

Republic of Palau National Report

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2013

The Republic of Palau has met or nearly accomplished most of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals. As a leader in sustainable development and conservation, Palau is committed to work towards universal and affordable education and health; clean water, air and sea; ample supply of drinking water and local foods within healthy ecosystems. There is a rising concern for the impacts of Climate Change to the well being of the community. Homes, food and marine ecosystems were lost during Typhoon Bopha. There is concern for increasing GHG emissions and Palau acknowledges the need to mitigate GHG emission with clean energy options for infrastructure and transport. Non- communicable diseases are a major concern and a concerted effort is being made to combat NCDs through healthy diet and exercise. Palau is working towards a shared vision in its planning and budgeting process and invites the global community to support priorities sent form by the nation to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

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I. Introduction

In 2000, the Republic of Palau joined the international community in adopting the UN Millennium Declaration.¹ The Declaration affirms the world's commitment to six fundamental values- freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, and respect for nature and shared responsibility for social and economic development. Millennium Development Goals were : (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) Achieve universal Primary Education; (3) Promote gender equality and empower women; (4) Reduce child mortality; (5) Improve maternal health; (6) Combat HIV/AIDs, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases; (7) Ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) Develop a global partnership. The definition of sustainable development was as follows: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." A proposed new definition of Sustainable Development is being proposed for post 2015 as follows:

"Development that meets the needs of the present while safeguarding Earth's life-support system, on which the welfare of current and future generations depends."²

Humans are transforming the planet in ways that could undermine any development gains. Research shows that the stable functioning of Earth systems – including the atmosphere, oceans, forests, waterways, biodiversity and biogeochemical cycles – is a prerequisite for a thriving global society. None of this is possible without changes to the economic playing field. National policies should, like carbon pricing, place a value on natural capital and a cost on unsustainable actions. International governance of the global commons should be strengthened (i.e. binding agreements on climate change, halting the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services and by addressing other sustainability concerns. Newly proposed New Comprehensive Millennium Development Goals for 2030 are as follows:

(1) Thriving lives and livelihoods. End poverty and improve wellbeing through access to education, employment and information, better health and housing. It should include targets on clean air that build on World Health Organization guidelines for pollutants such as [black carbon](#)

(2) Sustainable food security. The MDG hunger target should be extended and targets added to limit nitrogen and phosphorus use in agriculture; phosphorus flow to the oceans should not exceed 10mt/y; and phosphorus runoff to lakes and rivers should halve by 2030.

(3) Sustainable water security. Achieve universal access to clean water and basic sanitation. This would contribute to MDG health targets, restrict global water runoff to less than 4,000 cubic km/y and limit volumes withdrawn from river basins to no more than 50-80% of mean annual flow.

(4) Universal clean energy. Improve affordable access to clean energy that minimizes local pollution and health impacts and mitigates global warming. This contributes to the UN commitment to sustainable energy for all, and addresses MDG targets on education, gender equity and health.

(5) Healthy and productive ecosystems. Sustain biodiversity and ecosystem services through better management, valuation, measurement, conservation and restoration. Extinctions should not exceed 10

¹ Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly , September 8, 2000

² Guardian.co.uk Copyright (c) Guardian News and Media Limited. 2013 Registered in England and Wales No. 908396 Registered office: PO Box 68164, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1P 2AP

times the natural background rate. At least 70% of species in any ecosystem and 70% of forests should be retained.

(6) Governance for sustainable societies. Transform governance and institutions at all levels to address the other five sustainable development goals. This would build on MDG partnerships and incorporate environmental and social targets into global trade, investment and finance. Subsidies on fossil fuels and policies that support unsustainable agricultural and fisheries practices should be eliminated by 2020.

This Report is Palau's second formal status report on the Millennium Development Goals. This Report is based upon the 2008 MDG Initial Status Report³ and the 2005 national Assessment report prepared for the Barbados Program of Action +10 Review.⁴ The report is divided into six chapters, one for each of the proposed new MDG. Each chapter presents an overview and the proceeds to summarize progress against the targets and indicators selected by the international community to monitor. These targets and indicators are reorganized under the newly proposed MDG for 2030 as shown in Appendix 2

Constraints

Palau is subject to economic uncertainties with a tourism driven economy that can be extremely volatile and has high dependency on ODA and imported foods. Climate Change impacts from Typhoon Bopha tapped budget funds earmarked for other purposes and recovery is still underway. Palau needs to spend less, save more and prioritize and support private sector growth through transparent land use agreements and business contracts. There is high potential in tourism diversification into geo tourism and growth in the agricultural and aquaculture sector.

II. Synthesis of preparations undertaken in the country: National overview

This National Assessment was developed through a literature review and a series of facilitated meetings with multi sectoral representation; sectoral meetings; individual and small group meeting conducted during the months of April and May 2013. Refer to Appendix 1 for consultations and participants. The focus was primarily in areas that were identified in the first assessment that need strengthening: Health-NCDs, Gender, livelihoods- poverty and employment, Food Security, Education, Finance and affordable drugs. However all targets were discussed.

III National assessment of the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the MDGs, National Development Plans, BPOA and MSI, *building on the existing reports and relevant processes*

Palau's progress to date in the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Actions (BPOA) and Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI) building upon inter alia existing reports and relevant processes (i.e. Rio+20) and post 2015 UN development agenda. These processes may include other national (i.e. national sustainable development strategy) and regional processes that are related to the BPOA/MSI. Rio+20, post -2013 development agenda and the Pacific Plan but considered in the context of BPOA and MSI (i.e. How have they advance the BPOA and MSI and what more can be done.) It should also be understood that the assessment of the MDGs is part of the post 2015 development agenda process. And identify lessons learned and the remaining gaps.

³ Ministry of Finance 2009

⁴ Ministry of Resources and Development. 2004.

Development Status

Progress

Palau has made progress toward achieving its MDG Thriving lives and livelihoods with NCD program promoting home gardens, healthy lifestyles, and renewable energy options, low interest loans for farming and fishing and energy efficient homes. Education- steps have been taken judicial and educational programs to address truancy and drop out with counseling and mentoring programs⁵- NCD programs addressing behavior and mental health to track problems and prioritize areas to address- i.e. tobacco use. Currently a gender policy is under development and WEB organized to address gender issues- farming programs FAO- help women to market - Cases of HIV and AIDS down to one. NCD- starting to have active programs to reduce – some statistics starting to show a slight decrease. In providing access to affordable essential drugs through the implementation of the Health Care Fund that includes prescriptive drugs. The HCF is equitable to all who contribute and can be transferred to family members who cannot contribute. Palau continues to progress towards a more open, rule based predictable non- discriminatory trading and financial system through participation in PIF Peer Review, active membership with IMF and lender from ADB.

New MDG 1: Thriving lives and livelihoods

MDG 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1: Between 1990 and 2015, halve the proportion of people living below the national poverty line

In 2006, 18% of the households and 25% of individuals lived below the basic needs poverty line (Abbott 2006). So our goal is to half that by 2015 to 9% of the households and 12.5% of the individuals. Have we? No monitoring system based upon sentinel data generated annually or quarterly. There was no accounting for local compensation for services (i.e. food from customary events for services rendered).

Target 2: Achieve full and productive employment for all including women and young people

The mean population growth for the Palauan population is 0.28 (sd=1.1) therefore the change in growth is not significant. However from 2005 and 2012 the Palauan population dropped from 14, 438 to 12, 814 or 1,624 with a negative growth of -1.7%, which is the lowest growth rate since 1986. Refer to Appendix 3. The Labor force dropped by Employment has slightly decreased in both the public(-0.3%) and private (-1.0%)sector; self employed worked has increased by 2.6%; and working age people who are not in labor force increased by 1% since 2005. Those who are not in the formal labor force represent those who have informal employment (i.e. caretakers, farmers, fishers).

Target 3: Between 1990 and 2015, halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

An estimated 4, 939 individuals were affected by poverty of which 1, 555 (31%) were children (2008 Poverty Analysis Report). The MDG framework was integrated into the national development agenda as a strategy towards eradicating poverty. The 2008 MDG Report was used as a policy informing tool to implement measures to address the goals and targets. There are on average 0-2 underweight children a year. Malnutrition is widespread and manifested by poor food choices, overweight, obesity resulting in ill health and pre mature mortality. A 2006 school health survey found 35% of children were either over weight or at risk (Ministry of Health 2006). The Ministry of Health reports that 55% of adults are overweight (MOH 2007).

⁵ Sinto Soalablai pers.comm. May 15, 2013

Existing Policies: free public school ages 1-12, subsidies of essential utilities and health care, tax-free important of drugs and essential utilities. Minimum Wage Law passed by Senate in 2013. The Ministry of Education has developed a policy to ban Unhealthy food in Schools 2013

MDG 2: Achieve universal education

Target 1: By 2015, all children (boys and girls) will complete a full course of primary (and secondary) education

Statistics from the Ministry of Education for the Public Elementary Schools indicate on average 84% (sd=6%) of the students complete their elementary education in eight consecutive years (Appendix 4) . In 2012 there was a slight downward trend but not significant. The Ministry of Education data for high school students indicate that on average 51% (sd=5%) of the students complete their high school education in four consecutive years. In 2012 there was a slight downward trend but not significant (Appendix 5) Over 90% of all students in public school eventually finish high school (Ray Mechol, pers. comm. 2013. Many teachers with associate degrees attained their bachelor degrees increased from 17 or 7% in 2010-201 to 54 or 23% in 2012-2013 (Appendix 6; pers. comm. Ray Mechol).

Literacy-An assumption in previous reporting is that a person is literate if he or she receives 4 years of education. In previous reports, adult literacy is rated at 99.9%⁶. The Ministry of Education standard annual testing of the public school children test score results indication that 70.5% of students are passing English, 65% are passing math, 80. 2% are passing Palauan; 64.7% are passing Science and 71.4% are passing Social Studies. These results show a need to further develop Palau's programs for teacher training in all subject areas, especially science and math.

Palau Community College-Palau Community College began as a trade school in early 1927. In 1969 it became a 2 year post secondary vocational/technical school. The PCC has awarded degrees and certificates to 4, 088 students between 1971 to 2013. Through an extension program with San Diego State University (2003-2011), 122 students have received their Bachelor and Masters Degrees. The School of Public Health (2006) awarded 122 diplomas and certificates. The PCC Continuing Education (1993-2012) has awarded 9,595 certificates. The PCC –Cooperative Research and Extension (2005-2013) has awarded 1, 797 certificates. The Maintenance Assistance Program (1995-2013) has awarded 2,976 certificates.⁷

MOH Education and Training Center -WHO declared 2006-2015 as the Decade of Human Resources for Health, while PIHOA made Human Resource of Health (HRH) as strategic priority which culminated in the Nahlap Resolution which laid down the framework for addressing HRH in the region. The Ministry of Health 2010 Human Resource for Health Action Plan served as a guideline to develop the MOH Education and Training Center (College of Health) coordinate all HRH education and training development and integrate training outside of the MOH. The purpose is to improve health outcome as the product of the effort of the whole system. The College of Health will have four different components: (1) Development of Current Workforce (2) Community Health Education Extension (3) Platform for the development of credited curriculum to be recommended to the Palau Community College and (4) Ministry of Education Health Education Extension for Teachers and Students

MDG 3 Promote gender equality and empower women

Target 1: Eliminate gender disparity in education

There is no significant disparity between sexes in education the public and private elementary and secondary schools as the ratio of female to male studies has been very similar. There is a trend in towards less females from 2003-2005 (0.96), 2005-2010 (0.94) and 2010-2013 (0.92). The ratio of female to male

⁶ Palau Statistics (<http://www.spc.int/prism>).

⁷ Tia Belau Volume 22, Issue 41 May 23 2013

students show there is a tendency to have more males than females in the public schools (4% more males) compared to the private schools (2% more females). Refer to Appendix 7.

Target 2: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women in economic, political and all other spheres of life

The two laws discriminate against married women; one with respect to rape and the other in respect to inheritance in absence of will lands held in fee simple shall be inherited by oldest legitimate living male have not been revoked. However, proposed revised laws are in progress. No new statistics are available on mean salaries of men and women.

Gender Policy-During 2013, the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs began consultations towards the development of a Gender Policy in Palau began with an inception meeting to discuss issues. The top issues were (1) elderly care and home bound care; (2) human trafficking; (3) abuse of women; (4) more representation in politics and top decision making positions and sports (i.e. the Olympic committee); and (5) human rights. Gender was considered to mean both men and women in balanced roles in society.

MDG 8 Target 2: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs

The Healthcare Fund -Healthcare financing reform began in 1995 and was enacted by Congress and the President in 2010.⁸ The Healthcare Fund began operation in 2010 when employers were mandated to withhold contributions; benefit payments commenced in 2011. The National Health Care Financing Act (RPPL No. 8-14) initial plan is based on two objectives (1) improve access to affordable medical care for all Palauans and for foreigners working in Palau, and (2) to address the problem of chronic source constraints at Belau National Hospital and to achieve these two objectives in a fiscally sustainable manner without increasing appropriations under the national budget. This Act is made up of two components, the Medical Savings Account and the National Health Insurance. (Jean-Claude Hennicot, 2010).

The Medical Savings Account -The Medical Savings Account is financed from employee's contributions of 2.5% gross earnings and is specifically used for the payment of medical expense by the account holders, their dependents and designated beneficiaries. Individuals with Medical Savings account can use the accumulated 2.5% deductions to pay for outpatient services and prescribed medication at Belau National Hospital (BNH), all dispensaries under MOH, and participating private clinics. Medical Savings Account can be used to pay for private health insurance premiums. Only permanently departing foreigners are eligible to receive any unused MSA balance. Refer to Appendix 8.

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