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## ROC (Taiwan) Donates to RMI Drought Relief Efforts



Photo L-R: Speaker Kedi, T&C Minister Halferty, Rev. Johanes, ROC (Taiwan) Ambassador Chen, Minister-in-Assistance Zackhras, R&D Minister Alfred, & Minister Kaneko

ROC (Taiwan) Donated over 3,000 bags of rice (1 bag=30kg or 66lbs), assisting the RMI Government's drought relief efforts. Minister-in-Assistance Mattlan Zackhras expressed appreciation, on behalf of the Government and people of the RMI, to ROC (Taiwan) Ambassador Winston Chen and the Government and people of ROC (Taiwan) for supporting and assisting the RMI with its drought relief efforts. In addition, Ambassador Chen presented two checks in the amount of \$20,000 to fund the international and domestic shipping expenses of rice donations.

The RMI Government wishes to express heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Governments of the United States, Japan, Kazakhstan, Australia, New Zealand, the EU, Philippines, and the ADB among many others who provided generous disaster relief support and assistance to the RMI.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

ROC (Taiwan) Donates to RMI Drought Relief Efforts	1
President Heine Welcomes PNA CEO	1
Ministers Zackhras & Halferty Meet Kia'aina	2
IAEA Conduct Workshops on Majuro	3
Current RMI Projects with IAEA & Assistance on Zika	4
World Bank Climate Resilience Team Visits RMI	4
Mercator Fellow to Assist OEPPC	5
Status on Cabinet Bills	6



Photo L-R: President Heine, PNA CEO Kumoru, R&D Minister Alfred following courtesy call on President and members of Cabinet at the Cabinet conference room

President Dr. Hilda C. Heine welcomed new PNA CEO Ludwig Kumoru at the Cabinet conference room last week. Early this month, Kumoru officially took the reins as the PNA CEO and is now based in Majuro. CEO Kumoru previously served as the Deputy Managing Director of the National Fisheries Authority of Papua New Guinea.



Photos L-R: Minister-in-Assistance Zackhras, Assistant Secretary Kia'aina, Transportation and Communication Minister Halferty

## Ministers Zackhras and Halferty meet with Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Esther Kia'aina

Minister-in-Assistance Mattlan Zackhras and Minister Michael Halferty met with Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Esther Kia'aina earlier this month following her visit to Kili and Ejit.

On behalf of President Dr. Hilda C. Heine, the people and Government of the RMI, Minister-in-Assistance Zackhras expressed appreciation to Assistant Secretary Kia'aina for her assistance and contributions to the RMI, particularly on climate change initiatives and nuclear related issues. He thanked the Obama Administration, through Assistant Secretary Kia'aina, for the role DOI played with regards to the disaster response following the declaration by President Heine. He mentioned the excellent coordination and transportation of food baskets and hygienic products to the most affected communities in the outer islands and assistance with coastal management efforts on the ground.

The Minister said the RMI expects to work in partnership with U.S. on matters pertaining to the 4 atolls and particularly the recent request by the Bikini community on their quest for resettlement. The RMI Government expects to work closely with the Department of Interior and the Bikini Local Government and Leadership to address short term and longer term issues such as supporting technical support and follow up with congress on

pending legislation to lift the restrictions to use part of the trust fund to meet basic needs.

Also discussed was the banking correspondent issue with FDIC issue which DOI Assistant Secretary Kia'aina has expressed support to have a TA funded through JEMFAC to move things forward. Assistant Secretary Kia'aina expressed support for the RMI with technical assistance to reform financial programs to meet FDIC requirements. Minister-in-Assistance Zackhras expressed gratitude to Assistant Secretary Kia'aina for writing on behalf of the RMI to clarify particular issues with regards to FDIC's federal policy and her work with Congress to lift the legislative restrictions to assist the Bikini community.

The issue of debt-for-nature swap proposal that was being discussed by RMI-NTA and Micronesia Conservation Trust/TNC was discussed to assist the three Telecoms to alleviate their large debt with RUS. She expressed DOI's support and would help push this issue within her department and TNC.

This was possibly Assistant Secretary Kia'aina's last visit to the RMI in her current capacity at the Department of Interior, so Minister-in-Assistance thanked Esther Kia'aina for her service to the FAS and dedication to RMI issues during her time at DOI and many years as a senior staffer at Congress.

Continue on page 3

“Assistant Secretary Esther Kia’aina will remain a champion in our eyes in many ways and we wish

her all the best in her future endeavors,” said Minister-in-Assistance Zackhras.

## IAEA Conduct Workshops to Enhance Quality Project Designs & Diagnostic Imaging Services

Last week, experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) conducted two workshops at the ICC from 15–19 August 2016. The workshops brought together participants from Pacific Island member states including the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu.

One of the workshops aimed at enhancing the quality of technical cooperation on project designs by providing a hands-on training using the Logical Framework Methodology for the submission of quality project designs for IAEA in the 2018–2019 implementation period. The Logical Framework Methodology is an internationally-recognized project management methodology “through which project teams can logically and coherently analyze the substance of any problem or challenge and subsequently design projects which account for extraneous factors, minimize risks, and reconcile diverse interests and objectives.”

The outcome of the workshop included fifteen project designs in the areas of human health, food and agriculture, environmental monitoring, and radiology services improvement and radiation safety. Specific RMI project designs were– radiology services improvement; environmental monitoring in food safety and radioactivity in the coastal and marine environment; and the establishment of technical capabilities for ground water resources management.

In parallel to the project design workshop, the AIEA conducted another workshop for radiographers and clinicians aimed at enhancing the capacity and quality of diagnostic imaging services. In line with the current project with IAEA on the improvement of radiological services in the Marshall Islands, the workshop also included the participation of physicians from



Mr. Oscar Acuna, Section Head of the Division for Asia and Pacific within the IAEA’s Technical Cooperation Department (L) & Ms. Galya Dmitrova, Quality Assurance Specialist (R)



Participants of the sub-regional workshop on project design, including RMIEPA representative, Mr. Tuvuki Katedromo (far right).

the Ministry of Health.

The IAEA team members consisted of Mr. Oscar Acuna, Section Head for the Division for Asia and the Pacific; Mr. Thomas Pascual, Nuclear Medicine Physician; and Ms. Galya Dmitrova, Quality Assurance Officer. IAEA experts on Radiology included Dr. Asela Barroso, Dr. Cheyen Molon, Dr. Susan Olavidez.

The RMI has been a member of the IAEA since 1994.

Continue on page 4

### CURRENT RMI PROJECTS WITH IAEA

- Improvement of Radiology Services**  
 Worth \$200k, the project entails capacity building of radiology department staff, including safety measures in the calibration of equipment and diagnostic services. In addition, the project involves the provision of equipment, such as, patient immobilization and dosimetry tools.
- Building Independent Capacity to Monitor and Assess Radioactivity Levels in the Environment (coastal, terrestrial)**

Worth up to \$200k, the project includes the upgrading of EPA and MIMRA laboratories with equipment to analyze samples and determining the level and sources of contamination. This also entails training of staff and provision of equipment. The Kwajalein Contamination Project is being carried out as part of this project whereby equipment was provided to detect and analyze levels of PCBs in food, particularly fish, and humans. Training was provided to two laboratory staff from Ebeye and Majuro respectively, in the use of the equipment. Lead testing equipment was also dispatched for hospitals in Ebeye and Majuro to assess levels of lead in humans.

### IAEA ASSISTANCE TO RMI'S ZIKA STATE OF HEALTH EMERGENCY

In response to the State of Health Emergency declared earlier this year, IAEA dispatched experts to Majuro to assess the situation and make recommendations. From the mission, pulmonary chain reaction kits were sent to detect presence of Zika virus in humans and take immediate actions. MOH laboratory staff were trained to use PCR kits while equipment to detect the virus are on the way for Majuro and Ebeye.



photo: World Bank Climate Resilience team pays courtesy call on President Heine and members of Cabinet at the Cabinet Conference room

## World Bank Climate Resilience Team Visits the RMI

President Dr. Hilda C. Heine and members of the Cabinet met with the World Bank Climate Resilience Preparation team led by Senior Environmental Specialist Denis Jordy. Other members of his team comprise of several experts including Environmental Specialist Pene Ferguson, Coastal Hazard Consultant Alessio Giardino, Coastal Engineer Richard Croad, Civil Engineer Oliver George Whalley, and Implementation Support Consultant Caroline Adams.

The team was in Majuro from 9–13 August 2016 and in Ebeye from 14–19 August, 2016 to follow up on an earlier scoping mission held in February and with specific focus on project scope, components, costs, financing, implementation arrangements, local construction materials resources, and relevant social and environmental impacts assessment.

The team consulted with various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and conducted a preliminary coastal survey in Majuro and in Ebeye to conduct further assessment, coastal survey, and consultations. The proposed climate resilience project includes four major components, including strengthening early warning and disaster preparedness, strengthening coastal resilience and protection, establishing contingency emergency

Continue on page 5

response and strengthening project management and coordination. The goal of the proposed project is to address the coastal risks and the natural hazards with

a strategic approach to strengthen climate and disaster resilience in the Marshall Islands.

## Mercator Fellow on International Affairs to Assist OEPPC

Tim Cholibois is a Mercator Fellow on International Affairs from Germany and will consult the Office for Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination (OEPPC) during the upcoming months. In a meeting with Minister-in-Assistance Mattlan Zackhras and OEPPC Director Lowell Alik, they discussed the Marshall Islands' most pressing environmental issues. Minister Zackhras explained that his main priorities include building capacity and strengthening the local level, particularly via reaching out to communities on the outer islands and including them in discussions on climate change. Furthermore, the Minister is working on creating a new Ministry, which is to bundle competencies and become the focal point on issues related to the Environment and Climate Change.

Tim will support OEPPC in their efforts to obtain funding for future environmental programmes. His activities include – among others – the assistance in finalizing a funding proposal for the Green Climate Fund, a review of the upcoming State of the Environment Report and the provision of practical advice on how other countries have created environmental ministries in the past. During his time in Majuro, Tim would like to understand the difficulties that Small Island Developing States are facing in times of rising sea levels and constrained national resources. And above all he wants to support the OEPPC to create resilient infrastructure for the Marshallese.

Tim is currently participating in the Mercator Fellowship on International Affairs, a project jointly run by the German National Academic Scholarship Foundation and the Mercator Foundation in cooperation with the German Federal Foreign Office. It is a 13-month programme sponsoring Swiss and



Minister-in-Assistance Zackhras (R) & Mr. Tim Cholibois (L)

and German young professionals to work on a topic of global relevance in different international organisations.

Tim has dedicated his year as a Mercator Fellow to investigate the access to climate finance from the perspectives of different actors. He learnt about the complexities of mobilizing international capital in the context of a developing country in Madagascar where he worked with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on a project called “Rural Electrification Through Renewable Energies.” Tim evaluated international climate funds for potential future funding opportunities and advanced the reform of the National Electricity Fund. During his secondment to the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group in London he worked on improving the access to infrastructure finance for city governments. He was involved in organizing the

Continue on page 6

first ever Financing Sustainable Cities Forum in Rio de Janeiro and supported the establishment of the C40 Cities Climate Facility in its pilot phase.

“I think that the Marshall Islands are a unique place to learn about the actual consequences of climate change and how it affects the most vulnerable. Anybody working on environmental issues should know what it is like on the ground where people

have to find ways of dealing with existential problems they have not caused themselves. My colleagues in Majuro have been nothing but helpful and supportive in preparing my stay here and I would recommend it to anyone with a similar opportunity to come here and experience what fighting against climate change actually entails,” states Tim.

## Status on Cabinet Bills

No.	Bill No.	Title of Bill	Status
1	NB No. 47	MI Social Security (Amendment)	INTRODUCED – Assigned to HESA
2	NB No.33	Environmental Protection Authority (Amendment) EPA	INTRODUCED – assigned to HESA
3	NB No.32	Import Duties (Amendment)	INTRODUCED – Assigned to W&M
4	NB No.26	Birth Death and Marriage (Amendment)	INTRODUCED – Assigned to HESA
5		Foreign Affairs (Amendment)	Drafted – awaiting endorsement by Cabinet
6		Immigration (Amendment)	Drafted – awaiting endorsement by Cabinet
7	NB No.28	Styrofoam cups and plastic plates Bill	INTRODUCED – assigned to R&D
8	NB No. 27	Youth Services Corp	INTRODUCED – assigned to HESA
9	NB No.35	Adoption (Amendment)	INTRODUCED – Assigned to HESA
10	NB No.51	Banking (Amendment)	INTRODUCED – assigned to J&GR
11	NB No. 38	MIMRA (Surplus Fund Amendment)	INTRODUCED – assigned to R&D
12	NB No. 31	Ministry of Environment , Conservation and Climate Change	INTRODUCED – assigned to J&GR
13	NB No. 49	Workers Compensation Bill	INTRODUCED – assigned to HESA
14	NB No.16	Minimum Wage (Amendment)	PASSED – Sent to COI