



Stocktake of the Gender Mainstreaming Capacity of Pacific Island Governments Republic of Palau





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of Pacific Island Governments
Republic of Palau**

**Produced by
The Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs,
Government of the Republic of Palau
and
Ann Hillmann Kitalong,
The Environment Inc.**

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Disclaimer

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Abbreviations

BoAG	Bureau of Aging and Gender
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	International Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities
HRC	Human Rights Committee
MOH	Ministry of Health
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NCD	non-communicable disease
PALARIS	Palau Automated Land and Resources Information System
PNC	Palau National Code
PPA	Pacific Platform for Action
ROP	Republic of Palau
SIUL	Institute for Sustainable Living
SPC	the Pacific Community
UAK	Ulkerreuil A Klengar
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women, now UN Women
WHO	World Health Organization

Contents

Acknowledgments.....	iii
Disclaimer.....	iv
Abbreviations.....	v
Contents.....	vi
Executive summary.....	1
I. INTRODUCTION.....	2
II. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY.....	5
III. COUNTRY OVERVIEW.....	7
1. Facts and figures.....	7
2. Map of Palau:.....	8
IV. KEY GENDER ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	9
1. Land.....	9
2. Health.....	9
a. Maternal mortality.....	9
b. Sexually transmitted diseases.....	10
c. Non-communicable diseases.....	10
d. Shared responsibility of care giving.....	10
3. Violence against women.....	11
a. Family health survey.....	11
b. Human trafficking.....	11
4. Education.....	12
5. Employment.....	12
6. Poverty.....	13
7. Decision-making.....	13
a. Perception of women’s leadership.....	14
V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	14
1. National women’s machinery.....	14
a. Structure.....	14
b. Reporting mechanisms.....	17
c. Civil society and the private sector.....	17
d. Assessment.....	18
VI. AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW.....	20
1. Legal and policy framework.....	20
a. Key international and regional commitments.....	20

b. National legislation.....	20
c. Maternity leave legislation	22
d. Legislative gaps.....	22
e. Awareness of international, regional and national legal and policy frameworks	22
f. Recommendations:	23
2. Political will.....	23
a. Support to adopt gender mainstreaming approach.....	23
b. Recommendations	24
3. Organizational culture	24
a. Sex-disaggregated data	25
b. Guidelines on gender mainstreaming	25
c. Women in top government positions.....	25
d. Gender champions	26
e. Recommendations.....	26
4. Good governance – accountability mechanisms	26
5. Technical capacity	27
a. Technical capacity to mainstream gender.....	27
b. Recommendations	27
6. Adequacy of financing for gender equality	28
a. Allocation of resources.....	28
b. Prioritization of gender equality	28
c. Recommendations.....	28
7. Traditional institutions	28
a. Recommendations.....	29
VII. POTENTIAL STRATEGIC APPROACHES	30
1. Capacity development and strengthening networks	30
a. Recommendations.....	30
2. Development of a national gender policy	30
a. Recommendations.....	30
3. Gender statistics.....	31
a. Recommendations.....	31
4. Toolkit development	31
a. Recommendations.....	31
5. Organize a donors’ meeting	32
a. Recommendations.....	32
6. Establishing gender focal points in all ministries.....	32

a. Recommendations..... 32

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY 33

Appendix 1. People interviewed about women’s roles and gender mainstreaming 36

Appendix 2. Participants in focus group meetings and their contact details 37

Executive summary

This stocktake was designed to determine the capacity for effective gender mainstreaming in the Government of the Republic of Palau, and to identify potential areas of strategic intervention to strengthen such capacity. These recommendations for action are an initiative of the Government of the Republic of Palau through the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs (MCCA) in collaboration with non-government entities, UN Women and the Pacific Community (SPC). This stocktake of gender mainstreaming capacity in the Republic of Palau analysed the degree to which an enabling environment exists for such mainstreaming to take place.

The main research was undertaken from May to October 2013. Structured interviews were conducted between 2010 and 2014 with informants from within senior government and traditional positions, and with those involved in public policy development and programme implementation. The main interviewees represented the national congress, government ministries and local NGOs. One inception focus group discussion took place in 2013, and two focus group meetings were held in 2014 with civil society representatives.

The Palau stocktake adapted the methodology undertaken by SPC to conduct stocktakes across several Pacific island countries and territories, including Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Tonga in 2010 and Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Samoa, Tuvalu, and Wallis and Futuna in 2013 and 2014. In addition to assessing the enabling environment to support gender mainstreaming in the Government of Palau, MCCA conducted a gender analysis of key development issues in Palau. This report contains strategic recommendations relating to these development issues.

In general, the stocktake reveals that the capacity for effective gender mainstreaming needs to be strengthened. Strategic interventions are presented in the form of recommendations, which address: (a) land; (b) land management; (c) climate change and disaster management; (d) culture; (e) health; (f) education; (g) political will; (h) employment; and (i) decision-making. The Gender Division of MCCA, as coordinator of gender mainstreaming in Palau, can work within each ministry to implement the appropriate recommendation. In order to build capacity in the Gender Division, funding needs to be identified to hire key personnel to implement its mandate.

The top recommendations for the enabling environment (legal and policy framework, political will, organizational culture, good governance, technical capacity and adequate resources) were to: (a) develop a gender mainstreaming toolkit to educate political leaders and human resource personnel within each ministry; (b) establish a comprehensive program to collect and analyze gender disaggregated data; (c) establish a resource center for gender; (d) appropriate national funds for the Gender Division for personnel and operational costs; (e) foster production of annual reports and work plans by the Gender Division with a performance-based budget; (f) develop a sustainable financing strategy for MCCA that includes the Gender Division; (g) establish gender focal points within each ministry to mainstream gender; (h) ensure the active participation of the Minister of MCCA in high level meetings and donor round table discussions; and (i) develop a gender policy, based on the findings of this stocktake report.

I. INTRODUCTION

The ability to balance the old and new ways has long been part of Palauan matrilineal heritage that nurtured, fostered and encouraged adaptation to change. Palauan women continue to desire the values and principles of the past but they have adapted well to current trends and strive to integrate important characteristics of the past into the present. As she reflected on the co-existence of Palauan culture and modern social institutions, Senator Kathy Kesolei, who is one of three women currently in the *Olbiil Era Kelulau* (Palau's Congress), explained how women today have learned to balance tradition and modernization. According to her, the perceived ability to manage large scale events, careers, households and farms gives Palauan women the ability to carry out the complex processes/systems needed for sustainable land management today.¹

Through the centuries, the Republic of Palau developed and evolved a governing process in which women and men participated. Both benefited from this system. Palau has a matrilineal society which empowers women and they hold lead positions in society. Women from different clans nominate male counterparts to their chiefly titles, who are then either accepted or rejected by the chiefs. Women and men respect and support each other. Women have served as peace-makers in times of traditional warfare and during the German, Japanese and American administrations, women had opportunities for training and achieving high levels of education.

'Palauan women are peacemakers and our matrilineal society contributes to our strength – a critical turning point in our history was when the the Compact of Free Association was being negotiated with the United States. We were courageous in our efforts in advocating for the environment and a nuclear free nation and we are written down in history for our part in this particularly dark time not only for Palau but for the Pacific' Faustina Rehuher-Marugg

A hundred years ago, at least 148 women's clubs (*cheldebechel*) were recorded throughout Palau. Club members represented clans, families and households within a village. Female titleholders were members of the largest or highest ranking clubs. There were second-tier clubs of married women without titles, who had homes and responsibilities within the village; younger, unmarried women belonged to another group of smaller clubs. The large club of women titleholders functioned as protectors and guardians of the laws of the village, and as peacemakers. These women supported and protected village programs and supervised the smaller clubs. Over time, new political systems and cultures merged with the traditional Palauan culture. The population began to migrate to the urban centers and away from the island, seeking greater opportunities. Today, an estimated 66 clubs exist – less than half the number of earlier times. Because fewer people now live in the villages, women are challenged to perform their traditional functions, which often require knowledge of the daily activities within each village.² In addition to today's traditional clubs, non-profit organizations of women promote women's health and education (e.g. Didil Belau, Inc., Ekei Women's Organization, Palau Parents

¹ Ngiraingas M. 2012. Gender Assessment Sustainable Land Management Policy SIUL PALARIS; Kitalong 2012. Gender Assessment SLM SIUL

² The Palau Society of Historians and Bureau of Arts and Culture. 2009. Cheldebechel. Traditional customary practices. Palau Series 15. Draft.

Empowered, Omellememel Ma Ulekerreuil a Bedenged, Palau Women Empowered Belau, Milad il Dil, Palau Nurses' Association, Otil a Beluad, Klta'l Reng, and religious organizations).

In 1946, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women set standards for women's rights. Over the next decades, significant progress was made to address women's rights. In 1955, women met to discuss women's issues after attending a workshop in the Philippines. The 1975 World Conference on Women (the first such conference) was a global initiative to support women, children and families in changing times, and to celebrate the International Year of Women. Palau was an active participant in the second conference in Nairobi and the third conference in Copenhagen. In preparation for the fourth conference in Beijing in 1995, Palau held its first Mechesil Belau (Women of Palau) Conference. Since then, Mechesil Belau has met annually and provides a platform from which to improve the lives of women, families and communities. Traditional women leaders from each state have a series of consultative meetings to identify and define issues to be addressed each year. During the past 20 years, Mechesil Belau has discussed such issues, prepared follow-up reports, and often monitors the implementation of actions to address critical issues. Significant issues have included: preservation, protection and promotion of Palauan heritage, culture, languages, customs, traditions and education; health; conservation and the environment; government ethics; economic development; foreign workers; parenting; families; development; and traditional matters, issues and practices. Women's needs, perspectives and contributions have been addressed primarily through traditional women's clubs, Mechesil Belau, government agencies, and other non-government organizations.

Time Line

1946 UN Commission on the Status of Women – set standards on women's rights

1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights – equal rights and freedoms

1955 Palauan women discuss women's issues after workshop in the Philippines

1975 First International Women's Year, first global United Nations' women's conference in Mexico City; start of UN Decade for Women (1976–1985)

1980 Second World Conference on Women, Copenhagen

1985 Third World Conference on Women, Nairobi

1993 Bureau of Women's Interests established under the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs
Presidential Proclamation No. 01–93 to establish National Women's Week

1994 Women secure another major step forward for the rights of women and girls to control their own lives and bodies at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo

1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen; Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, Platform for Action for women's equality, empowerment and justice; first Mechesil Belau Conference

2010 15-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action

2011 UN Women, the new UN agency focusing on women

It is now widely recognized that development and governance processes will not be effective or sustainable until women and men participate in and benefit from such processes on a basis of both formal and substantive equality. Despite this, women continue to be significantly under-represented in governance and development processes and experience discrimination and diminished opportunity in virtually all development sectors. Contrary to a wide range of commitments that Pacific Island governments have made to achieving equality between men and women, women's needs, issues, perspectives and contributions continue in many cases to be on the periphery of development and governance dialogue.

'Mainstreaming' a gender perspective across all multi-sectoral development and governance work was universally recognized in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, as a critical strategy for achieving government commitments to gender equality and sustainable development. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), para 202, adopted at the conference, states:

In addressing the issue of mechanisms for promoting the advancement of women, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.

Gender mainstreaming was also recognized in BPA as key to addressing the enjoyment of human rights (para 229). The overarching objective of gender mainstreaming should thus be to ensure that all multi-sectoral development processes – which might otherwise be acting, advertently or inadvertently, to perpetuate gender stereotypes and inequalities – are instead actively contributing to the realization of gender equality in all spheres of life.

Definition of gender mainstreaming

...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, 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 programmes 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.

UN Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (2001)

II. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Gender mainstreaming gained significant momentum in the Pacific region during the years before, and soon after, the Beijing Conference. However, perceptions are that this momentum has not been maintained and that national governments do not have the necessary capacity to systematically integrate gender perspectives into multi-sector development as part of their strategies to achieve national, regional and international commitments to gender equality. This stocktake was designed to determine the extent to which capacity for effective gender mainstreaming exists in the national government of Palau, and to identify potential areas of strategic intervention to strengthen such capacity. This assessment is an initiative of MCCA in collaboration with non-government entities, UN Women and the Pacific Community (SPC). It is being carried out in phases in Palau in response to a call from 9th triennial Conference of Pacific Women held in 2007 to strengthen the institutional capacity of governments to meet their stated commitments to gender equality.

The Gender Division under the Bureau of Aging and Gender (BoAG) of the MCCA partners with other ministries and existing women's organizations to ensure that gender and women's human rights are mainstreamed within the government. To be effective, the Republic of Palau through MCCA (specifically the Gender Division within BoAG) needs both strong internal capacity and an enabling environment based on a strong legal and policy framework, political will and commitment, a supportive organizational culture, clear accountability mechanisms, strong technical capacity and adequate resources. Such an enabling environment can foster collaboration among partners at all levels, to design and implement evidence-based strategies.

The underlying premise of the stocktake is that national women's machineries (NWMs) are key catalysts for the mainstreaming of gender and women's human rights but they are not the sole agencies responsible for achieving it. To be effective, NWMs need both strong internal capacity and a wider government structure that is supportive of gender equality and mainstreaming. That wider structure must include a strong legal and policy framework supportive of gender equality and mainstreaming, genuine government commitment, a supportive organizational culture, clear accountability mechanisms, strong technical capacity and adequate resources – in short, an enabling environment.

The stocktake is not an evaluation of the work of government in addressing gender inequality or specific efforts at mainstreaming; rather it simply analyzes the degree to which there is an enabling environment for such mainstreaming to take place.

The stocktake process involved research combined with structured interviews and focus group discussions. The research was undertaken from May to October 2013. Structured interviews were conducted between 2010 and 2014 with informants in senior government and traditional positions and people involved in policy development and program implementation. Most interviewees represented the national congress, government ministries and local NGOs. One inception focus group discussion in 2013 and two focus group meetings were held in 2014 with civil society representatives.³

³ Appendices 1 and 2.

Enabling environment requirements for gender mainstreaming

- 1. Legal and policy framework:** The extent to which gender equality and mainstreaming commitments are in place by virtue of ratification of relevant international human rights treaties, existence of constitutional and legislative provisions, and existence of government policy mandates
- 2. Political will:** Demonstrated political will means that action is taken on stated gender equality commitments and action is formalized within systems and mechanisms to ensure mainstreaming is sustainable
- 3. Organizational culture:** The extent to which the attitudes of staff and institutional systems, policies and structures support or marginalize gender equality as an issue
- 4. Accountability and responsibility:** The ways in which action on commitments to gender mainstreaming can be traced and monitored within organizations, and the mechanisms through which individuals at different levels demonstrate gender equality-related results
- 5. Technical capacity:** The extent of skills and experience that organizations can draw on to support gender and human rights mainstreaming initiatives across and within their operations and programs
- 6. Adequate resources:** The allocation and application of human and financial resources in relation to the scope of the task of mainstreaming

III. COUNTRY OVERVIEW

1. Facts and figures

The information presented below was derived from the 2012 Statistical Handbook produced by the Bureau of Budget and Planning, the 2005 Census of Population and Housing, and the 2006 Household Income and Expenditure Survey produced by the Office of Planning and Statistics under the Ministry of Finance. The data were also derived from the Palau National Olympic Committee database under the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs, the Ministry of Education 2005 Statistical Yearbook, the Ministry of Health (MOH) annual reports and strategic plans, WHO Global Database, Palau 2011–2013 STEPS preliminary data, the Ministry of State and the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism and the 9th Obiil era Kelulau 2013 Report, *Center for Women’s Empowerment Belau – advocating for more women in politics: Moving forward as a non-governmental organization.*

The Republic of Palau

Population	17,445
Urban/Rural	65%/35%
Land area	535 km ²
EEZ	630,000 km ²
Geography	Two atolls and 586 isolated islands
Political System	Constitutional government under a Compact of Free Association with the United States of America
Economy	Tourism, fishing, agriculture
Ethnic composition	73.5% Palauan, 26.5% others
Main languages	Palauan, English,
Life expectancy M/F	58/67
Labor force participation	68% of population
Human Development Index	0.791
Gender Development Index	n/a
Gender Empowerment Index	n/a
National athletes M/F	64%/36%
Employment:	
Executive & professional M/F	78%/22%
Ambassadors M/F	3/1
Honorary Consul M/F	3/2
Judges M/F	4/5
Governors M/F	13/3
Delegates in House M/F	16/0
Senators M/F	10/3
State legislator candidates M/F	79.5%/20.5%
State legislator female candidates who won	20.2%
Elementary and high school teachers M/F	30%/70%
Farm owners M/F	35%/65%
Ministers M/F	7/1
Household heads M/F	73.5%/26.5%
Female household heads below basic poverty line	31.3%

2. Map of Palau:



Map ©SPC

IV. KEY GENDER ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a brief overview of some of the key manifestations of gender in Palau. This overview is not exhaustive; it is meant to provide the contextual basis for a proper understanding and appreciation of the need for gender and women's human rights to be thoroughly and systematically integrated across all government law and policy making, programming, planning, budgeting and monitoring. More detailed information on the status of gender equality in Palau can be obtained from a range of resources, including those listed in the bibliography.

1. Land

The matrilineal succession of land rights gave women a position of great importance and influence in traditional society. According to custom, every Palauan has land rights inherited from his or her mother. Today, women (especially young women) are less aware of their land rights and clanship relationships; an increasing population and migration make tracing lineage and land ownership even more complex. Women typically inherit their taro patch from a female relative. With fewer and fewer women interested in taro gardening, there is less connection to the land and its history. Local customs provide women with rights to customary land title, especially taro gardens, and inheritance passes through the female line. The migration of many Palauans to the urban center of Koror and to other countries, and the consequent increased exposure to non-Palauan values and culture, has weakened the local cultural norms and organization that were central to local society.⁴

Women still influence and regulate land management in many ways. Despite the shift from a matrilineal heritage based on a consensual decision-making system to that of a more patriarchal system of inheritance and authority, armed with a strong desire to perpetuate traditional practices and principles, Palauan women perhaps can uncover an effective approach to balancing the old and the new and the contradiction between conservation and development. The ability to balance the old and new ways has long been part of Palauan matrilineal heritage that nurtured, fostered and encouraged adaptation to change. Palauan women continue to desire the values and principles of the past. However, they have adapted well to current trends and strive to integrate important characteristics of the past into the present.

2. Health

Article IV of the Constitution of the Republic of Palau states that the government '...provides free preventive health care to the citizens of the Republic of Palau as prescribed by law'.⁵

a. Maternal mortality

Maternal mortality is defined as the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days after termination of that pregnancy,⁶ not due to accidental or incidental causes. There is currently no

⁴ Ngiraingas, M. 2012. Gender assessment sustainable land management policy SIUL, PALARIS.

⁵ Ministry of Health 2011. Annual Report.

⁶ Mainly ICD-9 codes 630-676; ICD-10 codes O00-O99, A34.

incidence of maternal mortality; the last reported maternal mortality was recorded in 2009. The 2011 statistics indicate no maternal mortality. All women in Palau have access to reproductive health services (family planning, prenatal delivery, postnatal care, cancer screening, and HIV testing). Contraceptives are available at the National Family Planning Clinic and community health centers. The Health Care Fund provides equitable access to reproductive health services.

b. Sexually transmitted diseases

Gonorrhea and genital *Chlamydia trachomatis* are the most common sexually transmitted diseases. The *Chlamydia* infection rate is 11% among pregnant women and 4.5% among males. While the rate among pregnant women is similar to or lower than that of many other Pacific nations, it is still very high by global standards.⁷ Based on routine reporting from health clinics, *Chlamydia* infection shows a generally increasing trend.⁸ Youth aged 15 to 29 appear to be at the greatest risk (HIV-AIDS Program, 2005).⁹

c. Non-communicable diseases

The transition of culture, political systems, economic development and technology has moved health indicators from communicable to non-communicable diseases. Leading causes of death indicate that eight of the ten leading causes of death in Palau were NCDs related to lifestyle associated risk factors.¹⁰

'Palau has an epidemiological shift from malnutrition and communicable diseases to an increasing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)...Between 2003 and 2012, the leading causes of death were cardio/cerebrovascular disease, cancer, injury and diabetes.'^{11,12}

Palau is ranked the 7th most obese country in the world. Over 80% of our off-island medical referrals are NCD-related.¹³ Palau spends 55% of its health budget on NCDs, and projects that within a decade that can be up to 80%. Thirty-three per cent of school children are overweight or obese. While Palau has made tangible gains in reducing communicable disease rates – one of the highest rates of immunization in the world, high primary care access rate, low infant and maternal mortality rates – these gains will soon succumb to the increased rates of NCDs. This is the data urgency that will threaten Palau's socio-economic development.¹⁴

d. Shared responsibility of care giving

More and more women are in the workplace, so that fewer Palauan women act as care takers. During the 2012 and 2013 focus group meetings with women, two key emerging issues were raised: care of the elderly and home-bound care. Statistics show that women on average live a decade longer than men and may need either longer-term care or care from a daughter who may also be a senior citizen.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ministry of Health. 2010 Annual Report

⁹ Ministry of Health. 2010 Annual Report-Division of Primary and Preventive Health Services (DPPHS) 2010. The increasing rates of *Chlamydia trachomatis* for 2009 and 2010 could be due to increased testing using self-collected urine and vaginal swab testing. This testing is made possible with United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) arrangement where specimens are sent to Atlanta (CDC) lab. Results are sent back in two weeks. The increasing rates for 2009 and 2010 are due to increased testing as part of this project.

¹⁰ Ministry of Health. COMPACT Report 2010.

¹¹ Tobacco use is associated with each of these diseases.

¹² Ministry of Health, Palau 2011–2013, Steps data and WHO Global database.

¹³ In 2013 it is over 85% of its off-island medical referral budget for NCDs: Minister Ngirmang, June 17, 2013 pers. comm.

¹⁴ Stevenson Kuartei MD, Former Minister of Health 2012.

Practical and pragmatic actions to address emerging issues include the partnership of Palau Community College and the Ministry of Health (MOH) to provide basic care-giving training for home-bound bedridden patients and a program to train care-givers. It is recommended that MCCA support the MOH and Palau Community College program, establish a sustainable financing mechanism for the certification program, and develop a way to track certified care-givers to ensure their needs are addressed.

3. Violence against women

a. Family health survey

During the 2012 and 2013 meetings with women, a key emerging issue was the abuse of women. The ongoing Belau Family Health Survey project is gathering data about violence against women in a collaborative project between MOH and the Office of Statistics under the Bureau of Budget and Management within the Ministry of Finance. The project is funded by the United Nations Population Fund. The main objective is to establish the prevalence and frequency of violence against women in Palau. Palau is one of five Pacific Islands (the others are Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru and Cook Islands) currently conducting similar projects, often referred to as family health and safety studies. These studies use a multi-country study methodology developed by World Health Organization (WHO). Three other Pacific Island countries have conducted similar studies using this method. Similar studies that did not use the WHO methodology have been based in Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga.¹⁵

Domestic violence is a challenge that is complicated by tradition, cultural practices, and a lack of institutional support and agencies to provide temporary relief or shelter. Traditionally, violence was dealt with within the family or clan setting. Through the process of westernization, this system has broken down and traditional forms of resolving conflict are playing a lesser role in protecting women. Victims now rely on modern systems to resolve conflict and apply justice, but lack of access and awareness prevents women from disclosing domestic abuse to the public. There is a general attitude that abuse is a normal part of marriage and other relationships. In 2013, Belau Lemetel Klechad was mandated with the purpose and mission to advocate, promote and protect human rights in Palau: to advocate for the rights of workers, women and children and persons with disabilities; and to combat human trafficking and any form of human exploitation and abuse. The 2013 Palau Child Protection Baseline Report indicated that children were increasingly being protected through legislation, judicial support and their own awareness of services available.

b. Human trafficking

During the 2012 and 2013 meetings with women, another emerging issue highlighted was human trafficking. Palau is now considered Tier 2, which means there are signs of human trafficking but little effort is made to address it. A 2013 investigation led to the arrest of a number of people for human trafficking and prostitution, and to the adoption of measures and safe havens for the female victims. This indicated the commitment of the Bureau of Public Safety. In 2012 and 2013, the Bureau began

¹⁵ Umerang A. Imetengel pers. com. Oct 11, 2013,

campaigning against violence suffered by women and children. The staff are all actively engaged in campaigns to raise awareness about violence against women and children.

4. Education

There is no significant disparity between the sexes in education in the public and private elementary and secondary schools, as the ratio of female to male students has been very similar. There was a trend toward fewer female students from 2003 to 2005 (0:96), 2005 to 2010 (0:94) and 2010 to 2013 (0:92). The ratio of female to male students shows a tendency to have more males than females in public schools (4% more males) compared with private schools (2% more females).¹⁶ Palau is essentially on target in meeting its Millennium Development Goals in education.

An average of 84% of the elementary students finished eight consecutive years. 51% of high school students finish four consecutive years.¹⁷ 90% of all students in public school eventually finish high school including the General Education Development program.¹⁸ A 2012 child protection study found that the two main reasons students were dropping out of school were pregnancy (29%) and boredom or dislike of school (14%). A concern remains with the high drop-out rate for girls at secondary and tertiary levels. However, there are more males than females dropping out of school. The incidence of drop-outs increased more in the high school than at the elementary school level. Of the 52 students who dropped out of school, 59.6% were high school students while the remaining 40.4% were elementary school students.¹⁹ The Palau Community College has an adult high school program to support completion of high school for young women and men. In the spring of 2014, 19 females and 29 males are enrolled in the adult high school program at the Community College based in Koror, as well as in programs in Ngaremlengui and Peleliu States. The student ratio in this program is one female to two males. Of these students, approximately 20% complete adult high school. The main problems are issues at home.²⁰

5. Employment

In 2005, 38.8% of Palauans employed were in management positions (executive and professional) – 22% held by women and 16.8% by men. The executive and professional positions included doctors, nurses, educators, administrators, ministers, judges, lawyers, and business people. There was only a 1.75% increase in the percentage of females in management positions since 1990. In 2005, 61.2% of those employed worked in other fields such as technicians, sales, services, farming, fishing, operators and laborers.²¹ In 2005, 57% of women worked in the private sector, 36% worked in government, 6% were self-employed, and 1% were unpaid family workers. Over a 15 year period (1990 to 2005), employment of men and women nearly doubled. The number of women employed increased from 2,057 to 3,795. The number of employed men increased from 3,544 to 5,982.²² Surprisingly, the number of urban workers declined between 2000 and 2005, from 8,170 to 7,883, with an increase of rural workers from

¹⁶ Kitalong, A. 2013. National Report SIDS. Appendix 7.

¹⁷ Kitalong, A. 2013. Palau National Assessment Report . Appendix 5 Statistics from the Ministry of Education for the Public Elementary Schools.

¹⁸ Ray Mechol, pers. comm. 2013.

¹⁹ Ministry of Education. 2005 Statistical yearbook.

²⁰ Beronica Bingkelang, pers. comm. March 17, 2014.

²¹ Republic of Palau. 2013. 2012 Statistical handbook. Bureau of Budget and Planning.

²² Appendix 2 Table 2.

1,213 to 1,894. There was an almost equal growth of over 60% in both public and private sectors between 1990 and 2005. Unemployment in rural areas remained stable from 2000 to 2005 at 7%, whereas urban unemployment increased almost two-fold from 2% to 3.5%. In 2012 and 2013 available data indicate that women represented 65% of farm owners,²³ 70% of teachers and over 90% of nurses. Palauan women perceive inequality in the workplace to be based on lower overall salaries of women compared with men with equal qualifications.

The Minimum Wage Bill became law in April 2013 and is the first minimum wage increase (from USD 2.50/h to USD 3.50/h) in 16 years. This wage increase applies to all employees except those employed as farmers by a single employer, domestic helpers, caretakers, babysitters, houseboys, student employees and non-governmental organization employees.²⁴

6. Poverty

In 2006, the Household Income and Expenditure Survey analyzed data from a poverty perspective. The survey revealed that a small but significant gender differential existed in poverty incidence. At the national level, 26.5% of households were headed by females and 31.3% of female headed households had expenditures below the basic needs poverty line. The gender differential was more pronounced in rural areas, where 40% of the female headed households had expenditures below the basic needs poverty line.

7. Decision-making

During focus meetings with women, a key issue raised was the need for more representation in politics, and in top decision-making positions, including those in sports (e.g. the Olympic Committee) and human rights.²⁵ Participation of women at the national decision-making level remains limited, with women being under-represented in the legislative and executive branches of government. Women believe that representation in key decision-making positions is dominated by men and this needs to be addressed. During the 32 years from 1981 to 2013, there was only one female delegate in the House of Delegates and five female senators in the Senate. Representation in the Senate is increasing, with three women senators in 2013. However, the House of Delegates has not had a female representative since 1981. In the state legislative bodies, as of 2013 and based upon available data, 20.5% of the candidates were women and 20.2% of these candidates became legislators.²⁶

In 2013, there were more female than male doctors and all senior staff members at the Social Security Office were female.²⁷ There are three female senators in the Palau National Congress, no females in the House of Representatives, and three of the 16 state governors are female. In 2013, a new organization, Women Empowered Belau, was established through the initiative of Senator Sengebau Senior, Senator

²³ Bureau of Agriculture Data, 2013. Data provided after Interview with BoA Staff, Gloria Idesiar and Trebkul Tellei.

²⁴ <http://www.oceaniatv.net/2013/04/30/palau-minimum-wage-passed>. Retrieved March 1, 2014

²⁵ Consultation inception meeting towards the development of a Gender Policy in Palau May 9, 2013.

²⁶ 9TH OBIIL ERA KELULAU. 2013.

²⁷ Minister Ngirmang, pers. comm. July 17, 2013.

Inabo and the Minister for Community and Cultural Affairs, Baklai Temengil. The NGO plans to become incorporated with a specific focus on achieving two key objectives: to promote and support women in politics and to address social issues through political leadership. Draft by-laws have been produced.²⁸ In 2013, a mock congress was held to help build capacity among women in the legislative process.

Although the number of women in the public service is growing, men dominate the most senior positions. Currently, out of a total of eight ministries, only one has a female minister. The Senate currently has three female senators. The House of Delegates has no female delegates. In the judiciary, five out of nine associate judges are female. However, the chief justice and senior judge are male. The religious, private and business spheres remain male dominated. Customary norms, stereotypes of women's roles, and the lack of public awareness about election processes limit women's opportunities to be appointed to leadership positions at the national level.

a. Perception of women's leadership

In 2010, the *Echeu er a Beluu* Forum was organized and sponsored by the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs to support a public dialogue on: (a) culture and traditions; (b) disadvantaged or underrepresented groups; and (c) individual rights under democracy. The forum theme *Echeu er a Beluu*, or 'small talks of disgruntlement or displeasure', was aimed to raise issues and gather public opinion to establish an understanding in the three thematic areas. The top reasons stated by the participants for explaining why women do not run for public office were: (a) few women are interested; (b) women do not vote for women; (c) women have a specific traditional role in society; and (d) it is expensive to run.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. National women's machinery

This section describes the history and current organization of the national government department responsible for the promotion of gender equality, as well as other government and non-government machinery that is or can be used to promote equality and mainstreaming. The Gender Division has a very important role in gender mainstreaming, as it serves as the coordinating mechanism in government to ensure that gender equality commitments are implemented and met.

a. Structure

Palau has a rich, unique, culture that is promoted through active participation in customary events: family events; national regional and international festivals; and conventions that benefit women. MCCA is the national focal point for history, culture and the arts. It works with traditional leaders, groups, historians, the National Archives Office, the semi-autonomous Belau National Museum and the privately-owned Etpison Museum. The directors of the two museums are women.

²⁸ 9th Obiil era Kelulau. 2013. Center for Women's Empowerment Belau: Advocating for more women in politics. Moving forwards as a non-governmental organization. Republic of Palau: Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Project.

Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs – Republic of Palau

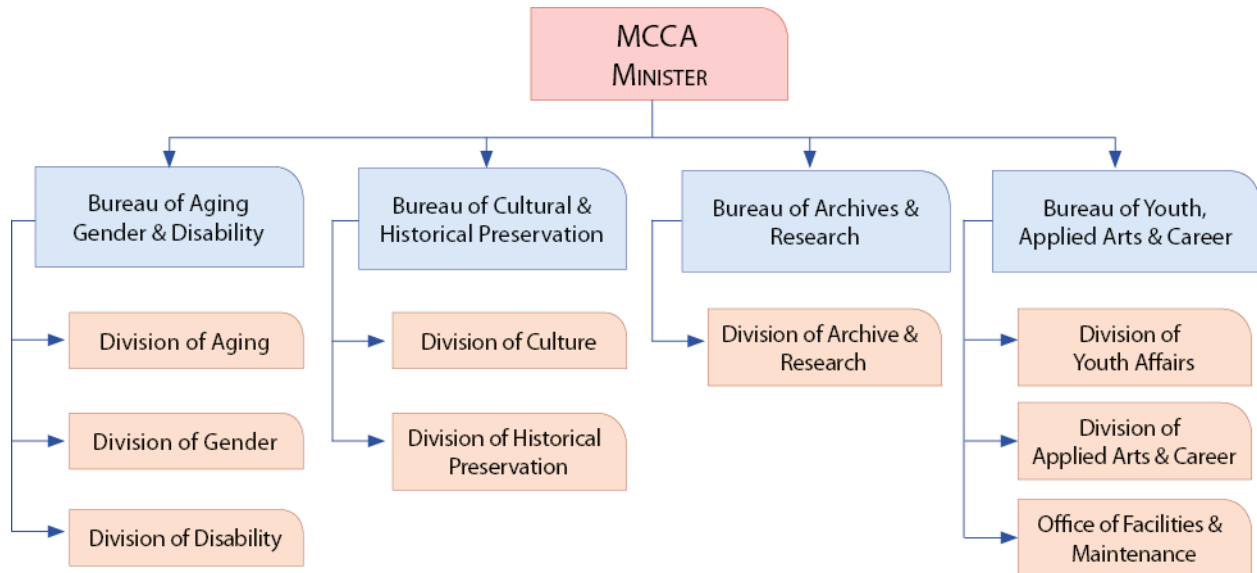


Figure 1 Proposed Organizational Chart for the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs

Community input is addressed through the bureaus and divisions within MCCA as follows: the Bureau of Cultural and Historical Preservation; the Bureau of Aging, Gender and Disability (ADG); Bureau of Archives and Research; and the Bureau of Youth, Applied Arts and Career (Figure 1).

BoAG is headed by a director who is mandated to coordinate programs, projects and events relating to senior citizens, both women and men. The Gender Division of BoAG was established to serve as a focal point for gender-related needs, and to cooperate with national entities and states to address these needs. The division is headed by a chief whose duties are: (a) to conduct a needs assessment survey to identify gender equality needs, assess and develop programs to address such needs and mitigate against gender inequality; (b) to coordinate with appropriate local entities and facilitate the development of a national gender policy to correlate with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, focusing on gender-sensitive policies applicable to Palau; (c) to serve as the focal point on gender matters for national, regional and international entities; (d) to establish a database for reporting gender equality issues; (e) to collaborate with state governments, identify resource people in

the community, and establish 'life skills centers'; and (f) to coordinate with appropriate local entities on all matters relating to gender.²⁹

The 2014 fiscal year budget earmarked USD 55,000 for BoAG to be used on infrastructure improvements, enforcement of the Palau Family Protection Act 2012, and support for home care for the elderly in families without income. The main source of funding for BoAG is from the government and it primarily covers salaries. Operational costs are handled by the administrative section of MCCA. Vehicle and equipment costs for all the units within BoAG are handled by the main administration office; there are no vehicles or equipment specifically dedicated to BoAG. There is a mobile unit where all the different sections of MCCA combine efforts to work in outer islands. However, this service has not been functioning for the last few years because of limited funding.

Although budgetary constraints remain a persistent difficulty, the level of in-kind support from government towards gender-related work is reported to have increased due to more collaboration among other ministries on gender-related work. Currently there is limited donor interaction with BoAG. The Economic Policy Planning and Statistics Office reports on performance budgeting have been requested to produce gender-disaggregated data. MCCA needs to develop a strategic plan of action that addresses gender. The BoAG strategic plan should include a goal to enhance the role of women in the development of the nation and to empower women in all aspects of life.

²⁹ Executive Order Number 267. Organizing the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs, Executive Branch of the Government of the Republic of Palau.

Table 1: Budget of the Bureau of Aging and Gender (USD)

	2013	2014
Total government budget	65,883,800	69,382,100
Total MCCA budget	1,070,500	1,115,500
Total Bureau of Aging and Gender budget	220,000	290,000
Bureau of Aging and Gender % of total government budget	0.33%	0.42%
Allocation of Bureau of Aging and Gender		
Salaries and overheads	220,000	249,000
Program costs (renovation, FPA, homecare w/no income)	55,000	50,000
Gender mainstreaming	0	0

b. Reporting mechanisms

BoAG reports to the Minister for Community and Cultural Affairs. MCCA reports to the Office of the President, and the Palau National Congress requires a performance-based budget report annually. Donor agencies also require reports. Most of the work of BoAG is with women’s organizations, including Mechesil a Belau, one of the major women’s organizations whose annual conferences leads to resolutions, some of which become law, such as the Palau Family Protection Act 2012. MCCA is responsible for the implementation of this act, which will also require a reporting format that needs to be gender disaggregated.

c. Civil society and the private sector

Mechesil a Belau is an organization that has been instrumental in bringing together women’s traditional clubs and non-governmental organizations each year to address women’s and community issues. Together, these partners have built an effective social network to build capacity among women within the community. Traditional women’s groups exist in all states, including the outer atolls and islands that are linked through the Internet and offices in the urban centers to ensure the full involvement of women in developing and implementing programs. They work closely with MCCA on gender mainstreaming. In-kind support through collaborative work between MCCA, and the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health and the traditional and newly established women’s groups, has included training to improve parenting skills, gender and leadership programs, resource management projects such as pilot farm projects and taro patch rehabilitation programs, parents as teachers programs, care-giving training through the community college and work on violence

against women. The Mechesil a Belau conferences have become an important platform among many mechanisms for consultation for policy development by government.

d. Assessment

This section assesses the Gender Division, including its basic capacity, working environment and relationships with other relevant stakeholders, and how those factors influence its ability to act as a catalyst for the mainstreaming of gender and women's human rights across the whole of government. The division faces a number of constraints that limit its effectiveness. Key among these is that it is not strategically located within the central government structure to influence mainstreaming across the policy, programming and resource allocation spectra.

The focus of BoAG is to increase government responsibility to ensure non-discrimination, and to implement the government's commitment to gender equality, including the Pacific and Beijing platforms for action. However, its mandate to empower women and increase their role in national development processes is not translated into specific achievable strategies. The Gender Division is the coordinating mechanism in government to ensure gender equality commitments are implemented and met, but there is currently no full-time staff member dedicated to the promotion of gender equality, making this goal a challenge.

Technical capacity to undertake gender and women's human rights analysis and mainstreaming is limited. The relevant skills for mainstreaming gender exist, but there is a need for funding to hire local expertise. While MCCA staff members do attend training sessions on gender awareness and development, the impact of this has not been adequately measured due to insufficient staff capacity. Applying the training to law, policy and program development requires resources and opportunities. The staff of BoAG need to be better networked within government and they need good connections to donor resources to build capacity and an organization culture.

Existing technical expertise at BoAG, with collaboration from local and regional partners, can ensure that strategies and policies are implemented. Strategic planning for gender mainstreaming is broadly inclusive of all ministries and civil society. Currently, BoAG relies on NGOs to implement a portion of its mandate. The involvement of partnerships between MCCA and NGOs in gender-related work indicates progress in collaboration with civil society groups; it can be indicative of the priority given by government to gender equality and women's human rights.

This stocktake report may serve as a basis for the Gender Division to develop a gender policy.

e. Recommendations

- (1) Develop a strategic plan for the Gender Division within BoAG/MCAA to address its responsibility as the coordinating mechanism in government to mainstream gender, including a vision, goals and specific objectives with clearly defined targets and measures to track actions within other government agencies to mainstream gender and address key gender issues.
- (2) Implement education programs to promote this strategy and an awareness of gender mainstreaming.
- (3) Develop a gender policy.
- (4) Review existing strategies to ensure that they can drive effective policy and strategies for mainstreaming gender and women's human rights, and raise public awareness of gender equality across all government ministries.
- (5) Develop an effective network within government with the Gender Division serving as the hub.
- (6) Serve as a catalyst for action, supported by non-government community entities.
- (7) Be actively engaged in the work of NGOs.
- (8) Build technical capacity and an effective organizational culture that promotes gender stocktake assessment.

VI. AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW

1. Legal and policy framework

Palau needs a legal and policy framework to support the mainstreaming of gender and women's human rights across all sectors. Two key human rights treaties are in force, but there is no anti-discrimination legislation and limited gender mainstreaming in place. It is recommended that anti-discrimination legislation and more gender mainstreaming be established. To achieve a stronger framework, greater attention to reporting under human rights treaties is needed, and specific anti-discrimination legislation must be enacted. More effort is needed to ensure that the existing legal and policy framework is understood across all political, economic, social and cultural spheres.

a. Key international and regional commitments

Palau ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1995, and endorsed a number of key international and regional policy frameworks promoting commitment to gender equality, including the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the 2000 Millennium Development Goals, the Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality 2005–2015 and the Pacific Plan (2005, revised in 2007).

In September 2011, Palau signed on the eight core human rights treaties, becoming the first Pacific Island country to have signed all human rights treaties. Palau became a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (not endorsed yet); the International Convention against All Forms of Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Palau became a signatory to the International Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2011 and ratified it on May 8, 2013.

By signing these conventions, Palau shows its support to their fundamental principles and the intention to ratify them. It is a step towards Palau becoming a party to these agreements.

As an ardent advocate of human rights and freedoms, I signed these conventions because I believe that all human rights and freedoms are indispensable elements to true happiness. Ratification of these basic tenets of democratically recognized rights and freedom is, however, not enough. Governments must also adopt laws and policies implementing, enforcing and strengthening these human rights and freedoms. H.E. Johnson Toribiong, former President of Palau 2011

b. National legislation

The Palau Constitution and Title 1 of the Palau National Code (PNC) guarantee women equality under the law.

Every person shall be equal under the law and shall be entitled to equal protection. The government shall take no action to discriminate against any person on the basis of sex, race,

place of origin, language, religion or belief, social status or clan affiliation, except for the preferential treatment of citizens (Palau National Constitution, Section IV.5).

No law shall be enacted...which discriminates against any person on account of race, sex, language, or religion, nor shall the equal protection of the laws be denied (1 PNC 407).

The 2012 Palau Family Protection Act³⁰ provides protection to families from all forms of abuse. In 2013, consultations began on developing a gender policy for Palau. In this context, 'gender' was considered to mean both men and women in balanced roles in society. In 2013, compilation of the proceedings from 20 years of an annual women's conference in Palau will be completed, and will contribute towards developing the policy.

National laws have been established to ensure the protection of children³¹ as follows:

(1) Title 22 Palau National Code Chapter 1 Section 101 states the policy and purpose of the law which is to provide for free, compulsory public education for all children aged 6 to 17, or until graduation from high school.

(2) RPPL 7-55 is an Act which provides for the elimination of spouse exemptions relating to child sexual abuse cases and amends the reporting requirements and penalties, to create a child hearsay exception, to allow closed circuit television and to extend the statute of limitation.

(3) Title 21 PNC Chapter 6 of the Palau National Code states that: 'It is the policy of the National Government to provide for the protection of children who are subject to abuse, sexual abuse or neglect and who, in the absence of appropriate reports concerning their conditions and circumstances, may be further abused, sexually abused, or neglected by the conduct of those responsible for their care and protection.'

(4) Title 21 PNC Chapter 6 Palau's Child Abuse Law (as amended by RPPL 7-55) defines abuse, neglect and sexual abuse; requires responsible officials to report suspected cases to the Office of the Attorney General within 48 hours; suspends the normal privileges of communications between spouses and doctors' clients in matters related to abuse; and provides for criminal penalties upon conviction ranging from a fine of not less than USD 1,000 to not more than USD 50,000 or imprisonment of not less than 6 months to 25 years or both.

(5) Title 17 PNC Chapter 36 Section 3601 is the Anti-Prostitution Act, passed in 1997 and amended in 2002. The amended act raised the fines to no less than USD 2,500 and no more than USD 10,000 and up to one year's imprisonment. Although there have been several high profile cases regarding prostitution, there are no major convictions on record.

The three national government agencies responsible for intervening in suspected cases of abuse, neglect and sexual abuse are the Bureau of Public Safety, the Office of the Attorney General and the Victims of Crime and Assistance section within the Ministry of Health. No legislation specifically addresses exploitation of children via sexually explicit videos, movies, photos and electronic images. There are anecdotal reports of children being exploited through payment for posing for sexually explicit photographs, but these reports could not be substantiated for this analysis.

³⁰ Republic of Palau Public Law (RPPL) 8-51 Senate Bill 8-147, SDA-HD2. The 2012 Palau Family Protection Act.

³¹ Palau National Code Annotated Vol 1. Constitution Titles 1-29 1995. Orakiruu Corporation, Koror, Palau.

c. Maternity leave legislation

In February 2013, Senator Sengebau-Senior introduced a bill (SB 9-20-SD2) to require all employers in Palau to provide up to three months of paid maternity leave to all pregnant employees, with an option of one additional month of unpaid leave. Palau's cultural tradition recognizes the importance of the post-partum period of rest and recovery.

d. Legislative gaps

Inheritance One law³² discriminates against women with respect to inheritance. The law discriminates against a wife whose rights to inherit property acquired during a marriage are not recognized and discriminates against female children in favor of male children.

- In the absence (of a will)...lands held in fee simple...shall, upon the death of the owner, be inherited by the owner's oldest legitimate living male child of sound mind, natural or adopted or if male heirs are lacking, the oldest legitimate living female child...(25 PNC 301).
- The 2012 Palau Family Protection Act does not specifically protect the elderly from abuse and neglect.
- Currently there are no standard regulations for day-care facilities in Palau. In March 2014, regulations were being developed by the Senate.³³
- House Bill No 9-57-3 was introduced to authorize the creation of a Court of Traditional and Cultural Matters and for other related purposes.

e. Awareness of international, regional and national legal and policy frameworks

Of the three ministries/departments (Education, Health, and Community and Cultural Affairs) interviewed, one director from one ministry and one minister from another ministry were able to cite at least one international, regional or national legal or policy framework that supported gender mainstreaming. Only one key member of an NGO cited the CRC; one director and two ministers from three ministries cited the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Attorney General cited conventions in general. A director from the Ministry of Education mentioned the policy of Education for All, and the Attorney General mentioned the Constitution. The Minister for Health knew that the WHO and United Nations Population Fund guidelines for reproductive health were linked to international commitments but was not directly familiar with these.

³² 25 PNC Chapter 3 Section 301 Inheritance of land held in fee simple.

³³ Dr Mareva Lechat Kitalong, Senate Legal Clerk, pers. comm. March 15, 2014.

f. Recommendations:

- (1) Amend the law that discriminates against women with respect to inheritance.
- (2) Establish a traditional court.
- (3) Develop legislation that specifically addresses exploitation of children from sexually explicit media. (4) Assess current provision for support and care of disabled children.
- (4) Lobby for the support of maternity leave law.
- (5) Amend the Family Protection Act to include the elderly.
- (6) Support the development of regulations for child-care facilities in Palau.
- (7) Develop and implement a comprehensive plan of action covering gender issues.
- (8) Partner with the Palau National Congress and legal community to develop educational materials and a media campaign to raise awareness of the legal and policy frameworks needed to address gender equality.

2. Political will

a. Support to adopt gender mainstreaming approach

Commitment to gender equality is perceived to have increased during the current administration. Senator J. Uduch Sengebau-Senior, a prominent advocate of the empowerment of women, said: ‘There should be equal numbers of men and women in the national, state and other elected offices.’³⁴

Overall, there remains limited political will and support for gender mainstreaming, which could be due to a lack of understanding of gender mainstreaming and resistance to gender equality. The greatest resistance to gender equality is likely to be found at the political level. There is also the understanding that women’s support of political leaders is crucial, as is their selection of traditional leaders. Political will for gender equality and mainstreaming is reflected to the extent that national and sectoral policies recognize, prioritize, and seek to address gender imbalances. Palau’s national strategic plans address sustainable development, and healthy, educational communities in a clean environment, but neither gender equality nor mainstreaming is specifically addressed. Budgetary constraints remain an issue, yet in-kind support from government towards gender-related work is perceived to have increased. The public service recruitment policy makes reference to recruitment based on merit and nondiscrimination.

There was a perception among interviewees that gender equality included women’s participation in community projects, provision of equal health care, equal school enrollments and increasing women’s participation in the workplace. Even in ministries and departments where political will was rated as high, a clear understanding of gender equality and gender mainstreaming was limited. Women’s programs continue to focus on the practical rather than strategic needs of women.

The lack of understanding and technical knowledge on mainstreaming gender was mentioned by representatives from ministries of health and education as the main barrier to higher political will. Other

³⁴ Island Time. 2014. Senior: There should be more women in politics. Volume 9 Issue 37

factors mentioned included the political culture, culturally defined gender roles and resistance to change. Female ministers have been appointed to MCCA for nearly all administrations except one. Thus the implementation of the mission of MCCA has been and continues to be perceived to be best administered by women. Only one female has held three ministerial posts in her career, in the Ministry of Administration, MOH, and the Ministry of State. Training for politicians is needed, to strengthen advocacy on gender issues at the community level and to help create better alliances among NGOs and women's organizations (e.g. Women Empowered Belau). Gender training as part of the school curriculum was mentioned as an important long-term strategy by the Ministry of Education and several programs are ongoing. It is recommended that a module on gender awareness be developed and integrated into the school curriculum.

b. Recommendations

- (1) Allocate a national budget to support future mock congresses for women and youth.
- (2) Develop a strategic plan for MCCA.
- (3) Develop short, user-friendly guides with relevant information on gender mainstreaming to increase understanding of gender mainstreaming and political will.
- (4) Engage communities in mainstreaming gender at all levels through education and outreach.
- (5) Develop a social marketing campaign for Women's International Day that targets political leaders.
- (6) In collaboration with development partners conduct targeted gender awareness, analysis and gender mainstreaming workshops across Government ministries.
- (7) Build capacity of NGOs and community groups through gender sensitization and awareness training including targeted training on gender and climate change or gender and health for relevant NGO and community based groups.

3. Organizational culture

Organizational culture refers to the extent to which the attitudes of staff and institutional systems and structures support or marginalize gender equality as an issue across sectors. A supportive organizational culture encourages a gender lens during all policy dialogues, establishes good lines of communication with the national women's machinery, ensures sex disaggregated data collection and analysis, has organizational systems in place to guide and inform staff on integrating gender within their technical area, strives for gender balance at all levels of the organization's staffing, and has gender-sensitive human resource management policies in place. Analyzed against these factors, the organizational culture in Palau needs to be a priority in its action plan. Gender issues are rarely mentioned in high-level discussions. The Attorney General's Office has had high-level meetings with the Palau National Congress, on Palau's Tier 2 status in relation to human trafficking. However, the dialogue during public hearings

indicates that there is a misunderstanding of the process in which human trafficking is reported. High-level discussion on gender has been part of MDG-related discussions.

There is strong collaboration between MCCA, BoAG and Mechesil ra Belau in preparation to host the annual women's conference. There is collaboration between the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism, the Environmental Quality Protection Board, and BoAG to implement activities related to World Food Day, International Women's Day, annual cultural fairs and community workshops. There is sectoral interaction with BoAG, based on clear strategies for collaboration, despite limited human resources and technical capacity within BoAG. MCCA works closely with other NGOs on gender-related work. Traditional women's clubs and organizations have facilitated the involvement of women in community-based government initiatives and are in the forefront of advocacy at the political level.

a. Sex-disaggregated data

Sex-disaggregated data is available for education, health and to some extent for general employment and the Office of Statistics has progressed in producing sex-disaggregated data. More such data are needed on employment in order to determine type of profession, level in management and income. There is also a need to consolidate the databases of the Bureau of Labor/Human Resources and the Bureau of Planning and Statistics.

b. Guidelines on gender mainstreaming

The Bureau of Public Service System is responsible for human resource management of the public service. Gender equality is restricted to the equal opportunity clause in the recruitment process. Sexual harassment is addressed under the 2012 Family Protection Act.

Palau's existing law governing maternity leave (RPPL 1-37) pertains only to permanent employees of the national government. (About 80% of the female employees are classified as permanent and covered by this law). The law allows one month (30 calendar days) of paid maternity leave with the option of up to four months of additional leave using a combination of accrued sick and annual leave or as unpaid leave. During maternity leave, whether paid or unpaid, a woman's job must be secure upon her return. The national labor laws contain provisions on working hours, working age, and minimum wage but make no specific reference to gender issues. Institutional policies are considered non-discriminatory and women need to be educated or made aware of gender issues so that they can exert their rights in various areas.³⁵

c. Women in top government positions

The men/women breakdown at the top three levels within the ministries interviewed can be summarized as: executive branch, president and vice president, 0 out of 2 positions held by women; senate level, three out of 12 positions; House of Delegates, 0 out of 16 positions; ministerial level, one out of eight positions; and of the 16 governors, three are women. Therefore seven women (13%) and 47 (87%) men work in the top 54 positions in government. Palau's four ambassadors are all Palauan: one

³⁵ Franz, P. and J. Otto. 2013. Rapid Health Impact Assessment. Maternity Leave Bill. S. B. 9-20-SD2.

female ambassador to the People's Republic of China and three male ambassadors to the United States, Japan and the Philippines, respectively.³⁶ The first US Ambassador to Palau was a woman.

d. Gender champions

Gender champions are leaders who advocate gender equality and women's human rights. MCCA and the Attorney General's Office staff members are female gender champions, as are also the female governors and legislators. The three female senators are gender champions within the Palau National Congress: Senator Kesolei introduced the 2012 Family Protection Act, which is now a law; Senator Sengebau Senior introduced maternity leave legislation, which passed the Senate and is now with the House of Delegates; and Senators Sengebau Senior and Inabo are among the founders of a new organization called Women Empowered Belau.

It is important to identify gender champions among the youth, as advocates of the work of the senior advocates. The representatives of the different ministries interviewed were supportive and showed strong interest in developing capacity in gender mainstreaming. Most of them expressed an interest in knowing more about gender mainstreaming and its relationship to improved development results. This is an organizational culture supportive of mainstreaming gender and women's human rights.

e. Recommendations

- (1) Prioritize organizational culture in the Gender Division's action plan.
- (2) The Minister of MCCA to act as the gender focal point at high-level discussions.
- (3) Conduct educational campaigns on human trafficking to target the National Congress.
- (4) Develop guidelines for gender mainstreaming for the ministries.
- (5) Establish an awareness-raising program on sexual harassment in the work place across government agencies.
- (6) Require the Statistics Office under the Bureau of Budget and Management to produce timely gender disaggregated data in order to track progress in gender mainstreaming.
- (7) Require national reports to include sex disaggregated data analysis.

4. Good governance – accountability mechanisms

Accountability mechanisms are a component of good governance and ensure that commitment to gender mainstreaming can be traced and monitored within organizations and that individuals are accountable for gender equality results in their area of work. There are no national gender accountability mechanisms in place. No reports were available regarding activities within the Gender Division. There are no mechanisms in place to track whether or not there are equal opportunities for women in the work place, or for women to access benefits or services provided by government. MCAA is mandated to work on addressing gender issues. No ministry had positions where gender was included in the terms of reference.

³⁶ Chief Hila Asanuma, Ministry of State, pers. comm. March 18, 2014.

a. Recommendations

- (1) Establish a national gender accountability mechanism through the Gender Division.
- (2) Produce an annual report and work plan for the Gender Division.
- (3) Develop a strategic action plan that addresses gender Issues with specific time lines and a performance-based budget.

5. Technical capacity

Gender and women’s human rights cannot be properly mainstreamed without a pool of qualified experts, whose skills and experience in these areas can systematically be drawn on by ministries.

a. Technical capacity to mainstream gender

Some participants in focal meetings thought that gender mainstreaming interventions should be made through the Bureau of Public Service System, which is responsible for recruiting government staff, as a starting point in ensuring gender equality in employment. Training on gender equality and mainstreaming needs to be culturally sensitive and the terminology translated into local languages to help people understand gender–power relations, methods of gender analysis and how gender analysis and gender-responsive policies and programs can lead to better development results. It is recommended that MCCA hire a chief for the Gender Division to serve as a coordinator for gender mainstreaming. The chief would be responsible for a training program on gender mainstreaming for focal points within each ministry. This coordinator and ministerial focal points are needed to evaluate existing and needed technical capacity

b. Recommendations

- (1) Implement gender mainstreaming interventions through the Bureau of Public Service System.
- (2) Develop a training module and conduct annual training on gender equality for the human resources personnel of each ministry.
- (3) Fill the position of chief under the Gender Division to serve as gender mainstreaming coordinator.
- (4) Identify qualified experts who support the development of tools to build awareness and develop more capacity for measuring the progress of gender mainstreaming at the national level.
- (5) Identify successful case studies of gender mainstreaming in either the public or private sector to duplicate in different ministries.

6. Adequacy of financing for gender equality

a. Allocation of resources

There is no specific budget support from donors or development partners to undertake gender mainstreaming work or any gender-related work in Palau, and the government provides only limited resources for mainstreaming gender. At present, only USD 55,000 is allocated to BoAG. There is no functional mechanism within the government to ensure that relevant sectoral gender issues are incorporated into the national budgetary process or, if identified in planning, are appropriately funded. Representatives from the ministries interviewed were able to identify specific or general budgets that target or could positively influence gender equality, such as the increase in salaries for nurses in MOH, and the caregiver certification program and adult high school program at Palau Community College.

b. Prioritization of gender equality

Through international agreements and donor support, MOH and other ministries have access to funded programs that are largely targeted at women (i.e. breast cancer detection and prevention, HIV and AIDS, Well Baby Program). However, budget constraints mean that gender equality work is not prioritized. The new round of the Compact Agreement emphasizes health and education and the improved use of data and statistics for policy and decision-making. This has resulted in carrying out a demographic and health survey that included specific gender-related questions in order to improve the availability of health indicators and to assist with policy making and MDG implementation. Ensuring reliable financing requires that gender mainstreaming across the whole of government be built into the government's budgeting processes.

c. Recommendations

- (1) Develop a work plan and budget for the Gender Division.
- (2) Seek additional budget from Congress that is performance based.
- (3) Hire a development officer for MCCA to source external funds for the Gender Division.
- (4) Coordinate with the Grants Office to sponsor round-table discussion with donors to support gender mainstreaming in Palau.

7. Traditional institutions

Women are landowners, traditional decision-makers, and traditionally influential in resolving conflicts. Repeated reference was made to these traditional roles of women, even though many of the roles have changed. The strong matrilineal culture of Palau was frequently mentioned as a support mechanism to gender mainstreaming. Traditional institutions are adept at promoting awareness at the community level, in facilitating advocacy initiatives and in creating a demand for government to become gender responsive. It was repeatedly noted that the most resistance to gender equality is likely to be found at the higher political levels. However, a number of interviewees indicated that, while providing politicians with gender awareness training might be useful, it would likely be more effective to strengthen

advocacy and awareness at national and community levels, and strengthen alliances among NGOs and women's organizations that have behind-the-scenes influence on politicians.

a. Recommendations

- (1) Use traditional institutions as effective levers of gender equality to do the following:
 - a) maximize women's traditionally strong and respected roles;
 - b) mobilize support for integrating gender and women's human rights into the modern context of governance and development; and
 - c) encourage the Gender Division to use accessible, culturally-contextualized terminology in discussions on gender mainstreaming.

VII. POTENTIAL STRATEGIC APPROACHES

Potential starting points for increasing Palau's capacity to mainstream gender and women's human rights in an effective and sustainable way are listed below.

1. Capacity development and strengthening networks

BoAG has some expertise to effectively mainstream gender into the work of other government departments; however only one government staff person is dedicated full time to women's issues, with limited technical capacity and financial resources.

a. Recommendations

- (1) National Congress to appropriate funds for the Gender Division to hire a chief to coordinate gender mainstreaming and program operations.
- (2) Create a Resource Center, to which all women have access, which can provide government assistance that is mandated for the Gender Division.
- (2) BoAG and the Human Rights Committee to combine forces.
- (3) Build on the relationships between these groups through a gender mainstreaming alliance that incorporates ongoing work of NGOs and women's groups. This alliance can act as the springboard to develop Palau's gender policy. The CRC Committee is multi-sectoral and can enable more cross-sectoral advocacy on gender issues and mainstreaming strategies.
- (4) Build more technical capacity to mainstream gender across the ministries through regular workshops, and by developing local educational modules for gender mainstreaming.
- (5) Work closely with local experts to implement gender mainstreaming.

2. Development of a national gender policy

Technical assistance is available regionally and internationally to assist Palau to develop a national gender policy that addresses key priority thematic areas for women, supports gender and the human rights of women, and mainstreams gender as a strategy. This assistance will support the work of BoAG and the CRC Committee to enable more strategic approaches to gender-related work in Palau. The Sustainable Land Management Policy has gender as a key component.

a. Recommendations

- (1) Develop a strategy within the Gender Division of MCCA to establish a working group for gender policy development.
- (2) Conduct a policy review.
- (3) Conduct a literature review of gender-related issues and initiatives in Palau.
- (4) Present the findings of this stocktake report to key stakeholders and use it as a basis for a gender policy.

- (5) Aim to include a gender component in all national policies that builds on each ministerial vision and/or mission statement, and include specific actions to mainstream gender in each ministry.

3. Gender statistics

Specific gender indicators and trends have been developed at MOH that could be extended to other sectors to build up an ongoing gender statistics initiative. The gender statistics work will involve a process of compiling key gender indicators in one comprehensive framework, developing user-friendly 'situation of women' statistical reports, conducting policy analyses based on the priority indicators with relevant government agencies, and collaboratively developing policy responses. The 2012 Statistical Yearbook produced by the Ministry of Finance provides data from the Social Security System that includes both foreign and local labor and can be sex disaggregated. The 2005 Ministry of Education's Statistical Yearbook provides sex disaggregated data.

a. Recommendations

- (1) The Bureau of Labor/Human Resources and the Office of Statistics under the Bureau of Budget and Planning should improve their collection of sex-disaggregated data, consolidate their separate databases, and extend collection to other sectors.
- (2) Produce annual 'situation of women' statistical reports.
- (3) Ensure that ministerial annual reports include sex-disaggregated data and analysis, to track progress in gender mainstreaming.
- (4) Statisticians should have regular training in database management and analysis, and reporting on sex disaggregated data.

4. Toolkit development

There are limited tools or systems in place to assist government in mainstreaming gender and women's human rights.

a. Recommendations

- (1) The Gender Division should develop a culturally sensitive toolkit that covers global, regional, national, and community initiatives and specific sector gender mainstreaming initiatives and programs.
- (2) The toolkit should include user-friendly handbooks that:
 - a) explain how to develop a gender mainstreaming social campaign;
 - b) explain how to establish networks;
 - c) list all traditional groups, NGOs, and professionals dealing with gender-related issues with their contact information and activities,
 - d) explain how to measure progress in mainstreaming;

- e) explain how to use analytic tools, such as socio-economic surveys (e.g. IUCN socio-economic survey for marine protected areas);³⁷ and
 - f) includes a trend analysis of gender disaggregated data from past censuses and surveys.
- (3) Use the developed toolkit for vigorous gender awareness work and capacity building at all levels of government.
 - (4) Establish a clear process to review the impact of the toolkit, including results achieved and feedback from those using the toolkit over at least five years.

5. Organize a donors' meeting

Technical assistance could be provided for a donors' meeting, at which all development partners and donors can discuss the various areas of involvement, areas of overlap and how best to improve the provision of assistance to ensure measurable outcomes for gender work in Palau. A coordinated approach and a planning mechanism will ensure maximization of external assistance to Palau's work on gender equality and women's human rights.

a. Recommendations

- (1) MCCA, BoAG and the Gender Division should establish a working relationship with the Grants Coordinator in the Office of the President and request timely notices of potential donors on islands, and opportunities for round table discussions on gender mainstreaming through all the ministries.
- (2) Set up national and regional round table discussions with donors that are country driven.

6. Establishing gender focal points in all ministries

Given the limitation in funding allocation to BoAG and MCCA for gender-related work, an alternative is to have gender focal points or gender champions in all key ministries, supported by targeted training and capacity building for technical staff. This expertise could result in the development of a pool of resource persons to undertake continuous gender mainstreaming, gender awareness and gender capacity building work.

a. Recommendations

- (1) Develop a terms of reference for gender focal points by the Gender Division.
- (2) Develop a sustainable financing mechanism to retain a focal point within each ministry
- (3) Conduct regular training using the gender toolkit for the focal points on data collection, analysis and reporting.

³⁷ Pomeroy et al 2004. How is your MPA doing? A Guidebook of natural and social indicators for evaluating marine protected area effectiveness. Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK: IUCN. xvi + 216 pp.

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Appendix 1. People interviewed about women's roles and gender mainstreaming

1. Minister Baklai Temengil, Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs, April 29, May 22, June 20, 2013
2. Ann Singeo, former head of Gender Division, MCCA, January 27, 2011; June 20, 2013
3. Senator Uduch S. Senior, 9th Obiil era Kelulau, July 2 and August 21, 2013
4. Roberta Louch, Former Head of Division of Women Affairs, March 24, 2014
5. Nancy Wong, citizen, and former teacher at Mindszenty High School, March 20, 2014
6. Dr Isebong Asang, March 20, 2014
7. Pia Morei, Director Belau National Museum, February 15, 2014
8. Dr Mareva Lechat Kitalong, Senate Legal Clerk, pers. comm., March 15, 2014
9. Tarita Holm, Sustainable Solutions, March 24, 2014
10. Minister Ngirmang, Ministry of Health, May 15, 2013
11. Director Wenty, Ministry of Education, May 15, 2013
12. Director Aquon, Ministry of Education, May 29, 2013
13. Philom Temengil, Consultant and women's advocate, August 21, 2013; March 24, 2014
14. Umerang A. Imetengel, Ministry of Health, October 11, 2013
15. Tua Tmetuchl, President of Didil Belau Inc., January 27, 2011
16. Sandra Pierantozzi, Former Vice President, Senator, Minister of Administration, Health and State, January 19, 2011
17. Senator Kathy Kesolei, 8th and 9th Obiil era Kelulau, January 25, 2011
18. Former President Johnson Toribiong, February 24, 2011
19. Bedbii Chokai Principal, Belau Modekngei School, February 28, 2011
20. Kiblas Soaladaob Coordinator, Global Environment Fund Small Grants Office, January 21, 2010

Appendix 2. Participants in focus group meetings and their contact details


Inception meeting, 9 May 2013

1. Minister Baklai Temengil, Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs
2. Dr Isebong Asang, Instructor, Palau Community College, 488–2700 587–3340
3. Dr Sylvia Osarch, Ministry of Health, National Hospital Outreach Program for the Home-Bound
4. Tina Rehuher-Marugg, former Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs, imuul@palaunet.com, Risong Tarkong, 778–3840
5. Holly Yamada, HollyYamada@palaumos.net, h.yamada.lmt@gmail.com
6. Hila Asanuma, Chief of Division of Multilateral Affairs, Bureau of Foreign Affairs
7. Sharon Sakuma, Country Development Manager, UN Joint Presence, Palau
8. Goretti Masayos
9. Roberta Louch, Ekei Women's Association
10. Ann Singeo, annsingeo@gmail.com
11. Nancy Wong, Mindszenty High School, 488–8025, pacific@palaunet.com
12. Elicita Morei, former principal, Mindszenty High School
13. Uroi Salii, uroi.salii@gmail.com
14. Lolita Gibbons-Decherong, Program Manager, Conservation and Protected Areas for PCS Conservation Society, gibbonsdecherong@palaupreservation.org
15. Kiblas Soaladaob, National Coordinator, GEF Small Grants Office, kiblas.soaladaob@gmail.com, kiblass@unops.org
16. Frida Delmau, Palau Housing Authority
17. Philom Temengil, consultant and women's advocate, ptemengil@gmail.com
18. Tarita Holm, Consultant on Climate Change Policy, Office of Environmental Response and Coordination, tarita@palaunet.com
19. Madelsar Ngiraingas, Coordinator of PACC project, Madelsar.ngiraingas@gmail.com
20. Laura Ierago, former Governor of Sonsorol, lauraimiles14@gmail.com

21. Surech Hideyos, surech.mcro@gmail.com
22. Umai Basilius, Policy and Planning Programs Manager, Palau Conservation Society
23. Risong Tarkong, 779-3840, rtarkong@gmail.com
24. Ann Kitalong, The Environment, Inc., kitalong@palaunet.com

Second meeting, 4 March 2014

1. Risong Tarkong, 779-3840, rtarkong@gmail.com
2. Hila Asanuma, Ministry of State, 767-2490, hasanuma@palaumos.net
3. Minister Baklai Temengil, MCCA
4. Nancy Wong, citizen, 488-8025, pacific@palaunet
5. Pia Morei, Director Belau National Museum, 779-6507, ulekdubs@palaunet.com
6. Charlene Mersai, 767-8681, charmairsai@gmail.com
7. Kiblas Soaladaob, kiblas.soaladaob@gmail.com, kiblass@unops.org
8. Sharon Sakuma, UNDP Office, 488-7270, sharon.sakuma@gmail.com
9. Tarita Holm, Office of Environmental Response and Coordination (OERC), 488-8287
tarita@palaunet.com
10. Dilmei Olkeriil, 775-3350, dilmei@palaunet.com
11. Sylvia Kloulubak, Bureau of Arts and Culture, 488-3361, skloulubak@yahoo.com
12. Sunny Ngirmang, Bureau of Arts and Culture, 488-3361, bac_reg@palaunet.com
13. Calvin Emesiochel, Bureau of Arts and Culture, 488-3361, bac_arch@palaunet.com
14. Erbai Xavier Matsutaro , OERC 767-8681, erbai.oerc@palaunet.com
15. Kloudil Singeo, PhD candidate, University of Hawaii, 778-5512 kloudil@hawaii.edu
16. Ann Kitalong, Project Manager, The Environment Inc./Curator for BNM Herbarium, Belau National Museum, 778-6152 kitalong@palaunet.com



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