school were completed in 2002. There are over 1,000 children attending Ebeye public school.
- A new community recreation center was completed with help from the U.S. Army in 2002

Other important project activities have included institutional development of the utilities along with associated policy reforms, introduction of cost recovery and user fees for medical services and utilities, budget and administrative reforms for health services management.

C. U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development Service

USDA Rural Development is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in all of rural America, its territories and the Freely Associated States of the Pacific. Through these programs, rural communities are touched in many ways.

USDA Rural Development financial programs support such essential public facilities and services as water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities and electric and telephone service. We promote economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools. We offer technical assistance and information to help agricultural and other cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their member services. And we provide technical assistance to help communities undertake community empowerment programs.

Community Facilities Program

This program has been targeted for outer island communities. In the last two years the RMI has been reasonably successful in winning some of these competitive grants. These grants are provided on a 75% - 25% matching basis, where the local government or national government match 25% of the proposed project cost.

- 2001 – Likiep Atoll - \$12,000 for the purchase one pick – up truck
- 2002 – Maloelap Atoll - \$75,000 for the purchase of Solar Powered Water Pumps
- 2003 – Ebon Atoll - \$38,000 for the construction of a medical dispensary
- 2003 – Majuro Atoll - \$7,000 for the purchase of a police patrol car

Rural Housing Program

1. Rural Housing 504 Loan and Grant Program

The objective of the program is to assist eligible, very low income, owner occupants to repair single-family homes located in rural area. Repairs made be made to improve or modernize the home, to make it safe, more sanitary, or to remove health and safety hazards. The interest rate for the 504 program loans is one percent (1%) per annum. The 504 program grant is given to those people who are 62 years of age or older and unable to repay a loan.

2. Rural Housing 502 Loan Program

The objective of the program is to provide eligible households who live in rural areas and opportunity to obtain adequate, but modest, decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings. The interest rate for the program can be as low as one percent (1%) but at the current time the rate is 5.75%.

3. Ebeye Developments

A new USDA office was established in Ebeye early in 2001. Previously most people on Ebeye did not have access to many of the USDA programs. With the establishment of this office the housing programs can reach more people.

4. Outer Islands

Since the start of the USDA Rural Housing programs in 1991, there have been more than 50 trips made to the outer islands. So far RH 504 loans and grants have been made to families on the following outer islands:

- a. Likiep Atoll
- b. Ailuk Atoll
- c. Mejit Atoll
- d. Aur Atoll
- e. Maloelap Atoll
- f. Wotje Atoll
- g. Utrik Atoll
- h. Enewetak Atoll
- i. Wotho Atoll
- j. Alinglaplap Atoll
- k. Ebon Atoll

5. Summary of the Total USDA RH Assistance Provided 1991 - 2002

Year	# Loans	#Grants	\$Loans	\$Grants	Avg Loan	Avg Grant
1991	142	8	\$353,580	\$23,000	\$2,490	\$2,975
1992	47	19	\$107,190	\$63,500	\$2,281	\$3,342

1993	79	14	\$395,000	\$52,030	\$5,000	\$3,716
1994	165	48	\$410,160	\$237,500	\$2,486	\$4,948
1995	12	7	\$29,880	\$35,000	\$2,917	\$5,000
1996	8	6	\$19,920	\$30,000	\$2,490	\$5,000
1997	93	14	\$182,580	\$60,040	\$1,963	\$4,289
1998	151	38	\$298,443	\$184,500	\$1,976	\$4,855
1999	143	42	\$783,441	\$174,628	\$5,479	\$4,158
2000	49	26	\$210,421	\$108,500	\$4,294	\$4,173
2001	86	43	\$459,368	\$172,251	\$5,341	\$4,006
2002						
Totals	975	265	\$3,249,983	\$1,140,949	\$3,338	\$4,224

5.6 Global Partnerships for Development

1. Compact of Free Association with the United States
2. Partnerships with the Asian Development Bank
3. Regional Partnerships with Regional Secretariats such as SOPAC, SPREP, FORUM SECRETARIAT, SPC, FFA
4. Pacific ACP-EU
5. Pacific regional programs to combat Climate Change in the areas of energy and greenhouse gas mitigation, vulnerability studies and adaptation efforts
6. Bilateral partnerships to assist with human development, institutional strengthening and capacity building

6. EMERGING CONCERNS AND SPECIAL NEEDS

1. The RMI has not been able to secure financing for waste management initiatives such as larger trash cans, and funding for land fills
2. On adaptation to climate change, we have not been able to find an avenue in the General Environmental Facility mechanism to get funding for adaptation options that are indicated in the RMI's Initial National Communication to the UNFCCC. These adaptation options include: sea walls, land reclamation of those impacted by coastal erosion
3. The many constraints of the GEF rules makes it very difficult to do national projects vs regional projects
4. Special assistance is needed to improve statistics. There continues to be great difficulties in backing up reports due to constraints such as health statistics and statistics in general. This is a growing problem that the RMI Government is

finding very difficult to deal with. It is making efforts to do so. However, human resource and expertise are a major constraint to statistical gathering and analysis.