**Marshall Islands Workshop on Ratification and Implementation of the
UN Convention Against Corruption**

**16-17 February 2011, Majuro**

**OUTCOMES STATEMENT**

From 16-17 February 2011, the Nitijela of the Republic of Marshall Islands (National Parliament) hosted a National Workshop on Ratification and Implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption for members of the Nitijela. The workshop was facilitated by the UNDP Pacific Centre.

The Workshop was opened by the Speaker of the Nitjela, Hon Alvin Jacklick who emphasised that: ““As a member of the international community, it is important that Marshall Islands joins the global fight against corruption. Our Nitijela must endorse the ratification the UN Convention against Corruption for the benefit of our children, our communities and our country.

The Workshop discussed the value of UNCAC ratification to the Republic of Marshall Islands national development efforts and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The provisions of UNCAC were explained in detail to Senators, as well as the UNCAC Review Mechanism. This National Workshop followed up the regional “Ratification and Implementation of UNCAC Meeting for Pacific Policy-Makers”, held in July 2010 in Apia, Samoa by UNDP and the UN Office of Drugs and Crime.

At the conclusion of the Workshop, the Members of the Nitijela agreed that, in support of national efforts to tackle corruption, priority should be given to:

1. Commencing the national process to progress accession to UNCAC;
2. Noting Bill 69 tabled in the Nitijela which currently seeks to amend the Criminal Code, obtaining urgent advice from the Attorney General’s Office and/or Nitijela Legislative Counsel on whether the current amendments to the Criminal Code are consistent with UNCAC, in particular UNCAC Chapter 3: Criminalisation and Law Enforcement and propose amendments for consideration by the Nitijela in response;
3. In furtherance of Article 6 and 36 of UNCAC, strengthening the capacity of:
	1. the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in order to build the capacity of members to undertake effective oversight of government expenditure and to coordinate their efforts more effectively with bodies such as the Audit Office;
	2. the Audit Office, in particular in relation to:
* Building up the proposed new Audit Investigations Unit;
* Reviewing national and donor scholarship programmes selection criteria to prioritise scholarships for accounting, public finance and similar courses;
* Supporting timely investigation of reports made through the proposed new Corruption Hotline;
	1. the Attorney General’s Office, in particular ensuring a properly staffed Office which:
* is equipped to prosecute corruption cases effectively and in a timely manner; and
* has access to capacity-building and training to support specialization in corruption prosecutions;
	1. the Police Service, in particular in relation to conducting investigations into corruption;
1. In furtherance of Article 7 of UNCAC, holding a Nitijela hearing of the Committee of the Whole into the work of the Public Service Commission (PSC) with a view to identifying options for strengthening public service accountability processes in the context of recruitment/management/discipline/ termination and improving enforcement of such processes;
2. In furtherance of Article 7 of UNCAC, revisiting:
	1. the *Ethics in Government Act* to ensure thatthe power to terminate public service employees falls within the powers of the PSC under the Constitution;
	2. the current Public Service Regulations to examine whether people who have been convicted of corruption offences should be terminated and not be re-recruited into the public service;
3. In furtherance of Article 8 of UNCAC, reviewing the draft Public Service Values released in January 2011 to ensure they promote the principles enshrined in UNCAC, including by:
	1. Including explicit provisions to stamp out nepotism;
	2. Promoting more information disclosure by the public service, rather than secrecy which may allow corruption to be hidden;
4. In recognition of the merit of Article 12 of UNCAC relating to the private sector and Article 13 related to civil society participation, develop stronger partnerships between the public sector/government , accountability institutions such as the Audit Office, private sector and civil society to more effectively tackle corruption;
5. In furtherance of Article 13 of UNCAC, undertaking education programmes with the public to:
	1. Raise their awareness of the channels available for reporting corruption and the public’s rights under the Constitution to protection for reporting corruption;
	2. Empower members of the public to participate in anti-corruption activities;
6. Noting that members of the public service and the general public are often afraid if they report on corruption to authorities, and in furtherance of Articles 32 and 33 of UNCAC in relation to protecting witnesses, experts, victims and reporting persons:
	1. Taking legislative action, such as a whistleblower protection law, and implementing other systems to protect people who report on corruption from reprisals;

In addition to recommendations specifically directed at addressing corruption and promoting accountability in the Republic of Marshall Islands, Members of the Nitijela also called for organization of:

1. A specific briefing on MDGs, including on the Marshall Islands 2009 MDGs Progress Report;
2. A specific briefing on MDG 3 on gender equality, in particular to discuss education and health indicators as well as women in decision-making.

Majuro, Marshall Islands
16 February 2011