

## New Zealand making a difference in Kiribati

### About the New Zealand Aid Programme

- The New Zealand Aid Programme is the Government's international aid and development programme which is managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- In 2009/10 the New Zealand Government spent approximately \$500 million on official development assistance (ODA).
- Over half of the New Zealand Aid Programme's allocated budget is spent in the Pacific.
- Approximately \$756 million will be spent on development in the Pacific over the next three years.
- New Zealand's total bilateral assistance to Kiribati in 2009/10 was \$7 million, increasing from \$3 million in 2007/08.

### The facts

- Kiribati is made up of 33 islands covering 811 sq km. Kiribati's Economic Exclusion Zone is 3.55 million sq km.
- Half of the total population of 100,000 live on South Tarawa where density is 2,558 people per sq km
- Subsistence lifestyles and traditional support networks prevent absolute poverty in Outer Islands, but relative poverty is increasing in South Tarawa where there is a greater reliance on a cash economy.
- Remittances from Kiribati seafarers employed on overseas cargo ships, and fees paid by foreign vessels fishing in Kiribati waters are the most important sources of revenue.

### The issues

- Climate change is a major issue for Kiribati. Most of the land is low-lying and water supplies are being impacted by variable rainfall patterns.
- Kiribati has the world's second largest ocean territory which provides marine resources such as tuna but land is limited.
- Kiribati's population is growing quickly and expected to double by 2025.
- Unemployment is very high. Approximately 2000 school leavers enter the economy each year, and there are not enough jobs.
- Rapid urban population growth in South Tarawa has damaged the environment, and led to significant public health issues.

- Kiribati's under five mortality rate is the worst in the Pacific (66 per 1000).
- Family violence rates are very high (80%), and alcohol abuse is increasing.



Students at the Kiribati Marine Training Centre (MTC)

### The New Zealand Aid programme on the ground

Currently New Zealand's development assistance programme is focused on three key areas:

- Workforce skills development
- Urban development
- Improved public sector performance.

### Workforce skills development

The Government of Kiribati's top priority is the creation of employment opportunities and a skilled workforce that can access the national and international labour market.

The New Zealand Aid Programme has supported the Kiribati Marine Training Centre (MTC) since 1983. The MTC delivers vocational training to I-Kiribati seafarers.

New Zealand will invest \$7 million in the MTC between 2006-2012. To date this funding has seen the completion of new classrooms, dormitories and a galley. New Zealand is also helping the Centre to develop its training curriculum so that it is accredited to train deck officers and engineers, establish a catering facility and offer English language training. This investment is enabling the Centre to increase its annual student intake from 150 to 200.

The Governments of Kiribati and New Zealand are looking at ways to improve fisheries training including developing the Fisheries Training Centre in Tarawa.

The New Zealand Aid Programme also currently provides the following scholarships and training awards:

- Scholarships for undergraduate or postgraduate study at New Zealand and Pacific regional universities
- Mid-career vocational training in New Zealand
- Funding for workforce training in Kiribati.

### Urban development

The Government of Kiribati has recognised the need to address the problems that unplanned urban development has caused. A study commissioned by New Zealand in 2007 laid out the extent of the problem. Around half of Kiribati's population live in urban areas that have:

- Serious overcrowding
- Severe lack of employment opportunities
- Lack of reliable access to basic services including clean drinking water, sanitation, and waste management.

These are contributing to widespread health problems, increasing social problems, environmental degradation, and poverty.

A Sustainable Towns Programme is underway to address these problems. The first phase of the programme commenced in 2008 and included preparatory work with Government, Urban Councils and communities.

The urban development programme aims to benefit approximately 7,000 people in South Tarawa and communities on Kiritimati Island.

To date the programme has helped deliver:

- Improved solid waste management
- The development of economic development agencies
- Training for Council and Ministry staff
- A baseline survey of Betio and Bairiki villages
- Water resources and environmental impact assessments and land use plans for Temaiku.

The urban development programme will also help with Kiribati's adaptation to climate change. A range of activities are now being considered as part of New Zealand's assistance with urban development on Tarawa with the Pacific Mission in 2010 to consider priorities and what New Zealand should support. Elements under consideration include new subdivisions, water and sanitation upgrades, solid waste management and landfill construction road maintenance and drainage.

Alongside this, New Zealand and Australia are also supporting the World Bank in helping Kiribati respond to climate change through coastal

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protection and determining the availability of fresh water resources.

### Improved public sector performance

NZ has enabled the Government of Kiribati to tender for greater access to, and lower cost of maintaining, air service links to Tarawa and Kiritimati Island. In November 2009 *Our Airline* (Nauru) commenced a new Nadi–Tarawa–Nauru–Honiara–Brisbane route which has reduced the cost of flying to Tarawa by 20%. New Zealand also helped to ensure the reopening of Cassidy Airport on Kiritimati Island when it fell into disrepair.

During his visit to Kiribati in July 2009, the Minister of Foreign Affairs offered assistance to the Office of the Berentitenti (President). Consequently, New Zealand is to provide support to the Strategic Policy Unit within the Office. The Unit is tasked with managing whole of government responses to issues such as climate change, population and disaster management

Assistance from the New Zealand Police has been helping the Kiribati Police Force to address the alarming levels of domestic violence in the country. A senior advisor has worked with the Acting Police Commissioner in a mentoring role. Specialist assistance has been provided with youth offending, child sexual abuse, road policing and criminal prosecutions.

The Phoenix Island's Protected Area within Kiribati recently became UNESCO's largest World Heritage marine protected area, at over 400,000 sq km. New Zealand's Department of Conservation has recently completed its first phase of work that has seen pests eradicated from selected Islands within the group, and Government staff trained in effective invasive species management. This has seen a remarkable recovery of vegetation on the islands, and will provide a remote refuge for nesting seabirds.



Kiribati Wildlife Conservation Unit Officer Katareti Taabu on one of the newly regenerated conservation areas in December 2009.