



**Water Resources Management in the RMI:**  
*An Introduction and Overview*

**RMI Water  
Summit  
March 22-23,  
2011**

**RMI-EPA**



# Presentation Outline

- Introduction
- Water resources in RMI
- Our major issues and challenges
- Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM): Some Key Principles
- Key questions for this Summit





# Introduction

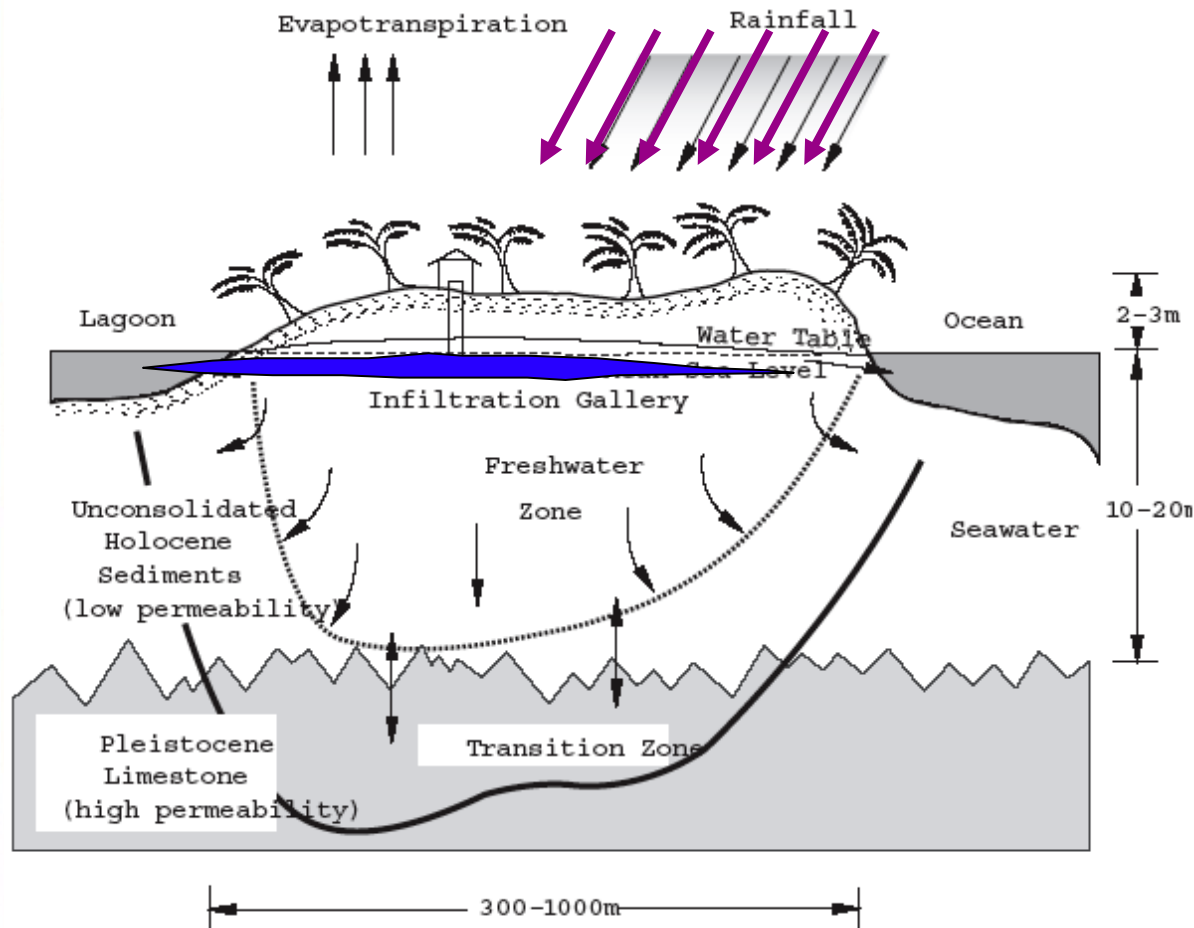
- A self-evident truth: water is a critical enabler for health, development, and wellbeing for every society, but...
- Sustainable management of water resources continues to be a major challenge for many countries
- For the RMI, a coral atoll nation, “water for life” is an understatement



# Introduction

- RMI already committed to improving water resource management and has pledged to expand access to improved water and sanitation (MDGs)
- But much more can and should be done
- Adopting a more integrated approach to water management, including developing a comprehensive water/sanitation policy should be prioritized

# Water Resources in the RMI

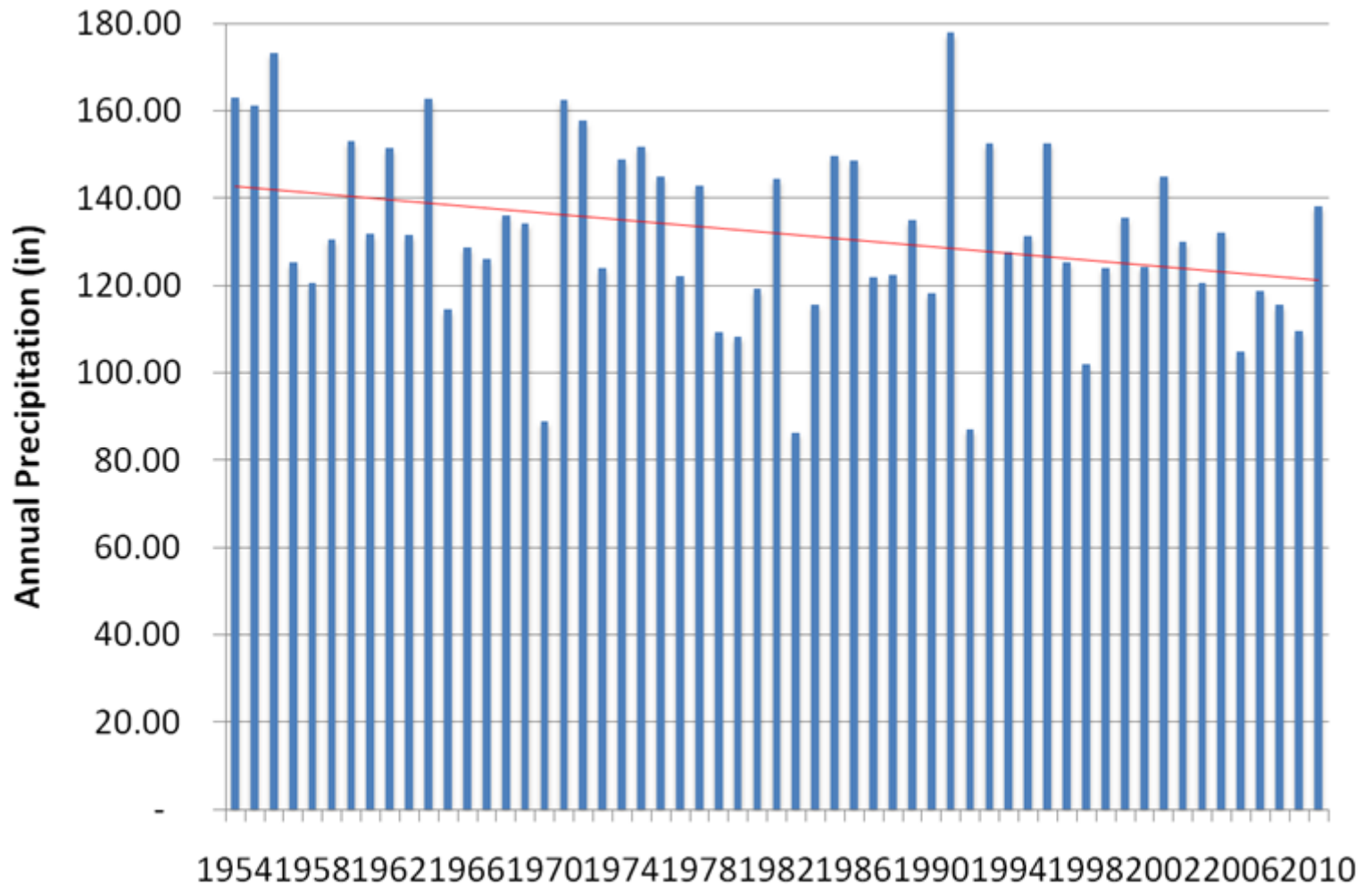


**Rainfall** is generally of the shower type, however continuous rain is not uncommon.

In favorable locations some of the rainwater may accumulate in a **freshwater lens** accessed through wells.



# Water Resources in the RMI





# Our Major Issues & Challenges

- We already know that:
  - While there is improving cooperation among key entities, overall water resource management could be much more integrated
  - The absence of a formal, institutionalized national water body (“National Water Apex Body”) is a weakness
  - Roles and responsibilities are fragmented and not clearly defined, and the absence of a centralized coordinating office is a weakness





# Our Major Issues & Challenges

- The absence of a national water policy or plan is a weakness
- Entities with direct and indirect responsibilities for water management (and the network that connects them) need strengthening and capacity development
- We have serious challenges in dealing with major risks and threats to water resources
- We face water quantity and quality challenges
- Our water utilities face critical challenges



# Our Major Issues & Challenges

- Conservation and demand-side management efforts can improve/expand
- Community level water management (e.g. Laura) need to be strengthened
- Sanitation challenges are serious, including many homes without access to improved sanitation (MDG)
- Effects of climate change are likely to be significant
- Others



# IWRM: Some Key Principles

- Involvement of all key stakeholders, working within an established policy and institutional (governance) framework
- Water source conservation and protection are essential
- Is both bottom-up and top-down; management taken care of at the 'basin' and sub-basin and community levels



# IWRM: Some Key Principles

- Coordinated, cross-sectoral, inter-disciplinary management; encompasses management of other sectors and activities (e.g. land use) that affect water resources
- Emphasizes efficiency, capacity building, and gender balance
- Takes into consideration economic, social, cultural and physical linkages





# Key Questions for this Summit

- Two main objectives of Summit are:
  - to raise awareness on water/sanitation issues and challenges,
  - to identify priorities and make recommendations for a new water policy
- Some important questions to consider:
  - What are the key/priority water issues that we must focus on?



# Key Questions for this Summit

- What policy, institutional, and governance arrangements need to be made to improve IWRM in the RMI?
- What sort of coordinating mechanism/office should be established? How should it be funded and staffed?
- What sort of national water apex body should be established and how should it be structured?
- How can we strengthen IWRM at the community level, such as in Laura?



# Key Questions for this Summit

- What can be done to improve the effectiveness of our two main water utilities?
- How can we improve water efficiency?
- How can we improve both water supply (quantity) and quality?
- What impacts will climate change have on water resources? How can we prepare for this?
- How can we secure financial commitments and mainstream investments into the water sector?
- What can be done to improve sanitation (public system and household facilities)?



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