El Nino Induced Drought In RMI

Affected Populations
- 21,000 people affected by severe drought conditions.
- 1,257 households on the outer islands and 5,195 households in urban areas affected.

Areas of cooperation:
Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), supplemental food assistance, education, training and capacity building

The Marshallese are no strangers to drought. In fact the last time they experienced severe drought was three years ago in 2013.

This time, though, thanks to a weather system that started building up in early 2015, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) declared this El Nino induced drought as "one of the strongest ... in recorded history."

Based on predicted and recorded rainfall, and field assessments, the Government of the RMI (GoRMI) began responding to this drought in early 2016 to mitigate affects and proactively initiate emergency response mechanisms.

This drought emergency has severely limited water supplies and caused widespread crop damage across the nation.

A State of Emergency was declared by Her Excellency President Heine on 3rd February, 2016, State of Natural Disaster on 8th March, 2016 and extension of State of Natural Disaster on 6th April, 2016. Thereafter President Obama officially declared the disaster on 27th April 2016.

With generous support from donors including the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Australian Aid and the New Zealand Embassy, IOM has been working with the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (GoRMI) through the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) since early January 2016 to ensure that basic water, hygiene and nutrition needs are being met during the drought emergency.

One critical element of the water security strategy has been for the GoRMI and IOM to maintain and deploy a stock of portable, solar powered Reverse Osmosis (RO) units and distribute more than 6000 jerry cans by the end of September. At the height of the drought, over 50 RO units serviced 33 communities throughout RMI, providing critical access to water. After completing a tailored IOM workshop with qualified trainers from New Zealand Red Cross and US company FCI Watermakers, 14 local staff are now able to maintain, install and repair the fleet of RO units.

IOM is working in coordination with the WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) cluster and the Marshall Islands Red Cross Society on health and hygiene promotion campaigns that underscore drought assistance efforts in affected communities.

Necessary hygiene and sanitation items have been procured locally and are being distributed to beneficiaries taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable populations including the elderly, those with disability, pregnant women and children.

“We continue to be concerned about the severity of these weather events in our region” said IOM Chief of Mission, Mr Stuart Simpson. “We stand ready to support partners as they respond and try to mitigate the effects of climate change.”

Overview of Assistance
- Ongoing coordination with Government of Republic of Marshall Islands and other key stakeholders
- Over 50 RO units were deployed to service 33 communities
- RO unit training for 14 key local technical staff members
- By the end of September over 6000 jerry cans purchased or released from warehouse
- Health and hygiene campaign in coordination with WASH cluster and Marshall Islands Red Cross
- Over 70,000 bars of soap distributed. Over 3300 hand sanitizer bottles for students. Nearly 1300 female hygiene kits distributed.
- Supplemental food assistance for more than 4600 (1756 moderate and 2981 severely affected) beneficiaries.
This mission update provides an opportunity for us all to reflect on the broad and ever expanding range of IOM’s engagement in the region. Indeed, we have now been working with valued partners and stakeholders to deliver key results for more than five years. In 2016 we also celebrate another important milestone as it is 65 years since the foundation of IOM as a leading International Organization.

Reconstruction activities under the Typhoon Maysak Reconstruction Program (TMRP) are progressing well. Our community centred approach to reconstruction has created economic development and capacity building opportunities for affected communities.

I have been particularly concerned about El Nino induced drought conditions throughout the region as they jeopardize important development gains and risk the health and safety of citizens. We are working closely with partner governments, donors, civil society and private sector partners to assist with response efforts.

With support from over 30 different government agencies, civil society organizations and private sector representatives, the Migration Profile (MP) for the Federated States of Micronesia has been finalized and launched. It is a comprehensive document that provides a strong evidence base for policymaking and decision making going forward.

As we finalize this update, news from the United Nations in New York has come to hand. On July 26, 2016 the UN General Assembly resolved to include IOM as a related organization. It is still early days but what we do know is that IOM’s Director General and the United Nations Secretary General will sign an agreement in New York on 19 September 2016. Going forward this means that IOM will be a full member of the United Nations and will continue to be the global lead agency on migration issues. Our advocacy and influence on a range of issues will continue to evolve as we move into the UN system.

We hope you enjoy the highlights provided in this edition and look forward to providing you with another update in a few months.

IOM Meets with RMI Cabinet

On Thursday June 9th IOM Micronesia Chief of Mission Mr Stuart Simpson, Majuro Head of Sub Office Angela Saunders and Emergency Response Coordinator Charlie Sell briefed H.E. Honorable President Dr Hilda Heine and her Cabinet. The Cabinet briefing included an overview of IOM assistance to date, including USD3 million in supplemental assistance for emergency drought response from USAID/OFDA, Australian Aid and the New Zealand Embassy focusing on the outer islands WASH and food security needs. Dialogue was held to explore areas of new initiatives regarding counter trafficking, migration and mobility. IOM Micronesia looks forward to continuing its close relationship with the Government of the Republic of Marshall Islands and partners.

El Nino Induced Drought in Palau

When a State of Emergency was declared in Palau, immediate support to the Government of Palau was made possible under the IOM Cooperation Agreement signed earlier in the month. IOM consulted key officials including those from the Ministry of State and the Palau Public Utilities Corporation (PPUC) to discuss immediate needs for the population. At this time, water sources in Koror and Airai were severely depleted and as a result access to safe drinking water was extremely limited.

With support from USAID, IOM engaged experts from the Hawaiian Rural Water Association (HRWA) to assist with assessments and provide recommendations going forward. The HRWA team also helped to setup and use leak detection equipment and train PPUC crews to detect leaks and drill for life-saving bore water. It was determined that more than 40% of water was being lost due to system leaks and many of these leaks were able to be fixed while the assessments were ongoing. The team then assisted and trained local crews to install and operate pumps for the underground wells. These wells provided life-saving water supplies for Koror and Airai. Leaks in fire hydrants were also identified and marked for repair.

HRWA experts investigated the stand alone systems in other states outside of Koror and Airai and found that access to safe drinking water was still limited. Water purification was found to be a major concern in all states and as such, IOM is exploring possible solutions, including the installation of Chlorine Injection System.

Affected Populations in Republic of Palau

- Over 17,500 residents and guest workers affected by drought conditions.
- Over 13,300 tourists affected by drought conditions.

Areas of cooperation:
Technical assistance and capacity building

IOM recognizes the generous support that we receive from:
El Nino Assistance

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

Yap

Under the US funded Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response (PREPARE) Program, IOM has been working with FSM National and State governments to increase resilience to the effects of natural disasters by enhancing national and local capacities for disaster preparedness, response and recovery. When surveys conducted in January and February indicated rapidly diminishing water supplies and poor agricultural conditions, IOM worked closely with Disaster Coordination Offices (DCO) to monitor and respond to mitigate the effects of El Nino in Yap. IOM has been working closely with civil society, disaster-affiliated government departments, and weather services to conduct outreach and public awareness campaigns to encourage household-level water conservation while highlighting El Nino’s impact.

To compliment the water conservation efforts, IOM solicited USAID/OFDA funding to provide mitigation-focused interventions through the provision of repair kits for solar-powered portable reverse osmosis (RO) units deployed in selected outer islands. The RO units are utilized to supplement drinking water supplies in vulnerable, remote islands including Ulithi, Ngulu, Fais and Faraulep as identified by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). IOM is also in the process of scheduling training on RO maintenance for key community members.

Chuuk

Earlier this year and with support from the New Zealand Embassy, IOM provided rainwater-harvesting assistance and education to 22 communities throughout Chuuk, reaching more than 20,000 people. In total, the intervention increased rainwater storage capacity by 225,000 gallons for the targeted communities. This additional collection and storage capacity has assisted the communities as they struggle to cope with current drought conditions.

In response to the ongoing drought, IOM will build on previous efforts and construct rainwater catchment and storage systems in 16 communities with support from Australian Aid. The installation of the catchment and storage systems will address post-Maysak recovery needs, provide relief during the ongoing drought and increase the resilience of these communities by bringing long-term, sustainable storage capacity commensurate with the size of the population in each location.

Critical Support for Chuuk Power Infrastructure

The power distribution infrastructure of Chuuk Public Utility Corporation (CPUC) was severely affected with more than 70% of the power distribution network brought down by Typhoon Maysak in March 2015. CPUC carried out the restoration of power distribution until it was fully restored. However, portions of power distribution that were patched still required permanent repair. IOM and CPUC joined forces with a project implementation agreement valued at over USD 1 million to ensure that Chuuk’s electricity supply is rebuilt. Under the terms of the agreement infrastructure costs were covered and a power distribution line supervisor was engaged to oversee the asset replacement and recovery efforts. Additional line crews were also employed. As each phase is completed, technical experts from IOM endorse the project components. This unique relationship has resulted in continuing improvements to infrastructure and ongoing access to power for the people of Chuuk. This project is scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2016.
Typhoon Maysak traversed the Federated States of Micronesia’s (FSM’s) Chuuk and Yap states March 29- April 1, 2015, damaging houses, crops, and public infrastructure. Nearly 30,000 were affected, representing more than 50 percent of Chuuk’s population and 10 percent of Yap’s. International Organization for Migration is USAID’s implementing partner for the Typhoon Maysak Reconstruction Program, helping communities rebuild and restore critical public infrastructure and utilities.

OVERVIEW OF EMERGENCY RELIEF AND RESPONSE
• supported relief and recovery
• transported 20 reverse osmosis water treatment units from the Republic of the Marshall Islands to FSM
• Desalinated and purified water for immediate use
• Established 17 water distribution points and distributed water containers to 3,000 families
• Distributed 2,000 gallons of water per day to local communities, in coordination with the Chuuk Public Utility Corporation
• Provided more than 5,030 families with hygiene kits
• Delivered more than 44,000 pounds of locally-procured food

REPAIR AND RECONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE
With support from the US Government, IOM is working to repair and reconstruct public schools, health facilities, and community centers. Public utilities, government administration buildings, seawalls, and jetties are also being rehabilitated. A total of 127 public infrastructure facilities are being repaired in Chuuk and 62 in Yap.

HOUSING REPAIR AND ASSISTANCE
Working with the U.S. Peace Corps and USAID, IOM are assisting people to repair or rebuild their damaged and destroyed homes. Members of the community are constructing new homes, providing jobs to 42 people in Chuuk and 162 in Yap. The tailored homes integrate cultural and practical considerations. Each home is equipped with a water catchment system, electrical connection, and is built to withstand winds of up to 95 mph. Persons with disabilities are receiving homes designed to fit their specific needs.

Chuuk State
Vouchers worth $1.3 million have been distributed to nearly 1,200 families. The vouchers are used to purchase food, clothing, additional rebuilding supplies, appliances, and other materials. They are tamper-proof, bilingual, and water-resistant. Recipients learn how to use the vouchers and those who are unable to travel to collect their vouchers due to disability receive an orientation in their homes. In addition, regional vendors were trained on how to accept voucher purchases. Close to 200 housing repair kits have been delivered and 334 new houses are being constructed.

Yap State
Nearly 200 houses were damaged or destroyed in Yap across five islands. Delivery of construction materials began in November 2015 and the houses are expected to be completed by the end of September 2016. Yap communities will also receive $223,300 worth of vouchers for boats, vehicles, and other necessities to be shared by individual island communities.

PREPARE Radio Initiative
Radio is one of the most popular forms of communication in the island nations of FSM and RMI and it is critical in times of emergency. In March, the PREPARE team launched a radio initiative designed to prepare citizens and provide basic infrastructure support. Local broadcasts including mini-dramas and documentaries that highlight key coping strategies and disaster preparedness measures will be produced and aired regularly. The project will also focus on basic radio hardware to ensure that radio stations including the governments’ own radio stations, are able to broadcast early warning and emergency alerts.

IOM’s Majuro Sub Office supported World Water Day in March. With drought conditions prevailing in most of the RMI, IOM used this opportunity to encourage water conservation and promote good health and hygiene practices.

Photo: Bruce Allen PREPARE Program Officer
The House That The Moon Moved

The House That The Moon Moved is an illustrated book based on the true story of a home that was swept into the ocean by a King Tide in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands. Our team wrote and translated the story into five languages from the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. Local artist, Jimson Rudolph, captured both the beauty and the danger that the ocean presents to island nations that are increasingly vulnerable to natural disaster.

The story book will be available to teachers participating in the Climate Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction and Education Plus (CADRE Plus) Program, allowing students age-appropriate information about this specific hazard. Watch the online version at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IicLT6CVUso

Cookhouse Confidential- Menstruation in Tropical Paradise

IOM’s Sub-Office Head in the Republic of the Marshall Islands was a founding member of the Cookhouse Confidential. It began as an informal working group of women in the RMI – both locals and ex-pats – who work in governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental sectors. They began talking about Menstrual Hygiene Management over coffee on Friday afternoons and from there developed the idea of Cookhouse Confidential and the potential for education initiatives and research methodologies.

Recently RMI President, Dr. Hilda Heine declared a State of Disaster to address the harshest drought in recorded history due to El Nino. IOM reacted by requesting a rapid assessment of women’s health needs in times of disaster to prepare for adequate response.

With a team of well-trained women field researchers, Marshall Islands Women’s Research Initiative (MIWRI) conducted a rapid assessment on the atolls of Majuro and Arno using Indigenous Methodology to create a safe space where women could voice their needs and the needs of their families.

From Friday coffee talk to the field, Cookhouse Confidential quite literally became a research space and research methodology that will lead to practical and culturally appropriate implementation of hygiene support in times of disaster or displacement.

Anti-Human Trafficking Day In Pohnpei

IOM Micronesia supported Anti-Human Trafficking Day after Pohnpei State Governor Marcelo Peter- son issued an executive order declaring January 22 as Pohnpei State Anti-Human Trafficking Day.

Our Chief of Mission, Mr. Stuart Simpson, addressed a large crowd who gathered to observe and recognize the importance of Anti-Human Trafficking in Pohnpei State. “Mr. Simpson underscored Trafficking in Persons (TIP) as a complex and dynamic global phenomenon involving the trade in human beings for the sole purpose of exploitation”.

Local community groups prepared performances that highlighted the plight of victims of human trafficking and they were judged by a panel that included Mr Johnny Santos, Chief of Police, and Senator Walter. Lieutenant Governor Reed Oliver officiated on the day and conducted an awards ceremony for the top performances.

New Logo For Yap Human Trafficking Taskforce

The Yap Human Trafficking Taskforce selected Anthony Yalon’s entry as their new logo. It has been a busy few months for the taskforce. Since they were endorsed in August 2015, they forged ahead with the drafting and implementation of their State Action Plan. They also have established a Facebook presence where you can keep up-to-date with their latest activities.
Training of trainers in Chuuk and Majuro

Equipping communities with the skills to identify victims and protect vulnerable people helps to combat human trafficking. In January, IOM supported this important goal by conducting a week-long training of trainers (ToT) for over forty government, civil society and Human Trafficking Taskforce members from each state of the FSM and RMI.

The training focused on victim identification, protection of vulnerable persons, and improving the response of service providers and justice systems. ToT is a sustainable option that fosters a culture of knowledge-sharing even after the training is completed. It is expected that participants will return to their communities to utilize their new skills and share what they learned and advance the network of protection offered to survivors and victims of trafficking.

Law Enforcement Expert Visits Micronesia

Over a period of three months, IOM law enforcement trainer, Mr. Peter Bryant, provided tailored training on Human Trafficking for more than 150 key law enforcement personnel in the FSM and RMI. Mr. Bryant is a Law Enforcement Trainer and specialist in Curriculum Design, Evaluation, and Assessment with more than 30 years of experience. He travelled to Micronesia to assist with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for victim identification, investigations, protection and referral, to be further endorsed by National and State Governments. Mr. Bryant brought with him a wealth of knowledge and experience that he was able to share with participants through interactive sessions. Participants from key agencies are now implementing their newly acquired skills and knowledge of human trafficking issues in their respective workplaces.

World Humanitarian Summit Simulation

In May, the ali CADRE team travelled to Palau to facilitate a student simulation of the World Humanitarian Summit. Twenty top students from four high schools across Palau spent 10 days learning about disaster preparedness and response in the region, and on June 10th the students acted as delegates to simulate a “Roundtable on Natural Disaster and Disasters and Climate Change: Managing Risks & Crises Differently.” The activity was a great success and was the first big event IOM hosted since the Cooperation Agreement signing with Palau in March.

Alii CADRE Kicks Off In Palau

In February, the ali CADRE Team, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Department of Public Safety, the National Weather Service and the National Emergency Management Office of Palau, conducted a 5 day work shop for principals to develop and practice School Emergency Management Plans (SEMP). Four schools rehearsed their hazard-specific drills with all students and staff, while all principals and other workshop attendees observed and provided constructive feedback. During the following couple months, all remaining schools practiced their drills with IOM present, and relevant staff members from these schools were trained and certified by the Red Cross in Emergency First Response. Schools will soon be provided with an emergency medical and evacuation kit, which will help principals to better manage their schools as community emergency evacuation sites during disasters.

CADRE Community Based Infrastructure Projects

IOM partnered with the Construction Faculty at College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) to develop a community-based approach for small infrastructure projects in RMI. Working with students from the College, and community members at each of the three sites, IOM will help to construct water harvesting systems, bathroom and shower block and a new stairwell, as well as improving existing infrastructure. Construction will take place over the summer, and is expected to be completed before the start of the school year in late August. This partnership with CMI and the communities surrounding each site marks the first time CADRE has used this approach to construction, but will likely be employed again in the future.
CADRE Plus
In addition to the Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) education module in the schools, the CADRE Plus team has piloted additional activities in 7 communities in FSM and RMI over the past few months to work with leaders on preparedness and resilience strengthening. During the visits, the CADRE Plus team works with community members to create a Disaster Committee, plan and run drills for community-specific hazards, and develop emergency management skills of community leaders. Community members are trained and certified in disaster search and rescue, water quality and conservation and basic first aid by the Red Cross. Through the trainings and workshops, communities gain the skills and tools they need to prepare and manage for disaster on their own.

IOM has released the Migration Profile (MP) for the Federated States of Micronesia. The MP is a comprehensive document that provides a strong evidence-base for policymaking. It also highlights how migration can contribute to national development priorities within each state. The document notes that there are a number of challenges facing the FSM including poor economic development and investment prospects, however, this MP provides in-depth analysis as a basis for positive strategic engagement and policymaking going forward. This MP was made possible with generous support from over 30 different government agencies, civil society organizations and private sector representatives.

IOM continues to assist the FSM Government as they deal with irregular arrivals. Since November 2015, IOM Micronesia has provided humanitarian assistance and helped to facilitate the repatriations for 12 Vietnamese, 2 Papua New Guineans and 3 I-Kiribati with support from generous donors including Australia. IOM assisted with diplomatic and intergovernmental negotiations, civil society engagement, departure requirements and subsistence items while in the FSM. IOM’s Humanitarian Assistance to Stranded Migrants (HASM) fund was activated to assist with the return of the two Papua New Guinean nationals.

IOM Assists With Repatriations

The Migrant Resource Center (MRC), located at the IOM Office in Majuro, opened its doors in early July 2015 thanks to funding from the IOM Development Fund. Working closely with civil society and government partners, the MRC has provided tailored training to over 2300 people. In its first year of operation 266 individuals (124 females and 142 males) have completed IOM’s Pre-Departure Training cultural orientation from different parts of the country (Kwajalein, Majuro, Wotje and Jaluit). In addition, 2118 high school students (1048 females and 1070 males) from private and public schools across the country have also participated in MRC orientations and seminars. The MRC is open daily from 8:30am to 5:00pm and provides counseling and support services to anyone considering moving aboard, preparing them to succeed in the next phase of their life. The MRC also has a library of resources covering the most common destinations for Marshallese abroad.

Emerging Projects:

World Bank Community Vulnerability Project
IOM will start implementation of the World Bank-funded project around “Community Vulnerability and Capacity Mapping, Geotagging, Stock Taking Exercise and Assessment.” As the title describes, the project will work with communities to standardize people-centered Early Warning Systems and then legislate best practices at the national level. The project will also work to geolag key infrastructure and RMI, and map emergency evacuation centers in FSM.

Migration Profile for FSM

IOM Micronesia
A Country Profile 2015