Water Resources Management in the RMI: An Introduction and Overview

RMI Water Summit
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RMI-EPA
Presentation Outline

• Introduction
• Water resources in RMI
• Our major issues and challenges
• Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM): Some Key Principles
• Key questions for this Summit
Introduction

• A self-evident truth: water is a critical enabler for health, development, and wellbeing for every society, but...

• Sustainable management of water resources continues to be a major challenge for many countries

• For the RMI, a coral atoll nation, “water for life” is an understatement
Introduction

• RMI already committed to improving water resource management and has pledged to expand access to improved water and sanitation (MDGs)
• But much more can and should be done
• Adopting a more integrated approach to water management, including developing a comprehensive water/sanitation policy should be prioritized
Rainfall is generally of the shower type, however continuous rain is not uncommon.

In favorable locations some of the rainwater may accumulate in a freshwater lens accessed through wells.
Water Resources in the RMI
Water Resources in the RMI

Annual Precipitation (in)
Our Major Issues & Challenges

• We already know that:
  – While there is improving cooperation among key entities, overall water resource management could be much more integrated
  – The absence of a formal, institutionalized national water body (“National Water Apex Body”) is a weakness
  – Roles and responsibilities are fragmented and not clearly defined, and the absence of a centralized coordinating office is a weakness
Our Major Issues & Challenges

– The absence of a national water policy or plan is a weakness
– Entities with direct and indirect responsibilities for water management (and the network that connects them) need strengthening and capacity development
– We have serious challenges in dealing with major risks and threats to water resources
– We face water quantity and quality challenges
– Our water utilities face critical challenges
Our Major Issues & Challenges

– Conservation and demand-side management efforts can improve/expand
– Community level water management (e.g. Laura) need to be strengthened
– Sanitation challenges are serious, including many homes without access to improved sanitation (MDG)
– Effects of climate change are likely to be significant
– Others
IWRM: Some Key Principles

• Involvement of all key stakeholders, working within an established policy and institutional (governance) framework

• Water source conservation and protection are essential

• Is both bottom-up and top-down; management taken care of at the ‘basin’ and sub-basin and community levels
IWRM: Some Key Principles

• Coordinated, cross-sectoral, inter-disciplinary management; encompasses management of other sectors and activities (e.g. land use) that affect water resources

• Emphasizes efficiency, capacity building, and gender balance

• Takes into consideration economic, social, cultural and physical linkages
Key Questions for this Summit

• Two main objectives of Summit are:
  – to raise awareness on water/sanitation issues and challenges,
  – to identify priorities and make recommendations for a new water policy

• Some important questions to consider:
  – What are the key/priority water issues that we must focus on?
Key Questions for this Summit

– What policy, institutional, and governance arrangements need to be made to improve IWRM in the RMI?
– What sort of coordinating mechanism/office should be established? How should it be funded and staffed?
– What sort of national water apex body should be established and how should it be structured?
– How can we strengthen IWRM at the community level, such as in Laura?
Key Questions for this Summit

- What can be done to improve the effectiveness of our two main water utilities?
- How can we improve water efficiency?
- How can we improve both water supply (quantity) and quality?
- What impacts will climate change have on water resources? How can we prepare for this?
- How can we secure financial commitments and mainstream investments into the water sector?
- What can be done to improve sanitation (public system and household facilities)?
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