

Imagine

By

2015

A Cook Islands where.....

The Cook Islands population has increased in numbers especially in the Outer Islands

The benefits of development are equally shared among all Cook Islanders

Cook Islands children do not die unnecessarily and are healthy

All Cook Islands mothers are healthy

All Cook Islands girls and boys are in schools and accessing quality education

Cook Island youth have access to alternative skills based training and development

Every Cook Islander has the opportunity for gainful and meaningful livelihoods and employment

HIV/AIDS numbers are still low and controlled

The incidence of Non-Communicable Diseases has started to reduce in the adult and youth population

*Every Cook Islander, regardless of where they live have sustained access
good quality water, shelter, sanitation, electricity, good cooking facilities and information technology*

*The Cook Islands environment is protected and environmental impact of development is reduced and
kept at a minimum*

The Cook Islands people have faith in our public and private sector institutions

Government of the Cook Islands

PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE



Kia Orana.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) are representative of the way even the smallest of nations like the Cook Islands, can play an important role in the challenge to make this Earth a better place for its inhabitants. Although the Cook Islands is not yet a member of the United Nations, I am pleased to say we have demonstrated high levels of commitment to meeting our obligations and responsibilities to the worldwide concerns of our global family.

This report constitutes the first of our documented efforts to embrace the spirit of the MDG's and place priority on meeting the stated goals and targets, which have been prescribed and endorsed by the nations of the world.

One of the greatest challenges we face, as a people and as a Government, is the navigation of our national priorities between a narrow-based economy fraught with vulnerabilities, and the need for a more equitable sharing of resources and opportunities for those of us who are disadvantaged by isolation and limited capacity.

This National Report reflects both our progress and resolve to institute improved policy and development planning for the good of all Cook Islanders. As such, this document will play an integral part in the ongoing public consultation and discussions, which have driven our forward-looking, national planning.

I wish to acknowledge and commend those responsible for preparing this report and placing it at the forefront of our policy thinking, particularly the National MDG's Working Group, the Cook Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations (CIANGO), and the United Nations Country Team of the UNDP Office in Samoa.

Kia Manuia

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Jim Marurai'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

The Honourable Jim Marurai
PRIME MINISTER

UNITED NATIONS MESSAGE



I am pleased to say that the Cook Islands is one of the better performing Small Island Development States in terms of human development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Whilst the development achievements are impressive, there are remaining concerns regarding the unequal distribution of the benefits of development and the risks to sustaining current development performance such as; small local markets, isolation from overseas markets, lack of natural resources, periodic natural disasters, declining population numbers and subsequent emerging labour force shortage and an over reliance on the tourism sector and very high costs of transactions. The significant impact of external and localized factors such as the economic crisis and subsequent high debt in the mid 1990s illustrate the vulnerability of Small Island development states like the Cook Islands to internal and external economic shocks. These risks and challenges highlight the need for the Cook Islands to continue to be vigilant about monitoring development progress and on sustaining development programmes.

It is therefore encouraging that despite having achieved or being on target to achieve most of the goals and targets of the 8 Millennium Development Goals, the Government and people of the Cook Islands are determined to improve on their current development performance and will be developing more ambitious Cook Islands Development Goals and targets in their National Sustainable Development Strategy 2006-2011 in 2006. As noted by the Prime Minister, this MDG's Report will have real value if it is considered as a basis for national discussion and a framework for national development planning, action and monitoring focused on equal development for all in the Cook Islands.

This National MDG's Report for the Cook Islands is the result of more than two years of partnership between the Government of the Cook Islands the Cook Islands Association for Non Government Organisations (CIANGO) and the Samoa United Nations Country Team on the Millennium Development Goals process in the Cook Islands. The United Nations Country Team in Samoa is pleased to have been part of the MDG's process in the Cook Islands and look forward to continuing to support the government in the implementation of programmes and strategies to achieve more ambitious development targets for the people of the Cook Islands.

Kia Manuia

Joyce Yu
UN Resident Coordinator for Operational Activities
Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In terms of national aggregates, the Cook Islands have already achieved two of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's): Goal 4 on Reducing Infant Mortality and Goal 5 on Maternal Health. With the exception of Goal 7 on environmental sustainability and an additional Goal 9 on Improving Governance, the Cook Islands is capable of achieving most of the other MDG's by the year 2015.

In general, key MDG's achievements on the main island of Rarotonga inaccurately paint national performance as overly positive when clearly the outer islands experiences suggest disparities in development outcomes between regions. Communities in the outer islands and similar pockets of communities on Rarotonga, mainly outer island migrants, are considered vulnerable and experiencing hardships due to lack of opportunities for employment and access to basic social services.

In 2001, about 6.5% of the Rarotonga population 15 years and over were unemployed, compared to 27% in the Southern Group and 35 % in the Northern Group islands, the majority of which were female. In total, the unemployed population 15 years and over doubled from 7% in 1991 to 14% in 2001 and the dependency ratio nationally increased from 76 per 100 persons in 1991 to 79 in 1996. About 38% (2001) of the total outer islands population were dependent on welfare benefits of various sorts. Income levels were about 80% higher on Rarotonga compared to the outer islands, and disparities between males and females were also significant.

About 99% of all of the school age population attend school and 1% is reported not to have attended school at any level at all. After the age of 14 and up to 18 year olds, enrolment levels start to drop from 90% to 30%. Of national concern is the growing number of young adults and school leavers without formal educational qualification and lacking the necessary skills for the local job market. Recently, the government established several vocational and trade skills training programmes under the National Department of Human Resources Development and a Department of Youth to address pressing issues facing young people in the communities.

The Cook Islands has already achieved the targeted two third reduction of under 5 year olds mortality rate from 26 per 1000 live births in 1991 to 7.7 in 2001. The infant mortality rate dropped from 31.3 infants per 1000 live births in 1991 to 9.8 in 2001.

Whilst the maternal health indicators for Cook Islands women were rated amongst the best in the region, there remain some worrying statistics. Teenage pregnancies had been on the increase in the past with a quarter of childbearing women reportedly having children during their teenage years. In general, key health issues affecting mothers and women include the relatively high incidences of cervical and breast cancers, and increasing prevalence of non-communicable disease (NCDs) such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, circulatory illnesses and their complications resulting from changing lifestyles of the Cook Islands population. NCD's are now the major cause of morbidity and mortality in the adult Cook Islands population.

There are no officially recorded cases of HIV/AIDS in the Cook Islands although there are 2 resident HIV/AIDS cases (one male, one female) in the Cook Islands. Prevention and awareness raising programmes on the modes of transmission and risks of HIV/AIDS in the Cook Islands need to be maintained and further strengthened.

Weak enforcement of health, environmental and building code regulations is a challenge for

protecting and limiting the impacts of economic activities, unsustainable land use practices, wastes, pollution, land degradation and deforestation, and poor natural resources management on the environment. There is also growing demand for fossil fuel as the economy continues to expand. Although our greenhouse gases emissions were insignificant in comparison to global outputs, the Cook Islands have one of the highest ratings for carbon dioxide gas emissions per capita, which increased from 2.15Gg² (1991) to 2.76Gg² (2001). Nationwide access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities is improving with 95% of households having access to safe drinking water, and 80% with improved sanitation facilities.

Of the total Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) given to the country in 2001, 19% went into health and education programmes, 31% for the development of the Outer Islands and 3.4% to building trade capacities. The ratio of national debt as value of GDP reduced from 81% (1998) to 69% (2001). However, net borrowing after taking into account advances in public enterprises and loan reserves is about \$74.7 million (as at June 2005), which corresponds to about 30% of GDP. During the late 1990s economic reform period, the Cook Islands established important structures to improve governance and administration in public sector institutions. Since then, government has struggled to get those and additional key governance and administration issues such as political reform, public service reform, devolution, and Commerce Commission Bill resolved or adopted.

Table 1: The Cook Islands MDG's Statusat a Glance

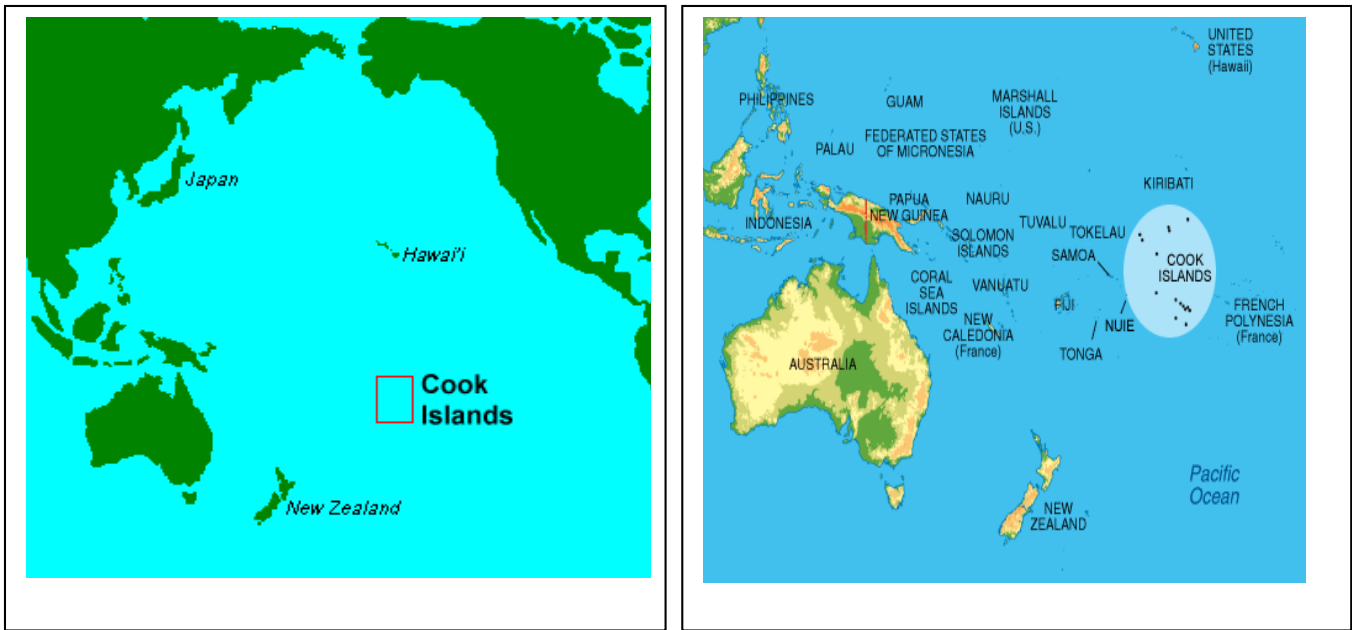
Goals	Will the Goal be Reached by 2015?				National Support			
	<i>Already Achieved</i>	<i>Probably</i>	<i>Potentially</i>	<i>Unlikely</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Weak but Improving</i>	<i>Weak</i>
1 Eradicate Extreme Poverty & Hunger	✓				✓			
2 Achieve Universal Primary Education		✓			✓			
3 Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women		✓				✓		
4 Reduce Child Mortality	✓				✓			
5 Improve Maternal Health	✓				✓			
6 Combat HIV/AIDS, NCDs and other diseases		✓				✓		
7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability			✓		✓			
8 Develop a Global Partnership for Development		✓				✓		
9 Improved Governance			✓				✓	



Table 1: continued

Goals	Targets	Will the Targets be Reached by 2015?					National Support?			
		<i>Already Achieved</i>	<i>Probably</i>	<i>Potentially</i>	<i>Unlikely</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Weak but Improving</i>	<i>Weak</i>	
1	Halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people whose income is <than 1USD a day	✓				✓				
	Halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of People who suffer from Hunger	✓				✓				
2	Ensure by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls, will be able to complete primary Schooling		✓			✓				
3	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education by 2015		✓			✓				
4	Reduce by 2/3 rd between 1990 and 2015 the under 5 mortality rate	✓				✓				
5	Reduce by ¾, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	✓				✓				
6	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	✓					✓			
	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of NCDs and other major Diseases			✓		✓				
7	Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of Environmental resources			✓			✓			
	Halve by 2015 proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water, basic sanitation		✓				✓			
	By 2020, to have achieved significant improvement in the lives of slum dwellers		✓				✓			
8	Develop an open rule based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial System			✓				✓		
	Address the special needs of LDCs: includes tariff and quota free access for least developed countries exports; enhanced program of debt relief and cancellation of bilateral debt, more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty									
	Address the special needs of landlocked countries, SIDS		✓			✓				
	Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through National and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term		✓			✓				
	In co-operation with developed countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth			✓				✓		
	In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries		✓				✓			
	In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication.		✓				✓			
9	Implement half of the Political Reform Recommendations by 2010				✓		✓			
	Achieve full financial accountability across government sectors and Parliament			✓			✓			
	Reporting procedures in place for monitoring/ evaluation of sector performances			✓		✓				
	Annual report of government's 'results based' expenditures available at public places		✓					✓		
	Complete devolution process with full Administration devolved to outer islands by 2010				✓		✓			
	Regular review of private sector performance at all levels			✓				✓		
	Code of conduct adopted for MPs, Cabinet, and all public servants and implemented under the Public Service Commission Act.				✓			✓		
	Full and independent review of the operations and performance of the whole Cook Islands Public sector and recommendations for improvement by 2008				✓				✓	

Figure 1: MAPS OF THE COOK ISLANDS



The Cook Islands consist of 15 islands scattered over some 2 million square kilometres of the Pacific Ocean. They lie in the centre of the Polynesian Triangle, flanked to the west by the Kingdom of Tonga and both Samoa and American Samoa and to the east of Tahiti and the islands of French Polynesia

ACRONYMNS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australia Agency for International Development
BPOA+10	Barbados Plan of Action + 10
CIANGO	Cook Islands Association of Non Government Organisations
CIRC	Cook Islands Red Cross
FEMM	Forum Economic Ministers Meeting
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HTTC	Hospitality and Tourism Training Centre
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IWP	International Waters Project
LDCs	Least Developing Countries
MDG's	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
NCEA	National Certificate in Education Achievement
NCW	National Council of women
NCDs	Non Communicable Diseases
NESAF	National Environment Strategic Action Framework
NSDP	National Sustainable Development Plan
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
TB	Tuberculosis
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
USP	University of the South Pacific
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

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INTRODUCTION

International MDGs Mandate

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) were formally adopted after the Millennium Declaration was signed by 189 member states of the United Nations including the Cook Islands through New Zealand, in September 2000. The 8 MDG's with its 18 targets and 48 indicators represent a consolidation of various United Nations conventions and declarations in the 1990s. This includes the Small Islands Development States framework for sustainable development, the Barbados Plan of Action and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)-Johannesburg Plan of Action. The MDG's provide a comprehensive multi-sectoral and integrated development agenda that combines the international goals and strategies for economic, social and environmental sectors into one framework.

National MDG's Framework

In addition to its international commitment to the MDG's, the Cook Islands also made regional and national commitments through various regional meetings; the Regional Social Development Workshop 2002, the Forum Economic Minister's Meeting (FEMM) 2002, the Regional MDG's Workshop in 2003 and the Regional MDG's Report meeting in 2004. At the March 2003 MDG's workshop, government and civil society representatives developed a Cook Islands National MDG's Work Plan consisting of three components;

- The National MDG's and National Planning Advocacy Program;
- The preparation of the National Cook Islands MDG's Report; and
- The integration of the MDG's into the Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP).

A specific MDG's and national planning partnership/project between the Cook Islands Government, the NGO community and the UN system in Samoa was developed to support the implementation of the Cook Islands National MDG's work plan. In November 2003, the government established a National MDG's Working Group to oversee the implementation of the work plan and the partnership/project and to report on progress.

A National Development Plan Forum held in November 2003 and subsequent forums identified 11 National strategic priority areas and 4 National Development Goals to address in the 20 Year Vision and 5-Year medium term NSDP (2006-2010). Strategic Priority Areas include:

1. Good Governance, Law and Order;
2. Macro-Economic stability and economic framework;
3. Improved Quality of Education of Human Resources;
4. Improved Health Services
5. Improved Standard of Infrastructure, utilities and transport
6. Enhance Agriculture and Outer Island Development
7. Improve Development of Marine Resources
8. Tourism Development
9. Environment and Natural Resources
10. Youth Development
11. Culture and Heritage

The inter-linkages between the 8 MDG's, the 11 strategic priority areas and the 4 National Development Goals are illustrated in Table 2. These priorities cut across the three pillars of sustainable development and demonstrate the usefulness of the MDG's framework as a tool for national planning and to monitor progress of implementing national development priorities.

Table 2: MDG's, Cook Islands Priorities and National Development Goals

MDG's	MDG's & COOK ISLAND PRIORITIES	COOK ISLANDS NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS	PILLARS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Goal 1	Poverty and Hunger	1. Well managed private sector led economic growth without compromising the environment and social harmony	Economic Development
Goal 2	Universal Primary Education	2. Well educated, healthy and productive people in all islands	Social Development
Goal 3	Gender equality & empowerment		
Goal 4	Reduce Infant Mortality Rate		
Goal 5	Improve Maternal Health		
Goal 6	HIV/AIDS, NCDs and other diseases		
Goal 7	Environmental sustainability	3. Sustainable use and management of natural resources and environment	Environmental Management
Goal 8	Partnership and development	4. Strengthened enabling environments for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law and order, good governance, accountability and transparency • Adequate infrastructure and utilities • More effective aid utilisation for national development • Resilience to natural disasters and climate change • Maintaining and cultivating cultural identity and heritage 	Economic and Social Development
Goal 9	Improving Governance		

Tailoring of MDG's

Where appropriate, some of the MDG's targets and indicators have been tailored to specifically suit and reflect the Cook Islands' situation. Major changes are the inclusion of Non-Communicable Diseases to Goal 6 and the addition of Goal 9 on Improving Governance. The addition of Goal 9 is significant and while it can be included as part of Goal 8, civil society felt it is critical that it has its own targets and indicators to emphasise the importance of good governance in national development and the achievement of the Cook Islands MDG's. It is expected that adopted indicators and measures for Goal 9 would provide the national monitoring framework to measure progress on good governance nationally.

The Cook Islands Association for Non Government Organisations (CIANGO), in collaboration with the government is spearheading the MDG's and NSDP public awareness campaigns to ensure that the MDG's reach the 'grassroots' population. This report will be translated into Cook Islands Maori to ensure greater understanding of the MDG's process nationwide. The report identifies MDG's achievement to date, and analysed the level of national support required for achieving the future goals and critical challenges facing the Cook Islands.

Community Consultations

Community consultation for the MDG's on the island of Mitiaro was a case study on the role of the community in the integration of local targets and indicators within the proposed NSDP. With the encouragement of local government leaders, a number of targets and indicators were developed (refer Annex 4).

The Mitiaro findings reflect similar outcomes with communities on the islands of Mangaia and Mauke. Priorities for Aitutaki were dominated by environmental degradation concerns due to the rapid growth of tourism development on the island.

During the MDG's and national planning community consultations, economic development priorities especially eco-tourism and agriculture were rated high in importance. Other priorities were concerns for the quality of the education system and improved health services and facilities. The need for better enforcement of legislations and concerns for the equal participation of women in national and local decision making roles were highlighted. There were also calls for the development and strengthening of partnerships at the local, national, regional and international levels between government, traditional leaders, civil society and development partners.

Table 3: Cook Islands Key Development Indicators

Indicators	1991	1996	2001	Source
Population size	18,608	19,103	18,027	2001 Census
Households	3,677	4,153	3,880	2001 Census
Average Household size	4.9	4.4	4	2001 Census
Life Expectancy at birth		62	71	MOH Statistics Bulletin 2003
Sex Ratio	108	106	107	2001 Census
Proportion of population under age 15	35.5	35.9	34.1	2001 Census
Proportion of population aged 15-59(%)	57	55.9	55.9	2001 Census
Proportion of population aged 60 and over	7.5	8.3	10	2001 Census
Overall dependency ratio	75.6	79	79	2001 Census
GDP per capita (US\$)		7,848 (NZ)	10,251(NZ)	CKI Annual Statistics Bulletin, 2004
Median age (years)	21.3	22.9	25.3	2001 Census
Net Enrolment Rate in primary Education			92.26%	Statistics Office
Ratio of girls to boys in Primary Education	98	91	89	Statistics Office
Adult (over age 15) Literacy Rate (%)	96(1980)	93(1991)	99 (1994)	UNICEF
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	31.3	23.5	9.8	MOH Statistics Bulletin, 2002
Under Five Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 Live births)	26	25.4	7.7	MOH Statistics Bulletin, 2002
Maternal Mortality Rate (per 1,000 Pop)	0	0	0	MOH Statistics Bulletin,2002
Immunisation of children < age 1 (%)		BCG -90 Dpt – 75 Measles - 72	BCG – 98 Dpt – 90 Measles – 83	MOH Statistics Bulletin 2003
Mean Age at Childbearing (years)			28.9	MOH Statistics Bulletin 2004
Supervised Delivery (%)	70%		98%	
Mean Age at Childbirth (years)		22(185)	22(80)	MOH Statistics Bulletin 2003
Total Fertility Rate	3.7	3.4	2.9	2001 Census
Teenage Fertility Rate		59/808 =73/00	47 / 000 39/656=59/000	MOH Statistics Bulletin 2003
Average age of women at first birth			22	2001 Census
Average age of women at last birth			31	2001 Census
Average age at first marriage		30.4	31.5	2001 Census
Crude Birth Rate		27.1	22	MOH Statistics Bulletin 2003
Contraceptive prevalence rate		32.9	41.8	MOH Statistics Bulletin 2003

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Geography

The Cook Islands is made up of 15 islands scattered across 1,942,500 sq km (750,000 sq miles) of the Pacific Ocean and located south east of Samoa and south west of Tahiti. The capital, Avarua, is on Rarotonga, the most populated island with 67% of the total population. Geographically, the Cook Islands is divided into two groups of islands, the Northern Group (atolls and sand cays) and the Southern Group that includes Rarotonga (volcanic and makatea islands). The scattered islands with small pockets of populations, and isolated from markets and trade opportunities makes the delivery of basic economic and social services very costly and a significant challenge.

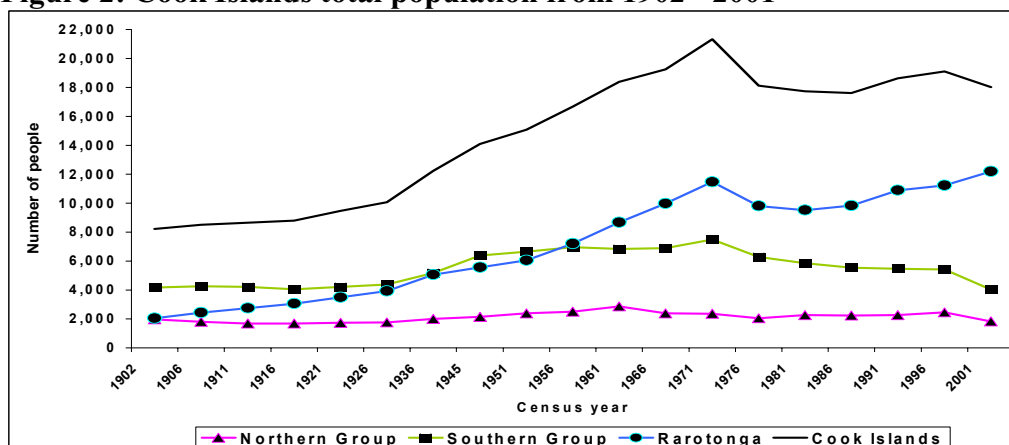
Government

The Cook Islands is a self-governing nation in free association with New Zealand. Cook Islanders hold New Zealand citizenship and have unrestricted access to reside, study, work and draw social benefits in New Zealand. The Cook Islands has a Parliament of 24 elected members (10 from Rarotonga, 14 from the outer islands). Since the 1999 general elections, there had been 5 coalition governments. The current coalition government is between the Cook Islands Party and Cook Islands First political parties. Key stakeholders see political unpredictability as a hindrance and risk to long-term national growth and economic development.

Demographic profile

The total Cook Islands population declined from its peak in 1971 of 21,322 reaching its lowest level of 17,614 in 1986. The biggest loss of population was experienced by the outer islands in particular, the Southern Group where 28% of its population; mostly between 15-24 year old age group migrated overseas between 1996 and 2001. In concert with total national population decline, the resident population has reduced dramatically by 17% (3,054 persons) between 1996 and 2001. All islands in the Northern Group experienced population loss between 1996 and 2001 with alarming rates of decline of 37% in Rakahanga and 42% in Penrhyn. Distribution wise, the number of the residents on Rarotonga increased from 57% in 1996 to 63% in 2001 as outer islands migrants settled on Rarotonga. Easy access of the Cook Islands population to New Zealand and Australia and the economic crisis in 1996 were major factors in the migratory patterns to Rarotonga and onwards to New Zealand and Australia, particularly between 1996 and 2001. There are approximately 4 times more Cook Islanders residing overseas mainly in New Zealand and Australia than the resident population in the Cook Islands.

Figure 2: Cook Islands total population from 1902 - 2001



Economic profile

The Cook Islands economy is among the better performing economies in the Pacific with an average annual growth rate in real terms of 2.8% between 1982 and 2000 (with exception of the economic crisis and reform years from 1995-1999). GDP per capita increased from NZ\$6,850 in 1996 to NZ\$11,167 in 2001. Since 2000, the annual rate of GDP growth was steady at 3.1%. Generally, the Cook Islands can be categorized as a middle-income country. Most of the economic growth has been driven by private sector developments, especially in the tourism, finance, pearl and more recently the fishing sectors. The 2005/06 National Budget Policy Statement current projections of the tourism industry receipts account for 54% of GDP. Tourism arrivals have grown from 37,779 visitors in 1987 to 87,846 in 2003 with a record increase in 2000.

Whilst the Cook Islands GDP per capita figures look impressive, the disproportionate distribution of income, uneven employment opportunities across islands and amongst males and females requires serious interventions. Although there are employment opportunities in the country, these are mainly located on Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Manihiki. As a result, some of the outer islands population do not fair well in terms of cash income due to limited income generating activities and employment

opportunities available on their islands. According to the Census of Population (2001), about 13% of the working age population were unemployed especially in the outer islands.

The Cook Islands economy is subject to various structural, geographical and demographic constraints such as; small local markets, isolation from overseas markets, inadequate infrastructure, lack of natural resources, periodic natural disasters, declining population numbers, reliance on the tourism sector, vulnerability to changes in the global economy, high external debt and high costs of transactions. Labour shortages had seen increasing reliance on imported foreign labour to work in the tourism and fisheries industries on Rarotonga and on pearl farms.

Social profile

The social indicators for the Cook Islands compared to other developing Pacific Islands countries are considered amongst the best in the region. Life expectancy is at 73 years, infant mortality rate at 9.8 per 1000 live births in 2001, down from 31.3 in 1996. The total fertility level is 3.1, while maternal deaths are a rarity with only 3 deaths registered for the period from 1985 to 2005. Average age for women at first marriage is 31.5 years and average age at first birth is 22 years. Immunization levels for children were almost 100%, while primary and secondary schools enrolment levels were in the upper 90 percentile with female students' tertiary school enrolment levels on par with male students.

Despite the impressive statistics, there were some worrying social trends such as the rapid increase in the prevalence of non-communicable diseases, declining educational achievements, low retention rates of students at secondary level, depopulation in the outer islands, limited access to basic social services and utilities in the outer islands, increasing deaths and disabilities from motor vehicle accidents, community discontent with increasing numbers of foreign workers and increasing numbers of youth committing crimes.

As a result of increase in government revenue and funding assistance from NZAID, AusAID, CIDA, and the EU since 2000, budgetary appropriations has increased for health and education sectors resulting in improvements in the quality of health and education facilities and services nationwide. Although there are remaining problems such as shortages of staff, drugs and equipment in some clinics, there is significant progress compared to declining health services and supporting structures during economic reform years in the mid 1990s.

MDG 1

Goal 1. Eradicate Poverty (Hardship) & Hunger

TARGET 1	Halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people whose income is less than 1 USD per day.				
Indicators	1991	1996	2001	Will Indicators Be met by 2015?	Source of data
Indicator 1: Proportion of population below \$1USD (PPP) per day	n.a	n.a	n.a	YES	
Indicator 2: Poverty gap ratio (incidence x depth of poverty)	n.a	n.a	n.a	YES	
Indicator 3: Share of poorest quintile in national Consumption	n.a	n.a	n.a	YES	
TARGET 2	Halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.				
Indicator 4: Prevalence of underweight Children under five years of age	<3%	10	n.a	Probably	UNICEF
Indicator 5: Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption	n.a	n.a	n.a	YES	

Status and Trends

The Cook Islands have not yet developed a national definition of poverty. Generally, the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) definition of poverty, used in the 2004 Pacific Regional MDG's Report is often used by Cook Islands government and civil society officials and is the broader definition of poverty that is used in this report.

Poverty (or hardship) is an inadequate level of sustainable human development, manifested by a lack of:

- **Access to basic services**
- **Opportunity to participate fully in socio-economic life of the community; and**
- **Adequate resources (including cash) to meet the basic needs of the household, and/or customary obligations to the extended family, village, community and/or church.**

At present, there is limited local data that can be used to derive information on the indicators of poverty in the Cook Islands. The Government of the Cook Islands is currently undertaking a national Household Expenditure Survey that will yield more detailed and accurate information on the extent and depth of poverty or hardship in the Cook Islands. In the absence of more specific poverty data, proxy indicators were used to determine the existence of hardship or poverty in the Cook Islands. These indicators include: per capita income; access and availability of basic necessities and services such as water, sanitation facilities, electricity and social welfare dependency ratios. While extreme poverty and hunger does not exist, there are pockets of communities, households and individuals living with certain levels of poverty or hardship as generally defined above.

Non-cash earners and unemployment

Sixteen percent of the total resident population 15 years and older claimed not to have any cash income in 2001. This figure has to be treated with caution as people often under report their level of income and engage in subsistence living. It is estimated that 66% of all households engage in subsistence farming and fishing with 80% of households in the Southern Group and 93% in the Northern group engaging in subsistence activities. Subsistence living often reverts to barter where trading goods for goods or services exists.

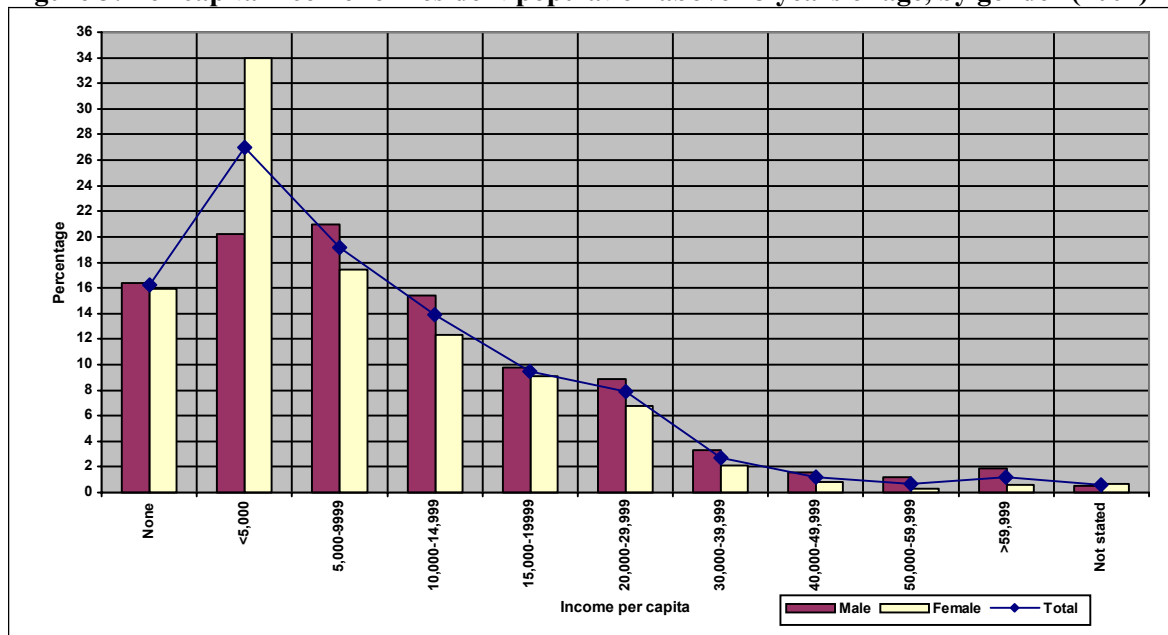
The national unemployment rate is 13% of the total labour force. The unemployment rate in Rarotonga was much lower at 7% compared to 27% and 35% in the southern and northern groups.

National unemployment levels also vary between males (12%) and females (15%). Unemployment rate for females in the Northern Group was the highest at 42%.

Income disparity between females and males

Whilst the GDP per capita income for the Cook Islands is NZD\$12,253 or about US\$9,500, this hides disparities between the island regions, gender groups and amongst the employed population as highlighted in Figure 3 and Figure 4. Males on average take home NZ\$14,121 per annum compared to the national average income of females at NZ\$10,328. More than a third of women in the labour force make less than NZ\$5,000 a year. More than 50% of women make less than NZ\$10,000 per annum compared to 41% of the male population. More than two thirds of females make less than NZ\$20,000 a year compared to 66% of males. In the Northern Group, males brought home 43% more money than their female counterparts.

Figure 3: Per capita income for resident population above 15 years of age, by gender (2001)



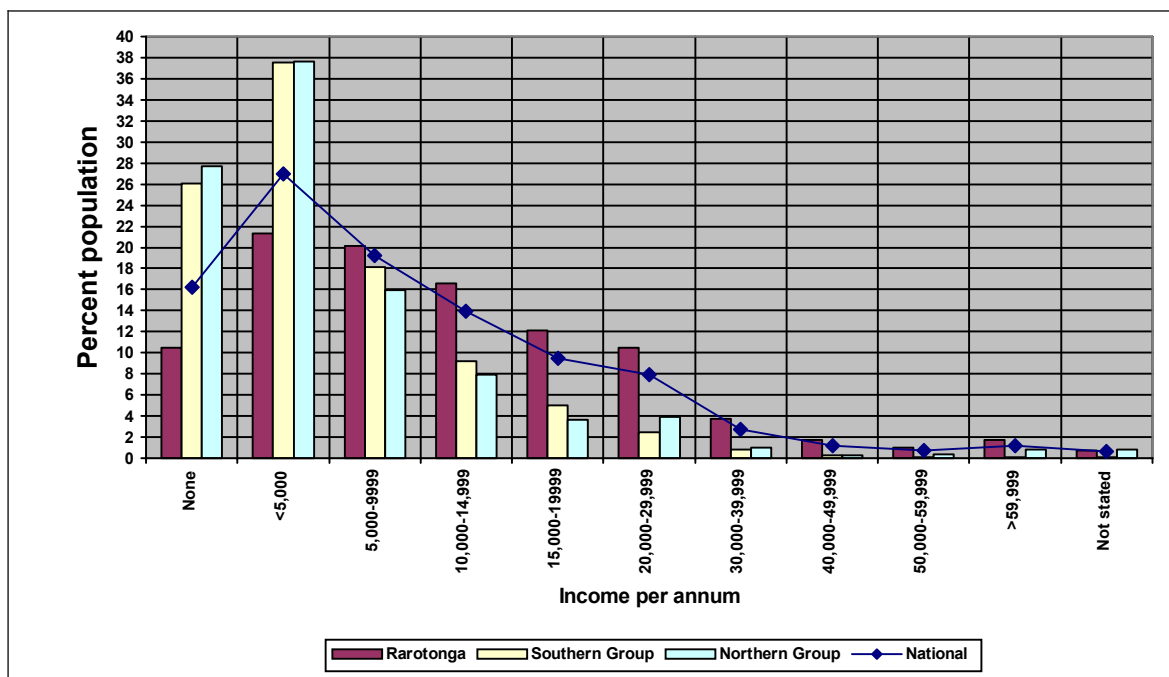
Income disparity between regions

Income disparity also exists between Rarotonga and the outer islands as highlighted in Figure 4. Except for those people earning NZ\$5,000 and below, all per capita income in Rarotonga were higher than the national per capita rates for males and females and the total population. On average, the Rarotongan population make 14% more than the national per capita income at \$14,236.

Dependency ratio

Dependency ratios increased from 75.6 per 100 persons in 1991 to 79 in 1996 and 2001. The number of recipients of welfare benefits in the outer islands is about 38% percent of the total outer islands population.. The 2001 Census reported 8% of the population in private dwellings lived in households with more than 10 persons.

Figure 4: Per capita income for resident population above 15 years of age, by region (2001)



Prevalence of underweight children

Very few infants are born underweight in the Cook Islands. In 1990 less than 3% of the infant population were below the WHO minimum weight standard. A recent health survey of Rarotonga and four outer islands found only 6% of children under weight. Of immediate concern to the Cook Islands is the rising prevalence of obesity in children and adults. The issue of obesity is further discussed in the chapter on Goal 6.

Access to safe drinking water and sanitation

It is very clear that there is disparity in access by population to quality source of water between Rarotonga (99.25%) and the outer island (87%). About 35% of population in the Northern Group islands carry or cart water to their houses from bore wells or public water tanks. This issue is further discussed in Goal 7.



Health problems related to poor access to water and sanitation are more common amongst the Northern Island population compared to the Southern Group and Rarotonga where water is more accessible. In 2001, 62% (393 cases) of all national reported cases of skin sepsis were from the Northern Group affecting 22% of the total Northern Group population. Similarly, reported diarrhoea cases in the Northern Group made up a total 34% of all reported diarrhoea cases in the Cook Islands. There is a very high incidence of skin sepsis and diarrhoea considering that the Northern Group make up only 12% of the total Cook Islands resident population.

Energy use

According to the Census 2001 report, about 1.2% of all households had no electricity at all and 79% of households used Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) for cooking. Of the 11% of households using kerosene and firewood, most were in the outer islands.



Challenges

Clearly, the statistics show disparities in indicators across regions, and amongst females and males regarding access to employment, income and basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity. The long distances between the islands and from Rarotonga, with dispersed pockets of population, poor infrastructure, coupled with diverse geological features between islands all combine to limit and constrain delivery of economic and social services in the outer islands. The cost of delivery of basic utility and social services such as water, electricity, health, education and including information communications technologies will always be high. Access to sustainable reticulated water supply in the Northern Group will always be difficult given that the islands are atolls with limited source of water besides using underground water which is often polluted and catching rain water in water tanks.

Supportive Environment

The government with the support of development partners such as NZAID, AusAID, the European Union (EU) and UNDP have initiated development programmes aimed at improving access to basic social as well as infrastructure services in the outer islands to address recognised disparities. A water project that started in 2004 and continues until 2009 is being implemented in the outer islands by OMIA. Alternative energy sources such as solar power had been adopted nationwide for lighting and water heating purposes while wind turbines are being piloted in Mangaia. Over the last 10 years, UNDP has supported the Outer Islands Devolution Program focussing on capacity building exercises. With matching funds and assistance from government, the EU has been allocating close to NZ\$1.0 million annually since 2003 to fund health and education infrastructure and services in the outer islands to redress health and education issues brought about by the economic downturn between 1996 and 1999. This year, the EU contribution is about NZ\$1.9 million.

Cook Islands Development Goals

The Government of the Cook Islands will develop a national definition for poverty (hardship) to suit the Cook Islands development context. The 2005 Household Income and Poverty Survey data and proposed 2006 National Census will be used to collect information to measure indicators 1 to 5 of Goal 1 on poverty and will be reported in the next Cook Islands MDG's Report.

MDG 2

Goal 2. Achieve Universal Primary Education

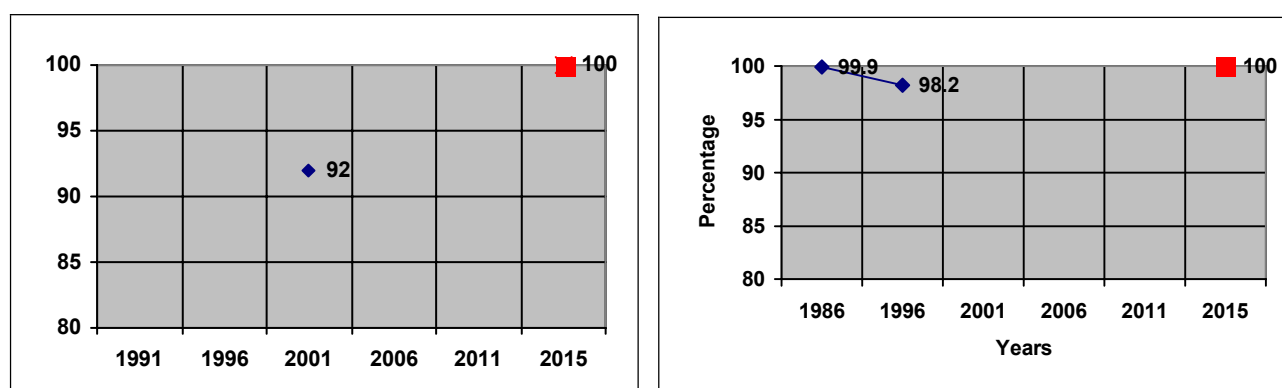
TARGET 3	Ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling				
Indicators	1991	1996	2001	Will Indicators be met by 2015?	Source of data
Indicator 6: Net enrolment ratio in Primary education	2960 (1992)	2379	92%	Yes	Cook Is Statistics Office
Indicator 7: Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5	99.9% (1986)	98.2%	99.9% (2001)	Yes	Cook Is Statistics Office
Indicator 8: Literacy rate of 15-24 year Olds	93% (all adults)	99% (all adults)		Yes	UNDP Pacific Human Development Report (1994)



Status and trends

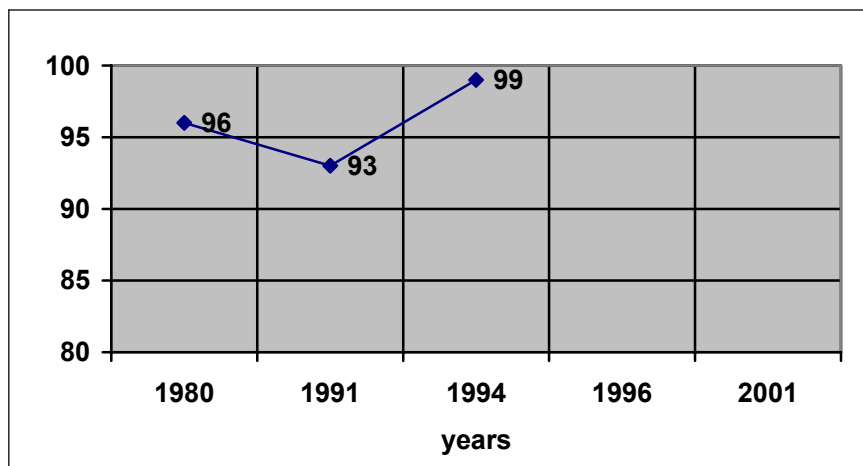
The Cook Islands Constitution recognizes the equal rights of males and females as well as the right of all children up to the age of 15 to have access to basic education. Education in the Cook Islands is compulsory and free for children from 4 to 15 years of age. This provides opportunity for access to primary (Grades 1-6) and secondary (Forms 6-7) level of education for all. Forms 6 and 7 schooling is neither free nor compulsory but fees are subsidised by the Government. Although government policy is for free and compulsory primary education, school attendance is not entirely free and the cost of putting children through school such as transportation, school uniforms, lunch and other school fees can be very expensive. Figures 5 and 6 shows primary school enrolment and completion in the Cook Islands to be very high and the primary completion rate is also very high although falling between 1986 and 1996.

Figure 6: Primary level completion rate



According to the 2004 Education Statistical Bulletin, 99% of all of the school age population attended school and about 1% did not attend any schooling at all. There was low retention rate of secondary schools students after the age of 14, where enrolment levels dropped from 90% to 30% by the age of 18. While more females nationally and in all regions completed primary schooling and attended secondary school than males, the rate of secondary schooling completion rate was higher for males at 4.8% than 4.4% of females. The completion rates for males and females in the outer islands were much lower (less than 2%) than the national secondary school completion rate. Between 1994 and 2004, 64 students graduated from university studies in various fields and are now in the workforce. Although small in numbers, there is a steady trickle of students graduating from tertiary education institutions and returning to the Cook Islands.

Figure 7: Literacy levels of all adults, 1980, 1991 and 1994



Source: 2004 Education Statistical Bulletin,

There are no official national figures for literacy rate for 15-24 year olds as there is no agreed or accepted method of measuring literacy for the Cook Islands.¹ No reliable survey has been done on literacy in the Cook Islands for all age groups, although figures from UNICEF in the 1994 UNDP Pacific Human Development Report and the 2004 Ministry of Education Statistical Bulletin indicated literacy levels in the upper nineties in 1994 (Figure 7).

Challenges

According to the Ministry of Education, a full review of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education needs to be taken to assess the effectiveness of delivering its core responsibilities. The ministry suffers from spending too much attention on addressing non core outputs, such as

¹ Rongo File. (2003). *Cook Islands Status of Women Report: Cook Island National Council of Women/PACFAW*



maintenance of schools, and having to address internal school administrative concerns. This is causing ineffectiveness in the area of most concern, delivery of education. In relation to the declining level of capacity in teaching, administration, policy and planning within the ministry and the sector, training opportunities need to be provided to educators and administrators for skills enhancement. The quality of teachers and equitable opportunities for teachers to advance in their respective fields were two outstanding issues needing attention. Pay parity and equitable distribution of benefits needs to be reviewed to encourage those disadvantaged by teaching in remote schools in the outer islands.

The high drop out rates from school between ages 14 and 18 poses serious concerns although some of these students were believed to be emigrating to New Zealand to complete secondary school studies and for tertiary studies. This is supported by the high rate of emigration of 14 to 24 year olds age group in the 2001 Census. A study needs to be undertaken to determine the fate of the dropouts as the current education information system does not track progression of students after their primary and secondary schools education. This study will better identify those that have moved overseas for further education, taken on vocational training locally, or staying at home or have started working. Existing national reports and documents point to a growing number of young adults without formal educational qualifications and lacking the necessary skills for the local job market. European Union resources received for the education sector have been directed solely to all outer islands schools to upgrade facilities, equipment and for teaching materials. Although funding has increased slightly over the years, Government may need to review how funds are being spent to meet the objective of delivering education to the outer islands. It costs twice as much to provide the same educational service to an outer island child than it would for a child receiving education in Rarotonga.

Linkages also need to be established and strengthened between the formal sector of education and post secondary sector of human resource development to assist improve the standard of education for all islands. There may be an opportunity for the Cook Islands to look at establishing its own 'tertiary institution' as a means of developing higher national standards to meet human resources requirements to service both the public and private sector.

Supportive Environment

To address the emerging decline in qualifications and trade skill levels amongst the youth and school leavers, the Government has established various tertiary vocational learning institutions and programmes locally. Post secondary institutions such as the University of the South Pacific (USP) Centre in the Cook Islands, Hospitality and Tourism Training Centre (HTTC), Cook Islands Teachers Training College, Cook Islands Nursing School have provided local Cook Islanders opportunities to study and qualify with internationally recognised qualifications within their respective fields and professions. A national trade school is being established by the National Department of Human Resource Development to provide youth with opportunities in various trades, and including internships and apprenticeships training schemes in the private sector. Government agencies and private sector interests, with support from donor agencies, have been providing accredited training programmes in business administration, carpentry, plumbing, motor mechanics, electrical, hospitality and catering, information and communications technology, aquaculture and fisheries, as well as maritime. These national vocational programmes provide courses and qualifications through accreditation schemes with New Zealand, Australia and regional tertiary education institutions.

In 2002, the Cook Islands introduced the New Zealand National Certificate in Education Achievement (NCEA) to focus education on standards based assessment. This allows students to study multi level without having to repeat subjects every year. NCEA also gives students the opportunity to continue into trade/vocational training. Since the introduction of this new system, retention rates have improved slightly with more students opting to stay in school longer to complete their schooling. Currently, a 15year strategic plan is being developed for the Education and Human Resources Sector that will identify problems between the sectors and ways to address them. Both sectors were confident that this attempt to form a partnership would bring about productive measures to deal with the numbers of school dropouts each year.

Early Childhood Education is another area that both sectors are emphasizing to further improve the standards and ensure that Cook Islands children have opportunities early on in life to develop into better adults. The education sector is producing ‘dialect readers’ for all Cook Islands children within their respective regions as studies had shown, children learn faster if they are familiar with their own language and culture. Numeracy programmes are also being targeted as a key area for improvements in this exercise. The Ministry of Education is also supporting private schools through a policy of bulk funding to sustain curriculum and teaching needs. It is envisaged that Information Communication Technology will close the information gap between the outer islands and Rarotonga. As a development tool, it is useful and economical in the long run to utilize this method of service delivery to raise outer islands educational standards to be on par with that of Rarotonga schools. It should also empower administrators and students to excel in their roles, given the opportunity and readily access to information, supporting resources and services in Rarotonga.



MDG 3

Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

TARGET 4	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015.				
Indicators	1991	1996	2001	Will Indicators be met by 2015?	Source of Data
Indicator 9: Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education	98	91	89	Probably	Education Statistics Digest 2004
Indicator 10: ratio of literate women to men 15-24 year old	n.a	n.a	n.a		
Indicator 11: share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	38%	44%	45%	probably	National Census 2001, Statistics Office
Indicator 12: Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	6%	8%	8%	No	National Reports on Women

Status and Trends

Enrolment Ratios

The ratio of girls enrolled in schools generally has almost been on par with that for boys between 1991 and 2001. In 1990, 98 girls for every 100 boys were enrolled in primary school, compared to 112 girls to 100 boys in secondary education, and 86 girls to 100 boys in tertiary education. However, since 1990, the figures show a steady decline in the enrolment ratios of girls in the primary and secondary levels of education. Girls' enrolment ratios in primary levels declined from 98 per 100 boys in 1990 to 89 per 100 boys in 2003 and from 112 per 100 boys in 1991 to 94 per 100 boys in 2003 for secondary level. There needs to be more intensive efforts by government, civil society and parents to improve on current enrolment rates to be able to close the gap, and improve levels of education for girls in the Cook Islands.

Figure 8: Primary Enrolment ratio

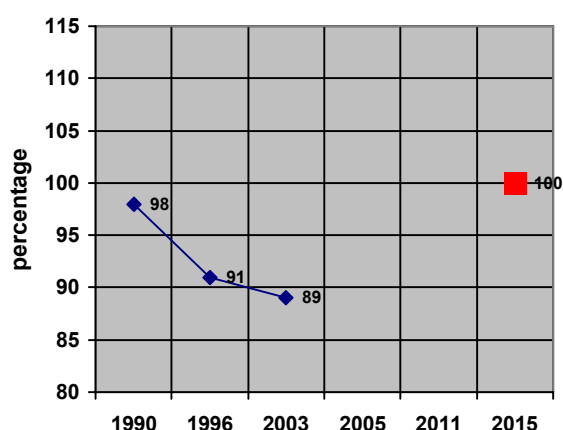
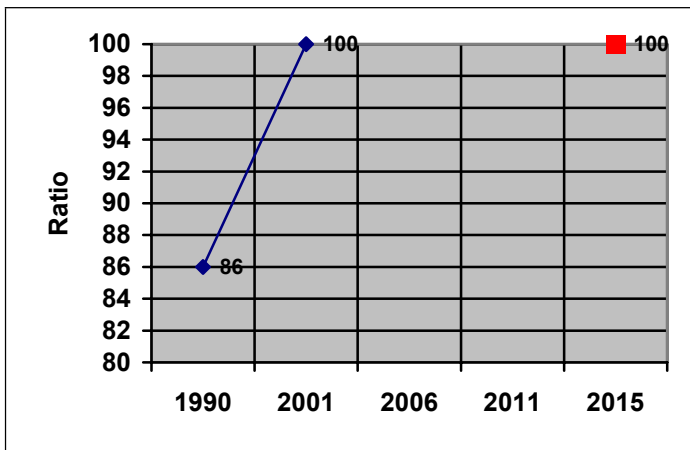


Figure 9: Secondary Enrolment Ratio



The enrolment ratio for girls in tertiary level had increased significantly from 86 per 100 boys in 1990 to a one-to-one ratio in 2001.

Figure 10: Tertiary Enrolment Ratio, 1990 and 2001



Share of women in wage employment.

The percentage of women in wage employment outside the agriculture sector has increased by 7% between 1990 and 2001. National figures show that more women are becoming self employed and creating businesses dealing in arts and crafts, food preparation and other enterprises. Technical assistance is being provided to small businesses by the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) and to new business enterprises in the outer islands through the Outer Islands Development Grant Fund, which were co-funded by NZAID and the government.

Figure 11: Share of women in wage employment in non-agricultural sector

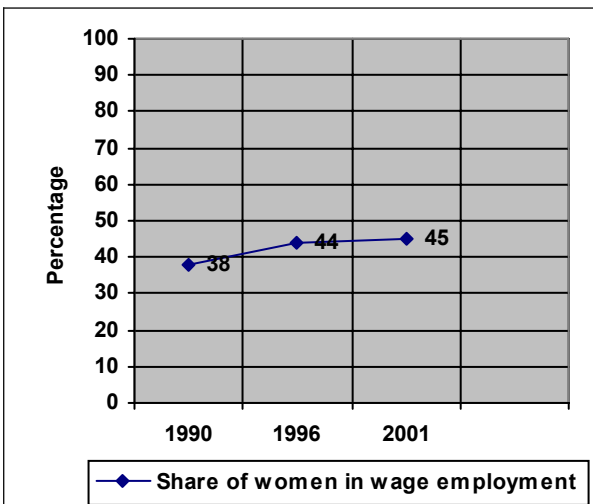
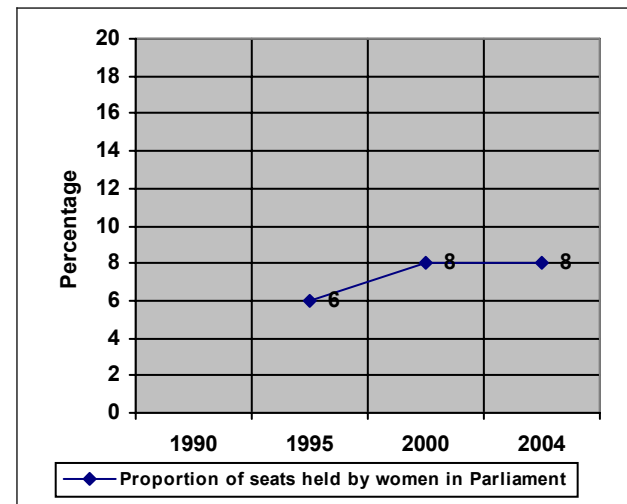


Figure 12: Proportion of seats in Parliament held by women



In 2002, the minimum hourly wage for all adult employees in the Cook Islands was set at NZ\$4.00. All public servants enjoyed equitable leave entitlements. Female public servants are entitled to six weeks paid maternity leave and males to paternity leave. There is need to strengthen national legislations and their enforcements to ensure that employees entitlements benefit all workers, including those in the private sector, especially women.

Challenges

There are several challenges in improving the status of gender equality nationally. Some of the challenges will be:

- Improving and maintaining enrolment, retention and completion rates among girls in the primary and secondary school levels
- Creating conducive environment within schools for career development (access to career counsellors)

- Incentives to be provided to parents/guardians of girls to enrol and retain them in school
- Decreasing the prevalence of teenage pregnancy by running education and awareness programmes in all schools.
- Structural and institutional policy reforms to recruit more women in decision-making roles and to enhance gender development policies at all levels of society.
- Establishment of affirmative action policies in identified and selected institutions.

Previous trends for continuous decline of female to male ratio in primary and secondary levels were attributed to families migrating to New Zealand and Australia or for teenage pregnancy. Lately however, and according to recent education sector statistics, female students are staying longer in schools at senior high school levels compared to males.

Nationally, there is a general lack of knowledge and understanding in regard to the importance of gender issues, the value of the diverse roles of women, the national policy on women and government's obligations to women under international conventions, especially the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).²

Women are still underrepresented in decision-making bodies at all levels of society. They are more likely to be making decisions in the 'social' arena than in the economic and political sphere, as was illustrated in the 2001 Gender and Development Workshop for the Pacific Platform for Action. It was revealed that most of the top three levels of Cook Islands Public Service positions are held by men, and almost all positions related to economic or political sections of government are occupied by men. Government Heads of ministries including 86% of senior management positions are dominated by males with a small percentage of less than 5% of women in senior management positions (File, 2002:10).

Participation by women in the political process had been sparse since self-governing was attained in 1965. A Political Reform Commission, publicly established in 1998 to review the Cook Islands political system, reported little support for guaranteed representation in Parliament of special interest groups such as women's organisations, even amongst women themselves, many of whom wanted women 'to make it' through the 'normal processes.'³ No study has been undertaken on why men predominate in key positions in the public service and in Parliament. There are no quota systems or affirmative action policies in place to advance women's integration and representation into key economic and political decision-making forums.

Obvious gender development programmes in the Cook Islands were focused on education and raising awareness, legal literacy, protection of human rights, law and order, good governance and participation in national development programmes. There was emphasis to incorporate gender responsiveness principles within national institutions and frameworks. These activities are driven by the Gender and Development Division (formerly Division of Women's Affairs) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Punanga Tauturu Incorporated, National Council of Women (NCW) and CIANGO, among others. Assistance has been forthcoming from development partners namely NZAID for 'gender responsive programmes' to assist in mainstreaming 'gender development' into national policies and plans. National data collection on gender development programmes needs to be coordinated.

² Gillespie, R. (2002). *Review and Evaluation of the Cook Islands National Policy on Women (1995) Against the National (1996) and Sub Regional (1998) Action Plans: A report for the Cook Islands National Council of Women.*

³ *Commission of Political Review (1998) Reforming the Political System of the Cook Islands The Report of the Commission of Political Review, Rarotonga, Government of the Cook Islands, P.39*



Representation and Decision-making

Supportive Environment

“Women’s voices have always been heard in women forums (e.g. Women’s church groups, community work that requires women’s input). Over the years though, there is a clear gap missing in national representation where the views of women don’t appear in the decision and policy making of the parliamentarians and this is what women are noticing today. Women are becoming more confident in their women leaders to take their voices to the country institutions that can make a difference. (Vaine Wichman, Member of Parliament - 2004)

There have been significant improvements in women’s access to human resource development programmes over the last six years.

Current conditions for donor funded university scholarships to New Zealand and regional institutions required that gender parity policies be applied when awarding scholarships. Additionally, capacity building and training programmes, workshops and conferences have provided opportunities to women to improve their skills and contribute to their development. However these efforts have not yet translated into anywhere near equal numbers of women in key leadership positions.

Cook Islands women have taken on an active interest in political activities in larger numbers. This

is especially evident prior and during the National Elections held in September 2004 with six women standing for Member of Parliament, three of whom stood as independent candidates after lengthy public concerns over poor Parliamentary oversight into government decisions and political “horse trading.” Women’s rights to decision-making at the highest levels of Cook Islands society have not been realised. Politics remain to a considerable extent, a male preserve.⁴ Currently two women have been elected as Members of Parliament representing 8% of the allocated seats. On the other hand, there has been an increase in the number of women administrators and councillors on local governments and island administrations in the Outer Islands.

The Cook Islands, through the New Zealand Government, ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on 10th January 1985. The Cook Islands is yet to formalise the full implementation of the convention as it holds several reservations on the application of certain provisions of the convention.

The newly established Cook Islands Business Women’s Association have been actively promoting and encouraging women to participate in commercial activities and to establish their own businesses. This is a major step forward in terms of expansion and broadening the scope for women in creating new self-employment opportunities and business development.

⁴ Gillespie, R. (2002). *Review and Evaluation of the Cook Islands National Policy on Women (1995 against the National (1996) and Sub Regional (1998) Action Plans (A report for the Cook Islands National Council of Women.*

MDG 4

Goal 4. Reduce Child Mortality

TARGET 5	Reduce by 2/3 rd between 1990 [FROM 26 TO 8.8] And 2015, the under five mortality rate				
Indicators	1991	1996	2001	Will Indicators be met by 2015?	Source of data
Indicator 13: Under-five mortality Rate	26	25.4	7.7	Yes, currently Met	MOH Statistical Bulletin, 2002
Indicator 14: Infant mortality rate	31.3	23.5	9.8	Yes	Cook Islands Annual Statistical Bulletin, 2004
Indicator 15: Proportion of 1 year old children immunized against measles	70	72	98 ¹	Yes	MOH

Note: ¹ - 1994 UNDP Pacific Human Development Report, UNICEF

Figure 13: Under 5 Mortality Rate: 1991-2001

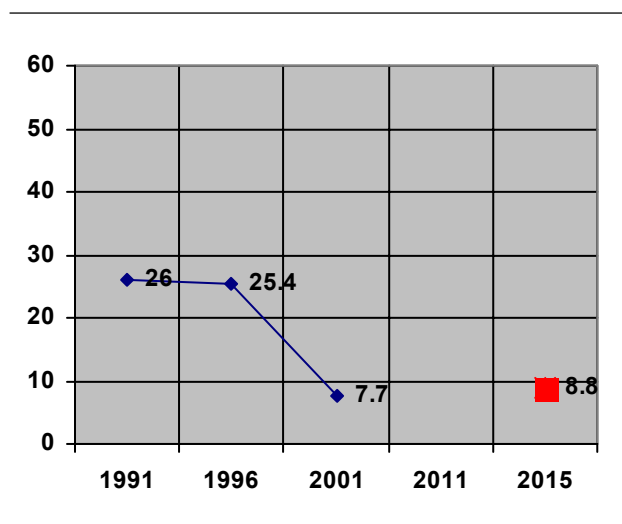
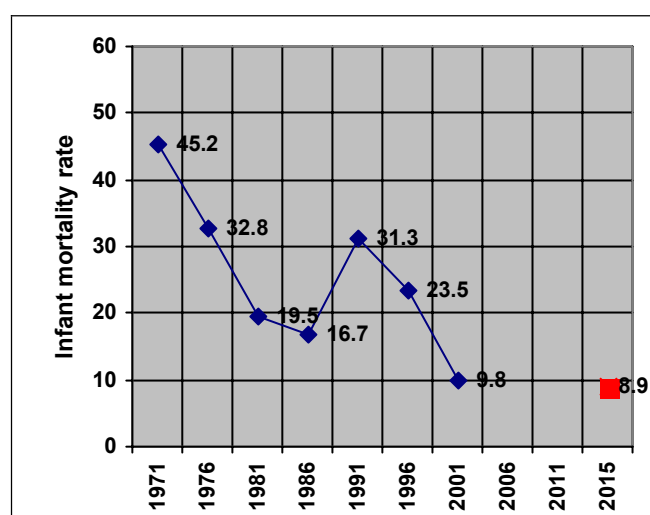


Figure 14: Infant Mortality Rate: 1971-2001



Status and trends

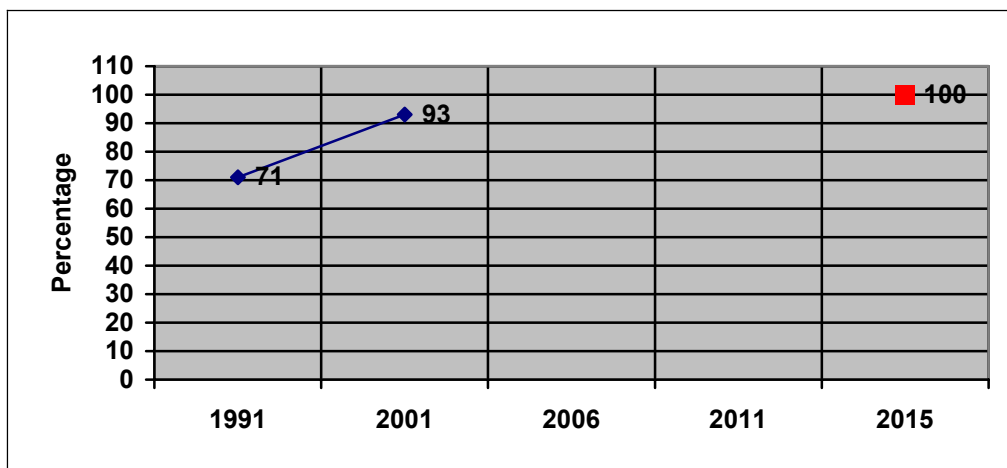
The overall level of child survival in the Cook Islands is good compared to the rest of the Pacific and other developing nations. The Cook Islands has already achieved the targeted two third reduction of under 5 year olds mortality rate from 26 deaths per 1000 live births in 1991 to 7.7 in 2001. The infant mortality rate also declined from 31.3 infant deaths per 1000 live births in 1991 compared to 9.8 infant deaths in 2001. Thus far, between 2000 and 2003, there were on average 4 infant deaths per annum. Given the current declining infant mortality rates and assuming continuing socio-economic improvements in the Cook Islands over the next 10 years, it is most likely that the target of less than 8.9 infant deaths per annum will be sustained or further reduced by the year 2015. The main causes of infant deaths were respiratory and septicaemia illnesses.



Despite the laudable progress made on child survival and child health in the Cook Islands, the figures do not reflect the problematic areas across all of the islands. It was noted that the outer islands have a higher rate of under 5 year olds deaths compared to Rarotonga. Furthermore, Cook Islands children are still getting ill and dying from preventable infectious diseases such as pneumonia, respiratory illnesses, diarrhoea and skin sepsis, sporadic outbreaks of measles and dengue and including injuries caused by traffic accidents and falls. The majority of illnesses in the under 5 years age group recorded in the health system are respiratory and digestive system illnesses, bodily injuries and poisoning. Sixty one percent of the total number of illness cases reported in 2001 for under 5 year olds were attributed to males.

It should be noted that in a small population like the Cook Islands, small changes in actual number of under 5 year olds infant deaths will result in significant changes in the overall ratings.

Figure 15: Proportion of 1 year olds immunized against measles: 1991-2001



The percentage of under 1 year olds immunized against measles increased from 71% in 1991 to 93% in 2001, equivalent to a 24% increase of coverage. Whilst the numbers were impressive, it should be noted that there was a measles outbreak between those 10 years that resulted in 194 measles cases. There had been three measles outbreaks in the last 2 decades, in 1980, 1989 and 1997. The 1989 outbreak affected around 700 children. The number of measles cases per annum had been constant at below 10 cases since the 1997 outbreak. If the immunization programmes continues to sustain 2001 levels coverage, then most likely the 100% targeted immunization level is achievable for the Cook Islands before the year 2015.

Challenges

There are two key challenges for the Government in providing good coverage of health services nationwide; sustaining and improving existing services and addressing national disparities in health outcomes for children. However, efforts to meet these challenges goes beyond the health services domain, to include improving the infrastructure for basic utilities such as water, sanitation, electricity and improve economic opportunities, livelihoods, education and food security in local communities. The health status of children, as with all other groups in the population, is dependent on these factors above.

The Government will need to focus and prioritise its assistance to the pockets of communities especially in the outer islands where the health outcomes for children are still showing developing countries standards. At the same time, non-communicable diseases including illnesses caused by accidents, injuries and poisoning, are increasingly affecting Cook Islands children. The rising numbers of overweight and obese children and youth in the Cook Islands must be addressed immediately.

Supportive Environment

The Cook Islands ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in June 1997 with obligations to fulfil the children's rights to survival, life, basic necessities including access to adequate health services, clean drinking water, and protection from malnutrition, and generally the highest standards of life attainable. The integration, translation and strengthening of the CRC obligations into existing and new national programmes and projects will enhance health outcomes for Cook Islands children.

The National Non-Communicable Diseases Strategy currently being developed by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education will provide the framework for addressing child health related issues regarding life style or non-communicable illnesses.

The current high levels of health outcomes for Cook Islands children has been achieved through decades of improvements in health infrastructure, health workforce and delivery of comprehensive primary health care programmes. Government's adoption of the 1978 Alma Ata Declaration on Health for All saw real progress of local maternal and child health programmes which were supported by WHO, UNICEF and the UNFPA.

The provision of free immunization to children under 5 years old, the overall improvements in access to basic utilities and services, and improved economic development has been instrumental in improving health status of children in the Cook Islands. The availability of health facilities and staff on almost all of the outer islands has also increased healthy children outcomes. Eight of the 13 inhabited islands have hospitals, outpatient clinics and child welfare clinics. The other six have health centres servicing isolated and small pockets of populations.

Cook Islands Child Health Development Indicators

Given the rising overweight and obesity problems in the young population of the Cook Islands, the Government, together with the support of the civil society, will revise the targets for Goal 4 to reflect its current child health situation.

MDG 5

Goal 5. Improve Maternal Health

TARGET 6	REDUCE BY THREE QUARTERS, BETWEEN 1990 AND 2015, THE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO				
Indicators	1991	1996	2001	Will Indicators be met by 2015?	Source of data
Indicator 16: Maternal mortality Ratio	*	*	*	Yes, already Achieved	MOH Statistical Bulletin, 2002
Indicator 17: Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	70 (1988)	n.a	98	Yes	MOH Statistical Bulletin, 2002

Note: n.a – not available, * only 2 maternal deaths for the period between 1991 to 2001

Status and Trends

In terms of keeping mothers alive during pregnancy, births and post natal, the Cook Islands is amongst the best performing countries in the world. Between 1991 and 2001, there were only two maternal deaths while none were recorded in the 3 years of reporting (1991, 1996 and 2001). This achievement was accompanied by declining numbers of births and fertility rates each year as well as increasing life expectancies for females who survive their male counterparts by an average of 5 years.

There have been on average 412 births per annum between 1991 and 2001. Total births have declined from the 500s during 1990s and currently around the 300 mark annually. The Total Fertility Rate for Cook Islands women has declined steadily from 7.9 in 1961 to 3.7 in 1991 and 2.9 in 2001. The 2001 Census enumerated 205 women in the Cook Islands who had more than 10 children each with 2 women reportedly having borne 18 children each.

Figure 16: Proportion of births attended by health personnel, 1988 and 2001

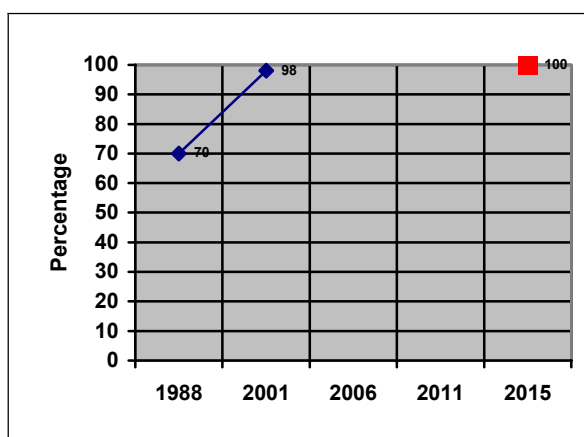
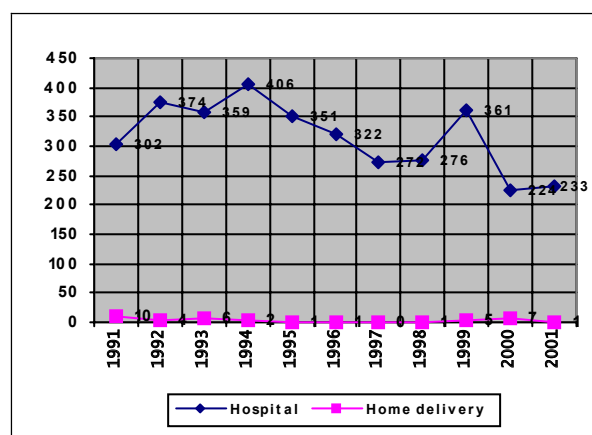


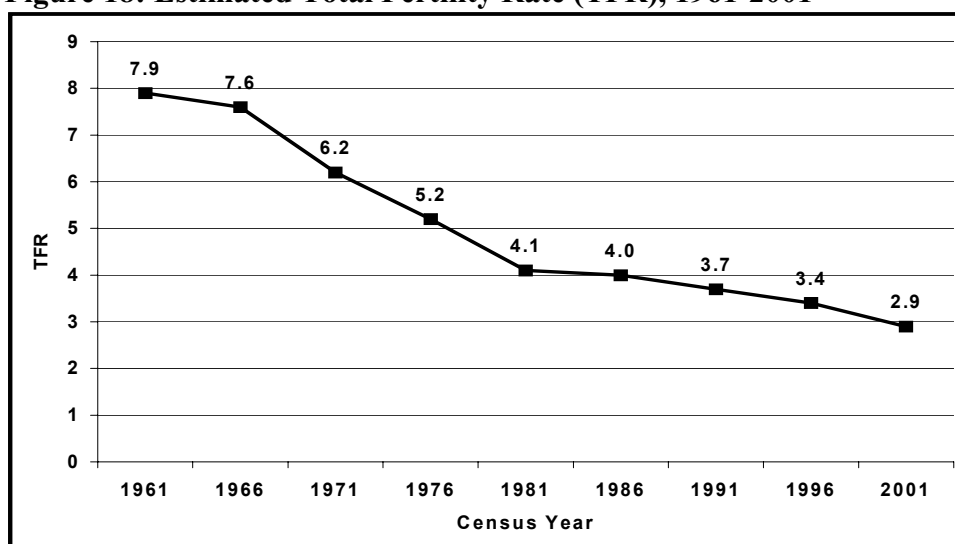
Figure 17: Birth deliveries in hospital skilled and at home.



Source: Ministry of Health Annual Statistical Bulletin, 2002

Concurrently, other social indicators for maternal health have improved over the last decade. The number of births attended by skilled health personnel rose from 70% in 1988 to 98% in 2001. In addition, the number of live birth deliveries attended by qualified health personnel increased from 96% in 1991 to 99% in 2001. Contraceptive prevalence rate is high at around 48% over the period, from 1991 to 2001.

Figure 18: Estimated Total Fertility Rate (TFR), 1961-2001



Source: Cook Islands Demographic Profile, 1992-2002

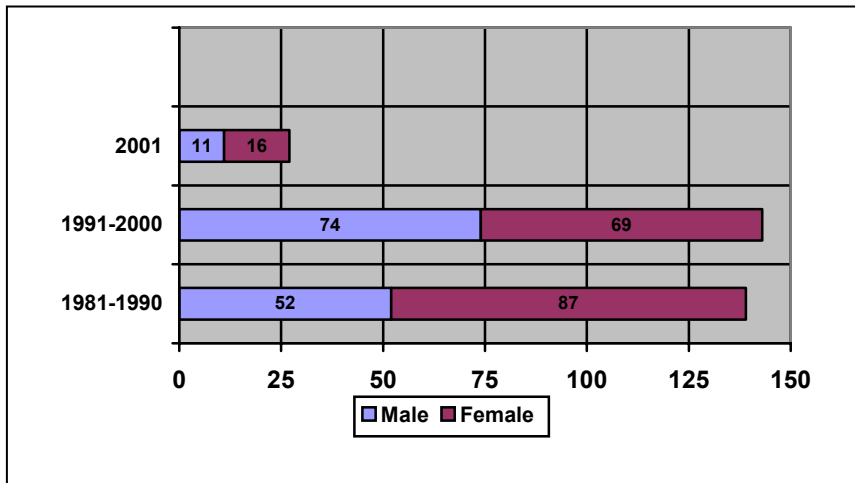
Despite the best maternal health indicators for Cook Islands women, there remain some worrying statistics. In recent times, teenage pregnancies were prevalent with 26 % of current childbearing women reportedly having children during their teenage years. The youngest age of a female giving birth was 11 years. Between 1991 and 2001, about 14% of mothers were below the age of 20 years, with 1992 showing the highest annual record with 19% of all mothers that year giving birth under the age of 20 years. The numbers of teenage pregnancy had since dropped to 13% in 2001 but still remain relatively high compared to the other Pacific Islands. Of particular concern is the fact that some teenage pregnancies were the result of sexual abuse and incest (PACFAW, 2004). Furthermore, reported cases could be lower than actual numbers due to under reporting and easy access of pregnant teenagers to health services in New Zealand.

Changing lifestyles of the Cook Islands population were the major cause of morbidity and mortality in the adult Cook Islands population. Key health problems affecting mothers and women include high incidence of cervical and breast cancer, as well as non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, circulatory illnesses and related complications. According to the Ministry of Health statistics, registered cases of diabetes and hypertension increased from 9.5% of the total population in 1980 to 18% in 2002. In 2000, the proportion of mortality of the population caused by cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer were 39%, 11% and 9% respectively.

The number of cancer cases in females is also on the increase. There has been on average 14 cases of cancer reported in the Cook Islands annually since 1980. In 2001, this rate increased to 27 cases per annum. Females in general have higher incidence of cancer compared to their male counterparts. Between 1980 and 2001, approximately 56% of all reported cancer cases nationally were females. Moreover, in 2001, about 60% of all national cancer cases reported were females.

As an emerging concern for Cook Islands mothers and females in general, the current profile of HIV/AIDS internationally and regionally highlights increasing risks of HIV/AIDS infections for females through heterosexual intercourse and passing it on to their unborn babies. While HIV/AIDS is basically non-existent in the Cook Islands, this issue will dominant maternal health concerns in the very near future.

Figure 19: Prevalence of Cancer cases amongst male versus females from 1980-2001.



Source: MOH-Annual statistical bulletin 2004

Challenges

The first challenge for the government would be to maintain the excellent record of zero maternal mortality rates by 2015. Government would continue to provide quality health services through skilled health staff in outer islands despite declining outer islands population numbers, aging health work force and health facilities.

The accompanying high cost of health care and treatments, not to mention the socio-economic impact of highly debilitating NCDs as well as HIV/AIDS on the adult population of the Cook Islands will continue to be an issue in the coming years and decades.

The rising levels of non-communicable diseases such as obesity, hypertension and diabetes in the female population, and the continuing high levels of teenage pregnancies, not only impacts on the females and mothers health but can also result in complications during pregnancy and birth. The high level of cancer in the female population is also a matter of urgent concern for the government, more so because of the limited capacity locally to provide specialist treatment and care. Cases needing tertiary care for complicated cases such as kidney failure, cancer and heart surgery were often referred to New Zealand for specialist treatments.

Issues surrounding young teenage mothers should be more closely examined and addressed across all sectors in the community. Limited access of young adolescent women to information, education and services on reproductive health was considered a major impediment to young women's health and development.

The Government should look seriously at including sex education or reproductive health education in the schools curriculum to ensure that youths in schools have factual information to make informed choices and access reproductive health services. In improving the delivery of reproductive health services to young Cook Islanders, the government should work with civil society and youth groups to put into action effective ways of making available reproductive health information and services to youths.

Concurrently, efforts should be made to ensure the protection of young girls and females from sexual abuse including abuse in families. Heavy penalties and imprisonment sentences should be given to sexual offenders especially against young girls. Furthermore, appropriate counselling services for victims of abuse should be made available on all islands of the Cook Islands where the problems are common.

The emerging risk of HIV/AIDS affecting local communities, especially Cook Islands mothers and female populations remain and will continue to be an imminent and imposing threat to the overall fabric of Cook Islands society.

Supportive environment

Almost all pregnant mothers ranging from 96.8% in 1991 to 100% in 2001, with the exception of a very few, gave birth at the National Hospital.

Funding from the WHO and the United Nations Population Funds have been instrumental in providing technical and funding support to the Ministry of Health to implement the Safe Motherhood programmes for local mothers.

CEDAW reiterates the specific rights of Cook Islands women to quality health outcomes and health services. Specific articles of the CEDAW, where appropriate, have been incorporated into the 1995 National Policy on Women (NPW) as well as into the corresponding National Plan of Action and Framework for Implementation. Key policy objectives in the NPW corresponds to ensuring equal participation of women in decision making at all levels, enhancing women's role by improving their health and environmental outcomes, maintaining and preserving the cultural values and traditions that promote the status of women and uphold the human rights of women as espoused in relevant international, regional declarations on women.

The Gender and Development Division with the Ministry of Internal Affairs in partnership with the National Council of Women (NCW) oversees the implementation of the National Policy on Women. The Punanga Tauturu or Women's Counselling Centre and the Red Cross have been particularly active in promoting the advancement of women, through programmes focussed on the elimination of discrimination against women, and putting the spotlight on women's health related issues and human rights. Assistance had been provided by NZAID to the government and NGOs towards the implementation of the national policy on women.

The Cook Islands has ratified other international and regional agreements related to the development of women, including the Beijing Plan of Action on Women as well as the 1994 Pacific Platform for Action on Women. The National Plan of Action on Women was developed in 1996 after the Beijing meeting to assist with the implementation of the 1995 National Policy on Women.

Cook Islands Maternal Health Development Goals

The Government of the Cook Islands intends to revise the targets for Goal 5 to reflect its current maternal health situation. Given the rising increasing NCDs, overweight, obesity problems, cancer in the female and maternal population of the Cook Islands, the Government, with the support of civil society, will develop targets and indicators to monitor progress of these health indicators for mothers and females to 2015.

MDG 6

Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, NCDs & Other Diseases

TARGET 7	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS				
Indicators	1991	1996	2001	Will Indicators be met by 2015?	Source of data
Indicator 18: HIV prevalence among 15-24 year old pregnant women	0	0	0	Yes, already achieved	MOH Statistical Bulletin, 2002
Indicator 19: Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate	46.8	52.3	43.8	Potentially	MOH Statistical Bulletin, 2002
Indicator 20: Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14	NA	NA	NA	NA	
TARGET 8	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases				
Indicator 21: Prevalence and death rates associated with Malaria	NA	NA	NA	NA	MOH Statistical Bulletin, 2002
Indicator 22: Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention treatment measures.	NA	NA	NA	NA	MOH Statistical Bulletin, 2002
Indicator 23(a): Prevalence (incidence) rates associated with tuberculosis	5.9 per 100,000 persons	n.a	10 per 100,000 persons	Yes	WHO
Indicator 23(b): Death rates associated with tuberculosis	5.3 per 100,000 persons	n.a	5.7 per 100,000 persons	Yes	WHO
Indicator 24: Proportion of TB cases detected and cured under DOTS.	n.a	32 (1998)	18 (2002)	Potentially	WHO

Note: NA – not applicable; n.a – not available

Status and trends

HIV/AIDS

There are no officially recorded cases of HIV/AIDS in the Cook Islands although there are 2 residents with HIV/AIDS (one male, one female) currently living in the Cook Islands. Both cases were infected and diagnosed overseas before residing in the Cook Islands since 2000. One of the cases is below 30 is above 40 years of age. Both of the residents continue to receive medication from their country of citizenship; Tahiti and New Zealand. The Cook Islands Ministry of Health has limited dealings with the cases except when they become sick or for collaboration on HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness programmes. Voluntary testing for HIV/AIDS is provided by the Ministry of Health. The only regular screening tests for HIV/AIDS are for blood donors and antenatal mothers. Screening by private practitioners are also conducted, however the results are not recorded and patient-doctor confidentiality policies prevents access to recorded information.

Although HIV/AIDS has not yet visibly impacted on the Cook Islands population and health care system, the mobility of residents and growing numbers of tourists combine to provide a favourable

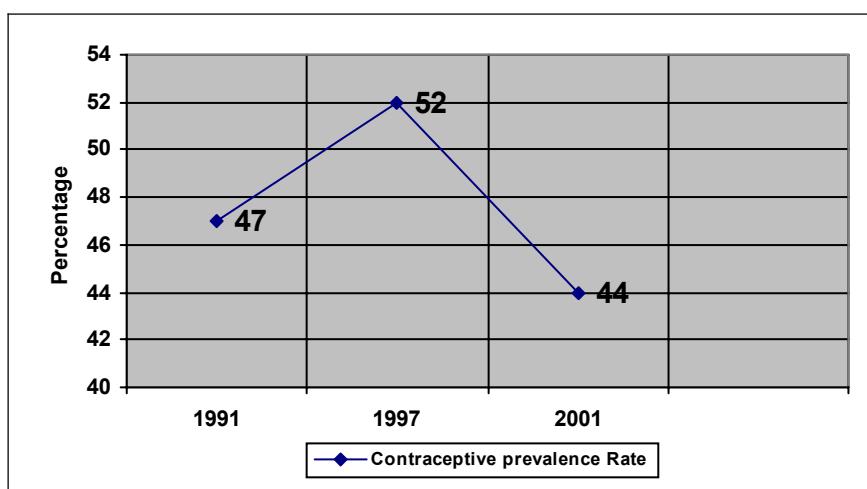
environment for the spread of HIV/AIDS to the Cook Islands. This concern is compounded by the high rate of sexually transmitted illnesses (STIs) in almost all countries in the Pacific, coupled with the fast growing longline tuna fishing industry in the country and the rapidly increasing numbers of HIV/AIDS cases in other Pacific island countries such as Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Fiji. All of these factors have been associated with the spread of HIV/AIDS.

It was estimated that it will cost around NZ\$3,000 per month for the treatment and medication of one HIV/AIDS patient in the Cook Islands (MOH, 2004). Furthermore, international experience shows that the reported number of cases for HIV/AIDS is about one tenth (1/10th) of the actual reported level of prevalence in a country or community (SPC and UNDP, 2004). Easy access and outward migration of Cook Island residents to New Zealand and their health care system could also mask actual numbers of HIV/AIDS cases that originally contracted the disease in the Cook Islands.

Currently, some of the targets and indicators such as the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in pregnant women and the HIV/AIDS orphan school enrolment rate are not relevant to the Cook Islands' situation, although it may become relevant towards 2015 and beyond.

In the absence of data on the prevalence rate of condom use, the total contraceptive prevalence rate in the Cook Islands was given instead. Prevalence rates for contraception is high compared to the other Small Island Developing States in the Pacific region. However, the drop in contraception use from 52% in 1997 to 44% in 2001 needs further examination to determine the cause of the lowering of the rate, which may have been due to the contraction of the Ministry of Health budget and services during the national economic crisis from 1996 to 1999.

Figure 20: Contraceptive Prevalence Rate; 1991, 1997 and 2001



Tuberculosis

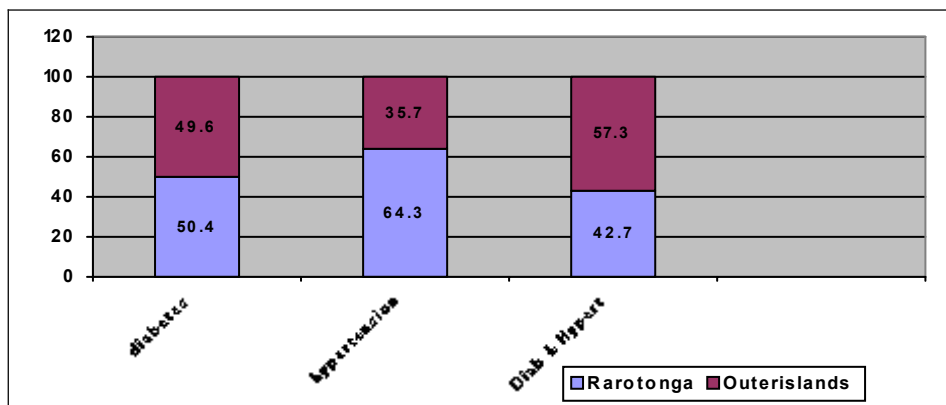
Tuberculosis incidence and related death rates have remained at very negligible low levels, with an average of 8 per 100,000 persons' tuberculosis cases between 1990 and 2001. Between 1994 and 2000, five (5) deaths per 100,000 persons were attributed to tuberculosis. The proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under the Directly Observed Treatment (DOTs) programme has fallen from 32% in 1998 to 18% in 2003.

Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

The Cook Islands population is undergoing significant epidemiological changes from communicable diseases to non-communicable diseases. Diseases that are common in developing countries such as tuberculosis, leprosy and diarrhoea are no longer the main cause of illness and deaths in the Cook Islands. According to the Ministry of Health, NCDs or lifestyle diseases such as diabetes,

hypertension, heart diseases, obesity and complications, cancer, injuries, poisoning and accidents are the most common cause of deaths and illnesses in the Cook Islands. Registered cases of diabetes and hypertension increased from 9.5% of the total population in 1980 to 18% of the total population in 2002. The proportion of deaths in 2000 caused by cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer were; 39%, 11% and 9% respectively.

Figure 21: Registered NCDs in Rarotonga versus Outer Islands, 2002

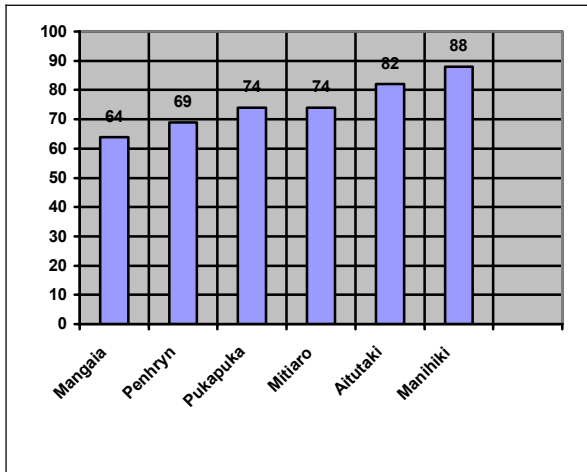


According to Ministry of Health reports, the prevalence of NCDs and overweight population in the outer islands is very high compared to Rarotonga. A study covering 7 island communities, Mangaia, Penrhyn, Pukapuka, Mitiaro, Puaikura, Aitutaki and Manihiki showed that on average about two thirds of the identified overweight population were considered obese. Outer islands community populations found to be overweight ranged from 64% in Mangaia to 88% in Manihiki. Records from 1980 to 2001 showed that the outer islands population accounted for 49% of all diabetic cases, 36% of hypertension cases and 57% of cases with both diabetes and hypertension in the Cook Islands. In total, about 41% of all recorded cases with non communicable diseases, between 1980 and 2001, were from the outer islands. This constitutes a high number considering the outer islands represent only 37% of the total Cook Islands population. An obesity study of 15 schools in Rarotonga in 2003 showed that six schools had students with an overweight percentage of above 15% of the school population. Tereora College recorded the highest cases with 32% of the school population considered overweight. There were more overweight males in the primary schools age group between 3 to 11 years old, while the secondary schools survey found higher incidences of overweight in the female population.

Challenges

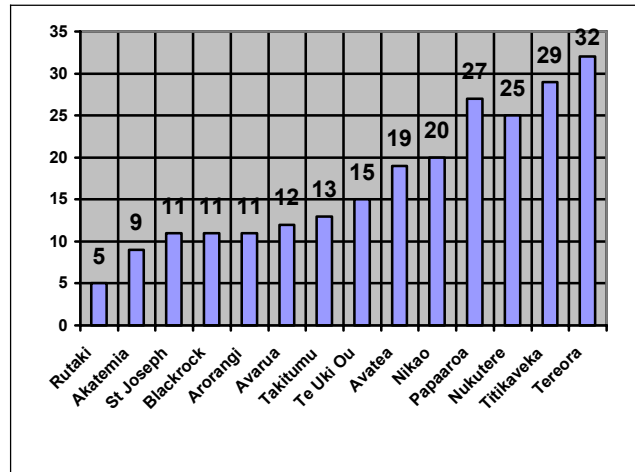
Despite the fact that HIV/AIDS is not an existing problem in the Cook Islands, it is still an imminent risk to the health and socio-economic development of the Cook Islands. The unwanted introduction of HIV/AIDS in the Cook Islands would be disastrous in small island communities. Given the limited resources and lack of capacity to manage multiple numbers of HIV/AIDS cases locally, the Government is aware that it cannot afford to be complacent in its awareness and prevention programmes. Budgetary allocation for health promotion and prevention makes up less than 15% of total Ministry of Health Annual Budget.

Figure 22: Percent overweight population by island, 2002



Source: Ministry of Health, 2004

Figure 23: Percent of overweight school population, 2002



Source: Ministry of Health, 2004

Similarly, less than 15% of total health sector expenditure over the past 10 years was appropriated for health promotion and preventative care. Programmes to address issues such as discrimination, stigmatisation and human rights need to be strengthened including providing support for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Much assistance has been received through the Cook Islands Red Cross Society (CIRC) in their vigorous campaign on educating all Cook Islanders on the effects of HIV/AIDS.

Clearly the Cook Islands is currently experiencing a transition from developing countries health status to mimic epidemiological profile in developed nations while at the same time still being affected by infectious diseases such as pneumonia, respiratory illnesses and skin sepsis. The number of overseas referral cases for treatment of complicated medical conditions often resulting from non-communicable diseases increased from 85 cases in 1996 to 116 in 2001, an increase of 26% over 5 years. A large proportion of the medical referrals had chronic conditions such as ischaemic heart disease, renal failure, diabetes, and heart failure requiring expensive long-term care and treatments. The implications on government's resources in the health sector is already being felt with as much as 10% of the total Ministry of Health annual budget being allocated to fund referral cases overseas. Private medical practitioners in Rarotonga and the outer islands are not required by law to report notifiable diseases to the Government information system. If the government is to get a complete picture of the health situation nationally, especially on Rarotonga, then efforts should be made to engage private physicians to participate in the national health system by recording and reporting of relevant statistics.

Supportive Environment

The Government approved the Cook Islands National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan of Action in 2003. The plan sets out clear priorities and actions for the prevention of HIV/AIDS. The plan was developed with technical assistance from the SPC, WHO and UNFPA and funding from the UNAIDS. The Cook Islands is fortunate to host the Pacific AIDS Foundation, a leading regional administered NGO specifically focussed on HIV/AIDS programmes for supporting people affected by the disease, prevention and awareness raising.

The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education are spearheading the development of a National Non Communicable Diseases Strategy to partly address the NCDs situation in the Cook Islands.

MDG 7

Goal 7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability

TARGET 9	INTEGRATE THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INTO COUNTRY POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES AND REVERSE THE LOSS OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES.				
Indicators	1991	1996	2001	Will Indicators be met by 2015?	Source of data
Indicator 25: Proportion of land area covered by forest	n.a	n.a	60.8% (1996-2003)	Potentially	NESAF
Indicator 26: ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area	n.a	n.a	15.1% (2003)	Potentially	
Indicator 27: <i>Energy use (national-Kwhrs '000) (KG oil equivalent) per USD \$ 1 GDP (PPP)</i>	16293	19840	24697	Probably	2001 ADB/Cook Is. Econ. report
Indicator 28: <i>Total Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) and consumption of ozone depleting CFC (ODP) tonnes</i>	2.15 Gg ² CO ₂	2.36 Gg ² CO ₂ , 1.7 ton ODP	2.76 Gg ² CO ₂ 0.03 ton ODP		Cook Is. First Nat. Communications – Climate Change (ES), CI National Compliance Action Plan
Indicator 29: Proportion of population using Solid fuels.	19%	n.a	11%		Cook Is. Stats 2001
Target 10:	Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation				
Indicator 30: Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, and rural	n.a	n.a	95.1% (4.9% cart or carry water to homes)	Yes	Cook Is. Stats 2001
Indicator 31: Proportion of urban and rural population with access to improved sanitation.	n.a	n.a	80% households with flush toilets	Yes	Cook Is. Stats 2001
Target 11:	By 2020 to have achieved a significant change in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.				
Indicator 32: Proportion of households with access to secure tenure.	n.a	66% houses owned outright	59.6% houses owned outright	No	Cook Is stats 2001

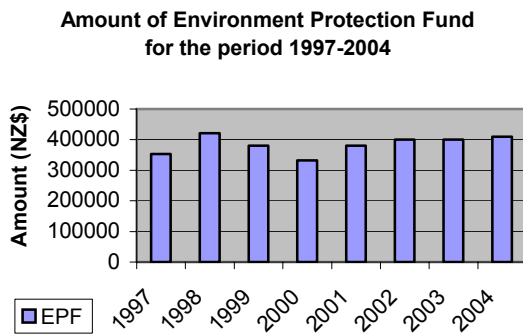
Status and trends

Recent public forums brought the environmental issues on the front foot in terms of national priorities for government to address. As a valuable commodity to the tourism sector, local environment conditions play a major part of the marketing and promotion of the Cook Islands as a tourist destination by the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation.

Outcomes from these public meetings pointed to the need to mitigate the adverse impact on the natural environment from increasing human and economic pressures. Priority issues such as appropriate management of natural resources such as water and sand, lack of important regulations and limited capacities, the protection of ecosystems from increasing pollution and wastes, land degradation and over-development, increasing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as impacts from climate change effects were flagged, and requiring urgent attention.

Government is committed to addressing these issues and have recently increased funding for various environmental programmes as well as formulating the NESAF, which will replace the NEMS as the key policy framework to guide national environmental programmes over the next five years.

Figure 24. Amount of EPF 1997-2004



Land area covered by forest

Approximately sixty percent of the total land area in the Cook Islands is still covered by forest. This is relatively high for a small islands setting. Removal of forest was mostly for plantation and housing development.

Table 4: Forest Land Area of the Cook Islands

Land Category	Area	
	ha.	percent
Coastal	4900	20.5
Makatea	5000	21.6
Other Natural Forest (water catchment)	4,500	20.5
Plantations (Water catchment)	1,100	4.6
other	7,800	32.8

Source: Oliver, USDA. 1999.



Area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area

To date there are 39 protected natural areas (PNA) nationwide which covered a wide range of purposes ranging from the Takitumu Conservation Area as an endemic bird conservation reserve, to marine and land ra'ui sites, as well as the national EEZ as a whale sanctuary.

Energy Use and Carbon dioxide emissions

Although insignificant in comparison to global outputs, and as a result of increasing fossil fuel consumption, the Cook Islands have one of the highest ratings for carbon dioxide gas emissions per capita. National figures revealed an increase of 2.76Gg² 2001 from 2.15Gg² in 1991.⁵ Despite the outer islands energy data being suspect, Rarotonga data were able to confirm a national trend of increasing fossil energy consumption.

For Rarotonga, the maximum demand for electricity generation had increased from 2.9 MW in 1994 to 4.4 MW in 2003, with maximum generation capacity at 8 MW. Nationwide, the maximum electricity demand in 2003 was about 5.54 MW with the maximum generation capacity at 10.58 MW. Likewise, fuel consumption increased from 4,000 KI to 5,800 KI between 1994 and 2003 as the energy, tourism, retail and wholesale, fisheries and transportation sectors expands.

⁵ National Climate Change Country team. (1999). First National Communications Report to UNFCCC. Government of the Cook Islands.

In contrast, solid fuel consumption has decreased significantly with about 11% of the population using solid fuel in 2001 compared to 19% in 1991. In Rarotonga, about 91.3% of households use Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) for cooking, while only 51% in the Southern Group islands use it. Others use kerosene and firewood.

According to the Census 2001 report, about 1.2% of all households had no electricity at all which is 46 households or equivalent to 200 people in the Cook Islands.

Figure 25: Per capita CO2 emissions, 1990–2002

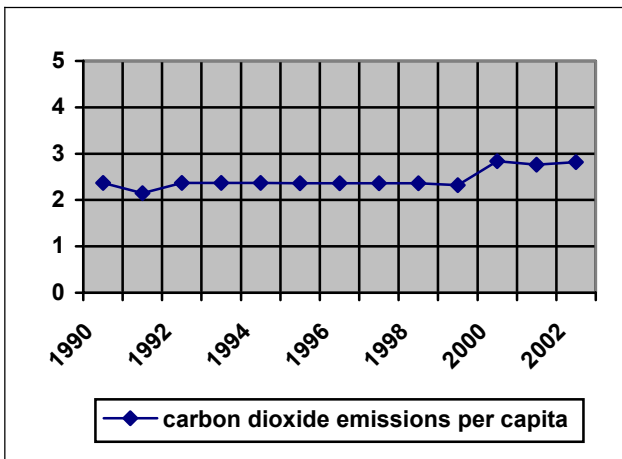
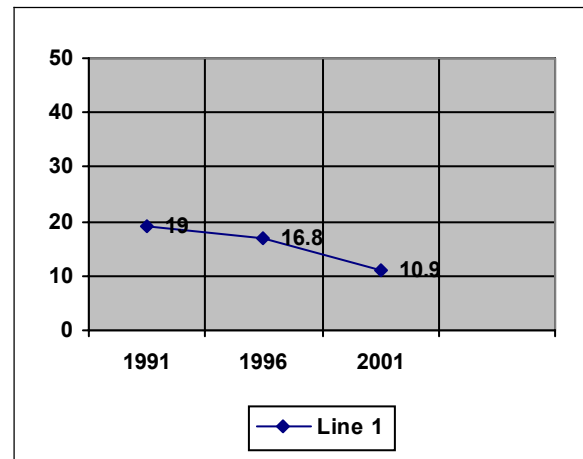


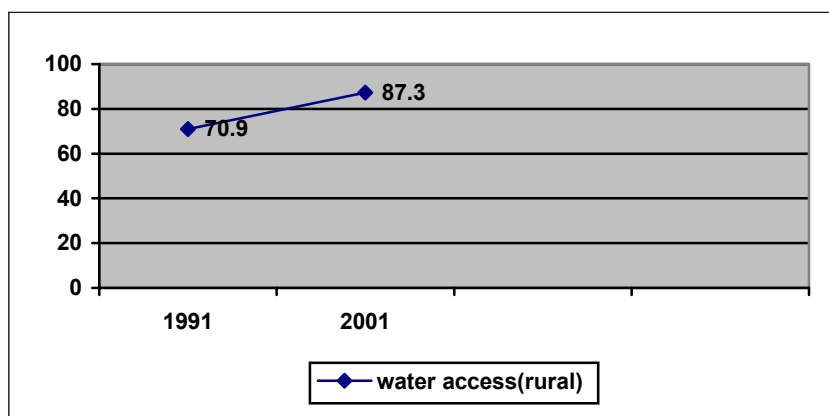
Figure 26: Percent of population Using solid fuel



Access to safe drinking water

Community access to safe drinking water improved between 1991 and 2001, especially in the outer islands. The proportion of the outer islands population with access to safe drinking water increased from 71% of the population in 1991 to 87% in 2001, an increase of 16%. Access of the population on Rarotonga to safe drinking water declined slightly from 100 to 99.25% between 1991 and 2001. Despite the improvements in access, there is still critical concern and clear disparity in access to good quality source of water between Rarotonga and the outer islands.

Figure 27: Proportion of population with access to improved water source, urban and rural



Source: Statistics Office

There is no public water pipeline system in the Northern Group Islands therefore most households in the Northern Group rely on their own or public water tanks or ground water in public bore holes or wells for their water. About 35.4% of the Northern Group population (equivalent to 136 households) cart or carry water to their house. This represents approximately 5% of the total resident population of the Cook Islands.

Access to basic sanitation and waste disposal

About 25% of households in the Southern Group and 40% in Northern Group islands do not have a bath or shower in their homes. Almost half (48%) of all households in the Southern Group used a pit toilet, which was considered eco-friendly in terms of water usage but a sanitation nightmare. Seven percent (7%) of the total households in the Cook Islands (all in the Northern Group) still use over-the-lagoon toilets, which were considered more eco-friendly.

Health problems related to poor quality water and sanitation were common amongst the Northern Group population compared to the Southern Group and Rarotonga, where better water quality is accessible. In 2001, 62% of all national cases reported for skin sepsis were from the Northern Group, affecting 22% of the total Northern Group population. Similarly, reported diarrhoea cases in the Northern Group made up a total 34% of all reported diarrhoea cases in the Cook Islands. These are very high incidences of skin sepsis and diarrhoea and could only be blamed on poor hygiene and water quality.

The urgency of the need for management plans and regulations for solid and sewage waste systems is reflected in the NESAF. Since 2002, the Rarotonga Recycling Centre shipped to New Zealand about 223 tonnes of glass, 33 tonnes of aluminium cans and 19 tonnes of plastic bottles from the Cook Islands. A local company has started the recycling of used vehicles and parts, heavy machinery and equipment and bulky household wastes such as iron roofing and whiteware goods back to New Zealand. Importers have also adopted their own initiatives to collect and recycle packaging materials used for imported products. In addition, 3943 kilograms of POPs pesticides were identified and collected from several islands and currently waiting shipment to Australia for proper disposal.

Climate Change Impacts

The effect of climate change and variations on the environment and local communities is currently a major issue and one yet to be fully appreciated by island communities. In February 2005, five hurricanes wash over the Cook Islands causing widespread damages to local communities, especially on the low-lying atolls of Pukapuka and Nassau. While this is an unusual event, local communities are now accepting that extreme local weather conditions were possible as climate changes. The vulnerability of these small islands to sea level rise and natural disasters reinforces the need for a comprehensive disasters risk management plan and climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes.

Challenges

For the urban population on Rarotonga, predictions of increasing water demand and limited current water holding capacities will create problems of water shortages in the near future as the economy expands. Pressure on water resources in the outer islands will continue as climate change effects continue to affect local weather patterns. Public health programmes and water development projects in the outer islands must be sustained to reduce sanitation related problems currently experienced, especially in the Northern Group.

Reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions is going to be tough for the Cook Islands as we increased the importation of fossil fuel to support our growing economy and changing lifestyle. Reducing the costs and improving the effectiveness of environmentally-friendly energy generating technologies were some of the barriers to adoption of these technologies.

Weak enforcement of health, environmental and building code regulations, as repeatedly emphasized in national assessment reports, posed a challenge for all in regulating and monitoring of development activities. The lack of a national resource management legislation means certain environmental issues may not be protected from unsustainable land use practices and poor resources development.

Limited availability of land for waste disposal purposes is a major future concern. Community

awareness of negative impacts from pollution and contamination of underground water lens, lagoons and reef ecosystems from nutrients discharges has raised the standard for management of waste. A risks assessment of the long term environmental impact from former dump sites is recommended. Initiatives by Government and Island Councils such as the provision of drop off sites, waste recycling bins and proper waste bins for domestic waste collections, together with education and awareness programmes, was expected to reduce the amount of domestic and business wastes generated.

Differences in land tenure systems on various islands means the enforcement of the Environment Act 2003 is complicated and does not apply to all islands. Traditional customs and the need to define customary laws and its place in the national development processes, including integration into the Environment Act, were important. Whilst advocating conservation on a national scale, the process of adoption of the Act by each island needs to be seen as fair and responsible in maintaining environmental integrity on each island.

Currently, islands that have officially accepted the Act are promptly equipped with an Environment Office, whilst those that have yet to acknowledge the Act, due to a perceived encroachment on their customary land laws, were denied access to the benefits of an Environment Office and related resources. Such discrimination reaffirms earlier public misgivings that resulted in public protests against the Environment Bill and the excess powers it gave to the Minister of Environment. Consequently, this perception of the law has created apathy and disenchantment to national initiatives in communities that aspire for sustainable development whilst maintaining their traditional land tenure systems.

There are calls for better commitment of national resources to the sector to achieve the NESAF target programmes. Currently, the National Capacity Self Assessment study for local capacity needs is a positive step toward implementation of the NESAF.



Supporting Environment

The recently completed medium term National Environment Strategic Action Framework (NESAF) 2005-2009 provides target driven programmes for addressing the challenges raised before.

The establishment of a new structure for the water sector and the completion of a National Water Board, legislation and strategy were likely to improve the development of the sector nationwide. Enforcement of the Public Health Act and Waste Management strategies will improve conditions for safe drinking water, sanitation, wastes and pollutions.

The National Environment Act (“Act”) provides the mandate for convening of a National Environment Forum with the purpose of determining future environmental policy directions, and the establishment of the Environment Protection Fund and its use. Several provisions of the Act were aimed at addressing concern for areas most vulnerable to development, such as the coastal foreshore, wetlands and sloping lands. The Act also requires the registration of organisations that have an interest in environmental management.

To harmonize the provisions of the Act with traditional land tenure systems, preparatory work on local government by-laws and capacity building in local communities are necessary to improve the regulatory processes and governance. Currently, only Aitutaki, Atiu, and Mitiaro have Environment Offices due to their acceptance of the Act.

Despite the desire for environment sustainability, it was interesting to note the bulk of environmental appropriations being allocated to band aid solutions, such as rubbish collection, as opposed to the longer term investments into public education programmes, national capacity building and incentives for reducing the impact of land degradation on the environment.

Collaborative efforts, mainly on advocacy and capacity building programmes, continue to strengthen the partnership between environmental NGOs, private sector and government.

MDG 8

Goal 8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development

TARGET 12	DEVELOP FURTHER AN OPEN, RULE-BASED, PREDICTABLE NON-DISCRIMINATORY TRADING AND FINANCIAL SYSTEM.				
Indicators	1991	1996	2001	Will Indicators be met by 2015?	Source of data
Indicator 33: Net ODA, total and to LDCs as percentage of OECD/DAC donor's gross national income.	*(NZAID) 15.2% (1990)	n.a	*(NZAID) ODA/GNI.22 % (1990)	ODA decreasing in value	www.oecd.org/dac
Indicator 34: Proportion of total bilateral sector allocatable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)	n.a	*18% HRD, 0.7% Health	*Edu 9% Health 10% Works 4% Outer Is 31% Misc. 46%	probably	Cook Islands Budget Appropriations 1991, 1996, 2000
Indicator 35: Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is untied	67.6%	n.a	84.8%	Probably	Unstats.un.org
Indicator 36: ODA received in land locked countries as proportion of their GNIs	NA	NA	NA		
Indicator 37: ODA received in Small Island Developing States as proportion of their GNIs (<i>GDP</i>)	n.a	7.9% of <i>GDP</i>	6.9% of <i>GDP</i>	ODA decreasing in value	2001 ADB/Cook Is. Econ. report
Target 13	Address the special needs of the least developed countries. Includes tariff and quota free access for least developed countries exports enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and More generous ODA for countries committed to poverty.				
Indicator 38: Proportion of total developed country imports (value and excluding arms) from developing countries and LDCs admitted free of duties.	n.a	n.a	n.a		
Target 14	ADDRESS THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF LANDLOCKED COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (THROUGH ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY)				
Indicator 39: Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products	n.a	n.a	n.a		
Indicator 40: Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as percentage of their GDP (<i>% agriculture ODA to total ODA to Cook Islands by all donors</i>)	n.a	1.9% 1999	1.85% 2001		MFEM 2001 Budget
Indicator 41: Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade (<i>figures for Agriculture & Marine Resources only</i>) capacity.	n.a	2.6% 1999	3.4% 2001		MFEM 2001 Budget
Target 15	Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term				
Indicator 42: Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points	n.a	n.a	n.a		

Indicator 43: Debt relief committed under HIPC initiative In USD	n.a	n.a	n.a		
Indicator 44: Debt service as percentage of exports of goods and services (<i>Debt as value of GDP</i>)	30% 1992	81% 1998	69% 2001		2001 ADB/Cook Is. Econ. report
Target 16	In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.				
Indicator 45: Unemployment rate of 15-24 year olds, each sex and total (<i>over 15 years of age</i>)	7.7%	12.7%	13.1%		2001 ADB/Cook Is. Econ. report
Target 17	In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries				
Indicator 46: Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis (<i>% population with access to local health services</i>)	100%	100%	100%		MOH STATS 2004
Target 18	In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications				
Indicator 47: Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population	n.a	n.a	49.5 telephone 24.4 cellular		TCI stats
Indicator 48: Personal computers in use per 100 population and internet users per 100 populations.			10.8 internet		TCI stats

**(NZAID fig. as Cook Is number 10 on NZAID recipients and Cook Is. biggest donor.*

Status & Trends:

ODA assessment

In terms of dollar values, foreign aid projects to the Cook Islands has plateau over the years with contributions totalling NZ\$11.593 million in 1996, and barely breaking the NZ\$13.0 million mark in 2001. Over 60% of the annual foreign aid contributions to the Cook Islands were provided by NZAID and AusAID.

In 2001, ODA allocation to the Cook Islands to improve basic social services was about 19%. In the same year, about 31% of the total ODA went to support capital projects in the outer islands. Since 2003, the European Union has also been providing about NZ\$1.0 million annually to education, health and civil societies programmes in the outer islands.



ODA contributions for trade activities, especially fisheries and agriculture, have been limited with less than 4% of the total ODA going into these sectors. Additional ODA contributions, valued at 3.7% of the total ODA, went to other trade related activities such as tourism; business enterprises and the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC). Overall, less than 10% of the total ODA contributions to the Cook Islands went towards improving trade programmes.

Trade

The Cook Islands trade experiences have long been subjected to physical constraints concerning market isolations and small size, narrow production base, and limited technical capacities and resources which restrict exports to a small number of horticultural crops, copra, pearls, crafts and artefacts, as well as tuna fisheries. Fisheries had recently taken over the pearl industry as the most productive primary sector industry. Merchandise trade balance has remained negative at minus NZ\$95.5 million in 2001, despite the economy maintaining an average 2.8% GDP growth over 20 years. As trade export values increased from NZ\$9.43 million in 1991 to NZ\$16.13 million in 2001, import values also jumped to NZ\$111.61 million in 2001, up from NZ\$69.79 million in 1991.

Despite the negative value in trade balance, it was somewhat offset by increasing receipts being generated from tourism, numismatic, service industries and resale of jet fuel at airports. Tourism is our biggest foreign exchange earner with visitors' numbers increasing from 39,976 in 1991 to 74,575 in 2001. Furthermore, the total tourism receipts represent over 51% of national GDP.



Fiscal Situation

The Cook Islands economy has really performed well over the last four years with the national debt level in 2001 sitting at NZ\$128.73 million, compared to about NZ\$200 million prior to the Manila Agreement in 1998. In 2001, the national debt represents about 70% of GDP compared to the current debt value of about NZ\$97.4 million, as of June 2005. However, net borrowing after taking into account advances in public enterprises and loan reserves is about \$74.7 million, as of June 2005, which corresponds to about 29.9% of GDP.⁶

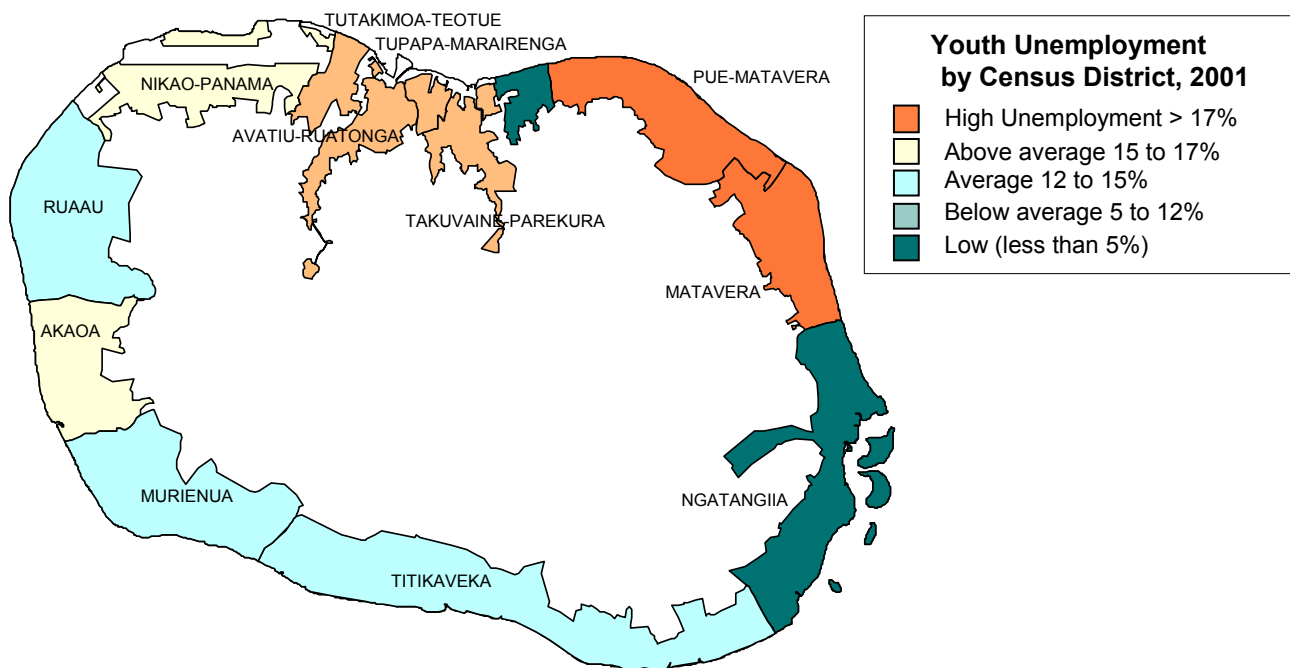
Government operating revenue had subsequently increased from over \$55 million in 2000/01 to about \$78.9 million (2005/06), highlighting a growing compliance with good practices and the effectiveness of stringent financial control measures and tax reform put into effect by MFEM.

Youth Development

The National Sustainable Development Plan process highlighted the general lack of basic skills among school leavers. As a result of these gaps, it was recommended to improve school programmes and curriculum in the education system, and to be in line with local employment opportunities. This allows for better preparations of school leavers for the work place.

Figure 28. Youth Unemployment by Census District 2001 (Rarotonga)

Source. POP GIS Project, SPC



¹ MFEM. (2005). Cook Islands Government Budget Estimates 2005/06. Government of the Cook Islands.

Youth development was considered a priority area in the national development planning process as youth struggles to find their place within Cook Islands society. Criminal offences committed by young delinquents have increased and how to deal with these juveniles had been a moot point in the justice system.



Access to Essential Drugs

During the devolution process, the pharmaceutical supply system suffered, especially in the outer islands, with supply problems and shortages. Currently, common of problems drugs shortages continue to exist, especially in the outer islands, due to lack of monies for the purchasing of supplies and ordering problems. Normally, the Pharmaceutical Section of MOH on Rarotonga allow a six months supply of drugs in reserve.⁷ Between June 2002 and November 2004, the monthly value of stocks of essential drugs within the MOH averaged about NZ\$51,000. Most of these drugs were for the treatment of NCDs related illnesses pointing to the rising costs of NCDs to the country. All Cook Islanders have access to hospitals and health clinics and thus have access to essential drugs.

Information Communications Technology

Except for Suvarrow, all inhabited islands had basic satellite telephone connections that can be used to access Internet through dial-up systems. Cook Islands telecommunications is reportedly among the best in the region. Telecom Cook Islands (TCI) is the only local telecommunication service provider, with 40% of TCI owned by the Cook Islands government, while Telecom New Zealand and private shareholders carved up the remaining 60%. A review of the Telecom license will be possible in 2006 where government is expected to ascertain future sustainable options for telecommunication services, and to scope the merits of continuing the monopoly or deregulating the industry.

Figure 29. Telephone subscribers per 100 persons.

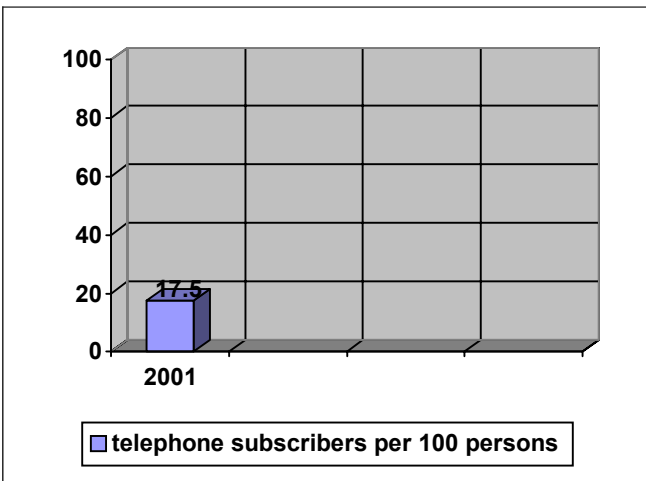
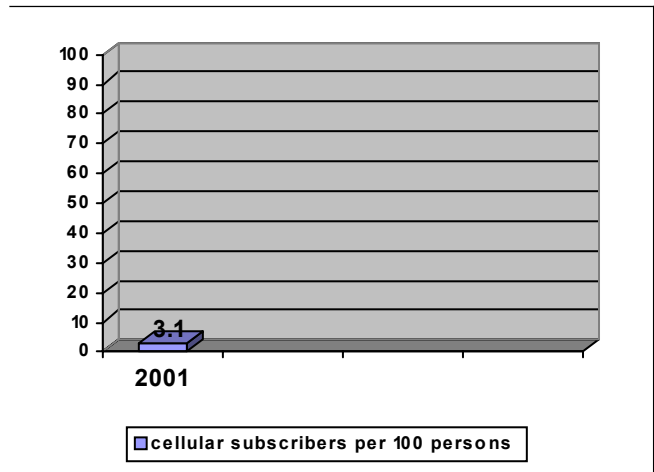


Figure 30. Cell phone subscribers per 100 persons.



¹ Reilly, Q., Head, L., Wichman, V. (2000). *Cook Islands Health Sector review 2000*. Government of the Cook Islands.

While telephone services is available nationwide, the level of access varied widely between Rarotonga (88% of households), as well as the Southern Group (73% of households) and Northern Group (57% of households). There were about 49.5 land line telephone phone users, 24.4 cellular phones users and 11 Internet users per 100 persons.

Challenges

The declining dollar values in the overall annual ODA contributions to the Cook Islands could be viewed as a failure on the part of government to meet its set development targets and goals, especially in the outer islands. ODA is crucial in supporting government's development programmes, especially capital investments on Rarotonga and in the Outer Islands. It is also important that government ascertain the impact of the amount of ODA pumped into the economic and social sectors over the last 10 years, so as to guide ODA contributions over next decade.

The economy is still subjected to major external risks such as global fuel price increases, which will affect productive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, transport and tourism. This could cause contraction to the economy as producers' cutback on operations and capital investments to offset rising productivity costs. A negative impact of this scenario will be the reduction in government tax takes thus affecting social welfare and development programmes.

The Cook Island has ratified the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA), Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Cooperation (PACER) as well as participating in the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations with the European Union. How the Cook Islands implement these instruments will have significant impact on the Cook Islands economy and social settings regarding import and export standards, immigration and labour movements, competitiveness of local products on regional markets, access to regional markets especially for competitive imports, trans-national crimes and changes in the transportation sector. Local consultations on the draft

Pacific Plan drew some scepticism in some sectors of the community due to local structures, institutions, policies and legislations, let alone capacities not in place to offset disadvantages and deal with the perceived impacts on the country from adopting these instruments.

Leading the national effort to improve trade activities is the Development Investment Board (DIB), which was set up in 1996 to encourage foreign investment and trade in the Cook Islands. Given the current robust economic environment, DIB policies have been focussed on redirection of foreign investment towards identified under-developed areas as well as promotion of local products for export.

Maintaining prudent fiscal policies is a major challenge for the Cook Islands in light of growing annual personnel budget for government and numerous changes in coalition government administrations. It is important that government see through the public service reform, job sizing and restructuring of key Ministries in order to make the delivery of public services more efficient.

Youths were struggling to find their place in the communities and this was highlighted by problems regarding drug use, increasing burglary or the lack of life skills and educational qualifications. The youths were also leaving for New Zealand and Australia especially from the outer islands, which were another major concern. The challenge for the Cook Islands is in developing youth programmes that enhanced employment opportunities and the contributions of the youth to the community, as well as for them and their contributions to be valued in local communities.

The government needs to strengthen its logical ordering system and funding for pharmaceuticals supplies, especially in the outer islands to resolve problems of drugs shortages.

Government is yet to fully realize the potential of Tele-Health and Edu.-Net programmes as the means to improving the delivery of these services to the outer islands.

The main challenges for ICT remain in reducing costs and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering of telecommunication services nationwide. This is difficult given the economy of scale in terms of market size and social responsibility to provide the service to communities in remote corners of the nation using expensive technologies across expansive ocean spaces.

Another challenge is the lack of legislation and regulation to keep up with the advancement in the ICT sector.

Supportive Environment

NZAID and AusAID have harmonized their administration of ODA to the Cook Islands last year in order to make delivery of assistance efficient and effective.

A revision of the old 1977 Investment Code (*now called the Investment Code 2003*) was undertaken to set a new direction in investment and to address limitations and shortfalls under the 1977 code that was a vital part of carrying out DIB's core responsibilities under its legislation.

Current government fiscal policies were underpinned by the 1998 Manila Agreements framework that was agreed to by the Government of the Cook Islands and development partners, including the Asian Development Bank. It was established to provide a strong framework for prudent fiscal decision-making after a period of fiscal mismanagement during the early 1990s saw the country basically bankrupt by 1995, and the government unable to meet its own debt and other payment obligations.



One of many Cyber cafes on Rarotonga

The national policy on youth will need to be reviewed and make it more representative of their needs and issues.

Government has established an ICT unit within the Office of the Prime Minister to facilitate and coordinate efforts for strengthening and expanding the ICT sector in the Cook Islands. The UNDP and the Commonwealth Secretariat have been providing technical and funding assistance towards this programme.

One of the important tasks of this office is to prepare and introduce legislation to guide future developments in this sector. A National ICT Policy was completed in 2004 with the following as guiding principles: Quality of Life through ICT, Access for All to ICT, Maximising Economic Growth, Sustainable Development of ICT, and Policy and Regulation of ICT.

MDG 9

Goal 9. Improved Governance

TARGET 19		IMPLEMENT HALF OF THE POLITICAL REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS BY 2010				
Indicators	1991	1996	2001	Will Indicators be met by 2015?	Source of data	
Indicator 49: Implementation of the Political Reform Process with a number of recommendations in effect	NA	NA	15% (or 4 recommendations) adopted 2004	NO		
TARGET 20		ACHIEVE FULL FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACROSS GOVERNMENT SECTORS AND PARLIAMENT				
Indicator 50: Timely financial reports show results-based outcomes (achievements against costs)			Not achieved	PERCA reports confirmed this.	2001 ADB/Cook Is. Econ. Report	
TARGET 21		REPORTING PROCEDURES IN PLACE FOR MONITORING/EVALUATION OF SECTOR PERFORMANCES				
Indicator 51: Sixth monthly and annual reports published and made available to the public.			Not achieved		2001 ADB/Cook Is. Econ. Report	
TARGET 22		ANNUAL REPORT OF GOVERNMENT'S 'RESULTS BASED' EXPENDITURES AVAILABLE AT PUBLIC PLACES				
Indicator 52: Income & Expenditure reports available for Public perusal at advertised public places.			Gradual Improvements		2001 ADB/Cook Is. Econ. Report	
TARGET 23		COMPLETE DEVOLUTION PROCESS WITH FULL ADMINISTRATION DEVOLVED TO OUTER ISLANDS BY 2010				
Indicator 53: Implementation of the devolution process with clear milestones (OMIA)		Devolution Introduced	Confusion, Devolution reversal, Need to develop a clear framework for devolution	Draft Island State Govt. Bill ready for Parliament debate 2005.	2001 ADB/Cook Is. Econ. Report	
TARGET 24		REGULAR REVIEW OF PRIVATE SECTOR PERFORMANCE AT ALL LEVELS				
Indicator 54: Have established a fully functional review Mechanism for monitoring private sector performance			Commerce Bill still in draft form	Stakeholders discussions has stalled	Office of the Prime Minister	
TARGET 25		CODE OF CONDUCT ADOPTED FOR MPs, CABINET, AND ALL PUBLIC SERVANTS AND IMPLEMENTED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER ACT.				

Indicator 55: A performance based and effective public sector as a result of Parliamentarians, public and civil servants adherence to the Code of Conduct			No Leadership Code of Conduct for leaders, senior public servants		2003 National Dev. Forum Outcomes report
TARGET 26	FULL AND INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE OPERATIONS AND PERFORMANCE OF THE WHOLE COOK ISLANDS PUBLIC SERVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT BY 2008				
Indicator 56: A standardized government operations Systems manual to be implemented strictly by HOM's			No updated Public Service operations manual/	Public service reform to begin (2005/06 Budget)	2003 National Dev. Forum Outcomes report

Status & Trends:

The objective of Goal 9 is to ensure integration of the principle values of the Millennium Declaration, in particular good governance, across all sectors especially the Parliament, public service and leading public and private institutions, as well as communities nationwide.

Since the Political Reform Commission report came out in 1998, the government has carried out only two full recommendations and two partial recommendations. These include: abolishing the Overseas Constituency prior to the last election; securing the mandate through a public referendum to reduce the term of parliament to four years instead of five years; replacing the MPs superannuation scheme with the current Cook Islands National Superannuation Fund and renewed the New Zealand/Cook Islands Relationship Agreement.

Since 1997, the process of devolution of responsibility for public expenditure and public service delivery in designated areas from central agencies to the outer islands is best described as chaotic. The process was not well implemented as devolution of functions and responsibilities went full speed ahead and overtook the resourcing and capacity development in technical and management areas, especially finance and administration.⁸ This caused confusion about the roles, functions and responsibilities of various departments, local governments and leaders on the outer islands and between central agencies and island administrations.

The lack of clear policy direction from government, the lack of progress and positive outcomes from the process also saw a reversal of devolution, which was made worse by misguided political interventions. In 2002, policy changes saw "devolution" being replaced by "partnership for empowerment" which even contributed to the confusion, as there was no clear framework to work with the new policy. The administration at the time wanted to continue pushing for devolution and has called for a clear framework to guide the process.

Weaknesses in financial management and reporting requirements in the public sector were still being highlighted by recent Audit reports. MFEM has responded to this issue by increasing assistance to government ministries through training and the production of an Accounting Procedures and Policies Manual in December 2002. A key concern identified by the Budget Committee (2003/04) consultations is the political pressure on Heads of Ministries (HOM's) and Island Secretaries. In general, there is an apparent lack of appreciation by Ministers of the Crown of the accountability of ministry budgets that are the sole responsibility of Heads of Ministries. There is also a lack of accountability by government in taking disciplinary actions against Ministers, HOM's and senior

⁸ AGRICO Ltd, ANZDEC Ltd. (2003). ADB TA No. 3795-COO: Preparing the Outer Islands Development Program. OMI, MFEM, ADB.

public servants who contravened government policies, contractual obligations and failed to meet set performance targets.

The current government administration is calling for a public service reform in the 2005 budget due to the public perception of a lethargic and ineffective bureaucracy. This perception was supported by audit reports of waste, overstaffing, inefficiency, tolerance for mediocre performances and failed management at the highest levels.

The draft Commerce Bill was completed but discussions by Cabinet and other key stakeholders for finalisation had stalled since 2003. This piece of legislation was aimed at setting up a Commerce Commission with a mandate to facilitate; monitor and enforcement of regulations and policies aimed at preventing unfair trading practices and corrupt behaviours in the business sector. It should provide support to other legislations such as the Fair Trading Act.

The judiciary system comprising of Parliament, Crown Law Office, Ministry of Justice and Police, collectively provide the basis for upholding the principles of democracy, and checks and balances fundamental to the cause of justice. There is a need to review the performances of some of these offices and to strengthen their capacities in their respective roles and responsibilities.

Challenges

Developing real partnerships between government and civil society organisations as was the case with the MDG's project continues to be slow due to indecisions, slow commitment and buy in from Parliament and government officials.

Our political coalition experiences in the past have not improved confidence in the level of political and administrative leadership much needed for strong future policy and national development directions. This predicament was highlighted and commonly voiced in community consultations.

Political will is needed to continue the implementation of the recommendations of the Political Reform Commission. This also applies to the enforcement of policies and regulations attributed to the Public Expenditure Review Committee (PERCA) Act, Public Service Commission (PSC) Act and Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) Act. PERCA must be given adequate support in terms of resources and strengthening of their legislation to ensure that the recommendations and disciplinary measures as the results of investigations and reports are followed through.

Before further developing a suitable and practical framework for devolving certain roles and functions to island governments, it is crucial that the current administration complete the long term and medium term National Sustainable Development Plan, so that the devolution process is integrated into the national development planning process. Another challenge is to keep leaders informed and in a participatory role to reduce misguided interventions during devolvement of public services to the outer islands.

Government must make sure that the Public Service reform is implemented and followed through to ensure that positive outcomes are actually translated from that exercise. Improving the delivery of services within key Ministries such as OMIA, the Ministry of Health, Ombudsman, Police, Ministry of Works and outer islands administrations is crucial to restoring confidence in the public service.

While it is good for government to refrain from competing with the private sector in commercial activities, it has obligations to ensure that good governance principles are upheld in the private sector as well. Therefore, it is crucial that the Commerce Bill is revisited and redrafted to suit local business environment and for it to be adopted to ensure good corporate responsibilities and behaviours as well as fair-trading activities prevail for the sake of the public and consumers.

Supporting Environment

Supporting frameworks for good governance in the public sector, as a result of the mid-90's economic reform, include: the MFEM Act, PSC Act, and PERCA Act which requires fiscal discipline, increased accountability and requiring performance assessments for HOM's and senior public servants. The independent Public Expenditure Review Committee (PERC) and the Audit Office as well as NGOs have been effective in monitoring of government activities to date. It is important that government continue to support the Audit office and NGOs in their roles and functions. Adoption of an appropriate Commerce Commission Act is important to ensure good governance principles are upheld in the private sector for the sake of the public and consumer interests.

As long as it is not politicised and not treated as a “witch hunt,” the public service reform would be an excellent opportunity to revitalise and re-energise the public sector, including the strengthening of key processes such as national planning, devolution and the Political Reform process. The call for a review was supported in principle by the government and opposition members during the 2005/06 budgetary debates in Parliament.



Traditional leaders



Hon. Tangata Vavia, Hon. Ngamau Munokoa

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Annexes

Annex 1: Table of MDG's Targets and Indicators

Annex 2: Selected Cook Islands Population and Economic Tables

- Table of Population Estimates and Vital Statistics, 2003.
- Table of Total population size, change, distribution and density by island (pg 13 2001 census report)
- Table of Resident Population, 1996, 2001
- Table of Resident Population by broad age groups, median age, dependency and sex ratio, 1991, 1996 and 2001
- Table of Household size, pg 39 2001 census

Annex 3: Tailored MDG's in Mitiaro: a Case Study

Annex 1: Table of MDG's Targets and Indicators

The MDG's and targets originate from the Millennium Declaration signed by 189 countries, including 147 Heads of State, adopted at the Millennium Summit, held in New York in September 2000 (<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/55/a55r002.pdf> - A/RES/55/2). The goals and targets are inter-related and should be seen as a whole. They represent a partnership between the developed countries and the developing countries determined, as the Declaration states, "to create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and the elimination of poverty."

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	
Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	1. Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day
Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	2. Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty] 3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption 4. Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age 5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	
Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full of primary schooling	6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education 7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 level 8. Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	
Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and Secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015	9. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education 10. Ratio of literate women to men 15-24 years old 11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector 12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	
Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	13. Under-five mortality rate 14. Infant mortality rate 15. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunised against measles
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	
Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	16. Maternal mortality ratio 17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	
Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	18. HIV prevalence among 15-24 year old pregnant women 19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate 19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex

<p>Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases</p>	<p>21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria 22. Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures</p>
<p>Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability</p> <p>Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources</p> <p>Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation</p> <p>Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers</p>	<p>25. Proportion of land area covered by forest 26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area 27. Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP) 28. Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons) 30. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural 31. Proportion of urban and rural population with access to improved sanitation 32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure</p>
<p>Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development</p> <p><u>Official development assistance</u></p> <p>Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally</p> <p>Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries. Includes: tariff and quota free access for least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty</p> <p><u>Market access</u></p>	<p>33. Net ODA, total and to LDCs, as percentage of OECD/DAC donors' gross national income 34. Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation) 35. Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is untied 36. ODA received in landlocked countries as proportion of their GNIs 37. ODA received in small island developing States as proportion of their GNIs</p>
<p>Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked countries small island developing States (through the of Action for the Sustainable Development Special session of the General Assembly)</p> <p><u>Debt Sustainability</u></p>	<p>38. Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and LDCs, admitted free of duties 39. Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles 40. Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as percentage of their GDP 41: Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade</p>
<p>Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt</p>	<p>42. Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)</p>

sustainable in the long term	43. Debt relief committed under HIPC initiative, US\$
Target 16: In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth	44. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services
Target 17: In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries	45. Unemployment rate of 15-24 year-olds, each sex and total
Target 18: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications	46. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis
Target 19: Implement half of the Political Reform recommendations by 2010	47. Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population
target 20: Achieve full financial accountability across government sectors and Parliament	48. Personal computers in use per 100 population and Internet users per 100 population
Target 21: Reporting procedures in place for monitoring/evaluation of sector performances	49. Implementation of the Political Reform process with a number of recommendations in effect
Target 22: Annual report of government's 'results based' expenditures available at public places	50: Timely financial reports show results-based outcomes (achievements against costs)
Target 23: Complete devolution process with full administration devolved to outer islands by 2010	51: Sixth monthly and annual reports published and made available to the public.
Target 24: Regular review of private sector performance at all levels	52: Income & Expenditure reports available for public perusal at advertised public places.
Target 25: Code of conduct adopted for MPs, Cabinet, and all public servants and implemented under the Public Service Commissioner Act.	53: Implementation of the devolution process with clear milestones (OMIA)
Target 26: Full and independent review of the operations and performance of the whole Cook Islands Public sector and recommendations for improvement by 2008	54: Have established a fully functional review mechanism for monitoring private sector performance
	55: A performance based and effective public sector as a result of Parliamentarians, public and civil servants adherence to the Code of Conduct
	56: A standardized government operations systems manual to be implemented strictly by HOM's

Annex 2: Selected Cook Islands Demographic Tables

Table 1: Total population size, change, distribution and density by island

Island/ Region	Area (km ²)	Total population		Population change (1996-2001)		Population distribution (%)	Density (persons per km ²)
		1991	1996	2001	Total		
Rarotonga	67.1	10,886	11,225	12,188	963	67.6	182
Southern Group	145.2	5,463	5,424	4013	-1,411	22.3	28
Aitutaki	18.3	2,357	2,389	1,946	-443	10.8	106
Mangaia	51.8	1,214	1,108	744	-364	4.1	14
Atiu	26.9	1,006	956	623	-333	3.5	23
Mauke	18.4	639	652	470	-182	2.6	26
Mitiaro	22.3	247	319	230	-89	1.3	10
Manuae	6.2	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Takutea	1.3	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Northern Group	24.4	2,259	2,454	1,826	-628	10.1	75
Palmerston	2.1	49	49	48	-1	0.3	23
Pukapuka	1.3	670	779	664	-115	3.7	511
Nassau	1.3	102	99	72	-27	0.4	55
Manihiki	5.4	663	668	515	-153	2.9	95
Rakahanga	4.1	262	249	169	-80	0.9	41
Penrhyn	9.8	503	606	357	-249	2.0	36
Suvarrow	0.4	10	4	1	-3	0.0	3
Cook Islands	236.7	18,608	19,103	18,027	-1,076	100	76

Table 2: Resident population, 1996 and 2001

Island and Region	Resident population		Resident population change (1996-2001)		Residents' distribution (%)
	1996	2001	Number	%	
Rarotonga	10,374	9,451	-923	-8.9	63.0
Southern Group	5,258	3,777	-1,481	-28.2	25.2
Aitutaki	2,272	1,743	-529	-23.3	11.6
Mangaia	1,083	739	-344	-31.8	4.9
Atiu	942	600	-342	-36.3	4.0
Mauke	643	469	-174	-27.1	3.1
Mitiaro	318	226	-92	-28.9	1.5
Manuae	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Takutea	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Northern Group	2,439	1,789	-650	-26.7	11.9
Palmerston	49	48	-1	-2.0	0.3
Pukapuka	778	662	-116	-14.9	4.4
Nassau	99	72	-27	-27.3	0.5
Manihiki	656	497	-159	-24.2	3.3
Rakahanga	249	158	-91	-36.5	1.1
Penrhyn	604	351	-253	-41.9	2.3
Suvarrow	4	1	-3	-75.0	0.0
Cook Islands	18,071	15,017	-3,054	-16.9	100

Table 3: Resident population by broad age groups, median age, dependency and sex ratio, 1991, 1996 and 2001

Age group	Total		Rarotonga		Southern Group		Northern Group	
	1991	1996	1996	2001	1996	2001	1996	2001
0 – 14	35.5	35.9	34.1	31.7	36.9	40.3	40.3	40.3
15 – 59	57	55.9	55.9	59.1	49.9	51.5	51.5	51.5
60 +	7.5	8.3	10.0	9.1	13.2	8.2	8.2	8.2
Median age	21.3	22.9	25.3	26.5	24.5	19.8	19.8	19.8
Dependency ratio	75	79	79	69	101	94	94	94
Sex ratio	108	106	107	105	105	119	119	119

Table 4: Resident population 15 years and older by sex, region and income range (NZD)

	COOK ISLANDS			Rarotonga			Southern Group			Northern Group		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
Total persons	9,882	5,019	4,863	6,431	3,258	3,173	2,383	1,183	1,200	1,068	578	490
Income range	(percentage)											
No income	16.2	16.4	15.9	10.5	9.2	11.9	26.1	27.4	24.9	27.7	34.1	20.2
Less than \$5,000	27.0	20.2	34.0	21.3	16.6	26.2	37.5	28.5	46.4	37.6	23.2	54.7
\$5,000-\$9,999	19.2	21.0	17.4	20.1	20.7	19.6	18.1	22.1	14.2	15.9	20.2	10.8
\$10,000-\$14,999	13.9	15.4	12.3	16.6	18.0	15.1	9.2	11.0	7.4	7.9	9.2	6.3
\$15,000-\$19,999	9.5	9.8	9.1	12.1	12.3	11.8	5.0	5.7	4.3	3.6	3.5	3.7
\$20,000-\$29,999	7.9	8.9	6.8	10.5	11.7	9.3	2.5	3.3	1.8	3.9	5.2	2.4
\$30,000-\$39,000	2.7	3.3	2.1	3.7	4.5	2.9	0.8	1.0	0.6	1.0	1.7	0.2
\$40,000-\$49,000	1.2	1.6	0.8	1.7	2.3	1.2	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2
\$50,000-\$59,000	0.7	1.2	0.3	1.0	1.7	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.0
> \$59,000	1.2	1.9	0.6	1.7	2.6	0.8	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.8	1.0	0.6
Not stated	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.8	0.9	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average annual income (\$)	12,253	14,121	10,328	14,236	16,117	12,237	7,485	8,748	6,283	8,390	10,755	6,092

Table 5: Number of privately occupied households and average household size by island, 1991, 1996 and 2001

Island/ Region	1991			1996			2001		
	Number of households	Average size	household	Number of households	Average size	household	Number of households	Average size	household
Rarotonga	2,222	4.6	2,569	4.1	2,531	3.9			
Southern Group	1,035	5.2	1,127	4.7	965	4.0			
Aitutaki	440	5.2	496	4.6	435	4.1			
Mangaia	228	5.3	237	4.7	197	3.8			
Atiu	192	5.2	197	4.8	161	3.9			
Mauke	120	5.3	133	4.9	110	4.3			
Mitiaro	55	4.5	64	5	62	3.7			
Northern Group	420	5.4	457	5.4	384	4.8			
Palmerston	10	4.9	11	4.5	12	4.0			
Pukapuka	112	6	120	6.5	124	5.4			
Nassau	18	5.7	21	4.7	15	4.8			
Manihiki	134	4.9	149	4.5	117	4.4			
Rakahanga	44	6	42	5.9	32	5.3			
Penrhyn	101	5	113	5.4	83	4.3			
Suvarrow	1	10	1	4	1	1.0			
Total	3,677	4.9	4,153	4.4	3,880	4.0			

Annex 3: Localised MDG's Targets and Indicators in Mitiaro - A Case Study

<p>GOAL 1 – Increase population & establish community college for Mitiaro with access to information technology.</p>	<p>Targets:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 100 more babies born and raised on the island. Community education programmes are implemented through the community college. All students have access to IT. Half the number of Mitiaro students gain scholarships for further studies overseas. More than half of the students have returned to work in Mitiaro. Double employment levels in the private sector by 2010 Increase agriculture production/exports, eco-tourism and cottage industries A private sector driven economy by 2010 with sustainable tourism industry. A virtues-based community of 'aroa' 	<p>Indicators:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> No more family planning programmes until target is reached. Half of the community are enrolled in skills training/education programmes Increased awareness and action reach a 50% sustainable communities status. 10 Mitiaro students progressing with their studies overseas. 5 Mitiaro students are serving in both the private and public sectors of the islands development. Double the number of sustainable businesses. Government subsidies for agriculture equipment/ seedlings and home gardening. Less crime, efficient, honest workers, co-operation in community.
<p>GOAL 2 Achieve universal primary education</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide special education needs at primary school level Mitiaro culture taught as a core curriculum subject. Run additional literacy/numeracy programme Increase teacher capacity to upgrade quality of teaching in classrooms. Increase parental/community support for school programmes Enforce law of compulsory education for children. Establish Early Childhood Education. (ECE) Promote post secondary learning Improve school infrastructure, resources and IT access. Establish a healthy lunches programme for students Increase opportunities for Distance learning for post secondary skills training courses Increase school roll and funds for a well-resourced school. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Special needs unit established Increased interest/pride in Mitiaro culture 50% of community involved in literacy/numeracy programme Highly qualified teachers in each classroom 60% parental support evident in students passes rates. Every child attending school. ECE centre up and running School partnership with community college. Classroom repairs completed, maintenance programme followed with sufficient resources. Healthier students on attendance roll. More students from Mitiaro graduating at higher education levels Respect & island-wide support for Mitiaro school
<p>GOAL 3 Gender</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Two women elected on island council and other decision-making areas. One Mitiaro woman elected as MP in the next elections. Equality in homes and workplace Provide equal opportunities for training at national level Run educational programmes on gender balance in the home re: sharing responsibilities for decision-making and implementation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Better and faster decisions backed by action made on the island. Changed attitudes toward decision making Women and men consult together when making decisions. Happier families and partnership in workplace. Women participate in political decisions Training opportunities accessible to women at national level
<p>GOAL 4 Reducing child mortality</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> ECE – preventative measures Strong child-centred communities contributing to healthier living standards. Regular Maternal health and parenting skills programme through community college. Promote healthy family life, ante, and pre/post natal care including fathers. Trained ECE teachers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regular review of Goal – 6 monthly – annually to determine strengths and weaknesses & the way forward. Parenting skills programmes run by the community college. Promotional programmes for healthy family life. At least 3 trained local ECE teachers
<p>GOAL 5 Maternal health</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Good nurse and good doctor Equipment available for pre-natal checks. Healthy diet programmes for mothers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Better resourced ante natal clinic Less obese women on the island.

<p>GOAL 6 Combat HIV/AIDS and other lifestyle diseases</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce by half the number of people suffering heart problems, hypertension and gout. 2. Promote condom use, no smoking, weight watch programmes, fitness training. 3. Promote personal hygiene 4. Promote clean environment to rid island of mosquito breeding sites 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Household diets consist mainly of healthy island foods/greens and vegetables. 2. Monogamy practiced. 3. Increased healthy population 4. Regular health inspections in every home and uninhabited areas where mosquitoes breed.
<p>GOAL 7 Environmental sustainability</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular environmental support/awareness programmes. 2. Collaboration between Environment Office and the community. 3. Pigs kept in pens. 4. Enforce By-Laws for the protection of endangered species and habitats. 5. Protection of lake/wetlands 6. Increased capacity for natural resources management 7. Better water quality access 8. Sustainable development integration in new ventures. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community/television programmes 2. Joint annual environment activities implemented by Environment Service/Community partnerships 3. Less damage to gardens from wandering pigs. 4. Increased number of protected species. 5. No unsustainable development around lake area. 6. At least five people trained in Resource Management and applying skills on Mitiaro. 7. Every home has a water tank subsidized by government.
<p>GOAL 8 Partnerships</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leaders on the island co-operate and work in partnership with the community. 2. Women and men work together according to their capacities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development benefits all of Mitiaro rather than a few. 2. Harmony in our homes and in our work place.
<p>Goal 9 Improve Governance</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement the half of the Political Reform recommendations by 2010 2. Achieve full financial accountability across government sectors and Parliament 3. Reporting procedures in place for monitoring/evaluation of sector performances 4. Annual report of government's 'results based' expenditures available at public places 5. Complete devolution process with full administration devolved to outer islands by 2010 6. Regular review of private sector performance at all levels 7. Code of conduct adopted for MPs, Cabinet, and all public servants and implemented under the Public Service Commissioner Act. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legislation passed for implementation of PR recommendations. 2. Timely financial reports show results-based outcomes 3. 6 monthly and annual reports published and publicly available 4. Income & Expenditure reports available for public perusal at advertised places. 5. Regular progress reviews with communities 6. Implementation of the devolution process with clear milestones (OMIA) 6. Have established a fully functional review mechanism for monitoring private sector performance 7. A performance based and effective public sector as a result of public and civil servants adherence to the Code of Conduct.