



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

## **Orange Day in Marshall Islands to stop violence against women and girls**

**Thursday 24 September 2020 (Republic of the Marshall Islands, RMI):** Women United Together in Marshall Island's (WUTMI) believe that greater action is needed to intensify and strengthen partnerships to better address the issue of sexual violence and harassment.

This will be highlighted by WUTMI's Executive Director, Daisy Alik-Momotaro at today's Orange Day march through the streets of Majuro, the capital of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI).

"Today sets a milestone in the RMI in our fight against sexual violence and harassment against our young adolescents and women of all ages," Ms Alik-Momotaro said.

"The support of women and men for this event clearly tells me that our Marshallese custom continues to play an important role in our society."

"Although significant progress has been made in the RMI, particularly in the area of legal reforms to help eliminate violence in our communities, greater action is needed."

Ms Alik-Momotaro said 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.

"Surveys have shown that an alarming one in three Marshallese women have experienced some form of abuse in their lifetime."

"The prevalence of violence against women and children that led up to this day are staggering and unacceptable for a small nation such as ours. So today, the purpose of our peaceful walk is to let the survivors know, we are all behind you and that violence is not okay and is against the law."

WUTMI established RMI's first counselling service called *Weto in Mour* in 2016, with the support of Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*). *Weto in Mour* continues to increase awareness about violence against women and to improve the referral network and services provided for its survivors.

WUTMI has begun commemorating Orange Day around the 25th of every month for the UNiTE campaign to end violence against women and girls worldwide. WUTMI organised today's Orange Day event in partnership with the Australian Government and its *Pacific Women*, Ministry of Health & Human Services, Ministry of Culture & Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Natural Resources & Commerce, Attorney General Office, College of Marshall Islands, ROC Taiwan, Kora In Okrane Club and MIEPI.

Ms Alik-Momotaro said 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.

"WUTMI is committed to ensure that perpetrators, child molesters, pedophiles and human traffickers were punished to the highest extent of the law," Ms Alik-Momotaro said.

"Safe havens must be established in our hospitals, police stations, courthouse to protect survivors once a case is reported."

### **For more information:**

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