



Pacific Islands
Development Forum

A United, Distinctive & Sustainable Pacific Society



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Talanoa Series

TALANOA

CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATION WITH REPUBLIC OF MARSHALL ISLANDS HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION



TALANOA SESSION REPORT

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We offer our sincere thanks to all our Members and Partners who have worked with us on our journey to support an enabling environment for Green-Blue Pacific economies, and affect transformative change for sustainable and inclusive development in the Pacific.

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**Pacific Islands
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ACRONYMS

PIDF – Pacific Islands Development Forum

RMI – Republic of Marshall Islands

SDCC – Suva Declaration on Climate Change

NDC – Nationally Determined Contribution

CVF – Climate Vulnerability Forum

HAC – High Ambition Coalition

IMO – International Maritime Organisation

MICNGOS – Marshall Islands Council of NGOs

ADB – Asian Development Bank

NSDB – National Sustainable Development Boards

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

UNOHCHR – United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

FBO – Faith Based Organisations



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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) has embarked on developing its adaptation plans to enhance its resilience, given it is one of the countries facing existential threat due to the impacts of global warming and sea level rise.

Whilst continuing to demand actions from major emitters and championing high level ambition on emissions and climate change, RMI needs active support from partners and the international communities to assist in its efforts.

The Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) with our member, RMI, extended to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and other partners an invitation for a Talanoa session with a High Level Delegation led by Hon. David Paul, Minister for Environment and Minister in Assistance to the President of Marshall Islands.

Key objectives of the Talanoa were to:

- Provide information on some of the major initiatives and activities that Marshall Islands have been working on and have been widely disseminated as part of their international obligations under the various Roadmap and NDC Partnership Plan;
- Garner support for the implementation of initiatives, including adaptation measures to build resilience to the increasing impact of climate change and sea level rise Marshall Islands is facing;
- Forge partnerships to face development challenges.





Welcome Address - Mr. François Martel, Secretary General PIDF

Secretary General Martel thanked those present for making the time to attend this Talanoa. The Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) are an integral part of climate change negotiations in the Pacific, with key outputs such as the Majuro Declaration on Climate Change fortifying its Pacific voice on the global arena.

RMI is a true friend of the PIDF, playing a vital role in the successful formulation of the Suva Declaration on Climate Change (SDCC) in 2015, and more recently being vehement proponents of a maritime emissions reduction plan, upping the ante with regards to its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Commitments and launching their Tile Eo 2050 Climate Strategy.

The presence of Hon. David Paul, Minister for Environment and Minister in Assistance to the President of RMI, and H.E. Ambassador Tregan Albon Ishoda, Ambassador of the RMI to Fiji, at this Talanoa sends a clear signal that addressing the challenges of climate change are imperative for the Marshallese.

The PIDF stands united with RMI in their efforts. In 2016, the PIDF organized a Talanoa that covered the role of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) post-COP21. These discussions are reflected in the Pacific Climate Treaty, and owing to the nature of Treaties, consultations between all PIDF members is still ongoing.



Opening remarks by Hon. David Paul – Minister for Environment and Minister in Assistance to the President of RMI

Hon. David Paul highlighted the need for urgent action by all parties in addressing climate change. The successful delivery mechanisms of CSOs meant that an open dialogue with them at every stage of a process was crucial in reaching a united objective. It is with the support from CSOs that implementing actions at the local level are possible, thus, this Talanoa will shed more light on RMI’s recent major initiatives and hopefully garner more support for the implementation of these initiatives. The process of a Talanoa is to have an honest, open dialogue about issues that impact everyone, and to that extent, a good part of this evening will be spent listening to participants.

Tile Til Eo 2050 Climate Strategy and links to other RMI Plans and Policies – Dr. Mahendra Kumar, Consultant for RMI

Dr. Kumar highlighted the purpose of the Tile Til Eo 2050 Climate Strategy –the RMI’s long-term low greenhouse gas emission climate-resilient development strategy under the Paris Agreement – was to outline a long-term pathway for RMI to achieve its objectives for net zero emissions and 100% renewable energy, as well as to facilitate adaptation and climate resilience in a way that ensures the future protection and prosperity of the country and its women, men and youth.

A copy of the 2050 Strategy can be retrieved from https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/180924%20rmi%202050%20climate%20strategy%20final_0.pdf.

Dr. Kumar then proceeded to show participants a YouTube video titled “The Energy of Survival”. This can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eCii00yFzU>



Presentation by Ms. Angeline Heine – Director NEO

The RMI's "Electricity Roadmap" was launched at a side event at COP24 Katowice. It is easy to understand and shows how other countries large and small might also make the decarbonisation journey.

The roadmap requires \$US170-million to take the sector from its current two percent renewable production to beyond 50 percent over the next seven years, and this means reducing energy losses in the diesel generation and distribution network, improving energy efficiency, and building large-scale wind and solar farms on the main islands of Majuro and Ebeye.

It also describes strategies to build a renewable energy workforce, encouraging youth to train in the sector.

A copy of the Roadmap can be retrieved from:

[https://islands.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Sids/
NavigatingourEnergyFutureMarshallIslandsElectricityRoadmapDecem.ashx](https://islands.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Sids/NavigatingourEnergyFutureMarshallIslandsElectricityRoadmapDecem.ashx)



Presentation by Mr. Clarence Samuel – Director Climate Change, RMI

In July last year, the RMI held a Partnership Dialogue on Climate Change (<https://ndcpartnership.org/system/files/180607%20RMI%20NDPC%20Partnership%20Dialogue%20one-pager%20FINAL.pdf>), where six (6) key areas of action were identified – (1) adaptation; (2) mitigation; (3) gender and human rights; (4) capacity building; (5) financing; and, (6) RMI’s role in global leadership and advocating on climate change.

It is in addressing mitigation where the implementation of electricity roadmap fits in perfectly. With respect to adaptation, actions in enhancing coastal resilience, countering salt water intrusion etc., are vital.

In terms of value, there are close to USD \$271m of projects being undertaken in RMI to address climate change and more are in the pipeline. RMI’s National Adaptation Plan identifies relevant gaps, particularly human and financial resources, in realizing RMI’s goals.

An In-Country Facilitator has been hired to manage the six (6) outcomes and the person has already met with all relevant stakeholders in RMI.



Talanoa Discussions

Hard Adaptation is difficult for donors to consider, but given that there are no higher grounds on RMI for people to move to, this becomes the only option. Discussions with CSOs, private sector, national governments and communities on how these types of actions can be implemented, are vital. Sceptics will question why adaptation is chosen over mitigation, but addressing the issue of emissions at its core has proven to be difficult, and solutions for reductions substantially elongated.

These issues regarding mitigation are also addressed at the Climate Vulnerability Forum (CVF), plus, Minister Paul is also the convener of High Ambition Coalition (HAC). RMI's membership of PIDF also strengthens its voice when addressing mitigation. However, considering that RMI has an abundance of natural biodiversity, it needs to ensure that hard adaptation has minimal detrimental impacts on these.

Being the holder of the second largest ship registry in the world, RMI is also a key strategist at discussions at International Maritime Organisation (IMO). The commitments made at IMO pushes the message, not only for RMI, but for our Pacific brothers and sisters, that the time for action is now. RMI's role in IMO negotiations is clear example of unity. Parties worked together at UNFCCC, but at IMO, countries had their own views.

Through dialogue, countries came together and the IMO devised their strategy. For far too long, the Pacific space has been misappropriated with the thought that we are within our own waters. It's time to break that thought because the Pacific is what unites us. Island nations in the Pacific are most vulnerable, and are likely the ones to disappear first, should it be business as usual.



A monetary contribution from the Government of RMI has given the Marshall Islands Council of NGOs (MICNGOS) a much needed boost. This allows for better engagement between MICNGOS and other similar actors at the regional level. It is suggested that the messages shared here today be shared at the upcoming three-day CSO Forum organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) along the margins of their 52nd Annual Meeting that will be held in Nadi in May this year. What is required is ownership at the national level for the Pacific to garner a united voice. This is where PIDF can be the glue – bringing key messages together, through their National Sustainable Development Boards (NSDBs), and translating them into actions on the ground. Together a lot more can be achieved. The NSDB in RMI is one of the five already established across the PIDF members, and establishment of these in the remaining member countries is a process that is still ongoing.

Relocation is on the mind of many actors in the Pacific, and these actors are actively bringing these discussions to the global stage, advocating the Loss and Damage angle and requesting for humanitarian aid from various pools of funds around the world to be made accessible and specific for relocation. The costs for Adaptation and Mitigation must be seen as an investment, and applied proactively.

The risk climate change poses on trade, migration, sustainable development is of grave concern, but there is an opportunity here for perhaps something similar to what can be seen in the value that agreements such as the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) has brought to the region. If the RMI can be saved from climate change within the next fifty (50) years, the biggest threats to other nations in the Pacific would have most likely been overcome as well.



Numerous research and suggested adaptation and mitigation strategies have been written over the past decades. Some, for instance, touch on using by-products from coconuts to increase the efficiency of diesel. Some focus on using the natural system. For example, the RMI was created by coral reef, and it is suggested that atoll nations like RMI can actually grow land by promoting a healthy reef system.

Dr. Austin Bowden-Kerby has revisited one such research of his and created a concept paper for RMI, a copy of which can be requested from Dr. Kerby through abowdenkerby@gmail.com

The lack of a general political will among Pacific Leaders is something that also needs to be addressed. What is also lacking is a National Action Plan, or Treaty, or Declaration on Business and Human Rights, and RMI's candidacy for the Human Rights Council should be supported by the Pacific.

Other engagements, such as PIDFs Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) to advocate on environmental rights and climate change induced displacement, ropes well into the discussion of climate change and human rights.



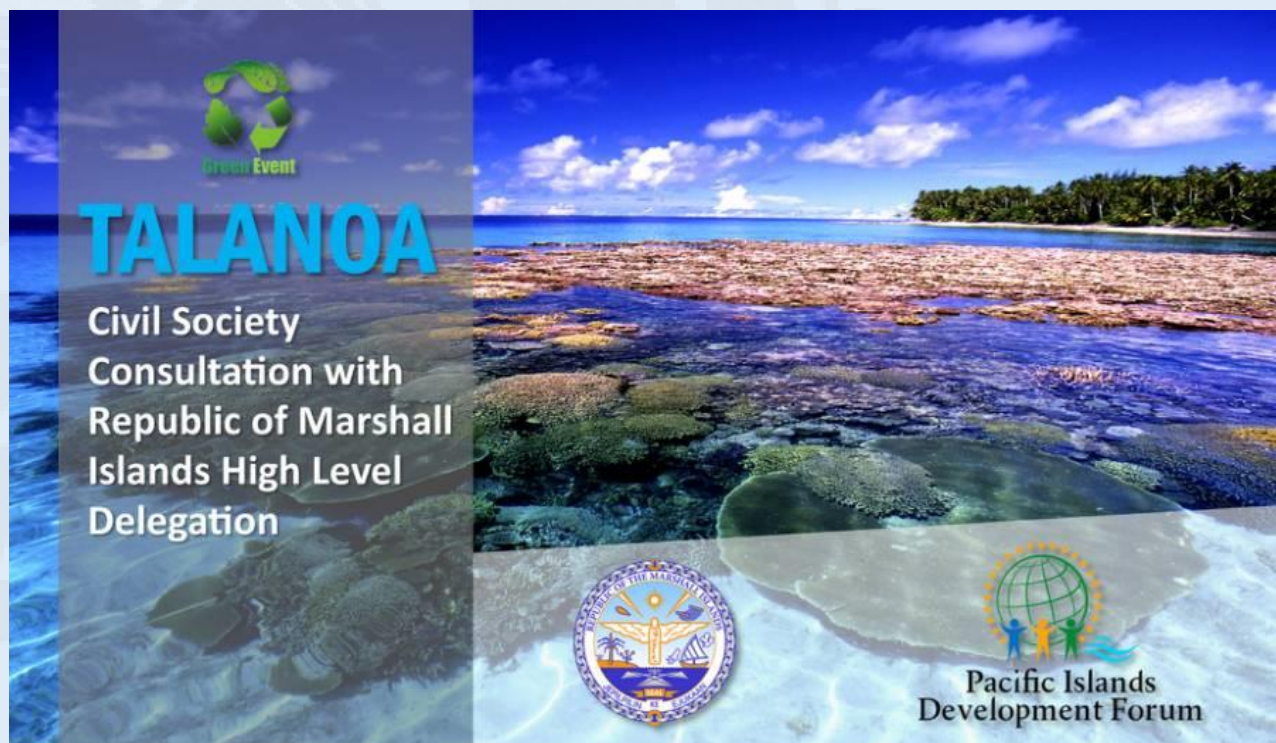
It has also been documented that when reefs die, a toxic algae comes into these same areas. Consequentially, reef fish eat these algae and get poisonous, and then when people eat them, they get sick. This is a violation of human rights. Climate change is essentially making people sick. Some evidence exists from around the Christmas Island area in Kiribati, where people got sick from eating reef fish. More information on this can be sourced from Dr. Kerby through abowdenkerby@gmail.com.

Governments of the Pacific have challenges dealing with other Governments from close-by, and far-away. These governments are usually climate denialists and act against the interest of those nations at the forefront of climate change. Maybe a Blacklist should be created?

It is vital to touch on the spiritual side of discussions too, as Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) are addressing climate change as well. A fallacy addressed most is that of people believing that climate change is an act of God, when in fact climate change is man-made.

The Talanoa concluded with the organisers expressing their gratitude to the participants and delight on the fruitful conversations that transpired.

The feedback and these sort of conversations are what we need to have to create and support further awareness on our members needs.



The Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) has embarked on developing its adaptation plans to enhance its resilience, given it is one of the countries facing existential threat due to the impacts of global warming and sea level rise. Whilst continuing to demand actions from major emitters and championing high level ambition on emissions and climate change, RMI needs active support from partners and the international communities to assist in its efforts.

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4 March 2019

PIDF Secretariat, 56 Domain Rd, Nasese

4pm-6pm

Please RSVP attendance before close of business on Friday March 1 2019:

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Tentative Agenda (4.00pm - 6.00pm)

- * **Welcome** - *H.E Ambassador Tregar Albon Ishoda*
- * **Introductory Remarks** - *Hon. David Paul, Minister for Environment and Minister in Assistance to the President*
- * **2050 Strategy and links to other RMI Plans & Policies** (*Chief-Secretary*)
- * **RMI Electricity Roadmap** - *Angeline Heine, Director NEO*
- * **NDC Partnership Plan** - *Clarence Samuel, Director Climate Change Directorate*
- * **Q&A**



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