



National Millennium Development Goals Report



Government of the Cook Islands

Cook Islands 2010



United Nations





Copyright © 2010, Central Policy and Planning Office, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER.
National Millennium Development Goals Report 2009, COOK ISLANDS

Prepared by Elizabeth Wright-Koteka, Director of Central Policy and Planning Office, Vaine
Wichman, UNDP Strategic planning Technical Assistant

Cover and Layout Design by Maria Tuoro
Photos credit : William Tuiravakai, Donye Numa
MDG LOGO's : United Nations



CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	4
ACRONYMS	5
Refocusing our Development Efforts	6
A Snapshot of Goals and Targets in the Cook Islands	8
GOAL 1. ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER.....	11
GOAL 2. ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION.....	16
GOAL 3. PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN	19
GOAL 4. REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY.....	23
GOAL 5. IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH.....	25
GOAL 6. COMBAT HIV/AIDS, NCDs AND OTHER DISEASES	27
GOAL 7. ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	31
GOAL 8. DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT	37
GOAL 9. IMPROVED GOVERNANCE.....	42
REFERENCES.....	46

FOREWORD



Kia Orana

As a member of the global community, the Cook Islands is committed to the Millennium Declaration and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As we are now at the mid-point year towards the target year 2015, it is important to look back and reflect on what the Cook Islands has been able to achieve since its first National Millennium Development Goal Report in 2005.

I am proud that the Cook Islands has built upon our first National MDG report and my government has taken the MDG agenda forward by incorporating the MDGs into our National Sustainable Development Plan 2007-2010.

We have achieved MDG 5 ahead of time and have made pleasing progress in all other goals. However, there are some goals where we have slipped in our efforts. This midway report will assist us to understand where we require additional focus and renewed commitment to guarantee that we will be on track, working together with the international community to ensure all goals will be achieved by 2015.

The task ahead will be challenged by global events that are impacting our island economy. Risks to our country's economic growth are strongly linked to the global economic outlook, via tourism receipts, financial links, vulnerabilities to rising fuel and food prices, distances from markets and the out-migration of our own people.

Climate change has now become an unprecedented challenge for our country and the rest of the world, and we need to collectively implement adaptation and mitigation measures that are so critical for the survival of small nations such as ours.

We must ensure that our past efforts towards achieving the MDGs are not derailed by the challenges that we now face and develop and implement the relevant policies and actions that will keep us on track towards reaching the 2015 MDG targets.



Hon. Jim Marurai
PRIME MINISTER

ACRONYMS

AusAid	Australian Aid
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADB/CIER	Asian Development Bank/ Cook Islands Economic Report 2001 and 2008
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIANGO	Cook Islands Association of Non Government Organizations
CINCW	Cook Islands National Council of Women
CO2	Carbon Dioxide
DOTS	Directly Observed Treatment Short Course
ECE	Early Childhood Education
GADD	Gender and Development Division (Ministry of Internal Affairs)
GIS	Geographical Information System
GNI	Gross National Income
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Gg	Gigagrammes
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MFEM	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NESAF	National Environmental Strategic Action Framework
NES	National Environment Services
NSDP	National Sustainable Development Plan
NCDs	Non Communicable Diseases
OMIA	Office of the Minister of Island Administrations
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Cooperation
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PSC	Public Service Commission
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TB	Tuberculosis
TCI	Telecom Cook Islands
UNCEDAW	United Nations Committee on CEDAW
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation



1

Refocusing our Development Efforts

THIS REPORT PROVIDES AN ASSESSMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Development Goals in the Cook Islands

In 2005, our first Millennium Development Goals National Report was published. This action signified our commitment alongside the global community to improve the living standards of Cook Islanders.

Our first report demonstrated that the Cook Islands has made significant strides in the areas of education, health, and political development. The principles that have directed our efforts expect us to strive to achieve all goals, highlighting, that the process of goal achievement is an iterative one. We therefore need to assess what has been achieved, refine our approaches and strategies and redefining goals in order to continue to improve the status of our people.

We remain committed to achieving the millennium development goals by 2015 and have thus since 2005 incorporated these goals into our own medium and long term national planning frameworks. The long term strategic outcomes for the Cook Islands reflect the Millennium Development Goals. Our national strategic outcomes are:

- Strategic Outcome 1:* Well educated, healthy and productive people and resilient communities.
- Strategic Outcome 2:* A secure society built on law and order, and good governance.
- Strategic Outcome 3:* Sustainable economic growth in harmony with our social values, culture and environment.
- Strategic Outcome 4:* Responsible and mature foreign relations with New Zealand and other regional and international communities in the interests of the people of the Cook Islands.
- Strategic Outcome 5:* Enhanced cultural and environmental values.

Our commitment to the achievement of the MDGs is mirrored also in our national strategic goals as articulated in the National Sustainable Development Plan, 2007-2010.

Goal 1: Equal opportunities for education, health, and other social services towards maintaining an inclusive, vibrant, resilient and productive society in harmony with our culture.

Goal 2: A society built on law and order and good governance at all levels.

Goal 3: Innovative and well-managed private sector led economy.

Goal 4: Sustainable use and management of our environment and natural resources.

Goal 5: A strong basic infrastructure base to support national development.

Goal 6: A safe, secure and resilient community.

Goal 7: A foreign affairs policy that meets the needs and aspirations of the Cook Islands people.

Goal 8: Strengthened national coordination and institutional support systems for development planning, evaluation and monitoring.

We envisage that our strategic targets for the achievement of our national goals will also lead to the realization of the MDGs.

MDGs

A Snapshot of Goals and Targets in the Cook Islands

THE GOALS

Goals		Will the Goal be Reached by 2015?				National Support			
		Already Achieved	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
1	Eradicate extreme poverty and 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, malaria and other diseases		◆				◆		
7	Ensure environmental sustainability			◆		◆			
8	Develop a global partnership for development		◆				◆		
9	Improved Governance			◆				◆	

THE TARGETS

Goals	Targets	Will the Targets be Reached by 2015?				National Support?			
		Already Achieved	Probably	Potentially	Unlikely	Strong	Fair	Weak but Improving	Weak
1	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	◆				◆			
	Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people		◆			◆			
	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	◆				◆			
2	Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling		◆			◆			
3	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015		◆			◆			
4	Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	◆				◆			
5	Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015,	◆				◆			

	the under-five mortality rate								
	Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health	◆				◆			
6	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	◆					◆		
	Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it		◆			◆			
	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	◆				◆			
7	Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources		◆			◆			
	Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss		◆				◆		
	Halve, by 2015, the proportion without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation		◆			◆			
	By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	◆				◆			
8	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)			◆			◆		
	Address the special needs of the least developed countries		◆			◆			
	Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States		◆			◆			
	Deal comprehensively with the developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term		◆			◆			
	In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries		◆			◆			
	In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications		◆			◆			
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 proves with full Administration devolved to outer islands by 2010		◆			◆			
	Regular review of private sector performance at all levels			◆			◆		
	Code of conduct adopted for MP's, 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		◆			◆			



2

Achievement of the MDGs in the Cook Islands

THE COOK ISLANDS REPORT ON THE NINE MDG'S, INCLUDING THE CHALLENGES AND EFFORTS FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MDG'S.

GOAL 1. ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

Target 1a	Halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people whose income is less than 1 USD per day ¹			
Indicators	2001	2008	Will indicator be met by 2015	Source of data
1.1 Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day	Not Applicable	Not Applicable		
1.2 Poverty gap ratio	Not Applicable	Not Applicable		
1.3 Share of poorest quintile in national consumption	Not Available	<i>Population (%) below basic needs</i> Cook Islands Ave: 28.4 Rarotonga: 30.5 Southern Group: 23.6 Northern Group: 7.6	Yes	Cook Islands Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2005/2006
Target 1b	Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people			
1.4 Growth rate of GDP per person employed	Not Available	- 1.3 (growth rate of labour productivity)	Yes	National Statistics Office
1.5 Employment-to-population ratio	Not Available	62.9	Likely	National Statistics Office
1.6 Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (PPP) per day	0	0	Yes	National Statistics Office
1.7 Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment	Not Available	Not Available		
Target 1c	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger			
1.8 Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age	Not Available	Not Available	Yes	
1.9 Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption	Not Available	Not below the international minimum level ²		

¹ The Head Count Ratio is not the same as the Poverty Indicator in MDG 1. The MDG 1 indicator, US\$1 per day is not yet available for the Cook Islands, as estimates of the Purchasing Power Parity exchange rates required to calculate the MDG indicator has not yet been finalized by SPC. The MDG 1 indicator, when available, will enable direct comparison of 'absolute' poverty levels between countries national poverty lines, which are used in this analysis, enable assessments of relative poverty between countries. (Cook Islands Statistics Office, Draft Poverty Analysis Report, 2008)

² The 2006 HIES results suggest that 2% of the population struggle to meet the basic food poverty line. Although few people appear to be going hungry there are nevertheless indications in the expenditure patterns of the poorest households that many may be getting inadequate nutrition, particularly in Rarotonga. This may be especially the case for children in Rarotonga where 'home grown' food or seafood may not be readily available in household diets as in the outer islands.

TRENDS

Indicator 1.1 Proportion of population below (PPP) per day

As highlighted in the Cook Islands MDG report 2005, some of the international indicators for Goal 1 are not applicable to or available in the Cook Islands. Extreme poverty does not exist in the Cook Islands. As indicated in the 2005 MDG Report, the Cook Islands is yet to develop a national definition of poverty. The Cook Islands continues to use the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) definition of poverty.

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.*

In the absence of specific poverty data, the income levels of Cook Islanders may be used to illustrate access to income in the Cook Islands.

Table 1: Resident population 15 years and older by sex and region and income level (percentage distribution, 2006)

Income range	Cook Islands			Rarotonga			Southern Group			Northern Group		
	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
No income	14.9	14.9	15.0	11.7	11.2	12.2	20.1	20.9	19.2	27.5	28.5	26.4
Less than \$5,000	20.8	16.0	26.7	15.1	11.7	18.5	32.5	25.1	39.7	34.9	24.9	46.2
\$5,000 - \$9,999	15.9	16.3	15.5	13.7	13.4	14.1	21.5	22.7	20.2	17.7	22.3	12.4
\$10,000 - \$14,999	16.6	18.6	14.6	18.3	19.8	16.9	13.5	16.8	10.3	11.0	14.3	7.4
\$15,000 - \$19,999	10.8	11.3	10.2	13.6	14.0	13.2	4.9	6.1	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.1
\$20,000 - \$29,999	11.8	11.6	12.0	15.1	14.8	15.4	5.3	5.3	5.2	3.0	2.9	3.0
\$30,000 - \$39,999	4.6	5.1	4.0	6.1	6.8	5.4	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.3	2.0	0.5
\$40,000 - \$49,999	1.8	2.2	1.5	2.5	2.8	2.1	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.5	0.9	0.0
\$50,000 - \$59,999	1.1	1.6	0.6	1.5	2.2	0.8	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
\$60,000 - \$69,999	0.6	0.9	0.2	0.8	1.2	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0
\$70,000 - \$79,999	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
\$80,000+	0.8	1.0	0.5	1.1	1.5	0.7	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not stated	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Average annual income \$	12,909	14,297	11,490	15,723	17,310	14,100	7,216	8,185	6,265	7,755	8,830	6,714

Source: Cook Islands 2006 Census of Population and Housing

Almost 15% of the resident population received no income, and 21% had income of less than \$5,000 per year. The proportion of the population without an income was much higher in the Southern (20%) and Northern islands (27%) than in Rarotonga (12%) reflecting the disparity in income earning opportunities between Rarotonga and the outer islands. Less than 5% of the total population earned more than \$40,000 per annum.

Disparity in earning between males and females and by region is also reflected in the average annual income. The average income of people in Rarotonga (\$15,700) was more than double of that in the Southern (\$7,200) and Northern group islands (\$7,800).

Indicator 1.2 Poverty gap ratio

Whilst this indicator is not applicable to the Cook Islands, there are obvious differences in earning power as indicated above between Rarotonga and the outer islands and between men and women.

Indicator 1.3 Share of poorest quintile in national consumption

The results of the Household and Income Expenditure Survey 2006 were used to drive food and basic needs poverty lines. Results from the survey show that:

- An average adult in Rarotonga spends \$44.71 a week on food; a further \$73.23 on nonfood items (housing, household operations, transport, communications, utilities, clothing and footwear, loan repayments and others) to give a total weekly expenditure of \$117.94. For an average household on Rarotonga this equates to approximately \$582 per week.
- In the Northern Group, an adult spends \$25.60 a week on food, \$23.63 on non-food items, equating to a total of \$49.23, or about \$195 per week on average.
- In the Southern Group, an adult spends \$37.50 a week on food, \$37.41 on non-food giving total spending of \$74.91, or an average of \$322.29 per week.

Table 2: Incidence of Poverty

	Proportion of Population (%) with weekly adult equivalent per capita expenditure less than the food and basic needs poverty lines	
	Food	Basic Needs
Cook Islands average	2.0	28.4
Rarotonga	2.7	30.5
Southern Group	2.2	23.6
Northern Group	0.0	7.6

The table demonstrates that 28.4% of the population cannot meet basic needs for a decent standard of living, with the regional spread showing that households in the Southern and Northern Group fared better than households on Rarotonga. However, it must be noted that expectations of basic needs differ between Rarotonga and the outer islands. The table confirms the level of consumerism apparent in Rarotonga and the Southern group in comparison to islands in the North. The data above also reflects the level of subsistence living in the outer islands and particularly the traditional distribution networks of the North where islanders are more self sufficient in food and less reliant on purchasing their basic needs than their neighbours in the Southern group and Rarotonga.

The social welfare benefit payments can also be used both as an indication of government’s support to the more vulnerable in the community as well as the reliance of the community on welfare benefits. During the census of December 2006, all persons 15 years and over of the resident population were asked whether they received any social welfare benefits (child, old age, destitute and disabled, superannuation, war). Nearly 1 in 3 persons 15 years and older received at least 1 social welfare benefit totaling 10,623 persons. This was 19% of males and 46% of females. The significant difference between benefit payments received by males and females is accounted to the fact that mothers were most likely to collect the child benefit of their children below the age of 12 years. Almost a third of all women received at least 1 child benefit.

The Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2006 explains that as poverty in the Cook Islands is a relative concept, it refers to those households and people who cannot afford to have the basic necessities of life compared to their neighbours. They cannot afford to buy good quality nutritious food; or children go to school without proper uniform or books; or houses are

unfinished or un-repaired; or families cannot always afford to pay bills when they fall due; and so forth. These families are constantly struggling to meet payments, and are frequently in debt – this is poverty and hardship in the Cook Islands.

Indicator 1.4 Growth rate of GDP per person employed

In the absence of specific growth rate of GDP per person employed, the growth rate of labour productivity employed for the years 2006 – 2008 are as follows:

Table 3: Growth rate of GDP per person employed, 2006 – 2008

Year	Labour Productivity	Growth Rate of Productivity
2006	32.1	-1.8
2007	35.2	8.6
2008	34.7	-1.3

Source: National Statistics Office

Whilst there has not been great variation in labour productivity in the years 2006 – 2008, there has been great variation in growth rate of productivity, where there has been a negative growth rate in 2006, a significant rise in 2007 and gain negative growth in 2008. This is reflective of the decline in the number of people employed. However, it is important to note that the key reason for this is not the unavailability of employment (particularly in the case of Rarotonga), but rather the changes in demography as a result of the emigration of people (especially from the outer islands) in working age groups in particular at the ages 20 – 34 years.

Indicator 1.5 Employment to population ratio

Mainly as a result of migration the employment to population ratio has been declining steadily over the period 2006 – 2008. In 2006 the ratio was 63.7, in 2007, this declined to 63.3, and further dropping to 62.9 in 2008. Another contributing factor related to migration and the employment to population ratio is the employment opportunity disparity between Rarotonga and the outer islands, where the working age group have migrated abroad leaving behind children and the older age groups.

Indicator 1.6 Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (PPP) per day

This indicator is not applicable to the Cook Islands.

Indicator 1.7 Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment

The Cook Islands does not have data on this indicator.

1.8 Prevalence of underweight children under-five years

Whilst data specific to this indicator is not available, the Ministry of Health's primary concern with regard to the nourishment of children is not starvation but rather children being overweight. As obesity of the population in general is becoming an issue in the Cook Islands, the Ministry of Health anticipates that it will collect data on the weight of children to better target its obesity prevention programmes.

1.9 Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption

This indicator is not applicable to the Cook Islands.

CHALLENGES AND EFFORTS

The economy of the Cook Islands is amongst the strongest in the Pacific Region. However, the impacts of the Global Economic Crisis have had negative impacts on the economy with trading revenue not reaching levels expected during 2008 and 2009. The average annual growth of net GDP for the country has declined from 9.6% in 2008 to 1.7% in 2009. This reflects the decline in

returns from the business sector as both locals and tourist are more cautious with spending. It is hoped that with the world coming out of recession and employment levels slowing returning to normal, we may experience an increase in tourism spending and thus economic activity for the Cook Islands, which should result in an increase in revenue in the out years.

In response, Government in the 2009/2010 budget focused its efforts on initiatives that will stimulate the economy. Additionally, the Government in 2010 has begun a review of welfare payments with a view to better target those more vulnerable and in need.

In March 2010, the island of Aitutaki suffered extensive damages from Cyclone Pat. This has put further pressure on finances. Development assistance has been sourced primarily to aid in rebuilding of the island. New Zealand has provided the majority of fund for rebuilding complimented by assistance from other development partners. Cyclones and other adverse impacts related to climate change remains a significant threat to the lives of people and to the economic viability of all islands. The Cook Islands will continue to highlight at the international level, the vulnerability and special consideration for assistance for climate change adaptation required for the Cook Islands as a small islands developing state.

A fundamental issue that remains a threat to the development of the Cook Islands is out-migration. Whilst people migrate for a multitude of reasons, the high cost of living in the Cook Islands is often perceived as an impetus to turn propensity for migration into action. Prices for basic goods have increased as reflected by a spike in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI for 2009 increased 4.3% over 2008 to 118.7.

The social and economic development disparities between Rarotonga and the outer islands remain a critical issue that requires addressing. This disparity is seen as another reason for emigration from the outer islands. Government acknowledges that the sustainable development efforts taken must target not only the betterment of life for the people in the Cook Islands, but must act as incentives to Cook Islanders to remain in the Cook Islands or to return home from abroad.

GOAL 2. ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Target 2a	Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling			
Indicators	2001	2009	Will the indicator be met by 2015	Source of data
2.1 Net enrolment ratio in primary education	92%	99%	Yes	Ministry of Education
2.2 Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary	99.9%	83%	Yes	Ministry of Education
2.3 Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds, women and men	99%	Not available; but the assumption is that the rate remains in the 99% arena	Yes	Statistics Office

TRENDS

Indicator 2.1 Net enrolment in primary education

Education in the Cook Islands continues to be compulsory and free for children from 4 – 16 years of age. Formal education in the Cook Islands starts at 4 years of age and primary from New Entrance for 5 year olds to Year 8 when students are 10 years of age.

Table 4: Primary Education Rolls by Gender and Region for 2009

Region	Gender	Primary	Percentage Per Gender
Rarotonga	Female	628	49
	Male	643	51
Southern Group	Female	210	48
	Male	226	52
Northern Group	Female	114	49
	Male	118	51
Total	Female	952	49
	Male	987	51

Source: Ministry of Education, Statistical Report 2009

The enrolment ratio in primary education demonstrates that the Cook Islands are close to achieving 100% although the number of enrolments has declined. This decline is not attributed to lack of access to primary education but rather the decline in population through out-migration.

Indicator 2.2 Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary

2009 shows a decline in the proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach the last grade of primary from 99.9% in 2001 to 83% in 2009. According to the Ministry of Education, the reason for the decline is not that children are not completing primary school but rather, as a result of migration from the Cook Islands.

Indicator 2.3 Literacy rate of 15 – 24 year olds, women and men

There is no recent official literacy rate for the 15 – 24 year olds; however, it is assumed that this is very close to 100% at 99%. Improved numeracy and literacy have always been a key goal for the Ministry of Education, and the rigorous programs in numeracy and literacy in primary schools will ensure literate adult population.

Table 5: Summary of Numeracy Achievement Rates in Primary School

	Rarotonga		Southern Group		Northern Group		National	
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
Below standard (Levels 1 & 2)	37.8	33.9	43.9	32	NA	80	40.9	39.5
At/Above standard (Levels 3 & 4)	62.2	66.1	56.1	58	NA	20	59.1	60.5

Source: Ministry of Education, Statistical Report 2008

Table 6: Summary of Literacy Achievement Rates Primary School

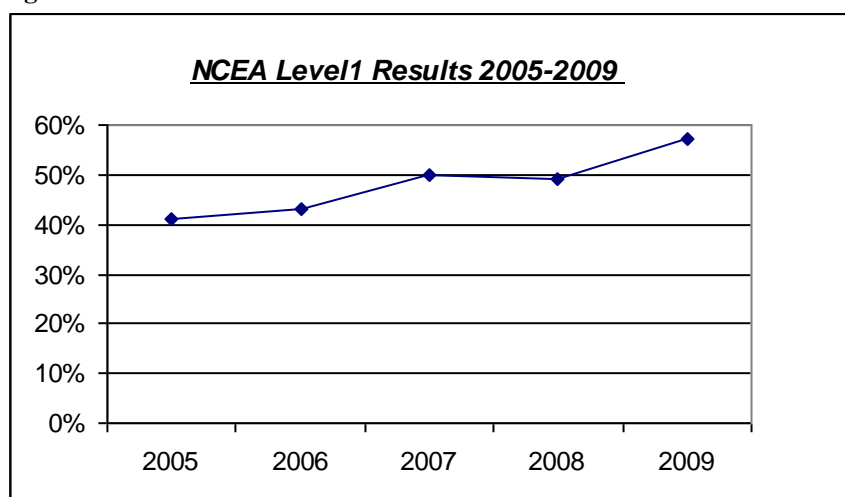
	Rarotonga		Southern Group		Northern Group		National	
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
CI Maori Below Standard	41.4	51	66.7	51	NA	67	54.1	51
CI Maori At/Above Standard	58.6	49	33.3	49	NA	33	45.9	48
English Below Standard	30.8	21	67.7	61	NA	94	49.2	37
English At/Above Standard	69.2	79	32.3	39	NA	6	50.8	63
Best Below Standard	19.5	16	53	37	NA	67	36.2	25
Best At/Above Standard	80.5	84	47	63	NA	33	63.8	75

Source: Ministry of Education, Statistical Report 2008

The above data demonstrates the continuing improvement in both numeracy and literacy at the primary school level.

At the secondary school level, the school curriculum is aligned with New Zealand where students work towards the New Zealand National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA). NCEA results show continuous improvement in achievement. In 2009, Year 11 students had a numeracy rate of 84% and literary rate of 88%.

Figure 1: NCEA Level 1 Results 205 - 2009



CHALLENGES AND EFFORTS

There has been significant progress made in the education sector. At the Early Childhood Education (ECE) level, considerable investment has made into specific ECE training and upgrading the qualifications of teachers and the improvement of the learning environment. The Ministry of Education has developed a number of initiatives to ensure quality primary education. These include: numeracy and literacy programmes supported by 'Lead Teachers'; significant

resourcing of school libraries; resource production; and significant developments in the area of inclusive education. Secondary Education has been an area of significant growth in the last five years in terms of scope of subjects and new initiatives. Such developments were in response to increasing the retention of senior secondary students with NCEA qualifications; the need to increase the scope of subjects available at senior levels to meet the needs of students; the growing number of outer islands students attending schools in Rarotonga; and the addition of transition courses at secondary level to provide alternative pathways and improve retention.

The key challenge that the Cook Islands faces in education is that our children receive the same quality of education across all regions. Academic achievements of primary students on a regional basis describe an ongoing challenge for the Ministry of Education in terms of ensuring equitable and quality delivery of services particularly in light of the continuing decline of school roles in the outer islands.

In 2008, the Cook Islands launched the 'Learning for Life': 15 Year Education Master Plan, which provides the framework for a sector wide approach to education and the direction for improved educational outcomes from early childhood to adult education. The Ministry of Education will continue to pursue the achievement of equitable access to quality education through enhancing the quality of programme delivery and teaching approaches, producing appropriate culturally sensitive and gender balanced resources and supporting inclusive education environments.

GOAL 3. PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Target 3a	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015			
Indicator	2001	2009	Will indicator be met by 2015	Source of Data
3.1 Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education	89	Primary School 52% Secondary School 49%	Yes	Ministry of Education
3.2 Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	46%	55% (2006)	Likely	Statistics Office
3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	8%	13%	Unsure	Parliament Services

TRENDS

Indicator 3.1 Ratios of girls to boys in primary secondary and tertiary education

The tables below show enrolments at primary and secondary levels in 2009.

Table 7: Primary Education Roll by Gender and Region, 2009

Region	Gender	Roll	Percentage Per Gender
Rarotonga	Female	628	49
	Male	643	51
Southern Group	Female	210	48
	Male	226	52
Northern Group	Female	114	49
	Male	118	51
Total	Female	952	49
	Male	987	51

Table 8: Secondary Education Roll by Gender and Region, 2009

Region	Gender	Roll	Percentage Per Gender
Rarotonga	Female	683	52
	Male	636	48
Southern Group	Female	231	49
	Male	239	51
Northern Group	Female	61	44
	Male	78	56
Total	Female	975	51
	Male	953	49

Enrolments in primary and secondary education reveal that there is low gender disparity in the schools.

In relation to post-school qualifications, the 2006 Census revealed that while a higher proportion of males had trade and business certificate qualifications, 10.9% and 3.8% respectively, there were a higher proportion of females (16%) than males with (12.6%) with a tertiary qualification. However, it must be noted that at the time of the census people that were currently pursuing

tertiary education were attending tertiary institutions abroad and were not included in the census data.

Table 9: Resident population 15 years and older by sex, region and educational qualification (in %), 2006

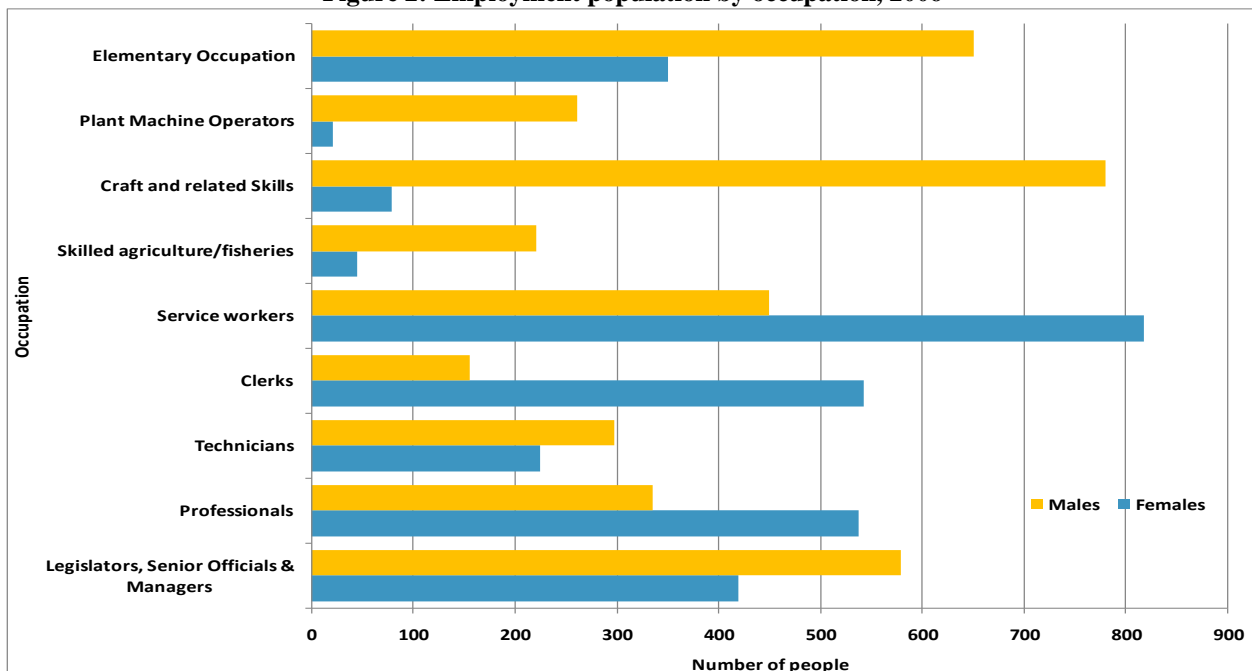
Trade Vocational/ Professional Qualification	Cook Islands		Rarotonga		Southern Group		Northern Group	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Trade and business certificate	10.9	3.8	13.1	4.9	6.2	1.5	5.8	1.5
Professional and higher certificates	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.9	0.4	1.1	0.0	0.5
Teachers & members of professional societies	0.6	1.8	0.7	2.0	0.6	1.7	0.4	0.5
Fellow & members of professional societies	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other vocational qualification	2.0	1.4	2.3	1.4	1.1	1.6	2.4	0.3
Tertiary qualification	12.6	16.0	14.4	18.7	9.1	11.0	7.1	8.6
None	71.2	73.6	67.3	70.1	80.2	80.7	78.2	81.7
Not Stated	2.1	2.4	1.6	2.0	2.3	2.4	6.0	6.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Cook Islands 2006 Census of Population and Housing

Indicator 3.2 Women in employment

The growing number of women employed in the non-agriculture sector has increased and is expected to do so consistently. Since the initial MDG report (2005), the percentage change has improved from 38% in 1991 to 55% in 2006. This is a 44.7 percentage change over the last 16 years, or an average annual improvement rate of 2.8%. Data from the 2006 Census shows that women dominated the Professional category for employment and increase in numbers from 458 in 2001.

Figure 2: Employment population by occupation, 2006



Source: Cook Islands 2006 Census of Population and Housing

More women are becoming self employed and creating businesses. In general, participation of women in the labour force has increased. However, average income differentiation between males and females remains in the labour force.

Table 10: Population aged 15 and older by labour market activity and sex, 2006

	Employer/ Self employed	Employee for wage/salary	Unpaid family worker	Unemployed	Total
Cook Islands	964	5,742	87	666	7,459
Male	605	3,080	53	348	4,086
Female	358	2,662	34	318	3,378

Source: Cook Islands 2006 Census of Population and Housing

Table 11: Resident population aged 15 and older by sex, region, labour force participation rate and employment – population ratio

Region/Sex	Labour force participation rate		Employment-Population ratio		Unemployment rate	
	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006
Cook Islands	69.0	70.2	60.0	63.1	13.1	8.9
Male	76.4	76.1	67.5	68.7	11.7	8.5
Female	61.4	64.2	52.3	57.5	14.8	9.4
Rarotonga	76.1	76.2	71.0	71.0	6.7	5.9
Male	80.8	80.4	76.8	75.3	5.0	5.2
Female	71.3	71.8	65.2	66.6	8.6	6.8
Southern Group	53.8	56.7	39.4	46.4	26.8	16.5
Male	64.5	64.6	49.4	54.0	23.5	15.6
Female	43.3	48.8	29.6	39.0	31.6	17.6
Northern Group	60.1	59.5	39.3	45.4	34.6	20.3
Male	75.8	73.1	52.1	55.2	31.3	20.7
Female	41.6	44.2	24.3	34.3	41.7	19.5

Source: Cook Islands 2006 Census of Population and Housing

Table 12: Resident population 15 years and older by sex and average annual income, 2006

Island/Region	Total	Males	Females
Rarotonga	15,723	17,310	14,100
Southern Group	7,216	8,185	6,265
Northern Group	7,755	8,830	6,714
Cook Islands	12,909	14,297	11,490

Source: Cook Islands 2006 Census of Population and Housing

Indicator 3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

The proportion of seats held by women in national parliament has slightly increased since 2001. However, this does not accurately reflect the number of seats held by women. Currently there are 3 women members of parliament, out of a total of 24 members. It is obvious that women's representation in executive decision making levels remains a challenge.

CHALLENGES AND EFFORTS

The country's track record advises that by regional standards Cook Islands women score highly on the gender development index and gender empowerment measure. A very recent review (May 2010) of the Cook Islands National Women Policy informs that 75% of all strategies and targets have been achieved and women have progressed significantly particularly in the areas of education and health. What remains to be achieved is primarily related to economic (pay parity) and political participation and the institutional and legislative amendments required to improve these. Whilst, national indicators demonstrate positive results, the challenge of disparity between progress on equality for women in Rarotonga and the outer islands remains.

The concluding remarks of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in relation to the Cook Islands first CEDAW report calls on the country to take all appropriate measures to increase the number of women elected, including temporary special measures; and to put into place legislative changes to eliminate discriminatory practices.

The Cook Islands has made some steps towards identifying legislative changes required as outlined in the Cook Islands Law Reform Report 2008. For example, currently only women in the public sector are paid six weeks maternity leave, whilst those in the private sector are paid maternity at the discretion of their employer. The current Employment Relations Bill hopes to address pay parity and maternity protection for women in the private sector in the form of paid maternity leave and preservation of employment during pregnancy or after birth.

Domestic and sexual violence remains a sensitive issue which few women speak openly about. The Punanga Tauturu (PTI) is at the forefront of addressing this issue through advocacy on women's rights and the provision of support in domestic and sexual violence situations. This is also supported by the Cook Islands Police and its Domestic Violence Unit.

Whilst the increase in the participation of women in the economy can be commended, this also highlights economic realities, where women now have to participate in the workforce to meet the economic needs of the family. This places further burden on women particularly in fulfilling their multiple roles and the result of negative impacts of less time spent within the family.

The Cook Islands is currently working towards the development of a National Gender Equality Policy following the recent review of the Cook Islands National Women's Policy. Whilst, this is a positive move, progress in relation to addressing gender equality issues are constrained by budgetary limitations. The national machinery for promoting the status of women and gender and development is the Gender and Development Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs remains under resourced both in relation of funding and capacity for implementation of initiatives. It must also be noted that NGOs have played a valuable role as independent advocates and activists, providing training and undertaking research and advocacy. The Cook Islands National Council of Women has been instrumental in a number of development initiatives and is the main vehicle for developing women's activities and disseminating information that plays a vital role in the development efforts of both women and men in the country.

GOAL 4. REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

Target 4a	Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality ratio			
Indicator	2001	2008	Will indicators be met by 2015	Source of data
4.1 Under-five mortality rate	6 cases	2 cases	Yes	Ministry of Health
4.2 Infant mortality rate	9.8 per 1000	6.8 per 1000	Yes	Ministry of Health
4.3 Proportion of 1 year old children immunized against measles	83% ³	97%	Yes	Ministry of Health

TRENDS

The Cook Islands is set to achieve this goal given the progress made and assuming continuing socio-economic improvements in the Cook Islands over the next 5 years.

Indicator 4.1 Under-five mortality rate

The Ministry of Health continues to improve on under-five mortality rate with a reduction of 66% in the years 2001-2008.

However, despite success, as noted in the 2005 MDG report, Cook Islands children are still getting ill and dying from preventable infectious diseases such as pneumonia, respiratory, and digestive illnesses. The outer islands have higher rates of deaths in the less than 5 age group in comparison to Rarotonga. In 2007, there were 9 deaths recorded, however, in 2008, it decline to 2 deaths.

Table 13: Deaths in Under 5 by cause in 2007

Cause of death	Male	Female	Total
Respiratory illness	1	2	3
Pneumonia	1	2	3
Digestive illness	2	1	3

Source: Ministry of Health

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

Indicator 4.2 Infant mortality rate

Child survival in the Cook Islands continues to improve. Infant mortality rates are expected to decline with access and improvements to free antenatal care in an effort to eliminate both infant and maternal mortality.

Indicator 4.3 Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles

Immunization against measles has improved over the period 2001 – 2008, by 14%. Much of the improvement in the indicators can be attributed to the close collaboration between the Public Health division of the Ministry of Health and the Child Welfare Clinics throughout the villages and islands as they play a critical role in monitoring and tracking the delivery of the

³ Amended figure provided by Ministry of Health.

immunization program. There is optimism that 100% immunization can be attained pending continued resource and personnel commitment.

CHALLENGES AND EFFORTS

The key challenge for the Cook Islands is providing good coverage of health services nationwide by addressing the disparity of health between Rarotonga and the outer islands to ensure that health outcomes for children are achieved. With depopulation in the outer islands, the challenge further exacerbates the struggle to provide quality health services to fewer people. The provision of equitable health services will continue to be a challenge given the reduction in national revenues as a result of the global economic crisis. Public health care for children up to the age of 16 years remains free.

Whilst gains have been achieved in infant mortality and immunization, an emerging challenge is the rising overweight and obesity problems in children in the Cook Islands. The National Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-Communicable Diseases provide the framework for addressing child health in the context of non-communicable diseases.

The Government is committed to better health outcomes and better lives and future for Cook Islands children and to fulfill the country's obligations to the Convention of the Rights of the Child. It is acknowledged by both Government and the wider communities that this can only be achieved through the collaboration of government, communities, families, and also development partners.

GOAL 5. IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

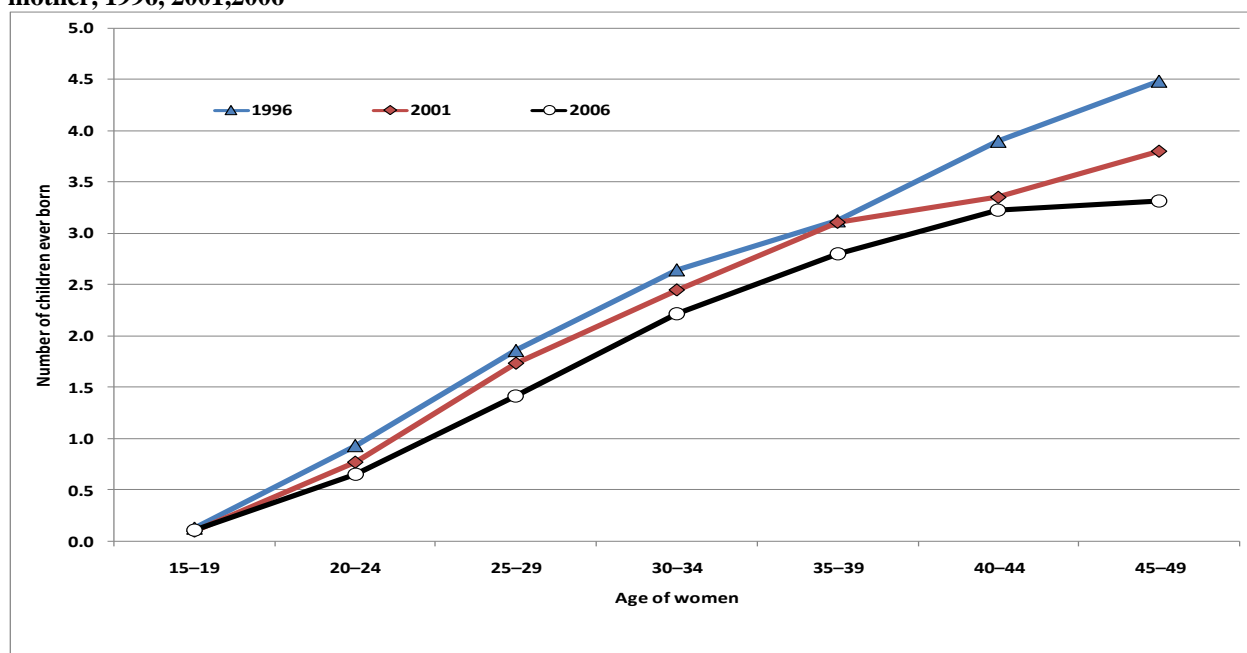
Target 5a	Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio			
Indicator	2001	2008	Will indicators be met by 2015	Source of data
5.1 Maternal mortality ratio	Achieved	Achieved	Yes	Ministry of Health
5.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	98%	100%	Yes	Ministry of Health
Target 5b	Achieve by 2015 universal access to reproductive health			
5.3 Contraceptive prevalence rate	47.16	Not available	Yes	Ministry of Health
5.4 Adolescent birth rate	33	24	Yes	Ministry of Health
5.5 Antenatal care coverage	100%	100%	Yes	Ministry of Health
5.6 Unmet need for family planning	860 women	Not available	Yes	Ministry of Health

TRENDS

Indicator 5.1 Maternal mortality ratio

Since 2001, the Cook Islands has had no maternal mortality. Success in improving maternal health can be attributed to the delivery of health services for expecting mothers and the 100% coverage of births attended by skilled health personnel.

Figure 3: Female population aged 15 and older by average number of children ever born alive by age of mother, 1996, 2001, 2006



Source: Cook Islands Census of Population and Housing

The 2006 Census demonstrates a decline in the average number of children per woman since 1996. While 45-49 year old women had 4.5 children in 1996, it was only 3.3.

Indicator 5.2 Proportion of births attended to by skilled health personnel

This indicator has been achieved by the Cook Islands with 100% of births attended to by skilled health personnel.

Indicator 5.3 Contraceptive prevalence rate

The latest Contraceptive prevalence rate data available is for the years 2001 to 2005. During this period the contraceptive prevalence rates have fluctuated from 47.16 (2001); 50.61 (2002); 45.97

(2003); 48.13 (2004); 46.10 (2005). The Ministry of Health advises that the factors influencing contraceptive prevalence includes distribution of orders to Cook Islands and within the Cook Islands; accessibility factors related to clients' perceptions of client friendly services, awareness of contraceptives and cultural and religious reasons. To improve contraceptive prevalence, the Ministry has focused on programmes emphasizing the provision of quality services and improving quality of care coupled with advocacy, information and education activities to reduce fears and misconceptions about contraceptive methods. These programmes emphasize counseling, informed choice and a comprehensive range of methods to help reduce unmet need.

Indicator 5.4 Adolescent birth rate

The trend for this indicator has fluctuated over the years.

Table 14: Number of adolescent mothers (aged 15 – 19 years)

Years	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
No. of adolescent mothers	31	35	33	42	39	33	24	42

Source: Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health has always ensured that adolescent girls receive adequate health support during and after pregnancy. A specialized adolescent clinic 'Te Akirata Ou' (The New Dawn) targeting youth has been established by the Ministry to provide specific youth health support. This compliments the Ministry's education and awareness programmes targeting reproductive health. The Cook Islands Child and Family Welfare Association provides for parent support programmes for adolescent girls to ensure that their families and communities understand their needs and that the girls are able to cope with the demands of being young mothers. To ensure that adolescent girls who fall pregnant are not disadvantaged in terms of their educational achievements, it is the official policy of the Ministry of Education to encourage pregnant young girls to continue their education either during pregnancy or after birth of the child. According to the Ministry, young mothers that have continued to pursue education during or after pregnancy have done really well and have progressed to pursue tertiary education.

Indicator 5.5 Antenatal care coverage

The Cook Islands has achieved this indicator with 100% antenatal care coverage. It is anticipated that this trend will continue into the future pending adequate allocation of resources.

Indicator 5.6 Unmet need for family planning

Currently, the only official data relating to unmet need for family planning is based on the 2001 Census. In 2001, approximately 860 of all adult women of child bearing age (CBA) and 637 women with a husband or partner had an unmet need out of a total population of 2846 women.

It is the policy of the Ministry of Health to address the unmet need for family planning by implementing the following strategies:

- conduct studies on user-profile; reasons governing non-use; perceptions of barriers to care and quality of care
- implement programmes to remove barriers and increase contraceptive choices
- develop and provide user friendly services at all facilities to promote trust and confidentiality in clients.

CHALLENGES AND EFFORTS

The Cook Islands has achieved Goal 5 and the challenge will be to maintain and build upon achievements made. One area requiring improved effort is timely data collection and analysis to ensure targeted and effective interventions. The Cook Islands cannot afford to be complacent.

GOAL 6. COMBAT HIV/AIDS, NCDs AND OTHER DISEASES

Target 6A	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS			
Indicator	2001	2008	Will indicator be met	Source of data
6.1 HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years	0	0	Achieved	Ministry of Health
6.2 Condom use at last high-risk sex	43.8	Not available	Unsure	Ministry of Health
6.3 Proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS	Not available	Not available	Unsure	Ministry of Health
6.4 Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	
Target 6B	Achieve by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it			
6.5 Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	
Target 6C	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases			
6.6 Incidence and death rates associated with malaria	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	
6.7 Proportion of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide treated with bed nets	Not available	Not available	Not applicable	
6.8 Proportion of children under 5 with fever who are treated with appropriate anti-malaria drugs	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	
6.9 Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis	10 per 100,000 persons	0	Achieved	Ministry of Health
6.10 Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course	18 (2002)	0	Achieved	Ministry of Health

TRENDS

Indicator 6.1 HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years

There continues to be no officially recorded cases HIV/AIDS in the Cook Islands, although there is 1 female resident above 30, but, below 40 years of age, with HIV/AIDS. This case is a non Cook Islands national and was infected and diagnosed overseas. The resident continues to receive medication from her country of citizenship. Whilst, the Ministry of Health conducts HIV/AIDS screening for all blood donors and antenatal mothers, testing for the general public is voluntary.

Indicator 6.2 Condom use at last high-risk sex

The Ministry of Health, reports a high prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) among antenatal mothers and youth. Despite awareness and educational programmes on safe and protected sex, this suggests that condom use is not a widely preferred option for both birth control and protection during sexual intercourse. This is concerning particularly given the consistent awareness and promotion of condoms for safe sex by both the Ministry of Health and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs).

Indicator 6.3 Proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS

The Ministry of Health regularly conducts awareness and educational programmes on HIV/AIDS with particular focus on HIV/AIDS contraction from unprotected sex. However, as stated above, the high prevalence of STIs indicates that the message is not being heeded to and that condom use is not at the level desired.

Indicator 6.4 Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years

This indicator is not applicable to the Cook Islands.

Indicator 6.5 Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs

This indicator is not applicable to the Cook Islands. The 1 person living with HIV/AIDS in the Cook Islands is treated in her country of origin.

Indicator 6.6 Incidence of death rates associated with malaria

This indicator is not applicable to the Cook Islands.

Indicator 6.7 Proportion of children under 5 sleeping with insecticide-treated bed nets

This indicator in relation to its association with malaria is irrelevant to the Cook Islands and therefore data regarding this indicator is not collected. However, there have been several outbreaks of dengue fever. Although there have been no fatalities resulting from dengue fever since the late 1980s (1 fatality), recent dengue outbreaks indicate that the Cook Islands cannot be complacent. The Ministry of Health conducts quarterly health inspections on all properties on the island with the objective of minimizing mosquito breeding sites. In times of dengue outbreaks, health inspections are more frequent.

Indicator 6.8 Proportion of children under 5 with fever who are treated with appropriate anti-malarial drugs

This indicator is not applicable to the Cook Islands.

Indicator 6.9 Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis

With no incidences or deaths associated with tuberculosis, the Cook Islands has achieved this indicator. It is anticipated that this trend will continue into the future.

Indicator 6.10 Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course

As there have been no tuberculosis incidences since 2001, therefore since then there has been no need for treatment. The Cook Islands have achieved this indicator.

CHALLENGES AND EFFORTS

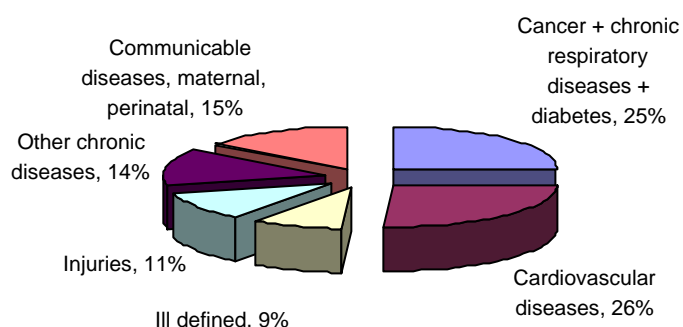
The Cook Islands has performed well towards the achievement of this goal in terms of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

In relation to HIV/AIDS, whilst there are no reported cases, it still poses an imminent risk to the people and the country. The low usage of condoms and high prevalence of STIs, indicate high incidences of unprotected sex. Should this trend continue the unwanted introduction of HIV/AIDS in the Cook Islands would be disastrous in such a small community. Also of concern is the mobility of residents and the high number of tourists which provides a favorable environment for the spread of HIV/AIDS to the Cook Islands. The Government acknowledges through its National HIV/AIDS Policy, that it cannot be complacent in its awareness, education and prevention programmes; however, budgetary constraints continue to limit efforts. Health promotion and prevention makes up less than 15% of the total Ministry of Health Annual Budget. The contraction of the national budget as an effect of the global economic crisis translates into a reduction of the Ministry of Health Annual Budget and the budget allocation for promotion and prevention.

Generally, gains in the Health Sector have resulted from improved planning processes and institutional arrangements related to the better delivery of health services in the community. The exceptional progress in containing tuberculosis is a result of public health immunization programmes, awareness campaigns and health inspections. However, these gains can be jeopardized by inadequate financial and human resources.

Despite, good progress in many areas in health, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, obesity and cancer continue to be the common causes of illness and death in the Cook Islands. NCDs are placing increasing pressure on the health system, including human, pharmaceutical and laboratory resources.

Figure 4: Causes of Death in the Cook Islands, 2007



Source: Ministry of Health

To tackle NCDs in the Cook Islands, the Government launched in 2009, its 5 year National Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-Communicable Diseases. The Strategy highlights that a community based comprehensive, integrated, multisectoral approach is required to reduce the incidences and impact on NCDs on Cook Islands individuals, families, communities and the country. This approach includes using robust evidence to inform practice and policy so that preventative and clinical management systems are efficient and effective and lead to improved health outcomes.

Though the first country MDG report advised that Goal 6 had included NCDs, however, no indicators were proposed. This report suggests the following indicators.

Indicator	2001	2008	Will indicator be met	Source of data
Incidence and prevalence rates associated with non-communicable disease	Hypertension: 38 Diabetes: 22	Hypertension: 118 Diabetes: 59	Unsure	Ministry of Health
Death rates associated with non-communicable diseases	Hypertension: 12 Diabetes: 5	Hypertension: 12 Diabetes: 4	Unsure	Ministry of Health

The inclusion of indicators related to NCDs and progress that the country will have in addressing the problem of NCDs will impact on its ability to achieve MDG 6.

GOAL 7. ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Target 7A	Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources			
Indicator	2001	2008	Will indicator be met	Source of data
7.1 Proportion of land area covered by forest	60.8%	Not available	Unsure	National Environment Service
7.2 CO2 emissions, total, per capita and per \$1 GDP (PPP)	0.0038 GgCO2 per capita	0.00375 GgCO2 per capita	Unsure	National Environment Service
7.3 Consumption of ozone-depleting substances	Not available	69,574 (tCO2-e) – (2006)	Probably	National Environment Service
7.4 Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits	Not available	Not available	Unsure	Ministry of Marine Resources
7.5 Proportion of total water resources used	Not available	Not available	Unsure	Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning
Target 7B	Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss			
7.6 Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected	Not available	Not available	Probably	National Environment Service
7.7 Proportion of species threatened with extinction	Not available	4	Unsure	National Environment Service
Target 7C	Halve , by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation			
7.8 Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source	95.1%	Not available	Unsure	Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning
7.9 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility	80%	90% (2006)	Probably	Cook Islands Census of Population & Dwelling
Target 7D	By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers			
7.10 Proportion of urban population living in slums	0	0	Achieved	Office of the Prime Minister

TRENDS

Indicator 7.1 Proportion of land area covered by forest

Over 50% of the total land area in the Cook Islands is still covered by forest. This remains relatively high for a small island setting. As indicated by the country's first MDG Report, removal of forest is mainly for agricultural purposes and housing development.

Indicator 7.2 CO₂ emissions, total, per capita and per \$1 GDP

Table 15: Trends in emissions (tonnes CO₂-e, 1994-2006)

	1994	2000	2006	% Change (1994-2006)
Energy	31,537	39,925	55,075	75%
Industrial Processes and Product Use	n/a	510	3,149	-
Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use	7,508	6,930	6,991	-7%
Waste	4,105	4,197	4,359	6%
Total	43,150	51,562	69,574	61%

Source: National Environment Service

Between 1994 and 2006 the Cook Islands' total emissions increased by approximately 61%, rising from 43,150 t CO₂-e in 1994 to 69,574 t CO₂-e in 2006. Part of this growth about 11%, is explained because of the inclusion of new sources in the inventory, which were not accounted for in 1994. However, the majority of the growth is due to increased fuel consumption.

The per capita rate of emissions in the Cook Islands was calculated by dividing the national emissions total by the national population. In 2006 per capita emissions were approximately 3.6 t CO₂-e. This is approximately 56% higher than in 1994, when the rate was approximately 2.3 t CO₂-e per person each year. The main reason for the Cook Islands' relatively high rate of per capita emissions is the heavy reliance on high emitting fossil fuel for electricity generation and transport purposes.

Indicator 7.3 Consumption of ozone-depleting substances

In 2006 the Cook Islands' total national emissions reached 69,574 t CO₂-e, while total carbon removals from forests and croplands were estimated to be 166,912 t CO₂.

Table 16: Total emissions and removals for 2006, by sector.

Sector	Emissions (t CO ₂ -e)	Removals (t CO ₂)
Energy	55,075	-
Industrial Processes and Product Use	3,149	-
Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use	6,991	-166,912
Waste	4,359	-
Total	69,574	-166,912

Source: National Environment Service

Energy use is by far the main source of GHG emissions in the Cook Islands, accounting for 79% of total emissions. Agriculture, forestry and other land use was the second largest source of emissions (10%), followed by emissions from waste management and disposal (6%). Industrial Processes and Product Use accounted for 5% of total national emissions.

Indicator 7.4 Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits

No data is available for this indicator.

Indicator 7.5 Proportion of total water resources used

There is an absence of detailed current information on the number of connections, type of consumer, and the average daily consumption. Metering of water in Rarotonga is piloted in several sites around the island since 2008. Based on these measurements, estimates of consumption have been made in 2009.

Table 17: Estimate of Likely Water Consumption by Usage Category

User Type	2009 Estimated Demand m ³ /day	2009 Estimated Demand m ³ /day	2009 Final Demand ML/year
Domestic	2,670	947,550	948
Large Hotels	860	313,900	314
Industrial	880	321,200	321
Commercial	670	244,550	244
Small Hotels	340	124,100	124
Government Offices	132	48,180	48
Schools	220	80,300	80
Hospital	35	12,775	13
Prison	3	1,095	1
Agriculture	4,100	1,496,500	1,500
Total	9,910	3,590,000	3,590
Rounding	10,000	3,600,000	3,600
Plus Losses – 25%	2,500	900,000	900
Total Demand	12,500	4,500,000	4,500

Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning

The major water source on Rarotonga is surface water, the rest of the Southern group islands rely on ground water and rain harvesting, while the Northern island predominantly use rain water. Data availability on water resources and demand is problematic in all islands. In Rarotonga, water demand is expected to increase over time with agriculture having the highest demand on water.

Table 18: Estimated Water Demand

User Type	Estimated Per Capital Water Use l/c/d	1999 Estimated Demand m ³ /day	2019 Estimated Demand m ³ /day
Domestic	240	2,403	2,932
Large Hotels	700	692	1,028
Industrial	15,000	795	970
Commercial	1,600	602	734
Small Hotels	300	270	402
Government Offices	110	132	132
Schools	70	196	239
Hospitals	450	32	38
Prison	115	2	3
Agriculture	5,000	3,775	4,606
Total		8,897	11,083
Rounding		8,900	11,083
Plus Losses – 25%		2,225	2,775
Total Demand m³ /day		11,125	13,875

Source: Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning

Indicator 7.6 Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected

There continues to be 39 protected natural areas nationwide covering a wide range of purposes from the Takitumu Conservation Area as an endemic bird conservation site, to Suwarrow island as an entire island reserve, to marine and land conservation areas (raui), as well as the national EEZ as a whale sanctuary. It is also common for islands to impose traditional restrictions on the harvesting of certain food sources for specific timeframes to ensure sustainability of supply.

Indicator 7.7 Proportion of species threatened with extinction

As of 2008, there are 4 species of birds that are considered threatened with extinction out of 82 species of birds. It is hoped that programmes such as reserving the usual habitat of the birds will ensure that these 4 bird species will not become extinct in the future.

Indicator 7.8 Proportion of population using an improved drinking water sources

Access to safe drinking water in the Cook Islands is high, as highlighted in 2005 MDG Report, 87% in the Outer Islands and 99.25% in Rarotonga. Efforts have been made to improve access in the outer islands. For example, the 2009 water catchments programme supported by New Zealand Aid has improved access to water in the Northern Cook Islands. Unfortunately, more recent data is unavailable.

All water sources in the Cook Islands remain untreated. However, there are simple filtration systems in some households in Rarotonga. There has been an increase in the reliance on bottled water for drinking by Cook Islanders, in particular on Rarotonga. This indicates some dissatisfaction of the levels of safety for drinking of some water sources.

Indicator 7.9 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility

There has been an increase in the proportion of the population with access to improved sanitation facilities from 80% in 2001 to 90% in 2006. Improved sanitation facilities are defined in the 2006 Cook Islands Census of Population and Dwellings as a household having at least 1 pour flush or flush toilet.

Indicator 7.10 Proportion of urban population living in slums

The Cook Islands has no slum dwellers, although there are outer islands settlements in Rarotonga where many people do not have secure tenure. This situation emerged during the time of the New Zealand administration where economic activities were started throughout the islands and provided opportunities for outer islanders to travel to Rarotonga to be part of the public and private sector workforces as well as to bring their families to Rarotonga for education and health reasons.

Over the years, some of these families married into chiefly families or developed relationships with the landowners of the areas they had built temporary lodgings on. Allegiances and friendships developed to the extent that the landowning chief offered these segments of land for the outer island populations to stay on as long as their families lines lived. Tutakimoa (the islanders from Manihiki and Rakahanga), Panama (mainly Penrhyn islanders) and Pue (Pukapuka islanders) are examples of outer islands settlements on Rarotonga that have grown out of such relationships.

CHALLENGES AND EFFORTS

Environmental sustainability is fundamental to the future socio-economic development of the Cook Islands. The Cook Islands has and is continuing to strengthen efforts of integrating principles of sustainable development in its planning processes. The Environment Act 2003 and the National Environment Strategic Action Framework provides the platform for environmental considerations at all stages of development.

The Cook Islands is similar to other Pacific Island countries where land is limited and economic development has increased pressure on the environment and natural resources. The islands are predominantly coastal entities and because of their size and isolation, and the fragile nature of island ecosystems, the biological diversity is among the most threatened in the world.

While forest cover has remained at sustainable levels, over the years, improper and largely uncontrolled development has occurred in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, sloping lands and the foreshore, which is now resulting in increased incidents of human health impacts and stress to natural ecosystems. There is concern about the increasing risks of land degradation as a result of unchecked development such as landfills. Increasing soil erosion is evident, especially around the foreshore and slopes. In recent years, 31% of developments on Rarotonga have been concentrated around the foreshore and 36% on sloping lands. Twenty-one percent (21%) of development applications under the *Environment Act 2003* required environmental impact assessment. One in three public complaints received by the Environment Service involved illegal developments.

In recognition of these circumstances, the National Land Use Policy and Land Zoning Maps have been developed and are currently in final consultations before endorsement as an attempt to better manage land use and to provide a vehicle for coordinating the roles of the different parties in the implementation of the policy.

Much of the Cook Islands green house gas emissions results from the use of fossil fuels to power electricity and transportation. The Cook Islands have endorsed a Renewable Energy Action Plan to guide its efforts to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels and increase the utilisation of renewable energy sources. It is envisaged that the implementation of this action plan will result in a reduction of green house gas emissions as well as added economic and social benefits particularly considering the instability and the cost of oil in recent years. Efforts in implementation of the action plan are hampered by competing priorities in a situation of reduced revenues that in part is a result of the global economic crisis.

Efforts to safeguard bio-diversity through conservation continues to be strengthened through the establishment of restrictions on harvest and reserve areas as well as increased awareness and educational programmes. Government endeavours are complimented by various environmental non-government organisations. Strengthening data collection and analysis is required to better inform policies. In 2008, the parliament passed bio-security legislation for protection from invasive species. The Cook Islands continues to be challenged by its limited financial and human capacities to collect and analyse data; implement programmes; and fully enforce legislation and regulations to protect the environment.

Water supply has had considerable support from both the Government and development partners in recent years. The sector attracts the highest allocation of funds from the Government Capital Expenditure of all sectors amounting to 15% of the national budget for capital expenditure. Challenges in the water sector relate to the geographical dispersion and the consequent high cost of providing services to the islands, and the general shortage of appropriate qualified staff in the sector.

The lack of metering of production or consumption of water by users means that consumption is generally proliferate and wasteful; and there is little incentive to conserve water, particularly in Rarotonga. Where water resources are scarcer as in the outer islands, people are more inclined to conserve water. Efforts to address these issues are currently being explored, as is attempts to improve data availability to better inform policies. The country hopes implement an Integrated Water Resources Management Programme in 2010.

Whilst, access to flush toilets has improved, poor quality of construction and the lack of maintenance of septic tanks present environmental challenges. The contamination of freshwater lens and lagoon pollution are key concerns. Furthermore, with the exception of Rarotonga and Aitutaki, there is no septage treatment. Government together with development partners

recognise these problems and are working together to reduce the contamination. Government introduced sanitation and septic tank standards and regulations in 2008, however, enforcement is a problem due to lack of financial resources and human capacity.

As low lying small islands, the Cook Islands, is extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change such as extreme rainfall; drought; sea level rise; strong winds and extreme high air temperatures and increase frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones. The country's National Vulnerability and Adaptation Statement recognises that development and social changes have placed increased pressure on the islands natural environmental systems and therefore the adverse impacts of climate change and sea level rise will further exacerbate the stresses on these systems.

Sectors identified as the most vulnerable are agriculture and food security, coastal zone and coral reefs, marine resources, water resources and biodiversity. It is increasing becoming essential that development must be carefully managed and that climate change must be considered if the islands are to improve abilities to adapt to the effects of climate change and survive in the long term.

GOAL 8. DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

Target 8A	Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system			
Indicators	2001	2008	Will indicator be met by 2015	Source of data
8.1 Net ODA	21%	8.9% of Real GDP	Decline in ODA	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
8.2 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)	Education 9% Health 10% Works 4% Outer Islands 31% Miscellaneous 46%	Education 20.25% Health 6.62% Works 3.3% Outer Islands 20% Miscellaneous 47.83%	Likely	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
8.3 Proportion of bilateral official development assistance of OECD/DAC donors that is untied	84.8%	Not available	Likely	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
Target 8B	Address the special needs of the least developed countries			
Target 8C	Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states			
Target 8D	Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term			
8.4 ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes	Not applicable	Not applicable		
8.5 ODA received in small island developing states as a proportion of their gross national incomes	6.9% of real GDP	8.9% of real GDP	Decrease in grant ODA and increase in concessional loans	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
8.6 Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and, admitted free of duty	Not available	Not available		
8.7 Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries	Not available	Not available		

8.8 Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product	1.85%	Not available		
8.9 Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity debt sustainability	3.4%	10% (Figures available for marine and agriculture only)	Unsure	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
8.10 Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that completion points (cumulative)	Not applicable	Not applicable		
8.11 Debt relief committed under the HIPC and MDRI Initiatives	Not applicable	Not applicable		
8.12 Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services	Not available	Not available		
Target 8E	In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in development			
8.13 Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis	100%	100%	Achieved	Ministry of Health
Target 8F	In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications			
8.14 Telephone lines per 100 population	49.5%	68.3%	Likely	Telecom Cook Islands Ltd.
8.15 Cellular subscribers per 100 population	24.4%	35.7%	Likely	Telecom Cook Islands Ltd.
8.16 Internet users per 100 population	10.8%	32.1%	Likely	Telecom Cook Islands Ltd.

TRENDS

Indicator 8.1 Net ODA, as percentage of gross national income

The Cook Islands Real GDP in 2008/2009 was NZD\$236,200,000. Total allocated ODA was NZD\$21,022,477. Therefore as a percentage of Real GDP, ODA was 8.9%. In relation to total expenditure, this was \$12,317,855 which equates to 5.2% of real GDP. New Zealand and Australia through their harmonised aid program continues to be the Cook Islands biggest donors with a combined allocation of NZD\$15,950,000. In the 2009/2010 fiscal year, total contributions by donor partners are budgeted at \$30.2 million. This is a 43.8% increase over the ODA funding level in 2008/2009.

Indicator 8.2 Proportion of total bilateral, sector allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services

In 2008/2009, the Education sector was the recipient of 20.25% of ODA. Whilst development assistance to the outer islands have been grouped under one sector, donor activities in the outer islands have targeted the provision of basic infrastructure. Again, much of the funding targeting the outer islands was provided by New Zealand. In 2009, New Zealand changed its aid policy to focus on economic development and support for programmes in Rarotonga and Aitutaki as the primary drivers of the Cook Islands economy. Whilst this has some implications on the provision of basic services to the outer islands given that their needs have in the past been primarily funded from the local budget and NZAid, it is anticipated that growth in the Rarotonga and Aitutaki economies will generate revenue to meet the needs of the outer islands. Given the present constraints in the local budget, perhaps other development partners can target assistance to outer island development.

Indicator 8.3 Proportion of bilateral official development assistance to OECD/DAC donors that is untied

Having a long history of providing development assistance to the Cook Islands, New Zealand and Australia's ODA programme is aligned to the country's development policies and the use of local institutions and budgetary systems for implementation. Likewise other donors such as India, Italy, the European Union and regional and international organisations predominantly also utilise local processes and systems in delivering their programs. The People's Republic of China is a relatively new donor to the Cook Islands, and largely funds infrastructure projects via grants and concessional loans. In most instances, it is China's preference that all material, equipment and labour are provided from China for construction of infrastructure projects.

Indicator 8.4 ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes

This indicator is not applicable to the Cook Islands.

Indicator 8.5 ODA received in small islands developing states as a proportion of their gross national incomes

As highlighted above (indicator 8.1), allocated ODA in 2008/2009 was 8.9% of real GDP. It is anticipated that ODA in relation to the country GDP will remain below 10%.

Indicator 8.6 Proportion of total developed country imports from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted duty free

The most recent information used for trade is the December 2009 quarter. Total imports to the Cook Islands for the December quarter 2009 was estimated at \$83.8 million; an increase of \$8.6 million and \$15.8 million when compared to the September and June quarters respectively. In comparison to the total imports for December quarter 2009, imports have been recorded 39.8% above that of the December 2008 quarter.

Most of the imports to the Cook Islands are from New Zealand, followed by Fiji and 'other countries'. To demonstrate its commitment to the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement, the Cook Islands has eliminated tariffs on most imported products as of 1st July 2006, and continues to review the tariff regime on the remaining products.

It is anticipated that the trend of increasing imports and the origin of imports will not change in the near future. This assumption is made on the fact that the balance of trade has recorded a deficit since 2006 and has increased steadily over consecutive years. However, programmes targeting import substitution particularly in agriculture are currently in development and scheduled from implementation in 2010 and beyond.

Indicator 8.7 Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries

Data for this indicator is currently not available.

Indicator 8.8 Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product

Data for this indicator is currently not available.

Indicator 8.9 Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity

Whilst, there was an increase in the proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity from 3.4% in 2001 to 10% in 2008. However, it must be noted that the 2008 figure is derived from agriculture and marine resources ODA allocations which is not entirely focused on trade capacity but capacity building in general. For example, the majority of the activities of the Ministry of Agriculture are not focused on external trade but rather import substitution and production for the local market.

Indicator 8.10 Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)

This indicator is not applicable to the Cook Islands.

Indicator 8.11 Debt relief committed under HIPC and MDRI Initiatives

This indicator is not applicable to the Cook Islands.

Indicator 8.12 Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services

The data regarding this specific indicator is not available. However there is data available on total tax revenue which includes export of goods and services and the level of debt to GDP.

Table 18: Total Revenue and Debt to GDP

	Benchmark	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Tax Revenue to GDP (%)	25	28.2	28	25.4	26.6
Debt		44,585,000	47,194,203	63,305,705 (estimate)	75,424,545 (estimate)
Debt to GDP (%)	30	16.1	16.7	20.4	24

Total revenue in relation to GDP has achieved the benchmark, whilst debt has remained below the benchmark despite the increase in total debt over the period.

Indicator 8.13 Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis

The Cook Islands has achieved this indicator. Since 2001, the country has achieved 100% coverage of essential supplies and medicines to all health clinics, and hospitals. Support from the World Health Organisation and other international development partners complement the Ministry of Health's efforts in this area.

Indicator 8.14 Telephone lines per 100 population

Telephone connections have increase from 49.5 % in 2001 to 68.3% in 2008. Telecom Cook Islands, the Cook Islands telecommunications company, which is owned by Telecom New Zealand and the Cook Islands Government have over the years continued to improve telephone services to the outer islands in spite of having a negative return on investment (in monetary terms) for the provision of the majority of services to the outer islands. However, Telecom Cook Islands is committed to providing service nationwide.

8.15 Cellular subscribers per 100 population

Cellular usage has increased from 24.4% in 2001 to 35.7% in 2008. Currently cellular services are available only on Rarotonga and Aitutaki. There are however plans to expand the service to other islands.

8.16 Internet users per 100 population

Internet usage has increased significantly over the period 2001 to 2008, from 10.8% to 32.1%. This is due to the growing reliance on the internet, the improvement of service including the availability of broadband in the outer islands, and the reduction of costs.

CHALLENGES AND EFFORTS

The Cook Islands has robust financial management legislations and procedures meaning that development partners are more likely to have faith in and use country systems in relation to the disbursement of funds and implementation of programmes.

The Cook Islands is less dependent on ODA in comparison to some other developing countries despite its rather narrow economic base. The relatively high GDP of the country (in comparison to some other developing countries) means that it does not receive as much ODA as other countries of a similar size and population. It is anticipated that this trend will continue. However, it must be noted that national GDP does not reflect the significant disparity of the economies of Rarotonga and the outer islands.

New Zealand is the Cook Islands primary donor. However, its recent change in foreign policy to focus on economic development on Rarotonga and Aitutaki has meant a reduction of ODA to the outer islands. This decline of development assistance to the outer islands and a reduction in local budgetary resources has negative implications on development in the outer islands. It is difficult for the country to borrow finances targeting outer islands development due to the likely negative rate of return on investment of developments in the outer islands. Therefore, meeting the development needs of the outer islands is a challenge and an area where other development partners may consider supporting. The challenge is further exacerbated by diminishing outer island populations. Depopulation is possibly the most fundamental challenge to the future economic viability of the country.

The balance of trade remains a problem for the Cook Islands. It is hoped that efforts to simulate agriculture and marine resources both for import substitution and export will bring about a more favourable balance of trade. Key initiatives are the revitalisation of agriculture in the Southern group, improvements of the production and marketing of pearls in the North and increasing returns from fisheries. The Ministry of Agriculture continues to negotiate with markets for export of new products.

There is some concern over the increasing levels of borrowing although these currently remain below the benchmark. The global economic crisis and the resulting decline in revenues plus the increase in debt poses concern and the need for caution. The challenge for the country is to improve revenues and reduce debt.

Telecommunication access has improved significantly. However, there is room for improvement in the speed and the cost of telecommunication. It is anticipated that government will de-monopolise the telecommunications sector in the near future and that competition will improve both service and cost to consumers.

GOAL 9. IMPROVED GOVERNANCE

Target 19	Implement half of the Political Reform Recommendations by 2010			
Indicator	2001	2008	Will the indicator be met by 2015	Source of Data
19.1 Implementation of the Political Reform Process with a number of recommendation in effect	15% implementation	No further implementation	Not likely	
Target 20	Achieve full financial accountability across government sectors and parliament			
20.1 Timely financial reports show results based outcomes	Not achieved	Partly achieved	Likely	Central Agencies
Target 21	Reporting procedures in place for monitoring/evaluating sector performance			
21.1 Six monthly and annual reports published and made available to the public	Not achieved	Not achieved	Likely	Central Agencies
Target 22	Annual report of governments results based expenditures publicly available			
22.1 Income and Expenditure reports available for public perusal at advertised public places	Gradual improvements	Achieved	Achieved	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
Target 23	Complete devolution process with full administration devolved to outer islands by 2010			
23.1 Implementation of the devolution process with clear milestones (OMIA)	Confusion, devolution reversal. Need to develop a clear framework for devolution.	Office of the Minister for Island Administration (OMIA) dissolved.	Not likely	Central Agencies
Target 24	Regular review of private sector performance at all levels			
24.1 Have established a fully functional review mechanism for monitoring private sector performance	Commerce Bill still in draft form	Fair Trading Act 2008 and Consumer Guarantees Act 2008 passed by parliament	Likely	Ministry of Internal Affairs
Target 25	Code of Conduct adopted for MPs, Cabinet, and all Public Servants and implemented under the Public Service Commission Act.			
25.1 A performance based and effective public sector as a result of parliamentarians, public and civil servants adherence to the Code of	No Leadership Code of Conduct for leaders, senior public servants	Public Service Act 1996 replaced by Public Service Act 2009, with clear responsibilities for Ministers, heads of ministries and	Likely	Central Agencies

Conduct		public servants. Manual of Cabinet Procedures 2009, outlines responsibilities of Ministers and the public service in relation to Cabinet decision making processes		
Target 26	Full and independent review of the operations and performance of the whole Cook Islands public service and the recommendations for improvement by 2008			
26.1 A standardised government operations systems manual to be implemented strictly by Heads of Ministries	No updated public service operations manual	Not achieved	No	Office of the Public Service Commissioner

TRENDS

Indicator 19.1 Implementation of the Political Reform Process with a number of recommendations in effect

The Commission for Political Review was established in 1997 and tasked to prepare a strategy to improve governance processes so that all would share the benefits of development. Thirteen recommendations were made when the report of the Commission was completed in 1998 which would form the basis for measuring serious commitment of Government and the people towards political reform. Since the 2005 MDG Report, no further progress has been achieved in terms of fulfilling any further recommendations with the exception of an amendment to the Electoral Act 2004 to stop party hopping by members of parliament.

Indicator 20.1 Timely financial reports show results-based outcomes (achievements against costs)

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management has improved significantly in terms of budget preparation and oversight. The Ministry maintains a steady vigil on safeguarding revenue streams and monitoring expenditure on a monthly basis. To better align financial resources and planning processes, the Ministry together with the Central Policy and Planning Office of the Office of the Prime Minister are working together to develop a medium term budgeting framework. Unfortunately, the Office of the Public Service Commissioner (who is responsible for performance management of the public service) has not been active in fulfilling its tasks of ensuring performance accountability. However, the new Public Service Act 2009 provides the rational for strengthening the Office of the Public Service Commissioner to ensure more robust systems of performance accountability.

Indicator 21.1 Six monthly and annual reports published and made available to the public

The Office of the Public Service Commissioner receives six monthly and annual reports from government agencies. These reports currently consist of self-assessments by Heads of Ministries (HOMs) on their performance and that of the ministry. In past years, the Office of the Public Service Commissioner has not published or made these reports available to the public. Furthermore, the Office has lacked the capacity to verify reports by conducting thorough assessments and to hold HOMs accountable for non-performance. The Office of the Public

Service Commissioner is currently in the process of improving its systems and capacity to fulfil its roles as stipulated under the Public Service Act 2009.

Indicator 22.1 Income and Expenditure Reports available for public perusal at advertised public places

Ministry income and expenditure accounts are published by the Ministry of Economic Management and Finance both in hard copy and on the Ministry website. Crown Accounts are tabled in Parliament. The performance of the Audit Office in appraising agency expenditure has played an important role towards achieving Target 22. Part of the Economic Reform of the late 1990s included the formation of the Public Expenditure Review Committee (PERC) and the passing of the Audit Act (PERCA). The Act specifies an independent committee to review all aspects of public finance to ensure accountability and to reflect international accounting principles. PERC reports directly to Parliament.

Indicator 23.1 Implementation of the devolution process with clear milestones

Devolution was perceived to be a mechanism to improve service delivery and development in the outer islands. However, the devolution process has not proceeded as successfully as had initially been anticipated. Key functions such as education, health that were devolved to local government and island administration offices have since been restored to central ministries. As the MDG 2005 report described, the process of devolution has lacked a clear framework for implementing the process. It is therefore unlikely that the Cook Islands will meet target 23 to completely devolve administration to the outer islands by the end of 2010.

Indicator 24.1 Have established a fully functional review mechanism for monitoring private sector performance

The Commerce Commission anticipated to have been set up under a Commerce Act to facilitate, monitor and enforce regulations and policies aimed at preventing unfair trading practices and corrupt behaviours in the business sector is yet to be finalised. Whilst Fair Trading and Consumer Guarantees Acts were passed by Parliament in 2008, the lack of resources and capacity to enforce these legislations is a challenge.

Indicator 25.1 A performance based and effective public sector as a result of parliamentarians, public and civil servants adherence to the Code of Conduct

Incorporated within the Public Service Act 2009, is a Code Conduct for all Public Servants. To ensure better accountability and robust decision making at the Cabinet level, the Manual of Cabinet Procedures 2009 outlines the conduct expected of Cabinet Ministers and the responsibilities of the public service in guaranteeing robust decision making. In 2010, the process of the preparation of policy proposals to cabinet as stipulated in the Manual of Cabinet Procedures is expected to be regulated under the Public Service Act 2009. Despite these gains, there remains no Code of Conduct for Parliamentarians.

Indicator 26.1 A standardised government operations systems manual to be implemented strictly by HOMs

The 2005 MDG Report anticipated that a public service reform would be undertaken in 2005/2006, this was not conducted nor has there been a standardised government operations system developed. However, since the passing of the 2009 Public Service Act, the Office of the Public Service Commissioner (OPSC) has begun efforts to strengthen the Office and the systems and processes that govern the public sector including conducting functional reviews and developing standardised operations systems and processes.

CHALLENGES AND EFFORTS

MDG Goal 9 is a country specific development goal to ensure integration of the principle values of the Millennium Declaration related to good governance across all sectors from the parliament, public and private sectors and communities nationwide.

At the heart of the achievement of this goal is political reform. However, since the 2005 MDG Report, the Cook Islands has made little progress in achieving this target. Though the public have since the 1998 Political Reform Commission report called for political reform, parliamentarian and politicians have been reluctant to change the status quo. The recent events on the Cook Islands political scene have reinvigorated the call for political reform. Elections will be announced in 2010, but there appears to be a lack of commitment from the two main parties to implement the recommendations for political reform, in particular, the reduction of the members of parliament and the election of the prime minister by the nation. It is unlikely that the Cook Islands will achieve the target to 'implement half of the political reform recommendations by 2010'.

Whilst it can be argued that the Cook Islands has a robust financial accountability legislative framework, in the form of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, and the Public Expenditure Review Committee Acts 1996, there remains weaknesses in financial management and reporting requirements in the public sector which are highlighted annually by the Audit Office. This is primarily due to the weaknesses in holding public servants accountable through strong disciplinary actions for financial misdemeanours and for performance in general. To remedy this, the Public Service Act 1996 has been replaced by a more robust 2009 Public Service Act. It is anticipated that this act will significantly contribute towards the improvement of the public service. The challenge for the Cook Islands will be putting into place the necessary policies, systems and processes required for the successful enforcement of the Public Service Act 2009.

Devolution remains a challenge for the Cook Islands. Implementation has been hampered by the lack of a clear devolution framework. The devolution process and its implementation requires re-examination to determine the best way forward in ensuring that the outer islands play a fundamental role in the sustainable development of the country.

Since 2005, the country has passed legislation to promote fair trading and consumer protection from unfair commercial practices. However, the enforcement of these laws is limited due to financial and human capacity constraints. Until clear commitment in terms of financial and human resources in this area is made, there will be little progress in the enforcement of these legislations. In an environment of a tight budget due to reduction in revenues, it is uncertain when this commitment in budgetary terms will eventuate.

The private sector and Non-government organisations (NGOs) have continued to be an important 'check and balance' mechanism for government as well as an important partner in development. This relationship in part has been held in place by the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), where both the business community and NGOs have been vocal in ensuring that government does not deviate from the NSDP. In recent public consultations to review the NSDP, the public in general have voiced their disappointment in the performance of government towards the implementation of the NSDP. Efforts must be made to ensure that Government listens to the will of the people as encapsulated by the NSDP.

REFERENCES

1. Asian Development Bank/Australian Government , 2008; *Cook Islands 2008 Social and Economic Report: Equity in Development*, Pacific Studies Series
2. Office of the Prime Minister, 2007-2010; Te Kaveinga Nui, National Sustainable Development Plan. Government of the Cook Islands
3. Office of the Prime Minister, 2008; First Monitoring and Evaluation Report, National Sustainable Development Plan. Government of the Cook Islands.
4. Office of the Prime Minister, 2005 ; *Millennium Development Goals National Report*, Government of the Cook Islands/UNDP/CIANGO
5. Government of the Cook Islands/Asian Development Bank/United Nations Development Programme, 2008; *Cook Islands Analysis of the 2005/2006 Household Expenditure Survey*. Government of the Cook Islands.
6. National Environment Services, 2000 ; *Cook Islands Initial National Communications/United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change*, Government of the Cook Islands
7. Ministry of Education, *Education Digest, 2006 and 2007*, Government of the Cook Islands
8. Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, National Budgets FY 05/06, FY 06/07, FY 07/08, Government of the Cook Islands
9. National Statistics Office, 2005/06/07/08/09 extracts from Statistics bulletins and reports. Government of the Cook Islands.
10. National Environment Services 2005-2009, National Environment Strategic Action Framework. Government of the Cook Islands
11. National Environment Services; *Extracts from Environment Reports*. Government of the Cook Islands.
12. Draft Report: SPC Gender Mainstreaming Stock take in the Cook Islands, 2009, SPC
13. Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2004 ; The Regional MDG Report
14. Ministry of Health/Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2005/06; *Second Generation Surveillance Surveys of Antenatal Women and Youth, Cook Islands, 2005/2006*. Government of the Cook Islands.
15. Ministry of Health, 2008; *Health Statistics*, Government of the Cook Islands
16. Ministry of Health, 2009-2014: *National Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non Communicable Diseases*, Government of the Cook Islands.
17. United Nations; *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008*, United Nations
18. UNIFEM, Translating CEDAW into Law; CEDAW Legislative Compliance in the Cook Islands, UNDP Pacific Centre, 2008

Websites

19. http://cop.mdgasiapacific.org/files/cop/AP-MDG-Social/20071113_egm_robertson.pdf
20. www.stats.gov.ck
21. www.environment.org.ck
22. www.pmooffice.gov.ck
23. www.cook-islands.gov.ck
24. www.moip.gov.ck