

## **TWG Consultations Country Statement**

### **Feb. 11, 2021**

#### **COUNTRY STATEMENT**

##### INTRO:

Greetings/IAKWE. Thank you for this opportunity to speak and thank you to the TWG for organizing this regional consultation to ensure Pacific voices are reflected in the report of the HLP on Internal Displacement.

##### Context:

Before I proceed to respond to the two guiding questions, maybe I can provide some context on the current situation in the RMI in regards to internal displacement.

(As mentioned in previous dialogues), RMI has no national policies/legislative frameworks in place of which addresses climate change related displacement, migration or relocation.

Currently RMI's coordination mechanism in responding to Disaster- related crisis mimics the UN Cluster System. This was adopted by the National Disaster Committee back in 2013 when the country was responding to a nation-wide drought. The UN Cluster System improved coordination with our national and international partners, but we are strengthening and improving our system as we go. . As for displacement, we haven't had any recent large-scale disasters that have resulted in permanent displacement. There have been several incidents of inundations from high tides and strong winds that have destroyed homes and personal belongings. In 1979 a series of storms hit the Marshall Islands forcing communities to relocate into tent cities in other areas of the island. But again, these are usually temporary. They'll return to the same areas and rebuild. Hence, this coordination mechanism is usually activated during times of disaster or state of emergencies.

As mentioned previously, providing temporary shelters is our only response to displacement, utilizing public spaces such as structurally sound school buildings and churches. There are no permanent mechanisms established yet, but in past practices, because of current early warning technologies, the National Disaster Management Office has been able to work closely with key clusters and the public in times of King Tides to

prepare these temporary shelters, warn the public of possible/potential surges and temporarily accommodate them in the shelters.

Although dealing with large scale disaster displacement is rare and we do not have any specific policy towards it, we do recognize that it is an issue and we are open to collaborate with other countries or development partners on how we can shape this conversation and develop solutions.

It is good to hear and learn from other Pacific Island countries on what they are doing to address displacement. Some are practices that the RMI could adopt. Of course, although we are very similar in many ways, we do have distinct differences and unique situations that vary across the Pacific, and those will have to be taken into consideration.

- Policy would be first to have to pave the way for first responders and decision makers for internal displacement.
- Financial Resources to capacitate the RMI's current resources.
- Technical Assistance in conducting awareness and training to key stakeholders, especially beneficiaries.

The type of support needed for governments in the region to address this issue varies. For us we need

- Technical assistance support for policy development
- Training and capacity building for key stakeholders
- Financial Resources would be the key support factor