

Ensuring Our Survival

RMI's Emerging Approach to Adaptation

Atoll Adaptation Dialogue: 30 April 2019 Suva, Fiji



Structure of Discussion

Increasingly Inconvenient Truths

Accelerated Adaptation Needed

Some Early Principles

Adaptation Horizons

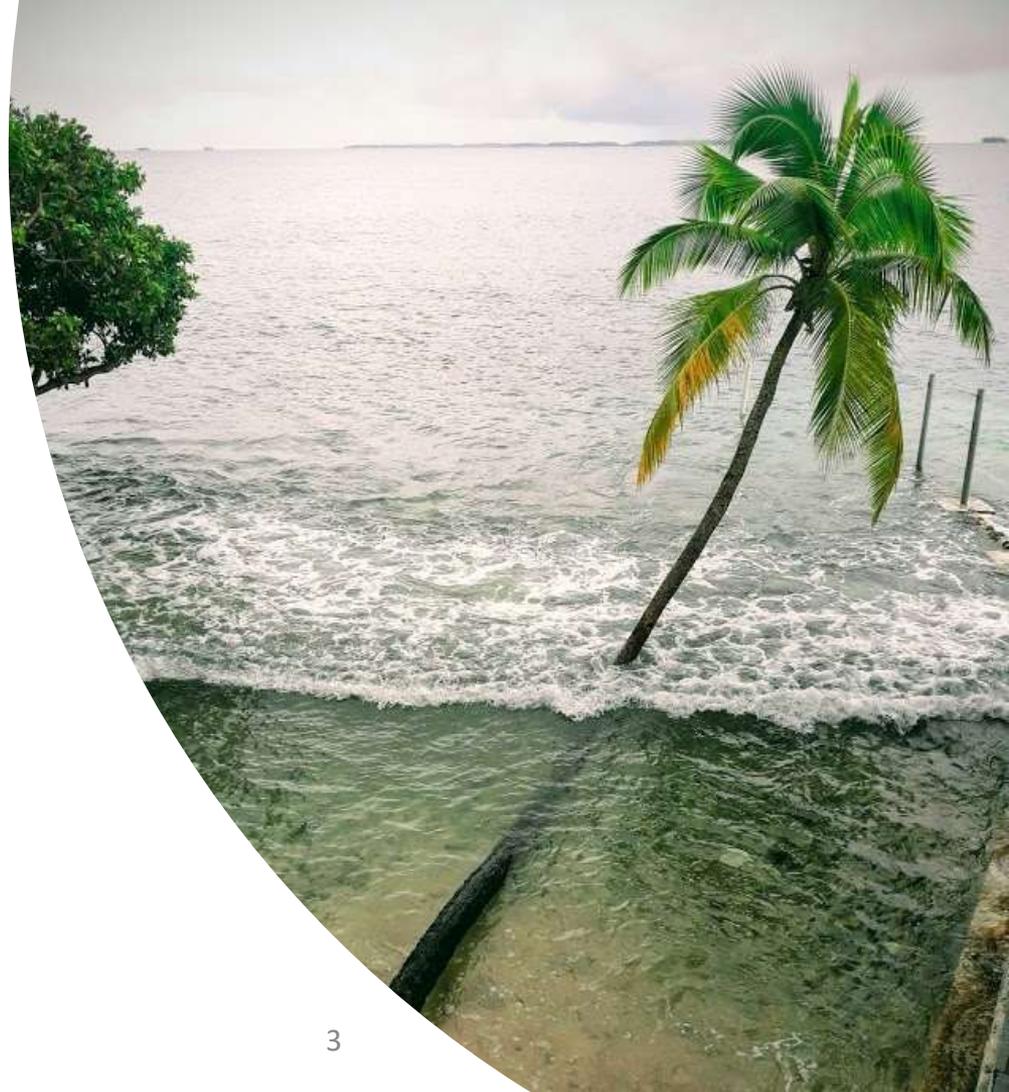
Migration?

Elevation?

Process and Pathways

Increasingly Inconvenient Truths

- Emissions, warming, sea-level rising
- Likely to worsen, accelerating change?
- Low-lying countries/areas threatened
- But atolls uniquely vulnerable
- Face exceptional, existential threat



Increasingly Inconvenient Truths

- Impacts and costs already growing
- Continued habitability of atoll communities in question
- Atoll nations now face the real prospect of being completely wiped off map



Accelerated Adaptation Needed

- Must err on the side of caution
- Heightened CC demands accelerated adaptation planning and action
- Build resilience to growing climate and disaster risks
- Counterfactual:
what if we did nothing?



Some Early Principles

- We have a natural, inalienable right
- Resilience to be a fundamental focus
- Adaptation is complex, multidimensional
- Knowledge-first approach
- Strengthen capacity to adapt
- Emphasize consultation, consensus-building
- Embrace innovation, traditional knowledge



Some Early Principles

Adaptation fundamentally about our....

Security

Well-being

Identity

Self-determination

Human rights

....Survival



Adaptation Horizons

- 1st Horizon adaptation (now):
 - Coastal protection
 - Water and food security
 - Climate proofing
 - Other common measures
- Tipping points toward 2nd Horizon (when?):
 - More radical adaptation measures
 - Potential relocation/migration
 - Elevation?



Migration?

- Marshallese already migrating
- Mostly for non-CC reasons
- But migration *en mass* problematic:
 - Cultural/identity: loss of place-based culture and language
 - Legal/sovereign: what about our sovereign space and resources?
- Migration already causing major development challenges



Elevation?

- Migration problematic, but how can we stay against the rising sea levels?
- Can we raise islands or build new ones to rise above future tides?
- Create the higher ground onto which we internally relocate/consolidate?
- Definitely a costly, complex process
- But likely the only long-term option



Process and Pathways

- NAP process starting (mid-2020 target)
 - Identify key knowledge gaps
 - Scientific, legal, socio-cultural pathways
 - Short, medium, long-term priorities
 - Plausible scenarios, tipping points, habitability thresholds
 - Atoll center of excellence?
 - Seek accelerated, dedicated support
- ...**but** what if conditions rapidly deteriorate?

Kommool tata (thank you very much)

