

REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS IOM COUNTRY STRATEGY 2017–2020



International Organization for Migration
The UN Migration Agency

The opinions expressed in the publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Publisher: International Organization for Migration
2nd Floor A/C Construction Building
Delap, Majuro, MH
96960
Republic of the Marshall Islands
Website: www.iom.int

© 2017 International Organization for Migration (IOM)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.

REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS IOM COUNTRY STRATEGY 2017–2020



International Organization for Migration
The UN Migration Agency



CONTENTS

Foreword by the Chief of mission	v
Executive summary	vii
International Organization for Migration	vii
Part I: Background	1
Demographics and human development indicator status	2
Peace and security	2
Gender	2
Human rights	3
Migration in the Republic of the Marshall Islands	4
Part II: IOM'S Strategic priorities in the Pacific	9
Strategic priorities.....	9
IOM's programming principles.....	15
Annex 1: Migration and the sustainable development goals	17
Annex 2: Migration in international legal frameworks.....	19



FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF OF MISSION

Migration has long been a key feature of the Marshallese identity, characterized by movements between the thousands of islands in the region. More recently, the migration dynamics have been dominated by the movement of Marshallese to more developed economies of the United States, Australia and New Zealand, as well as the threat of mass displacement and forced migration resulting from the changing climate.

In our modern era, communities in the Republic of the Marshall Islands are facing new challenges to which they must adapt as seen through the Joint National Action Plan of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The changing climate is just one of these. The relationship between climate change and migration is complex, tied up in a set of political, economic, and social dynamics which impact people's ability and willingness to move.

Frequent natural disasters in the Republic of the Marshall Islands have resulted in regular occurrences of internal displacement, as people seek safety from the impact of cyclones/typhoons, inundations and drought. However, the deeply rooted relationship that communities have with the land means that planned relocation or long-term migration, as a climate change adaptation strategy and durable solution for mass displacement, is often not the first choice for people on islands most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards. For many, migration is viewed as a last resort, as is evidenced through the lobby at the Paris Agreement by Climate Ambassador Tony de Brum, as well as large social movement campaigns such as "1.5 to Stay Alive". On that basis, it is imperative that, should this eventuality occur, people are offered the option described by ex-President Anote Tong of Kiribati as "migration with dignity".



Mr Stuart Simpson

Chief of Mission, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Palau.

While recognizing that there are different migration dynamics, in general when people choose to migrate, it is in search of short- and long-term economic opportunities, usually with the aim of returning home in the future. At present, over 30 per cent of the population of the Republic of the Marshall Islands is living abroad, a circumstance that has been facilitated through the preferential entry arrangements with the United States under the Compact of Free Association.

There is much scope for strengthening migration programming in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the IOM Republic of the Marshall Islands Strategy 2017–2020 lays out the key areas in which we will support governments to achieve this. These areas fall within IOM's three global areas of intervention as defined in our Migration Governance Framework: (1) ensuring that migration harnesses socioeconomic benefits for migrants and societies; (2) responding to the mobility dimensions of humanitarian emergencies; and (3) ensuring that migration takes place in a safe, dignified and orderly manner.

These goals will be achieved by implementing programmes in line with IOM's three global principles: (1) adhering to international standards and fulfilling of migrants' rights; (2) encouraging the use of evidence and whole-of-government approaches; and (3) prioritizing working through strong partnerships. I greatly look forward to working with our partners in the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, traditional leaders, civil society and academia in the country, as well as international organizations, to achieve these goals and ensure that the rich relationship between migration and development in the nation State continues to grow. Rather than seeing migration as a problem to be solved, IOM regards migration as a human reality to be managed. This is particularly important in the Pacific, where migration has long been a means of both adapting to challenges and seeking out new opportunities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the IOM Republic of Marshall Islands Country Strategy 2017–2020 is to provide a framework for addressing migration challenges and identifying priorities for action to guide IOM’s response to the needs of the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands,¹ as well as migrants, migration-affected communities and other relevant stakeholders. This country strategy aligns with the IOM Pacific Strategy and is guided by IOM’s Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). IOM’s three strategic priorities identified in this Republic of the Marshall Islands strategy are:

- Strategic Priority 1: Migrants and communities in the Republic of the Marshall Islands benefit from migration as a sustainable development and climate change adaptation strategy.
- Strategic Priority 2: Displaced persons and affected communities in the Republic of the Marshall Islands are protected from and resilient to the impact of natural disasters and climate change.
- Strategic Priority 3: Migrants in Republic of the Marshall Islands enjoy protection from human rights abuses and are able to migrate in a safe, orderly, and dignified manner.

The above priorities are informed by the UN Pacific Strategy, the Republic of the Marshall Islands Agenda 2020, the Republic of the Marshall Islands National Strategic Plan 2013–2017, and the Joint National Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation.

¹ As outlined in the Republic of the Marshall Islands Agenda 2020.

International Organization for Migration

Established in 1951, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental partners.

With 166 Member States, a further 8 States holding observer status and offices in over 100 countries, IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants.

IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems, and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced persons.

IOM’s Definition of “Migrant”

IOM defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of: (1) the person’s legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is. IOM concerns itself with migrants and migration-related issues and, in agreement with relevant States, with migrants who are in need of international migration services.



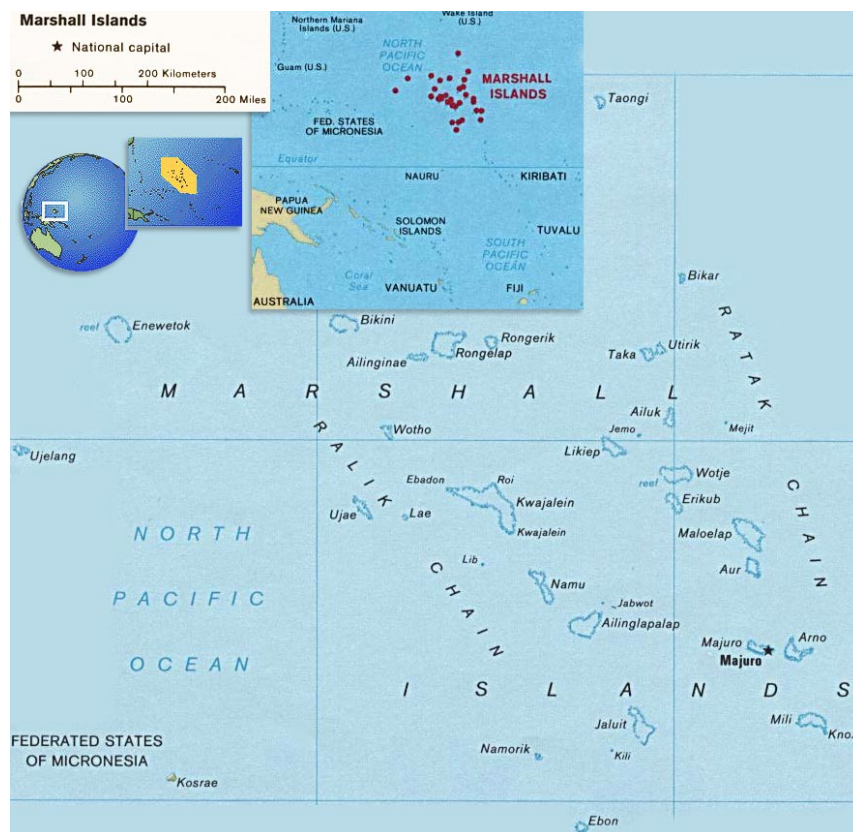
PART I: BACKGROUND

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is made up of two archipelago island chains, spread across 29 atolls and islands in the North Pacific. For nearly 40 years after World War II, the Republic of the Marshall Islands was part of a UN Trust Territory under US administration, during which the United States conducted a series of nuclear tests and set up a military base on Kwajalein Atoll. In 1986, the nation became independent under the Compact of Free Association (COFA) with the United States. The COFA treaty grants the United States exclusive military rights over the more than 2 million square miles of ocean encompassing three countries – the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau. In exchange, these nations receive financial aid and their citizens are permitted to live and work in the United States even without a visa or a green card (and thus technically are not immigrants). The Republic of the Marshall Islands is one of the 16 Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Since 1979, the Republic of the Marshall Islands has been self-governing.

Compact of Free Association

The Compact of Free Association is an agreement between the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the United States, which provides for US economic assistance (including eligibility for certain US federal programmes), defence of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and other benefits in exchange for US defence and certain other operating rights in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, denial of access to the Republic of the Marshall Islands territory by other nations, and other agreements.



Source: n.a.

Demographics and Human Development Indicator Status

According to the 2011 census, the Republic of the Marshall Islands has a population of 53,158 of whom the majority are ethnic Marshallese. The nation is becoming increasingly urbanized, with over 73.8 per cent living in urban centres, primarily Majuro and Ebeye.

The population of the Republic of the Marshall Islands is relatively young, with an average age just under 23. There is also a low population growth rate, because many young people are migrating, primarily to the United States, as they are allowed to work and travel freely under the COFA. All children have access to primary education, but many students have to move to the one of four islands for secondary education, which may be a contributing factor to the 50 per cent high school enrollment rate. Preventable, non-communicable diseases are relatively high in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the country experiences regular outbreaks of communicable diseases, including recent epidemics of zika and hepatitis A. Marshall Islanders in both the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the United States have among the highest rates of Type 2 diabetes in the world. For the Marshallese, access to dialysis is difficult to obtain on the islands and cost-prohibitive for those living in the United States. Among Marshall Islanders in Arkansas and elsewhere, untreated diabetes has frequently resulted in blindness, amputation and other impairments. Moreover, despite the fact that atomic testing ended more than 60 years ago, the Marshallese continue to suffer from unusually high rates of thyroid disorders, birth defects and cancer.² Other socioeconomic concerns in the Republic of the Marshall Islands include high rates of unemployment and overdependence on US foreign aid, which is set to end in 2023 during the transition period of the COFA.

² M.R. Duke, "Marshall Islanders: Migration patterns and health-care challenges" (Migration Policy Institute, 2014).

Peace and Security

There has been no recent conflict in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and its citizens enjoy a democratically elected Government. The most common crimes in the Republic of the Marshall Islands include petty theft, burglary and personal assault. Anecdotally, much of the crime is alcohol related. Natural hazards can include tropical storms and typhoons, and potentially tsunamis. There is also a high prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV), including family and intimate-partner violence.

Gender

Marshallese culture is matrilineal with an established social protection system based on access to land cooperative labour, social obligations and reciprocity. Women hold office at all levels of government and are active in the workforce. The Republic of the Marshall Islands is home to the first female president in the Pacific, Her Excellency Hilda Heine. In the last two decades, there has been a shift from large traditional family structures, which include traditional safety nets for women and girls, to more nuclear family structures. Studies indicate a decline in family values and erosion of traditional safety nets, leading to an increase in violence, particularly towards women.³ Thus, the response to violence against women and girls (VAWG) and family violence now requires a first-responder approach, which is a shift from traditional response mechanisms. Intimate-partner violence and VAWG are widespread across the Republic of the Marshall Islands, with 69 per cent of women experiencing physical or sexual violence in their lives from either a partner or a non-partner. There are limited resources available to support survivors of intimate-partner violence and GBV, but much progress has been made by local non-governmental organizations, such as Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI), which have the support of the Ministry of

³ Republic of the Marshall Islands Ministry of Internal Affairs, *Republic of the Marshall Islands National Study on Family Health and Safety* (Majuro, 2014).



Distribution of female hygiene kits. © IOM Republic of the Marshall Islands 2016

Internal Affairs to provide services for women and girls aged 14 and up. The Republic of the Marshall Islands continues to see high rates of pregnancy among women under the age of 18, particularly in rural areas.

Human Rights

While the Republic of the Marshall Islands has a bill of rights guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedom from discrimination, implementation of the bill has not yet taken full

force. According to the Marshall Islands 2015 Human Rights Report, the “most significant human rights problems included prison conditions, chronic government corruption, and chronic domestic violence.” Other human rights violations included “child abuse, sex trafficking, and lack of legal provisions protecting workers’ rights.” To support the actualization of meeting this bill, the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands has established a human rights committee and a national task force on human trafficking, a process that involves a



Republic of the Marshall Islands cabinet briefing on human trafficking. © IOM Republic of the Marshall Islands 2016

review of human rights records. During the 2010 Universal Periodic Review process, the Republic of the Marshall Islands – among other States in the Asia-Pacific – was reluctant to form a national human rights institution, despite recommendations for its establishment from the Human Rights Council. However, progress has been made in recent years, and in 2015 the Republic of the Marshall Islands passed legislation to set up a human rights committee and related procedures.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands has ratified the following conventions:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- Convention against Corruption;
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Migration in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

Recent Trends in Regular Migration

Approximately one third of the population of the Republic of the Marshall Islands has relocated to the United States, with Hawaii, Arkansas and Washington, D.C., as key destinations. Lack of economic and employment opportunities are among the leading factors that have prompted this dramatic outmigration, which has been enabled by the COFA. Access to education and access to health care – critically important for a population that has reduced life expectancy and significant negative health indicators – also represent key factors that propel the migration flow.

Causes of *ri-Majol* Migration

A number of factors have contributed to the significant outmigration of the Marshallese from their homeland. These include the lack of

economic opportunity, the lack of educational opportunities and limited health care, and internal displacement.

Lack of Economic Opportunity

Many factors, including climate change and globalization, have contributed to a shift from subsistence living on outer islands to the pursuit of formal and informal employment in the urban centres in Majuro and Ebeye. This has led to rapid urbanization and significant pressure on the national labour market. The country is dependent on US foreign aid, which helps to supplement the Government's budget on many operational costs and social services.

Lack of Educational Opportunity and Limited Health Care

A second factor contributing to outmigration is the relative absence of educational opportunities in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, especially secondary and tertiary education. Although a community college and a branch of the University of the South Pacific operate in Majuro, their programmes are relatively limited, and there remains a widely held perception among Marshallese that educational institutions in the United States are of better quality. Thus, there is continued outmigration of individuals and families to access education at all levels in the United States.

The Climate Change and Labour Migration Nexus

An IOM study titled “The Effects of Climate Change on Human Mobility in the Pacific”, conducted in 2016, found that labour migration (especially unskilled and semi-skilled) will be a critical migration pathway in the context of climate change in the Pacific. As climate change impacts increasingly lead to livelihood stress, affected communities are more likely to seek out labour migration opportunities abroad as well as in urban areas in their home countries.

Investment in skills development programmes is needed to leverage the impact of labour mobility schemes as a long-term climate change adaptation response. This includes investment in skills development in countries of origin to meet skills shortages in countries of destination, and recognition/harmonization of qualifications throughout the region.

Marshallese migration patterns are also tied to health care. Though Marshallese citizens enjoy low-cost health care, generally USD 5 per consultation, for those living outside the population centres, health-care access can be very limited. Regardless of where one resides in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the country's health sector lacks the capacity to provide technologically advanced medical interventions and preventative care. Health care influences not only migration from the Republic of the Marshall Islands but internal migration within the United States as well. For example, because Arkansas' health insurance for low-income residents is limited and difficult to access, Marshallese families will sometimes send their elderly parents or other relatives to states such as California and Oregon, which many consider to have more generous benefits.

Internal Displacement

An estimated 14,000 individuals were displaced during the era of US nuclear testing from 1947 to 1958. Some relocated to the United States, but most stayed within the Republic of the Marshall Islands and resided in several locations across the country, including Kili Island, Mejjatto Island, and Ejit Islet, making them internally displaced persons (IDPs). In 2012, the UN Special Rapporteur investigated the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and waste, and found that “a durable solution has yet to be found to the displacement of communities affected by US nuclear testing more than 60 years ago in the Marshall Islands.” IDPs did not suffer societal discrimination and received substantial support from the United States.

Recent Natural Disasters, Displacement Impact and Climate Change Vulnerability

Over the past several years, as well as historically, the Republic of the Marshall Islands has been affected by drought, king tide and storm surge inundations, typhoons and tsunamis. Such events have not only totally destroyed homes but also caused damage to public infrastructure, eroded coastlines, and caused damage to important cultural sites. Droughts in 2013 and 2016 affected over 75 per cent of the population, requiring supplemental food assistance and life-saving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions. The increased severity and frequency of these natural hazards is linked to climate change, and efforts at the grassroots, governmental and international level are being made to spread awareness and promote adaptability to the effects of climate change in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The rising sea levels caused by climate change pose a grave threat to the country's future, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands has been a forceful advocate in the UN for international efforts to reduce greenhouse gases.



Drought impacts agriculture in the northern region of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. © IOM Republic of the Marshall Islands 2016

IOM's Drought Response in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

Beginning in late 2015, the Republic of the Marshall Islands faced a severe drought due to El Niño impacting the Pacific, affecting more than 75 per cent of the country throughout 2016. From the mitigation and assessment stage, until the completion of all response activities, IOM Republic of the Marshall Islands supported the Government and partners to respond to targeted, nuanced needs throughout the country, focusing on the most vulnerable communities and households. There was a response for WASH concerns, which included the deployment of 23 reverse osmosis units and WASH non-food items, such as bars of soap (over 75,000 bars), jerry cans (over 4,000 containers) and female hygiene kits (over 4,000 kits to all women between 15 and 60 years old). Pilot research through the Cookhouse Confidential project was completed to ensure that the needs of women and girls were addressed.

As the drought progressed, assessments showed that targeted supplemental food assistance was required in 12 atolls/islands across the country in order to replace food that would have been grown both for subsistence and livelihood. To address the gaps highlighted by the assessments, IOM distributed over 500 metric tons of food to supplement diets over 9 months. Beyond meeting basic needs, IOM's robust response included mitigation response measures with its rainwater harvesting improvement programme in three atolls and WASH promotion in schools to reduce the spread of diseases. IOM ensured that all partners (national- and local-level governments, civil society, donors and communities) were informed and engaged in the response through situation reports, radio announcements, cleanup contests, and most importantly beneficiary feedback and monitoring systems. Through strong partnership and coordination, IOM Republic of the Marshall Islands was able to support the Government to implement its Drought Response Plan and support the Marshallese in coping with one of the worst El Niño-induced droughts in history.



Supplemental food assistance distribution in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. © IOM Republic of the Marshall Islands 2016



A community meets to learn about water production from the reverse osmosis unit in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. © IOM Republic of the Marshall Islands 2016



PART II: IOM'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN THE PACIFIC

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 1: Migrants and communities in the Republic of the Marshall Islands benefit from migration as a sustainable development and climate change adaptation strategy.

Outcome 1.1: The Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands is maximizing migration as a climate change adaptation and sustainable development strategy.

Outcome 1.2: Migrants, their families, and the communities affected by migration in the Republic of the Marshall Islands enjoy the socioeconomic and cultural benefits of migration.

Outcome 1.3: Migrants, their families, and migration-affected communities enjoy the benefits of good physical health and well-being.

Outcome 1.4: Improved high school and middle school enrollment and attendance rates build resilience of adolescents and the youth (aged 14–25 years) in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Outcome 1.5: Vulnerable communities in the Republic of the Marshall Islands are resilient to climate change, land degradation and resource constraints due to urbanization.

IOM will continue to promote the positive linkages between migration and development in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, as these five outcomes are pursued. Under the **first outcome**, IOM will aim to build the capacity of government, civil society and diaspora groups to implement migration-related policies and programmes. Through increased dialogue and evidence, migrants and governments will be well placed to pursue sustainable and equitable development.

The **second outcome** will focus on enabling migrants, their families and the communities by promoting the positive socioeconomic and cultural benefits of migration. Through information campaigns, such as “I Am a Migrant”, IOM will continue to promote positive the stories of migrants across the Micronesia

region, and of Marshallese in the United States. IOM will also support the improved provision of information on labour migration schemes and educational opportunities, including skills development and orientation programmes, which will help to ensure that migrants are well equipped.

The benefits of good physical health and well-being, as outlined in the **third outcome**, are of paramount importance to facilitate development of migrants, their families and the migration-affected communities. IOM Republic of the Marshall Islands will continue to work with government and civil society groups to increase access to quality migrant health services. IOM will support communities and governments as they respond to health crises, including zika, dengue and tuberculosis.

The **fourth outcome** recognizes that increased attendance and enrolment rates for adolescents and the youth in the Republic of the Marshall Islands are important for the future development of the nation, especially in light of the climate change and migration nexus. IOM will continue to foster key messages around the benefits of quality education, particularly for girls and young women, recognizing the critical role that boys, young men and families also play in this regard. IOM will support the provision of tailored reproductive health information and appropriate school facilities, as each contributes to increased education participation rates, particularly among females. IOM will also capitalize on key lessons highlighted in *Cookhouse Confidential*, a key piece of IOM research on menstrual health in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Under the **fifth outcome**, IOM will work to improve access to sustainable development pathways for communities affected by climate change, land degradation and resource constraints due to urbanization. Through innovative programming as demonstrated through IOM's Climate Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction and Education (CADRE) Programme, we will contribute significantly to this outcome in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. IOM will work with the Government and civil society groups to improve and sustain land and sea life including support for Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) Planning at the national, state and community levels.





Students enjoy reading their CADRE Plus materials. © IOM Republic of the Marshall Islands 2016

Cookhouse Confidential

Cookhouse Confidential is an informal working group comprised of women and various government, non-governmental, intergovernmental sectors along with civil society. The diverse circle of women meets to discuss women's knowledge of community needs, particularly menstrual hygiene during times of disaster.

A preliminary study exploring the intersection of disaster risk management and indigenous research methodology for the purpose of addressing the gender component to disaster management, response and recovery was done. The results of the study were used to design female hygiene kits for the drought emergency response. The Cookhouse Confidential methodology of women's engagement was used for distribution of hygiene kits, information dissemination, and beneficiary follow-up and feedback. This methodology and working group will continue to be utilized in the future to better understand gendered needs.

Strategic Priority 2: Displaced persons and affected communities in the Republic of the Marshall Islands are protected from and resilient to the impact of natural disasters and climate change.

Outcome 2.1: National and local government authorities effectively prevent, respond to, and manage natural and human-made disaster situations.

Outcome 2.2: Communities are resilient to the impact of natural and human-made disasters.

Outcome 2.3: Affected populations receive appropriate humanitarian and recovery assistance in a timely and coordinated manner.

IOM will continue to support the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands Agenda 2020, which commits to “adapting to climate change and reducing disaster risks . . .” In particular, IOM will work with the Office of the Chief Secretary, the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), the National Disaster Committee (NDC), and other key partners to prepare for and respond to disasters. **Outcome 2.1** focuses on providing support to the NDMO at the national and local

levels in order to strengthen contingency plans and standard operating procedures for the NDC members and local governments. These plans and procedures will be tested through simulations and tabletop exercises. Additionally, disaster response coordination mechanisms will be tested to ensure the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands is able to coordinate with US government and other international entities.

Climate Adaptation and Disaster Preparedness in the Education Sector

IOM aims to create holistic solutions to disaster preparedness by strengthening linkages from the grassroots, community level through to state and national governments. IOM has two long-term projects working at each of these respective levels: the CADRE Plus Programme, working at the school and community levels; and the PREPARE Project, providing technical assistance to the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

CADRE Plus and PREPARE have teamed up to create a set of Republic of the Marshall Islands-contextualized training modules on the essentials of humanitarian assistance, which aims to ensure better preparedness and response throughout all of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, by training leaders from the furthest outer-island communities to representatives from the national government. The six modules are centred around adult-based learning techniques and can be tailored to best meet the needs of the audience. The six modules are:

1. Humanitarian principles of emergency management;
2. Humanitarian assistance and COFA relationship;
3. Evacuation centre management;
4. Gender and security in emergencies;
5. Post-event assessments;
6. Distribution and logistics frameworks.

The training will be replicated in the Republic of the Marshall Islands throughout this strategy’s scope, from 2017 to 2020, with the aim of better informing and preparing all segments of Marshallese society to disasters and climate change.

Migration Crisis Operational Framework

The Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) is a practical, operational and institutionwide tool to improve and systematize the way in which the Organization supports its Member States and partners to better prepare for and respond to migration crises. Key features of the MCOF are as follows:

- Combines IOM humanitarian activities and migration management services in 15 sectors of assistance;
- Covers pre-crisis preparedness, emergency response and post-crisis recovery;
- Is based on international humanitarian and human rights law, and humanitarian principles;
- Complements existing international systems (e.g. cluster approach) and builds on IOM's partnerships;
- Helps crisis-affected populations, including displaced persons and international migrants stranded in crisis situations in their destination/transit countries, to better access their fundamental rights to protection and assistance.

Outcome 2.2 focuses on building community-level resilience to the impacts of natural disaster. IOM aims to continue creating programming that provides quality and targeted information and capacity-building, thereby preparing communities for natural disasters.

IOM will help strengthen local and national capacity of at-risk communities to be more resilient to natural disasters. The Organization aims to support improvement of national mechanisms to ensure information and communication flow before, during and after disasters is effective. At-risk communities will have increased tools to respond to disasters, including safe shelter and evacuation centres, through training and skills development. IOM will also support the inclusion of traditional knowledge and response mechanisms into national and local response systems to reduce risk to communities and promote sustainable livelihoods in times of disaster.

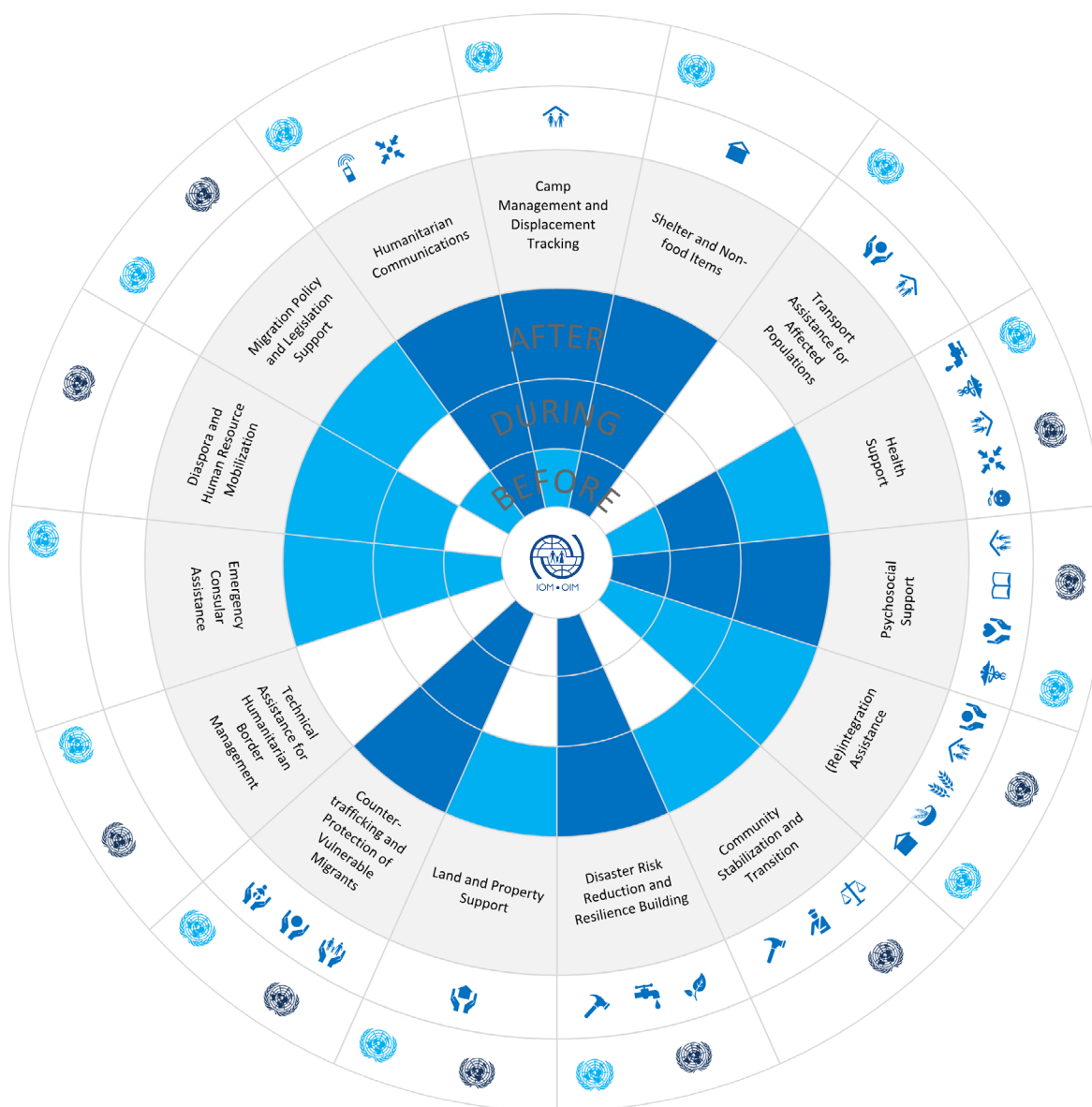
Under **Outcome 2.3**, IOM will continue to work directly with the NDMO and the NDC during times of disaster to ensure that response mechanisms are working effectively, and guarantee that affected populations receive appropriate humanitarian assistance and recovery support. This includes the provision of technical assistance to the NDMO to ensure

that there are assessment standard operating procedures, appropriate feedback mechanisms for beneficiaries and continued improvements to communication systems to ensure that all responders – from all levels – are actively participating through the disaster response cycle.

IOM provides technical assistance to the national level to strengthen humanitarian response systems such as clusters and technical working groups. IOM participates in clusters and technical working groups (WASH, logistics, and food security and agriculture) and will continue to provide assistance to the NDMO where requested.



IOM distribution of emergency response supplies.
© IOM Republic of the Marshall Islands 2016



- Critical
- Important
- Recommended

Systems

- Cluster System (OCHA)
- Refugee Regime (UNHCR)
- Development Actors (UNDP)
- Security and Peacebuilding Actors

Clusters

- Camp Coordination & Camp Management (CCCM)
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- Early Recovery
- Education
- Protection
- Logistics
- Emergency Telecommunications
- Health
- Food Security
- Shelter
- Nutrition

Other Clusters / Sectors / Groups

- Housing, Land and Property Rights
- Gender-based Violence
- Coordination
- Rule of Law and Justice
- Mental Health & Psychosocial Support
- Safety and Security
- Environment
- Child Protection
- Agriculture

Strategic Priority 3: Migrants in Republic of the Marshall Islands enjoy protection from human rights abuses and are able to migrate in a safe, orderly, and dignified manner.

Outcome 3.1: Vulnerable migrants in the Republic of the Marshall Islands receive appropriate and timely protection and assistance services.

Outcome 3.2: Migrants travelling across land and sea borders are able to do so in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.

Through the two key outcomes outlined above, IOM will strive to support the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to protect vulnerable migrants regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender and citizenship. Under the **first outcome**, IOM will support the Government and the communities to increase their capacity in detecting and protecting vulnerable migrants, especially victims of trafficking and stranded migrants. This will be done through legislative review, development of policies and the inclusion of standard operating procedures, taking into account psychosocial support and mental health. IOM will support the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, in addition to facilitating national responses to irregular migrants. In addition, this outcome will support the enhancement, and where necessary, the development of support services and assistance to vulnerable migrants that are gender-sensitive and culturally appropriate for both Marshallese and other nationalities.

Under the **second outcome**, IOM will support the Republic of the Marshall Islands to enhance safe, orderly and dignified migration across borders. This includes working closely with the Government and the country's division of immigration to improve border management, rolling out training, and providing support to enhance legislative and policy review. In addition, IOM remains ready to support the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands with assisted voluntary return and reintegration of migrants who are stranded in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, as well as Marshallese citizens abroad, if other resources are unavailable. Lastly, IOM seeks to strengthen its relationship with employers to support the enhancement of ethical recruitment of

and labour practices for migrants – both non-Marshallese who are entering the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Marshallese who are departing.



IOM Majuro staff conduct a pre-departure training with a local NGO in Majuro. © IOM Republic of the Marshall Islands 2015

IOM's Programming Principles

Principle 1: Good migration governance requires adherence to international standards and fulfilment of migrants' rights.

Humane and orderly migration requires compliance with international standards. The obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of individuals is paramount and should apply to all individuals within the Republic of the Marshall Islands territory, regardless of nationality or migration status and without discrimination, in order to preserve their safety, physical integrity, well-being and dignity. To ensure protection of the rights

of individuals, as well as adherence to the principles of equality and non-discrimination and access to protection, IOM will strive to work with the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to expand and strengthen the fundamental rights and protection under the law beyond sex, race, ancestry, national origin, language and social status.

Principle 2: Migration and related policies are best formulated using evidence and whole-of-government approach.

Migration policy is often the subject of intense political debate and can be based on populist sentiments. Policy must be based on facts and a well-founded analysis of the benefits and risks of the movement of people for the Pacific Island nations, and specifically the Republic of the Marshall Islands, which is highly vulnerable to climate change. IOM is seeking to support the capacity of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to collect, analyse, and be able to use credible data in decision-making processes for migration and other development initiatives and in alignment with national strategies and priorities as outlined in the Joint National Action Plan and National Disaster Arrangements. Furthermore, using an evidence-based approach makes it easier to facilitate the conversations among the various government counterparts such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Port Authority, the Division of Immigration, Customs and Revenue, and the Office of the Chief Secretary, resulting in a whole-of-government solutions, which can increase the effectiveness and enhance the durability of policies and programmes.

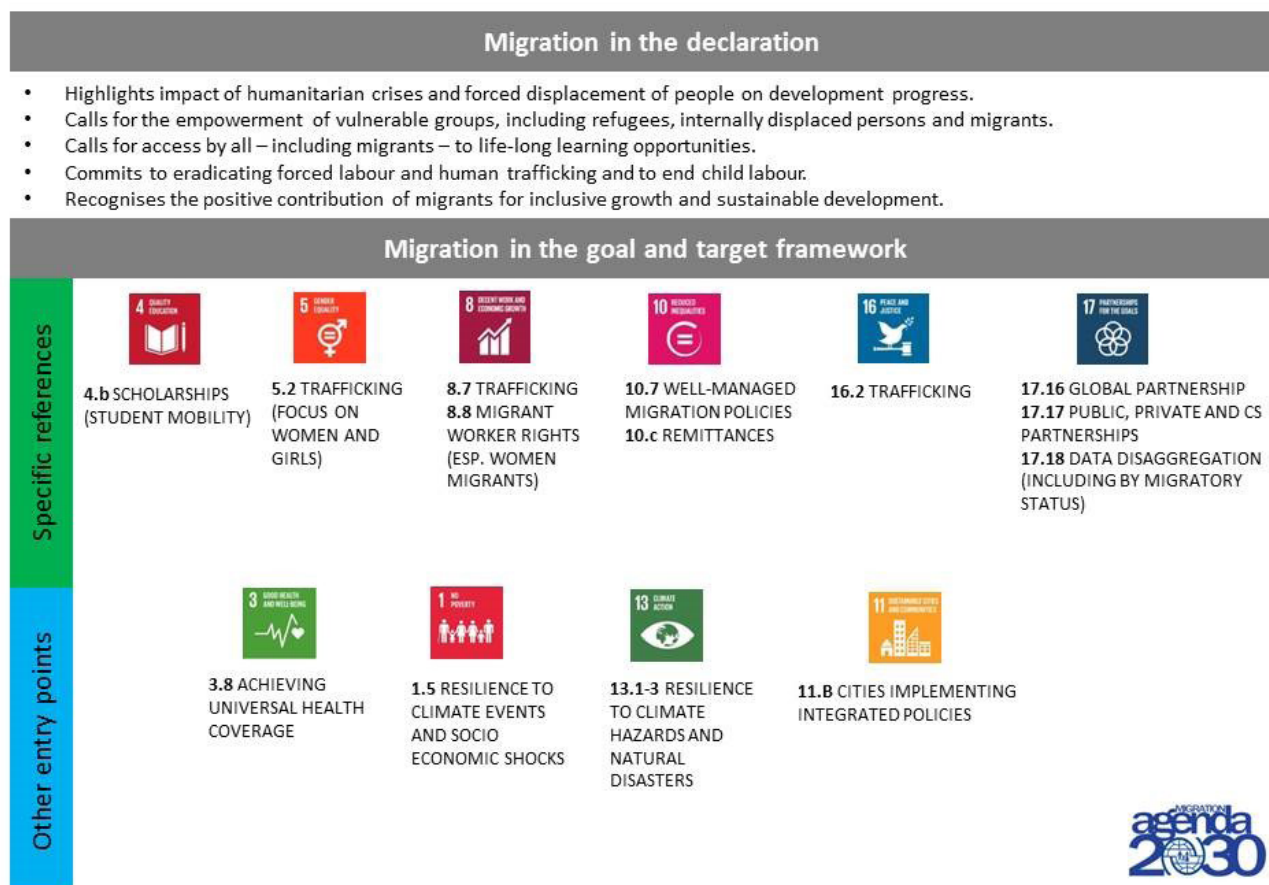
Principle 3: Good migration governance relies on strong partnerships.

IOM in the Republic of the Marshall Islands aims to build new partnerships and deepen existing partnerships in order to better address migration challenges in the island nation. Since the establishment of the IOM office in 2009, the Organization has worked closely with several government departments, especially the Office of the Chief Secretary, the Ministry of Justice, the Public Schools System, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to ensure effective and targeted programming. IOM has also worked closely with the traditional leaders, civil society and faith-based organizations, as well as community members and leaders to ensure needs are identified and targeted at the grassroots level.

In the next three to five years, IOM aims to formalize partnerships with civil society, especially local NGOs and youth groups. The Organization also hopes to deepen partnerships with colleges and universities in the region, as well as develop relationships with academia in countries where Marshallese citizens migrate. New partners that could facilitate the provision of social services in the United States will also be essential to ensuring vulnerable migrants are protected. Lastly, IOM aims to leverage a newly ratified relationship with the United Nations to generate solutions to regional challenges to migration.

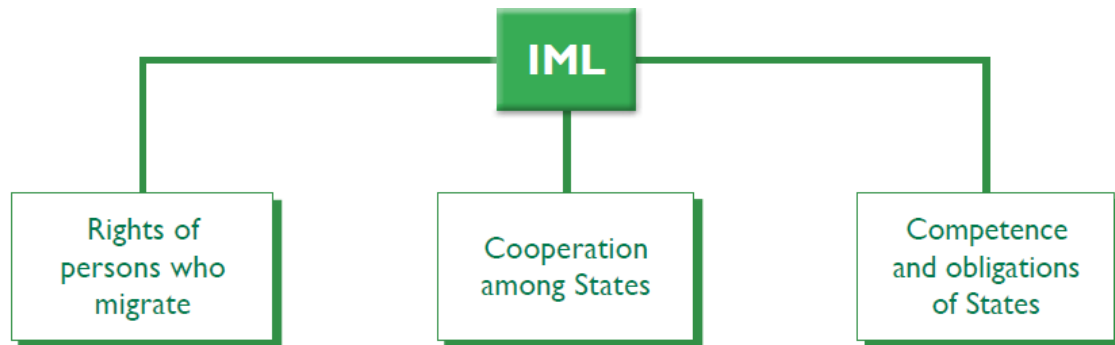
ANNEX 1: MIGRATION AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

HOW MIGRATION IS REFLECTED IN THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



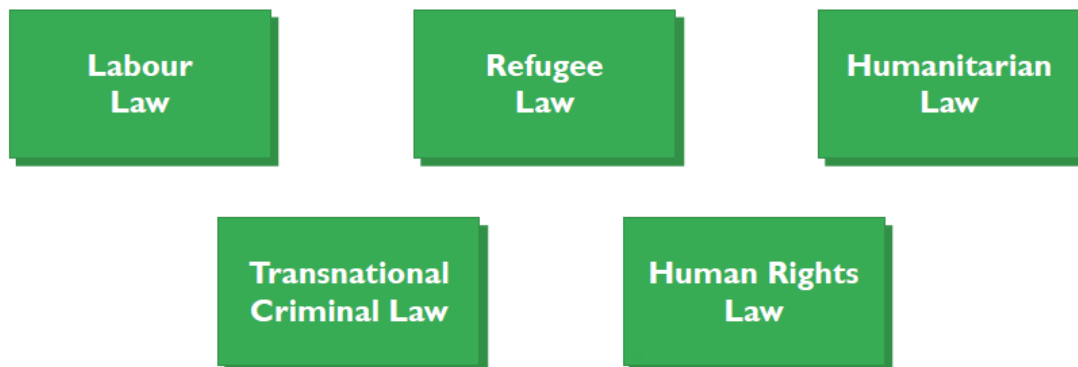


ANNEX 2: MIGRATION IN INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS



Rather than a branch consisting of a set of migration specific legal instruments, the International Migration Law (IML) is an umbrella term used to describe the body of laws, principles, and norms that together regulate the international rights and obligations of States related to migrants. Depending on the context, IML borrows principles from several branches of international public law.

The most important aspects of international public law relevant to a rights-based approach (RBA) to migration are:



Some key conventions under these areas include:

- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951;
- Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, 1967;
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (CAT), 1984;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989;
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), 1990;
- United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 2008.

International Organization for Migration
2nd Floor A/C Construction Building
Delap, Majuro, MH
96960
Republic of the Marshall Islands