



RMI: Drought

Situation Report No. 8



This report is produced by the National Emergency Operation Centers. It covers the period from 27 March to 09 April 2016.

Highlights

Background

- RMI Drought Immediate and Near Response Plan endorsed by Cabinet on 3rd March 2016.
- Her Excellency President Dr. Hilda Heine has extended the RMI State of Drought Disaster on 6th April 2016.
- Response efforts coordinated through the National Emergency Operation Center.

21,000

People across the RMI are affected from severe drought

1,909

Households affected in outer islands

5,195

Households affected in Urban Areas (Majuro & Ebeye)



Map Sources: UNCS, Gov't. of U.S.A.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Map created Jun 2010 - www.rmiweb.org

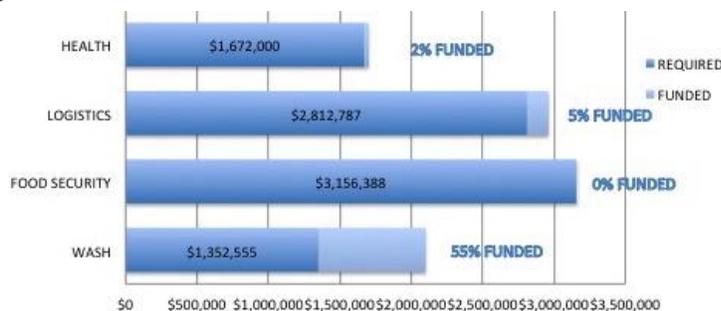
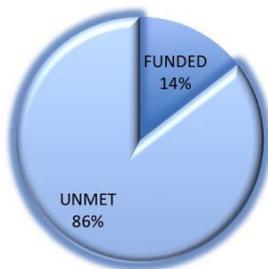
Funding and Contributions

The total funding requirement outlined in the RMI Response Plan is estimated at \$8.9 million. A significant funding gap of an estimated \$8.9 million remains to meet the immediate and near-term needs identified in the plan. International assistance is required and requested, as the RMI Government does not have the financial or logistical capacity to address the full scale of needs associated with the drought.

Approximately 21,000 people across RMI are in need of WASH assistance, while more than 4,700 face moderate to severe food shortages.

Based on inputs from the RMI Emergency Operations Center, the following table illustrates funding requirements across the four RMI Drought Clusters.

USD \$8.9 MILLION REQUIRED



Humanitarian Response

Further to the Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDA) conducted by the Team from the Government of the United States of America comprising of WASH sector, Agriculture, Health, Logistics, FEMA and USAID/OFDA in coordination with officials from the RMI Government, Her Excellency President Hilda C. Heine wrote a letter to His Excellency President Barack H. Obama requesting a U.S. Presidential Disaster for the Republic of the Marshall Islands as a result of the severe drought conditions in effects since December 2015 under the provisions of the Compact of Free Associations, as Amended between the RMI and U.S. Governments.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is coordinating with the EOC and actively participating in all clusters to provide support for the implementation of the response plan. To date IOM has received approximately USD\$440,000 combined from USAID/OFDA and Australia Aid to address immediate needs for WASH cluster activities. This assistance includes procurement of require items, logistical support (planning and implementation, and culturally appropriate awareness-raising on drought pest practices. In addition IOM continues to provide ongoing technical support to the EOC and Office of the Chief Secretary through the USAID-funded Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response (“PREPARE”) program to meet immersing needs.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community to assist the RMI in line with areas of need including WASH, Health and Agriculture/Food Security Clusters.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Needs:

1. Provision of drinking water Majuro Atoll
2. Provision of hygiene water for Majuro Atoll
3. Provision of drinking and hygiene water Outer Islands (2.6 gallons per person per day)
4. Provision of WASH Kit (outer islands and Majuro islets)
5. Technical assistance in rainwater harvesting maintenance to maximize catchment from rainfall event that occur during the drought.

Response:

- To date MIRCS has conducted a total of 52 hours of community education through the distribution of printed take home materials at Majuro water distribution points.
- MIRCS has passed WASH awareness messages via a radio program.
- To date 1,900 jerry cans (10L) deployed to Ailinglaplap, Jaluit and Namu from USAID funded, IOM implement warehouse in Majuro
- To date 11,218 soap bars (113gm) deployed to Ailinglaplap, Jaluit, Namu, Aur, Ailuk, Maloelap, and Lib funded by Australia Aid, implemented by IOM
- IOM funded by USAID has procured and awaiting arrival of 8 additional 360 gallon per day RO units to be deployed to WASH cluster priority locations.
- To date the Government has deployed 33 portable RO units in 19 atolls/islands. (Refer to attachment)
- Water distribution points have been installed in Mili and Arno Atolls.
- 15 water distribution points have been installed thru out Majuro.
- Government approved a six months SWRO lease contract for Majuro Atoll. The SWRO has the capacity of 260,000 gallons per day.
- Government approved the purchase of 12 solar powered reverse osmosis units to be deployed to the outer islands.
- To assist the RMI Government's efforts, SPC has provided supported thus far through:
 - The provisions of 208 water tanks for the outer islands under the EU-funded EDF10 Building Safety and Resilience in the Pacific project (BSRP) project (still in progress).
 - An assessment of the groundwater reserves at Laura on Majuro. The assessment has confirmed the sustainability of the lens and that 'modest' increases in pumping may be possible in selected wells around Laura for the next 6 month (a final report of the assessment is to be provided shortly by SPC).

Gaps & Constraints:

- Procurement of 39 x 360 GPD RO units and spare parts for outer islands
- Procurement of 3 mid-sized RO units of 800 GPD to provide drinking and hygiene water to outer island communities that are larger than average and host boarding high schools.
- Support for the maintenance of 15 x 300 gpd RO units procured under the PEC programme.
- Government's lack of warehouse capacity, for prepositioned emergency items/equipment.
- Support for the maintenance of current Government owned fleet of portable RO units (29 units).
- Regular RO monitoring to effected atolls to ensure proper functioning of units and conduct preventative maintenance.



Logistics

Needs:

- In coordination with the WASH cluster, the logistics cluster continues to monitor and refine the water distribution schedule of distribution points in Majuro – particularly the high traffic areas – to ensure those most vulnerable citizens are able to access water points.

Response:

- 19 air bridges has been implemented to support the WASH cluster activities.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Limited availability of transportation (sea and air) to outer islands continues to be an issue faced by the Government to respond in a timely manner. At the same time, when transportation is available to the outer islands, it is very costly.
- Additional financial support is needed to continue with a robust logistics plan to ensure outer islands populations are serviced in a timely, potentially, lifesaving manner.



Food Security

Needs:

1. Provisions of supplement of food assistance for the affected outer islands.
2. Continuation of the monitoring of food security.
3. Provisions of seeds and seedlings
4. Capacity building on food security recovery.

Response:

- Given the decline in food crop production in terms of bananas, pandanus, breadfruit and coconut as indicated in the drought situation reports, SPC will continue with supporting the finalization of the Agriculture assessment and undertake further consultation with the Ministry of Resources and Development's DOA on the request for seedlings and the construction of the nursery.
- DOA of Ministry of Resources & Development is liaising closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) technical expert through the TCP/MAS project who's on island to design and upgrade DOA's nursery.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Provisions of supplemental food assistance to the affected outer islands.
- Provisions of drought resilient seeds and seedlings for recovery after normal rainfall returns.
- Limited experts to provide technical assistance in terms of food security recovery.

Needs:

1. Ensure morbidity and mortality of diseases is maintained at low incidence.
2. Ensure all health centers are stocked with essential medical supplies at all times.

Response:

- The Ministry of Health continues to collect daily surveillance from all the remote outer atolls/islands through HF Radio. As of date, there has been a slight increased number of conjunctivitis.
- As the drought progresses and with a great chance of worsening, the Ministry is engaging daily with the Health Assistants in the outer atolls/islands to be vigilant and to also be mindful of the diabetes and hypertensive patients.
- On Sunday April 3, a deployment of the essential medical list to Maloelap was implemented.
- Surveillance activities by the RMI Ministry of Health are being supported by Dr. Mark Durand, a Consultant provided by the Pacific Islands Health Officials Association sponsored by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. SPC will monitor the drought situation remotely and liaise with Dr. Durand who will be serving with the RMI until February 2017. Any future assistance in terms of surveillance and/or laboratory support would depend on a future determination of needs

Gaps & Constraints:

- Replenishment of pharmaceuticals to the national depot is urgently needed.
- Deployment of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to affected outer islands.

Donations

The Government of the RMI encourages donors to make cash donations for maximum speed and flexibility, and to ensure that the most appropriate type of aid is delivered. Individuals or organizations who are interested in making in-kind contributions are requested to contact the EOC to ensure that any proposed items are both needed and relevant.

General Coordination

Coordination is conducted in the national Emergency Operations Center (EOC) through the Chief Secretary's Office, who is Chair of the National Disaster Committee. National agencies coordinate their efforts through the four activated clusters (WASH, Logistics, Food Security and Health).

Background on the crisis

Located just north of the equator in the Pacific Ocean, the Republic of the Marshall Islands is made up of 1,200 islands, islets and atolls with a land area of 180 square kilometers. The NDMO requested technical assistance from all cluster members to provide support to the Office of the Chief Secretary in response to the drought impacts. Through monitoring, surveys and rapid assessments evidence highlights that the current drought impacts are seen primarily in the WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) sector, food security and agriculture sector and continued need for preventative health measures to prevent disease outbreak. The logistics cluster will assist to fully implement all activities under the response plan. In order to reduce suffering and intervene before critical life threatening situations emerge; the EOC has developed the follow 9 month response plan to continue to address the emerging WASH needs, implement food security and agriculture cluster, logistics cluster and health cluster activities. The plan will be revised and updated as the situation progresses. The Cluster plans will vary in duration and needs as the concerns and response needed changes over time depending on rainfall and agricultural impacts of the next 6-9 months.

For further information, please contact:

Antonio Eliu, Director, National Disaster Management Office antonio.eliu@yahoo.com Tel:+692 625 5181;
Mobile: +692 456-0819 **Keyoka Kabua**, Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, rmieoc@gmail.com
or kpkabua@gmail.com Tel:+692 625 3234; Mobile: +692 455-7918