National Gender Mainstreaming Policy of the Republic of the Marshall İslands

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Foreword – message from the Minister

I have the pleasure to present the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) National Gender Mainstreaming Policy to all women and men of RMI. The Policy, developed through a consultative process with different sectors of the government and civil society, sets our priorities to progress towards achieving gender equality in our country, in our communities, in our families. In today's world, it is not a luxury to provide equal opportunities, to address equitably the needs and concerns of women and men, and to guarantee equal rights: we need everybody's skills, knowledge, ideas, and experience to build a resilient and prosperous country. Besides, in the Marshallese matrilineal culture, women have traditionally been respected as decision-makers and owners of land resources. We can all recognize their significant contributions to the peaceful development and wellbeing of our families and communities.

While our cultural values remain one of our greatest strengths, the reality is that too many women and girls are met with tremendous hardships in their daily lives, including facing violence at home; limited access to justice and protection; exclusion from decision-making processes; difficulty to accessing productive assets and financial resources; and limited job opportunities.

Our country has committed to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and has endorsed regional instruments such as the Revised Platform for action for the advancement of women and gender equality and the 2012 Forum Leaders Gender Equality Declaration. We have to live up to our commitments while respecting our culture. We must make sure our words are translated into reality for women and men of our country. We all have a role to play to make it true: all of us in the government, including local government entities and the parliament; and also our civil society organizations, faith-based organizations and the private sector.

Our combined efforts are required: "In our hands is our future".

Acknowledgements

The Government of Marshall Islands acknowledges the various ministries, organizations and individuals who generously contributed their time, expertise and feedback during the development of this publication:

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I. Policy statement

The Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is committed to creating an enabling environment for all women and men to develop their capacities and fulfill their aspirations. The commitment to "empower each citizen with both responsibility and opportunity" for the benefit of the "sustainable, equitable and measurable development reflecting the priorities and culture of the Marshallese people" has been made through RMI's National Strategic Plan 2015–2017 (NSP).

To achieve our objectives of sustainable development, wellbeing, and peace, we need to create the appropriate conditions to make sure that women and men have equal rights, equal opportunities and equal access to services in order to reach their full potential in all areas of life.

Our country has committed to achieve gender equality through international and regional conventions and instruments, which include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Millennium Development Goals and Pacific Plan, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Revised Pacific Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality, and the 2012 Forum Leaders Gender Equality Declaration.

What do we mean by gender equality or equality between women and men?

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.[1]
(OSAGI, 2001)

Our government commits all its ministries and departments to create all the necessary conditions to ensure that our policies and services benefit women and girls as well as men and boys. The government is taking additional actions to remove all obstacles to gender equality and empower women in areas where they have been disadvantaged.

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1. Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. 2001. Gender Mainstreaming: Strategy For Promoting Gender Equality. Factsheet.

II. Purpose of the Policy

Traditionally, in our matrilineal culture, women have been decision-makers and owners of land resources and there is recognition of their significant contributions to the peaceful development and wellbeing of our families, community and to our society as a whole.

The strength of our traditional beliefs has not eliminated a tendency to stereotype gender roles. Stereotypes that continue to affect our understanding of gender roles include the belief that the place of a woman is in the home while men should occupy the public space and be the breadwinner. Additionally, positions of leadership and decision-making are regarded as male roles. Today, in a changing world where women are educated as well as men, where families need more resources to fulfill their needs and women are increasingly contributing to their families' incomes, and where we need to face growing environmental threats, we cannot afford to limit the contribution of women in the development of our country.

Fundamental values of our culture include caring for each other, respect and partnership. These are required to address the imbalance we see today between women and men and to eliminate discrimination. Applying these values will help us ensure that the fundamental human rights of women and men are respected and that all women and men have equal opportunities and share the benefits of development.

The following issues require our full attention:

- Provision for sexual and reproductive health is well established, but the difficulty of access remains a problem, especially for women in rural areas and outer islands.[2]

- The teenage pregnancy rate (20.6 per cent of total number of live births) is higher than in most other Pacific Island countries.[3]

- On average, 1 woman out of 2 has experienced physical violence in their lifetime.[4]

- Women's economic empowerment remains a key challenge, as women continue to face limited job opportunities and remain underrepresented in management positions. Women in the workplace also face weak protection mechanisms and laws, particularly in the private sector.[5] The rate of men in the labor force was 54% in 2011 as opposed to 30% for women in 2011.[6] There is a growing number of women in the public service, although men dominate most senior positions.[7]

- Women's representation in the Nitijela and other high-level decision-making and management positions is low.

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2. Ibid.

3. Republic of the Marshall Islands. 2014. Review of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in Republic of Marshall Islands. National Review.

4. Republic of the Marshall Islands. Ministry of Internal Affairs. 2014. Family Health and Safety Survey.

5. Republic of the Marshall Islands. 2014. Review of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in Republic of Marshall Islands. National Review.

6. RMI Census of Population and Housing 2011 Summary Report (Numbers derived from pie charts in Figure 2.1).

7. Republic of the Marshall Islands. 2014. Review of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in Republic of Marshall Islands. National Review.

These remaining key issues can be strategically addressed through a practical and outcome-oriented National Gender Mainstreaming Policy that is aligned with the National Strategic Plan 2015–2017.

Strategic measures adopted in RMI for addressing gender issues

Acknowledging its responsibility to address gender inequality issues, the Government of RMI has adopted the following strategic measures in the last 10 years:

- Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

- Enactment of Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act 2012 in compliance with CEDAW and CRC; this law provides protection orders and criminalizes domestic violence.

- Dedicated women's office within the Ministry of Internal Affairs with operational budget support.

- National Climate Change Policy Framework covers goals and outcomes on gender and calls for the development of gender-sensitive strategies for climate change responses.

- Marshall Islands Public School System makes education compulsory for all children.

- RMI's progress on MDG 3 is on-track and gender parity in education has been achieved.

The purpose of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy is to guide the process of developing laws, policies, procedures and practices that will address the needs, priorities and aspirations of all women and men and effectively eliminate all forms of discrimination and inequality. It concerns private and public sectors, local governments, and communities. It requires the mainstreaming of a gender perspective across all government policies, strategies, programs and services.

The strategic approach promoted through the Policy is based on a multi-sectoral and coordinated approach across the government, in line with the National Strategic Plan. It has been conceived as a tool for dialogue and coordination between sectors and agencies to achieve the following objectives:

- Define agreed priorities and targeted support for empowering women and achieving gender equality.

- Create an enabling environment for translating our Government's commitments to gender equality and women's human rights into reality.

- Align national plans, including sectoral plans, to implement Government's international and regional commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

- Ensure that gender equality is pursued through culturally appropriate and sensitive approaches;

- Involve men as informed partners for gender equality.

- Define a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the progress in line with the NSP and other regional and international commitments to gender equality.

III. Policy operating principles

The National Gender Mainstreaming Policy recognizes that women and men are equal partners in the development of our country. It is in line with the RMI National Strategic Plan 2015–2017, which is based on Vision 2018 whose overall goal is to establish a resilient, productive and self-supportive nation. The NSP 2015 acknowledges gender equality as an issue affecting all development priorities that needs to be considered and integrated into the five main sectors[8] covered within the NSP, even though gender goals and priorities are specifically outlined in the Social Sector focus of the Plan.

The operating principles, which form the foundation of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy, are as follows:

- Gender equality is enshrined and included in traditional and cultural practices of the Marshallese people.

- Understanding and acknowledging basic human rights is the primary guiding principle for the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy.

- Women and men are equal partners in all development areas of our country and therefore gender equality and the participation of women at all levels and in all sectors is fundamental to the progress and advancement of RMI.

- Women in the outer islands need to be given special consideration in all Policy outcomes and actions.

- Policy-makers and managers need to develop their capacity to mainstream gender equality and address women's human rights into their sectoral programs and services and establish an accountability mechanism for monitoring progress within their sector.

- Strong partnerships and coordination mechanisms need to be in place between all line and sectoral ministries, outer islands governance mechanisms, and civil society organizations.

The Policy aims at addressing gender inequality for the overall population and to benefit all women living in RMI. However, the Policy acknowledges the fact that some women face additional disadvantages due to their physical and mental conditions (women living with disabilities), their location (women living in remote areas), their age (adolescents and elderly), or their limited assets (unemployed women and heads of household). Government institutions and civil society organizations are requested to prioritize women facing greater disadvantages and pay particular attention to their needs, making sure they benefit from development programs and government's services.

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8. Social development; environment, climate change and resilience; infrastructure development; sustainable economic development; good governance.

IV. Policy goal and objectives

The goal of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy is:

To progress gender equality and the empowerment of women in the RMI with the meaningful involvement and contributions of all development sectors and civil society, and women and men from all spheres, and at all levels of development and decision-making, from the Council of Iroij, the Nitijela, and in local governments in the outer islands.

V. Policy priority outcomes

There are five priority outcomes we want to achieve as a nation, through the implementation of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy:

1. Strengthened capacity across government to deliver gender-responsive programs and services.
2. Secure family wellbeing.
3. Elimination of gender-based violence and protection and care of survivors.
4. Enabling environment for equitable participation in, and benefit from, economic development.
5. Equitable participation of women and men in decision-making.

Priority Outcome 1: Strengthened capacity across the government to deliver gender-responsive programs and services

The delivery of gender-responsive programs and services requires a good understanding of the diversity of needs women and men may have across all dimensions of their life. Additionally, we must consider the fact that women face additional hurdles due to social and cultural barriers that contribute to disadvantages they may face, induced discrimination, social, cultural or economic inequalities, and prevention from accessing equal opportunities. Therefore, all ministries and departments, including local government bodies, must adopt a gender mainstreaming approach.

A 2010 stocktake of the capacity of the Government of RMI to mainstream gender reported that gender issues were rarely mentioned in high-level discussions; very few sectors were using sex-disaggregated data; gender analysis was not used in the policy and program development process; there was no accountability or reporting measures related to mainstreaming gender in the government; resources allocated to addressing gender issues were largely insufficient; and there was very limited technical capacity to conduct gender analysis and support the gender mainstreaming approach.

> **Gender mainstreaming** *is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.*
>
> *ECOSOC, 1997*

In order for the government (at both central and local levels) to effectively deliver gender-responsive programs and services, we need to develop an enabling environment for mainstreaming gender. For this purpose, we need to increase our capacity to identify and understand gender issues by producing sex disaggregated data and conduct gender analysis; we need to develop our capacity and establish mechanisms for mainstreaming gender; and we need to coordinate better across all sectors and monitor the impacts of our interventions in advancing gender equality.

Priority Outcome 2: Secure family wellbeing

Family is a basic unit of our society, responsible for the wellbeing and safety of all its members. Men and women must work together as equal partners to support their families and overcome the many challenges arising from our changing environment. We need to adopt healthier lifestyles; to support our children to achieve higher levels of education; to improve our parental skills; to adapt and be prepared to address climate change issues; to increase partnership between women and men to carry out family responsibilities; and to raise our children – boys and girls – to be equal.

The government, civil society organizations and faith-based organizations already play a critical role in supporting families all over the country in these areas. The Policy encourages a stronger partnership between these organizations, the private sector and local and central governments to ensure that women and men, as well as boys and girls, receive the attention required and that our support promotes equitable access to resources and services, and promotes gender equality.

Priority Outcome 3: Elimination of gender-based violence and protection and care of survivors

Gender-based violence is a challenge that is complicated by some social practices, some cultural beliefs, and a lack of institutional support and agencies to provide temporary relief or shelter.

The Family Health and Safety Study, conducted between 2013 and 2014, reveals that 48% of ever-partnered women reported having experienced physical violence in their lifetime, and 21% had experienced at least one act of sexual violence in their lifetime.[9] Domestic violence is not a private matter and cannot be justified for any reason. It concerns all of us and we have the moral obligation, as a government, to create all the conditions to prevent it, to protect the victims, and to provide justice and care for the survivors.

In 2011 RMI enacted the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act. A Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Task Force (DVPPA) was established in 2012, as an attachment to Secretary of Internal affairs, to support the implementation of the law, to make recommendations and to coordinate the pooling of resources.

To make a significant change to halt gender-based violence, we need to develop strong leadership and strengthen the coordination between the sectors of public safety, justice, health, internal affairs and local governments, and also with civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, and the media. We also need to strengthen legal frameworks, law enforcement and the justice system, and build institutional and community capacity.

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9.   Republic of the Marshall Islands. Ministry of Internal Affairs. 2014. Family Health and Safety Survey.

We also acknowledge the growing global trends around trafficking and the risk to RMI, and we will put in place mechanisms to monitor the situation and adopt measures for the protection of women and girls who are being trafficked on our territory.

Priority Outcome 4: Enabling environment for equitable participation in, and benefit from, economic development

In the overall context of the economic development of RMI, the creation of new employment opportunities is limited. Women's economic empowerment remains a key challenge, as women continue to face limited job opportunities and remain under-represented in management positions. Legislative mechanisms to protect the employment and labor rights of workers have not yet been established, and there are no anti-discrimination provisions, no maternity leave provisions, no protections for dismissal because of pregnancy, no sexual harassment protections, and no breaks for mothers working in the private sector to enable them to nurse young children during work hours.[10]

Nevertheless, a majority of women are involved in income-generating activities, in the cultural industry or in food production and processing. In many outer island families facing scarce job opportunities, income earned by women is necessary for the survival of families.

In order to support an enabling environment for an equitable participation in and benefit from economic development we need to ensure equal employment opportunities by improving working conditions. This includes creating a good balance between family and work-related responsibilities for both women and men, adopting measures to protect women's rights and encourage integrity in the workplace, expanding choices for women and girls in accessing technical and vocational education and training and higher education, and supporting women's entrepreneurship, especially by valuing opportunities within the cultural industry.

Priority Outcome 5: Equitable participation of women and men in decision-making

Leadership positions are still thought of as men's roles, and this view is reflected in all aspects of political, civic and family functions. Consequently, participation of women at the national decision-making level remains limited, with women being under-represented in the legislative and executive branches of government. At the national level, there is only one woman member of the Nitijela, out of 33 seats. Women have the right to sit on the Council of Iroj, but the custom is that sisters designate their brothers to represent their family. Currently, in the 12-seat Council of Iroj, which serves a largely consultative function dealing with custom and traditional practices, three seats are occupied by women. There is a growing number of women in the public service, although men dominate the most senior positions. At the time of the publication of this Policy, of a total of 10 permanent secretaries, four were women. At the local government level, three of 24 mayors were women.

Increasing the representation of women in leadership positions is not only a matter of demonstrating women's abilities to take part in decision-making and changing mindsets about the right of women to participate in public affairs. Additionally, inclusive participation in decision-making is an indicator of good governance. When women participate significantly in decision-making with men, it creates a stronger platform to address a broader range of concerns and needs.

10. Republic of the Marshall Islands. 2014. Review of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in Republic of Marshall Islands. National Review.

To support the equitable participation of women and men in decision-making, we need to undertake more civic education, encourage political leaders to be more supportive of female candidates, further develop women's leadership and communication skills, build the capacity of the media to promote a positive image of female leaders, discuss the adoption of temporary special measures, and promote more women in decision-making and senior management positions in both the public and private sectors.

VI. Policy Strategic strategies

The policy implementation strategies in this section describe outputs, key actions and sectors concerned for the achievement of the outcomes of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy.

The implementation of these strategies requires the active involvement and contribution of the Council of Iroj, the Nitijela, all government sectors, civil society organizations and communities. The five strategic areas are intended to be coordinated and to work in synergy with national policies and ongoing and/or planned strategic plans in RMI's government ministries, agencies and state-owned enterprises (SOEs).[11]

Table 1, below, provides an overview of the five sectors, and related strategic areas, identified by the NSP for the implementation of key national strategic actions:

Table 1: Sectors and related strategic areas identified by RMI's National Strategic Plan 2015–2017

Sector	Related strategic areas
Social development	• Health • Education • Gender • Children, youth and vulnerable groups • Community development
Environment, climate change and resiliency	• Vulnerability assessment and disaster risk reduction • Disaster management and response • Conservation resources management
Infrastructure development	• Transportation • Energy • Water and sanitation • Solid and hazardous waste management • Information communication technology
Sustainable economic development	• Agriculture • Marine resources • Trade and local manufacturing • Tourism • Financial services, private sector, private sector investment and employment • Government investment
Good governance	• Public administration • Public financial management reform • Law, justice and public safety • Legal and regulatory • SOE management and reform • Macroeconomic planning

11. Republic of the Marshall Islands. 2014. National Strategic Plan 2015-2017. p.xiv.

Policy goal and objectives

The goal of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy is to progress gender equality and the empowerment of women in RMI. This is to be accomplished with the meaningful involvement of, and contribution from, all development sectors. This includes civil society, women and men from all spheres and at all levels of development and decision-making, the Council of Iroj, the RMI Parliament, and local government bodies in the outer islands.

Policy Priority Outcomes

The following section proposes a series of inputs and strategic actions that will support the achievement of each of the five priority outcomes of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy.

> *Priority Outcome 1: Strengthened capacity across government to deliver gender-responsive programs and services*

What do we need to do to strengthen the capacity of the government to deliver gender-responsive programs and services?

1.1. Generate and disseminate information on gender issues in RMI.

1.2. Develop capacity of the government to mainstream gender in developing and delivering public services.

1.3. Establish a system to coordinate and monitor the advancement of gender equality at all levels and in all sectors.

1.4. Adopt measures to make governments institutions and senior government representatives accountable for gender mainstreaming

1.5. Embed CEDAW articles into legislative and policy initiatives across government.

Strategic Actions:

- Systematically produce and use sex disaggregated data and conduct gender analysis to inform policy development and service delivery, and to monitor the impacts and benefits of government programs for women and men.

- Develop gender profiles and gender indicators.

- Advocate and raise awareness on gender inequality issues.

- Increase capacity of senior government managers and all staff in the public service on gender mainstreaming through training, the development of guidelines, and technical assistance.

- Support the members of Nitijela and local governments to take into account gender equality and human rights commitments in their functions.

- Establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism on progress towards gender equality.

- Adopt measures for making government institutions and staff accountable for mainstreaming gender within their functions.

- Establish an information management system compiling gender profiles and statistics, and sectoral, national and local strategies and programs contributing to addressing gender issues and producing gender reports.

- Use CEDAW and other human rights instruments in the process of developing, reviewing and adopting new laws and policies, and review any laws that do not comply with CEDAW.

- Strengthen the Gender Office to improve coordination between government institutions, and effectively implement the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy.

- Establish gender focal points in every ministry.

Sectors concerned by priority outcome 1:

- Social development

- Environment, climate change and resilience

- Infrastructure development

- Sustainable economic development

- Good governance

What do we need to do to support and secure family wellbeing?

2.1. Enhance partnership of women and men in sharing family responsibilities.

2.2. Support women and men in adopting healthier lifestyles.

2.3. Expand boys' and girls' access to higher levels of education and vocational and technical training.

2.4. Significantly reduce the number of teenage pregnancies.

2.5. Support the role of women and men in households' and communities' adaptation strategies to climate change impacts and disaster risks.

Strategic Actions:

- Promote shared responsibility between women and men in the household.

- Organize parental skills training for both mothers and fathers.

- Build capacity of the media in developing positive images of gender equality and respectful images of women, in order to work towards the elimination of gender stereotypes.

- Expand sport programs for boys and girls, and disseminate information about healthy nutrition.

- Review school curricula and all teaching materials produced in RMI in order to eliminate gender stereotypes and all forms of discrimination.

- Implement a core basic teacher-training program that includes compulsory areas in family health, family life education and the promotion of gender equality and human rights.

- Strengthen family life education through the school curriculum.

- Raise awareness, and disseminate information, about sexual and reproductive health and rights.

- Adopt measures to increase access for boys and girls to secondary and higher levels of education and vocational and technical training.

- Promote respectful relationships at school, and adopt policies against sexual harassment and bullying.

- Adopt measures to support teenage mothers to pursue their education.

- Involve women and men in disaster risk preparedness and climate change adaptation initiatives.

- Support the role of both women and men in food security and water security.

- Value and use local knowledge of women and men in disaster preparedness, food security and water security in developing climate change adaptation strategies and programs.

Sectors concerned by priority outcome 2:

- Social development

- Environment, climate change and resilience

- Infrastructure development

- Sustainable economic development

Priority Outcome 3: Elimination of gender-based violence and protection and care of survivors

What do we need to do to eliminate gender-based violence and provide effective protection and care of survivors?

3.1. Increase access to justice to the survivors by the provision of legal assistance and effective remedies.

3.2. Create safe places for women and girls where they can be protected.

3.3. Monitor incidences of gender-based violence and how cases are being handled by the justice system, the Policy, the health service providers and communities.

3.4. Support community-based initiatives for preventing domestic violence and for protecting and supporting victims.

3.5. Monitor the risk of human trafficking and adopt measures for the protection of women and girls being trafficked.

Strategic Actions:

- Review current legislation for compliance with human rights commitments and the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act.

- Carry out awareness-raising programs and media campaigns aiming to change people's attitudes towards women and girls, and towards domestic violence, in partnership with government, the private sector, and civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations.

- Work with traditional leaders and faith-based organizations to address gender-based violence.

- Develop a community protection plan in each island.

- Implement awareness-raising programs and gender-based violence prevention initiatives.

- Establish a family support unit for the outer islands.

- Upgrade the reporting database of the Ministry of Justice.

- Enhance training for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police and health workers on the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act and human rights commitments.

- Upscale mental health and counseling programs, designate safe rooms for women and children, endorse first response protocols, and improve data collection for reporting mechanisms by the Ministry of Health.

- Develop life skills and primary prevention curricula, led by the Ministry of Education.

- Support men in playing a significant role in the elimination of gender-based violence.

- Engage adolescents and youth as strategic groups for ending the cycle of violence, through the implementation of educational programs based on gender equality and human rights.

- Support civil society organizations in providing effective services to survivors.

- Establish a system to identify people being trafficked in or through RMI.

- Strengthen protection and support services for women and girl victims of trafficking, and ensure protective measures, safe places and access to health services.

Sectors concerned by priority outcome 3:

- Social development

- Good governance

What do we need to do to support an enabling environment for equitable participation in, and benefit from, economic development?

4.1. Ensure equal opportunity for women and men in all fields of employment.

4.2. Adopt measures supportive of equitable access for women and men to decision-making positions in both the public and private sectors.

4.3. Support women's entrepreneurship.

Strategic Actions:

- Implement national employment legislation and policies to promote decent work, and remove discriminatory practices and eliminate sexual harassment, which affect women's overall participation in the economy.

- Adopt workplace policies supporting a balance between family and work-related responsibilities for women and men.

- Increase women's awareness about their rights in the work place.

- Encourage state-owned and private enterprises to improve and expand women's employment opportunities and to equitably promote women to leadership positions.

- Expand choices for women and girls in accessing technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education.

- Support income-generating activities for women in rural areas and in disadvantaged households.

- Identify markets, and support the development of value-chains, for cultural industries, and for agriculture and fisheries products produced by women.

- Promote and support the contribution of women and men in agriculture and fisheries including both paid and unpaid activities – and their respective roles in food security and rural development.

- Promote and support cultural industry, in particular women's handicraft production.

- Invest in and support women and young women, including those with disabilities, women living in rural and remote areas, and those working in the informal sector, by:

    ➤ providing access to productive resources;

> ‣ promoting financial literacy programs and access to financial services;

> ‣ developing safe and sanitary working conditions; and

> ‣ expanding access to credit and financial investments.

- Support initiatives that improve the hygienic conditions and safety of local markets.

- Support the development and use of gender indicators on women's economic empowerment.

Sectors concerned by priority outcome 4:

- Sustainable economic development

- Infrastructure development

- Good governance

<h3 style="background-color:#9fc5d4">Priority Outcome 5: Equitable participation of women and men in decision-making</h3>

What do we need to do to promote equitable participation of women and men in decision-making?

5.1. Increase women's leadership and participation in decision-making.

5.2. Adopt measures to increase representation of women in the Nitijela and in local government.

5.3. Promote equal opportunity for women and men to lead in local governance institutions and civil society organizations.

Strategic Actions:

- Provide more civic education.

- Include civic education, gender equality and human rights in the school curriculum.

- Increase political party support for female candidates.

- Put in place policies and practices that enhance gender parity in political representation.

- Increase the knowledge and capacity of members of the Nitijela to take into account gender perspective in their functions.

- Strengthen the leadership, communication and advocacy skills of female candidates.

- Host events for women to discuss politics.

- Organize mock Nitijela for women at the national and local levels.

- Build capacity in the media to promote gender equality and human rights.

- Raise awareness on the importance of equitable participation of women and men in decision-making.

- Raise awareness of, and advocate for, Temporary Special Measures.

- Amend the Constitution to allow for Temporary Special Measures.

Sectors concerned by priority outcome 5:

- Social development

- Good governance

VII. Institutional arrangements for the implementation of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy

The implementation of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy requires the contribution of all levels of government institutions, from every sector, and from civil society organizations. The following describes the role of different stakeholders and the coordination mechanisms.

The Human Rights Committee

The Human Rights Committee is an existing national committee composed of the Chief Secretary and Permanent Secretaries.

In the context of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy, the Human Rights Committee has an advisory role that includes monitoring the implementation of the Policy. It will adopt the implementation plan, the annual plan and the annual report of the Human Rights Working Group, review progress, make recommendations and present the plans and reports to Cabinet.

The Human Rights Committee also has an advocacy role in encouraging the government to allocate sufficient resources for achieving the Policy's targets.

The Human Rights Committee will meet annually (two months before the budget process commences), in a conference for monitoring and reviewing progress and the annual plan.

The Human Rights Working Group

The Human Rights Working Group is an existing mechanism composed of Assistant Secretaries and the Division Chief of every ministry.

The development and implementation of activities for each priority policy outcome will be the responsibility of the Human Rights Working Group. It has the responsibility of developing a five-year implementation plan of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy, and preparing an annual plan and budget to be submitted to the Human Rights Committee. The Human Rights Working Group has the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of activities for the achievement of the outcomes of the Policy, and will report on progress in an annual report to the Human Rights Committee.

The Gender and Development Office, Ministry of İnternal Affairs

The Gender and Development Office, under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is the official gender focal point of the government. The Gender and Development Office acts in an advisory and coordinating capacity. It informs, advises and provides technical assistance to the various levels of government to ensure that gender inequality and women's human rights issues are properly addressed. The Gender and Development Office also coordinates the government's efforts in addressing those issues. The Office also supports the monitoring and reporting process under the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy and other regional and international commitments promoting gender equality, and identifies areas needing further action.

Annex 1: Alignment of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy with Development Themes in the National Strategic Plan 2015–2017

National Strategic Plan Development Themes	Outcomes of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy	Contribution of the Policy outcomes to the development themes
1. Ensuring and applying the practice of good governance principles to achieve effective governance through community planning and developing effective linkages between local and national government.	**Priority Outcome 1** Strengthened capacity across government to deliver gender-responsive programs and services	• Systematically produce and use sex-disaggregated data and conduct gender analysis to inform policy development and service delivery, and monitor the impacts and benefits of government programs for women and men. • Building capacity in gender analysis and gender mainstreaming helps to identify a broader range of needs of the population (taking into account both women's and men's needs) and to improve the effectiveness of service delivery by central and local government (by addressing gender issues that prevent women and men benefiting from the same opportunities, and benefiting equitably from government programs and services). • Adopt measures to make governments, institutions and senior government representatives accountable for gender mainstreaming. • Improve the information management system related to gender issues and implement programs and strategies to address those issues. This provides better tools to monitor the overall impacts of government programs and services specifically in progressing gender equality. It also contributes to the transparency and accountability of the government.
	Priority Outcome 5 Increased women's leadership and participation in decision-making	• A critical indicator of good governance practices resides in an inclusive and participatory governance system. Significant participation of women in decision-making and representation in leadership positions contributes to expanding the scope of decision-making related to public affairs, as women may have different experiences and interests to men.

National Strategic Plan Development Themes	Outcomes of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy	Contribution of the Policy outcomes to the development themes
2. Empowering people and communities to reduce incidence of "access-related" poverty through improvements in all areas, including social, economic, environment, governance and infrastructure.	**Priority Outcome 1** Strengthened capacity across government to deliver gender-responsive programs and services	• Develop capacity of the government in gender mainstreaming by creating and delivering public services that benefit women and men equitably. • One of the principles of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy is to pay particular attention to women who are disadvantaged, such as women living in the outer islands, women living with disabilities, young women, and unemployed women who are head of household.
	Priority Outcome 2 Secure family wellbeing	• Support the role of both women and men in food security and water security.
	Priority Outcome 3 Elimination of gender-based violence and protection and care of survivors	• Gender-based violence represents an important economic cost, both for individuals and for the government, and it induces hardship and even poverty. Although addressing gender-based violence requires investment, its returns are high in terms of eliminating economic costs and contributing to safe and peaceful communities and families.
	Priority Outcome 4: Economic empowerment of women	• Recognize, promote and support the contribution of women and men in agriculture and fisheries – both paid and unpaid activities – and their respective roles in food security and rural development. • Adopt measures to ensure women's rights to equal opportunity in all fields of employment.
	Priority Outcome 5 Increased women's leadership and participation in decision-making	• The participation of women in decision-making with men about priorities and strategies to reduce the incidence of "access-related" poverty creates more empowered communities.
3. Strengthening ability to mobilize local and traditional knowledge to address emerging challenges facing people, communities and governments.	**Priority Outcome 2** Secure family wellbeing	• Value and use local knowledge of women and men in disaster preparedness, food security and water security, in developing climate change adaptation strategies and programs. • Involve both women and men in building resilient communities to face climate change impacts and disaster risks.

National Strategic Plan Development Themes	Outcomes of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy	Contribution of the Policy outcomes to the development themes
4. Building up a caring society embodied by traditional culture and values through continued focus on cultural awareness and cultural responsibility.	**Priority Outcome 2** Secure family wellbeing	• Organize parental skills training for both mothers and fathers. • Promote shared responsibility between women and men in the household. • Build the capacity of the media in developing positive images about gender equality and respectful images of women, working towards the elimination of gender stereotypes.
	Priority Outcome 3 Elimination of gender-based violence and protection and care of survivors	• Carry out awareness-raising programs and media campaigns, aiming to change people's attitudes towards women and girls and towards domestic violence, in partnership with government, the private sector and civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations. • Work with traditional leaders and faith-based organizations to address gender-based violence. • Develop a community protection plan in each island. • Engage adolescents and youth as strategic groups for ending the cycle of violence, through the implementation of educational programs based on gender equality and human rights. • Support men in playing a significant role in the elimination of gender-based violence.
5. Promoting an innovative people and improving health and education access and opportunities.	**Priority Outcome 1** Strengthened capacity across government to deliver gender-responsive programs and services	• Develop the capacity of government in gender mainstreaming by developing and delivering public services that benefit women and men equitably.
	Priority Outcome 2 Secure family wellbeing	• Promote healthier lifestyles. • Increase access for boys and girls to secondary and higher levels of education and vocational and technical training. • Raise awareness of, and disseminate information about, sexual and reproductive health and rights, to increase the use of contraceptives and other protective measures to prevent sexually transmitted illnesses (STIs) and unplanned pregnancy.
6. Addressing globalization and regional cooperation challenges through focused legislations, international agreements and implementation of regional and national policies.	**Priority Outcome 1** Strengthened capacity across government to deliver gender-responsive programs and services	• Establish a system to coordinate and monitor the advancement of gender equality at all levels and in all sectors. • Embed CEDAW articles into legislative and policy initiatives across government.
7. Ensuring broad-based growth and food security through a cross-cutting approach.	**Priority Outcome 2** Secure family wellbeing	• Support the role of both women and men in food security and water security.

National Strategic Plan Development Themes	Outcomes of the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy	Contribution of the Policy outcomes to the development themes
8. Building a sound infrastructure that provides energy, environmental, infrastructure and transportation security for all atolls.	**Priority Outcome 1** Strengthened capacity across government to deliver gender-responsive programs and services	• Develop the capacity of the government in gender mainstreaming by creating and delivering public services that benefit women and men equitably.
9. Mitigating the impacts of climate change and creating awareness of the importance of environmental assets through community, national, regional and international approach.	**Priority Outcome 1** Strengthened capacity across government to deliver gender-responsive programs and services **Priority Outcome 2** Secure family wellbeing	• Involve women and men in disaster risk preparedness and climate change adaptation initiatives. • Support the role of both women and men in food security and water security. • Value and use local knowledge of women and men in disaster preparedness, food security and water security, in developing climate change adaptation strategies and programs.
10. Ensuring outer islands populations receive access to all necessary services allowing all RMI citizens to enjoy a high quality of life.	**Priority Outcome 1** Strengthened capacity across government to deliver gender-responsive programs and services	• Develop the capacity of government in gender mainstreaming by creating and delivering public services that benefit women and men equitably.
	Priority Outcome 3 Elimination of gender-based violence and protection and care of survivors	• Develop a community protection plan in each island. • Implement awareness-raising programs and prevention initiatives. • Establish a family support unit for the outer islands. • Support civil society organizations in providing effective services to survivors.

Annex 2: Glossary of terms

Gender: Refers to the socially constructed roles held by women and men in a specific society, including their responsibilities, behaviours and attitudes towards each other. Even if they sometimes appear "natural", these roles are learned, and can vary from one society to another, and are changing over time.

Gender equality: Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but rather that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue, but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and an indicator of, sustainable, people-centered development.[12] (OSAGI, 2001)

Equity: Refers to the concept of fairness, and involves access to equal opportunities and the development of basic capacities. To ensure equity, it is necessary to recognize that some groups have been disadvantaged, and even though rules, laws and processes may not specifically discriminate against some people, they could, in fact, induce some forms of discrimination when social inequalities are overlooked. Therefore, equity could necessitate special measures to compensate for the disadvantages. Equity is an essential element in equality.

Empowerment: Refers to the process of enhancing the capacities of individuals or groups to make choices, and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions which both build individual and collective assets, and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context which govern the use of these assets. (Word Bank, 2011)

Gender analysis: A process, including methods and tools, to identify gender inequalities and the causes of those inequalities. A gender analysis aims to plan efficient development programs that address both men's and women's needs and reduce existing gender and other social inequalities. A gender analysis is not limited to analysing women's roles and needs, but also includes men's. It focuses on the causes of gender inequalities embedded in social relations and institutions. Thus, a gender analysis also studies social organizations and institutions in order to identify what needs to be changed in order to ensure equity, equality and social inclusion.

Gender mainstreaming: *…the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.* (ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions, 1997/2)

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12. Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. 2001. Gender Mainstreaming: Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality. Factsheet.

Discrimination against women: *…any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.* (CEDAW)

Annex 3: References

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