

**PRNGO submission to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review.
The 9th session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group, November 2010.
Submission of the Coalition for NGOs Marshall Islands.**

I. Description of the methodology and the broad consultation process

1. In writing this UPR Report the Coalition of NGO through the Secretariat of the Pacific Community / Regional Rights Resource Team and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Marshall Islands) attended a one week UPR Information Training session. The Coalition of NGO involved in this process and is directly responsible for the issues covered in this report are: Women United Together in the Marshall Islands (WUTMI), Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS), LIONs Club, and Waan Aelon in Majol (WAM)

The Coalition of NGO used different methods to collect information. One of the prime methods used was to gather information and conduct meetings and interviews with stakeholders and with non-government institutions.

II. Background of NGOs

Women United Together in the Marshall Islands (WUTMI) is the leading nongovernmental, not for profit women's group in the Marshall Islands. WUTMI was established in 1987 to serve as the voice of women throughout the Marshall Islands. The primary goal of WUTMI is to support and strengthen Marshallese women, and, in doing so, to strengthen Marshallese families. WUTMI seeks to encourage and ensure activities that preserve and strengthen the values of traditional Marshallese culture as well as addressing the realities of modern life in the islands. The current area of focus is to prepare the younger generation of women to take their role in society as healthy mothers, educators, health professionals, leaders and businesswomen. Since 2000, WUTMI has successfully carried out eleven projects, some of which are ongoing, which include Gender Equality in Leadership (GEL), and Protecting Our Rights-Enhancing Human Rights (POWEHR) and Violence against Women (VAW).

The Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS) was established in November of 2004 to help raise awareness and build capacity in the RMI for environmental education, resource management, and sustainable use of resources, particularly coastal resources and community based management. It was established recognizing that an environmental NGO had yet to succeed in the RMI where one was desperately needed. Members of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director have adopted a strategy to streamline MICS and grow in proportion to projects as they are funded. MICS has 3 thematic areas which consist of a Public Awareness Program, Marine Program and Terrestrial Program

Lions Club of the Marshall Islands (LCMI), #100187 of the Lions Clubs International, and under District 204; Region 3 for Micronesia, was incorporated in October of 2007. Lions Club International dates back to the year 1917 when a young Chicago insurance agent, Melvin Jones, presented the idea of consolidating a group of separate business groups into one strong individual club with the goal of helping the community and serving humanity. The Lions motto is "We Serve".

Waan Aelōñ in Majel (Canoes of the Marshall Islands, or WAM) is a grassroots non-profit organization. WAM's mission is to work with youth, their families, and the local and international community to perpetuate and safeguard Marshallese culture and tradition through canoe building and sailing, and through this cultural linkage develop life skills and modern work skills that create meaning in the lives of all participants. WAM

was chartered as a non-government organization in 1999, though previous work with the Alele Museum to document traditional canoe building began in 1989. WAM is a vocational training and substance abuse treatment provider, teaching job and life skills through the vehicle of the traditional Marshallese canoe.

III. Institutional Framework for Protection of Human Rights of the Republic

2. National/Regional Human Rights Commission

There is currently no UN-recognised human rights regional mechanism in the Pacific (Marshall Islands included). Access of information and justice through a regional body is needed in order for all human rights to advance significantly in the region. The human rights requirement include collective attention and strategic approaches to ensure longer term stability and social cohesion in the Pacific. Negative social impacts across the region have led to prolonged periods of poor governance and disappointing economic growth along with limited access to resources, a breakdown in traditional systems, political tensions and lack of opportunities. This is equally important for the realization and promotion of the rights of all citizens in the Marshall Islands.

The submission of this report believes that a regional human rights commission is the most appropriate long term model for a human rights mechanism in the Pacific region, with a mandate for promoting and defending human rights, which would be set up under The Pacific Plan, and envisage by it. If appropriate a regional mechanism could be closely tied to the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) that would administer and monitor the Plan. This wouldn't start off as a full-fledged commission, but just as a simple mechanism with a mandate that may include supporting domestic Bills of Rights and ratified international conventions which already exist, as well as reaching consensus over the years on the content of a potential regional Pacific Islands Charter.

The submission of this report will consider a decision made by the PICTS governments and its people on the regional mechanism's mandate, which would start off as simple and slowly over time acquire more refined mandates. A regional mechanism can have forms and functions as decided upon by the agreements as mentioned previously that could evolve the regional mechanism into a fully fledged Pacific Regional Human Rights Commission.

A regional body would provide a single contact point for the entire region, providing an effective and efficient conduct through which external bodies could disseminate information to the region, and receive reliable information and advice back from the region. It would also enjoy greater independence from individual national governments, reducing the risk of partiality in appointments to the commission and of undue influence in its operations.

Recommendation: NGO Coalition urges the government to support the establishment of a Pacific Regional Human Rights Commission to address human rights issues in Marshall Islands and the region and to consider lobbying and entering into partnership with other Pacific Islands States to support the establishment of the commission.

Recommendation: Urges the government to consider the advantages of having a regional human rights commission which is less costly and less subject to domestic influence yet efficient and more sustainable than a domestic commission.

3. Constitution sec. 12 a. 2 inclusion of "sex"-constitutional change

The Constitution of the Republic of the Marshall Islands is the supreme law of the land¹. The people of the Marshall Islands through the Constitution have affirmed their desire and right to live in peace and harmony, subscribing to the principles of democracy, sharing the aspirations of all other peoples for a free and peaceful world, and striving to do all we can to assist in achieving this goal.

¹ Article I s1 Constitution of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

The Constitution recognises the right of the people of the Marshall Islands to freedom of thought, speech, press, assembly and petition, unreasonable search and seizure, due process and punishment, imprisonment of debt, freedom from discrimination, personal autonomy and privacy, access to judicial and electoral process, health, education and legal services and ethical government. No person may be treated in a discriminatory manner under law or by any public official.

Under the Constitution, there is a section on the Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Individuals. There is a definition of discrimination, but it does not specifically refer to disability. There is a need to include disability in the non discrimination provision of the constitution. Section 12 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Marshall Islands states that “ *no law and no executive or judicial action shall, either expressly or in its practical application, discriminate on any person on the basis of gender, race, colour, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, place of birth or family status or descent* ”². Sex is not included in the list of non discriminatory grounds.

Recommendation: NGO coalition urges the government of the Republic to revise its Constitution Section 12(2) for the inclusion of sex, which currently allows and enables discrimination against women based on sex.

IV. Promotion and Protection of Human Rights on the Ground

4. Gender Equality

a. Violence against Women (VAW)

There is a lot of talk about ending violence against women and girls in the RMI. However, they are grossly underfunded and according to a survey conducted by WUTMI in 2003 on four outer island communities in the Marshall Islands, as many as 87 out of every 100 women in the Marshall Islands has suffered physical violence at the hands of her beloved. A more recent household survey conducted in 2007 by the Economic Policy Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO), only about 35% cases of abuse were reported. Somewhere between the two numbers lies the true statistics for the RMI. Suffice is to say that the issue is one of concern for the RMI.

In 2006, WUTMI received funding from Australia Aid for the Protecting Our Women-Enhancing Human Rights (POWEHR) Project. In the same year, the RMI signed and ratified the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in March promising that its legislation will comply with CEDAW laws. Until today the RMI legislation has done nothing to move forward its compliance with CEDAW. In 2009, WUTMI received another funding opportunity for its Violence Against Women project to raise awareness among government and community leaders for the movement of CEDAW-compliant legislation, national policy, and first responders’ protocols.

Recommendation: NGO coalition urges the government of the RMI to establish a national legislation that is aligned with human rights standards particularly the Convention for the Elimination of all Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);

Recommendation: urge the RMI government to amend current legislation to include a “no drop” case provision to protect women who are too scared to pursue their perpetrators.

Recommendation: urges the government of the RMI to establish National Action Plans to combat violence against women and girls, and to put in place the institutional, technical and financial resources

² Article II s12(2) Constitution Republic of the Marshall Islands

required for coordinated, multi-sectoral responses; for example, in the RMI reporting protocols for abuse cases are still not in place and resources for advocacy and training are very limited.

Recommendation: urges the RMI government to institute an immediate ‘frontline’ support and services from the police, health and legal aid providers for survivors of gender-based violence; education and sensitivity trainings for frontline workers in the RMI are critically needed.

Recommendation: urges the RMI government to allocate budget to allow collection, analysis and dissemination of data as an essential component for measuring the progress of anti-violence initiatives, developing effective strategies; a database to set baseline data and to track RMI VAW cases is overdue.

b. Gender Equality in Leadership (GEL)

There has never been more than one female senator serving in the 33-member parliament at any given time. Female participation in local government councils has improved slightly over the years, but total numbers remain low. In 2007 there was only one woman elected to the Nitijela; the Minister of Health. The gender divide in RMI is wide: the ratio of women holding key government and public service positions is 1:14 and, of 33 MPs in Parliament, there is only one woman. To address the gender imbalance issue, a one week workshop on Gender Equality in Leadership (GEL) was conducted in February 2005 to two participants (1 man, 1 woman) from all the 24 atolls by Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI). After the first gender workshop, WUTMI continued addressing gender issues with a GEL project in 2006-2007. A survey was part of the project and concluded that Marshallese women’s minimal participation was attributed to lack of knowledge about the political system and procedures of the government, lack of confidence and, cultural and discriminatory attitudes of men and women.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands National Election was held in November 2007. While there were no changes in the number of women elected in 2007, the number of women who *ran* for local government and national government in 2007 increased by double in comparison to the National Election in 2003. We can credit the increase in number of women who sought offices to the GEL activities done by WUTMI as the majority of women candidates in 2007 were members of WUTMI.

Gaps and Challenges that persist in the Marshall Islands are (1) the *Nitijela* (parliament) runs on influence from the traditional system where male chiefs have dominated leadership, (2) prevailing attitudes toward male control over family decision-making makes Marshallese women vulnerable to personal and financial insecurity, (3) a large number of women cast their votes based on their husband’s decisions; therefore women don’t necessarily support women running for public offices, and (4) the power of the Church and church leaders sometimes surpass the control of the government and traditional leaders, and since women are the ones who are most involved with church functions they are sometimes influenced by the Church decisions and follow them.

Recommendation: NGO coalition urges the government to implement a quota for women to be represented in parliament.

Recommendation: Urges the government to raise awareness and promote the importance of women in parliament and women voters.

Recommendation: Urges the government to promote and redefine women’s roles as decision makers at all levels of society.

c. Temporary Special Measures

The RMI has no temporary special measures currently in place. The Republic has signed and ratified (2006) the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and Article 4 states that “*Governments must implement short-term actions to advance women’s equality*”. Since the signing of this convention the Republic has yet to put in place any sort of TSM for the women advancement and empowerment.

Recommendation: NGO coalition urges the RMI government, as an affirmative action in the political arena, to create temporary special measures to ensure 30% quota of women representatives in parliament.

d. Gender & Energy

About 80-90% of the energy produced in the Marshall Islands is produced from burning fossil fuel (non-renewable). The work that women do on the day-to-day basis require electricity, therefore, they are the ones that are more affected when the power is out due to low fuel supply. WUTMI is working with the Energy Department of the Ministry of Resources and Development to raise awareness among the public and the leaders about possible renewable energy production that the RMI could generate.

Recommendation: NGO coalition urges the government of the RMI to look into a solar energy policy since it has been proven that the location of the islands is suitable for the use of renewable energy such as solar.

5. Right to Food Security

e. Conservation

MICS and local partners have been aiming to pilot raising awareness and building capacity for conservation, sustainable use of resources and protection of biodiversity in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. On almost all of the atolls in the Marshall Islands, there is very limited understanding of critical issues concerned with biodiversity, extinction of species, over fishing, climate change especially adaptation(s) to sea-level rise therefore; communities get little information solving environmental and resource management issues.

Though MICS and partners (under the Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC)), have actively participated in both national and local governments in meeting to address environmental issues, and also contributing to radio programs, studies, and different forms of outreach; much of this has been done in Majuro. Underwater surveys have been undertaken by CMI and local governments on Arno, Jaluit, Likiep, Mejjatto, Mili, Namu, and Ronglap. Furthermore; 8 atolls have installed 8 new HF/SSB Radios by MICS to provide for a more focused and sustainable means of communication and also enabling critical environmental information, awareness, training, capacity building, business planning and basic project implementation, but follow-up to establish MPA’s, local ordinances, and to work with communities has been challenging due to lack of funding.

With over 60% of people on Majuro dependent on some form of coastal fishing and close to 100% dependency on all other islands, the sustainability of coral reef and lagoon-based fisheries is of utmost importance in the Marshall Islands. MICS and CMAC have undertaken recent regional and national initiatives such as the *Reimaanlok* Conservation Plan workshops in the outer islands to help underscore the fundamental importance of *people managing their resources effectively at the local level*. MICS has worked on Mili, Arno, Majuro, Likiep, Namdrik and Jaluit.

In the last two years MICS has been concentrated on stabilizing waste issues around the Republic and is continuously finding ways to reduce waste through its terrestrial program. Within this program a project known as *Mule* is to safeguard the endangered *Ducula oceanic ratakensis* bird, which inhabits in the *Ratak* (sunrise) chain in the wild breadfruit *Mejwaan* forests (seeded *Autocarpus*). The mule has been closely looked at by the MICS terrestrial program and was monitored at first to numbers up to 16. Today the numbers have risen dramatically and are now close to the hundreds.

Recommendation: urges the RMI government to increase its capacity regarding waste removal, recycling, and surveillance and monitoring.

Recommendation: urge the RMI government to build local ordinances, policies, and agreements to protect conservation areas

Recommendation: urge the RMI government to strengthen advisory support to local governments, island councils, traditional leaders, and communities about the use of such management measures and how to control overfishing.

Recommendation: issue one water catchment and trash bins per home.

Recommendation: urge the RMI government to realize that climate change is causing many issues for our islands.

f. Climate Change & Sustainable Livelihood

Marshall Islands is among the states most vulnerable to climate change, the predicted impacts of which includes sea level rise, coastal erosion, droughts, desalination of water and coral bleaching. The consequence of these impacts will be severe for the Marshall Islands communities that depend highly on fish, water from the underground lenses, and agriculture for their livelihood. The impacts of climate change pose a fundamental threat to the rights to development, enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, rights to adequate food, housing, adequate standard of living and improvement of living conditions, and the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The government continuously raises, at the International level, Marshall Islands concern that when the situation comes to its worst, the people would have no choice but to be relocated. This outcome would threaten property ownership, cultural rights and identity. Women and children would be most vulnerable to climate change when the sources of their livelihood are depleted and their rights are under threat. This is because they have limited adaptive capacities due to prevailing social inequalities and ascribed roles. As primary care-givers, women may see their responsibilities increase as the family's health is affected by the diseases caused as impacts of climate change, such as water borne diseases. This would lead to effects on the women's own health.

The effects of the financial hardship in the outer atolls can be seen in every aspect of outer atoll life. Women experience financial hardship and have larger workloads as a result of women's increasing participation in income generating activities as well as their continued involvement in household tasks such as cleaning, gathering and preparing meals. There is less land area in some parts of atolls due to erosion, and increasing the handicraft industry has begun to lead toward over-exploitation of land and sea resources. Marketing of handicrafts is a system that entails a number of elements and factors that need to be in place and be operational. The unique elements call for good awareness and identification of needs and resources, and their impact on each other; competency and commitment to plan well and implement plans effectively; ongoing monitoring and willingness to learn from and improve upon experiences – good and bad.

In 2006, WUTMI created the agro-forestry initiative, Sustainable Livelihood Project (SLP) with the Ministry of Resources & Development (MRD) as well as with the Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS) and the College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) that would help protect and enhance the indigenous culture and heritage. In its efforts to promote the handicraft industry and coastal management efforts, WUTMI had and continues to enlist assistance and support of the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) and the Office of Environmental Policy Planning Coordination (OEPPC). One of the achievements of the SLP was planting of more than 1,000 pandanus trees on Majuro, and some of the outer islands/atolls. The first Annual Bob/Pandanus Festival in 2009 was created to support the goals and objectives of the SLP. The fruit of the pandanus is edible and highly nutritious, and the stem including the leaves are used for making various kinds of handicrafts.

Through the Lions club's *Green Project* local plants and trees are planted and harvested to benefit the health of the Marshallese. This initiative is meant as an alternative to purchasing fresh rather than imported produce and also to help out economically after the RMI announced a state of economic emergency in 2008.

WAM has continued to develop its work on the documentation of traditional Marshallese navigation. Originally conceived when one of the few surviving navigators, Captain Korent Joel, asked WAM to document and revitalize this cultural heritage, WAM has since been in collaboration with the University of Hawaii (UH) and the remaining Master Navigators to maintain and revitalize traditional navigation and voyaging. Previous work on the program has included voyages to Rongelap, Namu, and Ujae atolls, all conducted using traditional non-instrument navigational techniques and a buoy study on Arno atoll study the currents between Arno atoll and Mili atoll.

Recommendation: NGO Coalition urges the government to continue lobbying and seeking support from the International community to consider the problem of small island states and the Marshall Islands in particular.

Recommendation: NGO Coalition urges the government to adhere to the minimum human rights standards provided under CEDAW in the implementation, mitigation and adaptation of national responses to climate change.

6. Right to Education

g. Education/Training of Women

The WUTMI Early Childhood Parent Education (ECPE) Program is patterned after the USA PAT program, which begins prenatally and continues until the child enters kindergarten. The WUTMI ECPE Program follows the vision of the PAT program—that “All parents will be their child’s first best teacher.” In 2006, WUTMI was awarded funding for another five years to continue the Parents As Teachers program. As a PAT-certified project with certified parent educators, WUTMI’s program uses PAT’s guides re: contents, methods, resources, support, as well as local practices, to enhance 1) the types of early childhood experiences that children receive, and 2) the teaching role of parents. WUTMI’s PAT program serves 120 families on Majuro Atoll alone, with weekly radio programs, monthly home visits, quarterly social events, workshops, and community outreach that are geared toward first time parents to help and care for their child/children before entering the school system (school readiness). WUTMI receives little attention from the Ministry of Education on their PAT project which helps prepare young toddlers before entering the government’s school system. Funding is greatly limited, which has put a strain on staffing opportunities to increase the number of families served both on Majuro atoll as well as the outer islands.

WAM regularly conducts a six-month introductory Traditional, Vocational, and Life Skills Training program. In these trainings, WAM enrolls 25 youth between the ages of 16 and 24. These youth must complete an application process, and are chosen on their perceived interest in the program, their attitude, and their education level (the lower the education, the higher the priority). During the program, trainees learn both traditional and modern carpentry skills while building canoe models, rowboats, traditional tools, and a *korkor* canoe. Trainees also participate in weekly group and individual counseling, cultural education, English and math lessons, and life and job skills training.

In addition to the regular six-month vocational training, WAM has also held two six-week summer training programs, primarily designed for students who are unable to participate in the six-month training program. The summer program teaches youth participants some of their cultural heritage that they otherwise might never learn, as well as giving them some job and life skills that will help make them successful, whatever they end up doing.

WAM has also done in-reach with inmates at the local jail. WAM counselors work with the inmates, primarily those who were incarcerated for crimes committed while intoxicated, and previously WAM has piloted a combined counseling/vocational training program. WAM continues to develop this program, to serve as a re-entry program for inmates about to leave jail.

Recommendation: urges the RMI government's Ministry of Education to recognize and move alongside the WUTMI PAT program for better transition of the graduating toddlers from the PAT program into kindergarten.

7. Child Rights

a. Education

Female education has been shown to have dramatic effect on women earning power. While female enrollment rates in elementary and high school is nearly equal to their male counterparts, completion rate at these levels are lower. Furthermore, participation rate in college is lower than their male counterparts. This is perplexing given that girls tend to outperform boys in both elementary and high school tests, and the rate ever attending school females are slightly higher than males. Cultural, societal and parental expectations of girls and their roles play a major role in the discrepancy in school attendance at the postsecondary level. By the age of about 12 (primary level in the RMI) girls begin to drop out of school for many reasons. They stop attending school to help with household chores, if more than one child is going to school (male and female) the female will most likely be the one taken out if the parents are unable to pay for her tuition, and with the rise of teen pregnancy rates we see many young girls expelled, taken out by parents, or drop out from school either before or during secondary level.

Recommendation: NGOs coalition urges the RMI government to enforce laws that require individuals to attend school at least until the age of 18 yrs to ensure primary and secondary completion.

b. Health & Safety

Among Marshallese children from birth to two years of age we notice inadequate growth rate, micronutrient deficiencies, and common childhood illness like that of diarrhea, fever and acute respiratory infections (ARI). According to the demographic health survey of 2007 in the Marshall Islands less than 50% of mothers consume

the appropriate amount and type of fruits and vegetables for the well-being for their newborn child. From 12-23 months of age we see a higher percentage number of diarrhea cases with about 1% having diarrhea with blood and weren't ever taken to a health care provider.

A leading cause to early childhood illnesses is the lack of immunization and appropriate treatment. In the health survey of 2007, only about 34% of children from the age of 12-23 months had received their vaccination regardless of the fact that 75% of the children in the same age group have a vaccination card.

Between urban and rural children we see that rural children have almost double the number of malnourished children, and the status of economic well-being of a family does make an impact where we see the largest portions of malnourished children in the lower income households. With that being said child illnesses that go untreated, often among the rural population, leads to child mortality rates of about 37:1000. Under the WUTMI PAT program during the quarterly social event all 120 children that are listed under the program are updated on their vaccinations and healthy food intake choices are given to mothers for the well-being of their child as well as for themselves if they get pregnant again.

From its phase 1 of the eyeglass project, the Lions club noticed their little efforts to help the children of the Marshall Islands who were having eye sight issues after providing free examinations for students. In 2009, the Lions club initiated eyeglasses donation boxes for the elementary students of Majuro atoll. From the first eye examinations 3:27 students were in need of eyeglasses.

The Lions club also saw a need for better school safety, and road safety, with the need for reflective paint on the bumps and crosswalks on Majuro. But a problem came up in that while the paint was supposed to be reflective (with the addition of powdered glass) it did not last long. Within weeks it was gone.

V. Implementation of Human Rights Mechanisms

International Treaties	Ratification/Accession/Succession	Area of concern
CRC	Ratified: 10/4/93	
CEDAW	Accession: 3/2/06	<p>Critical Area: Article 2 Obligation to Eliminate Discrimination</p> <p>Critical Area: Article 7 Political & Public Life</p> <p>Critical Area: Article 4 TSM</p>
Beijing Declaration & Platform for Action	Ratified: 1995	Critical Area 7: Strategic Objective G.1: establish gender balance in government positions
Pacific Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women & Gender Equality	Ratified: 1994	<p>Critical Area 6: Shared decision making</p> <p>Critical Area 8: To improve</p>

		gender equality
Millennium Development Goals	Ratified: 2000	Critical Area 3: Gender Equality & the empowerment of Women

a. Resource Development Committee (RDC)

The RDC is a national committee on **the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** and **the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**. These two conventions have been ratified by the RMI in October 1993 (CRC) and in March 2006 (CEDAW). The purpose of this committee is to mandate and recognize the implementation and realization of the rights of children and women in the RMI; to improve the coordination and facilitation of the CRC and CEDAW amongst stakeholders, including cross-sectoral coordination as well as representation of children, the outer islands, and marginalized groups with respect to the planning and implementation; to strengthen and support the implementation of existing programs by stakeholders, to provide a consultative forum that can effectively address the issues relating to children and women; and undertake an advisory and advocacy role for the RMI Government in terms of the CRC and CEDAW, particularly with respect to legislative reform and policy.

Its functions are to develop measures and policies to progressively implement CRC and CEDAW, including legislative reform, and establish relevant mechanisms and mainstream the rights of women and children into sectoral strategies; to recommend to Cabinet national strategic plans of action and other measures to implement CRC and CEDAW; to ensure that state reports for CRC and CEDAW are prepared in a timely manner and according to the relevant guidelines; to ensure decisions reflect the views of proposed beneficiaries; and to advocate for sufficient human and financial resources to carry out the above functions.

b. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

In 2000, the RMI became party to the United Nations Millennium Declaration. By ratifying the declaration, the RMI government pledged to its citizens (and the world) that it would pursue a number of development goals and targets, with significant emphasis on poverty reduction. In the declaration, eight major goals entitled the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were identified, each with a set of targets.

In January 2009, RMI former President Litokwa Tomeing and his Cabinet established the RMI MDG Workgroup to ensure that the RMI makes good on its MDGs promises. The Eight goals are (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (2) achieve universal primary education, (3) promote gender equality and empower women, (4) reduce child mortality, (5) improve maternal health, (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, (7) ensure environment sustainability, and (8) develop a global partnership for development. Some of these goals are tackled by the NGOs, with WUTMI taking charge of raising MDGs awareness, to improve and sustain lives in the Marshall Islands.