



National Climate Security Risk Assessment Workshops

In Kiribati, Tuvalu,
and Republic of the Marshall Islands

Kiribati Climate Security Risk Assessment Workshop

As part of the Climate Security Risk Assessment for Kiribati, a hybrid workshop with national stakeholders was held in Tarawa and Suva on May 4, 2022. Relying on desk research guided by the Weathering Risk methodology and interviews, the workshop sought to elicit insights on the country's most pressing climate security risks. Stakeholders were not only encouraged to identify risks but also to respond to them, with an eye towards demonstrating the resilience of Kiribati in the face of climate change along the way.

Pathways showcasing the interlinkages between climate risks, socio-economic factors and conflict



Threats to the blue economy

Warming waters and coastal erosion pose a threat to the livelihoods of the I-Kiribati and government revenues. Participants stressed that in addition to the loss of income is increasing food insecurity due to decreasing fish stocks, and the malnutritional effects for I-Kiribati, with more expensive and unhealthy imports. It was also noted the negative effects of government subsidies which have led to unsustainable farming practices in copra production. Participants noted the need for government to offer or support alternative livelihoods, or else they faced a crisis of faith from the population.



Climate-induced mobility

Movement of people, mostly internally, is founded on social-economic reasons, including improved education and healthcare, and employment opportunities. Climate-related security issues, however, are also contributing to mobility, such as in the case of water inaccessibility, land erosion, and impacts on food crops.

Unplanned settlements and lack of space due to movements from outer island communities to urban centers can lead to disputes on land tenure, as well as health, gender, cultural and other related issues.



Climate-related disasters

In an environment of limited resources and capacities, the implication for safety and well-being of I-Kiribati is significant. Perception of government effectiveness in times of crises is especially important in such an environment. Stakeholders strongly agreed with this link but stressed the need to distinguish between forced displacement and temporary retreat in this regard. Temporal dimensions were considered important to consider for appropriate planning.



Land loss and impacts on food, water and health security

Sea level rise, coastal erosion, and changing weather patterns were discussed, and droughts were highlighted as being especially impactful for this pathway. Participants stressed the importance of including the impact of sea level rise and coastal erosion on infrastructures, such as energy systems, residences, and water provision. With regard to land loss, pressures on outer islands are encouraging more migration to urban centers, stressing resources there and contributing to overcrowding. In the capital, social tensions are reportedly worsening as resources become stretched due to climate risks, putting pressure on families to provide more with less. These social tensions are also contributing to loss of trust in the government.



Territorial integrity

Sea-level rise threatens to change Kiribati's maritime boundaries and EEZ, putting at risk significant revenues from fisheries, already threatened due to shifting fish migratory patterns. Safeguarding the EEZ is therefore a national and regional priority. In response to the decreasing income, the government's attempts to generate new areas of income from deep sea mining and opening a large marine protected area were broadly accepted. Planned external relocation as a last resort adaptation measure is no longer part of government strategies which has shifted to focus on internal migration and disaster risk management.



Objectives

- Presenting the Weathering Risk methodology;
- Applying the methodology through workshopping Tuvalu climate security pathways;
- Applying the methodology through workshopping entry points and recommendations.



Participants

- Government officials from across different ministries, and NGO partners.
- UNDP Climate Security in the Pacific project team
- Adelphi team



Entry points

supporting stakeholders to mitigate or prevent the security implications of climate change



Securing sovereignty and territorial integrity

Strengthening regional and global cooperation to protect boundaries was stressed as critical. In an ongoing process, the government is trying to resolve its boundaries and thus EEZ with a neighboring country. Participants mentioned the need of in-person dialogues with regional stakeholders. In addition, technical support in terms of remote sensing to monitor and protect boundaries against illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, was also highlighted. If external relocation becomes necessary as a last resort measure, it is crucial to strengthen international cooperation, in particular frameworks and policies that protect I-Kiribati sovereignty and culture. However, the immediate focus should be on internal migration and relocation.



Strengthen efforts to implement the Paris Agreement

Besides reinforcing global mitigation activities by main global polluters, the need to consider climate security risks, such as water and food insecurity and related impacts on health, in adaptation efforts was stressed by participants. The inclusion of these aspects in Kiribati's NDC and the identification of related funding and opportunities for adaptation were therefore pointed out as key entry points.



Targeted inclusion and support and protection of local practice

Reviewing and improving existing adaptation strategies in consultation with relevant stakeholders, those most vulnerable such as elderly, women, people with disabilities and youth was encouraged. So were inclusive consultations with communities to avoid tensions caused by implementation of adaptation interventions and to target them to the actual needs of the I-Kiribati. Also needed are proactive communication efforts with affected communities and educational support that explains the need and long-term benefits of adaptation measures. The support of grassroots initiatives that promote innovative, climate-resilient, and small-scale projects that also provide income-generation opportunities are of great interest for local stakeholders. The cultivation of seaweed and its further use for the production of various exports products is regarded as promising venture in Kiribati and is a great way governments can support livelihood diversification.



Addressing food and water insecurities

Participants noted that water and food securities are key concerns and that implementing effective mitigation, and adaptation strategies is needed. Encouraging growing resilient crops, improvement of flood protection, installation of desalination plants and support in their maintenance, and enhancing water shortage capacities to enable fresh water supply were considered as good solutions.



Supporting capacity building and awareness around climate security

Awareness raising and training on disaster risk management, specifically for the outer islands communities in cooperation with the Island Disaster Committees (IDC), was requested. In times of disasters, ensuring equal and transparent access to disaster relief through the inclusion of third party, such as NGOs or trusted community members, was also stressed. Special attention needs to be paid to the situation of women through extra budget allocation for the IDC gender-related activities. Additional support to assess climate related security risks in relation to specific vulnerable groups but also different sectors, such as health, food and water security, energy supply and infrastructure, was also pointed out. To reach affected communities and raise awareness about climate security risks, security implications of climate change need to be communicated beyond fatalistic narratives and messages need to adapt to the specific context and experiences of people, by linking risks to real time events and offering innovative options.



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RMI Climate Security Risk Assessment Workshop

As part of the Climate Security Risk Assessment for the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), a hybrid workshop with RMI stakeholders was held in Majuro and Suva on May 9, 2022. Relying on desk research guided by the Weathering Risk methodology and interviews, the workshop sought to elicit insights on the country's most pressing climate security risks. Stakeholders were not only encouraged to identify risks but also to respond to them, with an eye towards demonstrating the resilience of RMI in the face of climate change along the way.

Pathways showcasing the interlinkages between climate risks, socio-economic factors and conflict



Threats to blue economy

The migration of tuna away from RMI's EEZ would lead to a loss of income from fishing licenses, which is a key source of government revenue. This would in turn undermine the ability of the RMI government to deliver key services, potentially causing dissatisfaction among citizens and increasing the risk of political instability. Damage to subsistence fisheries, on the other hand, threatens social cohesion by threatening livelihoods dependent on these resources.



Climate change and (forced) mobility

With mobility being a common phenomenon in RMI, internal mobility places pressure on urban centers, exacerbating the potential for crime, particularly when young people are unable to find work. Internal and external migration also leads to further vulnerability as a result of 'brain drain'. While migration can be also an adaptation strategy (e.g. remittances for resilience-building), people may face discrimination in receiving countries and experience cultural loss as a result of external migration.



Climate-related disasters

Increased climate-related disasters cause severe damage to communities, with women experiencing gender-based violence in their aftermath. How communities perceive the disaster response is key for social cohesion: perceptions of corruption can impede response and create tensions. Disasters also strain the government by directing funds away from basic service delivery and towards emergency response, management, and building forward better. Participants suggested the focus should be on the government's capacity to respond, with particular attention to vulnerable groups.



Land Loss and impacts on food, water, and health security

Environmental stressors lead to loss of land and fertile ecosystems, undermining farming, and fishing. This causes water and food insecurity, with impacts on sanitation and health. As natural resources and space become more limited, their competition between groups increases, along with livelihood insecurity and potential dissatisfaction with the government. Land loss was identified as a critical issue, leading to conflicts over land tenure. Tensions over land could also impact donor-funded land reclamation, because of questions over who could own the reclaimed land. Finally, the ongoing consequences of the nuclear testing in RMI should be included in all pathways related to land, food, and health.



Territorial integrity and statehood

There is a risk that rising sea levels lead to a change in RMI's maritime boundaries and the scope of its EEZ. This could have serious knock-on effects on revenue from oceanic fisheries. Moreover, planned relocation of whole communities could also threaten notions of statehood. Workshop participants noted that RMI has been working with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat on securing national maritime boundaries and these discussions should be taken to the United Nations. This issue could also appear in the new Compact Agreement with the US, which is currently under negotiation.



Objectives

- Presenting the Weathering Risk methodology;
- Applying the methodology through workshoping RMI climate security pathways;
- Applying the methodology through workshoping entry points and recommendations.



Participants

- IOM, key government stakeholders and civil society
- UNDP Climate Security in the Pacific project team
- Adelphi team



Entry points

supporting stakeholders to mitigate or prevent the security implications of climate change



Transparent and inclusive policymaking

There is need for national dialogue around key issues arising from adaptation, in particular between landowners and government in relation to issues about land and reclaimed land. Decision-making should be inclusive, with a seat reserved at the table for marginalized groups, in particular youth. With respect to the difficult question of maritime boundaries, legal processes should be strengthened, and external relocation should not be included in these discussions in the meantime.



Inclusion of vulnerable groups in Disaster Risk Management

Workshop participants argued that strategies are needed to ensure disaster preparedness activities reach the most vulnerable groups of Marshallese. These strategies could include outreach through social media, better integration of DRM into education, increased community visits for disaster plans and drills, and enlisting the support of faith-based organizations. Women, who are at greater risk of gender-based violence during disasters, should be involved in decision-making processes and planning. Good referral mechanisms are needed for victims of violence.



Addressing water, food, and land issues

Issues related to water and food security, as well as loss of land, were identified as some of the biggest challenges facing RMI. Workshop participants suggested that water conservation, ensuring the availability of fish and other foods on the outer islands, creating salt-resistant taro patches, and condensed replanting were top priorities. The potential to construct sea walls should also be explored, to protect crops from saltwater intrusion.



Building capacity in climate security

There is a need to develop knowledge of key climate security issues and raise awareness of climate security at all levels. For instance, the 'climate change dictionary' for RMI should be updated to provide a useful, single source to understand issues related to climate change. Information products should not over-emphasize the negative impacts of climate change, but rather focus on positive adaptation strategies being undertaken. Sector-specific climate security assessments should focus on gender, energy, migrants, and women's economic empowerment.



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Tuvalu Climate Security Risk Assessment Workshop

As part of the Climate Security Risk Assessment for Tuvalu, a hybrid workshop with Tuvalu stakeholders was held in Funafuti and Suva on May 3, 2022. Relying on desk research guided by the Weathering Risk methodology and interviews, the workshop sought to elicit insights on the country's most pressing climate security risks. Stakeholders were not only encouraged to identify risks but also respond to them, with an eye towards demonstrating the resilience of Tuvaluans in the face of climate change along the way.

Pathways showcasing the interlinkages between climate risks, socio-economic factors and conflict



Threats to the Blue Economy

Warming waters within Tuvalu's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), coastal erosion and water salinity are threatening the livelihoods of Tuvaluans and government revenues, and creating medium- to long-term negative effects on social and political stability. Economic pressure is already leading to increased inter- and intra-family tensions and can erode traditional conflict resolution social norms. These challenges are particularly affecting vulnerable communities, especially women and girls.



Climate-induced mobility

Pressures from increased natural disasters as well as personal choice factors have led to more and more movement of people, either to Funafuti, or internationally. Opportunities abound from mobility, including increased remittances, but so do risks. Overcrowding in the capital of Funafuti coupled with decreasing land availability is a key concern, as well as loss of culture and knowledge which weakens resilience. Conflicts can occur between migrant and receiving communities.



Climate-related disasters

Increased intensity and frequency of disasters is hindering the effectiveness of the government response. With limited resources and capacities, the implications for safety and well-being are significant, as disaster response threatens to remove the veneer of government effectiveness. TAC members provided examples of government attempts to decentralize relief distribution by working with island councils, and for island councils to prioritize their own before others.



Land loss

Loss of land is a critical cross-cutting issue, with consequences for livelihood, food, water, and physical security. The destabilizing effects of land loss are already threatening social cohesion, including family confrontations over land, issues between communities and the state, and overwhelmed justice systems. With less fresh water and food, health is also affected by lower fresh food consumption and increased low nutritional imports. If government response falters, especially via perceived unfairness in water distribution during drought events, that can erode trust and faith in government, leading to discontent.



Territorial integrity

Statehood and sovereignty are codified in international law, but the applicable conventions (UNCLOS and Montevideo) are not adapted for contemporary issues like climate change. Changing territories threatens to change Tuvalu's EEZ as well, putting at risk significant revenues from oceanic fisheries, already threatened due to shifting fish migratory patterns. TAC members agreed and reiterated the need to solidify baselines in their current form to protect revenues and push for revisions on how statehood and sovereignty are defined.



Objectives

- Presenting the Weathering Risk methodology;
- Applying the methodology through workshopping Tuvalu climate security pathways;
- Applying the methodology through workshopping entry points and recommendations.



Participants

- Tuvalu's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on Climate Security and Human Mobility
- UNDP Climate Security in the Pacific project team
- Adelphi team



Entry points

supporting stakeholders to mitigate or prevent the security implications of climate change



Targeted inclusion

More inclusion is paramount, including in capacity building, national policies, adaptation implementation and disaster relief and response. Several initiatives were mentioned to promote inclusion, especially of outer islands, including better early warning systems, improved internet connectivity, first aid kits, and other disaster preparedness kits. It was also noted that communities can do better in identifying and articulating their needs. Listening to those on the ground was considered important not only to ensure everyone is heard but that tailored approaches could be developed to support resilience in the future.



Capacity building and awareness around climate security

Training on disaster response to outer islanders, as well as security service providers. Better articulation of climate risks to Tuvaluans was also encouraged, especially vulnerable groups, who are often left behind in capacity building and awareness training. Adopting new communication strategies, was one proposed method in addition to encouraging training opportunities. An additional method was ensuring that all development and adaptation plans and strategies incorporate climate security concerns, especially the cross-cutting themes and trends, and that communication strategies are put in place to support their adoption nationally.



Addressing food, water and land concerns

Suggested activities include better managing water resources and infrastructure. Doing so through enacting better building codes would help, and should be extended to other areas too, including residential and commercial buildings. To avoid conflict in the future, TAC members suggested supporting better conflict resolution mechanisms at an interpersonal/familial level.



Women and girls deserve better

Given the propensity for violence against women, especially during times of high stress, such as drought or extreme disaster, more attention needs to be given to supporting women. This includes a whole host of suggested activities, from specific trainings on gender-based violence for both men and women, to refreshing and revising the national gender policy, to providing women with opportunities to voice concerns in disaster planning processes.



Support, protect and encourage local practice

TAC members reiterated the threat posed to traditional knowledge and practice as a result of climate change, whether through migration away from family and village or the reduction of certain crops or marine life. To combat these trends, TAC suggested upscaling nature-based and traditional practices which can counter against food insecurity and the advancement of climate risks. Mangrove planting, coral planting, resilient crops, and agriculture were all suggested as important steps to take.



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