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RMI 2006 COMMUNITY SURVEY

Key Findings: *Majuro ATOLL*

Basic Demographics

- Majuro is home to nearly half of the entire Marshall Islands, continues to see rapid growth (with a seven-fold increase in its population from 1958 to 1999) and a 2006 population estimate of some 28,000
- The central to western areas of the main island of Majuro have seen rapid residential development in recent years
- Since the last census, in addition to domestic migrants from other atolls, Majuro has also seen a significant influx of at least several hundred Asian migrants
- Median age on Majuro has increased from 19 to around 21 from 1999 to 2006
- Majuro has a steadily aging population structure, but still has nearly 40 percent of its population below the age of 15
- Majuro is the highest receiving area of both domestic and international migrants, with some 6,209 persons in the 1999 census having resided elsewhere (in RMI and abroad) before coming to Majuro
- Majuro also serves as a large sending area for international migrants to the US
- Majuro's dependency ratio of .64 was the lowest among the surveyed areas

Household Characteristics

- Majuro's household size of 7.5 persons was lower than Ebeye's and Eniburr's but higher than the other surveyed areas
- Delap had the most crowded households, averaging 8.6 persons
- Majuro's home ownership rate was 87 percent, similar to the overall rate for all areas surveyed
- The majority of households made no payments on their residence buildings, while 15 percent made mortgage payments
- About half (51 percent) of households occupy land through permission, but in the rural areas most household land is occupied through family rights
- One quarter of households pay roof-tax payments to iroij and alaps, but this is only seen in the urban areas of Majuro
- Nearly one third (32 percent) of households make traditional eojok and ekkan contributions
- Thirty eight percent of households cook with electricity and another 38 percent cook with kerosene
- Ninety three percent of households use electricity as their means of lighting and access to electricity was high throughout all areas, urban and rural
- Seventy one percent of households had water catchments
- Almost all households (94 percent) made improvements in 2005
- Eighty percent of households had flush toilets, roughly the same as in 1999

- Almost all households in town used public dumpsters while the majority in the rural areas dumped in pits

Education

- The survey revealed school attendance rate on Majuro Atoll is 90%, above the national average of 87% in 2006. Attendance improved from the 1999.
- Aljeltak and Woja Villages had the highest attendance and Delap had the lowest attendance
- Most schools on Majuro did not average above 60% in the high school entrance test in 2005. Only Assumption Elementary, Rita Christian and Coop School had averages above 60%. The highest average school score was Assumption Elementary at 74%
- The majority of Majuro high school students who took the test, most qualified for development 1 courses
- In October 2004, MOE began testing its teachers in English proficiency. On Majuro Atoll, only Laura High School had the highest percentage of teachers passing the test at 65%. Aljeltake and Woja Elementary schools had the lowest both scoring below 2%.
- Laura High School had the highest number of teachers with BA's. Majuro Middle School had the lowest number of teachers with BA's. Majuro Middle had the highest number of teachers with AA's. Woja Elementary had the highest number of teachers with High School diploma's
- 99% of Majuro said completing 8th grade was very important
- 75% of Majuro said quality of education was good. Only 5% said it was poor
- Aljeltak and Woja villages were the highest on answering good on education quality. Rita was lowest.
- 70% said school never closed. 12% said schools closed 1-4 times a month. Main reason for closure was traditional events and no teacher
- In 2006 for 25 year olds and above completing 8th grade and above improved over 1999 and 1988 census periods
- In 2006 for 25 years olds and above completing high school and above dropped from 1999 Census, but improved from 1988 Census
- 8th grade and above completion by age group between 20's and 40's averaged between 80% and 90% for both the 2006 and 1999 Census
- There were more people obtain a high school diploma and above during the USTTPI than RMI today.

Health

- 80% said quality of hospital services was good
- 90% said they got their basic medicines from the hospital
- Only 10% got ill within the last week prior to the survey
- Aljeltak and Woja areas had the highest percentage of people that got sick
- Those who got ill, only 52% sought medical treatment
- Very few people got diarrhea, less than 5%
- Two thirds of Majuro 2 year olds had a card and immunized
- Most births on Majuro took place at the hospital
- Rita had the largest number of births by village
- Major cause of death reported by the respondents was cancer followed by heart disease
- Aljeltake and Woja areas had the highest number of cancer deaths
- The number of patients admitted declined in 2005
- Nearly a quarter of those admitted, were baby deliveries

- Majuro Atoll accounted for 70% of total births in the RMI in 2005

Economic Activity and Income

- The 2006 survey found a very low labor force participation rate (LFPR) in Majuro, at around 43 percent (meaning that nearly 60 percent of working age persons were unemployed but not looking for work)
- Unemployment on Majuro, estimated at 31 percent in 1999, remains high with an estimated range for 2006 of 25 to 39 percent (depending on the LFPR assumed)
- Only six percent of working age persons on Majuro did subsistence, higher than the rates on Ebeye and Eniburr but notably lower than the rates seen in the rural atolls
- The top-five most commonly held jobs on Majuro were: teachers (including principals), laborers, bookkeepers/cashiers, bricklayers/carpenters/construction, and protective service workers (policemen and security guards)
- About 40 percent of employed persons worked in the public sector
- Majuro's median household income of \$14,737 places it second among all seven areas surveyed, behind Ebeye (\$17,321)
- Eighty five percent of Majuro households had earnings/salary income but 12 percent of households had no workers at all

Quality of Life, Poverty and Social Problems

- Nearly one-third of Majuro households claimed that their overall quality of life has deteriorated in the past three years, closely matching the percentage (35 percent) of households that claimed they sometimes or often did not have enough to eat
- The areas with the highest percentage of households that claimed worsening quality of life were from Batkan to Woja
- Applying US poverty thresholds to Majuro families reveals that the percentage of families below the poverty line increased from 75 to 80 percent from 1998 to 2006 (with similar trends seen in Ebeye and Jaluit)
- Majuro residents identified alcohol abuse, theft, pollution, unemployment, and low wages as their top five biggest social problems, with some 71 percent of households claiming that alcohol and hard drug use is now a serious or growing problem
- In urban parts of Majuro, residents also identified overpopulation and teen pregnancy as top issues while in the rural areas lack of food came up as a key problem

Food Sources and Nutrition

- Only one in five Majuro households relied primarily on local sources of protein, with households in rural areas relying notably more on local sources than do households in urban areas
- The percentage of households in Majuro that rely primarily on local protein sources (22 percent) is much higher than the percentages seen on Ebeye and Eniburr (10 percent each) but far lower than the percentages on Wotje (84 percent), Jaluit (72 percent), Arno (100 percent) and Ailuk (98 percent)
- One third of households on Majuro rely mostly on local fruits and vegetables, again higher than the percentages seen on Ebeye and Eniburr (around 10 percent each) but far lower than the rates seen in the rural atolls (all over 75 percent)

- The most commonly grown crops on Majuro household premises were coconuts, breadfruit, nin, pandanus and bananas (these top-five crops were grown on forty percent or more of households)
- One quarter of households had chickens and pigs (around one in five households in the urban areas and one in two households in rural areas)
- Over one-third (35 percent) of Majuro households claimed that they sometimes or often did not have enough to eat at mealtimes

Gender Issues

- Sixteen percent of Majuro surveyed households had families headed by females with no husband present, an increase from 13 percent in 1998
- Among 6 to 14 year olds, females had a school attendance rate of 90 percent compared to 84 percent for males
- Adult (ages 25 or more) females and males had comparable primary completion rates at 87 and 88 percent respectively
- Forty percent of adult females finished high school or higher, compared to 51 percent of males
- Three percent of adult females completed bachelor level college or higher, compared to five percent for males
- This suggest that at higher levels of schooling, the drop-out rates for females progressively increase relative to males
- Majuro females had a labor force participation rate of only 31 percent
- The top three jobs held by Majuro females were: bookkeepers/cashiers, teachers, and cooks/waitresses/bartenders
- Majuro's full-time, year-round female workers earned \$6,400 while their male equivalents earned \$8,300
- Fourteen percent of Majuro's council seats are occupied by females as of the 2003 elections, up from 7 percent in the 1999 elections

Government Responsibilities, Responsiveness and Elections

- Households on Majuro identified education, health, and public safety as the top responsibilities of Government
- Fourteen percent of Majuro households felt that the government was not responsive to the needs and concerns of their community (lower than almost all the other areas surveyed)
- Batkan and Rairok had the highest percentage of households (28 percent) who felt that government was unresponsive
- Three-fourths of Majuro households support the idea of direct Presidential elections, slightly lower than the rate for all seven areas surveyed (82 percent)
- Eighteen percent of all votes cast for the Majuro senator race in the 2003 elections were non-regular votes (absentee, postal, confined), meaning the bulk of all votes for Majuro came from regular votes, within the atoll