



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

Disaster Management Reference Handbook

December 2019

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Women, Peace, and Security Section Photo: Woman from Ebeye Island, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands. Photo by Mr. Lorenzo Moscia. July 28, 2019.

Conclusion Section Photo: The Marshall Islands are known for diving due to the fish and coral. Photo by Mr. Lorenzo Moscia. Ebeye Island, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands. July 28, 2019.

Appendices Section Photo: Many Marshallese spend most days fishing. Photo by Mr. Lorenzo Moscia. Ebeye Island, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands. July 28, 2019.

Table of Contents

Welcome - Note from the Director	7
About the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management Humanitarian Assistance	8
Disaster Management Reference Handbook Series Overview	9
Executive Summary	10

Country Overview	12
Culture	13
Demographics.....	13
Ethnic Makeup.....	13
Key Population Centers	13
Language.....	14
Religion	14
Vulnerable Groups	14
Economics	18
Government.....	19
Environment.....	20
Geography	20
Maritime Security	20
Climate	20

Disaster Overview	22
Disaster Management Challenges.....	22
Climate Change.....	22
Recent History of Natural Disasters.....	23
Country Risks.....	26
Country Risk Profile.....	26

Organizational Structure for Disaster Management	28
Lead Government Agencies in Disaster Response	28
Key Disaster Management Partners	29
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.....	29
U.S. Government Agencies in the Republic of Marshall Islands.....	31
Participation in International Organizations.....	32
Foreign Disaster Relief and Emergency Response	32
Laws, Policies, and Plans on Disaster Management	33
Education and Training	35
Disaster Management Communications.....	35
Early Warning Systems.....	35
Responsible Agencies for Warnings.....	36
Armed Forces' Role in Disaster Response.....	37
Information Sharing	37

Infrastructure.....	42
Airports.....	42
Seaports	42
Roads.....	44
Railways.....	44
Waterways.....	44
Schools	44
Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education Sector	44
Communications.....	45
Utilities.....	46
Power	46
Water and Sanitation.....	46

Health	48
Health Overview.....	48
Health Care System Structure	48
Challenges in Health	48
Health Cooperation.....	50
Communicable Diseases	50
Non-Communicable Diseases	51
Training for Health Professionals.....	51
Women, Peace, and Security	54
Conclusion	56
Appendices	58
DoD DMHA Engagements in the Past Five Years.....	58
International/Foreign Relations.....	59
Force Protection/Pre-Deployment Information	59
Passport/Visa.....	59
Safety and Security	59
Emergency Contact Information	59
Currency Information.....	59
Travel Health Information.....	59
Sendai Framework.....	62
HFA Country Progress Report.....	64
Country Profile	67
Acronyms and Abbreviations	79
References (Endnotes)	81

List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of the Republic of the Marshall Islands	12
Figure 2: Urban Population in the RMI.....	14
Figure 3: RMI Age Demographics	17
Figure 4: Teenage Fertility Rates in the RMI	18
Figure 5: Major Import Sources to the RMI	18
Figure 6: A Structure for Disaster Risk Management in the RMI.....	28
Figure 7: Ministry of Health and Human Services Organizational Structure	49
Figure 8: Top 10 Causes of Death in the RMI	51
Figure 9: Health Problems that Cause the Most Disability	52
Figure 10: UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030	63
Figure 11: HFA Level of Progress Achieved	64

List of Tables

Table 1: Youth Demographics in the RMI.....	16
Table 2: Disaster Events Affecting the RMI	26
Table 3: RMI Cluster System	29
Table 4: Civilian Airports in the RMI	43
Table 5: CDC, Travel Health Information for the Marshall Islands	61
Table 6: National Progress Report on the Implementation of the HFA	64
Table 7: HFA Country Progress Report Future Outlook Areas, the RMI	66

List of Photos

Photo 1: RMI Country Preparedness Package.....	39
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Welcome - Note from the Director

Pacific island countries and areas are among the most vulnerable in the world to the impacts of climate change due to environmental, demographic and socioeconomic factors, such as low elevation, small populations and scarce resources.¹ These characteristics also make them vulnerable to transnational threats, natural disasters, and the potential effects of climate change events. For this reason, a significant amount of preparation and planning has been taking place over several years within the climate change arena in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), in particular.²

Under the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the Department of Defense (DoD) is increasing security assistance in the region with funding to enhance capabilities in the Freely Associated States including the RMI to safeguard their waters.³ United States (U.S.) assistance also focuses on supporting health, education, and infrastructure in the RMI, as well as their ability to perform maritime security functions and strengthen climate resilience through disaster preparedness.⁴

Additionally, several multilateral humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness missions and exercises help support readiness across the Indo-Pacific Region. Some of these exercises and missions have directly impacted the RMI including Pacific Partnership, the Pacific Allies Program, Navy infrastructure projects, various health engagements, humanitarian drops, and subject matter exchanges.

This Handbook focuses on RMI's disaster management framework and partnerships, and highlights disaster risk reduction strategies and plans. It also provides an overview of the country's government, geography, demographics, social cultural practices, as well as details its history of natural disasters, and the current state of its disaster risk and response management. It serves as an initial source of information for individuals preparing for disaster management and response activities or immediate deployment with RMI partner responders in a crisis.



Sincerely,

Joseph D. Martin, SES
Director

Information about the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance

Overview

The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) is a United States (U.S.) Department of Defense (DoD) organization that was established by U.S. Congress in 1994. The Center is a direct reporting unit to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and is located on Ford Island, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

CFE-DM was founded as part of the late Senator Daniel K. Inouye's vision. The Senator had witnessed the effects of Hurricane Iniki that struck the Hawaiian Islands in 1992, and felt the civil-military coordination in the response could have been more effective. He set about to establish CFE-DM to help bridge understanding between civil and military responders, and to provide a DOD platform for building Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (DMHA) awareness and expertise in U.S. forces, and with partner nations in the Asia-Pacific. While maintaining a global mandate, the Asia-Pacific region is our priority of effort and collaboration is the cornerstone of our operational practice.

Vision

The Joint Force, allies, and partners are fully prepared to conduct and support foreign humanitarian assistance.

Mission

CFE-DM builds crisis response capacity, enhances coordination and collaboration, and strengthens relationships to save lives and alleviate human suffering before, during, and after humanitarian crises.

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Disaster Management Reference Handbook Series Overview

The Disaster Management Reference Handbook Series is intended to provide decision makers, planners, responders and disaster management practitioners with an overview of the disaster management structure, policies, laws, and plans for each country covered in the series. Natural and man-made threats most likely to affect the country (such as the Republic of the Marshall Islands) are discussed. The handbooks also provide basic country background information, including cultural, demographic, geographic, infrastructure, and other relevant data.

Conditions such as poverty, water and sanitation, vulnerable groups, and other humanitarian issues are included. A basic overview of the health situation in the country and disease surveillance is also covered. The handbooks include information on key national entities involved in disaster management, disaster response and preparation, and the military's role in disaster relief. Information is also provided on United Nation agencies, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), major local NGOs, and key U.S. agencies and programs in the country.

The overall aim is to offer a guide that brings together important information about disaster management and response for each country in an effort to provide a basic understanding for the reader. Each handbook is a working document and will be updated periodically as new, significant information becomes available. We hope that you find these handbooks informative, relevant, reliable, and useful in understanding disaster management and response for this country. We welcome and appreciate your feedback to improve this document and help fill any gaps to enhance its future utility. Feedback, comments, or questions can be emailed to cfe.dmha.fct@pacom.mil. You may also contact the Center at: (808) 472-0518. Please visit our website (<https://www.cfe-dmha.org>) to view the latest electronic versions available or to request a hard copy of a disaster management reference handbook.

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared in good faith based primarily on information gathered from open source material available at the date of publication. Most of the information is considered to be in the public domain. Such sources include PreventionWeb, Reliefweb, the Pacific Humanitarian Team, United Nations Programs, the World Health Organization, the USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the World Bank, and various academic institutions. Information was also gathered from the Government of the Marshall Islands, the Embassy, and the Ministry of Health and Human Services in the country. We also reach out to subject matter experts and incorporate feedback and additional sources listed in the reference section of this document. Where possible, a link to the original electronic source is provided in the endnote (reference) section at the end of the document. While making every attempt to ensure the information is relevant and accurate, Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) does not guarantee or warrant the accuracy, reliability, completeness or currency of the information in this publication. Any necessary updates will be incorporated in a future version.

Executive Summary

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is already in crisis not only in its vulnerability but its state of emergency with regard to natural disasters and climate change. Sea level rising is the biggest threat in RMI with the country's highest point being just 10 meters above sea level in 2017.⁵ The country is also at risk for tropical storms, typhoons, storm surges, and drought. These emergencies further impact the country, often producing secondary disasters affecting the country include marine pollution, ecosystem degradation, coastal erosion and food insecurity which stack the effects of these disasters across all aspects of society and impacting not only the viability of the country but also the sustainability of the people of RMI.⁶ Additional factors contributing to the country's vulnerability to climate change include population density on the islands, poverty, low elevation, wide geographic dispersal, a fragile ecosystem with limited fresh water resources and an economy at risk to global influences.⁷ Emerging threats such as flooding and disease outbreaks such as dengue have also put a strain on the country.⁸

Marshall Islanders have a wide range of health problems to include communicable and non-communicable diseases. The impact of sustained nuclear weapons testing in the Marshall Islands during the 1940s and 1950s also contributes to these ongoing health problems.⁹

RMI has disaster management (DM) legislation in place to combat their disaster risks. The National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) of 1997, the Standard Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) of 2005, the National Emergency Response Plan, a Draft Communicable Disease Response Plan, a Draft Majuro Hospital and Public Health Emergency Operation Plan, and an Emergency SOP, are important documents. The National Disaster Committee (NDC) is responsible for mitigating the effects of any disaster and for conducting disaster operations.¹⁰ For large-scale disasters, the Government of RMI may request supplemental U.S. disaster assistance through a U.S. Presidential Disaster Declaration, which enables funding support from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/ OFDA).¹¹ In February 2016, The President of RMI declared a state of emergency, followed by a State of Natural Disaster in March, and an extension of State of Natural Disaster in April. Approximately 21,000 individuals were

affected by these extreme drought conditions. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) partnered with the Government, USAID, Australian Aid, and Women United Together Marshall Islands to respond to the drought.¹²

USAID OFDA and FEMA have developed an operational blueprint which guides humanitarian assistance in the event of a significant disaster in RMI.¹³ External support arrangements through the Compact of Free Association (COFA) between RMI and the U.S., as well as the UN regional office are initiated at the direction of the President of RMI on the advice of and through the NDC. Operational deployment of these arrangements, including via the humanitarian Cluster system and at the state level, are through the National Disaster Coordination Team (NDCT). USAID/OFDA collaborates closely with FEMA, as well as USAID/Philippines and USAID's Bureau for Asia, to implement humanitarian programs in RMI.¹⁴ Additionally, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the U.S. (NOAA) provides weather forecasting, critical natural hazard monitoring and warning, for the country and other regional COFA participants.¹⁵

RMI is heavily dependent on the local government as well as resources provided by the U.S. military to help sustain its economic growth. Although a vulnerable economy, RMI has seen some growth in commercial and small-scale fisheries, aquaculture, agriculture, traditional handmade goods, and tourism. A pressing issue for RMI is ensuring adequate fiscal transition as the Marshallese face the possibility of the expiration of certain economic provisions in 2023, as health and education are almost entirely funded through the Compact.¹⁶

A number of U.S. Government agencies operate programs or render assistance to the Marshall Islands. These include the Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Postal Service, Small Business Administration, USAID, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Department of State, and the Department of the Interior.¹⁷ A number of international humanitarian partners provide support to RMI. International Organization for Migration (IOM) has multiple projects in the country to help raise awareness and provide humanitarian assistance training. International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) and Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS) are involved with disaster response, early recovery, and help facilitate and coordinate international humanitarian and disaster response.¹⁸



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

Country Overview

Disaster Management Reference Handbook | December 2019

Country Overview

The first settlers to the Marshall Islands likely arrived as early as 2000 BC via traditional wooden canoes from neighboring island regions. The ancestors to present day residents of RMI migrated to the islands in the 1000s BC via the same mode of transport. Alonso de Salazar from Spain was likely the first European to document travels to the islands in 1529. And in 1788, British explorers John Marshall (for whom the islands are named) and Thomas Gilbert arrived.

Spain laid claim to the islands in 1874, and then Germany paid Spain several million dollars to settle some of the islands as trading posts for coconut production. The Germans benefitted economically from the land but had no interest in controlling it, leaving the Marshallese to self-govern under their chiefs until the Japanese inhabited the lands in the early 1900s. The Japanese ruled until their defeat by the Americans in the Republic of Marshall Islands battles of Kwajalein Atoll and Enewetak Atoll at the end of World War II. American forces remained in RMI post war and the islands fell under American jurisdiction.¹⁹

From 1946 to 1958, the U.S. used the Marshall Islands for testing of their nuclear bombs for the Cold War. The Castle Bravo bomb, a newly designed dry fuel thermonuclear hydrogen bomb a thousand times more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped in Hiroshima during World War II was detonated in RMI to catastrophic effect.

The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission in 1956 called the Marshall Islands “the most contaminated place in the world.” The bomb destroyed two atolls and displaced Marshallese living on the Bikini Atoll twice due to ongoing nuclear radiation which has caused long lasting health problems to both the people and the environment.²⁰ Radioactive dust fell on half of the nation resulting in a series of emergent health problems including tumors, sharp spikes in cancer and the displacement of communities.²¹ The nuclear testing grounds caused

devastating and irreversible damage to many of the atolls, local population, wildlife, sea life, coral reefs and more in the region.²² Figure 1 depicts a map of RMI.²³

RMI was part of the United Nations Strategic Trust Territory. The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands was a strategic-area trusteeship administered by the U.S. from 1947-1986 covering the region known as Micronesia and comprising of three major island groups including the Marshall Islands, the Carolines and the Marianas excluding Guam. In 1952, the legal basis for governing the Code of the Trust Territory was enacted defining a formal law code and placing the U.S. government responsible for the civil administration of the territory.²⁴

In 1979, RMI ended a Trusteeship Agreement with the U.S. and became a self-governing nation although the U.S. remained responsible for the defense of the region. Additionally, in 1983, RMI and the U.S. began negotiations to sign the Compact of Free Association.

The Marshall Islands became a self-governing nation and adopted its Constitution in 1979. In October 1986, RMI and the United States signed the Compact of Free Association (COFA) requiring the U.S. to remain responsible for defense and external security of the country as well as provide financial assistance. In return, the U.S. would be entitled to use the Kwajalein Atoll for missile testing and use of the island for its military base. RMI renegotiated the compact’s provision regarding compensation for the people displaced and/or otherwise affected by the nuclear tests to the four atolls resulting in the



Figure 1: Map of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

agreement that the U.S. would separate funding for the people of the four atolls and establish an open-ended fund to provide personal injury claims to islanders. Additionally, the agreement provided for additional funding to improve living conditions in Ebeye Island.

The RMI is a sovereign nation with full diplomatic relations, and maintain deep ties and a cooperative relationships with the United States. The RMI government has power to conduct its own foreign relations under the terms of the COFA which was amended in 2004. Under the amended Compact, the U.S. has full authority and responsibility for security and defense of the country, and the government of RMI is obligated to refrain from taking actions that would be incompatible with these security and defense responsibilities. Under the agreement set to expire in 2023, eligible Marshallese citizens may work, live, and study in the United States without a visa, and serve in the U.S. military, volunteering at per capita rates higher than many U.S. states. However, under the U.S. DoD's Military Use and Operating Rights Agreement, which is a subsidiary government to government agreement of the compact, extended permission to use parts of the lagoon and several islands on the Kwajalein Atoll including use of the U.S. Army Garrison Kwajalein Atoll missile test range until 2066 with an option to extend to 2086. An additional subsidiary agreement of the original Compact provides citizens of RMI settlement of all claims related to the U.S. nuclear tests conducted at Bikini and Enewetak Atolls from 1946 to 1958.²⁵

Culture

Little is known about the earliest settlers to the Marshall Islands because there are only few remnants of historical lifestyle and culture. Although it is believed that the people lived simple lives hunting, fishing and gathering food and traveling around the islands in wooden canoes. Additionally, communities seem to have been arranged in clans and lead by chiefs with property passed matrilineally.

Present day Marshallese still live relatively rural lives and their livelihood and identity are tied to the land and sea. Most days are spent farming and fishing to provide for family and spending time with family and friends is the most important and likely pastime. This dependence on the land and sea heavily influences the attitude of the people around environmental issues. The rising water levels and crisis is affecting what it means to be Marshallese

as their homeland and thus everything else is at risk.²⁶

The most important plant in the Marshall Islands is the coconut. It is one of the only plants that predates the settlers and the influence they brought with their foods which continues to make up the base of the Marshallese diet today. Additionally, sea animals like crab, clam, turtles, fish and sea birds make up a large part of the Marshallese diet. Early settlers also brought pigs, rats, dogs, taro, rice, yams, breadfruit, bananas, lemons and sugar cane. European settlers brought cattle, chickens, wheat, potatoes and pineapples, papaya and mango.

Missionaries and the islands' colonial history have been influential on the islands since resulting in the majority (over 80%) of the population identifying as Protestant Christian and 8.5% Roman Catholic.²⁷

Demographics

The majority (37.15%) of Marshallese citizens are between 25- 54 years old. Followed closely by children 0-14 years old (34.26%). Only 5% of the population is between 55-64 years old and only 4% are 65 years and older.²⁸

Ethnic Makeup

The Ethnic groups of the Marshall Islands consist of primarily Marshallese (92%), mixed Marshallese (5.9%) and 2% other.²⁹ The Marshallese are a sub-group of the Micronesian people with ties to Melanesian, Polynesian and Filipino carrying linguistic, ethnic and cultural ties to each. Additionally the Marshallese in RMI belong to the same subgroup of Micronesians and can likely trace ancestry to the Pohnpeians of the Federated States of Micronesia and also the Gilbert Islands in Kiribati.³⁰

Key Population Centers

According to the 2018 CIA Factbook population estimate, RMI has 75,684 people. The majority of the population (over two thirds) reside on the atolls of Majuro and Ebeye. Majuro is the capital of RMI and one of the most densely populated locations in the Pacific. Although, there are clusters of people centered around urban communities throughout the country's islands.³¹ Kwajalein, home to a large U.S. military base, is the second most populated atoll and Ebeye is RMI's epicenter. Ebeye is the most densely populated island in the Pacific,

with 33,113 inhabitants per square kilometer.

Figure 2 depicts trends in urbanization in RMI.³² Due to lack of employment opportunities and economic development, the outer islands of the RMI are sparsely populated. With the exception of Jaluit, Lae and Lib, all outer islands recorded negative population growth as a result of rural-urban migration.³³

Within the Marshall Islands there are substantial migration flows between islands and particularly from outer islands to the capital Majuro, Ebeye and the US military base Kwajalein. In addition, many are migrating to other countries, particularly the U.S. The number of Marshallese residing in the U.S. has rapidly risen over the past two decades, from 7,000 in the year 2000 to 22,000 in 2010. Nearly one third of the Marshallese population currently resides in the U.S. (Hawaii and the mainland). The country is increasingly having to contend with flooding and drought that damages agriculture, homes, and infrastructure. Residents are leaving their home islands in the hope of a more stable future, moving within the country to larger islands or to the U.S. where the COFA allows them to live and work without a visa.³⁴ Nationals of RMI were granted free movement to the U.S. through the COFA.³⁵ Drivers for migration include better access to healthcare, education, and jobs, as well as environmental factors. Climate change has had a particularly significant effect on migration due to sea level rise.³⁶

Language

The official language in RMI is Marshallese with approximately 98% of the population using it as a primary language. English is also widely used in RMI as a secondary language.³⁷ The Marshallese language is part of the Micronesian language family consisting of Gilbertese, Chuukese, Kosraean, Pohnpeian Nauruan and others. It consists of two distinct dialects, the Ralik Chain and the Ratan Chain and are primarily spoken on one of the two main island chains in the country. The Pohnpeian language, spoken in the eastern parts of FSM is the closest relative of the Marshallese language.³⁸

Religion

Christianity makes up the primary faith

The urban population has doubled since 1958

Trends in urbanization, 1958-2011



Figure 2: Urban Population in RMI

communities in RMI with Protestants accounting for over 80% of the population. Roman Catholics make up 8.5%, Mormons account for 7%, Jehovah's Witness' count 1.7%, 1.2% list Other and 1.1% do not claim any religion.³⁹

Vulnerable Groups

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), vulnerability is "the degree to which a population, individual or organization is unable to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impacts of disasters."⁴⁰ This section will discuss the vulnerable groups in the RMI which include the poor, women, and children.

The Poor

RMI is lacking with up-to-date data on poverty rates. The last Household Income and Expenditure Survey was carried out in 2002. There is also no current official national poverty line, and no recent data on the extent and nature of child poverty. However, estimates by the Asian Development Bank in 2011 suggest that up to 20% of the population are unable to afford basic needs, with trends pointing to an increase in poverty. RMI's extreme poverty rate is less than US\$1.90 a day. Rural households are hit harder. In addition, RMI has yet to achieve the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.⁴¹ According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), RMI has no statistical data for its poverty levels. But one indicator lists 93.1% of the population having access to electricity.⁴² The 2010 Majuro and Kwajalein Household Water Survey revealed a serious problem in urban areas, where some households had no access to water or electricity.⁴³ Poverty in RMI is concerning due to the scarcity of natural

resources, high unemployment and wealth inequality and population living at risk to natural disasters. Many of these factors exacerbated by the forced relocation of many RMI citizens due to uninhabitable environments, is a result of the islands history with the U.S. conducting nuclear testing. Ebeye city is the second largest city in RMI and outranks New York in number of people living per square mile with a population of approximately 12, 000 in a land area of only 0.14 square miles.⁴⁴ Pockets of poverty also exist in the two urban locations of Majuro and Ebeye, particularly among those living in informal 'squatter' settlements.⁴⁵

Women

The Republic of Marshall Islands does not currently have any laws in place against domestic violence, sexual harassment, human trafficking or sex tourism. Additionally, there are no minimum sentences or mandatory prosecutions in cases of sexual violence. Further, while the RMI constitution does grant protection to customs and traditions, there is no provision toward rights of individuals, including discrimination against women. This specific exclusion puts the country in non-compliance with the United Nations Human Rights Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Unfortunately, due to insufficient protection laws, violence against women is not uncommon. A report by Women United Together Marshall Islands reported that 51% of women in the country experience domestic violence. Alarmingly, UN Women also documented over half of the population also normalizes violence against women in marital relationships.⁴⁶ Approximately half of Marshallese women who experience domestic abuse do not report it.⁴⁷ Founded in 1987, named Women Union Together Marshall Islands, a nonprofit organization founded in 1987 serves as the leading voice for eradicating violence against women in the nation.

There are some benefits to RMI constitutional laws for women in that one of the protected customary laws is the tradition of matrilineal property title.⁴⁸ RMI is traditionally a matriarchal society with land rights inherited along matrilineal line. However, as many Marshallese migrate to urban areas and the population increases, the ability to trace lineage and land rights is becoming more of a challenge. Additionally with the erosion of customary land tenure practice, many women no longer

have autonomy over land and married couples are increasingly residing on land belonging to the husband's family. This change in customary tradition has been identified as increasing the vulnerability of women in the country as that move to the husband's land removes them from previous protections provided by brothers and uncles.⁴⁹

With regard to leadership, women have not normally been granted chief status however, they are not specifically prohibited from holding it. Currently, the Council of Oroji, the upper house of the Marshallese parliament has three member of the 12 total. And the current president of the Marshall Islands is a woman, Dr. Hilda Heine. She is the first female leader of any independent Pacific Island Nation and the first Marshallese citizen to obtain a doctorate.⁵⁰

Unemployment rates for women in RMI are much higher than rates for men with national averages of 37% and 28%. Additionally 66% of men are classified as economically active vice only one in three women. Annual wages of women are \$3,000 less than men holding the same job.⁵¹

The UN has several initiatives in RMI to increase women's rights and engagement in the country. They include:

- **The Advancing Gender Justice in the Pacific (AGJP) Programme** is a UN Women initiative which helps to build the capacity of government and civil society partners for CEDAR implementation and reporting.
- **The Ending Violence against Women (EVAW) Programme** is an initiative in which stakeholders are provided access to virtual knowledge platforms, tools and evidence based resources to build better evidence to advocate for strengthened EVAW legislation, improved policies and services for women and girls who have survived domestic violence.
- **The Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Programme** is an initiative to provide technical assistance to national and local government in RMI to include improved and comparable evidence on the economic situation of women in the country.
- **The Increasing Community Resilience through Empowerment of Women to Address Climate Change and Natural Hazards (IREACH) Programme** is a UN Women initiative that supports the incorporation of women in strategic planning for disaster risk management and climate change.⁵²

There is also a local NGO called Women United Together Marshall islands (WUTMI), which is an organization which serves Marshallese women and implements projects dealing with violence against women, HIV/AIDS, health and women in leadership.⁵³

Women in RMI's environmental and economic issues are tied to their health concerns as well. Due to a shortage of fresh fruits and vegetables, and reliance on imported processed and packaged foods, more than half of women in the Marshall Islands have obesity or risk factors for related diseases.

Political leaders play a strong role in promoting gender equality and ending violence against women. Although progress on women's empowerment in Marshall Island has been achieved, efforts to improve the status and protections of women is ongoing and necessary.⁵⁴

Children

Children in RMI make up approximately half (46%) of the population. Continuing challenges facing youth in RMI include quality of education, high teen pregnancy, population density for urban dwellers, employment opportunities, and climate change vulnerability. A pressing issue for RMI is ensuring adequate fiscal transition when the COFA agreement ends in 2023 as health and education are almost entirely funded through the Compact.⁵⁵

In 2007, approximately 13% of children under

5 years of age were malnourished leading issues of stunting, wasting, micronutrient deficiencies and child obesity. Additional information about RMI's health issues can be found in the Health section on page 50. Table 1 details youth demographics in RMI and Figure 3 depicts the youth bulge of children under 15 in the country.⁵⁶

On 4 October 1993, RMI ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and has continued its work in prioritizing investments in the country's youth and committing to safeguard children's rights through laws, financial resources, adequate social services, strengthening families and communities as well as other mechanisms. Since the 2004 amendment to the Compact Agreement with the U.S., RMI has allocated a substantial portion of the Compact grant funding to areas of health and education impacting positive outcomes in children. In particular, a significant decline in child mortality was achieved as well as an increased level of basic health services including skilled attendant at birth. Additionally, gender parity in basic education has been achieved and approximately 90% of primary school children are attending school.

RMI has the highest teen pregnancy rates in the Pacific region. Rural teens in RMI having higher rates than urban teens and with those with primary or less education level having higher rates of pregnancy than those with higher education levels. The DHS published results

A total of 24,261 children aged 0 to 17 years live on the Marshall Islands

Number of children 0-17 years by urban/rural residence, 2011

Age Group	Total	Urban			Rural
		Total	Majuro	Kwajalein	
<i>RMI population</i>	53,158	39,205	27,797	11,408	13,953
0 - 4 years	7,717	5,604	3,858	1,746	2,113
5 - 9 years	7,022	4,799	3,278	1,521	2,223
10 - 14 years	6,496	4,395	2,967	1,428	2,101
15 - 17 years	3,026	2,399	1,719	680	627
Total children	24,261	17,197	11,822	5,375	7,064

Source: 2011 RMI Census of Population and Housing, EPPSO

Children make up 46 per cent of the RMI's total population, and half of the rural population

Table 1: Youth Demographics in RMI

RMI

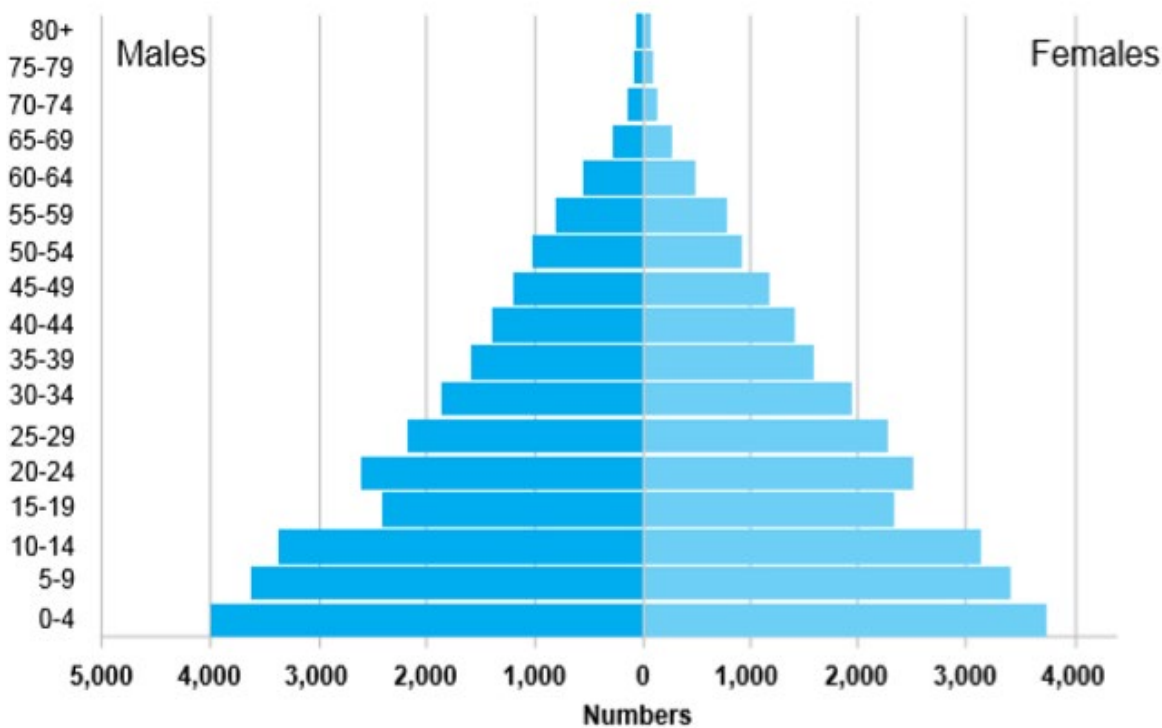


Figure 3: RMI Age Demographics

comparing the proportion of adolescents aged 15 to 19 years who had given birth as twice as high in rural areas (43 per cent) as those in the same age group living in urban areas (20 per cent). Some contributing factors to the high rates of teen pregnancy include socio-economic factors such as unemployment and school dropout rates, but the cultural acceptance of early pregnancy is likely plays a significant role. Figure 4 shows teenage fertility rates in RMI compared to other neighboring countries.⁵⁷

Incidence of suicide and attempted suicide among youth has been problematic in RMI with teen alcohol and drug use playing a role in incidence. Despite the Alcoholic Restriction Act (1994) forbidding possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages, for persons under aged 21, alcohol use among youth is prevalent. The DHS published, date on teen suicide in RMI listing primary reasons to include addiction, family issues and relationship problems, and economic pressure such as unemployment.⁵⁸

Another important consideration is the impact of the youth of the Marshall Islands who are coming of age as the compensation for damages done to the country by the U.S. will be ending. However, they will still be affected by the long term consequences including

limited natural resources, limited economic and education resources, and limited options for alternative opportunities that the previous arrangements with its open education and relocation policy allowed.⁵⁹

Persons with Disabilities

There is a lack of data regarding persons with disabilities in RMI, including children with disabilities.⁶⁰ The RMI Constitution prohibits discrimination in general, with no special dispositions to protect persons with disabilities. RMI has not passed any laws or adopted any policies to provide access to public transportation, buildings, education or information for persons with disabilities. In 2011, an estimated 16% of the population in RMI were living with a disability.⁶¹

RMI established a Disability Coordination Office in 2013 which provides support for the Marshall Islands Disabled Persons Organization (MIDPO) and coordinates Government activities. It was tasked with drafting the Disability Policy and Action Plan 2014-2018. In March 2015, the Marshall Islands ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).⁶²

The teenage fertility rate in the Marshall Islands is five times higher than in Tonga

Teenage fertility rates (births per 1,000 teenagers aged 15-19 years) by country, 2005-2009

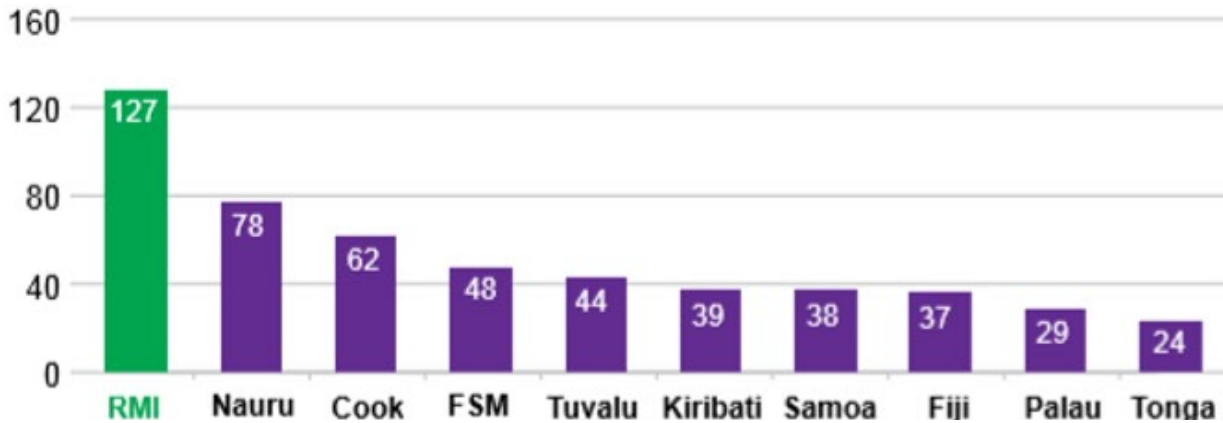


Figure 4: Teenage Fertility Rates in RMI

Economics

The Marshallese economy is highly dependent on donor funding. Since 2004, the U.S. has provided direct assistance, subsidies, and financial support in excess of \$800 million; an amount equal to approximately 70% of the country's total GDP during that time period. Additionally, RMI has received aid from Australia, Japan, Taiwan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Thailand, the European Union, and organizations such as the Asian Development Bank.⁶³

The RMI is characterized by high dependency on external assistance, mostly from the United States. The country received more than US\$1 billion in aid from the US from 1986-2002. In the fiscal year 2011, direct US aid accounted for 62 per cent of the Marshall Islands' US\$132.2 million budget. A Trust Fund has been set up to bolster the country's long-term budgetary self-reliance and to provide Government with an ongoing source of revenue after 2023 when Compact grants are set to expire.⁶⁴

The remoteness of RMI severely impacts the country's economy. The country has an annual GDP of approximately \$179 million, per capita GDP of \$3,800 and a 1.6% real growth rate. The country's largest employer is the government employing approximately 46% of the salaried work force. The second largest employer is the U.S. Army Garrison- Kwajalein Atoll *(USAG-

KA). The primary economic industries include: wholesale/retail trade, business services, commercial fisheries, construction and tourism. Subsistence sector industry includes fish, coconuts, breadfruit, bananas, taro and pandanus cultivation. RMI relies on imported goods for many items, mostly processed foods. Other major imports include machinery, transport equipment, manufactured goods, and fuels. Figure 5 depicts major importers to RMI with South Korea being the largest importer.⁶⁵

RMI has a narrow export base which includes frozen fish, tropical aquarium fish, ornamental clams and corals, coconut oil and copra cake, and handicrafts. Conversely, the country relies heavily on imports. Top U.S. exports to RMI include food products, prefabricated buildings, recreational boats, excavation machinery, aircraft parts, tobacco, and wood/paper products. The trade deficit was \$80 million in 2014.⁶⁶

Marshall Islands major import sources (2015)

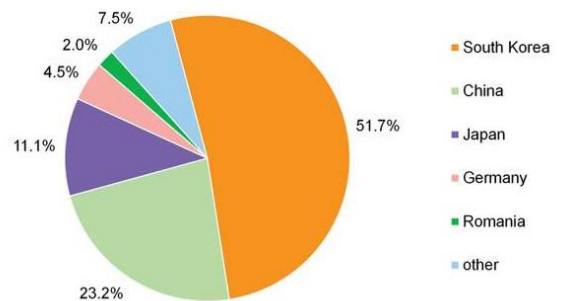


Figure 5: Major Import Sources to RMI

An estimated 33% of the labor force is unemployed and the legal minimum wage for public and private employees is US \$2 per hour, a figure which has remained unchanged for the past decade. There is no data confirming an official poverty line or basic needs line in the RMI, which makes the analysis and tracking of poverty in the country difficult. Similarly, there has not been a household income and expenditure survey (HIES) since 2002, causing a gap in data for policy, particularly with regard to how poverty affects children in the RMI and mitigating responses to safeguard them. Therefore, the situation of children and poverty is not clearly understood.

In spite of lack of figures, the effects of poverty in RMI is mostly found in rural areas. However, urban dwellers, because of high population density, have extremely limited access to subsistence living options, making the need to find paid employment imperative.⁶⁷

The U.S. dollar continues to be the currency of the country since the U.S. administered the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Economic challenges includes foreign direct investment (FDI) inhibitions due to laws preventing purchase of land by non-Marshallese, the high cost of doing business due to the remoteness of the country, its dependence on imported material and services, and the limited infrastructure including transportation links which create additional challenges. Further complicating potential for FDIs, the Foreign Investment Business License (FIBL) (Amendment) Act restricts foreign investment in small scale retail and service business including prohibitions for foreign investments in the following business ventures:

- Small scale agriculture and marine culture for local markets
- Bakeries and pastry shops
- Motor garages and fuel filling stations
- Land taxis operations, not including airport taxis used by hotels
- Rental of all types of motor vehicles
- Small retail shops with a quarterly turnover of less than USD 1,000 (including mobil retail shops and/or open-air vendors/take-outs)
- Laundromat and dry cleaning, other than service provided by hotels/motels
- Tailor/sewing shops
- Video rental
- Handicraft shops
- Delicatessens, Deli Shops, or Food take-out.

Additionally, the encroaching threat of climate change, rising sea level and RMI's very low elevation deflect potential FDIs to the country.⁶⁸

The primary source of funding for RMI comes from U.S. assistance and lease payments for the ability to utilize the Kwajalein atoll as a U.S. military base. During the initial COFA agreement spanning 1986 – 2001, the U.S. provided approximately \$1 billion USD to RMI estimates and additional \$1.5 billion will go to aid the small island country during the current Compact package agreement for the period 2004 – 2024.⁶⁹ Imports for the island far exceed exports as agricultural production is primarily subsistence and centered on small farms. The primary commercial crops are coconuts and breadfruit. The limited industry consists of handicraft, tuna processing, copra and to a very small extent, tourism.⁷⁰

The Gross Domestic product for RMI for the last three years has been \$196 million, \$191.3 million, and \$184.6 million making the country a lower income country.⁷¹ The labor force consists primary of services (72.7%), followed by industry (16.3%) and agriculture (11%).

In July 2008, the RMI government declared the first-ever State of Economic Emergency with hardships felt throughout the country due to high fuel and food prices. However, in 2010, economic growth rebounded to 5.2% as a result of low inflation and expansion in fisheries.⁷²

Government

RMI is a presidential republic in free association with the United States. This means that the country is a sovereign nation in regard to domestic and foreign affairs with its own governing body (the president) having gained independence in 1986. However, per the Compact of Free Association (COFA), the U.S. provides financial support, security, and defense to the country per the agreement which expires in 2023.

The current president, Dr. Hilda Heine (elected in 2016) is head of government and head of state. Additionally, she is the first female president of any Pacific island nation.⁷³ Dr. Heine, has been a vocal proponent of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation policies and a rallying force for international support of the Pacific Islands fight against Climate Change Issues.

The government is made up of a bicameral

parliamentary system, also known as, the Council of Ironij. The Council, which is the upper house, is made up of 12 tribal chiefs also known as the Council of Chiefs who provide advice and guidance on matters concerning customary law and traditional practice including land tenure. The legislative power resides in the Nitijela, is the elected lower part of the Parliamentary house⁷⁴ made up of 33 seats representing the 33 municipalities including, Ailinginae, Ailinglaplap, Ailuk, Arno, Aur, Bikar, Bikini, Bokak, Ebon, Enewetak, Erikub, Jabat, Jaluit, Jemo, Kili, Kwajalein, Lae, Lib, Likiep, Majuro, Maloelap, Mejit, Mili, Namorik, Namu, Rongelap, Rongrik, Toke, Ujae, Ujelang, Utirik, Wotho, Wotje.⁷⁵

Environment

Geography

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is located approximately 2,000 miles northeast of Australia. The country is made up of twenty-nine atolls and five reefs without lagoons which consist of approximately 1,225 islands and 870 reef systems. Twenty-two of the atolls and four of the islands are inhabited.

The atolls extend approximately 700 miles (1130km) north to south, and 800 miles (1290km) east to west. While some of the islands are several kilometers in length they rarely exceed a few hundred meters in width. Geographically, the RMI's nearest neighbors are Kiribati to the south, the Federated States of Micronesia to the west and is more than 2,000 miles (3230km) from its nearest trading centers, Honolulu and Tokyo. RMI's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) encompasses over 750,000 square miles (1.2 million sq km) of the Central Pacific.⁷⁶

There are approximately 1,225 islands and islets making up the Republic of the Marshall Islands in Oceania, in the North Pacific Ocean. Geographically, the islands are located in the middle of Hawaii and Australia and include the atolls of Bikini, Enewetak, Kwajalein, Majuro, Rongelap and Utirik.⁷⁷ The atolls and islands of the country are made up of two nearly parallel island chains, the Ratak (Sunrise) group and the Ralik (Sunset) group.⁷⁸ The terrain is primarily low coral limestone and sand islands.⁷⁹

The islands have extremely low elevation with the lowest point of the country 0 meters above sea level making it extremely vulnerable to the adverse effects of sea level rise. The country's

highest elevation is 10 meters on the Likiep atoll.⁸⁰ The mean elevation above sea level is only 2 meters (7 feet) leaving the country ecologically vulnerable.⁸¹

Maritime Security

The Pacific Islands face a multitude of maritime security threats, including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, financial crime, drug trafficking, human trafficking, gang activity, and cybercrime. Fisheries are extremely important to Pacific Island economies. The U.S. is responsible for security and defense matters in and relating to the RMI under the COFA with the U.S.⁸²

The U.S. is a key partner on maritime security through U.S. Coast Guard and the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI) shiprider agreements with 10 Pacific Island countries, which allow local law enforcement officers to embark on U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy vessels, in order to observe, protect, board, and search vessels suspected of violating laws or regulations within their exclusive economic zones. RMI and other Oceania states have among the largest exclusive economic zones in the world, which make surveillance and enforcement of such a large area quite challenging for island nations with limited financial resources. Under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, the U.S. supports maritime security through participation in the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's regional surveillance operations and inspections.⁸³

Australia, France, New Zealand, and the U.S. cooperate as the Quadrilateral Defense Coordination Group to coordinate maritime security efforts in the region, including joint operations. The U.S. and 16 Pacific Island parties agreed to adopt amendments to the 1987 Treaty on Fisheries in December 2016, and are currently working on implementation.⁸⁴

Climate

The climate in RMI is hot and humid with cooling trade winds. The southern atolls have frequent rains and the northern atolls are typically dry. The average daily temperature on the islands is 81 degrees Fahrenheit. May to November is the wet season and while the islands border the typhoon belt, storms are infrequent.⁸⁵



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

Disaster Overview

Disaster Management Reference Handbook | December 2019

Disaster Overview

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) counts tropical storms, typhoons, storm surge, and drought as major threats to natural hazards and is extremely vulnerable to the effects of these events as well as to the impacts of climate change. However, country's biggest threat is sea level rise.⁸⁶

Disaster Management Challenges

Climate Change

On October 10, 2019, the Parliament in RMI officially declared a national climate crisis due to the mounting risk of sea level rise. The declaration called on the international community to increase efforts to mitigate global warming and provide aid to nations financially unable to safeguard against rising sea levels.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report estimated that by 2050, many low lying coral atoll nations such as RMI would be completely uninhabitable and that by 2100, the sea level could rise by 1 to 4 feet completely submerging many of the nations. The report reiterated research by the U.S. DoD regarding the U.S. military base on the Kwajalein Atoll projecting unlivable conditions by 2030 if the Antarctic ice sheet were to melt and cosigned the 2050 projection of uninhabitability of the islands due to flooding, storm waves, and ground water contamination by saltwater even in a more conservative model than arctic melt.⁸⁷ Additional factors contributing to the country's vulnerability to climate change include population density on the islands, poverty, low elevation, wide geographic dispersal, a fragile ecosystem with limited fresh water resources and an economy at risk to global influences.

As a result of 100% of RMI's population and infrastructure residing on the coastline, the country is vulnerable to high winds, waves, typhoons, coastal erosion and what is increasingly the most threatening impact of climate change, drought which are longer and more frequently impacting the availability of water sources. Therefore, water management has been identified as a major issue that needs to be addressed. The population of RMI drink approximately 1 million gallons of water daily. Jointly, the existing reservoirs of water is only able to store 23 mega gallons of water which is

less than a month's supply in times of drought signaling a very high risk vulnerability. Future El Niño-type events in a climate change scenario could cause serious socio-economic and health repercussions for the islands.⁸⁸

The President of RMI has been vocal regarding the enlistment of international support for global commitment to climate change. Specifically she teamed up with Frank Bainimara, the Prime Minister of Fiji to urge the European Union to commit to a zero net emissions target of 2050 and to raise the 2020 mitigation goal to align with that target. Further, RMI and Fiji are the sole countries to have committed to the UN long term plans of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.⁸⁹

In June 2015, the Pacific Resilience Program as a series of World Bank programs set to strengthen Pacific Island countries' resilience to natural disasters and climate change. In September 2018, the World Bank approved \$2.5 million grant in support of RMI's goal to strengthen resilience and respond to natural disasters, including tropical cyclones and tsunamis. This grant extends the Pacific Resilience Program's support of the government of RMI by providing an additional 5 years of disaster risk insurance under the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Finance Initiative (PCRAFI) which provides immediate funds in the event of a major natural disaster.⁹⁰

Extreme Weather

The RMI are exposed to natural hazards including prolonged and recurring droughts, flooding from king tides, storms and cyclones. The majority of residents live along coastlines, which are extremely vulnerable to the extreme weather and resultantly exposed to supplemental effects such as coastal erosion, storm surges, and sea level rise. In the islands of Ebeye and Majuro, home to approximately 74% of the total population of RMI, the population density and concentration of public infrastructure is high, putting them at particular risk.⁹¹

Drought

The Republic of the Marshall Islands depends almost exclusively (over 90%) on rainfall for its water supply and thus is severely impacted by seasons of drought. Recent year's drought conditions in the islands have been exacerbated by El Nino event systems beginning in early 2015 and continuing through today. In response to the emergencies, states have had to manage

water reserves distributing allocations to citizens. Previous year's droughts in 2013 affected 5000 Marshallese in the northern atolls and an additional 11,000 suffered from food and water shortages with practically the entire population facing chronic water scarcity.

Additionally, as drought conditions worsen and prolong, salt water levels at the bottom of reservoirs contaminate the remaining sources of fresh groundwater reserves forcing citizens to rely on the limited municipal Capital water supply in Majuro. Since many of the islands water sources are permanently contaminated due to Operation Crossroads nuclear tests in 1946-1954.

As a result, the President Hilde Heine called a state of emergency which allows for international assistance to provide resources to cope with the crisis. In 2013, the U.S. government provided \$5.5 million in drought relief.

President Heine, speaking at the United Nations Climate Action Conference in New York in September 2019 said, "Prolonged and unseasonal droughts are hitting us (RMI) real hard, and salt water is creeping into our freshwater lands." The Marshallese government has installed several desalination units to combat the problem, the units are expensive to obtain and run typically costing between \$30,000 and \$75,000 per year in fuel costs alone. The limited impact of the few units in no way alleviates the grave public health risks posed by water scarcity to the country.⁹²

Sea Level Rise

In RMI, impacts of climate change, in particular the rising sea level are of critical concern.⁹³ The country faces annual flooding that experts predict could contaminate the country's drinking water making it undrinkable by 2030 and which will inundate the islands entirely by 2050. As a mitigation effort, discussions of, raising the islands or constructing a new one have begun. The plan is an adaptation measure that would select islands to dredge and use the reclaimed land to elevate, add to, or build onto other islands. Proponents including RMI's President, Hilda Heine who has expanded the country's mitigation efforts for a greater emphasis on adaptation, believes it is the only option. Opponents of the idea believe it would be prohibitively expensive and environmentally damaging, Land rights are also at stake and fueling the debate.⁹⁴

The President's administration is working on preliminary discussions for a National

Adaptation Plan to ensure the sustainability of not only the Marshallese lands, but importantly the people and its culture. Complicating the issue is the history of forced relocation due to nuclear testing, urbanization and disruption of traditional land tenure altering the ancestral land ties not only from a legal perspective but also from a socio-cultural level. Adaptation measures already underway include strengthening water and food security, climate-proofing, infrastructure, fortifying shorelines and other coastal protections.⁹⁵

Recent History of Natural Disasters

Drought: 2015-2017

El Niño-induced drought conditions started during the last quarter of 2015, when dry conditions were documented throughout RMI due to low levels of rainfall. In January 2016, the government conducted a series of rapid assessments across numerous atolls – including Aur, Mili, Ronglap, Wotho, Maloelap, Namu, Ebon, Jabot, Lae, Ailinglaplap, Arno, Jaluit, Likiep, and Ujae Atolls, and Ebeye and Ejit Islands. After 13 atolls had formally requested assistance from the National Government to address water shortage challenges associated with the droughts,⁹⁶ RMI President Hilda Heine declared a state of emergency on 4 February 2016, one week after she took office. RMI received only 25% of the usual rainfall from November to February, but depends on rainfall for over 90% of its water supply.⁹⁷ By early March 2016, local government officials reported that on affected islands, the majority of water tanks were almost empty, and most well water had been rendered undrinkable due to high salinity levels. As of 9 March, more than 12,000 people in the Marshall Islands were experiencing severe drought conditions. On 10 March 2016, the Government of RMI declared a national disaster due to the drought, and the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, Sarah A. Nelson also declared a disaster, paving the way for USAID funding assistance.⁹⁸

Throughout April 2017, extreme drought was reported in eight atolls across the Marshall Islands, including Wotje and Utirik. On 24 April 2017, the Government declared a State of Emergency for 31 days in the affected areas. The Emergency Operations Centre was activated and coordinated the response with local governments and national clusters. Authorities liaised with

bilateral partners to support the in-country response.⁹⁹

The 2015-2017 drought conditions affected not only the RMI, but a large area of the Pacific, including Fiji, Micronesia, Palau, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea. The drought conditions were caused by the 2015-2016 El Niño event, which was one of the strongest observed. While El Niño's effects are not consistent and can vary across countries, in this region the event generally causes extended dry spells leading to water shortages, prolonged lean seasons and food shortages.¹⁰⁰ El Niño (warm phase) and La Niña (cold phase) are opposite phases of the *El Niño-Southern Oscillation* (ENSO) cycle, which refers to temperature fluctuations between the ocean and atmosphere in the eastern equatorial Pacific region. These swings in ocean surface temperatures have large-scale impacts on ocean processes, global weather (short-term conditions), and global climate (long-term conditions).¹⁰¹

King Tides: March 2014

From 3-7 March 2014, king tides, a non-scientific term for exceptionally high tides, affected the Marshall Islands (as well as Kiribati). The morning and afternoon high tides produced tidal surges that inundated communities on low-lying atolls, as waves washing over shorelines sent water and debris across roads and properties. The Government declared a state of emergency, set up an Emergency Operations Centre and held National Disaster Committee meetings with humanitarian partners, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS), and donors.¹⁰²

There were no reported fatalities or serious injuries, but properties and infrastructure were significantly affected. In Majuro, 70 homes were damaged, ranging from complete destruction to minor damage. The number of displaced persons peaked at 940, many of whom relocated to churches in Uliga and Rita. The outer islands of Mili, Maloelap, Kili and Wotje were also affected, with Arno severely affected. In Arno Atoll (population 1,794), an initial assessment of four villages identified 370 people affected, who comprise 88% of the villages' total population, leaving many people sheltering in schools. The northeastern portion of the atoll is most affected, particularly Tinak, Lonar, Kilane and Malel.

All roads were blocked by debris, one school in Lonar was damaged, and the Tinak Health Centre was destroyed.

Concerns included food security, and water and sanitation issues. Most breadfruit, pandanus and banana trees were destroyed, and shops lost all food stock. Many household water catchments were damaged and community tanks contaminated. Approximately 80% of sanitation facilities were affected, with sewage reported in some locations. Boats were deployed with medical personnel, food, water, hygiene kits, reverse osmosis units, and heavy equipment to clear roads.¹⁰³

Drought: May 2013

A prolonged dry season was experienced since late 2012, leading to severe drought in Wotje and atolls north of Majuro.¹⁰⁴ As early as January 2013, drier-than-normal weather conditions began affecting several atolls and islands in northern RMI, where the majority of freshwater supplies depend on rainfall for replenishment.¹⁰⁵ The dry season usually ends by late March or April, but on 19 April 2013 the Government of RMI (GoRMI) declared a state of emergency for the northern Marshall Islands, which was elevated on 8 May to a state of drought disaster for 30 days¹⁰⁶ due to deteriorating conditions related to the drought in the northern atolls.¹⁰⁷

Months of drought conditions depleted water tanks and rendered groundwater unsafe for human consumption due to high salinity levels. In addition to critical shortages of safe drinking water, the drought had damaged food crops, such as banana, taro, and breadfruit, and local populations were relying on fish, crabs, and other coastal food resources. The GoRMI Emergency Operations Center estimated approximately 1,130 households, or 6,380 people, were residing in drought-affected areas of RMI. On May 3, U.S. Ambassador Thomas Hart Armbruster declared a disaster due to humanitarian needs resulting from the drought. In response, USAID/OFDA provided an initial \$100,000 through USAID/Philippines to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to distribute emergency relief commodities, such as water containers and hygiene kits, from a USAID-funded warehouse in the RMI capital of Majuro. On May 9, the GoRMI requested that the USG conduct a PDA. Coordinated jointly by USAID/OFDA and the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the PDA verified the magnitude of the disaster and informed potential USG response

options. On May 14, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service issued a drought information statement indicating very dry weather was likely to persist across RMI's northern atolls into early June. Drought-affected northern areas of RMI included Lib and Mejit islands and Ailinglaplap, Ailuk, Aur, Enewetak, Lae, Likiep, Kwajalein, Maloelap, Namu, Rongelap, Ujae, Wotho, and Wotje atolls.¹⁰⁸

The Government on 29 May issued an Intermediate Response Plan,¹⁰⁹ which required US\$ 4.6 million for the 6,384 people affected. On 7 June, the state of drought disaster was extended for an additional 30 days.¹¹⁰ National Disaster Committee Chair Casten Nemra stated that many large families were subsisting on as little as 4.5 liters (1.2 gallons) of water a day.¹¹¹ On June 14, U.S. President Barack Obama declared a disaster for RMI under the Compact of Free Association (COFA) between the USG and the GoRMI, authorizing the release of federal funding for emergency relief and reconstruction assistance. In response, USAID/OFDA deployed a DART to RMI from June 28 to July 19, 2013, and activated a corresponding D.C.-based RMT from July 1- 19, 2013. As of September 30, 2013, the interagency USG effort provided \$4.4 million in drought response funding; of this total, USAID had provided \$3.1 million using funding from FEMA.¹¹²

The severe drought conditions damaged or destroyed agriculture on many islands of the northern atolls. Deteriorating health was also reported in many locations. Four clusters – health; food security; logistics; and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) – were established and government cluster leads prepared response plans with support from the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Team deployed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).¹¹³ By mid-September, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) had procured 367 metric tons (MT) of food commodities, which were largely delivered to drought-affected islands by an IOM-chartered boat and IOM-contracted plane. Local governments and Women United Together Marshall Islands, a local non-governmental organization (NGO), managed onward delivery of food supplies to beneficiaries. IOM, a USAID partner, also coordinated with the Majuro Water and Sewer Company (MWSC) in providing technical support with reverse

osmosis purification units (ROPUs). IFRC supported repair and improvement of rainwater harvesting systems across three atolls. Although normal seasonal rainfall was being experienced in September 2013, the affected populations continued to recover from drought effects.¹¹⁴

Severe Sea Swell Floods: December 2008

In December 2008, the government declared a state of emergency as waves flood Majuro and Ebeye urban centers, displacing hundreds of people.¹¹⁵ The highest tides of the year coincided with a large storm, resulting in waves up to three meters that washed out roads and seawalls, ruined staple crops including taro and breadfruit, and flooded homes and graveyards.¹¹⁶ Seawater flooding also affected Roi-Namur,¹¹⁷ which hosts several radar tracking stations and is home to more than 100 U.S. and Marshallese employees of the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site. December 2008 marked the beginning of “inundation events,” once rare, occurring frequently, usually during the highest tides of the year.

Tropical Cyclone Zelda: November 1991

Tropical Cyclone Zelda (or Typhoon Zelda) struck the Republic of the Marshall Islands on 28 November 1991, with wind speed averaging 75-100 miles per hour. Affected islands included Kwajalein, Majuro, Lae, Ujae, Wotho and Eniwetok. Although no fatalities were reported, the typhoon seriously damaged buildings and infrastructure. On Ujae and Lae, 90% of the buildings were damaged. On Ebeye Island (Kwajalein Atoll), 5,000 were left homeless, 60% of buildings were damaged, power lines were partially cut, and water and sewage systems sustained serious damage.¹¹⁸ Intensification was overlooked during the early stages of the storm's development due to its small size (with a radius small enough to be classified as a midget tropical cyclone), but it nonetheless caused several injuries and significant damage to the lightly constructed buildings.¹¹⁹

Tropical Cyclone, January 1988

On 9 January 1988, Tropical Cyclone Anne (also referred to as Typhoon Roy) struck Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The storm resulted in one fatality, a drowning on Ebeye Island.¹²⁰ The majority of the homes on the island were damaged, with 350 houses destroyed and 500 sustaining minor damage, rendering 3,500 people homeless. By 20 January, the emergency phase

had ended and transitioned into rehabilitation or recovery. The storm had also affected New Caledonia, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands.¹²¹

Disease outbreaks, such as the 2018-2019 dengue outbreak and 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, are covered in the health section.

Table 2 shows recent past disaster events affecting the RMI. Predominantly the hydro meteorological natural hazards have the potential to significantly affect all sectors of the RMI.¹²²

Year	Event	Area (s) affected
2013	Drought	15 atolls/islands north of Majuro
2013	Sea swell, King Tide	Majuro
2008	Sea swell, King Tide	Pacific locations including RMI
2008	State of Economic Emergency	All of RMI
2007	Severe Drought	All of RMI
1997	Typhoon Paka	Majuro, Ailinglapalap, Namu
1994	High Surf Wave Action	Ajeltake
1992	Typhoon Gay	Majit
1992	Tropical Storm Axel	All of RMI
1991	Typhoon Zelda	All of RMI
1988	Tropical Storm Roy	Kwajalein
1979	Sea swell	Majuro

Table 2: Disaster Events Affecting the RMI

Country Risks

The Republic of the Marshall Islands, like other Small Island Developing States (SIDS), is extremely vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change, partially due to its isolation and limited resources. RMI has been called the most endangered nation in the world due to flooding from climate change. The supply of freshwater, usually sourced from rainfall, is strained to support the population. The northern atolls receive about 50 inches (1,300 mm) of rainfall annually and the southern atolls average twice that, but drought is a common threat throughout the island nation.¹²³

That RMI has a small amount of land area scattered over 34 major islands and atolls means that over 99% of the population lives along the coastline – this renders an overwhelming portion of the economy, infrastructure, and

livelihoods highly vulnerable to natural hazards, such as tropical cyclones. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 4th Assessment Report, the effects of rising sea level are "likely to be of a magnitude that will disrupt virtually all economic and social sectors in small island nations".¹²⁴ RMI is on the front line of populated areas threatened by sea level rise, as the average elevation is 6.5 feet (2m) above sea level.¹²⁵

Climate change exacerbates many of the other hazards and extreme weather events the RMI faces, including drought, sea swells/king tides, tropical cyclones, and food security.¹²⁶

Country Risk Profile

The INFORM Global Risk Index measures the risk of humanitarian crises and disasters that could overwhelm national response capacity in 191 countries. It is made up of three dimensions – natural hazards and exposure, vulnerability and lack of coping capacity. Higher risk indicates a higher probability of needing international assistance for a humanitarian crisis.

Risk involves exposure to hazards, vulnerability, as well as lack of coping capacity, all of which are important factors in Disaster Risk Management. INFORM is a global, objective, and transparent tool for understanding the risk of humanitarian crises. INFORM is a composite indicator, developed by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, combining 53 indicators into three dimensions of risk: hazards (events that could occur) and exposure to them, vulnerability (the susceptibility of communities to those hazards) and the lack of coping capacity (lack of resources that can alleviate the impact). It is a collaboration of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness and the European Commission. The index results are published once every year.

INFORM gives each country a risk score of 1-10 (1 being the lowest and 10 the highest) for each of the dimensions, categories, and components of risk, as well as an overall risk score. The higher the score the more vulnerable a country is. The purpose of INFORM is to provide an open, transparent, consensus-based methodology for analyzing crisis risk at the global, regional or national level. In the 2020 edition of the INFORM Global Risk Index, the Republic of the Marshall Islands had an overall risk of 3.6/10, which INFORM categorizes in the medium risk class. RMI's risk score for Natural Hazard and Exposure was 1.9/10, for Vulnerability was 3.9/10, and for Lack of Coping Capacity was 6.3/10.¹²⁷



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS Organizational Structure

Disaster Management Reference Handbook | December 2019

Organizational Structure

Figure 6 depicts the structure for disaster risk management in RMI. More information on roles is provided in the following sections.¹²⁸

Lead Government Agencies in Disaster Response

The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), based in the capital, Majuro, is the primary agency responsible for disaster management programs and activities. Local governments have the responsibility to help develop programs specific to each atoll, and to facilitate this the NDMO provides technical advice and coordinates government resource support. The Marshall Islands Weather Service Office (WSO) advises the NDMO on hazards, early warning messages and drought statements.

The NDMO alerts the clusters and advises the Chief Secretary of the disaster threat. The Chief Secretary is the chair of the National Disaster Committee and the Disaster Controller, or the key official with overall disaster management responsibility. The Chief Secretary convenes a meeting with the NDC to discuss response options, particularly whether to declare a state of disaster. Upon agreement, recommendations are made to the Cabinet regarding declaring a state of disaster and other steps. A declaration of a state of disaster can be documented in either a proclamation declaring a state of emergency for natural disasters or a declaration of a state of health emergency for health outbreaks.¹²⁹

The National Disaster Committee (NDC) is directly accountable to the Cabinet. It is responsible for providing technical advice and resource support to facilitate disaster management programs. The NDC also ensures a control and coordination mechanism is in place for effective disaster response and recovery. The NDC is the lead agency for implementing the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) and the Standard Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), which are described more in section on Laws,

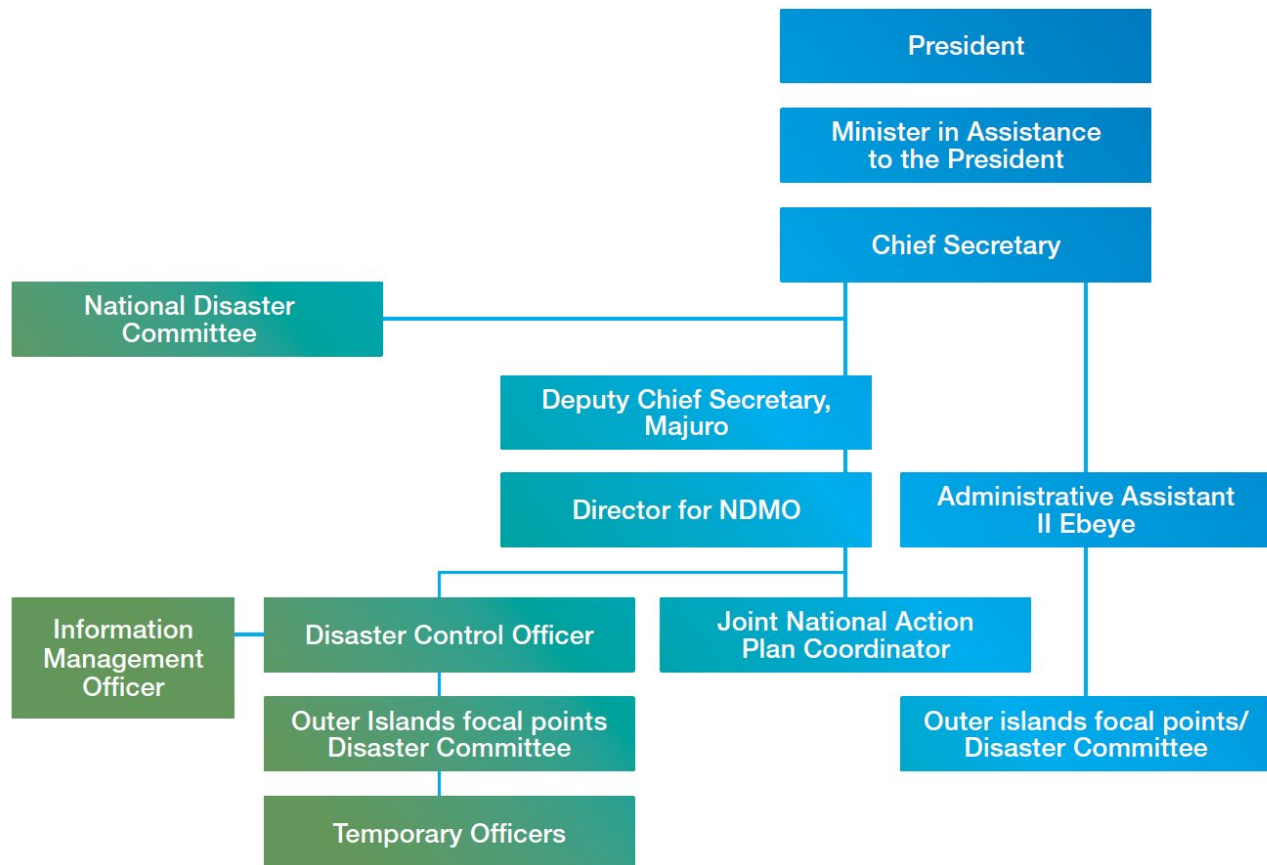


Figure 6: A Structure for Disaster Risk Management in the RMI

Policies and Plans on Disaster Management.¹³⁰ During the 2014 King Tides disaster, the NDC led the relief and assessment process with the support of government ministries, the Marshall Islands Red Cross Society, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).¹³¹

Depending on the nature and scope of the disaster, RMI may activate up to five clusters as depicted in Table 3.¹³²

Key Disaster Management Partners

Key Disaster Management Partners in RMI are often utilized before, during, and after a disaster. These partners also have varying roles and responsibilities. Coordination of partners is managed in part through the cluster system,

coordinated by the NDMO on behalf of the CSO.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is a humanitarian organization that provides assistance and promotes humanitarian activities by their National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering. It was founded in 1919, and includes 191 National Societies. The IFRC carries out relief operations to assist victims of disasters, and combines this with development work to strengthen the capacities of its member national societies.¹³³ The IFRC also provides technical assistance to governments on International Disaster Response Law (IDRL), officially titled, “Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international

Cluster	Lead	Participants
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	Majuro Water Service Company (MWSC), Halstan de Brum	MWSC; Salvation Army; Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Weather Service Office (WSO); International Organization for Migration (IOM); Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Utilities (MoWIU); Humanity First; Public School System (PSS); Majuro Atoll Local Government (MALGOV); Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MoCIA); Pacific Resources for Education & Learning (PREL); Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS); Women United Together
Health	Ministry of Health and Human Services (MoHHS), Mailyynn Lang, Deputy Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health outbreak: MoHHS, Chief Secretary’s Office (CSO), and Emergency Operations Center (EOC)/EpiNet Outbreak Control Team. Natural disaster: MoHHS, CSO, and IOM.
Logistics	Ministry of Transportation and Communication (MOT&C), Waylon Muller	MOT&C, Air Marshall Islands (AMI), National Telecommunications Authority, Ministry of Finance (MOF), Marshall Islands Shipping Corporation (MISC), and IOM.
Shelter sub-cluster (under Logistics)		MoCIA, MoWIU, PSS, MWSC and IOM.
Food Security and Agriculture	Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce (MoNRC), Henry Capelle	MoNRC, MoH, WUTMI, College of the Marshall Islands (CMI), JICA, Marshall Islands Mayors Association (MIMA), MoCIA, and IOM.
Infrastructure	Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Utilities (MoWIU), Melvin Aliven	MoWIU, AMI, MISC, National Telecommunications Authority (NTA), Ministry of Finance (MOF), and IOM.

Table 3: RMI Cluster System

disaster relief and initial recovery assistance.”¹³⁴ If the Marshall Islands Red Cross Society requests its assistance, IFRC has emergency response capacity in Suva, Fiji and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. IFRC also has regional stocks of relief items in Kuala Lumpur and Dubai, and can also provide technical advice and support on logistics planning and procurement.¹³⁵

Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS)

The Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (Incorporation and Recognition) Act of 2013 established the Red Cross of the RMI as an auxiliary to the government in humanitarian and disaster relief services.¹³⁶ The Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS) was formally recognized 20 December 2017 as the 191st National Society in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement,¹³⁷ following efforts to meet numerous requirements for this recognition, which included having hired the Secretary General, held the first annual national assembly, elected the board of governors, and adopted its constitution.¹³⁸ MIRCS and the IFRC operate in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, unity, universality and voluntary service. MIRCS works to address the needs of the people in the Marshall Islands and prioritizes the needs of the most vulnerable.

MIRCS has approximately 20 volunteers in Majuro who are available to assist in times of a disaster, and trained in conducting assessments, distribution of relief supplies, and reporting. MIRCS is planning on and working toward representation throughout RMI’s inhabited islands, to include groups of trained Red Cross volunteers with capacity to work and respond locally, depending on various needs. IFRC is supporting MIRCS in this process. In response to the 2016, supported by the IFRC and in coordination with the WASH Cluster, MIRCS carried out a public awareness campaign on water conservation and safety, conducted household assessments in Majuro and distributed new water containers to vulnerable people for safe storage of drinking water.¹³⁹

Marshall Islands Red Cross Society
PO Box 2014,
Majuro, MH, 96960
Phone: (692) 625-0340
Email: info@rmiredcross.org

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

International Organization for Migration (IOM) has an active and substantive presence in the Marshall Islands. IOM has a sub-office in Majuro, RMI’s capital, and its regional head office in Pohnpei, Micronesia, which oversees IOM’s operations across the vast North Pacific. IOM assists the governments of RMI and the United States with disaster mitigation, relief, and reconstruction activities in RMI. IOM is also managing a program on behalf of the Australian Government to build the community resilience to natural hazards and enable their adaptation to climate change.¹⁴⁰ IOM is also an implementing agency of USAID, and provides support in disaster risk management to RMI with USAID funding. IOM is coordinating with RMI’s NDMO to provide technical assistance to update the Standard Operating Procedures under the National Emergency Management Plan (2010) for each of the ministries that comprise the NDC. Additionally, IOM has multiple projects with the Office of the Chief Secretary, the NDC, NGOs, civil society and educational institutions. IOM works with participating groups to raise disaster awareness, development Marshallese-appropriate training agenda and train individuals in Essentials of Humanitarian Assistance Training.¹⁴¹

IOM played a leading role in the response to the recent drought emergency, where they coordinated the supply shipping and distribution of emergency assistance to affected islands. IOM also supplied reverse-osmosis purification units for water supply on the outer islands.¹⁴²

International Organization for Migration
Restaurant Annex
Long Island Lagoon side
MH 96960, Majuro
Republic of the Marshall Islands
Tel: +692 247 47 05
Fax: +692 247 72 15
Website: micronesia.iom.int

United Nations (UN)

A UN Joint Presence Office (JPO) was established in Majuro in 2008, comprised of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and UN Women.¹⁴³ Funded by the Government of Japan, UNDP and the Government of RMI have started the project,

“Enhancing Disaster and Climate Resilience through Improved Disaster Preparedness and Infrastructure.” The project aims to improve the Marshall Islands’ capacity to improve preparedness and mitigation to geo-physical and climate related hazards, and enhance resilience to climate change impact to protect lives, sustain livelihoods, preserve the environment and safeguard the economy.¹⁴⁴

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)

There are a limited number of NGOs operating in disaster response management in RMI. These include World Teach, Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI), Youth to Youth, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Humanity First, Church of Latter Day Saints, and Islamic organizations. However, there is no formal NGO forum for disaster response.¹⁴⁵ WUTMI, established in 1987, is one of the most prominent local women’s groups. WUTMI plays a lead role in the empowerment of women and gender equality, to in turn strengthen families. The NGO’s four strategic goals are:

1. Strengthen knowledge and practice of Mantin Majol, Indigenous and natural resources.
2. Promote capacity building and sustainable development.
3. Advance good governance and human rights.
4. Strengthen the voice of women through a structurally stronger WUTMI organization.¹⁴⁶

There are several smaller, local NGOs providing support to women’s groups. Women’s groups also receive significant support through local churches and IOM.¹⁴⁷

U.S. Government Agencies in the Republic of Marshall Islands

The U.S. Agency for International Development’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) collaborates closely with FEMA, as well as USAID/Philippines, U.S. Embassy Majuro, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to implement humanitarian programs in RMI. USAID/OFDA supports life-saving activities in response to drought, floods, storms, and other natural disasters, as well as provides technical assistance for response and early recovery activities.¹⁴⁸

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) took over responsibility for disaster response and reconstruction in RMI

(as well as in the Federated States of Micronesia) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2008. This transition reflects status of FSM and RMI as independent countries, as opposed to U.S.-administered trust territories. USAID’s lead in this matter is also in accordance with the Compact of Free Association between the U.S. and RMI, to support the U.S.’ treaty obligations. The U.S. developed a unique hybrid system, where USAID and FEMA work cooperatively to provide and support emergency disaster relief and reconstruction services that are similar in type and level, but not identical, to the assistance that FEMA previously provided RMI.¹⁴⁹ Following a U.S. Presidential Disaster Declaration, FEMA provides USAID with funding, in order for USAID to conduct foreign disaster response and reconstruction activities in RMI.¹⁵⁰ If the disaster is not declared by the U.S. President, USAID may still provide assistance consistent with its existing operational procedures and guidelines for responding to foreign disasters worldwide. USAID and FEMA developed an Operational Blueprint to guide coordination between the two agencies in providing U.S. government assistance to RMI following a disaster. The RMI government still has primary responsibility to provide disaster response and recovery services in its territory, with USG disaster assistance being supplemental.¹⁵¹ This unique foreign disaster support arrangement between USAID and FEMA only applies to the Marshall Islands and Micronesia. In addition to disaster response, USAID supports ongoing disaster preparedness and mitigation activities in RMI, while FEMA also provides limited financial assistance for disaster preparedness activities.¹⁵²

USAID/OFDA has provided more than \$2 million¹⁵³ since FY 2013 to the National Red Cross Societies of the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau, to support their preparedness and mitigation activities as they partner with local government agencies, businesses, and communities to build awareness of disaster response activities and cultivate a trained volunteer base for emergency responses.¹⁵⁴

U.S. Department of Defense

U.S. military assets based in Kwajalein have been used in the past with responses to Kwajalein Atoll, which includes Ebeye Island, the second most populated island in RMI. Thus far, the involvement of the U.S. Army Garrison –

Kwajalein Atoll (USAG-KA) has been limited to this.¹⁵⁵

A number of other U.S. Government agencies also operate programs or render assistance to the Marshall Islands, in support of the Compact of Free Association. These include the Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Postal Service, Small Business Administration, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Department of State, and the Department of the Interior.¹⁵⁶ If the Compact of Free Association between the U.S. and RMI is not extended beyond 2023, then support from these US government agencies to RMI would be severely curtailed in their present form.¹⁵⁷

Participation in International Organizations

The Republic of the Marshall Islands participates in the following international organizations (not all-inclusive):¹⁵⁸

African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP Group), Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Group of 77 (G-77), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Criminal Court (ICC), International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), International Development Association (IDA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the Pacific Community (previously called the South Pacific Commission)¹⁵⁹(SPC), Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (SPARTECA), United Nations (UN), Universal Postal Union (UPU), Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), World Bank (WB), World Meteorological Organization (WMO).¹⁶⁰

Foreign Disaster Relief and Emergency Response

The National Disaster Committee will assess early relief requirements, including any outer islands/atolls seeking assistance, as well as the capacity of the national government to meet needs. Accordingly, the National Disaster Committee will also assess the need for international assistance, in liaison with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, when it is determined that a disaster situation exceeds national coping capacities. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will consult directly with the donors, when international assistance requirements are made known through the information provided by initial damage assessments and post disaster needs assessments reports prepared for the National Disaster Committee. Once the RMI official requests international assistance, the customs and quarantine department is to make the necessary arrangements for the ongoing clearance of all donor assistance provided for disaster relief purposes. Following a letter of request from the Chair of the National Disaster Committee, the Secretary of Finance, Banking and Postal Services will consider approval of duty exemption for goods, which are purchased locally for the purpose of emergency and relief requirement. The National Disaster Committee is responsible for providing information on donor assistance to customs and quarantine to facilitate this process, including details on type, quantity, source, means of transportation, arrival point and estimated time of arrival.¹⁶¹

U.S. assistance to the RMI for disaster response is facilitated by the Compact of Free Association between the two governments. As with all US foreign disaster response, USAID is responsible for USG assistance in disaster response and reconstruction in RMI, a responsibility it assumed from FEMA in 2008. Unique to the Compact States of the Marshall Islands and Micronesia, USAID and FEMA developed a hybrid system to cooperatively support disaster responses there.¹⁶² Following a U.S. Presidential Disaster Declaration, FEMA provides USAID with funding, in order for USAID to conduct foreign disaster assistance activities in RMI.¹⁶³

Recently, the US responded to the 2015-2016 drought in RMI. El Niño conditions led to extremely below-average rainfall, resulting in drought conditions and water shortages across the country. The disaster affected some 21,000 people, and negatively impacted agriculture,

food security, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) conditions. On 10 March 2016, the acting U.S. Chargé d’Affaires declared a disaster, which allowed USAID/OFDA to provide an initial \$50,000 (via implementing partner IOM) and deploy staff to RMI to conduct assessments and help coordinate response activities. On 27 April 2016, U.S. President Obama issued a Presidential Disaster Declaration (PDD), authorizing the release of federal funding via the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to fund emergency relief and reconstruction assistance in RMI. Through FEMA funding, USAID/OFDA subsequently provided more than \$2.5million in additional funding to IOM for the procurement and distribution of supplemental food assistance and WASH supplies to drought-affected communities. This was in addition to USAID/OFDA’s pre-positioned relief commodities, which had been distributed in response to the drought. OFDA-supported response efforts in RMI wrapped up in May 2017.¹⁶⁴

Laws, Policies, and Plans on Disaster Management

The 1997 National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP)¹⁶⁵ and the 2005 Standard Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP)¹⁶⁶ are the key documents guiding RMI disaster management.¹⁶⁷

The National Disaster Management Plan of 1997 replaces the previous disaster plan of 1987. It was revised to emphasize disaster management policies, programs and activities related to lessening the impact of known natural hazards – the most frequent and probable being tropical storms, typhoons, sea surge/high surf, and drought. The plan is based on the effective utilization and coordination of the resources of the RMI government, NGOs, the private sector, and U.S. FEMA, in support of disaster management arrangements.

The National Disaster Management Office (NDMP) Strategic Plan 2017–2019 established a vision of “a safer and more resilient nation and communities.” To achieve this vision, the NDMO laid out three objectives: (1) Establish an NDMO governance framework through reporting, planning, resourcing, legislation, policy and procedures; (2) Improve Disaster Risk Management coordination and communication arrangements with all stakeholders at all levels; and (3) Improve Disaster management

operations through prevention, preparedness, response and recovery phases.¹⁶⁸

RMI National Disaster Risk Management Arrangements¹⁶⁹ were reviewed and updated in June 2017, and include the Regional Guidelines for International Assistance and Cooperation in the Pacific that drew on the outcomes of the 2015 Pacific Island Forum meeting.

The Strategic Development Plan Framework 2003-2018 (“Vision 2018”) outlined goals for overcoming ten challenges the nation faced, ranging from sound governance, education, economic improvement, healthy lifestyle, and effective partnerships among governments, civil society and the private sector. Disasters can undermine many of RMI’s national goals, and disaster risk reduction is very relevant for tackling challenges relating to sustainable environment and climate change adaptation.¹⁷⁰

The National Strategic Plan¹⁷¹ 2015-2017 was developed with the understanding of the importance of the enabling conditions outlined in Vision 2018 to national development. Through analysis of Vision 2018 and with stakeholder inputs, ten broad National Development Themes were developed:

1. Ensuring and applying the practice of good governance principles to achieve effective governance through community planning and developing effective linkages between local and national governments.
2. Empowering people and communities to reduce the incidence of “access related” poverty through improvements in all areas including social, economic, environment, governance and infrastructure.
3. Strengthening ability to mobilize local and traditional knowledge to address emerging challenges facing people, communities and governments.
4. Building up a caring society embodied by traditional culture and values through continued focus on cultural awareness and cultural responsibility.
5. Promoting an innovative people by improving health and education access and opportunities.
6. Addressing globalization and regional cooperation challenges through focused legislations, international agreements and implementation of regional and national policies.
7. Ensuring broad-based growth and food security through a cross-cutting approach.

8. Building a sound infrastructure that provides energy, environmental, infrastructure and transportation security for all atolls.
9. Mitigating the impacts of climate change and creating awareness of the importance of environmental assets through community, national, regional and international approaches and specifically the implementation of the Majuro Declaration.
10. Ensuring outer islands populations receive access to all necessary services allowing all RMI citizens to enjoy a high quality of life.

The National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management 2008-2018 was a collaboration between the National Task Force for Disaster Risk Management and the Office of the Chief Secretary. It was envisioned as a cross-sectoral action plan that feeds up into the Strategic Development Plan, to prevent disasters from undermining national goals.¹⁷²

The 2011 National Climate Change Policy Framework identified the following national areas that underpin sustainable development, where it was a priority to mainstream climate change considerations throughout:¹⁷³

- Food and Water Security;
- Energy Security and Conservation;
- Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management;
- Human Resources Development, Education and Awareness;
- Health;
- Urban Planning and Infrastructure Development;
- Disaster Risk Management;
- Land and Coastal Management, including Land Tenure; &
- Transport and Communication.

To address climate change risks throughout the above priority areas, the following five strategic goals were identified and envisioned as contributing to the national strategic development plan:

- Strengthen the Enabling Environment for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, including Sustainable Financing
- Adaptation and Reducing Risks for a Climate Resilient Future
- Energy Security and Low-Carbon Future
- Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery
- Building Education and Awareness,

Community Mobilization, being mindful of Culture, Gender and Youth

The Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management, 2014-2018, was built upon the foundation of the Disaster Risk Management National Action Plan. The joint plan incorporates actions to address climate change, which will severely affect livelihoods and disaster management. The joint plan lists the following strategic goals:¹⁷⁴

1. Establish and support an enabling environment for improved coordination of disaster risk management /climate change adaptation in the Marshall Islands.
2. Public education and awareness of effective CCA and DRM from local to national level.
3. Enhanced emergency preparedness and response at all levels within the Marshall Islands.
4. Improved energy security, working towards a low carbon future for the Marshall Islands.
5. Enhanced local livelihoods and community resilience for all Marshall Islands people.
6. Integrated approach to development planning including consideration of climate change and disaster risks.

In 2013, the “Immediate and Near-Term Response Plan for the Republic of the Marshall Islands Drought”¹⁷⁵ was published, and is a good source of operational-level details that may inform future disasters.

The National Energy Policy and Energy Action Plan of 2009 is envisioned as contributing toward achievement of the national strategic development plan by furthering its national energy development objective of improved quality of life for the people of the RMI through clean, reliable, affordable, accessible, environmentally appropriate and sustainable energy services. Broad goals included near universal electrification, 20% of energy by indigenous renewable resources by 2020, and improved energy efficiency in 50% of households and businesses and 75% of government buildings by 2020. These goals and objectives are conceptualized as related to disaster risk reduction. This link was made in the foreword by the former Minister of Resources of Development, “The RMI must significantly improve energy efficiency and begin shifting its reliance away from oil and towards practical and affordable renewable energy sources for its urban

and rural communities. This effort is also part of the nation's strategy to build resilience to climate change.¹⁷⁶

The United Nations Pacific Strategy 2018-2022 is a five year strategic framework that outlines the collective response of the UN system to development priorities in 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), namely Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The Joint UN Country Team, based in Fiji and Samoa, is guided by two UN Resident Coordinators.¹⁷⁷

The Disaster Assistance Act of 1987 provided a legal framework for the duties of various government ministries in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. The act clarified the role of the Cabinet and local governments in disaster prevention, preparation, response, and recovery. It also authorized and provided for coordination of activities between agencies across all the disaster management phases, with the aim of reducing the vulnerability of people and communities due to natural or manmade catastrophes.¹⁷⁸

Education and Training

The National Training Advisory Group is responsible for developing a national disaster risk management training strategy, with the consideration that disaster management training is a whole-of-government activity with responsibility across all sectors. The Training Advisory Group is to develop opportunities for DRM training partnerships within government, the private sector and NGOs, and seek regional training opportunities. The advisory group will maintain a disaster management training database of persons with skill sets that can be called upon in times of national emergencies in coordination, response and recovery. An annual audit conducted by NDMO with all line managers will confirm the location and availability of those on the database. Exercises are a large part of the disaster management training strategy. National Training Coordination Group Membership includes the Ministry of Education, Sports and Training; NDMO; Office of Environment, Planning and Policy Coordination; Ministry of Health and Human Services; Ministry of Justice, Immigration and Labour; Ministry of Culture, Social Services and Outer Island Affairs; Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture,

Commerce and Tourism; Chamber of Commerce; Marshall Islands Red Cross Society; NGOs; and the International Organization for Migration.¹⁷⁹

USAID/OFDA funds a significant amount of training initiatives to increase disaster management capacity. The Marshall Islands Red Cross Society, supported by the IFRC, received USAID funding to build awareness of disaster response activities in partnership with local governments businesses and communities, and train volunteers for emergency responses.

USAID/OFDA provided IOM with \$350,000 in FY 2018 to increase the Community Adaption, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Education (CADRE+) program in the RMI and FSM. With a focus on reaching outer-island communities, the CADRE+ program aims to train and provide activities to 4,500 school-aged children, 300 educators, and 7,500 community members to improve resilience to natural and climate-induced hazards. Activities include developing school emergency management plans and drills for students, training teachers in climate change and evacuation center management, establishing community disaster preparedness and response committees, and supporting the government of the RMI to implement national strategies for disaster risk management.¹⁸⁰

The International Organization for Migration manages the Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response (PREPARE) Programme, working with the RMI government counterparts to build capacities for disaster preparedness, response and recovery through training and other activities. An Essentials of Humanitarian Assistances training for the Marshall Islands was implemented in Majuro at the national level throughout 2017. IOM also works closely with partners in the RMI to implement the Climate Adaptation Disaster Risk Reduction and Education Programme (CADRE+). The project supports sustainable solutions for resiliency in vulnerable schools and communities through community-based education and initiatives.¹⁸¹

Disaster Management Communications

Early Warning Systems

The aim of the early warning plan in the RMI is to ensure all messages are simple and brief, use clear and consistent language, contain explicit information, and are suited to the communities they warn. Early warnings should provide

accurate information in real time through formal and informal institutions and communication networks (broadcast media, telecast media, automated SMS, automated outdoor public siren system, two-way HF and VHF radio, fax, email, church and school bells, as well as other local systems in the RMI. People-centered early warning systems should empower individuals and communities at risk with knowledge to act in an appropriate and timely manner to reduce fatalities, injuries, and damage to property and the environment. A well-designed “end-to-end” early warning system (EWS) ensures that even distant communities receive warnings, and that awareness programs have prepared communities to respond appropriately.¹⁸²

Outer Island Disaster Committees (DisComs) and disaster focal points exist for several islands. Together, the focal points and DisComs are responsible for relaying early warnings, assisting the community to prepare for disasters and reporting through standardized reporting forms. Many communities do not yet have DisComs and/or need to strengthen focal points.¹⁸³

Emergency communications systems within each local government are slightly different and have both public and private access. The outer islands of the RMI are very remote and require additional emergency communications equipment to stay connected. HF and VhF radios are one of the most important forms of communications for the outer islands, as well as Majuro Atoll and Kwajalein Atoll communities. There is a need for additional radios to improve communication during a disaster.¹⁸⁴

Information exchange with outer island focal points is most commonly achieved through High Frequency (HF) radio and chatty beetles (communication system for weather alerts in remote locations where communication options are limited).¹⁸⁵ Since 2009, USAID has supported NOAA to deploy chatty beetles, which are satellite terminals that enable text messaging in remote areas with limited connectivity, in order to disseminate hazard alerts and information in RMI. Chatty beetles connect emergency managers and hydrometeorological warning authorities, to notify isolated communities with limited communications of potential hazards. Other Pacific areas using this messaging service for early warning include Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.¹⁸⁶

Responsible Agencies for Warnings

Marshall Islands Weather Service Office (WSO) principally conducts risk monitoring and advises the Chief Secretary’s Office (CSO). The RMI’s WSO is a member of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Cluster. At a technical level, the WSO also reports to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)’s Pacific ENSO Applications Climate (PEAC) Center on a quarterly basis. It is worth noting that the Pacific ENSO Update is no longer being produced as of 1 July 2019, due to budgeting and personnel changes during PEAC’s transition to the U.S. National Weather Service. The loss of this information resource is likely to have a greater effect on the RMI, as one of the more vulnerable of the U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands it serviced.¹⁸⁷

The WSO is responsible for providing weather forecasts, early warnings on hazardous weather, and other weather-related products to the government for the purposes of protection, safety and general information. The WSO works with the NDMO to share warnings and alerts and to designate focal points, especially mayors, to receive weather information on the outer islands. The WSO’s activities include:¹⁸⁸

- Scientific assessments and analytical services;
- Manual surface aviation, synoptic and upper-air observations, transmission of data to the Global Telecommunication System/Integrated World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Information System;
- Receipt of data from outer island focal points, including mayors and disaster committees, using standardized drought monitoring forms;
- Receipt and interpretation of daily data from partner scientific agencies, especially the U.S. NOAA, on hazards to generate adaptive weather forecasts and warnings for local constituents;
- Advising the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and Chief Secretary on key threats to inform further action (e.g. activation of the National Disaster Committee or announcement of disaster declaration);
- Communication of alerts and warnings to the RMI authorities and communities including the use of local radio stations to get information out to the public.¹⁸⁹

During times of emergency or leading up to an emergency the national government will issue warnings and updates on the National Radio Station V7AB. Most of the islands can hear V7AB using the AM frequency, though some locations may be weak such as Enewatak because it is located far away from Majuro.¹⁹⁰

The RMI's WSO provided early warnings regarding detection of the 2015-2016 El Nino event and anticipated drought, disseminating the information ahead of time to the RMI authorities and communities. NOAA's PEAC and the Guam Forecast Office provided long- and short-term rainfall outlooks. The forecasts were used to identify the atolls that were likely to be hit the hardest, although actual impacts varied.¹⁹¹

The Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS) works with WSO to monitor weather information and tidal schedules to prepare for potentially damaging events. MIRCS, in cooperation with WSO and the NDMO, conducted a pilot Community Based Early Warning System project in Jenrok (2015-2016) to enable the community to better prepare for and respond in the event of a disaster.¹⁹²

Other agencies that provide warnings for the RMI include the following:

- USAID and FEMA, in addition to conducting and funding (respectively) disaster response in the RMI with their unique cooperation arrangement, also provide, at no cost to the RMI, services including air safety, weather forecast, and health services.
- The U.S. NOAA's Honolulu and Guam offices provide weather forecasting, as well as the following:
 - Critical daily data on hydrometeorology and seismic hazards threatening the RMI;
 - Training in meteorological services;
 - Receive rainfall and temperature data from the RMI's WSO, to monitor keep the RMI informed of developing trends.
- NOAA's PEAC and the Guam Forecast Office provide long and short-term rainfall outlooks and forecast.
- The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (PTWC) in Hawaii serves as the Pacific Tsunami Warning System's operation center, and identifies major earthquakes in the Pacific to determine tsunami generation and provide timely warnings to affected populations.
- NOAA, together with the University of Guam, conducts monthly conferences with

the WSO to determine national disaster trends and threats.¹⁹³

- IOM and IFRC, through projects and focal points on the outer islands, provide rainfall data validation via the WASH cluster.

Armed Forces' Role in Disaster Response

The RMI has no armed forces. Territorial defense is provided by the U.S. The Republic of the Marshall Islands does have a police force.

Information Sharing

Understanding how to overcome the information challenges that civilian and military agencies experience during a typical disaster response mission is important. Knowing what the available information resources are will assist Joint Task Force leaders and staff during mission planning.¹⁹⁴ The sharing of information is critical because no single responding entity (host government, NGO, international organizations or assisting country government, including foreign military forces) can be the source of all the required information.¹⁹⁵

Collaboration, Information Sharing (IS) and networking have been the backbone of successful disaster response and preparation. Disseminating information not only to those in country and threatened by disaster but also to those responding to the emergency has been crucial to timely, efficient and effective disaster response. Recent technology has advanced to aid in both prediction and communication, including when and how to send alerts regarding disasters around the world. These advances have resulted in improved early warning and evacuation measures and opportunities to react and prepare for incoming threats to countries. The following are some of the ways in which information regarding disaster risk management and response are shared.

There are many resources, stakeholders and components to consider regarding information sharing before, during and after a natural disaster. This section will discuss country, humanitarian, regional, U.S. Government, and DoD informational sources.

Country-specific information sources:

Republic of the Marshall Islands Information Sources

National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)
Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/RMINDMO/>

NDMO Group, Environmental Data Portal – <https://rmi-data.sprep.org/group/marshall-islands-national-disaster-management-office-ndmo>

Environmental Data Portal: Information for Decision Making

<https://rmi-data.sprep.org/>

International Humanitarian Information Sources

ReliefWeb is a service of UNOCHA that consolidates information and analysis from organizations, countries and disasters for the humanitarian community.

Website: <https://reliefweb.int/>

PreventionWeb is provided by UNISDR to consolidate disaster risk reduction information into an online, easy to understand platform.

Website: <https://www.preventionweb.net/english/>

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with over 13.7 million volunteers helping to reach 150 million people in 191 National Societies. IFRC provides support to and coordination among national societies as needed, working before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people.

Website: <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc>

Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS)/Virtual OSOCC is a cooperation framework between the United Nations, the European Commission and disaster managers worldwide to improve alerts, information exchange and coordination in the first phase after major sudden-onset disasters.

Website: <https://vosocc.unocha.org>

The latest alerts can be found here: <http://www.gdacs.org/Alerts/default.aspx>

To subscribe: <http://www.gdacs.org/About/contactus.aspx>

Consider other sources of information such as:

Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT)

The HCT is a strategic and operational decision-making and oversight forum established

and led by the Humanitarian Coordinator in each country. It is generally comprised of representatives from the UN, IOM, international NGOs, and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. During a disaster response, HCT's often produce a Situation Report, often in conjunction with UNOCHA.

Most HCT SitReps can be found through ReliefWeb: <https://reliefweb.int/>

Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) is an open platform for sharing data across crises and organizations launched in 2014 with the goal of centralizing humanitarian data for easy access and analysis. HDX is managed by OCHA's Center for Humanitarian Data in The Hague.

Website: <https://data.humdata.org/>

Regional Information Sources

Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT)

The Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) was established by OCHA in 2008 to ensure that regional responders work together to deliver timely and appropriate humanitarian assistance to disaster-affected people across the Pacific. OCHA acts as the Secretariat of the PHT and provides an online platform to share disaster response and preparedness information called Humanitarian Response. It is a platform providing the humanitarian community a means to aid in coordination of operational information and related activities.

Website: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info>

The Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) with the support of the OCHA Office for the Pacific produces Country Preparedness Packages (CPPs) on countries vulnerable to disasters in the Pacific. The documents are a joint initiative of the Governments of the Pacific Islands and the PHT; it outlines existing national structures and plans for utilizing international support in a disaster response. The PHT remain the authors of the CPPs. They have created CPPs for the Marshall Islands, the Cook Islands, and Vanuatu. Photo 1 shows a cover of the resource.¹⁹⁶

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)

seeks to optimize the speed, volume and quality of humanitarian assistance and coordinates emergency preparedness and response in the world's most disaster-prone region in support of national governments.

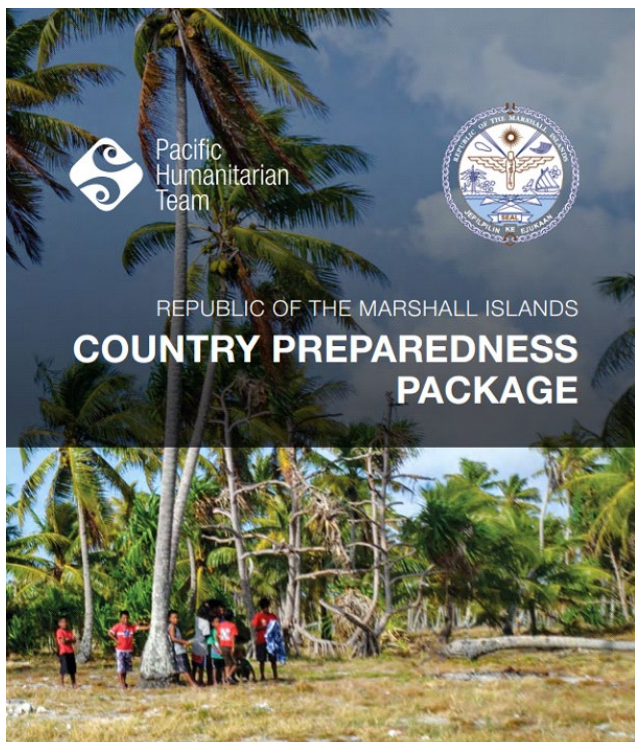


Photo 1: RMI Country Preparedness Package

UNOCHA's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) covers 41 countries partnering with them for coordinated and effective international responses to emergency situations. Website: <https://www.unocha.org/roap> For UNOCHA situation reports, click on "Subscribe" button on bottom of page.

UNOCHA's Office of the Pacific Islands, a sub-regional office under ROAP, directly covers the Marshall Islands, as well as 13 other Pacific Island states of territories. Website: <https://www.unocha.org/pacific>

U.S. Government (USG) Information Sources

Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)

The U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance is responsible for leading and coordinating the U.S. Government response to disasters overseas. OFDA responds to an average of 65 disasters in more than 50 countries every year. OFDA fulfills its mandate of saving lives, alleviating human suffering and the reduction of the social and economic impact to disasters worldwide in partnership with USAID functional and regional bureaus and other U.S. government agencies. OFDA works with the international population to assist countries prepare for, respond to and recover from humanitarian crises.¹⁹⁷

USAID/OFDA products are sitreps and maps which are available via email mailing lists.

For OFDA updates on a disaster response, ask the OFDA representative for USINDOPACOM to add you to the email list: OFDAindopacom@ofda.gov

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

- USAID is committed to responding to crises around the world to help people and places most in need. They aim to:
- Promote Global Health
- Support Global Stability
- Provide Humanitarian Assistance
- Catalyze Innovation and Partnership
- Empower Women and Girls

USAID produces a monthly newsletter called USAID Newsletter which is available digitally at, <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/newsletter>

More information and updates from USAID is available via their blog, IMPACT at, <https://blog.usaid.gov/> and on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Website: <https://www.usaid.gov/>

FEMA

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) coordinates U.S. disaster assistance in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Under the Compact of Free Association (COFA) between the government of the U.S. and the government of the RMI, the President of the RMI may request a disaster declaration from the U.S. President, which authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide U.S. federal disaster funding to USAID to carry out U.S. disaster assistance programs in the RMI. USAID supports on-going disaster preparedness and mitigation activities in the RMI. An example of a U.S. response to disasters in the RMI through the joint USAID-FEMA disaster assistance program is the 2015-2016 drought exacerbated by the El Niño climatic event.¹⁹⁸ The only other country to which the unique joint USAID-FEMA disaster assistance program applies is the Federated States of Micronesia.¹⁹⁹

FEMA has informational resources online: Website: <https://www.fema.gov> www.fema.gov/blog, www.twitter.com/fema, www.facebook.com/fema, and www.youtube.com/fema.

Pacific Disaster Center

The Pacific Disaster Center (PDC) has trademarked an early warning and decision support system called DisasterAWARE®. DisasterAWARE® is primarily for disaster management practitioners and senior decision makers. It supports disaster risk reduction and best practices throughout all phases of disaster management from early warning to multi-hazard monitoring. It boasts the largest collection of scientifically verified, geospatial, data and modeling tools to assess hazard risks and impacts.

The PDC also hosts a public application, Disaster Alert which is a free, early warning app to receive customizable map based visual alerts of active hazards. The app offers the fastest, most comprehensive global notification system covering every type of natural and man-made hazard to the public. It is available on both iPhone and Android. There is also a link to Disaster Alert without the app to view the world map documenting 18 hazard types.²⁰⁰

Website: <https://www.pdc.org/>
<https://www.pdc.org/apps/disasteraware/>

Emergency Operations (EMOPS) system:(Request account):
<https://emops.pdc.org/emops/>

Department of Defense (DoD) Informational Sources

All Partners Access Network (APAN)

APAN is the Unclassified Information Sharing Service (UISS) for the U.S. Department of Defense. APAN provides the DoD and mission partners community space and collaboration tools to leverage information to effectively plan, train and respond to meet their business requirements and mission objectives. Importantly, APAN's technology team has been supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR) operations for over 15 years. APAN has played an integral role in the success of disaster responses, such as the 2015 California Wildfire Response and the 2013 Typhoon Haiyan Response in which they provided organizations and militaries a centralized location to share information, increase situational awareness and decrease response time and duplicated efforts for best practices in HADR services.²⁰¹

Website: <https://www.apan.org/>

Note: The Multinational Communications Interoperability Program (MCIP) has an APAN site used in planning exercises and real world HADR information sharing.²⁰²

Daniel K. Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI APCSS)

DKI APCSS is a U.S. Department of Defense institute that addresses regional and global security issues, inviting military and civilian representatives of the U.S. and Asia-Pacific nations to its comprehensive program of executive education and workshops.

Website: <http://www.apcss.org/>

CFE-DM

The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) is a U.S. Department of Defense organization that was established by U.S. Congress in 1994 and is a direct reporting unit to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. CFE-DM provides training and education to help U.S. and foreign military personnel navigate complex issues in DMHA. They produce country focused disaster management reference handbooks, after action reports and disaster management country assessments which provide best practices and lessons learned for advancement in response coordination. CFE-DM also works to improve cross-coordination and reduce duplication of efforts and promote U.S. involvement in civ-mil consultations and dialogues with relevant HADR parties such as the AHA Center, UNOCHA and the Changi RHCC. CFE-DM provides DMHA resources and updates at its website, as well as via their Facebook and Twitter accounts.²⁰³

Website: <https://www.cfe-dmha.org/>

CFE-DM Disaster Management Reference Handbooks (for 23 countries) are available for download at: <https://www.cfe-dmha.org/DMHA-Resources/>

CFE-DM Disaster Information Reports are available for download at: <https://www.cfe-dmha.org/Publications/Reports>

Joint Typhoon Warning Center provides advanced warning for U.S. Government agencies and organizations in relevant areas.

Website: <https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html>



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

Infrastructure

Disaster Management Reference Handbook | December 2019

Infrastructure

The challenges of transportation and logistics during emergency responses are exacerbated in the RMI, due to the country's isolation and scattered nature of hundreds of islands spread across an expanse of ocean. Scarce logistics and transportation resources can hinder emergency responses. Therefore, it is critical that all stakeholders coordinate for the maximum benefit of affected populations.²⁰⁴

November to April is the season most likely to see storms and tropical cyclones, which disrupts air, sea and road transport. Cyclone season affects interisland air transport, as most atolls only receive flights once a week. Associated high seas impact interisland sea vessel transport, particularly from Majuro, which is the critical supply link to the outer islands. While most atolls have protected lagoons to receive vessels for resupply, islands that are not part of an atoll are especially vulnerable to transport disruption. High winds and high seas also affect road transport, particularly the causeways constructed between islands, often resulting in damage that renders these roads impassable.²⁰⁵

The Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Utilities (MoWIU) is the lead for the Infrastructure Cluster. Under the Infrastructure Cluster is the Shelter sub-cluster, led by the Secretary of Internal Affairs. The Logistics Cluster is comprised of TNC, AIR, MISC National Telecommunications Authority, MOF and IOM. The clusters only convene during a disaster.²⁰⁶

The sections below give a basic overview of the RMI's infrastructure. A fuller logistics capacity assessment²⁰⁷, which was conducted to aid potential humanitarian assistance operations for the RMI (as well as 100 other countries), is available at the website for the Logistics Cluster, managed by the UN World Food Programme: <https://logcluster.org/dlca/>²⁰⁸

Airports

The RMI's only public international airport is the Amata Kabua/Marshall Islands International Airport (MAJ), located 7km from the capital, Majuro. The airport is in compliance with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and works closely with the Federal Aviation Administration to meet all regulatory

requirements. It is served by 1.) United Airlines, an international passenger and cargo carrier, 2.) Nauru Airlines, an international (central and south Pacific) passenger carrier, 3.) Air Marshall Islands, a domestic passenger carrier, and 4.) Asia Pacific Airlines, an international (overall Pacific region) cargo carrier.²⁰⁹ Air Marshall Islands has three aircraft available for charter in humanitarian response situations.²¹⁰ Facilities at Amata Kabua/Marshall Islands International Airport include a terminal building, Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) facility, Air Marshall Islands Hangar and fuel delivery system.²¹¹ It has an elevation of 1.5m, runway length of 7,897 feet, sealed surface, and is open during daylight hours.²¹²

The RMI hosts Kwajalein International Airport, which is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. military (Bucholz Army Air Field) and restricted to use by authorized persons.²¹³ Located 3 km from Ebeye, the airport serves as part of the domestic flight route to Ebeye. There passengers disembark at the base, are escorted to a receiving area, and then are transported to a dock terminal for a ferry to Ebeye. Bucholz Army Airfield has an elevation of 3m, is open 24 hours, and is designated with the IATA code, "KWA," and the ICAO code, "PKWA." There is a runway, 2200m x 60m, and eight helicopter pads for military use.²¹⁴ Also under the authority of U.S. Army Garrison – Kwajalein Atoll (USAG-KA) is Kwajalein Elenak airfield at Roi, which is not used by civilian aircraft.²¹⁵

Table 4 lists the civilian airfields in the RMI.^{216,217}

Seaports

The two international civilian ports in the RMI are on Majuro and Ebeye Islands. The port on Kwajalein Island is under US military authority.²¹⁸ Domestic sea transportation is provided by interisland ships, which service each of the outer islands about once every three months.²¹⁹

The Port of Majuro is the main port and the hub of the RMI's economy. The main dock is Delap dock, which is used for international cargo (with Uliga Dock used for interisland cargo and passenger vessels).²²⁰ Delap dock is about 300m, and handles 2,500-2,700 Twenty Foot Equivalent Units (TEUs) per year, with approximately five scheduled freight vessel services per month. Tuna exports have recently increased, a trend expected to continue, which could potential challenge the

Airfield	Province/District	Nearest town	Elevation	Runway length	Runway surface	Runway condition
Ailuk Airfield	Ailuk	Ailuk	1.5 meter (m)	750m x 50m	Grass/coral	Fair
Airok Airfield	Ailinglaplap	Airok	1.5 m	1000m x 40m	Grass/coral	Fair
Arno Airfield	Arno	Arno	1 m			Closed
Arno Tenak Airfield	Arno	Tenak	1 m	1150m x 50m	Grass/coral	Closed
Bikini Airfield	Bikini	Bikini	1 m	1177m x 60m		Closed
Ebon Airfield	Ebon	Ebon	1 m	951 m x 30 m	Unknown	Unknown
Enewetak Airfield	Enewetak Atoll	Enewetak	1 m	2200m x 60m	Concrete	Good
Jabat Airfield	Jabat Atoll	Jabat Island	1 m	700m x 300m	Grass	Good
Jaluit Airfield	Jaluit	Jaluit	1 m	1300m x 90m	Grass/coral	Good
Jeh Airfield	Ailinglaplap	Jeh	1 m	1290m	Grass/coral	Fair
Kili Airfield	Kili	Kili	1 m	1338m x 48m	Grass	Good
Lae Airfield	Lae	Lae	1 m	629m x 40 m	Grass	Good
Likiep Airfield	Likiep	Likiep	1 m	903m x 43m	Grass	Fair
Majkin Airfield	Namu	Majkin	1 m	1129m x 54m	Grass	Fair
Maloelap Airfield	Maloelap	Taroa	1 m	1127m x 48m	Grass	Fair
Malaolap Kaben Airfield	Maloelap	Kaben	1 m	854m x 64m	Grass/Gravel	Good
Mejit Airfield	Mejit Island	Mejit	1 m	1229m x 48m	Coral graded	Good
Mili Airfield	Mili	Mili	1 m	919m x 24m	Grass	Fair
Mili Enjanet Airfield	Mili Atoll	Enjanet	1 m	967m x 96m	Grass/gravel graded	Good
Namdrik or Namorik Airfield	Namdrik (or Namorik)	Namdrik (or Namorik)	1 m	Data inconsistent	Grass/coral	Fair
Namu Airfield	Namu	Namu		838 m	Grass	Closed
Rongelap Airfield	Rongelap	Rongelap	1 m	1322m x 48m	Concrete	Good
Tabal Airfield	Aur Atoll	Tabal	1 m	822m x 43m	Graded coral	Fair
Ujae Airfield	Ujae Atoll	Ujae	1 m	806m x 36m	Grass	Fair
Utrik Airfield	Utrik	Utrik	1 m	838m x 43m	Coral	Fair
Woja Airfield	Ailinglaplap	Woja	1 m		Graded coral	Fair
Wotho Airfield	Wotho	Wotho	1 m	919m x 64m	Dirt	Fair
Wotje Airfield	Wotje	Wotje	1 m	1085m x 54m	Grass/coral	Fair

Table 4: Civilian Airports in the RMI

capacity limits of the port in the future. Majuro Stevedoring Company (MSTCO) indicated that humanitarian cargo will be considered a priority during disasters, as with the recent drought, holding containers for IOM's response.²²¹ The port has an anchorage depth of 23.2m and a cargo pier depth of 15.5m.²²²

The Port of Ebeye, located in Kwajalein Atoll, is a secondary international port although it mostly handles domestic shipping. The

port handles 400 TEUs per year, with a dock approximately 120m long. There were previously two scheduled freight vessel services per month, which increased to four in 2018. MSTCO indicated humanitarian cargo will be considered a priority during disasters, as demonstrated by holding containers for IOM's response to the recent drought.²²³ The U.S. Army operates passenger ferry services to and from Kwajalein Island six days per week, about 10 times per day,

which are open to the public and free of charge.²²⁴

Kwajalein Island is under U.S. military authority, and the Port of Kwajalein is a very small port with a maximum length less than 500 feet, anchorage depth of 14m, and cargo pier depth of 7.1m.

The Port of Enitwetak Island has an anchorage depth of 20.1m and cargo pier depth of 7.1m.²²⁵

Roads

The network of sealed roads primarily exists on the two most populated islands in the RMI – Majuro and Ebeye. In the RMI, there are 1,953 km of unpaved roads, and 65 km²²⁶ – 75 km²²⁷ of paved roads, with the majority of the paved roads on the main island of Majuro, the capital. Majuro has approximately 50 km of sealed roadway, with an associated travel time of two hours. Ebeye has approximately 10km of unsealed roadway, with an associated travel time of one hour. Maximum vehicle speed is 40 km/hour on Majuro and Ebeye, where roads are also used by a high proportion of pedestrian/foot traffic. Generally, the sealed roads are in average condition, with drainage but poorly maintained, leading to large puddles after rain. On Majuro, the predominant traffic pattern is a single lane in each direction. Taxis comprise approximately half of the vehicle traffic. Unpaved roads are typically constructed of coral laterite. The vast majority of islands in the RMI have few or no vehicles, thus no vehicular roads. Transport around the outer islands is usually via walking track. Larger islands may have pickup trucks, while on smaller islands goods are moved using wheelbarrows or pushcarts.²²⁸

Railways

There are no railways in the RMI. Neither is there public transportation, although taxis are available.²²⁹

Waterways

Interisland ships provide domestic sea transportation, which service each of the outer islands approximately every three months.²³⁰

There are no notable rivers in the RMI. The islands are generally too small to support bodies of water that are larger than small ponds or lagoons.

Schools

The last population and housing census for RMI revealed that the level of educational attainment of Marshallese people needs improvement. Approximately 43% of people age 25 and over have completed high school or pursued further studies and training, and approximately 48% had completed primary education. In addition, school enrollment for children ages 5-9 is only 80% enrolled; ages 10-14 only 92%; and ages 15-24 only 38%. Literacy rates of Marshallese aged 5 and older are at 91%.²³¹

The Ministry of Education is the umbrella for the RMI Public Schools System. There are 75 public elementary schools in the RMI. Eight are in Majuro Atoll, one is in Ebeye, and the remainder are on the outer islands. There are 27 private elementary schools throughout the country. Approximately 8,000 students are enrolled in the public elementary schools and 2,200 in the private system. There are four rural schools in Majuro that enroll between 100 and 500 students a year. Ebeye Elementary School in Kwajalein Atoll is the largest, enrolling 1000 students. The outer islands schools generally have between 50 and 100 students.

The public secondary system enrolls about 2,000 students. There are six public secondary schools in the RMI. Three are on Majuro, one is on Kwajalein, and the other two are located on the outer islands and are public boarding schools. There are 14 private secondary schools enrolling about 1,000 students. The military base on Kwajalein is host to the Kwajalein Junior/Senior High School.

There are two tertiary institutions: the College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) and the University of the South Pacific (USP). CMI is the main training center for the RMI teachers. It also provides a two-year Associates degree.²³²

In 2015, schools faced a shortage of teachers when a change in local government regulations required teachers to have a certification or at least two years of college education. Teachers holding those qualifications were inundated with students and reinforcements from the Philippines and the U.S. were recruited to fill space.²³³

Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education Sector

The RMI does not have a dedicated Education Cluster. Education issues are addressed within the WASH cluster. In the event of a disaster,

the Ministry of Health and Human Services (MoHHS) contacts the Public Schools System. UNICEF is able to provide education supplies including schools in a box, tents (for temporary classrooms, teachers' quarters), teacher kits, student kits (including backpacks) and recreational kits if there is an emergency and need.

There are some areas of improvement needed for the education sector. There is a need for clarification on which schools can be used as evacuation centers and who would open the schools for centers, as well as training in the use of schools for shelters (safety, management) and shelter support arrangements.²³⁴

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is implementing the Climate Adaptation Disaster Risk Reduction and Education (CADRE) Program in the RMI, funded by the Office of Insular. As part of the program, IOM has implemented a curriculum throughout the country and supported schools with school emergency management plans and evacuation drills, providing disaster first aid kits, emergency first responder training and school communities with hazard vulnerability and capacity mapping.²³⁵

The CADRE Program aims to increase the resilience of vulnerable communities in the RMI and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) against natural hazards, especially climate induced hazards. The project began in 2011, targeting approximately 10,000 school-aged students, 50 schools, and surrounding communities to provide training and education regarding climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness.²³⁶

The program is a 36-month project with two Tracks. Track 1 focuses on education, capacity building of students, teachers, administrators and local communities as well as assessment of climate change impacts and disaster risk on school grounds and the surrounding communities. Track 2 utilizes the assessments from Track 1 to roll out adaptation measures based on the recommendations of the assessments.

The CADRE Program's end goals included:

- Supporting sustainable adaptation and preparedness strategies, an increase in the resilience of vulnerable schools and communities to climate change and natural hazards;
- Empowering schools and communities to independently cope with, and respond to, natural disasters; thereby filling a gap in the

communication and education sectors by combining climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR);

- Supporting National Government efforts to implement their national policies and strategies pertaining to adaptation and disaster risk reduction; and
- Implementing practices, which will assist in safeguarding the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in the context of climate change and the lined impacts of climate change.²³⁷

Communications

There is one national radio station, V7AB, which serves as an important communication link with the community and with outer islands. The radio station is the channel in which essential broadcasts are made in times of emergency. All broadcast requests related to the operational situation, in the case of a disaster situation, should be channeled through the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) for authorization by the Chief Secretary to ensure relevant information is being broadcast to the public.

CB radio can be used to share information and warnings. All islands have radio access; however, the nature of (non-CB) radio connections varies with some islands operating with Demand Assigned Multiple Access (satellite-based) systems and others with Global System for Mobile Communications.

Several ministries and NGOs run successful public awareness campaigns on various aspects of DRM. Public awareness initiatives from the MoHHS and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) use various forms of media (e.g. radio, newspaper) and targeted educational products in Marshallese. However, according to the 2016 RMI drought post disaster needs assessment, there is a need to upgrade information and communications platform to better facilitate information flows prior to, during and after a disaster.²³⁸

The RMI has a total of 2,361 fixed telephone lines. There are 16,000 mobile cellular phone users. The country has 21,857 internet users. Some telecom infrastructure improvements have been made in recent years. The U.S. Government, World Bank, UN and International Telecommunication Union (ITU), have aided in improvements and monetary aid to the islands telecommunications.²³⁹

Utilities

Power

The RMI's energy supply is fueled by imported liquid fossil fuels. Electric power is available on Majuro, Ebeye, Jaluit and Kili, and is provided by the Marshalls Energy Company (MEC), a government-owned utility. Almost 95% of the population in the primary islands has power lines supplying its power. For the outer islands, Kerosene and some solar energy are used for electricity. MEC has two power plants. Solar energy and other alternative energy policies have only been sporadically implemented in the RMI.²⁴⁰

Water and Sanitation

Most of the fresh water consumed in the RMI is collected via rainfall catchments and artesian wells. Rainwater is also collected on the paved airport runway at Majuro, with adjoining storage tanks or artificially lined reservoirs. On many islands, rain provides the only fresh water available, and water supply remains problematic during the dry season. There are concerns that the RMI's freshwater lens will shrink as sea levels rise due to climate change.²⁴¹

The number of households with a supply of potable water has steadily increased. Water supply on Ebeye is supplemented by some desalinization, although supply does not meet demand. Ebeye has water and sewer problems due to high population density. Two of the three reverse osmosis units that supply the island with fresh water are broken. Waste management infrastructure is also in poor condition.²⁴²

The country is a member of the Pacific Water Association (PWA). The PWA's main objectives are to improve the water industry within member countries and to monitor comparative performance of their water and sanitation utilities against international benchmarks.²⁴³

The RMI operates a five-cluster system for coordination including, Water and Sanitation (WASH). The WASH Cluster lead is the Majuro Water and Sewer Company (MWSC) and IOM is the secretary for the WASH Cluster. Cluster members convene primarily during disasters, although they may convene for preparedness. The cluster meets around three times per week during disasters.

Cluster members include the MWSC, Salvation Army, EPA, Marshall Islands Weather

Service Office (WSO), IOM, Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce (MoNRC), Humanity First, Public Schools System, Majuro Atoll Local Government (MALGOV), Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MoCIA), Pacific Resources for Education & Learning (PREL), Red Cross, and the Pacific Community (SPC) (Water Security).

The WASH cluster could benefit from improved inter-cluster coordination, information management, resource mobilization support, innovative methods of assessment, and ongoing technical training (i.e. reverse osmosis maintenance).²⁴⁴

In a disaster, the WASH cluster mainly deploys reverse osmosis units to the affected communities. Cases of drinking water may be used as the first phase of their response. During the 2016 drought, MIRCS, with support from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) and in coordination with the WASH Cluster, carried out a public awareness campaign on water conservation and safety, conducted household assessments in Majuro, and distributed new water containers to vulnerable people for safe storage of drinking water.

During the 2013 Emergency drought operation, a project to improve household rainwater harvesting was completed in coordination with IFRC and following an international appeal for funding. This benefited approximately 1700 people across three atolls.²⁴⁵

IOM has prepositioned emergency response solar powered reverse osmosis units and other WASH items available in the event of an emergency. UNICEF can provide WASH supplies in an emergency including WASH/hygiene kits, jerry cans and water bladders. UNICEF actively conducts assessments in the RMI to determine what other activities can be supported by UNICEF. USAID and JICA may supplement water supplies during a drought if there are limited supplies.²⁴⁶

SPC delivers a number of water quality, quantity and security projects.²⁴⁷ The Pacific Partnership for Atoll Water Security is a collaboration between SPC member countries facing similar challenges of safe drinking water. It is supported by SPC and funded by New Zealand and brings together regional experience, lessons learned and technical assistance to help atoll communities better respond to drought by building skills, systems and basic infrastructure.²⁴⁸



REPUBLIC OF THE
MARSHALL ISLANDS
Health

Disaster Management Reference Handbook | December 2019

Health

Health Overview

There is high mortality and morbidity for both non-communicable and communicable diseases in the RMI.²⁴⁹ Life expectancy in the RMI is 60 years. (Life expectancy in the FSM is 69, Palau is 72, and the U.S. is 79 years to provide comparison).²⁵⁰

The MoHHS has a 3-Year Rolling Strategic Plan 2017–2019. The health priorities are to:

- Secure high-quality health care in the outer islands;
- Achieve universal access to high-quality care for all people with communicable diseases;
- Provide integrated non-communicable disease (NCD) services along with the tools and support that people need to manage their health;
- strengthen national capacity to deliver high-quality maternal, infant, child and adolescent health and community-based interventions for family resource management;
- Increase access to community-based care and supports for adults and children with mental illness and/or substance use disorders through a network of service providers that are committed to a person-centered and recovery-oriented system of care;
- Increase immunization rates and reduce preventable infectious diseases;
- Promote and educate the public on healthy lifestyle changes; and
- Provide efficient and effective administrative and coordinated functions of preventive and public health care services.

Health Care System Structure

The Ministry of Health and Human Services (MoHHS) works collaboratively with the Community Health Councils to provide health-care services.²⁵¹ In response to natural disasters and health outbreaks, the RMI activates the cluster system, including a Health Cluster. The MoHHS is the lead of the Health Cluster. Cluster members are part of the National EOC (NEOC) and report to the Chief Secretary's Office (CSO).

In the event of a smaller health outbreak, the cluster system may not be activated. In this case, MoHHS activates its own EOC, the EpiNet, and reports to the Secretary of MoHHS. If the outbreak is beyond the Ministry's capacity to manage, MoHHS may then advise the CSO and the cluster system to be activated for wider support.²⁵² The MoHHS also has their own internal HEOC or Health Emergency Operations Center (HEOC), which activates the incident command structure (ICS) within their own ministry with their secretary selected as the chair.²⁵³

An organizational Chart depicting the MoH is located below in Figure 7. It reflects the reorganization that took place in 2016.²⁵⁴

The RMI has two hospitals (one each in Majuro and Ebeye) and 56 health care centers in the outer atolls and islands. Both hospitals provide primary, secondary, and limited tertiary care. Patients who require full tertiary care are referred overseas.²⁵⁵

It approved its Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) in 2016, and also has a Pandemic Influenza Response Plan 2005, and Public Health Emergency Response Plan 2015, as well as a National Emergency Response Plan with a health component in 2010.²⁵⁶

A new HPP draft named the Majuro Hospital Emergency Operations Plan (MHEOP) and Public Health EOP (previously PHERP) is expected to be available by the end of 2019. In addition, a Communicable Disease Response Plan is currently in draft and should be endorsed by 2020.²⁵⁷

Challenges in Health

Marshall Islanders have a wide range of health problems including tuberculosis, diabetes, hypertension, thyroid tumors, alcoholism, depression, Hansen's Disease/leprosy, as well as higher rates of suicide.

Approximately one-third of the population of the RMI, has relocated to the U.S. enabled by the Compact of Free Association (COFA). Main relocations include Hawaii, Guam, and Arkansas. Marshallese migration patterns are tied to health care. For those living outside the population centers of Majuro and Ebeye, health-care access is very limited. The country's health sector lacks the capacity to provide technologically advanced medical interventions.

A variety of factors contribute to these negative health conditions, including poverty, overcrowding, and poor sanitary conditions, and

REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS MINISTRY OF HEALTH

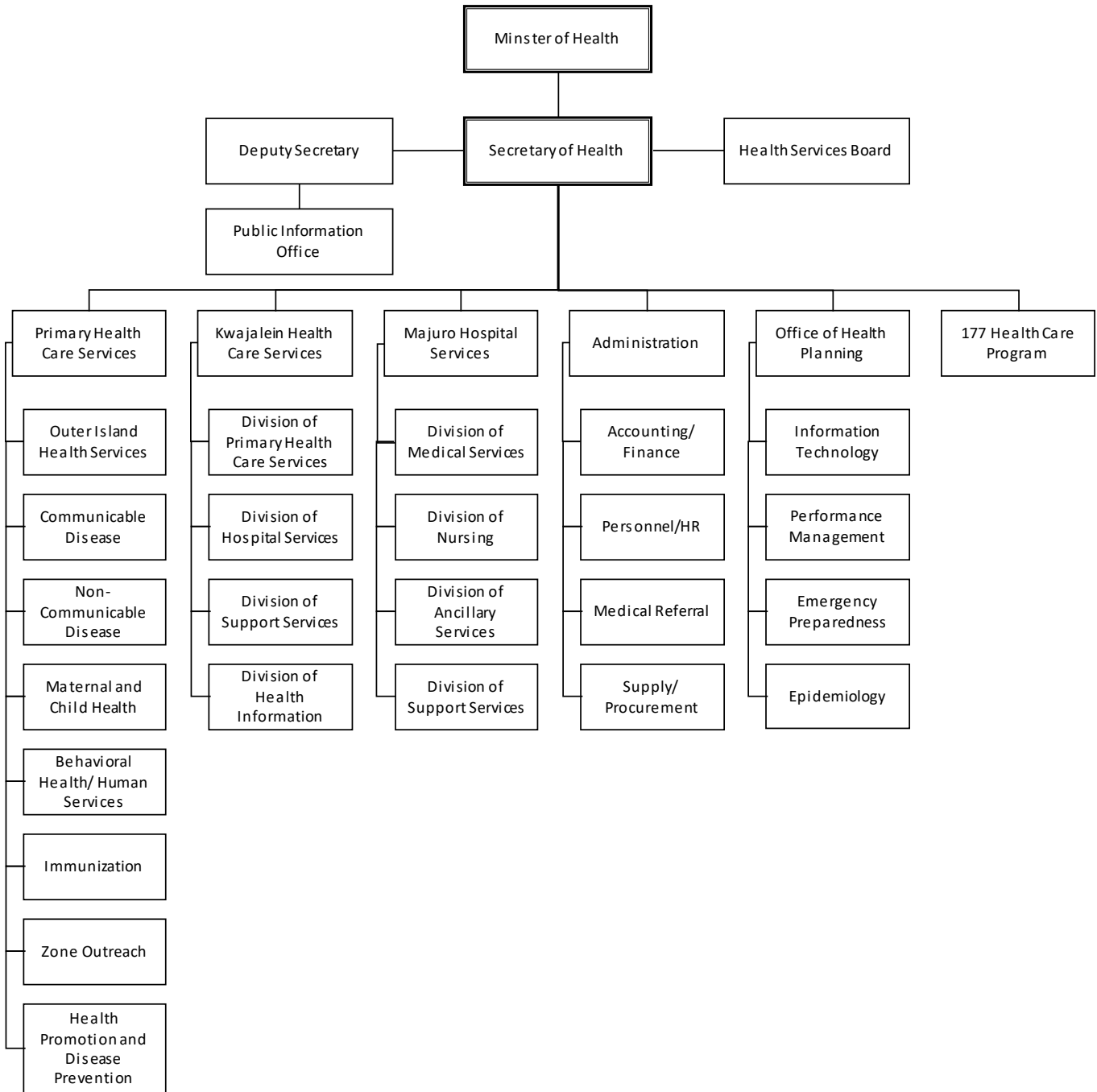


Figure 7: Ministry of Health and Human Services Organizational Structure

loss of traditional forms of subsistence farming. The ecological, genetic, and psychosocial impact of sustained nuclear weapons testing in the Marshall Islands by the United States during the 1940s and 1950s also contributes to these ongoing health problems. Although atomic testing ended more than 60 years ago, the Marshallese continue to suffer from higher rates of thyroid disorders, birth defects and cancer.

The Marshallese have also changed their diets which has led to the loss of the traditional diet of fresh fish, breadfruit, and coconut, to highly processed packaged foods and white rice. This has been a result of social dislocation and radiation contamination caused by the atomic tests, coupled with the U.S. military's presence in the region. As a result, Marshall Islanders in both the RMI and the U.S. have among the highest rates of Type 2 diabetes in the world. Furthermore, access to dialysis is difficult to obtain in the islands and cost-prohibitive for those living in the U.S. Untreated diabetes has frequently resulted in blindness, amputation, and other impairments.²⁵⁸

Health Cooperation

The RMI's domestic partners for natural and health-related disasters include MALGOV, Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Utilities (MoWIU), EPA, CSO, and the Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS). International partners for natural and health-related disasters include the WHO (Micronesia Office), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNDP, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and IFRC.²⁵⁹

Pacific Island leaders have declared non-communicable diseases a crisis and expressed commitment to the Pacific NCD Roadmap, which specified policy and legislation to prevent NCDs. To strengthen compliance, the Pacific Monitoring Alliance for NCD Action (MANA) and a mutual accountability mechanism was initiated in recent years. Pacific MANA works collaboratively with PICTs and partner agencies including Pacific Community (SPC), World Health Organization (WHO), Pacific Research Centre for the Prevention of Obesity and NCD (CPOND) and the Pacific Islands Health Officers' Association (PIHOA); by establishing Pacific MANA Coordination Team, developing MANA Dashboard indicators, and completing

and facilitating for endorsement at the Heads of Health meeting.²⁶⁰

Communicable Diseases

Climate change is likely to enhance the risks for the potential of outbreaks of vector-borne diseases, such as dengue due to an increase in mosquito breeding sites associated with a warmer climate and potentially higher rainfall conditions. Higher temperatures may also lead to water borne diseases because there is an enhanced risk of outbreaks of diseases such as typhoid and cholera with contaminated water during and after flooding.²⁶¹

Communicable diseases in the RMI include dengue, typhoid fever, measles, tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis, schistosomiasis, meningitis, and Lassa fever. These diseases may be hard to control due to poor water supplies, personal hygiene issues, overcrowding and a lack of good medical facilities.²⁶²

TB is a leading cause of death in RMI, and the country has reported multidrug-resistant TB. The RMI is also affected by Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD).²⁶³ They are a group of viral, parasitic and bacterial diseases that typically affect impoverished communities that lack proper sanitation.²⁶⁴

As of October 6, 2019, there have been 662 dengue like illness of which 183 have been lab confirmed. These outbreaks are in Ebeye and in Majuro. There have been no reported cases yet in outer atolls. An EpiNet team in Ebeye and the RMI national EpiNet teams were both activated in July 2019. There was also a Presidential Declaration of Health Emergency and activation of multi-ministry and NGO National Emergency Operations Center in August 2019. In response of the outbreak, A RMI Dengue Response Plan was finalized on August 6, 2019. Weekly conference calls with technical assistance partners are also being held.

The community is received ongoing assistance from partners including the Red Cross, WUTMI, Kalgov, and Malgov. Community awareness by mass phone texts, radio, posters and public seminars have taken place. In addition, Ebeye have completed their community clean-up and spraying of hospital, schools and churches to help control the mosquitos. Fumigating Majuro starting with the village with the highest attack rate is an upcoming activity.²⁶⁵

In July 2019, Ebeye declared an outbreak for

Typhoid fever. Typhoid can be spread through contaminated food or water in the RMI. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends this vaccine for most travelers to the country.²⁶⁶

The RMI is highly susceptible to measles introduction due to low immunity coverage, vitamin A deficiency, and stunting of children under 5. In November, 2019, the Ministry of Health and Human Services (MoHHS) in the RMI issued an international travel advisory due to the current measles outbreaks occurring in the region (Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines).²⁶⁷

Non-Communicable Diseases

Non-communicable diseases are the leading cause of death in the RMI.²⁶⁸ Diabetes-related diseases and cancer are the leading causes of non-communicable deaths. The high consumption of imported canned and instant food, lack of physical exercise and use of tobacco products are all associated with the high prevalence of non-communicable disease and obesity.²⁶⁹

Situated in an economic and historical context, the rise of NCDs in the Pacific strongly correlates with trade and investment liberalization, which facilitates the imports of

unhealthy commodities.²⁷⁰

In the RMI, non-communicable diseases, specifically heart disease, stroke, and diabetes account for the top three causes of death as shown in Figure 8. Kidney disease, COPD, Cirrhosis, and congenital defects account for the other high rates of non-communicable diseases.²⁷¹

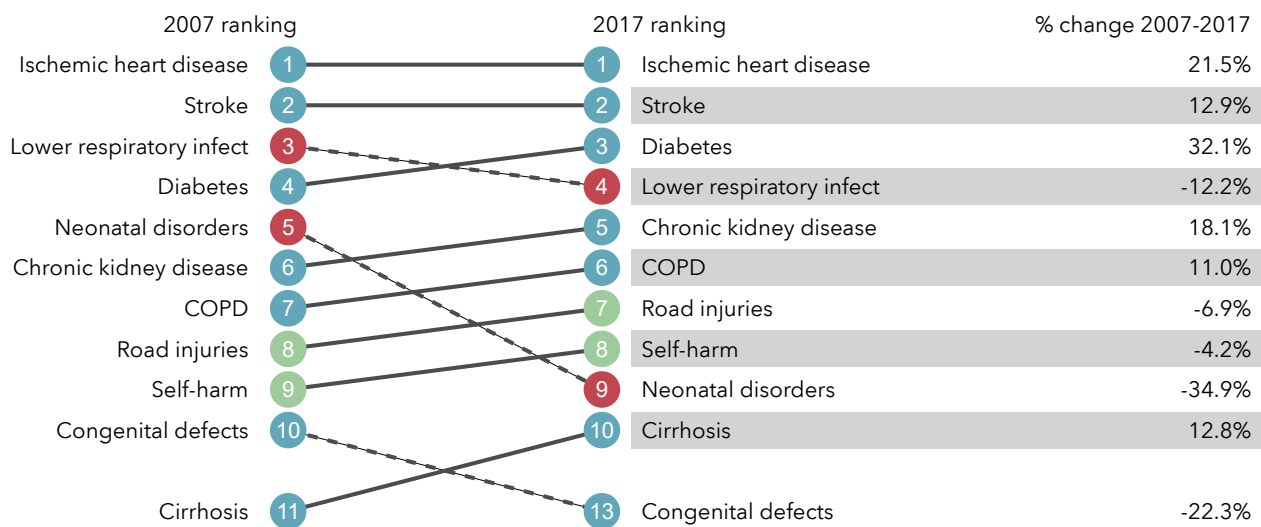
When focusing only on the health problems that cause disability, non-communicable diseases come into even starker focus. NCDs comprise nine of the top ten health problems in the RMI that cause the most disability, as illustrated in Figure 9.²⁷²

Training for Health Professionals

Training for health professionals can be challenging because the region faces unique logistical challenges to reach many populated islands across thousands of miles of water. An important regional initiative is the Pacific Open Learning Health Net (POLHN), which focuses on distance education for health professionals working in the Pacific.

POLHN was established in 2003 as a joint initiative between the World Health Organization (WHO), the Government of Japan, and Pacific Ministers of Health. It has since grown to support 67,000 registered students with health education and training.

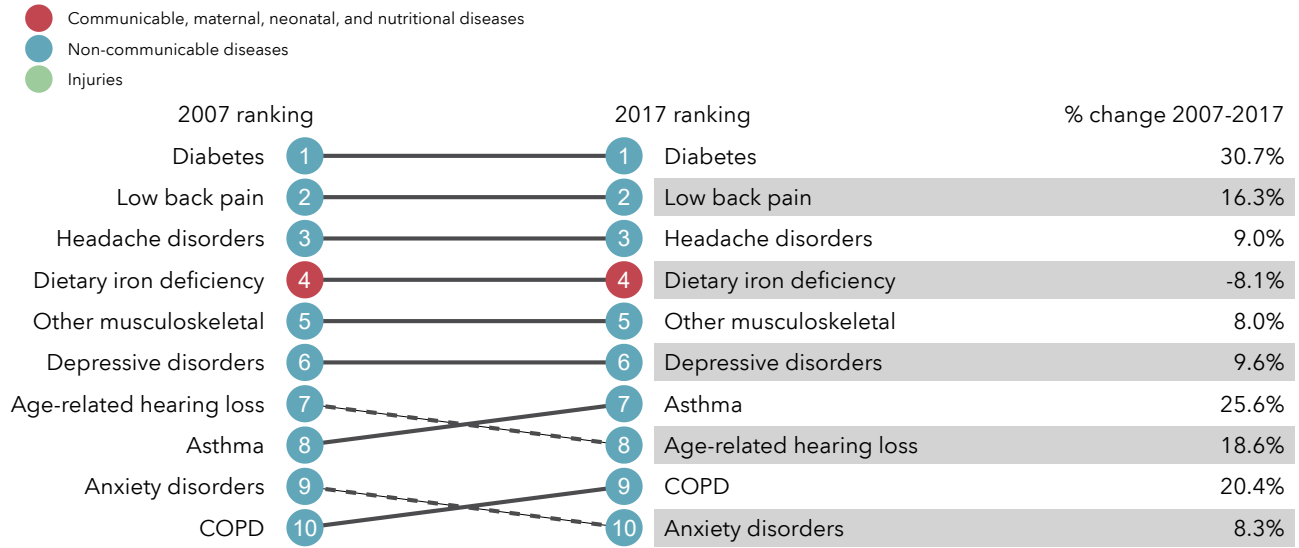
What causes the most deaths?



Top 10 causes of death in 2017 and percent change, 2007-2017, all ages, number

Figure 8: Top 10 Causes of Death in RMI

What health problems cause the most disability?



Top 10 causes of years lived with disability (YLDs) in 2017 and percent change, 2007-2017, all ages, number

Figure 9: Health Problems that Cause the Most Disability RMI

POLHN uses a combination of digital networks and physical infrastructure. As of 2019, there were 52 e-learning centers and 50 courses.²⁷³ POLHN provides appropriate e-learning curricula in medicine, nursing, health education, and public health, and offers them online as well as on CD and other formats to accommodate the limited bandwidth in many Pacific Islands.²⁷⁴ POLHN also endorses courses offered through the Global Health eLearning Center (GHeL). This leads to GHeL course certificates being largely accepted by Pacific Ministries of Health to meet requirements for continuing professional development.²⁷⁵

The University of the South Pacific, which has a campus in the Marshall Islands, is a key partner to POLHN. It offers distance and internet education services. POLHN has two learning centers in the Marshall Islands: one at the Ebeye Community Health Centre and one at Majuro

Hospital. However, there is no medical school in the Marshall Islands.

Students can enroll in medical school programs within the Pacific, such as the Fiji National University (FNU), University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) and the University of Hawaii. The University of Hawaii, in cooperation with the US Health Resources and Services Administration, developed the Pacific Association for Clinical Training (PACT), in which the Marshall Islands is involved. This provides e-learning telecommunications for those wishing to further their education.

Nursing is the only health profession with training available in country. The College of the Marshall Islands confers a three-year Associate of Science in Nursing with graduates qualifying as registered nurses, known locally as Staff Nurse 1.²⁷⁶



REPUBLIC OF THE
MARSHALL ISLANDS
Women, Peace and Security

Disaster Management Reference Handbook | December 2019

Women, Peace and Security

At the national level, partner agencies supporting gender in the RMI do not meet regularly or in any formal meeting. However, the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MoCIA) is working to strengthen gender work and to better align work for reporting against the National Strategic Plan and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).²⁷⁷

The RMI currently has no domestic violence, sexual harassment, human trafficking or sex tourism legislation in place. There are also no minimum sentences or mandatory prosecutions in cases of sexual violence. Among women who have experienced physical violence, 72% reported that a current husband or partner committed physical violence against them, while 21% reported that they had experienced violence by a former husband or partner.²⁷⁸

President Hilda Heine was sworn into office in the RMI in 2016. She is the first woman elected as President of a Pacific Island Country. She is also the founder and a current advisor to Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI), an organization which serves as the voice of Marshallese women and implements a number of projects dealing with violence against women, HIV/AIDS, health and women in leadership.

The Pacific as a region has the world's lowest percentage of women in parliament, a combined average of 6.1 per cent (excluding the French territories). The RMI has only elected a handful of women as senators since independence in 1979.²⁷⁹ Dr. Heine and other senior government leaders have been strong advocates of gender equality and ending violence against women. 'Gender equality: Where do we stand?' was launched in the Marshall Islands parliament in August 2018 and has been used to support national planning and reporting processes as well as resource mobilization.²⁸⁰

In 2018 there was review of all legislation and policies to ensure compliance with Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in the RMI.²⁸¹

The NDMO and each of the clusters (WASH, Health, Logistics, Food Security and Agriculture, and Infrastructure) and a sub-cluster on Shelter are responsible for mainstreaming gender and protection in their preparedness and response activities; however, currently there are no gender or protection focal points in any of the government led ministries and the RMI does not have a Protection Cluster. In the WASH Cluster, an umbrella organization of women's civil society organizations, Women United Together in Marshall Islands (WUTMI), provides gender mainstreaming support.²⁸²

In an emergency response or disaster response, the Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS) prioritizes vulnerable populations including women and children. MIRCS applies gender equality principles to programming and follows an inclusive approach to gender and diversity. Staff are members of the National Taskforce on Human Trafficking and Cookhouse Confidential group.²⁸³

The Pacific Community (SPC) (previously called the South Pacific Commission)²⁸⁴ and other partners, are assisting the RMI and other countries to increase their capacity to meet international human rights commitments and making headway towards achieving SDG 5 (Gender equality) and SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).

The RMI ratified key UN human rights treaties in 2018 and submitted national reports to the UN treaty bodies on time. SPC also assisted with strengthening the civil society and private sector by establishing women in maritime associations in the RMI.

SPC's experience in gender mainstreaming in the Pacific has identified two key enablers of gender-responsive policies (1) leadership for these policies, including mandating change, and (2) production and use of data to inform their development and allow monitoring of progress. As part of advancements in this area, the public sector, through the Ministry of Internal Affairs, produced a gender mainstreaming policy in 2015 with the support of SPC.²⁸⁵

UN Women's Fiji Multi-Country Office (MCO) works with governments and civil society organizations across 14 Pacific Island countries and territories including the RMI to address gender inequality, empower women and help make communities more inclusive.²⁸⁶



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS Conclusion

Disaster Management Reference Handbook | December 2019

Conclusion

The RMI counts tropical storms, typhoons, storm surge, and drought as major threats and is extremely vulnerable to the effects of these events. However, the country's biggest threats are the impacts of climate change such as sea level rise.²⁸⁷ Additional factors contributing to the country's vulnerability to climate change include population density on the islands, poverty, low elevation, wide geographic dispersal, a fragile ecosystem with limited fresh water resources and an economy at risk to global influences.²⁸⁸ In addition, climate change and disaster risks have a considerable impact on all sectors in regards to children and women's rights in the RMI. Geography poses primary access challenges to hospitals and healthcare centers, courts, police stations, schools and other facilities providing services to children and women.²⁸⁹

As a result of 100% of the RMI's population and infrastructure residing on the coastline, the country is vulnerable to high winds, waves, typhoons, and coastal erosion. It is also increasingly threatened by drought events which are longer and more frequently impacting the availability of water sources. Therefore, water management has been identified as a major issue that needs to be addressed. Future El Niño-type events in a climate change scenario could cause serious socio-economic and health repercussions for the islands.²⁹⁰ In regards to health, the country is dealing with the challenge of dealing with high mortality and morbidity rates for both non-communicable and communicable diseases in the RMI.²⁹¹ Many of these issues resulting from physical dislocation and radiation contamination caused by the atomic tests, coupled with the U.S. military's presence in the region.²⁹² There are also some areas of need for the education sector.²⁹³

Current progress in regards to disaster management programs and activities is the responsibility of the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), based in the capital, Majuro. The NDMO provides technical advice and coordinates government resource support. Local governments have the responsibility to help develop programs specific to each atoll, and to facilitate this. A declaration of a state of disaster can be documented in either a proclamation declaring a state of emergency for natural disasters or a declaration of a state of

health emergency for health outbreaks. The NDC is the designated lead agency for implementing both the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP).²⁹⁴

The NDMP Strategic Plan 2017–2019 established a vision of “a safer and more resilient nation and communities.”²⁹⁵ However, challenges of transportation and logistics during emergency responses are exacerbated in the RMI, due to the country's isolation and scattered nature of hundreds of islands spread across an expanse of ocean. Scarce logistics and transportation resources create some competition during emergency responses. Therefore, it is critical that all stakeholders are advised when aircraft and sea vessels go to the other islands, so they can coordinate for the maximum benefit of affected populations.²⁹⁶

The international partners present in the RMI includes IOM, MIRCS, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, JICA, and FAO, among others.²⁹⁷ IOM has multiple projects in the country to help raise awareness and provide humanitarian assistance training. IFRC and MIRCS are involved with disaster response, early recovery, and help facilitate and coordinate international humanitarian and disaster response.²⁹⁸

A number of U.S. Government agencies operate programs or render assistance to the Marshall Islands. These include the Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Postal Service, Small Business Administration, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Department of State, the Department of the Interior, and USAID.²⁹⁹ The U.S. Embassy in Majuro provides consular services, and USAID/OFDA has a regional advisor based in Majuro, covering the Pacific Islands with additional support staff in based in Manila and throughout the Asia Pacific region.³⁰⁰

The U.S. provides assistance to the RMI for disaster response facilitated by the COFA between the two governments. As with all US foreign disaster response, USAID is responsible for USG assistance in disaster response and reconstruction in the RMI, a responsibility it assumed from FEMA in 2008.³⁰¹ USAID/OFDA's work in the Pacific targets capacity building and disaster risk reduction (DRR) interventions that promote self-reliance, enabling partner countries to lessen the impacts of disasters and respond more effectively.³⁰²



REPUBLIC OF THE
MARSHALL ISLANDS
Appendices

Disaster Management Reference Handbook | December 2019

Appendices

DoD DMHA Engagements in the Past Five Years (FY 2014-2019)

Navy Team Health Engagement-October 2019

A Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit team worked with local responders to stand up a defense against mosquitoes and other disease-carrying pests in Ebeye. RMI had a recent outbreak of dengue fever on the island.³⁰³

Pacific ALLIES Internship-August 2019

The Pacific ALLIES program brings together students from the U.S. and host nation sponsors from the Government of Kwajalein in the RMI. In August 2019, a group of students from the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, the University of Hawaii, and Whitman College recently wrapped up a summer internship on the Ebeye Atoll as part this program. The geo-location and census effort is the first time that these types of initiatives have been undertaken on the Atoll and will aid in improving situational awareness for disaster awareness and health emergencies.³⁰⁴

Pacific Partnership-March 2019

Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. The first mission port was in the RMI and the mission included disaster response seminars and training to improve overall disaster preparedness, installation of rainwater catchment and filtration, and community-wide health fairs. Each year, the mission team works collectively with host and partner nations to enhance regional interoperability and disaster response capabilities, increase stability and security, and foster relationships in the region.³⁰⁵ As part of Pacific Partnership, an incident command system subject matter expert exchange in Majuro, sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service and the Office of the Telecommunications Authority, on 11-15 March 2019 took place. The incident command system is a standardized, on-scene, all-risk incident management approach that allows users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to address the complexities of incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional

boundaries. The U.S. Coast Guard also hosted a train-the-trainer planning workshop and simulated search and rescue exercise in Majuro on 20-22 March 2019.³⁰⁶

U.S. Coast Guard Response-January 2019

A Chinese-flagged commercial fish carrier ran aground on Taka Atoll in the RMI on January 3, 2019, with 24 crew aboard. The Coast Guard coordinated with the RMI and the parent company of the vessel to rescue the crew.³⁰⁷

Joint Maritime Security Initiative Patrol-April 2018

The U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy completed a 24-day joint mission in the Western and Central Pacific under the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative to combat transnational crimes, enforce fisheries laws and enhance regional security in April 2018. A Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment from Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific embarked USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112) and conducted 4 fisheries enforcement boardings with the assistance of the ship's visit, board, search and seizure team and law enforcement ship riders from the RMI.³⁰⁸

Seabees Humanitarian Construction-April 2018

Fourteen Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11 Construction Civic Action Detail (CCAD) Marshall Islands began a second water catchment project in April 2018 Carlson Island, RMI.³⁰⁹

Joint Fisheries Patrol in Oceania-March 2016

The U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy completed a month-long joint mission under the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative to combat transnational crimes, enforce fisheries laws and enhance regional security in the Central and South Pacific. A Coast Guard law enforcement detachment, from Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team South, embarked the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110) and conducted eight fisheries enforcement boarding with the assistance of the Navy's Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) team and enforcement ship riders from the RMI and Nauru.³¹⁰

Seabees Deployment-October 2014-January 2015

Members of the Navy Seabees Construction Civic Action Detail-Marshall Islands took part

in a four-month humanitarian construction deployment to Kwajalein Atoll. The projects included the construction of clean rainwater catchment and distribution systems, bathroom and shower facilities, and a large beach pavilion. These humanitarian projects targeted important quality-of-life improvements for the thousands of Marshallese citizens who live on Enniburr and Ebeye, and U.S. military and civilian personnel living on Kwajalein.³¹¹

Operation Christmas Drop-December 2014

Men and women from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam and Yokota Air Base, Japan, airdropped a total of 89 bundles of goods, each weighing approximately 500 pounds, into the RMI, FSM, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The bundles consisted of donated toys, clothing, fishing equipment, sporting goods, food items, tools and other items.³¹²

International/Foreign Relations

A number of countries have interests in Oceania and in the Freely Associated States. China's rising profile within the broader region has prompted responses by other actors, including Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, and Japan.³¹³

The U.S. and the RMI have full diplomatic relations, and maintain a cooperative relationship. While the government is free to conduct its own foreign relations, it does so under the terms of the amended Compact Agreement. The U.S. has full authority and responsibility for security and defense of the RMI. Eligible Marshallese citizens may work, live, and study in the U.S. without a visa, and a large percentage serve in the U.S. military.³¹⁴

Australia and the RMI enjoy a close bilateral relationship based on shared regional interests. Australia was the second country, after the U.S., to establish diplomatic relations with the RMI. The Australian Embassy located in Pohnpei, FSM is responsible for Australian affairs in RMI. Australia's bilateral aid program includes securing water supply and sanitation services on Ebeye Island, and improving social and economic opportunities for women and girls.³¹⁵

China's economic relationship with the RMI includes substantial trade and aid components. The RMI established formal diplomatic relations with China in 1989. Since that time, the relationship has grown, including the creation of

the commission on economic trade cooperation in 2014. China maintains commercial ties to the island through fishing companies such as Pan Pacific Foods. Beijing is also a part owner in the Marshall Islands Fishing Company, a major enterprise in the RMI, and Chinese businessmen own small stores in the RMI.³¹⁶

Force Protection/Pre-Deployment Information

The following information is provided for pre-deployment planning and preparations. Visit www.travel.state.gov prior to deployments for further up-to-date information. Embassy requirements to enter the RMI are listed in the Foreign Clearance Guide at www.fcg.pentagon.mil

Passport/Visa

Travelers to the RMI will need a U.S. Passport valid for at least six months from the time of entry, and one blank page. A tourist visa is not required for U.S. citizens.

For international flights departing Amata Kabua International Airport in Majuro, there is a departure fee of \$20 for individuals aged 13 through 59. For domestic flights within the Marshall Islands departing Amata Kabua International Airport in Majuro, there is a departure fee of \$2 for individuals aged 13 through 59. Diplomats are exempt from departure fees.

Some HIV/AIDS entry restrictions exist for visitors to and foreign residents of the RMI. HIV testing is required for temporary visitors staying more than 30 days and applicants for residence and work permits. Foreign test results are accepted under certain conditions. Please verify this information with the Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands before you travel.

Safety and Security

The RMI has a low crime rate. The most common crimes are break-ins and thefts from homes, hotel rooms, and vehicles, and random acts of vandalism. Keep your hotel room or residence locked at all times. The number of violent assaults, reports of sexual harassment towards women and girls, and reports of domestic violence, has increased over the last few years. It is recommended that visitors dress

conservatively; Marshallese citizens typically dress very modestly with tops that cover their shoulders and pants, dresses, or shorts that fall below their knees. Occasionally, fights and assaults occur at nightclubs and bars. If you visit those establishments, especially late in the evening, be extra vigilant to ensure your personal security. Also, be careful driving or walking on the roads late at night as drunk driving is prevalent and there are no sidewalks and little to no room on the sides of roads for pedestrians to walk. All taxis in Majuro are shared taxis that stop to pick up and drop off passengers frequently. There have been reports of taxi drivers and/or passengers sexually harassing women in shared taxis. It is recommended that women and girls avoid riding shared taxis, particularly after dark, and avoid walking around alone after dark.

Emergency Contact Information

Report crimes to the local police at 625-6911 and contact the U.S. Embassy below:

U.S. Embassy in Majuro

Located on the ocean-side of the island's major road, approximately two miles east of the airport

(There is no street address).

P.O. Box 1379

Majuro, MH 96960-1379

Telephone: (692) 247-4011

Emergency after-hours: (692)-455 8213

Fax: (692) 247-4012

Email: MAJConsular@state.gov

Currency Information

The unit of currency is the U.S. dollar.

Travel Health Information

Vaccination and Prescriptions

The CDC provides the following recommendations for travel to the RMI. The information in Table 5 is taken directly from the CDC website.³¹⁷

Non-Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

The following diseases are possible risks with traveling in the RMI:

- **Dengue** – There is a dengue outbreak in the RMI. On September 13, 2019, the

Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (GRMI) updated its State of Health Emergency due to a dengue fever outbreak on Majuro and Ebeye Island. Travelers should prevent mosquito bites. Dengue viruses are spread to people through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species (*Ae. aegypti* or *Ae. albopictus*) mosquito.

- **Zika:** active local transmission of Zika virus by *Aedes* species mosquitoes has been identified in the RMI (as of August 2016); it poses an important risk if bitten by an infective mosquito; other less common ways to get Zika are through sex, via blood transfusion, or during pregnancy, in which the pregnant woman passes Zika virus to her fetus.

Prevent Bug Bites

Bugs (like mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas) can spread a number of diseases in the RMI. Many of these diseases cannot be prevented with a vaccine or medicine. You can reduce your risk by taking steps to prevent bug bites.

To prevent bug bites:

- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
- Use an appropriate insect repellent (see below).
- Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents). Do not use permethrin directly on skin.
- Stay and sleep in air-conditioned or screened rooms.
- Use a bed net if the area where you are sleeping is exposed to the outdoors.

For protection against ticks and mosquitoes:

Use a repellent that contains 20 percent or more DEET for protection that lasts up to several hours.

For protection against mosquitoes only:

Products with one of the following active ingredients can also help prevent mosquito bites. Higher percentages of active ingredient provide longer protection.

- DEET
- Picaridin (also known as KBR 3023, Bayrepel, and Icaridin)
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) or PMD
- IR3535

If you are bitten by bugs:

- Avoid scratching bug bites, and apply hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion to reduce the itching.
- Check your entire body for ticks after outdoor activity. Be sure to remove ticks properly.

Eat and Drink Safely

Unclean food and water can cause travelers’ diarrhea and other diseases. Reduce your risk by sticking to safe food and water habits.

Eat

- Food that is cooked and served hot
- Hard-cooked eggs
- Fruits and vegetables you have washed in clean water or peeled yourself
- Pasteurized dairy products

Don’t Eat

- Food served at room temperature
- Food from street vendors
- Raw or soft-cooked (runny) eggs
- Raw or undercooked (rare) meat or fish
- Unwashed or unpeeled raw fruits and vegetables
- Unpasteurized dairy products
- “Bushmeat” (monkeys, bats, or other wild game)

Drink

- Bottled water that is sealed
- Water that has been disinfected
- Ice made with bottled or disinfected water
- Carbonated drinks
- Hot coffee or tea
- Pasteurized milk

Don’t Drink

- Tap or well water
- Ice made with tap or well water
- Drinks made with tap or well water (such as reconstituted juice)
- Unpasteurized milk

Take Medicine

Talk with your doctor about taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs with you on your trip in case you get sick.

Safety and Security

As a first step in planning any trip abroad, check the Travel Advisories for your intended destination.

Note that conditions can change rapidly in a country at any time. To receive updated Travel Advisories and Alerts for the countries you choose, sign up at step.state.gov.

Routine vaccines (for all travelers)	Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines before every trip. These vaccines include Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot.
Hepatitis A (for most travelers)	The CDC recommends this vaccine because you can get hepatitis A through contaminated food or water in the RMI, regardless of where you are eating or staying.
Typhoid (for most travelers)	You can get typhoid through contaminated food or water in the RMI. The CDC recommends this vaccine for most travelers, especially if you are staying with friends or relatives, visiting smaller cities or rural areas, or if you are an adventurous eater.
Hepatitis B (for some travelers)	You can get hepatitis B through sexual contact, contaminated needles, and blood products, so the CDC recommends this vaccine if you might have sex with a new partner, get a tattoo or piercing, or have any medical procedures.
Measles (all travelers)	When traveling to the RMI, travelers should ensure update to date MMR vaccine before travel as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants (6 through 11 months old): 1 dose of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine before travel. This dose does not count as the first dose in the routine childhood vaccination series. • People 12 months old or older, with no evidence of immunity or no written documentation of any doses: 2 doses of MMR vaccine before travel. The 2 doses must be given 28 days apart. • People 12 months old or older who have written documentation of 1 dose and no other evidence of immunity: 1 additional dose before travel, at least 28 days after the previous dose

Table 5: CDC, Travel Health Information for the Marshall Islands

Sendai Framework

The Sendai Framework is the global blueprint and fifteen-year plan to build the world's resilience to natural disasters.³¹⁸ The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 outlines seven clear targets and four priorities for action to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks:

The Seven Global Targets include:

- Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality rates in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015.
- Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower average global figure per 100,000 in the decade 2020 -2030 compared to the period 2005-2015.
- Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030.
- Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030.
- Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020.
- Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this Framework by 2030.
- Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to the people by 2030.³¹⁹

The Four Priorities of Action include:

- Understanding disaster risk;
- Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk;
- Investing in disaster reduction for resilience; and
- Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The Sendai Framework aims to achieve the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries over the next 15 years. It was adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan in 2015.³²⁰ The Sendai Framework is the successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.³²¹ Figure 10 shows the Sendai DRR Framework.³²²

Chart of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

Scope and purpose

The present framework will apply to the risk of small-scale and large-scale, frequent and infrequent, sudden and slow-onset disasters, caused by natural or manmade hazards as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks. It aims to guide the multi-hazard management of disaster risk in development at all levels as well as within and across all sectors

Expected outcome

The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries

Goal

Prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience

Targets

Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015	Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure per 100,000 between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015	Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030	Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030	Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020	Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this framework by 2030	Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to people by 2030
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Figure 10: UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

Hyogo Framework for Action Country Progress Report

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) was adopted as a guideline to reduce vulnerabilities to natural hazards. The HFA assists participating countries to become more resilient and to better manage the hazards that threaten their development. The levels of progress of the 2011-2013 results of the HFA for The Republic of the Marshall Islands are represented in Figure 11 and Table 6. Table 7 provides an overview of the overall challenges and the future outlook statement from the HFA report. The **2011-2013** is the most recent HFA report available for the RMI.³²³

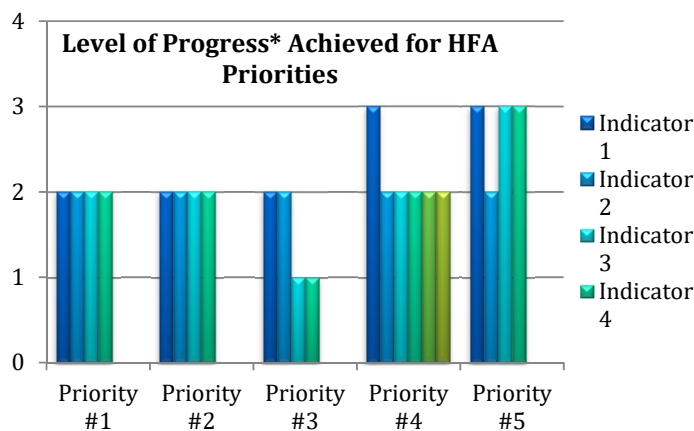


Figure 11: HFA Level of Progress Achieved

Priority for Action #1: Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.		
Core Indicator*	Indicator Description	Level of Progress Achieved
1	National policy and legal framework for disaster risk reduction exists with decentralized responsibilities and capacities at all levels.	2
2	Dedicated and adequate resources are available to implement disaster risk reduction plans and activities at all administrative levels.	2
3	Community Participation and decentralization is ensured through the delegation of authority and resources to local levels.	2
4	A national multi sectoral platform for disaster risk reduction is functioning.	2
Priority #2: Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning		
Core Indicator*	Indicator Description	Level of Progress Achieved
1	National and local risk assessments based on hazard data and vulnerability information are available and include risk assessments for key sectors.	2
2	Systems are in place to monitor, archive and disseminate data on key hazards and vulnerabilities.	2
3	Early warning systems are in place for all major hazards, with outreach to communities.	2
4	National and local risk assessments take account of regional / trans-boundary risks, with a view to regional cooperation on risk reduction.	2

Table 6: National Progress Report on the Implementation of the HFA

Priority #3: Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels		
Core Indicator*	Indicator Description	Level of Progress Achieved
1	Relevant information on disasters is available and accessible at all levels, to all stakeholders (through networks, development of information sharing systems, etc.).	2
2	School curricula, education material and relevant trainings include disaster risk reduction and recovery concepts and practices.	2
3	Research methods and tools for multi-risk assessments and cost benefit analysis are developed and strengthened.	1
4	Countrywide public awareness strategy exists to stimulate a culture of disaster resilience, with outreach to urban and rural communities.	1
Priority #4: Reduce the underlying risk factors		
Core Indicator*	Indicator Description	Level of Progress Achieved
1	Disaster risk reduction is an integral objective of environment related policies and plans, including for land use natural resource management and adaptation to climate change.	3
2	Social development policies and plans are being implemented to reduce the vulnerability of populations most at risk.	2
3	Economic and productive sectorial policies and plans have been implemented to reduce the vulnerability of economic activities.	2
4	Planning and management of human settlements incorporate disaster risk reduction elements, including enforcement of building codes.	2
5	Disaster risk reduction measures are integrated into post disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes.	2
6	Procedures are in place to assess the disaster risk impacts of major development projects, especially infrastructure.	2
Priority #5: Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels		
Core Indicator*	Indicator Description	Level of Progress Achieved
1	Strong policy, technical and institutional capacities and mechanisms for disaster risk management, with a disaster risk reduction perspective are in place.	3
2	Disaster preparedness plans and contingency plans are in place at all administrative levels, and regular training drills and rehearsals are held to test and develop disaster response programs.	2
3	Financial reserves and contingency mechanisms are in place to support effective response and recovery when required.	3
4	Procedures are in place to exchange relevant information during hazard events and disasters, and to undertake post-event reviews.	3

Table Notes:

*Level of Progress:

1 – Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

2 – Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

3 – Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

4 – Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

5 – Comprehensive achievement with sustained commitment and capacities at all levels

Table 6: National Progress Report on the Implementation of the HFA (cont.)

<p>Future Outlook Area 1: The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.</p>	
<p>Challenges:</p>	<p>Ad-hoc and uncoordinated approaches to DRM and CCA have been identified through the HFA Review Process. This is in part due to overburdened staff in key ministries, having to take on numerous roles and manage multiple projects and programs concurrently. It is also due to the irregular meetings of groups such as the National Disaster Council (NDC) and the National Climate Change Committee (NC3). Without strong leadership from these key groups, it is unlikely that integration and mainstreaming of DRR and CCA will occur within line ministries.</p> <p>An additional challenge is the level of dependency external assistance, particularly the US, for issues pertaining to DRR/DRM and CCA. With highly limited human resource capacity, RMI leans heavily on donor partners to address risk reduction issues.</p>
<p>Future Outlook Priorities:</p>	<p>Finalization, endorsement and wide distribution of the JNAP to national stakeholders will allow for some level of coordination and strategic approach to the addressing of DRR issues in RMI.</p>
<p>Future Outlook Area 2: The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.</p>	
<p>Challenges:</p>	<p>The change in key personnel in OEPPC and Chief Secretary’s Office has delayed progress on strengthening institutional structures for DRR/DRM and CCA.</p>
<p>Future Outlook Priorities:</p>	<p>Identifying appropriate replacements for key staff within OEPPC and CSO, and supporting them in working together, should be the aim over the short to medium term. This will allow much needed progress in DRR/DRM and CCA including finalization and endorsement of the JNAP.</p>
<p>Future Outlook Area 3: The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programs in the reconstruction of affected communities.</p>	
<p>Challenges:</p>	<p>Mainstreaming of risk reduction is occurring across many projects and initiatives in ad-hoc approaches, given the recognition that climate change is likely to have significant consequences on issues such as water and food security. The overall challenge in RMI is to ensure a strategic, systematic and coordinated approach to ensure DRR is always a high priority.</p> <p>A further challenge is that of funds, and the limitations imposed by the Disaster Assistance Emergency Fund (DAEF). Currently the DAEF is reserved only for disaster response, and not to be used for any risk reduction activity. If these limitations were loosened it may be possible to reduce the impact of some disasters by addressing underlying risk factors before the event occurs.</p>
<p>Future Outlook Priorities:</p>	<p>The JNAP, once finalized and endorsed, will provide a national overarching document that can guide attempts across all sectors to mainstream DRR into emergency preparedness, response and recovery</p>

Table 7: HFA Country Progress Report Future Outlook Areas, RMI

Country Profile

*The information in the Country Profile section is sourced directly from the CIA World Fact book. Additional numbers on country comparison to the world can be found by going directly to the CIA website.*³²⁴

Background:

After almost four decades under U.S. administration as the easternmost part of the UN Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Marshall Islands attained independence in 1986 under a Compact of Free Association. Compensation claims continue as a result of US nuclear testing conducted on some of the atolls between 1947 and 1962 (67 tests total). The Marshall Islands hosts the US Army Kwajalein Atoll Reagan Missile Test Site, a key installation in the US missile defense network. Kwajalein also hosts one of four dedicated ground antennas that assist in the operation of the Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation system (the others are at Cape Canaveral, Florida (US), on Ascension (Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha), and at Diego Garcia (British Indian Ocean Territory)).

Oceania, consists of 29 atolls and five isolated islands in the North Pacific Ocean, about halfway between Hawaii and Australia; the atolls and islands are situated in two, almost-parallel island chains - the Ratak (Sunrise) group and the Ralik (Sunset) group; the total number of islands and islets is about 1,225; 22 of the atolls and four of the islands are uninhabited

Geographic coordinates:

9 00 N, 168 00 E

Area:

Total: 181 sq km

Land: 181 sq km

Water: 0 sq km

Note: the archipelago includes 11,673 sq km of lagoon waters and encompasses the atolls of Bikini, Enewetak, Kwajalein, Majuro, Rongelap, and Utirik

Country comparison to the world: 217

Area - comparative:

About the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

370.4 km

Maritime claims:

Territorial sea: 12 nm

Exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Contiguous zone: 24 nm

Climate:

Tropical; hot and humid; wet season May to November; islands border typhoon belt

Terrain:

Low coral limestone and sand islands

Elevation:

Mean elevation: 2 m

Lowest point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

Highest point: East-central Airik Island, Maloelap Atoll 14 m

Natural resources:

Coconut products, marine products, deep seabed minerals

Land use:

Agricultural land: 50.7% (2011 est.)

Arable land: 7.8% (2011 est.)/ permanent crops: 31.2% (2011 est.)/ permanent pasture: 11.7% (2011 est.)

Forest: 49.3% (2011 est.)

Other: 0% (2011 est.)

Irrigated land:

0 sq km (2012)

Population distribution:

Most people live in urban clusters found on many of the country's islands; more than two-thirds of the population lives on the atolls of Majuro and Ebeye

Natural hazards:

Infrequent typhoons

Environment - current issues:

Inadequate supplies of potable water; pollution of Majuro lagoon from household waste and discharges from fishing vessels; sea level rise

Environment - international agreements:

Party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands, Whaling Signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

the islands of Bikini and Enewetak are former US nuclear test sites; Kwajalein atoll, famous as a World War II battleground, surrounds the world's largest lagoon and is used as a US missile test range; the island city of Ebeye is the second largest settlement in the Marshall Islands, after the capital of Majuro, and one of the most densely populated locations in the Pacific

Population:

75,684 (July 2018 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 201

Nationality:

Noun: Marshallese (singular and plural)

Adjective: Marshallese

Ethnic groups:

Marshallese 92.1%, mixed Marshallese 5.9%, other 2% (2006)

Languages:

Marshallese (official) 98.2%, other languages 1.8% (1999 census)

Note: English (official), widely spoken as a second language

Religions:

Protestant 80.5% (United Church of Christ 47%, Assembly of God 16.2%, Bukot Nan Jesus 5.4%, Full Gospel 3.3%, Reformed Congressional Church 3%, Salvation Army 1.9%, Seventh Day Adventist 1.4%, Meram in Jesus 1.2%, other Protestant 1.1%), Roman Catholic 8.5%, Mormon 7%, Jehovah's Witness 1.7%, other 1.2%, none 1.1% (2011 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 34.26% (male 13,224 /female 12,706)
 15-24 years: 18.49% (male 7,117 /female 6,875)
 25-54 years: 37.15% (male 14,318 /female 13,800)
 55-64 years: 5.86% (male 2,221 /female 2,215)
 65 years and over: 4.24% (male 1,580 /female 1,628) (2018 est.)

Median age:

Total: 23.1 years

Male: 23 years

Female: 23.2 years (2018 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 176

Population growth rate:

1.5% (2018 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 72

Birth rate:

23.8 births/1,000 population (2018 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 53

Death rate:

4.2 deaths/1,000 population (2018 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 207

Net migration rate:

-4.6 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2018 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 190

Population distribution:

Most people live in urban clusters found on many of the country's islands; more than two-thirds of the population lives on the atolls of Majuro and Ebeye

Urbanization:

Urban population: 77.4% of total population (2019)

Rate of urbanization: 0.61% annual rate of change (2015-20 est.)

Major urban areas - population:
31,000 MAJURO (capital) (2018)

Sex ratio:

At birth: 1.05 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.04 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1.04 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 1.04 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 1 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.97 male(s)/female

Total population: 1.03 male(s)/female (2018 est.)

Infant mortality rate:

Total: 18.7 deaths/1,000 live births

Male: 21.1 deaths/1,000 live births

Female: 16.1 deaths/1,000 live births (2018 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 84

Life expectancy at birth:

Total population: 73.6 years

Male: 71.4 years

Female: 76 years (2018 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 135

Total fertility rate:

Total fertility rate field listing

2.98 children born/woman (2018 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 53

Drinking water source:

Improved:

Urban: 93.5% of population

Rural: 97.6% of population

Total: 94.6% of population

Unimproved:

Urban: 6.5% of population

Rural: 2.4% of population

Total: 5.4% of population (2015 est.)

Current Health Expenditure:

22.1% (2015)

Physicians density:

0.46 physicians/1,000 population (2012)

Hospital bed density:

2.7 beds/1,000 population (2010)

Sanitation facility access:

Improved:

Urban: 84.5% of population (2015 est.)

Rural: 56.2% of population (2015 est.)

Total: 76.9% of population (2015 est.)

Unimproved:

Urban: 15.5% of population (2015 est.)

Rural: 43.8% of population (2015 est.)

Total: 23.1% of population (2015 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

NA

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

NA

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

NA

Major infectious diseases:

note: active local transmission of Zika virus by Aedes species mosquitoes has been identified in this country (as of August 2016); it poses an important risk (a large number of cases possible) among US citizens if bitten by an infective mosquito; other less common ways to get Zika are through sex, via blood transfusion, or during pregnancy, in which the pregnant woman passes Zika virus to her fetus

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

52.9% (2016)

Country comparison to the world: 4

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

11.9% (2017)

Country comparison to the world: 55

Education expenditures:

NA

Literacy:

Definition: age 15 and over can read and write (2011 est.)

Total population: 98.3%

Male: 98.3%

Female: 98.2% (2011 est.)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

Total: 11%

Male: 12.2%

Female: 8.7% (2010 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 119

Country name:

Conventional long form: Republic of the Marshall Islands

Conventional short form: Marshall Islands

Local long form: Republic of the Marshall Islands

Local short form: Marshall Islands

Former: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Marshall Islands District

Abbreviation: RMI

Etymology: named after British Captain John Marshall, who charted many of the islands in 1788

Government type:

Presidential republic in free association with the US

Capital:

Name: Majuro; note - the capital is an atoll of 64 islands; governmental buildings are housed on three fused islands: Djarrit, Uliga, and Delap
Geographic coordinates: 7 06 N, 171 23 E
Time difference: UTC+12 (17 hours ahead of Washington, DC, during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

24 municipalities; Ailinglaplap, Ailuk, Arno, Aur, Bikini & Kili, Ebon, Enewetak & Ujelang, Jabat, Jaluit, Kwajalein, Lae, Lib, Likiep, Majuro, Maloelap, Mejit, Mili, Namorik, Namu, Rongelap, Ujae, Utrik, Wotho, Wotje

Independence:

21 October 1986 (from the US-administered UN trusteeship)

National holiday:

Constitution Day, 1 May (1979)

Constitution:

History: effective 1 May 1979
amendments: proposed by the National Parliament or by a constitutional convention; passage by Parliament requires at least two-thirds majority vote of the total membership in each of two readings and approval by a majority of votes in a referendum; amendments submitted by a constitutional convention require approval of at least two-thirds of votes in a referendum; amended several times, last in 1995 (2018)

Legal system:

Mixed legal system of US and English common law, customary law, and local statutes
International law organization participation: Accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; accepts ICCt jurisdiction

Citizenship:

Citizenship by birth: no

Citizenship by descent only: at least one parent must be a citizen of the Marshall Islands

Dual citizenship recognized: no

Residency requirement for naturalization: 5 years

Suffrage: (whether the right to vote is universal or restricted)

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

Chief of state: President Hilda C. Heine (since 28 January 2016); note - the president is both chief of state and head of government

Head of government: President Hilda C. Heine (since 28 January 2016)

Cabinet: Cabinet nominated by the president from among members of the Nitijela, appointed by Nitijela speaker

Elections/appointments: president indirectly elected by the Nitijela from among its members for a 4-year term (no term limits); election last held on 27 January 2016 (next to be held in 2020)
Election results: Hilda C. Heine elected president; Parliament vote - Hilda C. Heine 24 votes, she was the only candidate

Note: Hilda C. Heine is the first female elected head of state of any Pacific island nation

Legislative branch:

description: unicameral National Parliament or Nitijela (33 seats; members in single- and multi-seat constituencies directly elected by simple majority vote to serve 4-year terms); note - the Council of Iroij, a 12-member group of tribal leaders advises the Presidential Cabinet and reviews legislation affecting customary law or any traditional practice)

Elections: last held on 16 November 2015 (next to be held by November 2019)

election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - independent 33; composition - men 28, women 5, percent of women 15.2%

Judicial branch:

Highest courts: Supreme Court (consists of the chief justice and other judges as prescribed by law)

Judge selection and term of office: judges appointed by the Cabinet upon the recommendation of the Judicial Service Commission and upon the approval of the Nitijela; judges appointed until retirement, normally at age 72

Subordinate courts: High Court; District Courts; Traditional Rights Court; Community Courts

Political parties and leaders:

Traditionally there have been no formally organized political parties; what has existed more closely resembles factions or interest groups because they do not have party headquarters, formal platforms, or party structures; the following two "groupings" have competed in legislative balloting in recent years - Aelon Kein Ad Party [Imata Kabua] and United Democratic Party or UDP [Litokwa Tomeing]

International organization participation:

ACP, ADB, AOSIS, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICt, IDA, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ITU, OPCW, PIF, Sparteca, SPC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, WHO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

Ambassador Gerald M. ZACKIOS (since 16 September 2016)
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 Telephone: [1] (202) 234-5414
 FAX: [1] (202) 232-3236
 Consulate general: Honolulu, Springdale (AR)
 Consulate: Agana (Guam)

Diplomatic representation from the US:

Chief of mission: Ambassador Karen Brevard Stewart (since 25 July 2016)
 Telephone: [692] 247-4011
 Embassy: Oceanside, Mejen Weto, Long Island, Majuro
 Mailing address: P. O. Box 1379, Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands 96960-1379
 FAX: [692] 247-4012

Flag description:

blue with two stripes radiating from the lower hoist-side corner - orange (top) and white; a white star with four large rays and 20 small rays appears on the hoist side above the two stripes; blue represents the Pacific Ocean, the orange stripe signifies the Ralik Chain or sunset and courage, while the white stripe signifies the Ratak Chain or sunrise and peace; the star symbolizes the cross of Christianity, each of the 24 rays designates one of the electoral districts in the country and the four larger rays highlight the principal cultural centers of Majuro, Jaluit, Wotje, and Ebeye; the rising diagonal band can also be interpreted as representing the equator, with the star showing the archipelago's position just to the north

National symbol(s):

A 24-rayed star; national colors: blue, white, orange

National anthem:

Name: Forever Marshall Islands
 Lyrics/music: Amata Kabua
 Note: adopted 1981

Economy - overview:

US assistance and lease payments for the use of Kwajalein Atoll as a US military base are the mainstay of this small island country. Agricultural production, primarily subsistence, is concentrated on small farms; the most important commercial crops are coconuts and breadfruit. Industry is limited to handicrafts, tuna processing, and copra. Tourism holds some potential. The islands and atolls have few natural resources, and imports exceed exports. The Marshall Islands received roughly \$1 billion in aid from the US during the period 1986-2001 under the original Compact of Free Association (Compact). In 2002 and 2003, the US and the Marshall Islands renegotiated the Compact's financial package for a 20-year period, 2004 to 2024. Under the amended Compact, the Marshall Islands will receive roughly \$1.5 billion in direct US assistance. Under the amended Compact, the US and Marshall Islands are also jointly funding a Trust Fund for the people of the Marshall Islands that will provide an income stream beyond 2024, when direct Compact aid ends.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$196 million (2017 est.)

\$191.3 million (2016 est.)

\$184.6 million (2015 est.)

Note: data are in 2017 dollars

Country comparison to the world: 221

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$222 million (2017 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

2.5% (2017 est.)

3.6% (2016 est.)

2% (2015 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 130

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$3,600 (2017 est.)

\$3,500 (2016 est.)

\$3,400 (2015 est.)

Note: data are in 2017 dollars

Country comparison to the world: 186

GDP - composition, by end use:

Government consumption: 50% (2016 est.)

Investment in fixed capital: 17.8% (2016 est.)

Investment in inventories: 0.2% (2016 est.)

Exports of goods and services: 52.9% (2016 est.)

Imports of goods and services: -102.3% (2016 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

Agriculture: 4.4% (2013 est.)

Industry: 9.9% (2013 est.)

Services: 85.7% (2013 est.)

Agriculture - products:

Coconuts, tomatoes, melons, taro, breadfruit, fruits; pigs, chickens

Industries:

Copra, tuna processing, tourism, craft items (from seashells, wood, and pearls)

Industrial production growth rate:

NA

Labor force:

10,670 (2013 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 217

Labor force - by occupation:

Agriculture: 11%

Industry: 16.3%

Services: 72.7% (2011 est.)

Unemployment rate:

36% (2006 est.)

30.9% (2000 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 212

Population below poverty line:

NA

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

Lowest 10%: NA

Highest 10%: NA

Budget:

Revenues: 116.7 million (2013 est.)

Expenditures: 113.9 million (2013 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

52.6% (of GDP) (2013 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 13

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

1.3% (of GDP) (2013 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 26

Public debt:

25.5% of GDP (2017 est.)

30% of GDP (2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 173

Fiscal year:

1 October - 30 September

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

0% (2017 est.)

-1.5% (2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 11

Current account balance:

-\$1 million (2017 est.)

\$15 million (2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 68

Exports:

\$0 (2013 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 223

Exports - commodities:

Copra cake, coconut oil, handicrafts, fish

Imports:

\$103.8 million (2016 est.)

\$133.7 million (2013 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 215

Imports - commodities:

Food, machinery and equipment, fuels, beverages, tobacco

Debt - external:

\$97.96 million (2013 est.)

\$87 million (2008 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 193

Exchange rates:

The US dollar is used

Electricity access:

Electrification - total population: 93.1% (2016)

Electrification - urban areas: 94.6% (2016)

Electrification - rural areas: 89.1% (2016)

Electricity - production:

650 million kWh (2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 161

Electricity - consumption:

604.5 million kWh (2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 167

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 168

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 172

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

52,000 kW (2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 190

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

81% of total installed capacity (2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 81

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 140

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

19% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 90

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

0% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 201

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2017 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 172

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 163

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 163

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2018 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 167

Refined petroleum products - production:

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 175

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

2,000 bbl/day (2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 195

Refined petroleum products - exports:

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 179

Refined petroleum products - imports:

2,060 bbl/day (2015 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 190

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 168

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 173

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 149

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 155

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

293,700 Mt (2017 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 192

Telephones - fixed lines:

Total subscriptions: 2,361

Subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 3 (July 2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 211

Telephones - mobile cellular:

Total subscriptions: 16,000

Subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 21 (July 2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 210

Telephone system:

General assessment:

Some telecom infrastructure improvements made in recent years; modern services include fiber optic cable service, cellular, Internet, international calling, caller ID, and leased data circuits; the US Government, World Bank, UN and International Telecommunication Union (ITU), have aided in improvements and monetary aid to the islands telecom; mobile penetrations is around 30%; radio communication is especially vital to remote islands (2018)

Domestic: Majuro Atoll and Ebeye and Kwajalein islands have regular, seven-digit, direct-dial telephones; other islands interconnected by high frequency radiotelephone (used mostly for government purposes) and mini-satellite telephones; fixed-line 3 per 100 persons and mobile-cellular is 21 per 100 persons (2018)
International: country code - 692; satellite

earth stations - 2 Intelsat (Pacific Ocean); US Government satellite communications system on Kwajalein

Broadcast media:

No TV broadcast station; a cable network is available on Majuro with programming via videotape replay and satellite relays; 4 radio broadcast stations; American Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) provides satellite radio and television service to Kwajalein Atoll (2019)

Internet country code:

.mh

Internet users:

Total: 21,857

Percent of population: 29.8% (July 2016 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 203

Broadband - fixed subscriptions:

Total: 1,000

Subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 1 (2017 est.)

Country comparison to the world: 192

Communications - note:

Kwajalein hosts one of four dedicated ground antennas that assist in the operation of the Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation system (the others are at Cape Canaveral, Florida (US), on Ascension (Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha), and at Diego Garcia (British Indian Ocean Territory))

National air transport system:

Number of registered air carriers: 1 (2015)

Inventory of registered aircraft operated by air carriers: 1 (2015)

Annual passenger traffic on registered air carriers: 86,868 (2015)

Annual freight traffic on registered air carriers: 0 mt-km (2015)

Civil aircraft registration country code prefix: V7 (2016)

Airports:

15 (2013)

Country comparison to the world: 147

Airports - with paved runways:

Total: 4 (2017)

1,524 to 2,437 m: 3 (2017)

914 to 1,523 m: 1 (2017)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

Total: 11 (2013)

914 to 1,523 m: 10 (2013)

Under 914 m: 1 (2013)

Roadways:

Total: 2,028 km (2007)

Paved: 75 km (2007)

Unpaved: 1,953 km

Country comparison to the world: 167

Merchant marine:

Total: 3,419

By type: bulk carrier 1437, container ship 256, general cargo 68, oil tanker 837, other 821 (2018)

Country comparison to the world: 7

Ports and terminals:

Major seaport(s): Enitwetak Island, Kwajalein, Majuro

Military branches:

No regular military forces; Marshall Islands Police Department (2019)

Military - note:

Defense is the responsibility of the US

Disputes - international:

Claims US territory of Wake Island

Trafficking in persons:

current situation: The Marshall Islands is a source and destination country for Marshallese women and girls and women from East Asia subjected to sex trafficking; Marshallese and foreign women are forced into prostitution in businesses frequented by crew members of fishing and transshipping vessels that dock in Majuro; some Chinese women are recruited to the Marshall Islands with promises of legitimate work and are subsequently forced into prostitution

Tier rating: Tier 3 – The Marshall Islands do not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so; the government made no anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts, including developing a written plan to combat trafficking; no new trafficking investigations were opened in 2014, and no prosecutions or convictions were made for the fourth consecutive year; no efforts were made to identify trafficking victims, especially among women in prostitution or men working on foreign fishing vessels in Marshallese waters, and no attempt was made to ensure their access to protective services; limited awareness-raising events were conducted by an international organization (2015).

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CADRE	Climate Adaptation Disaster Risk Reduction and Education Program
CCA	climate change adaptation
CCAD	Construction Civic Action Detail
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S.)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFE-DM	Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMI	College of the Marshall Islands
COFA	Compact of Free Association
CPOND	Centre for the Prevention of Obesity and NCD
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Chief Secretary's Office
DAEF	Disaster Assistance Emergency Fund
DMHA	Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance
DoD	Department of Defense
DOS	U.S. Department of State
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency (U.S.)
FNU	Fiji National University
FSM	The Federated States of Micronesia
GDP	gross domestic product
GHeL	Global Health eLearning Center
GPS	Global Positioning System
GRMI	Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HMP	Standard Hazard Mitigation Plan
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHR	International Health Regulations
IOM	International Organization for Migration (a UN related organization)
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JNAP	Joint National Action Plan

Acronym	Definition
MALGOV	Majuro Atoll Local Government
MANA	Pacific Monitoring Alliance for NCD Action
MCO	Multi-Country Office
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Marshalls Energy Company
MIRCS	Marshall Islands Red Cross Society
MMR	measles-mumps-rubella
MoCIA	Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs
MoHHS	Ministry of Health and Human Services
MoNRC	Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce
MoWIU	Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Utilities
MSTCO	Majuro Stevedoring Company
MT	Metric tons
MWSC	Majuro Water and Sewer Company
NCD	non-communicable disease
NDC	National Disaster Council
NDC	National Disaster Committee
NDMO	National Disaster Management Organization
NDMP	National Disaster Management Plan
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
NMCB	Naval Mobile Construction Battalion
North-REP	North Pacific Renewable Energy Efficiency Project
NTD	Neglected Tropical Diseases
OCHA	The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OLE	Oil of lemon eucalyptus
PACT	Pacific Association for Clinical Training
PIHOA	Pacific Islands Health Officers' Association
POLHN	Pacific Open Learning Health Net
PREL	Pacific Resources for Education & Learning
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
ROPU	Reverse osmosis purification unit
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPC	Pacific Community
TB	Tuberculosis
TEU	Twenty Foot Equivalent Units
U.S.	United States
UN	United Nations
UNDP	UN Development Programme

Acronym	Definition
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea
USP	University of the South Pacific
VBSS	Visit, Board, Search and Seizure
WHO	World Health Organization
WSO	Marshall Islands Weather Service Office
WUTMI	Women United Together in Marshall Islands

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