

Operation Update Report

Marshall Islands, Pacific: Drought Response 2022

DREF MDRMH002	GLIDE n° DR-2022-000176-MHL
Operation update n° 1: 30 June 2022	Timeframe covered by this update: 02 Feb - 10 June 2022
Operation start date: 26 February 2022	Operation timeframe: 6 months (extended from four months) Revised end date: 31 August 2022
Funding requirements (CHF): 221,332	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 221,332
N° of people being assisted: 4,480 people	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation: The National Society is working with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), American Red Cross Society and Australian Red Cross Society (ARCS), and New Zealand Red Cross Society (NZRCS).	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Government has released its RMI drought response plan for general circulation. This plan details the work of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Cluster. The cluster consists of the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), International Office of Migration (IOM), Ministry of Health and Human Services (MHHS), Majuro Atoll Waste Company (MAWC), Majuro Water Sewage Company (MWSC). The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) leads the cluster, of which Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS) is also a member.	

Summary of major revisions made to emergency plan of action:

This Operation Update (OU) report will institute the following changes brought to this DREF operation.

- Change of timeline from initial four (4) months to six (6) months.
- End date of the implementation is extended to 31 August instead of the 30 June due to the accessibility of the affected neighboring islands with transportation there and back being unreliable.
- Reallocation of international budget lines that were in the approved budget for international procurement, logistics service fees, and handling fees to support local Reverse Osmosis (RO) unit maintenance training and local procurement plus transportation of NFIs to the neighboring islands.

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the disaster

Located just north of the Equator in the Pacific Ocean, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) comprises 1,200 islands, islets, and atolls with a land area of 180 square kilometres. Like most countries in the region, RMI faces increasing challenges from climate change and natural hazard-related disasters.

The US Drought Monitoring Report received through the RMI National Weather Service Office (WSO) dated 24 December 2021 indicated extreme drought for the Northern Marshall Islands. Weather Service Office Majuro and Weather Forecast Office Guam will continue to monitor conditions across the Northern Marshalls. According to the Drought Information Statement (DIS) issued on 6 January, some northern islands reported limited to no rain in the first week of January. Mostly dry conditions persisted across the Northern Marshall Islands. D1 (Moderate drought) was introduced for Wotje atoll based on insight from WSO Majuro and the United States Drought Monitoring (USDM) and US-affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPI) team. Atolls near and north of Wotje were facing similar drought outlooks. Weather Service Office Majuro and Weather Forecast Office Guam continued to monitor conditions across the northern Marshalls. A drought statement issued on 25 February 2022 can be found [here](#).

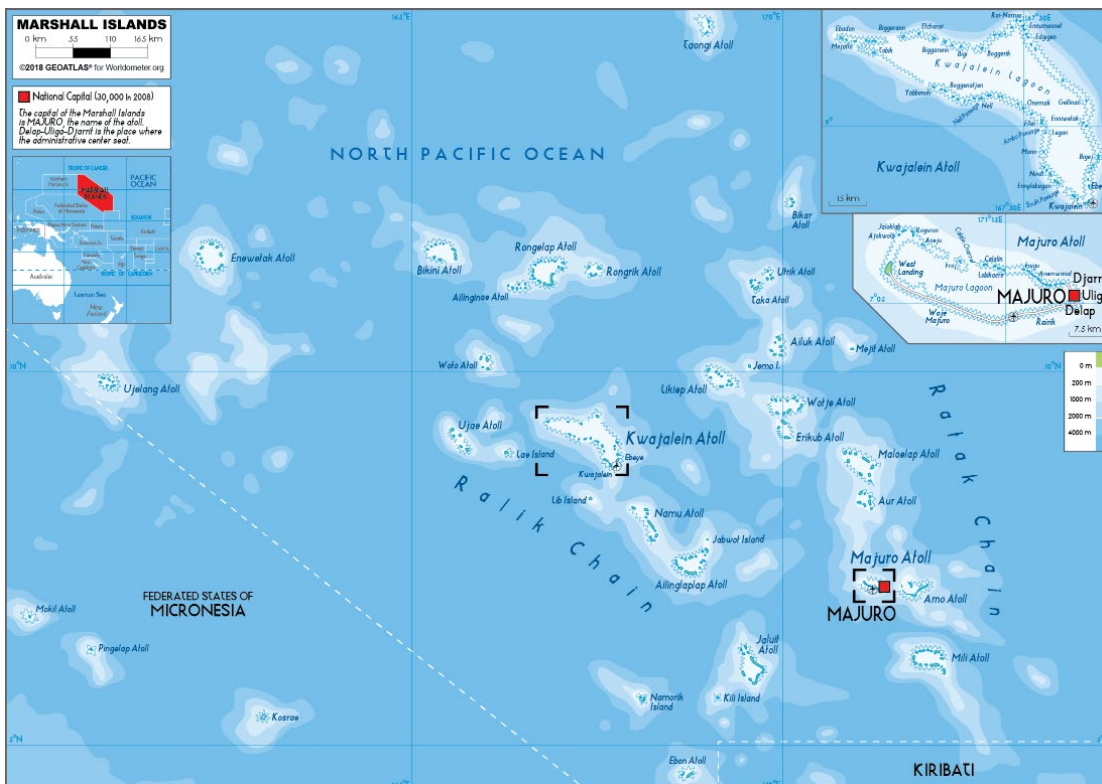
Due to the continued dry conditions in the northern islands west of the Republic, the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) activated the National Emergency Operations Committee (NEOC) in Majuro on 1 February 2022. The NEOC's purpose is to discuss further steps in response to the ongoing abnormally dry situation, which primarily affects RMI's northern and western islands.

The NEOC initially developed the Immediate Drought Response Plan in response to the critical conditions reported from 14 neighbouring islands/communities, including Aur, Ailuk, Jaluit, Lae, Lib, Likiep, Maloelap, Mejit, Wotho, Wotje, Mejjato/Ebadon, Utrok, Ujae, Namdrik, Jabot, Ailinglaplap and Namu. Therefore, the RMI Government released for general circulation the: "Immediate and Early Drought Response Plan for the Republic of the Marshall Islands"¹.

Led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the WASH Cluster organized a meeting to initiate partner coordination. The first meeting was held in January to provide technical input to the Drought Response Plan. The second meeting was held on 16 February to review the plan with partners after the parliament endorsed the Drought Response Plan.

Summary of Drought Impact:

- D3 Extreme drought in Wotje and RMI atolls
 - D1 Moderate drought in Kwajalein/Ailinglaplap (RMI)
 - D3 Extreme drought in the Northern Marshall Islands near and north of Majuro
- This includes, but is not limited to, Wotje, Ailuk, Mejit, Wotho, Uirik, Maloelap, Ebadon, Namu, Jabot, Aur.



<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?usapi>

¹ <https://ndmo.gov.mh/>

Many catchments were very low or empty in February, and some wells were salty, but well water levels are still decent. Catchment water is being used for drinking on many islands, with some using coconuts for hydration. Plants are yellow to brown with absent leaves, and some fruits are dropping prematurely. Some islands have reverse osmosis units, but many are inoperable. Many islands have two to four weeks of water left if no rain falls. Rains were predicted to return around mid-to-late March based on all guidance, including long-range model output, and there are expectations for waning La Nina conditions in the next few months. However the recent forecast from weather services office on the 7th of June stated that the drought over the eastern Marshall Islands has eased with the onset of heavy rains 3 weeks prior. The western sites (Kwajalein, Ailinglapalap, and Jaluit) had been on the brink of abnormal dryness (D0) until early to mid-May, when rainfall increased and has been above normal. To the east, Majuro is near abnormal dryness (D0) with subnormal rainfall reported 5 of the last 6 weeks. But the last week of May significantly topped the threshold for optimum hydrologic conditions (where supply keeps up with demand) by 50 percent (3.15 inches), and the first week of June barely missed that mark (1.97 inches), keeping abnormal dryness (D0) at bay by a small margin.

The last vestige of impactful dryness in the Marshalls is at Wotje the northern side, where conditions have been slowly improving for several weeks. Conditions improved to D0 this week following a third consecutive week of above-normal rainfall. February through early March had been exceptionally dry, with rainfall averaging a mere 0.01 inch per week, with a weekly normal of just under 0.5 inch.

Mili in the south-eastern Marshalls are not concerned about dryness at this time, with 15 straight weeks of above-normal rainfall that was also more than the optimum threshold of 2 inches per week. For almost 4 months, weekly rainfall has averaged 4.88 inches, compared to a normal of 2.16 inches. The top weekly total was 12.32 inches April 6-12. Mili experienced the 4th wettest May in 38 years of record, and each of the 2-month to 12-month totals ending May 2022 were the wettest on record.

An El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) neutral pattern may be set up by late spring. Overall expectations are for the current drought condition to worsen across the northern Marshall Islands in the next month or so before showers begin in mid to late March. This largely follows climatology and seasonal climate model guidance.

Recent rainfall (inches) for select islands across the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Chuuk State; per cent of average rainfall based on 1991-2020 rainfall data is found [here](#).

Summary of current response

Overview of Host National Society

Timeline	Activity
26 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIRCS communication officer attended the first meeting and posted the drought press release from the NDMO office on MIRCS Facebook and shared it with the network of staff and volunteers.
1 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Disaster Committee approved the press release. The WASH Cluster shared the Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) Form and requested MIRCS disaster management team, Ebeye branch and IFRC for support in adapting a drought detailed assessment form for house-to-house needs assessment.
16 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIRCS Secretary-General, disaster management officer and IFRC DRM delegate attended the second meeting of the WASH Cluster on 16 February 2022. In this meeting, the RMI Government Drought Response Plan was shared and MIRCS' role in the Drought Response plan was agreed upon. The agreed role of MIRCS is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assist with carrying out IDA in the outer islands provide a detailed assessment of the situational impact support the supply of Reverse Osmosis (RO) spare parts provide maintenance training for focal persons in charge of the RO units in the outer islands in partnership with IOM provide technical support provide water containers and hygiene kits provide hygiene promotion and water safety measures in the outer islands. This complements Government measures and supports the outer island's efforts to respond to this event, while the Government focus on providing technical support. Climate officer and DRM officer have revised the drought assessment form and have reviewed it against the NDMO Drought Situation Overview (DSO) assessment form.
24 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIRCS deployed the DRM officer as part of the initial situation overview (ISO) assessment with the WASH Cluster Committee to determine the level of damage in Likieb Atoll as part of an ongoing overview monitoring by the WASH cluster.

25 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIRCS deployed the DRM officer as part of the ISO assessment with the WASH Cluster Committee to determine the level of damage in Wotje. Only 19 households were assessed by MIRCS due to grounding flight only availing four hours for the team to carry out their ISO. Budget briefing discussion with Branches- Jaluit and Ebeye branch coordinators and all staffs and volunteers in Majuro
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ebeye branch carried out assessments in Lib island Headquarters and IFRC met with Deputy Chief Secretary who is also the Acting Director for NDMO to discuss the EPoA and Budget and way forward Namdrik Atoll Assessment- completed Hire of Finance Assistant for short term completed Hire of Logistics Surge locally Health Promotion carried out on all media, and household (HH) integrated with assessments
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ebeye Branch carried out Assessment in Mejatto- Ebandon, Namu atolls Jaluit Branch completed Assessment in Jabbort Logistics procurement of water containers, buckets, soaps and hand sanitizers Fleet and Drivers authorisation completed for all staff Finance procurement SOP signed off and disseminated to all staffs in HQ and branches International Shipping of RO Unit spare parts negotiation with supplier commenced Health Promotion carried out on all media, and HH integrated with assessments
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment form printing completed Resupply and printing of local IEC materials with key messages from MOHHS Media campaign locally through radio and Facebook on prevention measures for water borne diseases done by MIRCS Communications Officer Logistics briefing with local volunteer ongoing International shipping of RO Unit spare parts negotiation with supplier continues Health Promotion carried out on all media, and HH integrated with assessments
1 – 14 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of Hygiene Kits ECV Refresher discussion and agenda finalised. Training date to be confirmed. Data Analysis and Distribution planning to be completed Dissemination of IEC materials for Hygiene Etiquettes Health Promotion carried out on all media, and HH integrated with assessments

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The IFRC supports in-country through a DRM delegate stationed in RMI for the North Pacific sub-delegation, advising the National Society's planning and response. IFRC Pacific country cluster delegation in Suva, Fiji and ICRC Pacific delegation are providing remote technical assistance towards the operation through coordination of updates and information to all regional partners and technical support. IFRC in-country support includes:

- Provision of technical assistance with adapting the drought assessment tools and supporting on data collection, review and analysis methods and approaches
- Provision of guidance to MIRCS planning and mobilization
- Coordination of information to partners both locally and regionally
- Provide guidance on information management, reporting and drafting of EPoA and budget for the MIRCS operation
- Financial Acquittal review and submission
- Drafting of the OU1

MIRCS is an active member of the National Disaster Committee (NDC) and will continue to coordinate its efforts under the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) leadership in partnership with local governments for further logistical support. The government will continue to provide coordination support through its technical WASH Cluster Lead EPA and NDMO on areas the MIRCS needs assistance.

The ICRC and IFRC support the MIRCS Communications Officer in carrying out the dissemination of information and communication plans that the National Society is undertaking in this response.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

A sound foundation for collaboration has been established through the coordinated effort from NEOC members led by the NDMO. As of to-date, the following are the combined responses:

Table 2: Cluster's current /undertaken activities and responses due to the ongoing dry conditions

Cluster/Sector	Response to date	Partners
WASH	Verifying and collating an updated drought status with the National Weather Service Office and other international Agencies	RMI WSO/NOAA ² NDMO
	Contacting NDMO Outer Island focal points /and Atoll local governments to collect updated data for drought through filling out the Drought Situation Report (DSO)	NDMO Outer Island Focal Points, Atoll Local Governments
	Conducting coordination meetings	NDMO, EPA, IOM, MIRCS, NDMO, MWSC, MAWC.
	Drafting request memos to IOM and MIRCS for further assistance in providing RO unit parts and a full set of RO units.	IOM, MIRCS, NDMO, EPA
	Conducting RO units inventory and maintenance	NDMO, MWSC, IOM, MIRCS

Details on the current status of the Reverse Osmosis (RO) units' functionality are available, according to an assessment conducted by NEMO.

Table 3: Northern and Kabinmento RO units' current status

Atoll	Total # RO	Status	New RO requested	Parts requested for RO's
Utrok	1	Down, needs the batteries	0	Need 4 batteries
Ailuk	1	Down, need chemical to flush the unit	0	4 filters, 8 chemicals, 4 batteries, 2 pumps
Wotje	2	2 RO units on island and they both working	0	Needs rapid assessment and maintenance check
Aur	2	Both are down need batteries for replacement	0	8 batteries
Maloelap	4	Need 1 additional RO and some parts for existing units which are down	1	1 RO, 14 batteries and 4 regulators
Likiep	2	1 RO unit working, and 1 RO unit has battery problem	0	Need 4 batteries
Mejit	1	RO unit not operational	0	Needs 1 RO
Jaluit	0	No RO on islands	1	Needs 1 RO
Ujae	0	No RO unit on island	1	Need 1 RO
Lae	0	No RO unit on island	1	Need 1 RO
Wotho	1	Down and needs 1 regulator	0	Need 1 regulator
Lib	1	Down? Replace pump	0	Need 1 pump
Namu	0	No RO unit on island	4	Need 4 RO units
Mejjato	1	Down? Need replacement parts	0	Need 1 membrane, 2 cooling fans, 2 pumps
Ebadon	1	Down? Need replacement parts	0	Need 2 pumps and 2 cooling fans
Jabot	0	Send a team to conduct Initial Rapid Assessment		Needs rapid assessment
Ailinglaplap	0	Send a team to conduct Initial Rapid Assessment		Needs rapid assessment
Namdrik	0	Send a team to conduct Initial Rapid Assessment		Needs rapid assessment
Total RO	17		8	ROs required plus parts

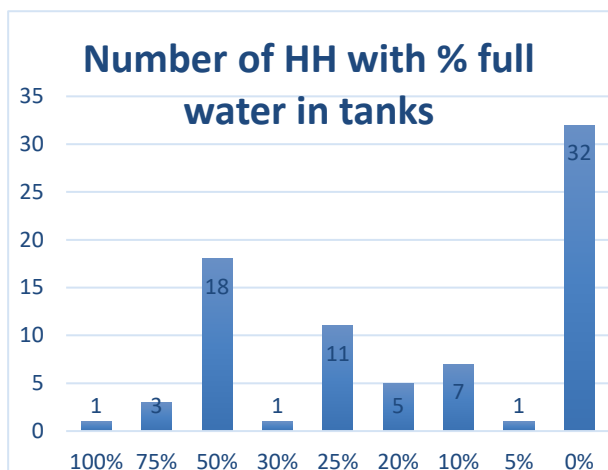
Of the seventeen (17) units, ten (10) are currently not working, and an additional eight (8) units have been identified as being needed.

The RMI Government has released the plan entitled "Immediate and Near-Term Drought Response Plan for the Republic of the Marshall Islands" for general circulation. This plan details the work of the WASH Cluster, which consists of NDMO, IOM, MIRCS, MOHHS, MAWC, MWSC and is led by EPA. The activities in this proposal have developed from discussions and close coordination with the RMI Government and members of the NEOC and WASH Cluster. The WASH Cluster was requested by the NEOC Chair (NDMO) to develop an immediate drought response plan.

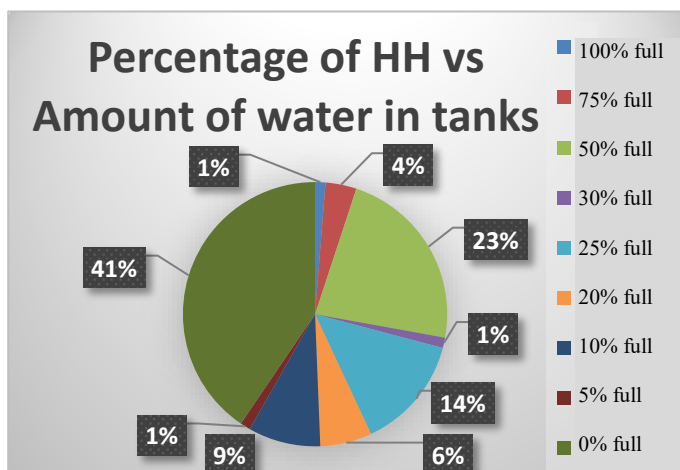
Coordination is crucial for the operation's success because of the distances between the affected atolls/islands and the scarcity of means of transportation.

² [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#)

EPA carried out the ACWA (Addressing Climate Vulnerability in the Water Sector) project Technical Design Survey mission to Aur Atoll from 24 to 31 January. The community of Tobal was surveyed on 25 and 26 January, and the community of Aur was assessed on 27 and 28 January. EPA issued a report that stated the following analysis of these two communities' water capacity:



Amount of water in the 79 households surveyed in both Tobal and Aur communities.



Percentage of households in both communities with different levels of water in water catchments.

A total of 79 households (HH) were surveyed during this mission. From the 79 households:

- 41 per cent of the households' water catchments are empty
- 28 per cent are at one-quarter capacity or less
- 23 per cent are at half capacity
- only about five per cent are near full
- only one per cent of the HH had a full tank
- over a third of HH had empty tanks

Communal water sources were also assessed and found to have the following capacity:

- Aur UCC church has three buildings with only one concrete water catchment with water level at about 20 per cent of total capacity.
- Aur Elementary School has two buildings with five water catchments: four plastic water catchments are about 80 per cent full and the concrete catchment is completely empty.
- Aur Mon Council has two 1500-gallon water tanks with one tank empty and the other at 25 per cent capacity.
- Aur Assembly of God Church is without a water tank.
- Aur Health Centre has two 1500-gallon water tanks at 75 per cent capacity.
- Tobal airport terminal has one empty 750-gallon water tank.
- AOG church is without a water tank.
- Tobal Health Center have four water catchments. However, the team did not check the amount of water in them.
- Tobal Mon Council has a 1000-gallon water tank currently at 20 per cent capacity.
- The UCC church has three buildings with one plastic and one concrete water tank. The 750-gallon plastic water tank is leaking and empty, whereas the concrete tank is at 20 per cent capacity.
- Tobal Elementary School has two main buildings with six water catchments (five plastic tanks and one concrete water tank). The concrete water tank is also being used by WIU staff, who are currently constructing the seawall at the airport. Two of the 1500-gallon are at 20 per cent capacity, the 750-gallon water tank is empty, and two of the 1000-gallon water tanks are both at full capacity.

In terms of water quality, the assessment team surveyed 54 groundwater wells during this mission, 27 wells in Tobal and 27 in Aur communities and found the following: 93 per cent of the groundwater wells are of freshwater quality, and seven per cent were found to be slightly brackish. Groundwater is mostly used for washing and bathing, but some households use the wells for cooking purposes and drinking during this dry period. However, the systems are highly sensitive, especially during dry periods. When lower rainfall persists with higher temperatures, the groundwater resources of these atolls would decrease, with less rain-fed recharge, increased evaporation and increased water demand. Additionally, with sea-level rise, the freshwater lens which floats above a mixed saltwater base will be elevated. This is likely to result in increased lateral saline mixing, increased evaporation through wells and increased loss of freshwater by coastal leakage. Saline water will be brought within reach of coconut and other tree crop roots or wells,

pump intakes, and generally, freshwater resources will be lost.³ Suppose increased storm surges accompany sea level rise (as seen in December 2021); in that case, such 'wash processes' will render groundwater saline until a state of stability returns, which is only possible if sea level rise ceases.

Both RO units in the two communities are non-operational. The team was informed that the RO units require new batteries, as indicated in the table above.

The following additional elements have been completed and will continue to be supported through the operation:

- Press releases and radio announcements were given to the communities and outer islands through the local government representatives in Majuro. MIRCS is working with its communication officer to establish CEA feedback once the implementation is underway through verbal feedback collated over the phone from the Outer Island Representatives. Community leaders are meeting before the assessments by EPA and MIRCS to garner community support for the response and provide the local knowledge on assessment areas.
- The outer island atolls do not have access to the internet, phone lines are intermittent, and communities are heavily dependent on radio announcements for information. Focal people on the islands have sporadic access to network connectivity to relay any request to Majuro. HF Radios are commonly used to relay urgent messages to Ebeye, Majuro and Jaluit.
- EPA completed freshwater lenses, rainwater harvesting assessments in all 12 atolls affected except 5 that are in planned to be done in July and August. Results of these assessments have yet to be completed and shared with the partners.

Needs analysis and scenario planning

Need analysis

The press release by NDMO dated 27 January stated general advice to the communities to start conserving water immediately. Other advice included cleaning water catchments, roofs, and gutters. Catchment water is to be for drinking only. Well water might become brackish and should only be used for cooking and washing. It was recommended to boil water before drinking. During water shortage, health issues such as pink eye and gastro-intestinal problems become more common and serious. Dehydration is a major problem during drought periods. Recommendations to clean water containers, boil drinking water, and wash hands constantly are shared.

The anticipated needs based on the existing data:

- Health impacts: due to lack of safe water, diseases will spread, especially when hygiene practices are reduced, and clean and safe water is unavailable for drinking and bathing. Outbreaks of diarrhoea and sickness linked to inadequate waste disposal (when poorly managed) could increase health risks and environmental degradation. Also, the effects of drought and the uncertainty/insecurity may distress and worsen the mental wellbeing of those affected.
- Food security and livelihood issues: severe water shortages that lead to a loss of crops become critical for food security. The land is mostly unsuitable for farming, allowing few crops to grow. The limited crops that can grow in the hostile atoll environment — such as coconut, breadfruit, bananas, and pandanus fruit trees — will likely continue to wilt and become inedible. The income for the atoll population is highly dependent on fishing and the selling of local produce. Dependency on canned and imported goods will increase, resulting in further risks of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD).

Number of affected populations and households.			
	Affected Atoll	Population	Households
1	Aur	370	33
2	Ailinglaplap	1673	287
3	Ailuk	250	48
4	Jabot	58	16
5	Jaluit	1860	252
6	Lae	386	54
7	Lib	149	21
8	Likiep	416	83
9	Maloelap	546	113
10	Mejit	235	57
11	Mejjato/Ebadon	460	61
12	Namdrik	508	97
13	Namu	780	131
14	Utrok	271	45
15	Ujae	364	52
16	Wotho	110	24
17	Wotje	800	150
	Total	9,326	1524

³ Climate Country Risk Profile: Marshall Islands, World Bank (2021) [HERE](#)

- **Social impacts:** Droughts also have socio-economic impacts. During extreme events, community gatherings will be disrupted, schools and churches, and normal social practices will likely decrease. There may be poor coping behaviours that can increase violence.

Targeting

Based on the Drought Situation Overview assessments done by NDMO outer Island focal points from the reported atolls /islands:

- The drought is now affecting some 9,326 people across the 17 atolls/islands in the North and West of Majuro.
- The RMI Government estimates that more than 9,000 people (18 per cent of the RMI total population) are experiencing limited to no rain from the past two to three months.
- Further detailed assessments will be part of this EPoA to determine the level of damage and impact at household level

A preliminary overview of the population to be assisted is presented in the table, with plans that the detailed assessment will provide the disaggregated data of the population affected in the coming weeks.

All targeting is to be verified upon completion of assessments. Targeted household numbers are based on the average of 6.8 people per household (2011 [census](#)).

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1	Aur	370	33
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12	Namdrik	508	97
13	Namu	780	131
14	Utrok	271	45
15	Ujae	364	52
16	Wotho	110	24
17	Wotje	800	150
	Total	9,326	1,524

Targeting of protection gender and inclusion (PGI) will be reviewed once assessments are completed and those most vulnerable requiring special assistance to be revised/confirmed. The current estimate is based on six per cent of the population requiring specific support.

Scenario planning

Scenario	Humanitarian consequence	Potential Response
Prolonged extreme drought situation affects the main islands of Kwajalein, Ebeye and Majuro.	High water demand in the country, increased potential of social issues, increased risks of agriculture and livelihood scarcity, increased health issues, and waterborne disease outbreak, putting excess stress on the health system.	International assistance will be required to provide water supply, food, and livelihood assistance to the whole country. A nationally declared disaster and controlled use of resources throughout the Republic. International partners will increase their humanitarian footprint
King Tide inundation and extreme windy conditions.	Due to saltwater inundation, there are increased vulnerabilities in water quality and access to safe water. The supply of resources from Majuro, Ebeye and Kwajalein is cut off.	Local entities will have to work hard on their water and resource rationing. Humanitarian assistance will be focused on more immediate needs whilst working on the prolonged impacts of the severe drought conditions.
COVID-19 outbreak and community transmission in Majuro and Kwajalein.	Restriction of movement and increased social impacts to those already lacking support. Fear amongst the people and psychological impacts are increasing.	Focus would be given to the COVID-19 situation. More restrictions are put in place. Local resources and systems need to be activated. Coordination amongst Government and partners continues. Concerns related to the effectiveness of handwashing during drought, need to share IEC material such as "No soap? No running water? Handwashing is still possible from the WHO." ⁴

Operation Risk Assessment

The following are the main risks:

- Transport: Planes leave every Friday, but it is difficult to confirm seating; boat transport is unpredictable. Therefore, there are risks in the timeline that activities will take longer than planned.

⁴ [https://cities4health.org/assets/library-assets/handwashing-alternatives-20200608-\(1\).pdf](https://cities4health.org/assets/library-assets/handwashing-alternatives-20200608-(1).pdf)

- Bad weather conditions will contribute to the delay of implementation as these islands are remote and hard to reach.
- If there is any COVID-19 outbreak in communities, outer islands will be completely cut off, and no one will be allowed to travel inter-island as part of the future prevention plans by the Ministry of Health.
- Procurement for materials/repair parts for the Reverse Osmosis units may be delayed due to complex needs or procurement challenges, finding sources of materials, etc which will impact repair and operationalizing the RO units, and access to clean water. In the logistics section below, the procurement/timeframes are being supported by IFRC CCD and Australian Red Cross.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Proposed strategy

This operation aims to provide support to the drought response plan (RMI Government Drought Response Plan) through the collation and analysis of more detailed data at the household level and to provide:

- Support to develop and adapt detailed needs assessment tool specific for drought
- Support with purchasing and transport of the RO spare parts (shared cost with IMO)
- Support distribution of WASH items (shared costs with cluster)
- Support development of training on maintenance of equipment; and household hygiene promotion and water safety awareness
- Support printing and translation of hygiene and water safety IEC materials from previous response including the "No soap?, No running water?, Handwashing is still possible" from the WHO.

During the response, the activities are planned according to the RMI COVID-19 safe protocol.

Based on the outcome of the assessment, MIRCS will identify if further response activities are required and will consider support in:

- WASH: strengthen hygiene promotion including menstrual hygiene management (MHM), community outreach to support the implementation of the drought management SOPs, i.e., support with water rationing plan which includes protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI) lens, and assist authorities to monitor water distribution points.
- Health: strengthen health and hygiene awareness, including waste management, conduct community outreach on safe drinking water awareness to reduce waterborne diseases.
- Livelihood: consider options for supporting home gardening and support to fisherfolk and farmers.
- Education: support schools to implement drought action plans.
- Distribute WASH and health items.

Forty volunteers will provide the operational support relevant to this operation - ten from Ebeye branch, ten from Jaluit branch, ten from Majuro and the ten outer island focal persons. Nine staff from the Branches and Headquarters will also do their part in supporting the response. Remote technical support will be sought from RCRC partners in the Pacific. A dedicated finance person will be funded for the duration of this operation to support the financial reporting and management of the expenditures. Technical assistance will be provided in country by the IFRC DRM delegate.

Operational support will be provided through the following:

Communications and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)

- MIRCS has a strong communication team supported by ICRC and the IFRC communications manager. The National Society has invested in training communication volunteers to support collating evidence and stories from the response. Internet and phone lines (2G and 4G) are easily accessible on the main island. In Kwajalein and Ebeye, most of the outer islands affected by drought have no accessibility to the internet and very sporadic access to the 2G network.
- CEA capacity of the NS is new; however, they have staff who have been trained and can lead the CEA design and approaches. The MIRCS know their context and adapt their approach to ensure proper CEA throughout the response.
- MIRCS will monitor CEA implementation activities, supported by the IFRC climate and resilience delegate and CCD planning monitoring evaluation reporting (PMER).

PMER

- The RMI National Weather Services monitors the water safety and the ongoing situation.
- The WASH Cluster Lead heads coordination and monitoring of the activities with support from NDMO.
- Agency plans and activities are monitored within each agency's ability and reported to the WASH Cluster through the coordination meetings. NDMO will have the responsibility to report to the NDC meetings when called.
- MIRCS will monitor the operational activities, supported by the IFRC DRM delegate and CCD PMER. This will include a lessons learned workshop conducted towards the end of the operation. Monitoring shall also be conducted through community engagement and accountability methods.

Logistics

- Local procurement is possible; however, the suppliers would not be many. Only a few service providers have systems to support a proper procurement process beyond the basic purchase. The IFRC CCD logistics manager provides guidance and support to ensure the local procurement is in line with the standard IFRC procurement process.
- NS has one pickup truck that is used for disaster response. Other NS activities hire vehicles on a needs basis. The NS has a Vehicle Policy that needs strengthening by the management.
- The transportation services that shall be accessed will be via road and considering inter-island transport means with only few service providers available in the country.
- The main terminal for the RMI airport is currently closed, and with the COVID-19 restrictions, landing international freights will have to be pre-approved by the NDC and comply with the RMI Pandemic Travel Safety Program.
- Assistance to IOM in identifying RO spare parts suppliers is done through the logistics manager in the IFRC CCD.
- With the anticipated distribution plan, the replenishment of the stocks would be done locally. Basic logistics training is needed for the MIRCS organized by the IFRC CCD. An IFRC volunteer will provide in-house support throughout the operation, and a surge delegate to support supply chain management will be sought. Transportation from Majuro to close-by islands can be via airplane or boat. The Likiep atoll and most atolls that have a runway will need the team to fly in and be grounded for a maximum of four to six hours before returning to Majuro. The outer islands further away will be accessed by boat and dependent on the weather. This could take between two to eight days.
- IOM and MIRCS have prepositioned WASH supplies in the country; however, the reach is very minimal and is located in Majuro. Shipment to the outer islands will require bigger freight and a coordinated effort among the partners.
- MIRCS stock count as of May 2022 has the following supplies as shown in the table below, not all of which will be mobilized for this response.
- Soaps and other hygiene items can be sourced locally in Majuro if required.

Stock count as of May 2022:

Hygiene kit	Kitchen set	Bucket w/ Lids	Shelter tool kit	Tarpaulin	Mosquito net	Jerry Cans	Blanket	Water Containers (3Gallons)	Solar lights	Soaps	Hand Sanitizers (500ml)
110	110	375	104	215	24	280	250	445	50	1600	840

Security

- There are low-security issues in RMI and especially in the outer islands. The National Society's security framework will be applicable for the duration of the operation to their staff and volunteers.
- In case of need for deployment of personnel under IFRC security's responsibility, including surge support, the existing IFRC security plan will be applicable.
- All IFRC personnel must, and Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers are encouraged to complete the IFRC Stay Safe e-learning courses. Staff and volunteers will be aware of the security situation and briefed on restrictions and reactions in an emergency before deployment in the operational area.
- Any field missions undertaken by IFRC personnel will be undertaken following the current IFRC travel approval process, current health advisories and business continuity planning (BCP) guidance regarding COVID-19. There are currently no significant security issues or threats for NS and IFRC staff.

Finance


- MIRCS has only one finance officer who is fairly new to the organization and her role; therefore, support from the Board members and one part-time consultant is given to bring their finance and administrative function up to speed. MIRCS must consider ongoing work and anticipate this response's load and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic operation.

- The IFRC finance team in the Pacific CCD office supports financial matters and reports.
- Through the Australian Red Cross and New Zealand Red Cross, delegates mentor the finance network in the Pacific and give remote training and technical advice to the finance staff. The National Society has had very little funding for programmes, and the Government supports a small portion of its annual budget.

Information Communication Technology


- Information Technology, including the cost of communications (telephone, etc.), is detailed in the operational support budget. However, a dedicated person is needed for data entry and to provide oversight and analysis support to ensure the WASH Cluster receives a timely analysis of the situation for planning purpose.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN

	<p>Health</p> <p>People reached: 4480</p> <p>Male: 2214</p> <p>Female: 2266</p>	
Health Outcome 4: Transmission of diseases of epidemic potential is reduced		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of people reached with health promotion as a response to an emergency by community-based volunteers	9,326	4,480
Health Output 4.1: Community-based disease control and health promotion is provided to the target population		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of people reached with health promotion as a response to an emergency by community-based volunteers	9,326	4,480
Progress towards outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With COVID-19 Vaccine rollout continuing from February to May in the outer islands, the MIRCS Health team have been using the same window to roll out community-based disease control messaging to communities it visited in four outer islands. • Eight⁵ neighbouring islands were also reached with house-to-house community-based disease control and health promotion while the teams were deployed to do house to house assessments. • In close coordination with the MOHHS, the media teams were able to do a talk back radio show relaying preventative message and addressing disease outbreaks both in Majuro, Ebeye and Jaluit. • MIRCS Media team post through social media the work of the Red Cross in response to the Drought conditions and hosted a radio talk back show in collaboration with the NDMO office to share the best ways to save water in a Drought like condition. • Outreach teams were posted as a commemoration of World Red Cross Day on the week of 9 – 13 May to disseminate 1000 IECs (posters) regarding saving water and handwashing in 8 locations around the main islands- Majuro, Ebeye and Jaluit. 		
Challenges		
Teams that were doing house to house campaigns were debriefed on the key challenges of rolling out Health promotion and most answers were:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing of door to door had to be arranged around the community's busy schedule. • Transportation to neighbouring islands was unreliable and the team needing to stay longer in one island delayed the work for the next island. Availability of seats was also an issue. • Health awareness, when done with the communities, is often combined with so many other diseases that the information becomes overwhelming, and communities lose interest. • Most volunteers doing Health Promotion are not equipped to be on their own- staffs need to accompany them. • Media access from the outer islands is very limited to radio. • IEC materials are too wordy and most need translation. 		

⁵ Although WASH assessments were completed in nine islands, only eight were reached with health awareness messaging due to time limitations. One outer island was not reached at this time.

Health Outcome 6: The psychosocial impacts of the emergency are lessened		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of people who receive mental health and psychosocial services in emergency situations from RCRC.	9,326	1,690
Health Output 6.1: Psychological first aid (PFA) support provided to the target population as well as to RCRC volunteers and staff		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of staff trained to provide psychological first aid PFA	40	Not Yet started
Progress towards outcomes		
<p>Activities already carried out;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefings with the Branches and their volunteers (11 male; 4 female) included a short session on PFA. Assessment of PSS needs and resources available in the community completed. As part of the HH assessment, it was the leaders from each team sent out to discuss some of the stress associated with the lack of water and the major concerns on what's affected by the lack of water. 1690 people (328 households) were reached in these assessments and were given PFA by the team leaders. PFA full training for the staff and volunteers is scheduled in July. 		

	<h3 style="color: red;">Water, sanitation and hygiene</h3> <p>People reached: 4,480 Male: 2,214 Female: 2,266</p>	
WASH Outcome 1: Immediate reduction in risk of waterborne and water related diseases in targeted communities		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of people targeted for WASH assistance in the response phase	9,326	4,480
WASH Output 1.1: Continuous assessment of water, sanitation, and hygiene situation is carried out in targeted communities		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of target communities/sites with WASH situation assessments conducted at least once	17	9
Number of volunteers trained in WASH M&E	40	15
Progress towards outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the drought (water, sanitation, and hygiene) assessment form with minimum standards for PGI in emergencies was completed with guidance from the IFRC climate centre adviser and DRM delegate, and it has been uploaded on Kobo for digital collation. 15 RC volunteers (11 male; 4 female) have been trained on carrying out the water, sanitation and hygiene assessment- 5 in Ebeye, 5 in Jaluit and 5 in Majuro. These trainings were completed with their first deployment the very next week. Nine targeted neighbouring islands have completed initial assessment of the water, sanitation and hygiene situation. However, with some of these islands, only a small percentage of the island was assessed due to the lack of timing allowed by grounding flights. Majority of the assessments were also very concentrated on the main atoll, and the inlets around the atolls were not covered due to the lack of transportation and fuel available to get to them. For example, Jaluit has 21 inlets inhabited by some households, but only two that could be assessed, and the rest of the inlets' information will be gathered using pre-existing secondary data collated from other ministries. Analysis and assessing the approach to support these outer islands is done through the data collection team of volunteers at Majuro with assistance from the WASH cluster. The approach of the EPoA remains the same, with some of the requests being covered by other WASH actors. Most of the neighbouring islands have requested for support in fixing their RO units and this is in the Government's plan of action with support from IOM. Continuously monitor the water, sanitation and hygiene situation in targeted communities. Each neighbouring island communities have a water monitoring person, that does the monitoring for their islands and sends monitoring reports to the Lead of the WASH Cluster once a month. Majority of these water monitoring personnel 		

<p>are also Red Cross volunteers on the neighbouring islands that carry out promotion and awareness on a monthly basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with other WASH actors on target group needs and appropriate response. Five meetings have been held by the WASH cluster and attended by the members to coordinate the assistance given to the neighbouring islands. 		
WASH Output 1.2: Daily access to safe water which meets Sphere and WHO standards in terms of quantity and quality is provided to target population		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of people that have access to sufficient safe water	9,326	4,480
Progress towards outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only activity which has been completed is the training of the population of targeted communities on safe water storage and management. With the combined effort by MIRCS and some of the other WASH clusters, awareness also included training people on the need to ensure that their storage and management of water tanks is done properly. Training of RO unit maintenance preparation is underway with all the WASH cluster members meeting twice now to discuss agenda, curriculum, participants, and trainer. Dates of the training is set to be in the third week of July. <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The company shipping that NDMO is working with for the spare parts for the RO units has experienced delays in receiving payment, which has caused the timeline of the shipping to now fall outside of the extension requested under the DREF. The supplier does not want to receive payment from IFRC as their contract is with NDMO. The team have requested that the shipping coverage be done under a different funding and the negotiation to consider other shipping options is in progress with the supplier and the NDMO office. 		
WASH Output 1.4: Hygiene promotion activities which meet Sphere standards in terms of the identification and use of hygiene items provided to target population		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of people reached by hygiene promotion activities	9,326	4,480
Progress towards outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design/print IEC materials - 300 completed and more to be ordered for the outer island to go alongside the distribution in late June to July. Hygiene promotion is done through media and Facebook, and handwashing demonstration is integrated into the HH assessments. <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication plan is yet to be developed and training of volunteers on rolling out this communication plan is pending the availability of staff to develop and to carry this out. 		
WASH Output 1.5: Hygiene-related goods (NFIs) which meet Sphere standards and training on how to use those goods is provided to the target population		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of the most vulnerable people reached by hygiene kits	400	Not yet started
Progress towards outcomes		
<p>Determine the needs for hygiene NFIs, including soap, hand sanitizer, water storage and menstrual hygiene for each community based on health risks and user preference in targeted communities in coordination with the WASH cluster and other WASH actors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local procurement of soaps, hand sanitizers and water storage containers have been completed Local procurement of hygiene kits is awaiting discussion of items to be included in the kit with the WASH cluster. <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of standard items locally and cost of items are higher than expected. Back order of some of the items means that the distribution plan will also be delayed awaiting arrival of supplies from overseas through the local supplier. 		



Protection, Gender and Inclusion

People reached: 15

Male: 11

Female: 4

Outcome 1: Protection, Gender & Inclusion Outcome 1: Communities become more peaceful, safe, and inclusive through meeting the needs and rights of the most vulnerable.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Does the response adhere to IFRC Protection, Gender and Minimum Standards	Yes	Yes

Protection, Gender & Inclusion Output 1.1: Programmes and operations ensure safe and equitable provision of basic services, considering different needs based on gender and other diversity factors.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Data collected is segregated according to sex, age, and disability.	Yes	Yes

Progress towards outcomes

All the activities below have been completed through the planning phase and the Drought assessment form development:

- Conduct an assessment of specific needs of the affected population based on criteria selected from the minimum standards for PGI in emergencies. (This is integrated into the IDA with other sectors)
- Support sectoral teams (WASH and health) to mainstream gender and inclusion in their planning include measures to address vulnerabilities specific to gender and diversity factors (including people with disabilities) in their planning
- Support sectoral teams to ensure collection and analysis of sex-age and disability-disaggregated data

Protection, Gender & Inclusion Output 1.2: Programmes and operations prevent and respond to sexual- and gender-based violence and other forms of violence especially against children.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Volunteers briefed on CoC and relevant policies	40	15

Progress towards outcomes

- MIRCS staff and 15 volunteers were briefed on code of conduct, PSEA and child protection/child safeguarding policies
- For SGBV, MIRCS reports to and partners with other capable actors. This is done through PFA; however, SGBV was not an issue identified in the assessment.

Strengthen National Society

S1.1: National Society capacity building and organizational development objectives are facilitated to ensure that National Societies have the necessary legal, ethical, and financial foundations, systems and structures, competences and capacities to plan and perform

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Volunteers that are insured and equipped to perform their duties	Yes	Yes

Output S1.1.4: National Societies have effective and motivated volunteers who are protected

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of staff and volunteers engaged in the lessons learned workshop	45	Not yet started
Number of volunteers insured	45	45

Progress towards outcomes

- Prior to deployment, all volunteers have briefing sessions on safety and behaviour appropriate for field deployment as well as ensuring that they are adequately briefed on customary rules of where they are going. So far no incidents have been reported to the HQ.
- Provide psychosocial support to volunteers- this is done through debriefing after they return home, and most only suffer from the physical heat during deployment and have high spirits that they want to do it again
- Training on Assessment and Promotion of Health and WASH is done through the Branches and the HQ staffs.
- Financial assistance hire was also completed; however, the candidate started summer school and is no longer employed. The MIRCS is looking into hiring someone to fill the role for the remainder of the operation.

International Disaster Response		
Output S2.1.3: NS compliance with Principles and Rules for Humanitarian Assistance is improved		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
NS implements CEA mechanisms	Yes	Ongoing
Output S2.1.4: Supply chain and fleet services meet recognized quality and accountability standards		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Transportation and logistics effectively support the operation	Yes	Ongoing
Progress towards outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic logistics training by IFRC CCD Pacific Logistics Manager for DMO of MIRCS in Majuro has been completed, while Surge support carried out training on the job to the two branches including two regular volunteers from Majuro. These trainings included warehouse management, procurement, and fleet. • Development of MIRCS Fleet policy is completed and signed off by the SG. • Development of the procurement and payment SOP is completed and disseminated to all staffs and volunteers. • Logistics management support (Surge) is hired locally and has been working on a 4-month contract. • Part of the Surge role is ensuring the warehousing, goods reception, forwarding, fleet, fuel costs, customs clearance of Drought, and COVID-19 response as well as the matters that are not related to a specific area of focus are well managed. 		

Influence others as leading strategic partner		
Outcome S3.1: The IFRC secretariat, together with National Societies uses their unique position to influence decisions at local, national, and international levels that affect the most vulnerable.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of communications pieces released regarding the drought situation and operational response.	4	1
Output S3.1.1: IFRC and NS are visible, trusted, and effective advocates on humanitarian issues		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
NS is present on social media regularly posting activities and needs.	Yes	Ongoing
Progress towards outcomes		
Communications work – photography and videography (includes collecting human interest stories from the ground) is yet to be done alongside the distribution.		

Effective, credible and accountable IFRC		
Output S4.1.3: Financial resources are safeguarded; quality financial and administrative support is provided contributing to efficient operations and ensuring effective use of assets; timely quality financial reporting to stakeholders		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
NS financial acquittals are submitted monthly	Yes	Ongoing
Output S3.1.2: IFRC produces high-quality research and evaluation that informs advocacy, resource mobilization and programming.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Number of lessons learned completed	1	0
Progress towards outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NS acquittals for Feb, March, April and May have been submitted. • Lessons learnt is scheduled to be in August. 		

D. Financial Report

The financial report will be issued in the next update of this DREF Operation.

Reference documents



Click here for:

- [Emergency Plan of Action \(EPoA\)](#)

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.