



**REPUBLIC OF  
THE  
MARSHALL  
ISLANDS**

**(RMI)**

**National Review  
Report for  
Beijing+30  
Platform for  
Action (1995)**

**2024**

## FOREWORD



Iakwe!

As the Minister of Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MoCIA), I have the privilege of overseeing one of the RMI's most important Ministry – important not just for its values to the Rights of the People of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), but also its potential to change our Country for the better. In my 1<sup>st</sup> term in this role, I've seen the cutting – edge work under way in the RMI, from cloud computing to virtual reality.

The Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is committed to seeing this enormous potential fulfilled-to ensuring the RMI is the best place to nurturing our people and to end unhuman activities against Human Rights, and to ensuring the benefits are felt across RMI, throughout Society and in every corner of the Marshall Islands. Every individual and every group of people of the Marshall Islands should have the rights and confidence to seize the opportunities for both women and men as well as for all young peoples.

The RMI Government holds an unwavering the commitments that the human rights of every person still matter. Our RMI National Beijing+30 Report for the Platform for Action (1995) details how we “the people of the Marshall Islands” are working with our allies to stand up for the marginalized and repressed across the full range of our Human Rights work.

Komool Tata!

**Hon. Minister Jess Gasper Jr.**  
Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs  
Republic of the Marshall Islands

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to extend my thanks to all my colleagues for their contributions, insightful discussion and interview and for all your support in providing the information for this important review report.

- Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI)
- Weto in Mour (WIM)
- Domestic Unit (National Police Department)
- Office of the Immigration
- Economic Policy, Planning and Statistical Office (EPPSO)
- Marshall Islands Development Bank (BIDB)
- Disability Office (Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs)
- Senior Citizen Office (Ministry of Culture and Interna Affairs)
- Champer of Commerce
- Office of Commerce, Investment & Tourism (OCIT)
- Ministry of Education (PSS)
- Nitijela
- Waan Aelon in Majol (WAM)
- National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)

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## ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

- **AG:** Attorney General
- **CEDAW:** Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
- **CMI:** College of the Marshall Islands
- **Con.Con:** Constitutional Convention
- **CRC:** Convention of the Rights of the Child
- **CRPD:** Convention of the Rights of Person with Disability
- **DM:** Disaster Management
- **DRR:** Disaster Risk Reduction
- **DRMNAP:** Disaster Reduction Management National Action Plan
- **DV:** Domestic Violence
- **DVPPA:** Domestic Violence Protection and Prevention Act
- **EPPSO:** Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office
- **GID:** Gender in Development
- **GRMI:** Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands
- **HIES:** Household Income and Expenditure Survey
- **HVI/STI:** Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Sexual Transmitted Infection
- **HRC:** Human Rights Committee
- **ICT:** Information and Communication technology
- **IOM:** International Organization for Migration
- **JNAP:** Joint National Action Plan for Climate Change
- **MCH:** maternal and Child Health
- **MDG:** Millennium Development Goals
- **MIMA:** Marshall Islands Mayors Association
- **MIPD:** Marshall Islands Police Department
- **MIDPO:** Marshall Islands Disabilities Person Office
- **MIJ:** Marshall Islands Journal
- **MIPSSA:** Marshall Islands Public School System
- **MOCIA:** Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs
- **MOHHS:** Ministry of Health and Human Services
- **MOFA:** Ministry of Foresing Affairs
- **NCCPF:** National Climate Change Policy Framework
- **NDMO:** National Disaster Management Office
- **NGO:** Non-Government Organization
- **NHRI:** National Human Rights Institution
- **Nitijela:** RMI National Parliament
- **NSP:** National strategic Plan
- **NTC:** National Training Council
- **NTHT:** National Taskforce on Human Rights

- **PDNA:** Post Disaster Needs Assessment
- **PIFS:** Pacific Islands Fourm Secretarat
- **PSC:** Public Service Commission
- **PSS:** Public School System
- **RDC:** Resource Development Committee
- **RMI:** Republic of the Marshall Islands
- **ROC:** Republic of China (TAIWAN)
- **RRRT:** Regional Rights Resource Team
- **RP:** Rights of Person with Disability
- **RPDA:** Rights of Person with Disabilities Act, 2015
- **SDG:** Sustainable Development Goals
- **SPC:** Pacific Community
- **SPREP:** Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
- **UN:** United Nations
- **UNDP:** United National Development Program
- **UNICEF:** United Nationals International Children's Emergency Fund
- **UNFPA:** United National Family and Population Fund
- **UNTF:** United National Trust Fund
- **USP:** University of the South Pacific
- **VAW:** Violence Against women
- **WM:** Waan Aelon in Majol
- **WEE:** Women Economic Empowerment
- **WE:** Women Empowerment
- **WIM:** Weto in Mour
- **WUTMI:** Women United Togher Marshall Islands
- **YSP:** Youth services Bureau
- **YTYIH:** Youth to Youth in Health

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) has ratified three of the nine core human rights treaties (BIG 9), namely the Convention of the Rights of People with Disability (CRPD, 2015), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 2006), and Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1993), and committed to achieve gender equality through International and Regional commitments.

The Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is committed to creating an enabling environment for all women and men to develop their capacities and fulfill their aspirations. The commitment to “empower each citizen with both responsibility and opportunity” for the benefit of the sustainable, equitable and measurable development reflection of the priorities and culture of the Marshallese people.

At the national level, the RMI Gender Equality Act, 2019 embodies such commitments to recognize, protect, promote, and enforce the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls, on an equal basis with men and boys, thereby promoting gender equality and non-discrimination.

The RMI Beijing+30 report reflects on the RMI’s priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks from the past five years. This report is followed by the four units of guidance questions prepared by the UN Women Office, which are as follows:

- Unit one – Priority, Important Achievements, Challenges and Setbacks.
- Unit two – The 12 critical areas of concern which is divided into 6 different issues by combining the SDGs indicators related to gender issues which are:
  - ✓ Inclusive development, share prosperity and decent works.
  - ✓ Poverty eradication, social protection, and social services.
  - ✓ Freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes.
  - ✓ Participation, accountability, and gender responsive institutions.
  - ✓ Peaceful and inclusive societies.
  - ✓ Environmental conservation, protection, and rehabilitation.
- Unit three – National Institution and Process
- Unit four – Data and statistics.

# UNIT ONE: Priorities, Achievements, Challenges and Setbacks

**Question 1:** *Over the past five years, what have been the most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women?*

## 1. Important Achievements

RMI is considering these achievements the important one because People of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) has been suffering due to climate changes and gender inequalities.

- **2019-2023:** Younger female graduated from College & University.
- **June 2020:** (United Nations Sanctions (Implementation) Act, 2020):
  - This Act is to implement United Nations targeted financial sanctions regimes, including those related to terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as Chapter 2 of Title 15 of the Marshall Islands Revised Code (source; P.L 2020-09).
- **Year 2022:** National Climate Change, Health Policy and Revised Action Plan:
  - The purpose of this Policy & Action Plan is to address the impacts of climate changes on people's health in the Marshall Islands. This Policy and Action Plan was supported by the European Union through the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus Scaling up
- **October 2023:** (Disaster Risk Management Act, 2023):
  - This Act is to amend Title 7 MIRC in order to enact Disaster Risk Management Law to reduce vulnerability of people and communities of the Republic to damage, injury, and loss of life and property resulting from natural or manmade disasters, including health and environmental disasters; to provide for the roles and powers of cabinet, National Government Agencies, Local Government and other parties, in the reduction of, preparation for, response to, and recovery from disaster events.
- **2023:** Kora in Okrane Club (KIO): RMI is the 2<sup>nd</sup> in world to access to clean water. –



- RMI has now has the good capacity for the clean water and Marshallese resident especially people from the Neighboring Islands are now can be able to use their equipment during draught <sup>1</sup>
- Kora In Okrane Club (KIO) met with Nauru to introduce the project to “Daan in Mour” known as “Water of Life” project. The purpose of this meeting was to share ideas on how RMI Daan In Mour was successful and to inspire other Pacific Islands to implement sustainable development goal #6.
- **November 2023:** 1<sup>st</sup> time for RMI Parliament to have 4 females for Senator Seats.
  - For the first time to have this number (4) of women to be in this level/position. Former Director for WUTMI now a Senator and Special Envoy for RMI President was then stated that “it is important for women to take their place in decision-making platforms to ensure women and girls issues are not left behind”<sup>2</sup>. The issues and concern from Marshallese women have now been raised up by these four female Senators to ensure these requests from all Marshallese women can be address accordingly
- **November 2023:** Newley Elected RMI female Head of State for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time.
  - Madam President Hilda C. Heine is a Marshallese educator and politician who has served the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands since 2016 to 2024. Madam President Heine is the first women to hold the presidency of the Marshall Islands, and first female president of any Micronesia Country. This is the second time for Madam President Heine to be a RMI Head of State.
- **November 2023:** 1<sup>st</sup> two newly elected RMI females for Envoy for Gender, Youth and Children & Climate Change.
  - For the first time to have females to be called Special Envoy for President.
    - a. Senator Daisy Alik-Momotaro is a newly elected to be a Special Envoy for Gender, Youth and Children for President.
    - b. Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner is a poet and climate change activist. Ms. Kathy is a newly elected to be a Special Envoy for Climate.
- **2023:** The price for copra has gone up from .50 cent to .60 cent.
  - Basic needs poverty rate in RMI: Poverty was disproportionately rural, with the poverty rate in urban areas being only 2.5%, compared to 21.2% in rural areas<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> KIO Club Report, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> RMI Government Women Forum Report “Ainikine Kora Forum/Women’s Voice, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> EPPSO Household Income and Expenditure Survey HIAES, 2019/20.

- **April 2024:** *A milestone in Disaster Preparedness and Response.*
  - The aim of this project is to improve the capacity for preparedness and mitigation of RMI to man-made, geo-physical and climate-related hazards and to climate change impact. This project is sited in Ebeye Atoll, and it's called Emergency Operation Center (CEO).
- **2023-2024:** More young women are involved in Solar Training.
  -
- **2024:** *New ships to service the Neighboring Islands to buy copra.*
  - The current high cost and low frequencies undermine the viability of investment opportunities and remain a significant concern. Improvement in transportation is crucial to addressing the geographic factors that make economic development so challenging, especially when it comes to ensuring that the positive impacts are realized outside of the urban areas<sup>4</sup> The RMI Government has recently announced that there is a new ship that will services all Neighboring Islands equally and will be providing services to buy their copra from the local people. This is one of the huge achievement the RMI Government has made this year to make it lots easier for Marshall Islands for a reliable way for efficient movement of people and goods and services.
- **2024:** *More women in the Secretary level in Government Ministries.*
  - In the years from 2021 to 2023, even though percentage in male in Public Services are higher than female, but more females occupied managerial and senior level positions<sup>5</sup>.
- **2023-2024:** Expansion of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in RMI with World Bank Fund. ECD have reached out to Ebeye, and all Neighboring Islands will be next.
  - The HHs in rural areas get a much higher share of income while in rural areas it is only receiving low<sup>6</sup>. Low-income families have been receiving financial support from Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs to help all mothers and young mothers to support their families, especially their children. Mothers and young mothers are now can be able to provide for their children.
- **July 2024:** *1<sup>st</sup> time for RMI to host a women/Ministerial conference (Triennial):*

<sup>4</sup> RMI National strategic Plan, 2020-2030.

<sup>5</sup> PSC Annual Report, 2021-2023 “Public Services Commission”.

<sup>6</sup> EPPSO HIAES, 209/20, p.16).

- **2022-2024:** More opportunities have been awarded with money from different donors to help addressing the issues that affected many Marshallese people especially our young women.

## 2. Challenges

Marshallese people are still struggling with multiple challenges. People from the rural areas are the ones who are more suffering.

- **High Rate # of Migration**
  - Numbers of people migrating is at least 23,592
- **Teenage girls’ pregnancy is still an issue.**
  - Getting pregnancy is a choice, but sometimes people might take advantage of our vulnerable Marshallese teen girls by against their rights such as rape/sexual assaults. According to Weto in Mour (WIM) report, there are 30 total cases from at least 2020 to 20203<sup>7</sup>. Raising awareness about these issues is one of the RMI priorities to address.
- **High rate of Impacts of Climate Change**
  - Climate change is one of the major problems and the reason why Marshallese citizen are leaving for another country.

**Question 2:** *Over the past five years, what have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies/or programs.*

## 3. Top Priorities

- ✓ **Women Economic**
- ✓ **Women in Decision-Making**
- ✓ **Climate Change**
- ✓ **Women in Health & Justice.**

Below are the five priorities the RMI has accelerating the process for women and girls in the RMI through:

### ❖ **Laws**

#### *i. The Constitution of the Republic of the Marshall Islands*

The purpose of this Constitution is to affirm our desire and right to live peace and harmony, subscribing to the principles of democracy, sharing the aspirations of all other people for a free and peaceful world<sup>8</sup>. In the Article II Bill of Rights,

<sup>7</sup> WIM Data Report “Weto in Mour”, 2020-2023.

<sup>8</sup> [Rmiparliament.org/cms/constitution.html](http://Rmiparliament.org/cms/constitution.html)

under the section 1 “freedom of thought, speech, press, religion, assembly, association, and petition stated:

- (1) Every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and belief; to freedom of speech and of the press, to the free exercise of religion; to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; and to petition the government for a redress of grievance.
- (2) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to invalidate reasonable restrictions imposed by law on the time, place, or manner of conduct, provide:
  - a) The restrictions are necessary to preserve public peace, order, health, or security or the rights or freedoms of others.
  - b) There exist no less restrictive means of doing so;
  - c) The restrictions do not penalize conduct based on disagreement with the ideas or beliefs expressed.

The RMI National Police Department (MIPD) was established in 1952 and is part of the Ministry of Justice. Headed by a Police Commissioner. The role and responsible for the MIPD is to:

- Protection of people and property; and
- Law enforcement throughout the RMI.

The MIPD Structure:

- Criminal Investigation Division
- Community Policing
- Correction and Rehabilitation
- Finance & Human Resources
- Fire & Rescue
- Internal Affairs
- INTERPOL- National Central Bureau Majuro/Transnational Crime Unit
- Recruitment and Development
- Maritime Sea Patrol
- Traffic Control.

#### ❖ **Policies**

- i. RMI National Gender Mainstreaming Policy.

Below are the issues to be address:

- Provision for sexual and reproductive health is well established, but the difficulty of access remains a problem, especially for women in rural areas and outer islands.
- On average, 1 woman out of 2 has experienced physical violence in their lifetime.<sup>4</sup>

- Women 's economic empowerment remains a key challenge, as women continue to face limited job opportunities and remain underrepresented in management positions. Women in the workplace also face weak protection mechanisms and laws, particularly in the private sector.<sup>5</sup> The rate of men in the labor force was 54% in 2011 as opposed to 30% for women in 2011.<sup>6</sup> There is a growing number of women in the public service, although men dominate most senior positions.<sup>7</sup>
- Women's representation in the Nitijela and other high-level decision-making and management positions is low

ii. National Youth Policy 2021-2025

*Code: Iliju eo an aelon keín ej pad ilo lubdrín peín jodikedik ro / the future of our islands rests in the hands of our youth.<sup>9</sup>*

The mainly focused for the Youth Policy is to address the issues youth in the Marshall Islands face have prioritized as fundamental to their development and wellbeing. The priority concerns of Marshallese Youth:

- Increase Family and Community support and Guidance
- Improve access to Education and Training
- Increase and improve opportunities for Youth Employment
- Health (Teen Pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV/AIDS: sex work, cancers, non-communicable disease, and Mental Health).
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Juvenile Crime
- Youth Precipitation
- Leadership and Governance
- Climate Change and Human Rights

iii. National Strategic Plan 2020-2030

iv.

**A. Women Economic Empowerment (WEE)**

Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) is one of the resources for Marshallese women. Most of the resources that help so many unemployed women through their handcrafts. RMI Government is currently supporting this priority.

- i. **Strategic Area:**
- Trade, Investment and Tourism

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<sup>9</sup> National Youth Policy, 2021-2025.

**ii. Goal:**

- Local Economic and Employment Growth

**ii. Objectives:**

- Establish more sustainable and eco-friendly tourism
- Promote fair and friendly business environment
- Promote MSMEs and women entrepreneurs
- Promote partnerships among public-private and civil society organizations.

**B. Women in Decision-Making**

Women usually do multi-task and capable of doing everything in her power not just for her family, but to their community as well.

**i. Strategic Area:**

- Social Justice and Inclusion

**i. Goal:**

- Equality and Empowerment for ALL

**ii. Objective:**

- Ensure provisions and opportunities for equitable participation for all persons in society.

**C. Climate Change**

Climate change is one of the worst things in the world, especially the Marshall Islands. Women and young women, as well as vulnerable group of people are the one who most affected from the Climate change.

**i. Strategic Area:** Health, Social Justice

**ii. Goal:** Healthy Lives and Well-being for ALL ages, Equality

**iii. Objectives:**

- Strengthened response and resilience to communicable disease, environmental health, and health emergency preparedness.
- Provision of quality health care infrastructure, especially cancer care, for all Marshallese.
- Strengthened Neighboring Islands health services
- Address issues of climate change and human health.
- Strengthen actions for accessing restitution for those most affected by the RMI's nuclear legacy.
- Continued national advocacy, awareness and education on climate change impact.

**Question 3:** *Over the past five years, what specific actions have you taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls?*

4: Promotion, Rights of groups of women and girls.

Over the past five years, the Government of the Marshall Islands was able to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls through the policies & Acts. The following are the Policies and Acts where the RMI Government Ministries, Agencies, NGOs, and Civil Societies were managed to undertake commitments successfully:

**RMI Acts**

- *Gender Equality Act, 2015:* This Act was created a new chapter under the title 26 of the MIRC to recognize, protect, promote and enforce the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls, on an equal basis with men and boys, and to further implement the legal obligations of the Marshall Islands as a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of ALL Forms of Discrimination against Women, and to make related provisions.
- *Rights of Person with Disability, 2015:* This Act was created a new Chapter under the Title 26 of the MIRC in order to declare the equals rights and freedoms of all person with disabilities and provide for the protection, promotion and enforcement; of those rights and freedoms, as a step towards implementing the legal obligations of the Marshall Islands, as a State Party to the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and to make related provisions. (RMI Disability Act, 2015).
- *Child Rights Protection Act, 2015:* To declare the rights of children and provide for their protection, promotion, enforcement, and implementation in the Republic of the Marshall Islands as required under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- *The Human Rights Committee Act 2015* establishes the Human Rights Committee, tasked under section 3 to:
  - iii. Establish a multi stakeholder body to promote the human rights of all persons living in the Marshall Islands.

- iv. Promote the implementation of international human rights stakeholders, including international human rights treaties to which the Marshall Islands is a State Party.
  - v. Promote understanding of and compliance with the Bill of Rights and legislation promoting human rights, including the Domestic Violence Prevention and Prevention Act 2011, the Child Protection Act 2015, and the Rights of Person with Disability Act 2015.
  - vi. Establish a complaints mechanism for the redress of human rights violations.
- *Youth Service Corps Act, 2016:* This Act was established a National Youth Services Corps for the provision of voluntary period of service to the Republic to promote community development, conservation-related activities, activities and remuneration for those without employment, nor enrolled as a student at any level and related purposes.
  - *Marshall Islands Employment Equal Opportunity Act, 2017:* To ensure that all employees of a person or other entity doing business in the Republic of the Marshall Islands are treated equally regarding obtaining employment benefits.

## **POLICIEs**

### *National Climate Change and Health Policy and Revised Action Plan.*

- *Vision Statement:* This Policy and Revised Action Plan is to protect body and mind from the direct and indirect consequences of climate changes<sup>10</sup>.

### *Tile Til Eo/ Lightning the Way, 2018.*

- 2050 Climate Strategy: This 2050 Climate Strategy is to set a clear framework for progressing towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, as well transitioning to the economy and society that is resilient and can adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Health and Human Services NCCHP v2, 2022.

<sup>11</sup> RMI 2050 Climate Strategy, 2018.



**Question 4:** *Over the past five years, how has the confluence of different crises affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what measures have you taken to prevent their negatives impact on progress for women and girls?*

Marshall Islands was facing multiple crises over the past five years. The negative impact crises were most likely affected women and girls, as well as

5: Negative Impact of Crises against Women and Girls in RMI

- ✓ Climate Change
- ✓ Covid-19
- ✓ Dengue Outbreak

all person with disabilities. Following is the negative impact that came in different ways

### **Climate Change**

Situated in the north of the Pacific Ocean, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, particularly sea level rise.

Spanning 29 coral atolls and five single islands over a total land area of just 70 square miles with a population of over 43,372, the country faces socio-economic and environmental challenges due to its geographical isolation and increased risk of natural disasters. As global temperatures continue to climb, Marshallese people are witnessing firsthand the devastating impacts of climate change: widespread coral bleaching, increasingly frequent flooding, intensified cyclones, and severe droughts.

Given the vulnerability of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) to the impacts of climate change, the Government of the Marshall Islands (MoHHS) was developed a comprehensive Policy called “*National Climate Change and Health Policy and Revised Action Plan (NCCHP v2)*”<sup>12</sup>. This policy and revised action plan define as to protect RMI people from disaster and are to prevent and to improve the coordination and effectiveness of measures that will lead RMI into a climate-resilient environment and healthier future. However, this policy and revised action plan was conducted through a consultation amongst stakeholders and a communication engagement to identify the key health issues. The Ministry of Health and Human Services (MoHHS) identified some key actions to prevent the negative impacts of climate issues toward health. Following is the key action plan:

- i. Increase awareness of the direct and indirect health consequences of climate change across the RMI population, including policymakers, the private sector, youth and the elderly, and those living on outer atolls.
- ii. Strengthen national capacity to develop and implement effective interventions to minimize climate related health risks and enhance community resilience for adaptation, with special regard for the most vulnerable populations.

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<sup>12</sup> MoHHS Report 2018-2021.

- iv. Mobilize communities to better adapt to the health consequences of climate change, as well as other impacts, applying the healthy settings approach embedded in the healthy islands vision.
- v. Reinforce existing programs and build the capacity of health and other related sectors in terms of infrastructure, human resources and financial resources.
- vi. Assess the health implications (including co-benefits and potential trade-offs) of decisions made on climate change by other key sectors, such as energy, agriculture, fisheries, industry, water supply and sanitation, transport, urban and rural planning, and advocate for decisions that would improve health.

In the year of 2017, the Government of the Marshall Islands (GRMI) was conducting a consultation with young people to develop a RMI National Youth Policy 2021-2025. The ownership of this policy is Youth Bureau which is under the Community Development Division at the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MoCIA).

This youth policy provides the National Agenda that express Marshall Islands recognition and commitment to its youth, sets out priorities and provides guidelines for implementation and for monitoring outcomes, and represents a common agreement about how to meet the needs and aspirations of young men and women, while drawing on the cooperation and commitments.

The RMI Youth or young people define as the age of 14 to 24, and the legal age for marriage has been changed from 16 years of age for both men and women<sup>13</sup>. Most of the youth stated that “climate change directly impacts the youth of the RMI because they could be the last generation to live in the RMI while fighting climate change and they are slowly losing their cultural identity as well as human rights. However, the Legislative and Policy enabling environment for young people in RMI, including the National Strategic Plan 2020-2030, Child Rights Protection Act 2015, Marshall Islands Public School System Act, Youth Service Corps Act 2016, Rights of Person with Disabilities Act 2015 and the Gender Equality Act 2019.

The Act for Disaster was just recently passed by the Nitijela last year October 2023 and it called “Disaster Risk Management Act, 2023. This Act is to “activation” means the process of initiation arraignments of a declared disaster. The National Emergency Operation (NDMO) committee is the one in charge of all response operations and the National Disaster Council is oversight body

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<sup>13</sup> National Youth Policy, 2021-2025.

steering the response and assuring Cabinet is updated. According to the Office of the NDMO, drought happens every year but the bad and huge one in that period is 2021 and this year. Also, inundation was this year hitting multiple Neighboring Islands in January, February and March. The Office of NDMO responded to drought by deploying Reverse Osmosis Unites. They also deploy food supplies, non-food items, and other relief goods to both drought and inundation affected areas. The Government is planning on preparing homes that were damage in one of the Neighboring Islands which was the only area that got the most damage in the recent inundation event<sup>14</sup>.

The five-year clean water initiative “Kora in Okrane (KIO’s) Dren in Mour is Water is Life” project was divided into three phases. The more distant remote atolls were selected for the first water filter distributions. With the collaboration of multiple stakeholders, the project was rolled out in 2019, and over 8,000 water filters were distributed to households, churches, and school through all 24 atolls. The first distribution of water filters was to the most remote atolls in the RMI as they were more vulnerable to water shortages, inconsistent transportation and limited resources. Gradually, the distribution closed in, and the urban centers were the last ones left to complete the distribution for the whole country.

RMI is now the second country worldwide to have border-to-border basic access to clean water through this important initiative. This project was implemented to improve access to clean water for Marshallese families and reduce illness caused by disease-borne drinking water. This initiative ended in July 2023 having contributed to the improvement of the livelihoods of the people of RMI, giving them easy and free access to water. This project was useful for all

## **Covid – 19**

Before the Covid-19 was hitting the Marshall Islands (MI), there was a State of Health Emergency (SOE) for covid-19 was declared in March 2020. The borders were closed to its citizens and foreign nationals alike in the early stages. This was then allowing the Ministry of Health and Human Services to conduct the high covid-19 vaccination in the RMI. According to the report from MoHHS, as of September 29, 2021, zero cases of covid-19 transmission and a total of 1,919 individuals have been successfully repatriated from abroad<sup>15</sup>.

The greatest public health achievement of the MOHHS over the past two years was preventing the spread of COVID-19 within the RMI. This was through the border closure (February 2020), strict quarantine protocols, and active COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. As of September 29, 2021, zero cases of COVID-19 transmission were reported within the RMI, and a total of 1,919



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<sup>14</sup> NDMO Report, 2024.

<sup>15</sup> MoHHS Report, 2018-2022.

individuals have been successfully repatriated from abroad<sup>16</sup>. The Ministry of Health and Human Services achieved through:

- *Border Control and Travel Restrictions*

RMI implemented strict border control measures, including border closure, local and international travel restrictions, and quarantine protocols for incoming travelers. This included the implementation of 2-week quarantine procedures before entering the country and at specific sites in-country. These measures were aimed at preventing the introduction and spread of COVID-19 within the country. The steadfast commitment to prioritizing health has kept life within the RMI relatively unaffected by the deadly disease, effectively managing and controlling the potential spread of COVID-19 within its borders<sup>17</sup>.

- *Healthcare Capacity*

Efforts were made to enhance healthcare capacity, including the availability of testing facilities, the establishment of quarantine and isolation facilities, and availability of medical supplies and equipment like HEPA filters, portable x-rays, PPEs, etc. Additionally, there was a surge in capacity recruitment in various areas, such as IPC specialists, epidemiologists, public health nurses, laboratory scientists, radiologists, clinical nurses, and anesthetists.

- *State of Health Emergency*

On February 07, 2020, a proclamation declaring a State of Health Emergency (SOHE) was signed by President David Kabua in response to the global pandemic, the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19. This proclamation temporarily restricts the entry of travelers and sea vessels originating from or transiting through Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau. Additionally, it suspends all Government of RMI international travel until further notice. This declaration empowered the government to enforce measures aimed at protecting public health and safety.

- *Public Health Measures*

Public health measures such as social distancing, wearing masks, and hygiene practices were promoted to reduce the risk of transmission within the community. As well as training on IPC measures, donning and doffing of personal protective equipment (PPE's) to the healthcare workers.

- *Vaccination Campaign*

The RMI participated in global vaccination efforts. Vaccination campaigns were rolled out to vaccinate the population against COVID-19, with priority given to frontline workers and vulnerable populations.

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<sup>16</sup> MoHHS Report, 2018-2022,p23

<sup>17</sup> MOHHS Report, 2018-2021

## Dengue Outbreak



According to the MoHHS report from FY.2018-Fy2021, during the year 2019, RMI experienced the worst dengue-like illness (DLI) outbreak. This outbreak had the highest DLI recorded number of cases in the history of RMI. Ebeye Island had reported the first few DLI cases which spread throughout the 13 Neighboring Island (NI) atolls. The highest proportion of cases were recorded from Majuro atoll. From May 2019 to March 2021, there are total of 3,842 dengue cases with 1,236 hospitalizations, and 2 deaths<sup>18</sup>.

On July 16, 2020, the RMI Health Emergency Operations Center (HEOC) was activated to monitor the Dengue Outbreak, observe the Measles outbreak, and include monitoring of COVID-19. The purpose was to implement preparedness and response measures to minimize the risk of importation and potential community transmission of COVID-19.

## UNIT TWO: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

### 6: Inclusive Development, Shared Prosperity, and Decent Work

**Question 5:** *Over the past five years, what actions has your country taken to advance gender equality in the world of work (including informal and non-standard employment as well as entrepreneurship)?*

The Kora Fund issued its first loan to an Ebeye women as part of its official launch for

Kwajalein Atoll and expanding its programme to the second urban Centre in the Marshall Islands. The Kora Fund works with Bank of Marshall Islands (BOMI) to manage the loan program. The fund has issued 74 small loans to women since the inception of the program. These 74 loans injected \$214,600 into the local economy through Marshallese entrepreneurs. The largest number of loans have gone for handicraft or retail business initiatives with 25 percent of the loan funds for each of these two areas. In addition to handicraft and retail, loans are

<sup>18</sup> MoHHS Quarterly Report, FY2019-Fy2021, p.15.

supporting a range of business areas, including sewing, clothing, food processing, design, resort development, copra and agriculture<sup>19</sup>. There are now total of 100+ women who have received loans from Kora Fund<sup>20</sup>. Through this loan/business opportunity, the Marshallese employees then now are a business manager and have hired another local woman to be their staff. The Marshallese women are now independence and leading a respectful life with utmost dignity they have the power to use their talent and for that, by generating revenue they are now can be able to help their family(ies) especially their children.

The Chamber of Commerce (COC) was established in 1985, the Marshall Islands Chamber of Commerce (MICC) represents over 50 local business, employing approximately 2,000 individuals. As a non-political, non-aligned and non-Government Organization (NG), the Chamber is the largest and most inclusive business network in the Marshall Islands, encompassing businesses of all sizes, industries, and islands associations. The objective for the COC is to provide economic development financial assistance to communities to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship<sup>21</sup> in a way that works best for them. Through its network regionally based staff and portfolio of flexible grant tools, EDA helps communities experiencing economic distress take control of their future and position themselves for economic prosperity and resilience.

The Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) related activities/projects are to lead on the “One Islands, One Product, the purpose of this activity is to boost creativity for local products from all respective atolls, and to provide free learning courses to those interests in business<sup>22</sup>. The WEE’s recommendations are:

- To educate our leaders about the importance of gender equality
- Launching of whatever documents in place endorsed or created by the Government
- Make sure there is program tailored for women, e.g fund allocated by the government specifically for women in the sector as Fisheries, Agricultures, and SMEs.
- Ensure equal opportunity for women and men in all fields of employment
- Adopt measures supportive of equitable access for women and men to decision-making in both the public and private sectors.
- Support women’s entrepreneurships and access to finance
- Allocate funding for WEE committee

**Question 6:** *In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance, and strengthen the rights paid care workers?*

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<sup>19</sup> Johnson, G. new fund for Marshallese women moves into higher gear, 2022.

<sup>20</sup> Kora Fund Report, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Chamber of Commerce Action Plan, 2021-2024.

<sup>22</sup> Office of Commerce Investment and Tourism (OCIT).

According to the Public Service Regulations (PSR), the Regulations on maternity leaves<sup>23</sup> states “Female employees are only allowed to take a leave based on the conditions as the Commission from time to time prescribes. Below are all conditions for maternity leave shall be followed:

- Female employee shall be paid full salary
- The employee shall be entitled to 20 workdays of maternity leave.
- Maternity leave shall be granted only for four deliveries

### **Gender Equality Committee Priority (ies).**

#### **Priority 3: Improving availability of maternity leave/paternity leave for all government employees**

This upcoming Micronesia Islands Forum (MIF) will be taking place in June 2024. The Regional Gender Equality Committee (including RMI) has established a Gender equality Framework Design. Within this framework design, this committee has agreed to establish four priorities areas. This committee members are currently working on it before presenting it to the Pacific Leaders for the endorsement<sup>24</sup>. Hopefully, the priority 3 will be passed and all employees (both men & women) will be benefit from it, not only that but for all men to have a time with their wives during their pregnancy:

#### *i. Priorities*

- Establishing gender policies
- Increasing political participation of women across the region
- Improving availability of maternity leave/paternity leave for all government employees, and,
- Recognizing that the underlying issues relating to gender equality related to resources and capacity constraints, institutional weakness, harmful norms and behaviors and the prevalence of “Gender Based Violence” (GBV).

The project under MoCIA “Women Youth Skills Empowerment and Resilience (WYSER) will address the main question from question #7 to recognize and reduce unpaid care and domestic work promoting in work-life as well as family balance. One of the main purposes of this project is to establish a program for childcare program. This Childcare program will no doubt beneficial for all Marshallese people equally and will also support the Government in developing new childcare regulations, policies, and procedures.

### **The Outcomes:**

1. Support services increased.

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<sup>23</sup> Public Service Commission Regulations (PSR).

<sup>24</sup> Regional Gender Equality Committee Framework, 2023.

- Once this project signed and the money is allocated, the College of the Marshall Islands will start a new childcare for all mothers and young mothers to help them focusing on their studies or works.

**Question 7:** *In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce the gender digital divide?*

In the year of 1970, Alele Museum was registered the charter for the Marshall Islands Museum, and the year of 1981 was open for the public. This Museum then namely

“Alele Incorporated”. The “Alele” is a Marshallese traditional basket, a soft-sided plaited bag made from pandanus leaf, which use to hold one’s family’s most valuable possessions in Marshallese custom<sup>25</sup>. The eldest woman of the family keeps the basket, and it passes on to the next eldest female down the line. Alele Museum, Library and Archives were named after this alele basket, which is a symbol of our valuable, knowledge in the Marshall Islands.

Alele has developed a program called “computer skills”. The purpose of this program is to provide knowledge of how to use a computer for those young mothers who have not completed their high school level. Alele Museum were able to reach out to 20 young women and 5 women, and both were able to complete their training on how to use computer. One of the women is now working with the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MoCIA) as an announcer, she is now can be able to write announces through computer. The limitation of this review is that there is no data system in place to help monitor the numbers of women who attended this program.

7: Poverty Eradication, Social Protection, and Social Services.

**Question 8:** *In the Past five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?*

The Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO) was able to gather all information regarding the rate of the RMI unemployment. The 2019/20 census rate for unemployed female is low compared to the previous census in 2011, the majority of woman were not employed at least 28% of female were employed compared to 51% employed male and 72% of unemployed female compared to 49% unemployed male. The current census 2019/20 shows that Marshallese females are improved<sup>26</sup>.

**Unemployment Rate**

	Male	Female	Total

<sup>25</sup> Alele Museum

<sup>26</sup> RMI 2019/20 HIES, p.131



<b>Unemployment, aged 15+</b>	880	231	1,111
By age group			
15-24	279	53	332
25+	601	177	779
25-64	554 (*)	177(*)	731
65+	47(*)	0.0	47
Unemployment rate, aged 15+ (%)	7.4	4.3	6.4
By age group			
15-24	31.0	14.2	26.0
25+	5.5	3.5	4.9
25-64	5.3(*)	3.7(*)	4.8(*)
65+	9.8(*)	0.0	7.0(*)

Note: (\*) Denotes small sample cases of less than 10.

Over the past five years, RMI was able to prevent poverty among women and girls through training. The following are all the training that took place in the RMI to help reduce poverty in the RMI.

#### **A. College of the Marshall Islands**

- *Youth Corps Program*

This program is under the College of the Marshall Islands (CMI). The purpose of this program is to provide vocational skills training and capacity development opportunities for Marshallese youth<sup>27</sup> with the help of Ministry of works, and Utilities (MoWU), Rober Reimers Enterprise (RRE), Pacific International Inc (PII), Kwajalein Atoll Traditional Leadership, Chamber of Commerce (CoC), Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MoCIA), RMI Local Government Office, Fiji national University, TObolar, Majuro Wast Company (MWC), Life Skill Academy (LSA), and RMI Office of the President.

The youth corps program was able to conduct a training for young women called “*Jewelry making, Embroidery and Entrepreneurships Training*”. This training was conducted over five weeks long with fifteen Marshallese women. The purpose of this training was to develop their skills in jewelry making and embroidery, along with the training in entrepreneurship so that they can turn these skills into a livelihood. This training was successful with the contribution from Kora In An Kol Func (KIAKF), Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and KIO Club.

The Chamber of Commerce was granted a US federal Grant from the Economic Development Agency with the worth of \$1 million, for a duration of 1 year and partnered with Economic Development Agency. The main goal <sup>28</sup>of the project is to analyze the needs of communities with persistent poverty and formulate strategies to decrease disparities between these areas and more prosperous areas within a state. This project has selected at least 7 Atoll for both focuses areas, which are “Sustainable and Food Security and Renewable Energy”. There are few findings/observations which are as follows:

<sup>27</sup> College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) Youth Corps Program Report, 202-2024.

<sup>28</sup> Champer of Commerce (COC) Project, 2023-2024.

- The community, in particular women, tend to rely more on “canned foods” or “convenient foods”, and have less interest in farming. Although, the community has expressed greatly that with proper training on agriculture and proper tools, this would increase the interest and decrease the Food instability that they face.
- Knowledge of preparing traditional cuisines have long gone, due to the longevity process, and women tend to rely on quick cooked meals such as rice and canned foods.

*Question 9: In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve access to social protection for women and girls?*

Rights of Person with Disability Act, 2015.

The Disability Coordination Office (CDO) is under the Community Development Division at the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs. The CDO aims to enhance the quality of life and the participation of people with disabilities on their communities. The objectives are to increase community knowledge and understanding on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, increase participants of persons with disabilities as leaders’ disability rights movements of the RMI<sup>29</sup>, as well as to improve accessibility and accommodation to public services for person with disabilities.

The Disability Coordination Office has established a 25% discount card for all people with disabilities. Most of the registered disabled women, men, boys and girls, including from all Neighboring Islands were able to get their discount card and benefit from it equally. Below is the data of all persons with disabilities including those from Neighboring Islands. Within this data, number of females are less than male. The limitation of this review is that it is not showing the age and numbers of female/male directly to their types of disabilities, and some Neighboring Islands are missing in this data<sup>30</sup>. This office only received FY with the amount of \$34,450.

Atolls/Islands	No. Person with disability	Male	Female	Mobility & Physical Impairments	Vision Disability	Cognitive Learning Disability	Hearing Disability	Psychological Disorder	Invisible Disability
<b>Ailinglaplap</b>	3	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Arno</b>	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Ebon</b>	15	10	5	11	2	1	1	1	3
<b>Jaluit</b>	7	5	2	2	0	2	2	1	3
<b>Kwajalein</b>	88	54	34	29	2	20	17	19	13
<b>Kili</b>	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	1

<sup>29</sup> MoCIA Annual Report, 2022-2023 (Disability Office & Senior Citizen Office)

<b>Majuro</b>	396	247	149	207	69	102	109	87	59
<b>Maloelap</b>	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	3	2
<b>Aur</b>	8	6	2	8	0	0	1	3	2
<b>Ujae</b>	14	7	7	2	0	0	6	1	9
<b>Wotje</b>	8	8	0	7	3	5	1	2	7
<b>Wotho</b>	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	548	350	198	271	81	31	140	115	98

**Description:** This data shows the only numbers of people with disabilities and the types of disabilities.

Senior Citizen Act, 2018

Senior Citizen Affairs (SCA) is under the Community Development Division at the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs. The aim for this office is to make sure all elderly citizens are benefits equally for both elderly men and women. The SCA was able to also establish a program for all elderly people to get their 25% discount card. The total number of senior citizens who have registered and received their 25% discount card is total of 277 people<sup>31</sup>. The limitation from this review is that there are no available numbers of how many women and men have registered in this program. The money that is allocated to this office is only FY \$22,540. (Source: MoCIA Report, 2022-2023)

In August 2023, the Nitijela has adopted the resolution No. 93 to support and established the income program or known as “*Enra bwe Jen Lale Rere*” which shall be benefit all Marshallese citizen resident. As of now, this support money is ongoing and has been discussed by Nitijela<sup>32</sup>.

In the year 2020-2023, Weto in Mour (WiM) supports young, abused survivors financially based on their situation. For example, if the victim does not have relatives or been abused by her relatives, then WIM often looks out for the relatives of the survivors so that they can offer to buy at least a one-way ticket to Outer Islands or Mainland Hawaii or pay for their school tuition fees. Below is the table for the Financial Services<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> MoCIA Annual Report, 2022-2023.

<sup>32</sup> New Bill adopted by Nijela, 2024. \* This Bill is still under discussion

<sup>33</sup> Weto in Mour Data, 202-2023. Financial Services.

Year	Services Provided to new & repeat clients										Total
	Financial assistance	Refer to Police	Psychosocial support	Multiple services	Health assistance	Legal assistance	Safe accomodation	Enquiries	Court accompaniment	Others	
						88	129	56	47	320	
2020	4	4	17	52		2		6	0	3	88
2021	2	0	14	98	0	5		13	0	1	133
2022	1	0	9	40	0	3	0	1	1	0	55
2023		1	5	32		1	0	4	1	1	45
Total	7	5	45	222	0	11	0	24	2	5	321

### Early Childhood Program (ECD)

In year of 2023, the 7<sup>th</sup> tranche of the Republic of the Marshall Islands' Early Childhood Development Program (ECD) financial assistance was transferred to families on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The social assistance payments went to 1,677 families of 2,048 children across Majuro and Ebeye with a total amount of \$131, 340, 00. This payment, support pregnant mothers and families with young children under 5 years old of age, to help their children reach their full potential. The ECD project is designed to improved children's development in the Marshall Islands by increasing access to early learning activities for young children: improving coverage of essential health and nutrition services, providing social assistance for early year's families and strengthening childhood development systems<sup>34</sup>. The RMI Multi-sectoral Early Childhood Development project is supported by the World Bank and implemented by Government of the RMI through the Ministry of Education, Sports, and Training (MoEST), Ministry of Health and Human Services (MoHHS), and the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs and the Child Rights Office (CRO). Partnerships with the Ministry of Finance, DIDA, MISSA, and the Bank of Marshall Islands (BOMI) are essential in rolling-out the ECD social assistance payments. The payments are accessed through the ECD Bank of Marshall Islands saving account debit card at no charge to the family's receiving assistance. The ECD project has advanced to expand to the Neighboring Islands (NI).

*Question 10: In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?*

### **National Comprehensive Cancer Control Program (NCCC)**

<sup>34</sup> RMI Early Childhood Program (ECD), 2024

### *a. Cancer*

Over the years spanning from 2018 to 2021, the Cancer Program within MOHHS has been steadfast in its commitment to addressing the challenges posed by cancer in the RMI. This period has seen the program intensify its efforts in cancer prevention, early detection, and comprehensive care.

Implementing various awareness campaigns, the Cancer Program aimed to educate the public on preventive measures, lifestyle choices, and the importance of regular screening<sup>35</sup>s. The collaboration with healthcare professionals and the community has been instrumental in fostering a holistic approach to cancer care.

Despite the inherent complexities associated with cancer management, the program has made strides in enhancing diagnostic capabilities and treatment options, ensuring that individuals affected by cancer receive the best possible care. The dedication of the Cancer Program reflects MOHHS broader commitment to improving health outcomes and addressing the specific health challenges posed by cancer within the Marshallese population.

The Cervical and Breast Cancer (CBC) duties and responsibilities <sup>36</sup>

- To implement the Community to Clinic Campaign Plan that focuses on community navigation of underserved women to after-hours BCC screening services.
- Target more 150 women with complete screening pap smears and 75 women with completed screening mammograms.
- Use the eligibility checklist form and have all clients for screening sign and data release consent forms.
- Promote awareness of the burden of breast and cervical cancer in the Marshall Islands and stress the importance of screening and early detection to target women and communities including churches, worksites, and organizations such as women's groups
- Engage worksite to adopt BCC screening policies in accordance with the worksite screening Policy Initiative (WoSPI).
- Quarterly monitoring calls with evaluator and TA consultant
- Submission of annual progress reports.

### **The accomplishments**

- January to March, CBC were able to reach out to 72 young girls and women aged 21-65. Out of these 72 only 47 were screen (24 new and 23 returning clients).
- MoHHS received their new Mammographic.
- CBC was able to bring in 27 women aged 40+ and up to be screened.

### **Lesson Learned**

- Women do not show up during picking up time screening

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<sup>35</sup> MoHHS Report, 2018-2021.

<sup>36</sup> WUTMI Cancer Project Report, 2024.

- Screening was cancers 4 times due to power outage at MoHHS, shortage of staff and miscommunication (Doctors went home early)
- Working women do not show up for screening after their working hours on Thursday due to forget about the screening, and too tired to come to the clinic.

**Upcoming Action Plan**

- Bringing in more women ages 40+ and up for Mammogram
- Visiting more women from other paces within Majuro.
- Continue to post announcements on social media, WUTMI Facebook page.

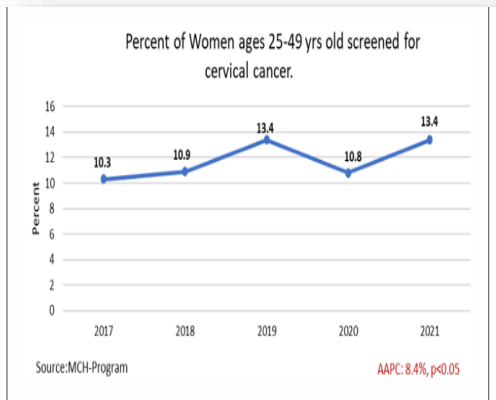
Following the table below - provides a comprehensive analysis of cancer cases that have been conducted, shedding light on the prevalence, trends, and mortality rates. It includes the number of new cancer patients, incidence rates, deaths related to cancer, mortality rates, and the total number of old and new cancer patients. The figures highlight the fluctuating trends in cancer incidence, mortality, and prevalence rates over the specified fiscal years. Efforts to address and mitigate the impact of cancer on the population are crucial, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies in cancer prevention, treatment, and ongoing surveillance.

	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021
No. of New Cancer Patients	69	50	55	52	63
Incidence Rate Per 10,000 Population	13	9	10	9	15
No. of death related to cancer, all ages	33	31	35	36	35
No. of Old and New Cancer Patients	603	622	642	658	686
Prevalence Rate Per 10,000	111	114	117	120	164

Source: RMI Cancer Program, Rate is per 10,000 population

*Description: The percentage of women in RMI (24-49 years of age) careened for cervical cancer, 2017-2021<sup>37</sup>.*

<sup>37</sup> MoHHS Report, 2018-2021, p.39.



*Description: Summary of Cancer Cases, FY 2017-2021<sup>38</sup>*

The National Comprehensive Cancer Control Program organized events for the whole month of February for Cancer Awareness. The activities were walkathon, visit of cancer support group outreach to Laura Salvation Army church, sponsored Tennis games, Art Gala Night Fundraiser for all Cancer survivors and support.

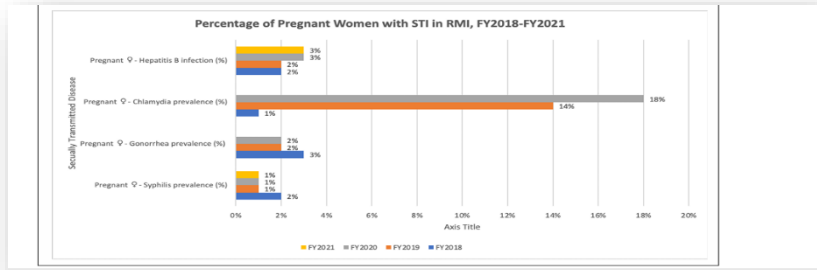
*b. HIV*

The Ministry of Human Services has been dedicated to addressing the challenges posed by Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in the RMI from 2018 to 2021.

The STI and HIV program within MoHHS has

implemented comprehensive

prevention, testing, and treatment strategies to curb the incidence of STIs, including HIV. Efforts have been directed towards increasing public awareness, education, and outreach initiatives to promote safe sexual practices and reduce the spread of infections. Accessible and confidential testing services have played a crucial role in early detection and timely intervention. Ongoing collaborations with international health organizations and community stakeholders have strengthened the overall response to STIs and HIV, contributing to improved health outcomes and the well-being of the population in the RMI.



Description: This figure is the percentage of pregnant women with STI in RMI, FY2018-2021.

In 2020, with the help from the Government of Australia, Majuro Atoll Local Government, Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs and Kwajalein Atoll Emergency Operation Center – International Organization and Immigration (IOM) was able to reach out to at least 3,400 household and was able to identified at least 12% of residents in Ebeye and 17% from Majuro who have no access to a toilet, at least 600 hygiene kits were able to deliver to all household in vulnerable situation and to all person with disabilities. These gifts were included with reusable pads, toiletries and underwear that will go a long way in supporting women and girls who are unable to access sanitary pads and meeting urgent needs. Additionally, IOM distributed dignity

<sup>38</sup> CH, FY.2017- 2021. (Summary of all cancer cases).

kits to NGOs that make up Gender and Protection Cluster and are at the frontlines of emergency response<sup>39</sup>.

*Question 11: In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls, including in sectors where they are underrepresented?*

### Installation of Solar Photovoltaic DC Refrigeration program

Heavy duty is rare for women and often it is a male dominated area of work. IslandECo<sup>40</sup> is a company where they are selling lots of different solar made. This company have extended this knowledge to Marshallese young girls. The Marshallese young girls have been involving in this project and been participate in the assembly, delivery and installation of solar power lights refrigerators and freezer on two atolls in the Marshall Islands. The young women are now independently learned how to master the technical elements, assembly methods, and packing and delivery of the components across oceanic distances to remote islands. They also gained competency in the off-loading, re-assembly and installation of mechanical and electrical components.

However, young rural high school educated women were trained in the skills of electrical and mechanical assembly and the commissioning of solar PV systems. This training for women is uncommon as, especially in the Marshall Islands, it is a male dominated area of work. These young women also supervised the installation of solar photovoltaic refrigerators in their own homes. As women are the primary users of homes refrigeration, women in the community were involved at each household. This is the first such activity in the RMI.

### Waan Aelon in Majol

Waan Aelon in Majol (WM) is one of the important programs in the Marshall Islands. The WAM program is where empowering lots of young men and women who were not able to be completed with their education. The main goals for the WAM program are to <sup>41</sup>empowering young Marshallese women and men and to endowing them with the skillsets essential to bring them into the global society in which we find ourselves today. The WAM program has given lots of opportunities to our Marshallese young people to get to where they are today. This program was not only getting skills, but they are also benefited from it by earning their own money. The Vocational and Life Skills Training Program where are not only providing the skills but to raise awareness, while transferring knowledge and appreciation of Marshallese Culture. The WAM at least have reached out to total of 18 young Marshallese males and 2 females.

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.iom.int>.

<sup>40</sup> <https://womengenderclimate>

<sup>41</sup> Waan Aelon in majol (WAM) Report, 2019 \*note that all reports have been washed away after the fire



**Question 12:** What actions has your country taken to ensure that economic recovery from the covid-19 pandemic closes gender gaps in poverty, employment, social protection, education, and/or health that the pandemic has exacerbated?

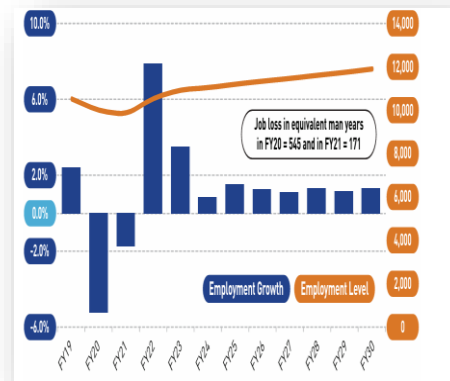
**a. Economic Recovery & Employment**

➤ The impact of covid-19 against Tourism

In the Marshall Islands, there are only two hotels that usually accommodate lots of tourists or visitors to the RMI. These two hotels economically started to low due to zero visitors

➤ The Impact of Covid-19 against Employees

The impact of Covid-19 on employment is shown in the figures indicating both the level of jobs and the annual changes<sup>42</sup>. There is an implied total loss of 716 jobs over FY2020 & 2021.



The RMI Labor Division was responsible for releasing the money to all Marshallese people including women and girls. The purpose of this money was to cover for those who only received of their (40 hours), and for those who lost their job or been laid off from work due to the low-income profits.

half

**a. Poverty**

➤ The impact of covid-19 against household income.

i. Food Security Loan

Marshall Islands Development Bank (MIDB) was releasing a memo to offer an opportunity for all local business to apply for a food security loan. The purpose of this loan was to provide food security items and other related (relevant) supplies including fishing gear, and agriculture tools and supplies. MIDB was able to disburse loans to 127 local businesses. The total of the disbursed amount was approximately \$1.69 million. Most of the receivers were handicrafts business from the Neighboring Islands<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> <https://pitiviti.org>

<sup>43</sup> Marshall Islands Development Banks (MIDP, 2022).

ii. Loan Allotment Release

In 2020, the former RMI Nijitela Speaker Mr. Kedi sent a memo to Bank of Marshall Islands (BOMI) and Marshall Islands Development Bank (MIDB) to release all allotment back to all Government employees' check at least six payrolls<sup>44</sup>. The purpose of this request was to help all Government Employee to secure their families with food and needs before the lock down. The BOMI was the only one who accepted this request and managed to release all allotments to all Government Employees. MIDB was not able to accept the request due to the MIDB policy (Nitijela 2020)

iii. Covid-19 Recovery Money

During the Covid-19, the RMI Government was managed to contribute money for all Marshallese people especially for all vulnerable group of peoples. The purpose of this money was to help RMI people to prepare and provide their food and needs before the lockdown. This contribution targeted the low-income families. Following is the group of people who received the money.

- *Taxi Driver:*
- *Early Childhood Development Members (Pregnant mothers to a 4 years old).*
- *Senior Citizen & Retiree*
- *Disability*

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<sup>44</sup> Nitijela, 2024

## 8: Freedom from Violence, Stigma, and Stereotypes

**Question 13:** *Over the past five years, which forms of gender-based violence, and in which specific contexts or settings, has your country prioritized for action?*

Weto in Mour (WiM) is the National Support Service helping young girls who have experienced violence and abuse, including violence perpetrated by family members with the help from Domestic Unit at the Marshall Islands National Police Department (MINPD). The WIM program and Domestic Unit has been dealing with lots of forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV) such as domestic violence, rape/sexual assault, sexual harassment, child abuse, human force marriage, human trafficking, physical, emotional, sexual, verbal, psychological, economic, social, and stalking. The most forms of GBV WIM are focusing on are intimate partner violence including and child abuse and sexual violence “rape” and family dispute. Weto in Mour (WIM) services are free of charge and safe space (confidential). The WIM is operated 24/7 and on calls. This data of numbers shows the forms of GBV<sup>45</sup>

Weto in Mour- WUTMI					
new and repeat counselling statistics					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Domestic Violence	59	84	52	29	224
Rape/Sexual Assault	20	8		2	30
Sexual Harrassment	1				1
Child abuse					0
Forced marriage					0
Human trafficking			2		2
Others		16		5	21
Physical	8	6	1	8	23
Emotional		11			11
Sexual		1	1	2	4
Verbal					0
Psychological		3		1	4
Economic					0
Social					0
Stalking					0

**Question 14:** *In the past years, what actions has your country prioritized for action to address gender – based violence?*

Weto In Mour (WIM) is one of the active programs in the RMI. The WIM program is under Women United Together Marshall Islands to support Marshallese women and girls who are suffering from the most unhuman activities against their rights. The WIM services are to provide Marshallese women and girls through counselling, financial support (paying off school fees), and to provide one-way ticket for their client(s) back to their family(ies) or relatives and that option always based on their situation or case(s). Weto In Mour usually do all their activities through communities’ awareness, radio programming, social media, and the Annual Conference. Following are the activities:

*i. Action Priorities*

<sup>45</sup> Weto In Mour Report, 2020-2023.

- Community awareness: to deliver the information within communities, including Neighboring Islands.
- 16 Days of Activism: at least one month awareness – V7ab and 103.5 radio to conduct a round table discussion, activities (each member from 16 days usually do activities based on what is/are related to their role and responsibilities within their areas).
- Annual Conference for all Marshallese women and girls to conduct more awareness and to share stories.
- Table discussion with all high school students to talk about their rights and what is GBV.

ii. *The Accomplishments*

- On Dec 2020, WUTMI Weto in Mour/Violence against Women & Girls project received fund from Spotlight through UN Women to extend its services to 3 of the Neighboring Islands.
- 2021: one of the Neighboring Islands (NB) was able to join WUTMI to do some activities on violence against women and girls and was able to launch a project called “Food Security/Climate Change for WUTMI/Arno wish was fully funded by a small grant program (SGP).
- February/ Cancer Month: WUTMI Cancer Prevention and Navigator Project was able to conduct a cancer month activity through walkathon, candlelight vigil, wine and desing evening and Gala Night.
- 2022: WUTMI and WIM leaders were joined a one-week workshop conducted by AG Office, Ministry of Health and Human Services (MoHHS) – Mental Health
- Women Month, March 202: *ChooseToChallenge/Tuwak Mene Elimajnono*: WUMTI was the leading this activity and it was successfully.
- 2021: WUTMI/WIM receiving a grant to expand its operation on Violence against Women and Girls. This grant was given by US Embassy and IOM.
- March 2021: WUTMI partnered with US Embassy was conducting a half day forum followed by a luncheon for 150 girls from public high school.
- April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021: WUTMI was able to join Mayor’s Annual Conference to conduct raising awareness.
- Sexual Awareness Month: Both National & Local Police from Ebeye was attended a training and conducting awareness for high school students.

- WIM conducting a training for at least 28 police officers with the help from Micronesia Legal Services.

*Question 15: In the past five years, what strategies have your country used to prevent gender-based violence?*

The Strategic measures adopted in RMI for addressing gender issues is by:

- Increase access to justice to the survivors by the provision of legal assistance and effective remedies.
  - Weto In Mour Program (WIM) and RMI National Domestic Unit usually work together to ensure all victims/survivors have access to justice and protection.
- Create safe places for women and girls where they can be protected.
  - Weto In Mour Program (WIM) often accommodated the victim/survivor based on the nature of her case(s), including meals.
- Monitor incidences of gender-based violence and how cases are being handled by the justice system, the policy, the health services providers and communities.
  - Human Rights Committee responsible for is to make sure that all women in the RMI is handled equally.
- Support community-based initiatives for preventing domestic violence and for protecting and supporting victims.
  - Raise awareness is one of the key contributions to help preventing domestic violence and for protecting and supporting the victims.
- Monitor the risk of human trafficking and adopt measures for the protection of women and girls being trafficked.
  - Attorney Gender Office responsible for is to monitor all human trafficking cases to ensure action is place.

<sup>46</sup>Most of the activities conducted by the WUTMI are support and funded by the:

- (SPC)
- GRMI
- IOM
- DFAT
- UWF
- TNC (goes towards WUTMI Conference/Lerooj Forum).
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<sup>46</sup> WUTMI Annual Report, 2023

*Question 16: In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence (e.g online sexual harassment, online stalking, and non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?*

Social media is one of the most popular communications now a days, especially for all young people. Technology and online spaces are increasingly being misused and weapon zed against women and girls based on their gender. Technology gender-based violence takes many forms such as extortions or blackmail by threatening to publish sexual information or photos/videos. The Marshallese young people do not really understand how they are exposed and been subject to technology gender-based violence. This kind of case had happened once and was not really in a high consideration to public because Marshallese young people though only gender-based violence is only by when someone is physically touching your inappropriate ways

One of the challenges is that RMI Domestic Unit has limited capacity in preventing and respond to technology-facilitated online gender-based violence. In do so, and to help prevent this kind of cruel activity against our young generation, the Weto In Mour program (WIM) usually conduct community activities as well as a workshop for all young high school girls with the help from all relevant partners. The purpose of this activity is to help the high school girls to understand what is like to be violated and to be subject to gender-based violence not only physically but through social media. This activity was the only good and possible way to help prevent all Marshallese young girls from violated via social media. Weto In Mour Program (WIM) usually reaches at least 100 girls from different high schools here in the RMI, both private and public school<sup>47</sup> .

*Question 17: In the past five years, what measures has your country taken to resource women's organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV?*

There is a memorandum of agreement between Ministry of Finance, Banking of Postal Services and Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI). The purpose of this MOA is for WUTMI to undertake to use the fund to finance Weto in Mour Project proposed to the Ministry of Finance, Banking and Postal Services. Within this MOA, its stated that WUMTI shall use the funds only for allowable costs specifically and irectly related to the objective of the Grand.

Under this MOA, the Ministry of Finance, Banking of Postal Services has given at least \$80,000 quarterly. Within this money given by MOFBPS, Weto in Mour will use it to cover all the costs for the community engagement, and training and for employee salaries. Every quarterly, the WIM makes sure reports are prepared and submitted to MOF.

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<sup>47</sup> Weto In Mour Report, 2020-2024.

*Question 18: In the past years, what actions has your county taken specifically tailored to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls?*

Over the past five years, RMI Government have taken some actions to help in addressing the violence against marginalized group of women and girls by training programmes for professionals, campaigns to raise awareness, promoting in women’s empowerment and conducting education in non-violence and equality between women and men within communities as well as Neighboring Islands.

## 9: Participation, Accountability, and Gender – Responsive Institutions

*Question 19: In the past five years, what actions and measures has your country taken to promote women’s participation in public life and decision – making?*

In 2022, the RMI Government conducted a forum for all women including women from the Neighboring Islands. Nearly 200 women representing the 24 atolls of the Marshall Islands to attend the forum called “Ainikine Kora Forum” known as “Women’s Voice”. The range of presentations and discussions from experts enable the participants to learn and apply their understanding to localize regional gender equality commitments. One of the main topics was about “Women in Decision-Making”. The Senator and Newley elected Envoy for Women, Youth and Children Ms. Daisy Alik-Momotaro was one of the panelists who share her experience about how she became a Senator few years back. In her statement, she stated “The important for us women in taking place in decision-making platforms is to ensure women and girl’s issues are not left behind. However, one of her examples was about how women’s needs are not met when women are not at the decision-making table including the limited financial support major issues face by women and girls. She then encourages the young women of voting age to support one another in the upcoming National Elections.

One of the requests from the participants is for WUTMI to conduct further outreach to the Neighboring Islands. Former Director for WUTMI - now a Senator Mrs. Daisy Alik-Momotaro went on and shared the news of grant WUTMI has been awarded, which would allow them to reach out of the Islands including Marshallese communities in the USA to implement a voter education campaign and to promote women in leadership at all levels and in all sectors with a particular focus on women in Parliament and Local Government positions<sup>48</sup>.

*i. The Objectives of the Forum*

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<sup>48</sup> MoCIA Gender Office Report “Ainikine Kora Forum/Women’s Voices, 2022.

The Ainikien Kora Forum was a gathering of gender equality stakeholders from the national and local government and civil society organizations, and women leaders representing all islands and atolls in the Marshall Islands. Given RMI's current Chairmanship of the 15<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conference, the focus of the Forum was to inform all participants about the 14<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and the 7<sup>th</sup> minister for Women Meeting outcomes and recommendations.

ii. *The Outcomes of the Forum*

The Ainkien Kora Forum brought together national gender equality stakeholders to present on current work and challenges pertaining to the priority areas and the cross-cutting themes. There were eight presenters (7 females and 1 male) and twelve panelists (10 females and 2 males) that took part representing government, non-government and private sector, and twenty facilitators and note takers who managed and recorded each session and breakout groups. There were a total of 24 female official representatives, selected by the respective local governments of each atoll/island jurisdiction, along with over 150 female observers representing their atoll/island that attended in person and over 20 women and men who attended via Zoom.

The forum was funded by RMI Government, Pacific Community (SPC,RRRH), and International Organization and Migration (IOM).

*Question 20: Please describe your country's current national women's machinery (government entity exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender and the empowerment of women) and describe the measures that your country taken over the past five years to establish and/or strengthen it.*

The Gender in Development Office which is under the Community Development Division at the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs has committed to achieve gender equality through international and regional to strengthen the representation and participation of women leader in development through the gender equality commitments including the implementation of international commitments such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), regional commitments such as the Pacific Platform for Action (BPfA), Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED), and the Triennial of Pacific Women outcomes.

**Gender in Development Office**

In the reporting period between October 2020 to October 2023, the Gender in Development Office has experienced several major challenges that have prevented it to carry out most of its functions, and primarily the main objective prescribed by the office mandate of overseeing the Gender Policy implementations plan of action. Considerable shortage of staff caused by inability to fill positions, and health concerns by team members, have severely limited the capacity of the



office to play a significant role in the empowerment of women in the RMI<sup>49</sup>. Nonetheless, among other local interventions the GiD conducted two forums for women in Majuro and Ebeye. These forums addressed two major topics:

- Women Economic Empowerment
- Women in Decision Making

GiD Office will be soon recruiting two staff (Director & Gender Officer) to fill the vacant position that would set us on course to fulfill our ambitious work plan, which will include:

- **Outcome 1:** Strengthen the accessibility of gender equality services through mobile community engagement.
  - a. **Objective 1:** Coordinate the setup of a community engagement mobile team with relevant partners, develop a Gender Equality Analysis Report on the Status of Women in the RMI to strengthen Gender Equality community engagement response and related services.
- **Outcome 2:** strengthen capacity to mainstream gender and social inclusion & improve policies, programs and project to respond to gender inequalities within the RMI.
  - **Objective 2:** strengthen capacity for gender and social inclusion response to Gender Equalities.
- **Outcome 3:** Strengthen coordination and collaboration efforts amongst stakeholders on Gender Equality Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation & Lesson Learned.
  - **Objective 3.1:** Improved Planning, Coordination, Collaboration and Reporting on Gender Equality Progress in RMI.
  - **Objective 3.2:** Strengthen Partners Preparation, Organization, Coordination, and Facilitation and Collaborative efforts on Gender Equality implementing action.

The Gender in Development Office's operations are funded by the Government of the RMI and Pacific Community (SPC-RRRH).

*Question 21: In the past five years, what other mechanisms and tools has your country used to mainstream gender equality across sectors? (e.g gender focal points in the executive legislature or judiciary; inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms, gender audits, consultations with women's organization)*

Following are the tools of how Government Ministries are engaging to do mainstreaming gender equality within the Marshall Islands over the past five years.

- a. **Ministry of Finance:** The MOU is for the financial support from MOF to MOU to conduct services and activities to eliminate violence and discrimination against Marshallese women and girls.

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<sup>49</sup> Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs/Gender Office Action Plan, 2023-2025.

- b. Ministry of Health and Human Services:** Record all patients of women and young women who are struggling with HIV/AIDs, cancer, pregnant, and ER rape/domestic cases and to make sure polices are aware.
- c. Ministry of Education:** To ensure young girls had the opportunity to stay in school even after having the baby (ies).
- d. Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs:** To carry the mandate through several legislation ot provide oversight and lead the implementation of the Government of the RMI gender equality commitments. The Gender in Development Office also helps develop and strength maintain programs and services focused on social and human rights issues. This office is continuing to draft, implement, monitor and report national policies for women and girls as well as for all women with disability based on the Gender Equality Act, 2019.
- e. Attorney General:** To prosecute the cases of domestic, trafficked and rapes against women and young women in the RMI.
- f. Women United Together Marshall Islands:** Provide counselling, financial assistance, safe house, public awareness via social media and radio programs.
- g. Legal Services:** To support RMI to issue Protection Order against the perpetrator or an offender.
- h. National Police Department /Domestic Unit:** Work with WUTMI to protect the worker and the victims while working on the paper for the victims, and to help investigating the case(s).
- i. Economic Planning, Policy and Statistic (EPPSO):** To collect gender equality data to inform the Nitijela and the policy makers.
- j. International Organization and Migration:** Help the trafficked women and girls and conducting training for gender equality and promote women and business.
- k. Office of Commerce, Investment & Tourism:** To support and develop investments and operate business enterprises on behalf of the Government.

*Question 22: If there is a national human rights institution in your country, what measures has it taken to address violations of women's rights and promote gender equality?*

In the year of 2016, the former Acting Secretary for the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs requested for the SPC to help conducting a scoping study on the feasibility of the RMI establishing a National Human Rights Institution<sup>50</sup>.

The most of the recent RMI's human rights based on the laws are:

- Human Rights Committee Act 2015
- Rights of Persons with disabilities Act 2015
- Child Rights Protection Act 2015

<sup>50</sup>Scoping Study to the GRMI (establishment of a Paris Principles-Compliant National Human Rights Institution, 2017

- Marshall Islands Public School System Act 2013
- Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act 2011
- Criminal Code 2011

The scoping study was able to identify some of the important tasks for the Human Rights Committee, and the task was to:

- Establish a multi stakeholder body to promote the human rights of all people living in the Marshall Islands.
- Promote the implementation of international human rights standards, including international human rights treaties to which the Marshall Islands is a State Party
- Promote an inclusive and coordinated cross-sectorial approach to the implementation of human rights reporting and programmes.
- Promote understanding of and compliance with the Bill of Rights and legislation promoting human rights, including the Domestic Violence Protection and Prevention Act, 2011, the Child Protection Act 2015, and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2015
- Established a complaints mechanism for the redress of human rights violations.

The following are the GRMI and Civil Society representatives:

- a. Chief of Secretary, Chairperson
- b. Secretary of Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs, Vice Chairperson
- c. Secretary of Foreign Affairs
- d. Secretary of Health
- e. Secretary of Finance
- f. Secretary of resources and Development
- g. Commissioner, Ministry of Education
- h. Attorney General
- i. Public Defender
- j. Police Commissioner
- k. Clerk of Nitijela
- l. Director, Economic Planning Policy and Statistics Office
- m. Director, National Training Council
- n. Director, Women United Together Marshall Islands
- o. Director, Youth to Youth in Health
- p. President, Marshall Islands Persons with Disability Organization
- q. President, Chamber of Commerce

Within the NSP 2020-2030, the NSP has identified some of the key areas of Human Rights role & responsibility.

- **Social and Culture:** Health, Education, Social Justice and Inclusion, Culture and Traditional Knowledge.
- Pillar 2, 3, and 4.

There is a SPC human rights focal point who advice and help the Human Rights Committee members on implementing all the commitments agreed by the GRMI.

*Question 23: In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful an inclusive society for sustainable development and implement the women, peace, and security agenda?*

Women are recognized as leaders in their household and in their respective communities for their significant contribution to the peaceful development and wellbeing of our people. The fundamental values of our beliefs/cultures include caring for each other, and partnership. These can be addressing the imbalance we see today between women and men and to eliminate discrimination. Applying the values will help our Blue Pacific Communities ensure that the fundamental of Human Rights of women and men are respected and that all women and men have equal opportunities and share the benefit of development.

In the Marshall Islands, mothers are the one who always sacrifice herself when it comes to her family. Below are how we described a mother.

- When two men are fighting, no matter how these two men are mad and are willing to do something dangerously but when a women stand in between, both will stop right away, we called it “Lejmaanjuri” peacemaker.
- Whenever a father leaves his family without providing financially, the mother will always do in her power to make sure her children are together and make sure foods are on the table, we called it “Jined ilo Kobo”, means compassionate.
- During the war, women often encourage men in time of war to be brave and courageous and to make sure her community is not weak, we called it “Limaro Bikbikir kolo eo”, means powerful of women’s voices.
- In our Culture, whenever a son is getting married, he must leave his family for his new wife and whenever a daughter is getting married, she often the one who stayed while her new husband stayed at her village/home, we called it “Ieb Jeltok”.

The RMI Government will continue to make sure peaceful and inclusive society for sustainable development and implement of women, peace, and security agenda are ongoing by strengthening the Gender Equality Act 2015 and the Domestic Violence Act through community awareness and support all the women’s organization to help promote human rights as well as to end the violence against women and girls in the Marshall Islands<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> \*RMI Government Commitments & Action Plan

*Question 24: In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?*

The mission of the courts of the Marshall Islands, the Judiciary, is to fairly, efficiently, and effectively resolve disputes properly brought before them, discharging their judicial duties and responsibilities in accordance with the Constitution, laws, and customs of this unique island nation, for the benefit of those who use the courts' services.

The Strategic Plan of the Judiciary of the RMI, 2019-2023. Within the strategic plan, below are the strategic goals for FY.2019 to FY. 2023:

- To be fair, efficient, and effective
- To be affordable and accessible
- To be independent yet transparent and accountable
- To manage Judiciary's personnel in accordance with sound leadership and management practices
- To administer the Judiciary's building and equipment in accordance with sound management practices
- To manage the Judiciary's financial resource in accordance with sound financial practices
- To identify, develop, and employ innovation approaches and best practices to achieve the Judiciary's strategic goals.

*Question 25: In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of girls' children, including adolescent girls?*

As a signatory to the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the RMI Government takes its obligations for taking care of Marshallese children to heart. To this end, the government delegates the responsibilities of overseeing that children rights are respected, promoting activating and campaigns to the Child Rights (CRO) is Child Rights Office and Disability Office.

The Child Rights Protection Act 2015 is addressing the rights of girls' children including adolescent girls. The Children Rights Protection Act was created under Title 26 of the MIRC to

help declaring the equal rights and freedoms of all persons with disabilities and provide for the protection, promotion and enforcement. The principles of this Act, in relation to people with disabilities. The limitation in this review is that there is not enough evidence of how Government “Child Rights Office” addressing the discrimination against and violations of the rights of girls’ children, including adolescent girls, and lack of capacities within the Child Rights Office (CRO).

The Rights of Person with Disabilities Act 2015 stated that “person with disabilities is entitled be recognized as person before the law and as having legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspect of life and the Article II of the constitution, the protection and safety of persons with disabilities institute of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters. The Disability Office oversees all actions or activities to help eliminate discrimination and violations against the rights of girls’ children, including adolescent girls in the RMI<sup>52</sup>. Below are some of the actions done by Disability Office to prevent discrimination and violation against rights of girls’ children, including adolescent girl:

- Improved accessibility and accommodation to public services for persons with disabilities (PWD).
- Have developed SOP on accessible parking program.
- Have approached Government sectors to ensure their building and offices re complied with the RMI National Building Code (NBC).
- Make available social assistance for persons with disability (PWD),
- Developed social assistance Bill for persons with disabilities.

## 10: Environmental Conservation, Protection and Rehabilitation

*Questions 26: In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and land degradation?*

*Question 27: In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programs for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience?*

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<sup>52</sup> Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs Report, 2020-2023.

Integrating gender perspective into policies and programs for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience have often come from the traditional knowledge by a local woman who possess great knowledge and understanding about her surroundings. It is very impossible to capture the ideas without their contributions, because people understood their own challenges based on what they have seen or experience in daily life. Over the decades, Marshallese women were prohibited from part taking during a roundtable discussion due to our Culture norms.

In the year of 2022, in partnership with the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) together with the Pacific Community (SPC) to delivering the 4-year (2021-2024) Management Coastal Aquifers (MCA) project in the Pacific Islands Countries of Marshall Island, Palau and Tuvalu. The MCA project was designed to improve the understanding, use, management and protection of groundwater towards enhanced water security in the context of climate change. The design approach was based on the experiences, network and trust build towards local people. The proposed activities were encroaching into the social and culture heritage to the identified sites within the Marshall Islands.

The Gender Office was called to join the project called “Managing Coastal Aquifer Project” to conduct the community engagement. The Gender Officer was managed to divide the groups into 4 groups – women, men, teen girls/boys<sup>53</sup>. The purpose for these four groups was to capture all ideas based on the difference level of experiences and knowledge. This project is aligned with SPC’s 2020 Social Environment Responsibility Policy. The proposed socio-cultural survey is aim to:

- Identify and assess all social and cultural heritage in projects sites, and particularly the links to water and natural resources management.
- Understand and manage project activities to allow the protection of social and cultural heritage from damage, inappropriate alteration, disruption, removal or misuse.
- Recognize and foster full respect of indigenous people’s human rights
- Embed a people-centered approach across all project activities so that target communities benefit equitably and maximally.
- To ensure activities that may impact indigenous people are designed in a spirit of partnership with them, with their full and effective participation, with the objective of securing their free, prior and informed consent where their rights, lands, territories,

The recommendations & the negative impact of

1. Women group

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<sup>53</sup> Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs/Gender Office Report, 2022.

- We’ the women” often the one who collected our water from other places far from our home.
- We need to be more involved in any decision-making during any disaster.
- We need more

## UNIT THREE: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

**Question 28:** Please describe your country’s national strategy or action plan for gender equality, including its name, the period it covers, its priority, funding and alignment with the 20230 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.

### Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs

The Gender in Development Office (GiD) aims is to strengthen the representation and participation of women leaders in development, and ensure equal opportunities for women, men, girls and boys. GiD office take lead in the implementation of gender equality commitments including the implementation of international commitments such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Regional commitments such as the Pacific Platform of Action, Pacific Leaders Gender Declaration, and the National Strategic Plan 2020-2030, Gender Equality Act, and the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act Gender Office also helps develop and strength maintain programs and services focused on social and human rights. The action plan is alignment with SDG 5, “Gender Equality<sup>54</sup>”

### Details of activities to be implemented

#### 5 Years Project

Asian Development Bank (ADB) team have brief RMI Madam President Heine and Cabinet about the proposed new RMI project called “Women and Youth Skills Empowerment and Resilience (WYSER, 5 years project) with the worth of \$21.73 Million. The purposes of the ADB mission were to meet with the key stakeholders, especially for the Gender and Youth office to go over the project and how it will run and by whom.

The Secretary of MoCIA & Finance are now reviewing all the documents before the ADB team comes back for the endorsement before the end of May 2024.

<sup>54</sup> Gender Office & Youth Office, project under Asian Development Bank, 2023-2027.



This project is aligned with the following impacts:

1. An enabling and sustainable environment built where all youth of the Marshall Islands develop their full capacity and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development (*National Youth Policy 2021-2025*).
2. Gender Equality and the empowerment of women in the RMI progressed, with the meaningful involvement and contributions of all development sectors and civil society (*National Mainstreaming Policy*).

**Priorities:**

1. Women Economic Empowerment (WEE)
2. Gender Based Violence (GBV)
3. Women in Decision-Making
4. Gender-Responsive Climate Justice

**The Outcomes:**

2. Vulnerable youth and women accessing quality skills training.
3. Support services increased.

**The Outputs:**

1. Climate – resilient facilities for women and youth upgraded and expanded.

There will be a new building/center that will be built by WYSER project. This building/center will house the offices of the government’s Gender in Development Office and enter operations staff, including counseling services. It will also include operating space for two women focused CSOs such as WUTMI/WiM & Kora Fund. The purpose of this new building/center is to help access to training and support services for vulnerable women and at-risk youth.

2. Skills and livelihood development activities implemented.

This output will deliver skills and related support activities for vulnerable women and at-risk youth in urban and rural areas, as well as in the neighboring islands. Following are the training skills.

- Informal skills training, in areas such as short-course vocational training.
- Support groups and counselling sessions.
- Careers and employment drop-in session.
- Marketing and business mentoring
- Health and wellness activities
- Education session – related topics will be “parenting skills and women’s rights.
- Traditional elder and youth storytelling discussions.
- Craft workshops and cultural activities.
- Networking events, and
- Handicraft, food, and retail market days.

This project will be working closely with the National Training Council (NTC) and deliver targeted employment or livelihood creation programs for small groups of vulnerable youth and women living in or from rural Majuro and neighboring islands village.

3. The capacity of government and civil society organizations to implement youth and women's empowerment activities strengthened.
  - To strengthen the capacity of key stakeholders to deliver support services to vulnerable women and youth.
  - This project will hire professional development for management and staff working in gender and youth offices by providing training and mentoring by long-term gender and youth advisors within the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MoCIA)
  - Youth and Women councils will be re-established, and government staff from other ministries will be trained in gender equality and mainstreaming, as well as training the NGOs delivering services to youth and women in topics such as fundraising, communications, and long-term sustainability planning.
  - To support the government in developing new childcare regulations, policies, and procedures, and
  - To design and implement women and youth's events.

Apart from the commitments/action plan above, Gender in Development Office is waiting for the proposal that was sent to Pacific Women Lead (PWL) grant in 2023. This request/proposal is still pending and has not been provided any update from PWL yet. Hope RMI will get some closure soon. One of the main purposes for this proposal was to help update the gender data since the Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO) was not having enough information regarding gender equality. It would be very hard for GID Office to offer support since we don't have concrete evidence to support groups of women or invidiously.

This proposal was requested to cover these outcomes/objectives below:

- **Outcome 1:** Strengthen the accessibility of gender equality services through mobile community engagement.
  - b. **Objective 1:** Coordinate the setup of a community engagement mobile team with relevant partners, develop a Gender Equality Analysis Report on the Status of Women in the RMI to strengthen Gender Equality community engagement response and related services.
- **Outcome 2:** strengthen capacity to mainstream gender and social inclusion & improve policies, programs and project to respond to gender inequalities within the RMI.
  - **Objective 2:** strengthen capacity for gender and social inclusion response to Gender Equalities.
- **Outcome 3:** Strengthen coordination and collaboration efforts amongst stakeholders on Gender Equality Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation & Lesson Learned.

- **Objective 3.1:** Improved Planning, Coordination, Collaboration and Reporting on Gender Equality Progress in RMI.

**Objective 3.2:** Strengthen Partners Preparation, Organization, Coordination, Facilitation and Collaborative efforts on Gender Equality implementing action.

One of the main purposes for this proposal was to help update the gender data since the Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO) was not having enough information regarding gender. It would be very hard for the GID Office to offer support since we don't have the concrete evidence for Gender Inequality.

*Question 29: Please describe your country's system for tracking the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting), including the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in this area.*

The Public Financial Management Act, 2023 is to provide a legal framework for public financial management for the Republic of the Marshall Islands:

- To adopt a Financial Management Information System.
- To establish an Internal Audit function in the Ministry of Finance.
- To establish a unified cash management through a Treasury Single Account structure of government bank account.
- To prescribe the roles and responsibilities of persons entrusted with public financial management
- To provide for sanctions.
- To repeal the Appropriated Funds Act 1977, the General Fund Investments Act 1979, and the Financial Year Act 1986, and for related matters.

The money that has been allocated to Gender in Development office is at least approximately \$49,547 in every FY.

*Question 30: What formal mechanisms are in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?*

RMI relevant partners for gender equality have been reporting on Ministries' objectives listed within the NSP which are linked to SDGs. Below are the following stakeholders that are participating in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

- Sustainable Development

- Private Sector: Chamber of Commerce
- Women’s Organization: WUTMI, KIO club, OCIT
- Parliament: Minister in Assistant to the President
- RMI Government Ministries
  
- Beijing Platform for Acton Stakeholder
- Human Rights committee
- Civil Society Organization
- Private Sector
- Cabinet

*Question 31: Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.*

It was quite difficult to reach out to the stakeholders and relevant partners to conduct interviews due to their timing and schedule. Some of the questions from this report has left out due to no responds and

the right persons are on travel duties. This report was conducted through interviews and report from relevant Ministries and Agencies as well as the NGOs. Therefore, it was worth to learn new information.

#### Recommendation

- Need to make sure supervisor(s) are in this process to make it lot easier for GID to conduct the review report.
- Partnerships in this report process.
- Head of Department (HOD) need to step in and to make sure responders are fully cooperative and can be able to be able to provide answers in the timely manner.

## UNIT FOUR: DATA AND STATISTICS

*Question 32: What are the most important areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?*

Over the past five years, according to the Compendium of Analyses of the 2019/20 Household income and Expenditure Survey, the most progress that RMI had made when it comes to gender statistics at the national level is<sup>55</sup>:

- Poverty profile:
  - Age and Gender based on the population.
  - Poverty rate by sex of household head and area
- Labor force and labor force participation rate

<sup>55</sup> HISES Survey 2019/20

- Labour force participate rate
- Labour force by education attainment
  - Employment
- Employment and its main classificaitons
- Employment to population ratio
- Employment by economic activities
- Employment by status in employment
  - Unemployment and labour underutilization
- Unemployment rate
- Labour underutilization
- Youth no in employment, education or training
  - Wages
- Average monthly wages in the main job of employees
  - Main activity status and subsistence work
- Main activity status
- Main activity status and labour force status
- Subsistence work and household care
  - Population profile
- Education profile of persons aged 3+
- Received scholarship
- Activity profile (aged 15+)
- Main income items
- Employee benefits
- Primary activities

*Question 33: Over the next five years, what are your country's priorities for strengthening national gender statistics?*

The Gender in Development Office has developed a 5-year action plan. In this action plan, one of the outcomes is to strengthen coordination and collaboration efforts amongst stakeholders on Gender Equality Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Lesson Learned. The objective is to improve planning, coordination, collaboration and reporting on Gender Equality progress in the RMI to convene the streamlining of the Gender Equality Act and messaging into core businesses delivery with relevant Government stakeholders, as well as National Gender country reflections for Government and CSO's partners. One of the important parts is to strengthen and coordinate partnerships within Government stakeholders to support gender equality in collaboration with the Office of the Economic Planning, Policy and Statistics (EPPSO) to conduct gender equality planning and gender sensitive budgeting and reporting at least twice a year, as well as to strengthen and coordinate partnerships with women's right movement and civil society organizations working to engage men and boys to support gender equality. The GID office have preparing documents to collaborate with Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics

for the compilation of gender/sex disaggregated data (including socio-culture and key populations datasets).

*Question 34: What gender – specific indicators have your country’s priorities for monitoring progress on the SDGs?*

### **The Indicators**

A. Women, men and boys in RMI have increased opportunity to influence and engage with policy and government programs, through the consultations to develop the Gender Equality Report on the Status of Women in RMI.

- **Indicator**

- # of women, adolescent girls, youth and networks in all their diversity meaningfully participating and engaging in the consultation of the Gender Equality Report on the Status of Women in RMI. (At least 100 women and adolescent girls engage in consultation on the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy and other key areas of policy during the Policy review consultations.)
- The Republic of Marshall Islands has a cross sectoral approach to Gender Equality mobile community engagement response and related services and a clear and detailed plan of action with measurable results.

B. Capacity of stakeholders within Government and civil societies is strengthened to implement gender equality and mainstreaming activities within existing national priorities.

- **Indicator**

- # of Government other staff and civil society representatives trained in gender mainstreaming, at least 50% government staff and 50% civil society representatives has been trained on gender mainstreaming.
- # of government other staff and civil society representatives applying gender mainstreaming tools.

C. Increase in demand for technical and gender equality and mainstreaming support by other government ministries and civil society.

- **Indicator**

- # of research, publications, reports and policies contextualized and culturally grounded approaches to human rights, culture and gender and social inclusion.

- # of government ministries and # of civil societies supported with policy and other technical review on gender and social inclusion/mainstreaming.

D. RMI Communities, women and vulnerable groups have increased knowledge and awareness and appreciation of gender equality, GBV and disability inclusion.

- **Indicator**

- # of key messages developed and delivered on gender equality and social inclusion
- # of people and communities who participated in sessions on gender issues and women's equal rights.
- # of people and communities in all their diversity who have increased knowledge, awareness and appreciation of gender equality in RMI.

E. Communities in the RMI receive key evidence – based messaging on preventing family violence and the harm of violence against women and girls as well as disability and social inclusion.

- **Indicator**

- # of key messages developed and delivered on preventing violence against women
- # of people and communities who participated in sessions on gender issues and women's equal rights. (key message on gender equality and social inclusion reach 100 people).
- Evidence of communities and families practicing and promoting non- violence and inclusion

F. Strengthen gender equality commitment and collaboration at national, sub regional and regional levels

- **Indicator**

- # of cross government mechanisms implementing human rights and GESI commitments at national, sub regional and regional levels with SPC support.
- Perspectives of key stakeholders improved on the level of coordination across actors on human rights and social development priorities.

*Question 35: Which data disaggregation is routinely provided by major surveys in your country?*

The Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office was established to as an advisory body to the Government of the day on matters of economic of the Marshall Islands, and has the responsibility for the development of sound economic policies and strategic planning, based

amongst other factors, the analysis of statistical data representing the various subject matters in the area of Government operations and of the communities in the Republic<sup>56</sup>, as set out under schedule 1 of the statistics act 1986. EPPSO duties are to:

- Advise on – overall national development goals and strategies to cabinet and budget preparation for the Ministry of Finance
- Monitoring and evaluation of the compact and related agreements
- Conducting economic and social studies, reviews, and assessments.

Any survey reports provided by EPPSO, most of it came with different information based on the Geographic location, income, sex/gender, age, education, marital status, race/ethnicity, migratory status, disability. The limitation in this review is that there is no information of data for sexual orientation and religion. From what I understand as a Marshallese, LGBT people in the Marshall Islands may face legal challenges due to culture norms. However, Marshallese people often don't really talk about religion during conducting survey or questionnaires because when someone is mentioning "religion" they might think you're judging or comparing how they're serving God.

## UNIT FIVE: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Gender Equality "what is it and why do we need it?" - Gender Equality is when people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. Although Marshallese women have gained numerous rights, such as the right to works and been developed in multiple spheres, they still face challenges. The purpose of this review report is to capture and highlight all achievements, challenges and priorities within the RMI over the past five years. This review report has navigated the intricacies of sustainable development within the RMI, shedding light on the pivotal role of the Government of the RMI. Through applying qualitative research methods, this report managed to uncover valuable insights into the remaining challenges and the opportunities/achievements that RMI has over the past five years. This review report underscores the significance of how Marshallese people involved and forward-thinking strategies in shaping the future of our beautiful Marshall Islands.

Following is what this report have identified:

- This report has identified the weakness and the strength within each stakeholder and partners.
- This report has identified types of action that should be included to address the gaps and the remain issues/challenges.
- Government Ministries should be more inclusive when implementing project and activities within the RMI.

### Recommendations

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<sup>56</sup> RMI Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO)



- Since time and schedule are tightly controlled, this report should have a committee from each Ministries, NGOs, and other relevant partners to help gather information.
- Support from Head of Department should be in place during the whole progress

#### Lesson Learned

- Call out for all relevant partners for a half-day consultation to go over the questionnaires and to identify who is relevant to the question(s) to avoid overlap works.
- Give them at least 5 months in advance so that they can have time to provide lots of information.

In analysis this work, this review report has given inspiration from so many various sources that help providing information for this review report, subsequently building on imaginative capacity as well as the practical knowledge toward SDG 5. Therefore, the entire review period has been given the Gender in Development Office lots of information on how and what “action” must be done in the next coming five years.