



Media Release: Women United Together in Marshall Island (WUTMI)

Training supports police in RMI to better respond to and prevent violence against women

Friday 30 May 2021 (Republic of the Marshall Islands, RMI): Women United Together in Marshall Island's (WUTMI) is training almost 30 police officers from the Marshall Islands Police Department working in Ebeye to better respond and support survivors of violence against women and children.

The training is being provided through WUTMI's counselling and support service, *Weto In Mour (A Place of Life): Violence Against Women and Girls Support Service*.

"Police officers are often the first to respond to situations of domestic and family violence and it's critical they uphold the law – violence against women is illegal – by removing the violent perpetrator while offering support to the woman survivor," said WUTMI's Executive Director, Daisy Alik-Momotaro.

"This training is also very timely, as in recent months during the COVID-19 response period, there has been a surge of sexual violence and substance abuse which target women and girls within their communities," Ms Alik-Momotaro said.

Opened by Lerij Anta Kabua James John, a woman Chief of Ebeye, and a member of WUTMI as well, this is the second *Weto In Mour* training to support Marshall Islands Police Department officers to better respond to, support and prevent domestic and family violence, with the first held in November last year.

The Attorney General Richard Hickson will also be a guest facilitator on Monday, 3rd of May, during the Ebeye police training being held 26 April to 4 May. He was also a guest speaker at the first training held in November last year for 18 police officers.

This training has 28 participants, including two from the Micronesian Legal Services Corporation and the gender office in Ebeye. In total there will be 46 people trained by end of this second police training, with facilitated by WUTMI in partnership with Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*).

"RMI's rates of violence against women are unacceptable for a nation whose culture is built on peace, care and love for family and clan; a traditional structure that has existed for centuries, and a Christian country, Ms Alik-Momotaro said.

"Police, as first responders and community activists, are essential to stopping this modern day violence and helping our nation return to its culture of peaceful families, but we need to train and support police to help make a violence free RMI a reality."

The police training in Ebeye island, Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), follows WUTMI's February opening of its *Weto In Mour* support service for women in Ebeye, expanding its services beyond Majuro.

Funding for WUTMI's *Weto In Mour (WIM)* Ebeye centre is from the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, via UN Women Pacific, complementing support from the Australian Government through *Pacific Women* that funded the Majuro *Weto In Mour* – the first ever support service for domestic violence survivors in RMI. *Pacific Women* also provides ongoing technical support.

"The training is focusing on gender, violence against women, human rights and legislation and is being remotely delivered to the 28 police officers," Ms Alik-Momotaro said.

“Through the training, police officers will deepen their understanding of the need and importance of referring survivors of violence against women to support services such as Weto in Mour,” she said.

The training is part of *Pacific Women's* ongoing support for RMI's first counselling and support service Weto in Mour, established in 2016 with the support of the Australian Government through *Pacific Women*. The counselling service continues to increase awareness about violence against women and to improve the referral network and services provided to its survivors. *Pacific Women* also provides ongoing technical support for all WIM staff along with assistance designing its police training workshop, supported by Wilma Eileen, *Pacific Women's* Capacity Development Adviser for Gender-Based Violence (Federated States of Micronesia and Republic of the Marshall Islands).

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Caption: Women United Together in Marshall Island's (WUTMI) is training 28 police officers from the Marshall Islands Police Department working in Ebeye to better respond and support survivors of violence against women and children.

Credit: Supplied by WUTMI

For more information:

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