



KIRIBATI NATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION POLICY



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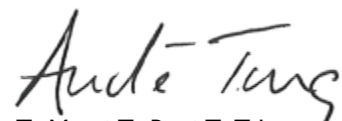
PREFACE

Although migration is a running thread through much of Kiribati's long history, never has it been so relevant and critical a topic as it arguably is today. However, migration is not unique to Kiribati or the Pacific region. One only has to look at what is happening globally to understand that migration continues to be relevant today as it was in the past. Migration is often seen as synonymous with displacement, with brain drain and with loss of culture. However, these fears are not inherent in the concept of migration, but rather are the consequences of what happens if we don't manage migration well.

For Kiribati, migration is the proud tradition of seafaring – in which hundreds of our young men voyage the world and send back savings and remittances which stimulate our economy. Migration is the involvement of hard-working i-Kiribati men and women on Australian and New Zealand farms, filling vital labour shortages while also gaining skills and experience abroad. Migration is the strength of our diaspora communities, which can support our country's development and help to integrate future migrants, particularly if we are forced to move due to the impacts of climate change. Migration is many things to many people, but above all, migration is a voluntary choice which people should be able to make based on a realistic understanding of options; and a choice which can be exercised safely and for the long-term benefit of our people.

The Government of Kiribati recognises the important role of international labour migration in addressing a deficit of employment opportunities on our islands, and promoting economic and social development. It is also a critical component in the concept of Migration with Dignity, which articulates the importance of training I-Kiribati to take up skilled labour migration opportunities in response to climate change threats to livelihoods at home.

For this reason, I am pleased to be presenting this policy to the people of Kiribati, as a testament to the Government's commitment to ensuring that safe and productive opportunities are available for labour migration, as a choice that they can make.



Te Mauri, Te Raoi, Te Tabomoa.
His Excellency Mr Anote Tong
President of the Republic of Kiribati

MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

There is no doubt that our country faces critical challenges in generating decent work opportunities for our people. As is the case for most small island countries, the tyranny of distance from other countries makes creating a strong private sector – the engine of growth in many other countries - undeniably challenging. However, our country is also blessed with a youthful and energetic labour force which can bring not only bring new dynamism to our own labour market, but can also fill labour shortages in other countries, earning remittances that can help spur development in our country.

I am honoured to be presenting Kiribati's first National Labour Migration Policy and Action plan which, for the first time, develops a clear pathway for how our country will promote opportunities for decent foreign employment while at the same time protecting the rights of migrant workers and providing support services.

This policy could not have been achieved without the tireless work of the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development (MLHRD) with technical and financial support from the International Labour Organization (including consultant Dr Carmen Voigt Graf), through a European Union-funded project titled Pacific Climate Change and Migration. My thanks go not only to the efforts of these key stakeholders, but the many other organizations that participated in numerous consultations on this policy to ensure that it reflected a whole-of-government approach to increasing decent work opportunities abroad. These included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Cooperatives, the Ministry for Women Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development, the Ministry of Education, the Public Service Office, the Ministry of Fishing and Marine Resources Development, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Office of the Beretitenti, the Ministry of Communications, Transport and Tourism Development, the Kiribati Trade Union Congress, the Kiribati Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Kiribati Major Employers Organization.

This policy is not simply a document but a commitment to action that our Government has pledged. Specific, time-based activities have been outlined in this policy to be completed between 2015-2019. These activities will be thoroughly monitored, tracked and evaluated, to make sure that we are doing everything we can to establish a workforce that has the skills and knowledge to compete for labour migration opportunities, and that these opportunities lead to stronger diasporas, greater remittances, and long-term development for our people.



Hon Martin Moreti,
Minister of Labour and Human Resource Development

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APTIC	Australia-Pacific Technical College	MFAI	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration
DoE	Department of Employment, Australia	MFMRD	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone	MHMS	Ministry of Health and Medical Services
EQAP	Educational Quality and Assessment Programme	MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
FNU	Fiji National University	MLHRD	Ministry of Labour and Human Resources Development
FTC	Fisheries Training Centre	MHMS	Ministry of Health and Medical Services
GFC	Global Financial Crisis	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
GOK	Government of Kiribati	MTC	Marine Training Centre
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey	MWYSA	Ministry of Women, Youth and Sports
IAU	Inter-Agency Understanding	NLMP	National Labour Migration Policy
ITAC	Industry Training Advisory Committee	OB	Office of Te Beretitenti
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation	PAC	Pacific Access Category
ILO	International Labour Organization	PACER	Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations
IMF	International Monetary Fund	PAILS	Pacific Islands Labour Sending Forum
IMO	International Maritime Organization	PIC	Pacific Island Country
KANI	Kiribati Australia Nursing Initiative	PICTA	Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement
KCCI	Kiribati Chamber of Commerce and Industry	PLMAM	Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting
KDP	Kiribati Development Plan 2012–2015	PNA	Parties to the Nauru Agreement
KIT	Kiribati Institute of Technology	PSDS	Private Sector Development Strategy
KJIP	Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management	PSO	Public Service Office
KIOSU	Kiribati International Overseas Seamen's Union	RERF	Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund
KNSO	Kiribati National Statistics Office	RSE	Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme, New Zealand
KPA	Key Policy Areas	SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
KSON	Kiribati School of Nursing	STCW	Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping
KTC	Kiribati Teachers College	SWP	Seasonal Work Program, Australia
KTUC	Kiribati Trade Union Congress	TMNP	Temporary Movement of Natural Persons
LDC	Least Developed Country	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
LMWG	Labour Mobility Working Group	TVETSSP	TVET Sector Strengthening Programme
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, New Zealand	USP	University of the South Pacific
MCIC	Ministry of Commerce Industry and Cooperative		
MCTTD	Ministry of Communications, Transport and Tourism Development		
MoE	Ministry of Education		
MELAD	Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development		
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand		

1. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Kiribati recognises the important role of labour migration in addressing the lack of employment opportunities, promoting economic and social development, alleviating poverty, and adapting to climate change. The **National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP)** is designed to provide a coherent strategy for promoting overseas employment and protecting the welfare of I-Kiribati abroad, within the broader context of generating productive and decent employment opportunities for all I-Kiribati. The Government recognises that labour migration will become an increasingly important strategy for permanent migration and population control according to the government's "Migration With Dignity" Policy, which articulates the importance of training I-Kiribati to take up skilled labour migration opportunities in response to climate change threats to livelihoods at home.

The Government of Kiribati adopts this **National Labour Migration Policy** to achieve the following objectives:

1. Protecting the rights of migrant workers and providing support services;
2. Promoting opportunities for decent foreign employment;
3. Increasing the development benefits of labour migration; and
4. Improving the administration of labour migration.

The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Office for Pacific Countries was requested in 2014 by its partner – the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development (MLHRD) – to help develop a coherent strategy and action plan for labour migration from Kiribati. The product of this collaboration is this **NLMP** which contains the following substantive sections: context, vision and policy statement, policy areas and action plan, and inception, follow-up, monitoring and evaluation. The NLMP is concerned with the emigration of workers from Kiribati and focuses on the permanent, temporary and seasonal migration of workers of all skill levels to anywhere in the world. The policy does not cover immigration into Kiribati and the situation of foreign workers in Kiribati.

A fundamental requirement for the successful achievement of better labour migration outcomes for Kiribati is a co-ordinated, whole-of-government approach to increasing work opportunities overseas, and mainstreaming of labour migration into the country's policies for national development. The Government of Kiribati (GOK) welcomes the participation and contributions of all stakeholders including donor governments in facilitating the implementation of the action plans and recommendations of the policy which has been developed through a process of consultation with key stakeholders from the Government of Kiribati and the social partners.

2. CONTEXT

The Government of Kiribati recognises three key pressure points on the domestic labour market: 1) the number of school leavers entering the labour market and seeking employment is increasing at a faster rate than the creation of decent employment opportunities in the domestic economy; 2) due to internal migration to South Tarawa, the population there is increasing at about double the national rate, leading to increased pressure on the labour market in these already densely populated areas; and 3) Kiribati today has fewer opportunities for labour migration than it had a decade ago due to falling overseas demand for seafarers from Kiribati and ongoing challenges with increasing the number of seasonal workers in Australia and New Zealand. In addition to these pressures on the labour market, Kiribati's long-term sustainability as an island nation is under threat from climate change, one response to which is the permanent relocation of some of its people, under the Government's "Migration with Dignity" Policy.

These challenges call for a review of the current situation and for the development of a **National Labour Migration Policy** that promotes a balanced approach to future labour migration, provides an outlet to alleviate domestic employment pressures, and helps secure Kiribati's long-term survival as a nation, people and culture. It is crucial that this policy is in line with the Government's overall strategy for national development, and provides I-Kiribati with opportunities for safe and productive employment abroad that contribute to the maintenance of sustainable livelihoods at home.

2.1 Overview of the economy, population and labour market

Kiribati is one of the lowest earning and most remote islands among small states (IMF, 2014). It is categorised by the United Nations as both a "Small Island Developing State" and a "Least Developed Country". Kiribati faces major development challenges and relies heavily on foreign aid to finance its large development needs.

National economy

Kiribati consists of 33 small islands with an Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ) of 3.5 million square kilometres, and a land mass of 810 square kilometres. In 2010, its population was 103,058 (KNSO, 2012). The per capita income was USD 1,650 in 2013, down from USD 1,736 in both 2011 and 2012 (World Bank), which was the lowest of any Pacific Island Country (PIC) included in the World Bank database.

In common with other small island atoll states Kiribati faces obstacles posed by remoteness, lack of scale and vulnerability to external shocks and environmental degradation. Internal and external remoteness and weakness in business climate has kept the private sector small. Kiribati has few natural resources and tourism is negligible.

Notwithstanding its limited range of economic assets, Kiribati has largely had a solid record of financial stability since independence in 1979. Governments have adopted a cautious approach to domestic spending combined with a deliberate policy of capitalising its sovereign wealth fund, the Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund (RERF). The RERF is used to supplement recurrent revenues and smooth volatility in other income sources, e.g. seasonal fluctuations in fishing revenue.

In 2014, the Kiribati economy grew by 3.0%. Growth was sustained by construction projects funded by development partners and continuing high revenue from fishing license fees. As a party to the Nauru Agreement, Kiribati has benefitted from rising rates under the vessel day scheme. Growth in Kiribati's economy is projected to halve to 1.5% in both 2015 and 2016 as projects funded by development partners are completed. The IMF Article IV of 2014 states that Kiribati's key economic challenges are: to reduce large structural fiscal imbalances and to increase growth and employment opportunities.

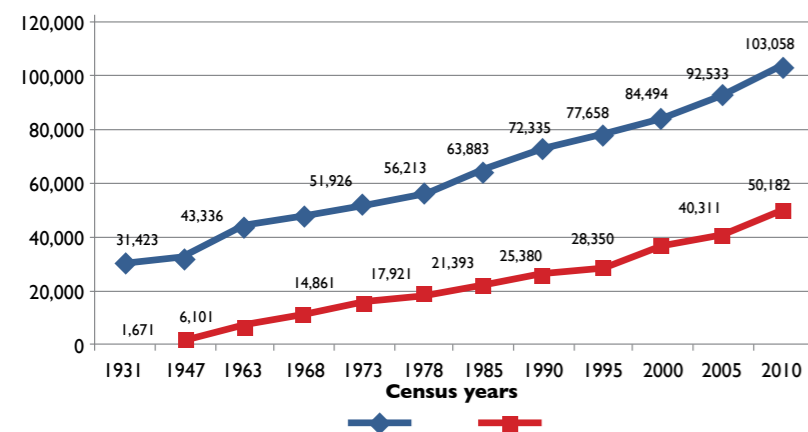
Communication services remain limited throughout Kiribati and when they are available they are very expensive. Internet penetration remains relatively weak, with just 4% of households having access to the internet in 2010 according to the 2010 Census. Communication between islands, particularly outer islands, is also difficult because of isolation and a lack of access to affordable transport. The main island of South Tarawa is connected through two commercial flights per week to Fiji with Fiji Airways and two flights a week to Nauru and Majuro with Air Nauru.

Population

At the time of the last Census in 2010, the population of Kiribati was 103,058 including 50,796 males and 52,262 females (KNSO, 2012). Kiribati faces two key demographic challenges: a rapidly growing population, and increasing overcrowding in South Tarawa.

In 2010, Kiribati's population was almost four times that recorded in the first Kiribati census in 1931, which reported 29,671 people (Fig. 2.1). Over the past five years, Kiribati's population has increased by 11,000 people. Figure 2.1 shows that there is no abating of the population growth rate and that South Tarawa's population has experienced an even higher population growth, from 1,671 in 1947 to 50,182 in 2010. The urban growth rate in South Tarawa between 2005 and 2010 was 4.4% per annum, compared to 2.2% for the total population (KNSO and ILO, 2012). The densely populated atoll of Tarawa is particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts and development pressures.

Figure 2.1: Population of Kiribati and South Tarawa, 1931 to 2010



Source: KNSO and SPC, 2012.

Labour market

There is a lack of reliable labour market data in Kiribati since no labour market survey has been conducted and there is no centralised database to coordinate labour market information within the MLHRD. The main source of labour market data is the five-yearly population census with the most recent census conducted in 2010. Some labour market information is collected in the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), the most recent being conducted in 2006. The National Statistics Office is the main government office responsible for all national statistics including population censuses and household surveys. The lack of reliable labour market data, fragmentation of data and absence of a proper and centralised database at MLHRD is a potential threat to the Government's efforts to increase labour mobility.

Kiribati has a relatively youthful population with 36% of the total population in 2010 below 15 years of age. Between the last two censuses in Kiribati, the working age population of 15 to 64 years increased from 55,060 in 2005 to 62,208 in 2010 (KNSO, 2007; KNSO 2012). Table 2.1 shows that while the economically active population increased, the number of employed persons actually decreased. As a consequence, the number of unemployed increased from 2,254 in 2005 to 11,426 in 2010.

Table 2.1: Activity status of the Kiribati population: 1985 – 2010

	1985	1995	2000	2005	2010
Total population	63,432	77,658	84,494	92,533	103,058
Working age population (15 – 64 years)	36,540	43,019	47,917	55,060	62,208
Economically active (labour force)	25,348	36,613	39,425	35,929	39,261
Employed	24,730	36,547	38,811	33,692	27,835
Paid employment	6,459	7,787	9,046	12,014	10,847
Self employment	18,269	28,760	29,767	21,662	16,988
Unemployed	618	66	648	2,254	11,426

Source: Kiribati National Statistic Office, 2013.

Table 2.2 shows more detail on the economic activities of the population aged 15 years and over in 2010.¹ In 2010, the unemployment rate was 31% of the labour force. It was higher amongst females (34.1%) than males (27.6%) (KNSO, 2012). Youth unemployment was particularly high, with 54% of the 15-24 year old persons being unemployed (KNSO, 2012). According to the National Youth Policy, over 2,000 students leave school each year. However, there are only 400 to 600 paid jobs available, and training institutions absorb around 300 to 400 school leavers (GOK, 2011), leaving at least half of the school leavers without training opportunities or jobs. It is also obvious from Table 2.2 that the public sector dominates the Kiribati economy. 34% of the paid labour force are employed by the government (KNSO 2012, KNSO & SPC 2012).

Table 2.2: Economic activity of population aged 15 years and over, 2010

Economic activity	Males	Females	Total
I. Labour force			
I.1 Employed - paid work			
Employer	775	343	1,118
Employee	9,158	7,974	17,132
- Employee government	3,586	3,135	6,721
- Employee private	2,569	1,689	4,258
- Producing goods for sale	3,003	3,150	6,153
Self-employed	829	514	1,343
Total employed - paid work	10,762	8,831	19,593
I.2 Employed - unpaid work			
Voluntary work	355	223	578
Unpaid family work	1,887	1,028	2,915
Subsistence - Village work	2,329	1,681	4,010
Total employed - unpaid work	4,571	2,932	7,503
Total employed	15,333	11,763	27,096
I.3 Unemployed	5,853	6,085	11,938
Sub-total in the labour force	21,186	17,848	39,034
% unemployed	27.6	34.1	30.6
2. Not in the labour force			
Student	2,561	2,816	5,377
Home duties	2,771	6,967	9,738
Inactive	2,838	3,007	5,845
Retired	1,993	3,117	5,110
Disabled	384	386	770
Total not in the labour force	10,547	16,293	26,840
Total	31,733	34,141	65,874

Source: KNSO and SPC, 2012.

¹ The figures in Table 2.1 differ slightly from those in Table 2.2 because Table 2.1 refers to the working age population of between 15 and 64 years of age, whereas Table 2.2 refers to the population above 15 years of age.

The 2010 Census showed that only 3% of the labour force had a higher education in 2010. More than one-half the working population (57%) has attained a secondary level education, with just over 30% having a primary education and about 10% of the working population having no formal education (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Highest school attainment of working population aged 15 and over, 2010

	Males	Females	Total
School attainment			
No school	9.5	10.6	10.0
Primary	30.8	29.9	30.3
Secondary	56.2	56.8	56.5
Higher education	3.5	2.8	3.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: KNSO and SPC, 2012.

2.2 Labour migration from Kiribati: Current trends, opportunities and challenges

Current migration trends

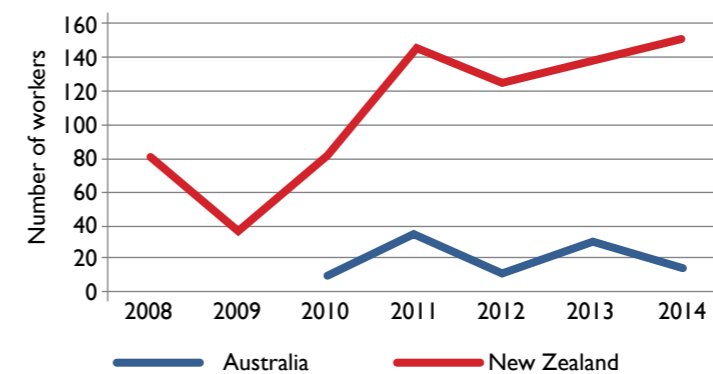
After independence, **seafaring** has presented the best overseas employment opportunity for I-Kiribati, complemented by other temporary work and few permanent migration opportunities. The Marine Training Centre (MTC) is a world class marine training institution, providing training for ratings to work in deck and engineering positions under the international maritime convention STCW-95. Ship-owning companies represented by the German shipping line South Pacific Marine Services (SPMS) employ seamen who trained at MTC. However, employment of seafarers fell sharply in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis. (IMF, 2014). In June 2015, there were about 750 Kiribati seamen on board, compared to 1,452 in 2006. The recovery in world trade from the global crisis did not produce a corresponding recovery in seafarer employment for a number of structural reasons within the shipping industry (IMF, 2014), including a restructuring of the industry and lower demand for crew globally. On a positive note, the number of I-Kiribati seafarers is on the rise again.

The **maritime and fisheries sector** also offers employment opportunities for I-Kiribati who used to be trained at the former Fisheries Training Centre (FTC) which has become a new department under MTC following the merger in 2015. Access agreements currently dictate I-Kiribati crewing requirements and I-Kiribati crew have built a strong regional reputation, particularly among Japanese fleets. It is estimated that approximately 325 I-Kiribati crew are working on Japanese fishing vessels and between 100 and 200 on Korean, Taiwanese and Chinese fleets (MFMRD 2013).

Migration flows to New Zealand intensified partly as a result of a work permit scheme in New Zealand in the 1990s and early 2000s, and the introduction of the **Pacific Access Category (PAC)** Scheme in 2002. Under the PAC Scheme, up to 75 I-Kiribati are accepted to New Zealand every year for permanent settlement under a lottery scheme. The lottery winners have six months to secure a job in New Zealand in order to stay in New Zealand. If they fail to find a job, they have to leave New Zealand. The PAC scheme is a self-funded scheme and many workers draw on their pension funds to meet their expenses. According to the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the number of successful PAC applicants from Kiribati including both visa applicants and their dependents who were able to secure a job offer was 61 in 2013-14 and 69 in 2014-15.

More recently, small numbers of workers from Kiribati have found **seasonal employment opportunities** on Australian farms under the Seasonal Work Programme (SWP) and on New Zealand farms under the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme. However, Kiribati faces competition from larger PICs with better resourced Departments of Labour, better end to end processes and better and cheaper air linkages to Australia and New Zealand. It has therefore not been easy to find New Zealand or Australian employers for seasonal workers from Kiribati. Overall, 2011 recorded the highest number of I-Kiribati seasonal workers in both SWP and RSE (181), which fell in subsequent years and reached 168 in 2014.

Figure 2.2: Number of I-Kiribati seasonal workers in Australia and New Zealand



Source: Data provided by MLHRD

The **Kiribati Australia Nursing Initiative (KANI)** programme, completed in September 2014, educated 84 young I-Kiribati women and men in nursing at Griffith University in Brisbane. As of February 2014, 78 had graduated with a Bachelor degree in Nursing (63), Social Work (3) or Human Services (1), Diploma of Nursing (4), Diploma of Community Welfare (1) or Certificate III in Aged Care qualifications (6) (Shaw, Edwards and Rimon, 2014), while five had withdrawn and one was still studying. The programme was a response by the Australian Government to the Government of Kiribati's concerns about climate change, youth unemployment and the need to give I-Kiribati the opportunity to gain internationally recognised qualifications. Of the 68 graduates with Bachelor degrees, 55 were working as trained nurses in the aged care sector (24 full time and 22 part-time in Australia, and 9 in Kiribati). While KANI will not be continued, the Australian Government has declared its commitment to pursue the objective of increased labour mobility through other programmes.

One of the most recent initiatives is a five-year **pilot program** to provide up to 250 citizens (around 50 per year) of Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu access to a multi-year work visa (two years, with the option of applying for an additional (third) year) to work in lower-skilled jobs in Northern Australia.² The pilot program will target non-seasonal occupations, where employers are unable to attract Australian-resident workers. Department of Employment and Austrade labour market analysis and industry and stakeholder consultations will be used to identify sectors, occupations and geographic areas of labour demand and the Australian DFAT will work to ensure Australia's aid program targets technical and vocational training needs to match labour market analysis.

Another initiative by the Australian Government to endow Pacific Islanders with skills and qualifications to Australian standards was the establishment of the **Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC)** in 2008 with training centres in Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu and PNG and offering training in hospitality and tourism, automotive, construction, manufacturing and electrical services, and health and community service. APTC scholarships provide opportunities to upgrade skills and gain internationally recognised qualifications. Since 2008, some 232 I-Kiribati students have graduated from APTC with qualifications in areas including children's services, youth work, aged care, disability, hospitality, tourism, hairdressing, automotive, electrical, carpentry, painting, and tiling. However, most APTC graduates from Kiribati are unemployed due to limited employment opportunities in Kiribati and difficulty in accessing overseas employment opportunities.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Republic of Kiribati regarding Labour Cooperation was signed in 2007 according to which Taiwan permits the employment of I-Kiribati in Taiwan in certain roles (manufacturing workers, construction workers, domestic helpers, caretakers and crews on ships or fishing boats). Taiwan also welcomes vocational trainees and undertakes to protect female labourers from sexual exploitation and physical abuse. However, there is no record that any labour migration from Kiribati to Taiwan has taken place under this MoU. Chinese language skills are one of the criteria to consider when preparing workers for Taiwan. The MLHRD is currently working with respective agencies in assessing and working on requirements for accessing the Taiwan market.

² Australian Government 'Developing Northern Australia White Paper', released in June 2015

Remittances have long been an important income source for households in Kiribati. In 2010, 12.8% of households received remittances from seafarers and 18.3% received other remittances (see Table 2.4). A higher proportion of urban than rural households received remittances from seafarers, whereas a higher proportion of rural households received other remittances. Accounting for the fact that some households receive remittances from seafarers as well as other remittances, we can estimate that around one quarter of all households in Kiribati received remittances. Before the start of the GFC, remittances were about 15% of GDP. Between 2006 and 2013, seafarer remittances fell by about 4 % of GDP, and stood at 6% of GDP in 2013.

Table 2.4: Household income sources, 2010

Cash income source	% of urban households	% of rural households	% of households in Kiribati
Wages	71.7	34.8	50.2
Rental property	3.5	0.9	2.0
Seaman's remittances	17.9	9.1	12.8
Land rent	15.9	13.7	14.6
Sale of fish, crops	25.9	49.2	39.5
Other remittances	16.1	19.8	18.3
Own business	26.6	8.3	15.9

Source: KNSO and SPC, 2012.

Migration opportunities and challenges

Given that the established sectors of overseas employment have recently employed fewer workers from Kiribati, there is a degree of urgency to identify new migration opportunities. As acknowledged in *MLHRD's Strategic Plan (2013-15)*, the country's labour force needs to be endowed with skills, qualifications and work ethic in order to facilitate migration.

The first step is to identify the technical and academic institutions in Kiribati which offer internationally recognised skills and qualifications for which there is demand overseas. These include the MTC, and the Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT), which are run by MLHRD; and the APTC which is run by the Australian government. Other training institutions which offer qualifications that are currently not recognised outside of Kiribati include the Kiribati School of Nursing (KSON), the Kiribati Teachers College (KTC), and the Kiribati Police Training Centre, as well as some vocational centres run by churches and schools. A plan for the merger of KSON with KIT has been endorsed by Cabinet and will be implemented in 2016. KSON curriculum options are being developed with a view to upgrading and offering internationally recognised qualifications. Employment opportunities for nursing graduates will be explored in Australia, New Zealand and other potential markets.

Some tertiary education is available through the USP Extension centre though further studies are usually taken up in Fiji, Australia or New Zealand. The Fiji National University provides one-year certified courses in computing, fabrication and welding, carpentry and joinery. Pre-service and in-service scholarships for tertiary study are awarded by the Government and by donors including Australia, New Zealand, and Taiwan. There are also Cuban Scholarship Awards for studies in Medicine.

It is important to emphasise that having internationally recognised qualifications often does not easily translate into finding employment overseas. For instance, it is noteworthy that in the five year period up to June 2013, only 18 I-Kiribati have migrated to Australia as skilled migrants (Curtain, 2014). Training to international standards guarantees overseas employability but not necessarily overseas employment. Other important factors determining whether a qualified person secures employment overseas include the immigration and visa regimes in potential destination countries, the cost of attaining skill recognition in the destination country, the existence or non-existence of contacts to potential employers, English language and general workplace skills.

In Australia and New Zealand, employers have increasingly been involved directly in the skilled migration selection process. In Australia, there has been a shift away from 'supply driven' independent skilled migration towards 'demand-driven' outcomes (Curtain, 2014). The objective is to enable the skilled migration program to better target the skills needed in the economy and ensure that skilled migrants are employed in industries that have the highest need.

In other words, ensuring that I-Kiribati are receiving Australian standard training for an occupation in demand in Australia is not sufficient to gain entry as a skilled migrant to Australia. This is also underlined by the experience of APTC graduates where a mere 1.2% of all APTC graduates from PICs currently reside in Australia or New Zealand (Curtain 2014). Australian employers are looking for migrants not only with Australian qualifications, but with high-level English language skills, coming from comparable high-quality education systems, who have the right workplace skills to easily and quickly fit into the workplace (Curtain 2014).

It is likely that other countries such as New Zealand will face skill gaps, labour shortages and imbalances, therefore potentially presenting employment opportunities for Pacific Islanders across all skill levels including in agriculture, construction, tourism and hospitality, and aged care (Scott and Malaulau 2014).

2.3 Legal and institutional framework for managing migration

Legislation and Regulations

The legal framework in Kiribati for employment and labour migration includes ILO's eight Fundamental Conventions which Kiribati has ratified. The major Acts regulating employment in Kiribati are: The Employment Ordinance 1966 (CAP 30, Revised Edition 1980), the Employment (Amendment) Acts 1980 and 2008, the Employment (Return) Regulations, and the Employment (Housing Standards) Regulations. The Employment Ordinance and Employment (Amendment) Acts have been repealed following the adoption of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act 2015 which will be effective in 2016.

There is no specific legislation relating to employment of I-Kiribati overseas. Under the Employment and Industrial Relations Code, the Commissioner for Labour is responsible for issuing licences to recruitment agents or agencies that provide workers to overseas employers. Regulations for the conduct of private recruitment agencies are likely to be drafted in 2015 or 2016.

While there is no specific legislation relating to the recruitment of seafarers, there is a well-developed set of arrangements between the MLHRD (which oversees the MTC), South Pacific Marine Services (SPMS – an employment agency established in 1970 by the German shipping lines employing I-Kiribati labour), and the Kiribati International Overseas Seamen's Union (KIOSU) (Bedford et al 2014).

Several agencies are authorised to recruit in Kiribati for overseas fishing companies including Kiribati Fishermen Services (KFS), Kiribati Employment Marine Services (KEMS), Central Pacific Producers Ltd (CPPL), Kiribati Fish Limited (KFL), the Central Pacific Maritime Agency (CPMA), Kiribati Seas, OTTA, Dojin and Pacific Kiribati Enterprise.

Unlike the situation relating to seafarer and fisheries employment, the recruitment of I-Kiribati for the RSE and SWP schemes was until recently exclusively managed by the MLHRD's Labour Officers.³ In October 2013 Cabinet approved the outsourcing of recruitment for the schemes whilst also maintaining the system of recruitment implemented by MLHRD. The MLHRD maintains a work-ready pool of prospective seasonal workers for the RSE and SWP schemes, and a cross-Departmental team is involved in the selection and pre-departure training processes. Under both schemes, seasonal workers sign individual employment agreements with their employers. Since October 2013, a license to recruit workers under the RSE and SWP schemes can be obtained from the Labour Division within MLHRD. The licensee has to comply with a number of conditions set out in the agreement. However, the Ministry has still yet to receive applications from interested private recruiters. Some existing employers who were consulted on the outsourcing of recruitment have expressed that they preferred to work with MLHRD based on the good working relationship that they have had with the Ministry.

Institutional Framework

The Ministries and agencies dealing with aspects of labour migration are detailed below in Table 2.5. The lead agency responsible for regulating labour migration is the MLHRD. The Labour Division within MLHRD administers labour regulations and oversees the management of the seasonal work schemes with Australia and New Zealand. The Secretary of MLHRD also acts as the Commissioner for Labour. Within MLHRD the Senior Labour Officer and the Labour Officer are Assistant Labour Commissioners under the Employment (Amendment) Act 2008. Furthermore, MLHRD also has two divisions for training institutions, including the Kiribati Institute Technology (KIT) division and the Marine Training Centre (MTC).

³ An Interagency Understanding between the relevant Ministries in New Zealand and Kiribati; and a Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian and Kiribati Governments both signed in 2015.

Table 2.5 Institutional Framework: Government of Kiribati's line ministries and other institutions with responsibilities on labour migration

Line ministry	Responsibilities
Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development (MLHRD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead agency overseeing employment relations and labour administration across different sectors of employment including labour mobility; - Licensing private recruiters for the seafaring and fishing industries, and the RSE and SWP schemes; - Overseeing several TVET institutions: MTC, KIT; - Providing pre-departure training.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration (MFAI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead agency for establishing and maintaining foreign relations; - Maintaining overseas missions with a view to strengthening Kiribati's link with Governments to pursue work opportunities overseas; - Initiating discussions with Governments on labour migration schemes such as the RSE and SWP and PAC schemes; - Responsible for immigration policy and the issuing of visas.
Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives (MCIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead agency negotiating free trade agreements including PACER Plus and PICTA including negotiating labour mobility under these schemes; - Responsible for the National Private Sector Development Strategy and in charge of the Business Promotion Centre.
Ministry for Women, Youth and Sports (MWYS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead agency for women and youth.
Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development (MELAD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for developing Kiribati's adaptation strategy to climate change which includes labour mobility.
Ministry of Education (ME)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead agency responsible for education; - Responsible for the Kiribati Teachers College; - Involved in developing a Kiribati National Qualification Framework and responsible for implementing a framework to encourage the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications in the Pacific region.
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development (MFMRD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead agency responsible for fishing licenses and involved in negotiations within the Parties to the Nauru Agreement group, including on local crewing requirements for vessels.
Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for dealing with outer island councils; - Facilitating recruitment from outer islands for the SWP and RSE.
Office of the Beretitenti (OB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National focal point for climate change adaptation in Kiribati as articulated in the National Framework for Climate Change and Climate Change Adaptation
Ministry of Communications, Transport and Tourism Development (MCTTD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for transport policy and regulation in the maritime sector, including shipping registration and licensing.
Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for medical check-ups and providing medical clearance for labour migrants before departure.
Public Service Office (PSO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for administration of scholarships and in-service training.
Kiribati Trade Union Congress (KTUC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Kiribati Trade Union Congress (KTUC) is the national trade union centre of Kiribati. All 7 registered unions (Kiribati Nurses Association, Kiribati Union of Teachers, Kiribati Island Overseas Seamen's Union, Hotel Workers Union, ANZ Union, Telecom Union, Public Utilities Board Employees Union) in Kiribati are affiliated with the KTUC.
Kiribati Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The KCCI is the major employers' organisation in Kiribati.
Private recruitment agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruitment agencies for seafarers, fishermen, and seasonal workers.

3. VISION AND POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 Vision

The long-term vision of the **National Labour Migration Policy** is to provide I-Kiribati with increased opportunities to migrate with dignity by accessing decent work opportunities abroad. The permanent relocation of some of its citizens is part of the Government's long-term climate change adaptation strategy. In the medium-term, the **National Labour Migration Policy's** vision is to help Kiribati achieve its national sustainable development goals, reduce poverty and relieve pressure on the domestic labour market through identifying strategies to secure employment abroad, improving the linkage between training and overseas employment, and providing I-Kiribati with realistic options to work abroad, within a decent work agenda which primarily addresses the generation of productive employment opportunities for all citizens within the country.

3.2 Goals and Objectives

- To facilitate the temporary and permanent movement of I-Kiribati overseas through promoting opportunities for decent, safe and productive employment abroad, and to assist migrants in the transition from temporary to permanent migration;
- To ensure the protection and welfare of the migrant workers;
- To create equal opportunities for overseas employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups, including women, youth, people with disability and people from the outer islands;
- To develop strategies to link the provision of education and training in Kiribati with employment opportunities abroad;
- To promote quality training for workforce development within Kiribati and avoid brain drain;
- To develop an up-to-date database of labour supply in Kiribati and labour demand both in Kiribati and in selected countries overseas;
- To enhance Kiribati's competitiveness in the global market for skills and labour, while protecting the domestic economy by ensuring relevant skills and sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced workers are retained at home;
- To maximise the development benefits of migration through effective use of savings and remittances and thereby to contribute to achieving the goals under the KDP's KPA 2 - Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction;
- To enhance the resilience of I-Kiribati communities and people against climate change and ensure that Kiribati as a nation, culture and people will not perish as a result of climate change;
- To involve all concerned stakeholders, including government ministries and agencies, social partners, private sector and international partners, in good governance of labour migration and the protection of migrant workers; and
- To adopt a whole-of-government approach to the management of labour migration, encouraging inter-agency cooperation, information sharing and institutional capacity building.

3.3 Policy Statement

The **National Labour Migration Policy** has been formulated with reference to the Kiribati Development Plan (KDP) 2012-2015, the National Framework for Climate Change and Climate Change Adaptation, the Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, the 2004 Kiribati Population Policy, the National Youth Policy 2011-2015, the Education Sector Strategic Plan, the MLHRD's Strategic Plan, the National Approach to Eliminating Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Kiribati, the Gender Equality Policy (currently being developed), the Comprehensive Trade Policy Framework (currently being developed), and the Kiribati Foreign Policy (currently being developed). The **NLMP** also takes into account the effectiveness of existing programmes and strategies such as the Private Sector Development Strategy, the TVET Strategy for Kiribati 2013-18, and the TVET Sector Strengthening Programme. The normative foundation of the NLMP draws upon principles and good practices contained in relevant international instruments, particularly the three international migrant worker Conventions: The 1990 International (UN) Convention on Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (ILO Convention No. 97); and The Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (ILO Convention No. 143).

The Government of Kiribati, under the leadership of MLHRD, is committed to securing decent and productive employment opportunities for I-Kiribati overseas. The country has a long history of migration for employment, and this experience has been drawn on to inform recommendations contained in the **NLMP**. The **NLMP** has been framed with reference to a context that includes:

The domestic demographic and labour market situation:

- Kiribati's population is growing rapidly and the Government's population policy aims at a stable population of about 120,000 persons by 2025;
- Unemployment rates are high, particularly among women and youth;
- The importance of education and skills training for I-Kiribati has been recognised in the Government's policies on education, TVET, climate change, and youth. Apart from enhancing Kiribati's competitiveness in the global market, developing skills of the labour force will improve productivity and domestic employment outcomes;
- Existing skill shortages within Kiribati must not be exacerbated by pursuing overseas employment;

Climate change threats:

- The threat of climate change is likely to further minimise domestic job opportunities and livelihoods;
- The National Framework for Climate Change and Climate Change Adaptation (Office of The Beretitenti, 2013) refers to the facilitation of overseas employment and permanent migration in order to ensure that the population of Kiribati remain at a level that facilitates the country's climate change adaptation effort.

The Government recognises the importance of adopting a pragmatic approach when formulating the **NLMP** and setting realistic objectives of the Policy which take into account the limited number of staff within the Government of Kiribati available to implement the Policy; the comparatively low levels of education and qualifications among potential labour migrants; the limited number and high cost of international flights; and the reliance on cooperation from destination countries and technical support from development partners. The Government is committed to allocating adequate financial and other resources for a successful implementation of the **NLMP**.

The Government acknowledges the timeliness of the **NLMP** and its significance for the planning of the international post-2015 development agenda. The **NLMP's** alignment with other national policies, strategies and programmes ensures that the Government has a cohesive policy framework in which supply-side factors, such as the employability of labour market entrants and their access to skills training, are linked with demand-side factors in both the domestic and foreign labour markets.

The Policy promotes continued social dialogue between government stakeholders, social partners, NGOs, training institutions, and churches within Kiribati, as well as bilateral, regional and international cooperation through labour agreements, regular dialogue, and regional and international consultative fora, with the aim of strengthening Kiribati's existing labour migration arrangements and developing new opportunities. Such cooperation will be founded within a rights-based framework that places protection of the rights of migrant workers at the forefront of negotiations.

The **NLMP** will be based on local ownership to ensure the commitment of relevant stakeholders and the Policy's longer-term sustainability. International actors may support and facilitate the development of the **NLMP**, but the policy reflects the vision and goals, priorities, and implementation capacity of the Government of Kiribati and the social partners. It is expected that involving Kiribati's social partners in the formulation and implementation of the **NLMP** will lead to improved policy coherence within the Government and broaden the sense of ownership of the Policy with Kiribati.

The **NLMP** is directed by a long-term and medium-term vision and implemented through a variety of short and medium term activities. This provides the Government of Kiribati with the opportunity to review the vision from time to time, adjust the activities and ensure that the **NLMP** remains dynamic.

4. POLICY AREAS AND ACTION PLAN

The **NLMP** covers permanent, temporary and seasonal migration of migrants of all skill levels and to anywhere in the world. The policy has the following four major objectives:

- Protecting the rights of migrant workers and providing support services;
- Promoting opportunities for decent foreign employment;
- Increasing the development benefits of labour migration; and
- Improving the administration of labour migration.

Each of these objectives is discussed in detail and presented with the associated Action Plan. The Action Plans include short-term actions for 2016 and medium-term actions to 2017-2019, in line with the MLHRD's next Strategic Plan which in turn is aligned with the four-year cycle of the KDP.

4.1 Protecting the rights of migrant workers and providing support services

The Government of Kiribati acknowledges the importance of a robust regulatory framework to protect the rights of I-Kiribati workers employed abroad, and to ensure their access to decent and productive employment opportunities. The Government makes a distinction between temporary and seasonal labour migrants for whom the Government of Kiribati is able to provide a range of support services, and long-term or permanent migrants who have become permanent residents or citizens of other countries. Most permanent migrants make their own arrangements to move (such as under the PAC scheme or as skilled migrants to Australia or New Zealand) without any involvement of the Government of Kiribati. In their case, high levels of education and skills are known to contribute to their general awareness of their rights as migrants and workers, lowering their chances of being exploited.

For temporary and seasonal workers, the Government of Kiribati undertakes to protect their rights by:

- Identifying and strengthening areas related to the protection of migrant workers in existing legislation;
- Ensuring that recruitment processes are fair and safe;
- Providing pre-departure preparation; and
- Ensuring decent work standards for migrant workers are adhered to including in the areas of minimum wage, OHS and social security.

Identifying and strengthening areas related to the protection of migrant workers in existing legislation

As discussed in Section 2.3, the Government, through the MLHRD, issues licenses to labour recruiters and the terms under which private recruiters operate will be specified in upcoming Regulations. While under the current legal framework of Kiribati, there is no specific responsibility the Government faces for the protection of the rights of migrant workers except for regulating recruiters, the Government undertakes to identify and strengthen areas related to the protection of migrant workers in existing legislation.

The Government commits to working with social and non-government partners (including unions) to establish a legislative and regulatory framework for protection of overseas workers, particularly those in vulnerable occupations such as fisheries, care work and construction.

Safe recruitment of workers

As noted in Section 2.3 above, recruitment is currently managed differently in different migration sectors – with seasonal work recruitment managed by MLHRD,⁴ seafarer work managed by SPMS, recruitment for the fishing industry done by several agencies licenced to recruit in Kiribati for overseas fishing companies, and recruitment in other sectors less regulated.

The Government supports the development of private recruitment regulations a system of compliance with the legislation. This will be done in parallel with legal provisions under the Labour Code to be enacted in 2015 or 2016.

⁴ Though, as earlier noted, private recruitment agencies are able to apply for permission to MLHRD to recruit under these schemes.

Pre-departure information

The Government acknowledges the importance of providing relevant pre-departure training for migrant workers in order to prepare them on how to adapt to living and working in another country, increase their understanding of their rights at work (such as in regards to wages and social security), and provide advice on health-related issues. While ensuring the welfare of the migrant workers is the main purpose of the pre-departure training, workers will also be trained in communications skills, English language skills and general workplace skills including work ethics, time management and punctuality. The current system of pre-departure training will be reviewed and revised with a view to delivering the desirable outcomes. KIT will be tasked with coordinating and delivering pre-departure which includes basic English Training, employability skills and most pre-departure training modules. Other agencies including MHMS will involve fitness test while MTC will be involved in delivering some modules including discipline training. MFAI will contribute to pre-departure training in particular in regards to travel advice.

Ensuring decent work standards for migrant workers including in the areas of minimum wage, OHS and social security

Another important consideration for the Government of Kiribati is to make sure temporary and seasonal workers receive decent wages and other basic services, and that they are safe in their working environments. The rights of workers temporarily based overseas are covered by national employment laws in the destination countries. In the case of seasonal workers in New Zealand and Australia, workers sign standardised employment contracts that address a range of conditions relating to the work environment, worker rights, wage rates and discipline provisions. The Kiribati Consulate-General in Sydney and Consulates in Wellington and Auckland may provide assistance with the resolution of disputes. It is a priority to ensure that protection of I-Kiribati workers in other countries and sectors. If new employment opportunities emerge in the future, either in new sectors or in different countries, the Government is committed to signing MOUs or Agreements with the host Governments, along the lines of those signed with Australia and New Zealand regulating agricultural seasonal work. Kiribati's diplomatic representations will provide consular assistance for migrant workers.

All temporary and seasonal migrant workers recruited under existing schemes through licensed recruiters, are covered by health insurance which is part of the terms and conditions imposed by MLHRD when granting a license to recruiters under the Employment Ordinance. The Government will ensure that health insurance will also be included in future schemes.

Under the **NLMP**, the MLHRD with the legal assistance of the Attorney General's Office, is responsible for the vetting of employment contracts of migrant workers where recruitment is regulated through formal inter-Government agreements. In cases where parties to the contract are private citizens, MLHRD with the legal assistance of the Attorney General's Office commits to offering the service to sight the employment contracts of prospective migrants and provide legal advice and assistance.

Table 4.1 Action Plan for Protecting the rights of migrant workers and providing support services

PROTECTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS					
S = short-term (2016). M = medium-term (2017-19 onwards).					
Strategic Area	Policy	Action Plan	S	M	Lead Agency(s)
Legislative/regulatory framework	Review current legislation relating to labour laws and ensure appropriate mechanisms in place to protect migrant workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop draft regulations relating to areas identified in the Employment and Industrial Relations Code which are relevant to labour mobility, including regulation of recruitment. 	✓		MLHRD and Attorney General
	Review regulatory frameworks for fisheries sector, in particular to protect the rights and welfare of fishermen employed on foreign-owned fishing vessels (such as purse seiners and long-liners).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review legislation and institutional frameworks on the protection of fishers and adopt reforms where necessary. Assess the possibility to use formal bilateral agreements and other institutional mechanisms to govern overseas employment of fishermen. 	✓		MLHRD
	Improve provision of pre-departure training for all temporary and seasonal workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing pre-departure training scheme and make recommendations for improvement Implement new compulsory pre-departure training system for all migrant workers that prepares them to work and live overseas, raises awareness of their rights and of health issues, enhances their general workplace skills (including English language skills) and helps create an identity and image for I-Kiribati workers (commonly referred to as "branding"). 	✓	✓	MLHRD, KIT, MFAI
Legal assistance	Provide legal assistance to prospective migrant workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the service of providing legal assistance to migrants moving on their own accord by providing legal advice on their employment contracts 		✓	MLHRD and Attorney General
On-site services in Australia and New Zealand (and other countries)	Strengthen consular and liaison services to support seasonal workers and provide assistance with resolving employment disputes as well as finding additional employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current management of pastoral care issues raised by seasonal workers and resolving employment disputes. Assess feasibility of appointing additional Liaison Officer in New Zealand and Australia (and other countries, should numbers of workers in those countries increase). 	✓		MLHRD
			✓		MLHRD, PSO

4.2 Promoting opportunities for decent foreign employment

Kiribati faces a number of challenges when trying to expand opportunities for offshore labour migration which include: a comparatively small pool of labour, from which to build a competitive workforce for overseas employment; a small private sector with limited capacity and few resources to train workers and provide work experience; a lack of reliable labour market data; competition from other labour sending countries that are less remote and experience lower transportation and communication costs; limited contacts to overseas employers (with the exception of seafaring and fishing companies); lack of skills in areas of demand overseas and of general workplace skills including English language skills. A variety of strategies are proposed to promote opportunities for decent foreign employment. Migration is viewed in a context where the creation of decent work opportunities in Kiribati takes precedence.

Intra-government partnership arrangements

As noted in the institutional framework on labour migration (see Table 2.5 above), a number of government departments and non-governmental organizations are involved in labour recruitment and mobility in Kiribati. The Government of Kiribati commits to enabling MLHRD to undertake the lead role in the process. The MLHRD's Strategic Plan includes the introduction of a comprehensive international labour mobility strategy as its first objective. The Strategic Plan (2013-15) notes that in order to take advantage of employment opportunities outside of seafaring, fishing and seasonal agricultural work, innovative partnership arrangements have to be formed, including between MLHRD and other Ministries. One partnership will be with MFAI which manages bilateral agreements covering diplomatic relations with 59 countries, all of which are potential labour markets. MCIC is another key partner ministry as it is responsible for negotiating the PICTA and PACER Plus free trade agreements and PLMAM which include provisions on labour mobility. MCIC is also responsible for promoting and generating income from entrepreneurship and foreign investment programmes within Kiribati. The existing **Labour Mobility Working Group** (LMWG) chaired by MLHRD will take Secretariat functions for the implementation and monitoring of the NLMP (see Section 4.4).

Expanding demand for I-Kiribati in existing areas of labour migration

Strengthening demand of i-Kiribati in seafaring and fishing

The 48 year old MTC which is run by MLHRD is an internationally recognized maritime vocational training institute offering IMO approved merchant marine training courses under the international maritime convention STCW-95 for employment on board merchant vessels. Courses include 18 month-long deck, engine and catering courses, 12 months training for fishing vessel personnel, 10 months Basic Steward and Hospitality, ship's officer courses, and upgrading and refresher courses for ratings. All courses are delivered to the highest accreditation level and most of the graduates find initial employment with overseas shipping companies. On-going investment in the MTC by New Zealand and Australia ensures that the MTC maintains programmes and facilities at recognised international standards. New Zealand is providing support in the area of institutional strengthening and officer level training for seafarers.

The decline in demand for I-Kiribati seafarers, has placed pressure on Kiribati's economy and on households reliant on seafarer income. Fisheries training is offered at FTC which started off as part of the MTC in 1989 and has recently been merged again with MTC with a view to strengthening its training programme. Student intake is organized by a system of island quotas whereby the Labour Division within MLHRD calculates the intake quota for each island, depending on overall admissions.

Until 2006, FTC has received financial assistance from the Japan Tuna Fishing Corporation (JTFC) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), with the Japan Marine Service Company Ltd later also providing assistance. Since its establishment, more than one thousand young men have graduated, having been trained in three fishing methods, namely Pole & Line Fishing, Purse Seine Fishing, and Long Line Fishing.

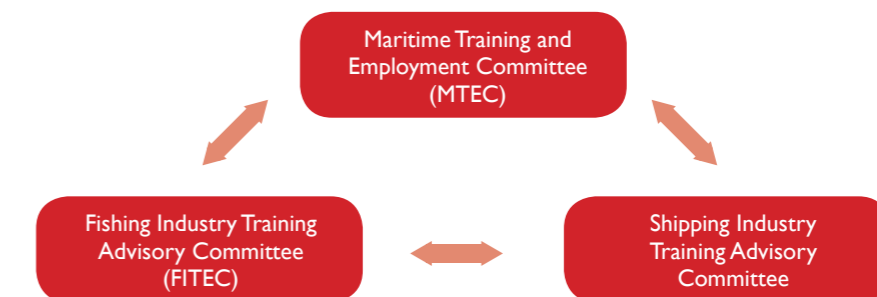
According to the Forum Fisheries Agency's regional register, there were about 18,000 jobs on longliners, purse seiners and pole-and-line vessels operating in the Pacific region in 2014 (Gillett, 2015). The Kiribati National Fishing Policy Statement estimated that there are around 325 I-Kiribati on Japanese vessels and from 100 to 200 on Korean, Taiwanese and Chinese vessels operating in the Kiribati EEZ (MFMRD 2013), with smaller numbers on Kiribati flagged fishing.

It should be noted that while the total number of jobs on industrial fishing vessels in the region is substantial, the number has decreased by around 15% over the last 15 years. The current trend is for an increase in the number of jobs on purse seiners while the number of jobs on longliners and pole-and-line vessels decreases. However it should

be noted that other opportunities in New Zealand on other types of fishing vessels (including trawlers) are also being pursued.

I-Kiribati workers have faced increased competition from Asian countries, particularly Indonesia and the Philippines. The Government is prioritising securing employment opportunities for I-Kiribati to work as fishermen on purse seiners operating in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of countries that are signatories to the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA). The PNA controls the world's largest sustainable tuna purse seine fishery. PNA members are: Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Solomon Islands and Tuvalu. An important aspect of the PNA is a crew requirement which be enforced from 2016 by progressively increasing waiver fees to vessels that do not have the required crew levels (Gillett, 2015). PNA is proposing to enforce mandatory crewing requirements that would lead over a 10-year period to PNA nationals comprising 50 percent of purse seine crews. Kiribati, together with Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, are likely to benefit the most. If successfully implemented, the requirement will also set a precedent for similar schemes on other types of foreign vessels.

There is a mechanism in place to ensure that training is relevant and leads to employment opportunities in seafaring and fishing.



A number of strategic actions have already been taken by the Maritime Training and Employment Committee to revitalise Kiribati's seafaring sector including strategy development, promotion of I-Kiribati seafarers at international conferences attended by employers and recent discussions with the New Zealand shipping industry including on introducing a scheme for fishermen and seafarers for which the last remaining issues are currently being resolved and which is planned to start at the end of 2015. In addition, efforts have been made to expand opportunities beyond seafaring. MTC is negotiating the employment of stevedores for fishing vessels in Japan and MTC has already trained 50 women in hospitality to the level of a Certificate III in Hospitality. Promotion activities for these graduates on cruiseships will commence soon.

In addition, KIT and MLHRD have established Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) for the following industries:

- Automotive
- Construction and Utilities
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Business
- Health and Community Service

Members of the ITACs are drawn from the industries concerned in consultation with KCCI, and meet once every six months or once a year. Within the ITACs the industry and employers have a strong voice to Government on the future direction of TVET in Kiribati as well as to project employment opportunities locally and overseas.

The ITACs are set up to carry out the following functions:

- provide advice on workforce development and skills needs.
- support the continuous improvement of high quality training including fulltime courses and short courses.
- provide independent advice to KIT and APTC on appropriate course structures and content through special course advisory committees.
- provide advice on the structure of apprenticeships and operation of work placements (on the job training).

There is a need for ITACs or employer organizations to work closely with MLHRD and the labour mobility working group to consider the employment of TVET graduates.

The fishing industry is generally less regulated than international shipping lines and concerns about working conditions have been expressed. Work on purse seiners is reputed to be hard and living conditions are difficult. The employment safety and welfare implications for I-Kiribati therefore require careful consideration. The Government, in collaboration with KTUC, will work to ensure there are mechanisms in place to protect workers while on-board foreign vessels, and to deal with any employment-related disputes that may arise.

Seasonal work opportunities

The Government is committed to maintaining relationships with New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and Australia's Department of Employment with the aim of increasing participation of I-Kiribati in the two seasonal work programmes and maximising the gains from existing schemes. However, increasing the number of workers under the two programmes may be difficult to achieve as the programmes are employer-driven. The best approach is therefore to concentrate efforts in the promotion and marketing of I-Kiribati to employers, as well as in reviewing and possibly adjusting the selection and preparation processes. While KIT is working on strengthening the pre-departure training for seasonal workers, MLHRD is also building awareness among the island councils on the need to enhance the pre-selection processes. There is also the need to address the capacity gap within MLHRD in regards to new officers engaged within the employment section by conducting capacity building programmes in order to strengthen the recruitment process and employment negotiations.

Identifying new employment opportunities

In addition to efforts to expand employment in the existing sectors, the Government is committed to identifying additional employment opportunities in new occupations and skill areas and / or new destination countries; and to negotiate market access, either through bilateral Government-to-Government negotiations or as part of trade negotiations.

The Government has taken a pro-active approach to developing bilateral relations. The recent establishment of missions in Taiwan which is also accredited to Japan, and in the US is a step towards expanding diplomatic relations. There are plans to expand diplomatic representation to other countries in Asia. The Government will explore the possibility of signing bilateral labour mobility arrangements with countries other than Taiwan.

The Government will facilitate the development of market research undertaken by MLHRD to systematically examine labour market demand and supply in different skill areas, including demand offshore, with the intention of identifying domestic and overseas employment opportunities. The Labour Mobility Working Group (LMWG), led by the MLHRD and comprising of representatives from MFAI, MCIC, MFMRD and PSO, will be responsible for commissioning research and studies on particular labour markets, through one of the participating Ministries and/or embassy staff. The purpose of Foreign Labour Market Studies will be to identify potential opportunities for I-Kiribati and provide information on how to tailor education and training to meet these opportunities in the future.

The studies will include information such as:

- Data on the qualifications, skills and other requirements which are sought by employers in that particular market (or in the case of a government-run migration scheme, the requirements for eligibility to that scheme);
- The situation of workers' rights and protection in that particular market;
- The benefits that workers will get from migrating to that market (based on current wages, possibility of skills acquisition), relative to the costs (transport, language requirements); and
- Any impact that migration to the particular market will have on the domestic situation (including in terms of loss of skilled workers).

The LMWG will create a permanent position with responsibility for:

- Coordinating the search for new markets for I-Kiribati with other government and non-government agencies, including Kiribati embassies in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, the US and Taiwan;
- Preparation of foreign labour market studies;
- Briefing diplomatic missions on labour mobility discussions;
- Establishing a database of skilled I-Kiribati with recognized qualifications; and
- Maintaining records of all overseas workers including seafarers, seasonal workers and temporary skilled workers.

The LMWG will be responsible for submitting a recommendation to Cabinet for any formal negotiations into potential new foreign markets. This should be based on a Foreign Labour Market Study as well as an analysis of how (and how many) I-Kiribati workers meet the skills required in the particular market.

Where Cabinet endorses the recommendation to explore access, negotiations will be undertaken by MFAI with technical support from other Departments or stakeholders. All negotiations should be informed by the research undertaken in the Foreign Labour Market Study. Once access to the labour market is achieved, the Committee will provide comprehensive advice on developing a pilot test – ensuring appropriate pre-departure training for workers participating in the pilot, protection while abroad, reintegration, and comprehensive evaluation.

The Government will prioritise exploring the following opportunities:

- Employment opportunities for I-Kiribati in hospitality and tourism in Australia, New Zealand and other PICs such as Palau and Cook Islands;
- Employment opportunities for I-Kiribati in the aged care sector in Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, the United States and Canada;
- Employment opportunities for I-Kiribati in the construction and trades industry in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and PNG;
- Opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled migration under the PICTA TMNP Scheme,⁵ which is currently being negotiated with a view to encouraging labour mobility among the PICs;
- Opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled migration under the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus Agreement which is currently being negotiated.⁶ (MCIC and MLHRD will continue to work together in developing Kiribati's negotiating position on labour mobility. The Government through MCIC will seek a TMNP chapter in PACER Plus which would expand the seasonal work programmes into additional sectors such as aged care and seafaring);
- Employment opportunities in countries with which Kiribati maintains diplomatic representations (US, Taiwan, Fiji), and in countries in the Pacific region with potential labour market opportunities (such as PNG, Cook Islands, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia);
- Opportunities which may also exist in New Zealand and Australia through their respective temporary labour shortage migration schemes. New Zealand's Long Term and Immediate Skill Shortage Lists contain several trades-based occupations requiring TVET qualifications, as does Australia's Consolidated Sponsored Occupation List.⁷

When exploring labour market opportunities overseas, the Government will take care to avoid brain drain and to ensure that migration is only encouraged where there is labour surplus, so that the NLMP does not conflict with the government strategy towards developing the private sector.

The MLHRD will also identify pathways from temporary labour mobility to securing more permanent jobs such as from participating in the RSE scheme to securing a permanent job offer in New Zealand and migrating under the PAC scheme. A possible transition from temporary to permanent migration is seen as a crucial step towards the Government's goal of "Migration with Dignity" and will be actively pursued under the **NLMP**.

Strengthening links between skills development and labour market needs

The Government is committed to strengthening links between training in Kiribati and overseas labour market opportunities and exploring ways of expanding access to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) which has regional or international recognition. In addition, pre-departure training will be made more relevant. KIT will offer pre-departure training courses with a focus on workplace skills including work ethics, communication skills and English language skills. These courses will be tailored depending on the needs of workers and feedback from overseas employers and will be mandatory for all seasonal and temporary workers. The duration is estimated to be one month. MLHRD will explore funding options for these courses, including donor funding.

⁵ The PICTA TMNP promotes intra-Pacific labour migration to meet national skill shortages and stimulate skills development. Efforts are currently underway to identify skill demand and supply across the PICTA members in order to make progress on the proposed TMNP.

⁶ The Forum Island Countries (FICs) are also engaged in the PACER Plus negotiations with Australia and New Zealand which commenced in 2009. Regional labour mobility is a core component of discussions surrounding the free trade negotiations.

⁷ See the Immigration New Zealand website for links to the long term skill shortage list, immediate skill shortage list and Canterbury skill shortage lists: <http://skillshortages.immigration.govt.nz/>, accessed 18 May 2015. See the Australian Department of Employment website for information on skill shortages nationally and for each State and Territory: <https://employment.gov.au/skill-shortages>, accessed 18 May 2015; and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's website for the Consolidated Sponsored Occupations List: <http://www.immi.gov.au/work/pages/skilled-occupations-lists/csol.aspx>, accessed 18 May 2015.

Various policy documents including the KJIP, the National Youth Policy and MLHRD's Strategic Plan emphasise the need to deliver training programmes that meet regional and global labour market needs. It is essential that I-Kiribati have the highest level of vocational skills possible so they can better compete for regional and international employment opportunities.

In particular, the Government agrees on the need for a whole-of-government approach, particularly collaboration between MLHRD, MoE and MWYSA to increase opportunities for internationally recognized education in sectors with projected foreign labour shortages, including aged care, hospitality and catering (including on cruiseships), construction and agriculture. Considerable progress has been made in upgrading courses and making qualifications internationally recognised at KIT, in addition to ongoing high quality training provided at MTC and FTC.

Since the start of the Kiribati Technical Vocational Education and Training Sector Strengthening Program (TVETSSP), the quality of TVET has been lifted considerably. The TVETSST is a Government of Kiribati program with financial support from the Government of Australia. The program is designed to develop an integrated and modern TVET sector. Such training will lead to improved workplace productivity, broader work opportunities for I-Kiribati at home and abroad, and contribute to economic growth and social equity. Under the TVETSSP, the capacity of MLHRD to provide better policy, planning, coordination and oversight of TVET Services has been increased, as has the quality, quantity, scope and equity of training delivery at the Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT). In order to make training more relevant for the domestic labour market, KCCI currently undertakes a Training Needs Analysis the results of which will feed into additional KIT courses. KCCI will also offer practical work experience with its members for KIT students. An enhanced quality of training will contribute to improved employment outcomes overseas as well as workforce development and greater productivity within Kiribati.

The overall functions of the MLHRD have been enhanced through a significant number of professional development activities for administrative and technical staff within the Ministry. The MLHRD developed a draft TVET Strategy and 2013-2015 Strategic Plan. The management of apprentices was reviewed and initial design of a labour market information system was completed. KIT underwent significant reform and development including the introduction of Australian TVET Certificates in business, accounting, carpentry, automotive, electro technology, IT and English. Trainers and administrative and support staff completed professional development. Facilities and equipment have been upgraded to Australian TVET standards.

KIT has entered into a training agreement with TAFE South Australia to strengthen the quality of training and assessment and to allow KIT students to graduate with an internationally recognised and valued qualification. KIT's close relationship with the Australian Pacific Technical College has formalised a pathway that allows I-Kiribati graduates to complete higher qualifications at APTC. In 2013 an MOU between the Fiji National University (FNU) and KIT was a significant step towards providing new training opportunities for I-Kiribati and is the first agreement of its kind between KIT and an overseas tertiary provider.

TVETSSP is continuing with a focus among others on reforming the MLHRD's policy framework and strategy for the TVET sector; modernising apprenticeship and trade testing systems, and identifying and developing labour mobility strategies for the TVET sector. KIT will also further be upgraded through professional development, upgrading of facilities and equipment, introducing new competency-based courses that meet international standards in plumbing, metal fabrication and children's services. It is also foreseen that additional enrolments in short courses will occur to meet demand from private sector employers, enterprises, Government Agencies and Ministries and the community.

Although there have not been high numbers of I-Kiribati graduates able to migrate, efforts are currently underway to include apprenticeships and work experience in Australia and New Zealand into KIT courses which would provide students with overseas work experience and could greatly facilitate finding a job in Australia or New Zealand. This should include apprenticeships overseas, including Australia and NZ, to allow our KIT students to have exposure and training to real work experiences.

With efforts underway to make internationally recognised qualifications available in Kiribati, it is also important that a national authority be set up in Kiribati that will work with the regional body (EQAP) on a regional qualifications framework in order to introduce the mutual recognition of qualifications. The Government supports the establishment of the Pacific Regional Qualifications Framework with a view to making qualifications internationally more easily transferable.

In addition to strengthening the TVET sector and training in areas of overseas labour demand, it is necessary to increase the emphasis on English language teaching and numerical literacy in the school system. These are two general areas in which I-Kiribati have comparatively low levels of knowledge despite their importance in all areas of work.

Marketing I-Kiribati workers overseas

Establishing a skilled workforce with the qualifications that meet the needs of foreign labour markets is only one part of foreign employment promotion. A significant amount of work is required by the government to facilitate access to a foreign labour market, and then to monitor and evaluate whether to continue to work on expanding opportunities in that sector, or to focus on another sector or country.

The Government commits to promoting I-Kiribati workers by developing effective links with employers and recruiters in destination countries. MTC serves as a good model for developing links with employers. Its experience has demonstrated the importance of cultivating personal links with selected employers, participating in international events such as trade shows, preparing and distributing promotional material, having up-to-date knowledge of the training pool in terms of number of workers by qualification and skill level, as well as of all stages of the migration process of relevance to overseas employers such as medical screening procedures, labour laws, and union, social security and visa requirements. At the same time, MTC maintains close contact with existing employers and seeks feedback on current crew members. MTC is also proactively trying to get into new areas of work such as stevedoring in Japan.

The Government will consider options how to address the comparative disadvantage of I-Kiribati in regards to the country's remoteness and high airfare costs to destination countries.

The Government of Kiribati recognizes the need to develop a high level cooperation mechanism on labour migration with other small island states such as through the Coalition of Low Lying Atoll Nations in Climate Change. There is also the need to seek support for a high level dialogue especially with Tuvalu and Nauru to consider improving labour market access in foreign markets. A sub-regional group could be formed to establish a strong voice as Small Island States in the pursuit of overseas employment opportunities.

Inclusion of disadvantaged population groups

The Government of Kiribati is committed to proactively expand labour mobility opportunities to disadvantaged population groups including women, youth, and outer island residents. This will initially be done by targeting Government information campaigns on available schemes at disadvantaged groups and supporting disadvantaged groups to meet the eligibility criteria for labour mobility schemes through training.

An assessment of the participation of disadvantaged population groups in the various schemes will be undertaken in three years. If it is found that they are inadequately represented in the schemes, the Government will assess the possibility of introducing quotas for women, youth and outer island residents both as students in Government run training facilities and in labour mobility schemes.

Table 4.2 Action Plan for Foreign Employment Promotion

PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DECENT FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT					
S = short-term (2016). M = medium-term (2017 - 2019).					
Strategic Area	Policy	Action Plan	S	M	Lead Agency(s)
Intra-Government Partnership Arrangements	Increase cooperation between key Government Departments in order to promote opportunities for decent employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the Labour Mobility Working Group (LMWG) to take up Secretariat functions for the NLMP 	✓		MLHRD
Seafaring industry	Revitalise overseas demand for I-Kiribati seafarers with aim of securing 1,400 employment contracts in 2016, 1,500 in 2017, and 1,600 or more contracts per annum from 2018 onwards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a comprehensive plan to assess options for increasing employer demand for seafarers, and making recommendations to Government. Continue to explore seafaring employment opportunities in New Zealand and other countries 	✓		MLHRD, MFMRD
Fisheries industry	Increase decent employment opportunities for I-Kiribati on fishing boats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insist on progressive 50% mandatory crew requirement under PNA in collaboration with other PNA countries. 	✓	✓	MFMRD
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closely monitor work conditions in the fishing industry and produce bi-annual report on conditions. 	✓	✓	MHLRD
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully undertake participation of i-Kiribati fishers in New Zealand pilot. 	✓		MLHRD
Employment opportunities in hospitality	Explore employment opportunities for I-Kiribati in catering and hospitality roles including on regional cruise liners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review employment prospects and devise appropriate marketing strategy(s). 	✓		MLHRD
Seasonal work opportunities	Increase numbers of seasonal workers in Australia and New Zealand to 200 by 2017.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion campaigns among employers in Australia and New Zealand, organised through diplomatic missions, and inviting employers to Kiribati. Enhancing the quality of workers sent to Australia and New Zealand including under the new pilot scheme of the Micro State visa (250 job opportunities for workers from Kiribati, Tuvalu and Nauru in the North of Australia) 	✓	✓	MFAI, MLHRD; KIT, MTC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine options for increased recruitment from outer islands to ensure better alignment between skills possessed by recruits and skills required in New Zealand and Australia. 	✓		MLHRD, MIA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek greater synergies between the RSE and PAC schemes for future employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With assistance from New Zealand MBIE and I-Kiribati resident in New Zealand, examine possible opportunities for RSE workers with horticultural skills to gain full-time horticultural employment in New Zealand if successful in the PAC ballot. 		✓	MLHRD, MFAI

Strengthening links between education and overseas employment	Assess labour market demand and supply in different skill areas to identify domestic and overseas employment opportunities and match training to areas of skill shortage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LMWG to be mandated with the task of assessing labour market demand and supply domestically and in the major overseas markets. Develop Foreign Labour Market Studies on potential foreign labour markets. 	✓	✓	MHLRD, MFAI, MCIC, MFED (Statistics)
	Expand opportunities for technical and vocational education and training (TVET).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and prioritise areas of training most relevant to domestic and foreign markets. Identify areas of training particularly relevant for women. 	✓	✓	MLHRD, MoE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue and expand TVET courses in MTC and KIT to international standards through third party training agreements with international colleges and institutes and accrediting bodies. Promote and strengthen career counselling and decent-job searching by assisting job-seekers/TVET graduates with online applications. 	✓	✓	MLHRD, MoE, MLHRD, MFAI; MTC, KIT
Identifying new employment opportunities	Continue to pursue employment opportunities in regional and international labour markets, particularly with countries that have close diplomatic relations with Kiribati.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue pursuing options for skilled and semi-skilled migration under PICTA TMNP and PACER Plus. Review opportunities in Taiwanese labour market, and other potential markets. 	✓	✓	MCIC
Marketing I-Kiribati workers overseas	Develop marketing strategies to employers based on cost-efficient dissemination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop website to promote i-Kiribati workers to foreign employers 	✓		MLHRD
	Work with foreign consular offices to promote workers in destination countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing marketing strategies for Australia/New Zealand, taking into account domestic employment conditions and marketing efforts of competing Pacific countries. 		✓	MLHRD
Access to labour migration by disadvantaged groups	Develop a high level cooperation mechanism with other small island states such as the Coalition of Atoll Nations in Climate Change on labour migration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a high level dialogue with Tuvalu and Nauru to specifically consider improving labour market access in foreign markets. 		✓	MLHRD
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase participation of disadvantaged population groups as students and labour migrants Undertake assessment of access by women, youth and outer island residents both as students in Government run training facilities and in labour mobility schemes (including SWP, RSE and others) If assessment finds that these groups are inadequately represented, assess the possibility of introducing quotas. 		✓	MLHRD

4.3 Increasing the development benefits of labour migration

The Government of Kiribati intends to maximise the development benefits of labour migration for the migrant workers, their families and communities, and for the national economic and social development. As noted earlier, the NLMP supports the temporary movement for overseas employment as well as the permanent settlement of I-Kiribati abroad – the latter in particular in light of Kiribati’s vulnerability through climate change and within the vision that Kiribati as a nation, culture and people will not perish. Strategies to increase the development benefits of migration necessarily differ between permanent migration and temporary labour migration.

Mainstreaming of labour migration issues

The Government is committed to mainstreaming labour migration issues in national development, poverty alleviation, and climate change adaptation plans and programmes, with a view to linking labour migration directly with policies aimed at fostering economic and social development, alleviating poverty and adapting to climate change. In addition, efforts will be made to mainstreaming labour migration into national policies on population, education and TVET, youth and women.

Enhancing diaspora engagement

The Government acknowledges the role of the Kiribati diaspora to be an important partner in Kiribati’s strategy to maximise development outcomes. Australia, New Zealand and Fiji are home to the largest I-Kiribati diaspora. The diaspora represents a source of information on potential destination countries in regards to opportunities for work, education and training, and more generally a source of new ideas. Many diaspora members are part of significant social networks. The diaspora can be engaged in skills and knowledge transfers which in turn can lead to job creation in Kiribati. The Government is committed to promoting the circulation of skills by creating opportunities for skilled and qualified I-Kiribati abroad to productively use their skills in Kiribati if such opportunities arise. The diaspora often provides financial support and accommodation when their island-based kin visit their countries of residence, and they often send material goods to Kiribati that are not accessed easily there.

It is a priority for the Government to develop and foster close economic, social and cultural networks with the diaspora in order to better harness the potential benefits from working with them.

While it is not possible to determine the exact numbers, it is estimated that in 2013 around 3,000 people of I-Kiribati ancestry (Australia, 700) and ethnicity (New Zealand, 2,300) were living in the two Pacific Rim countries (Bedford et al., 2014). These numbers are small when compared to the sizeable overseas populations of many other Pacific Island countries. The numbers of I-Kiribati in Fiji and Solomon Islands are unknown. Apart from the historic migration flows of I-Kiribati to Fiji and Solomon Islands, and some students from Kiribati studying mostly in Fiji and Vanuatu, there has been very limited labour mobility within the region. The Government commits to fostering diaspora linkages in destination countries, especially in countries where Kiribati maintains foreign diplomatic missions including Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Taiwan, and the US.

Leveraging the use of remittances for development

Remittances have long been an important component of household incomes in Kiribati. Recognizing that remittances are private funds, a challenge for Kiribati is to identify ways to attract a portion of remittances for productive development at home by voluntarily increasing the savings and investment of remittances into productive areas which in turn can lead to job creation in Kiribati. Under the Act to amend the Provident Fund Ordinance (Cap 78A) of 2007, Kiribati citizens can apply to make voluntary contributions to the Kiribati Provident Fund which could be promoted as a useful strategy for labour migrants to save for their and their families’ future.

Increasing the financial literacy of individual migrants and their family members to enable them to make informed decisions regarding the use of income, budgeting, saving and investing is a significant aspect of enhancing the benefits of labour migration. An increase in financial literacy will be organised alongside exploring the possibility of introducing remittance backed financial products for migrants and their families.

Supporting migrants’ families

While decisions on labour migration are usually taken at the level of the household and the household members staying at home often benefit economically, many households experience some negative consequences of labour migration caused by prolonged absences of their family members. The Government is committed to supporting the welfare of migrants’ families through targeted policies, and by improving the use of remittances, as discussed above.

Facilitating return and reintegration of temporary migrant workers

Labour mobility generally leads to increasing job creation at home through skills transfers, increased investment using remittances, and by raising the overall skill level in Kiribati as a result of increased motivation to obtain skills and qualifications if there are migration opportunities.

There are currently no courses for return migrants that would assist their reintegration into Kiribati society, economy and labour market. The government acknowledges the importance of assisting the reintegration of returnees through delivering courses for returnees on financial literacy, setting up a business, and finding productive employment. These could be delivered by KIT, and linked to the business incubator that will be opened at KIT under the TVETSSP. In addition, the government is committed to setting up formal mechanisms through which the overseas acquired skills of returnees are recognised in Kiribati.

Table 4.3 Action Plan for Increasing the Development Benefits of Labour Migration

INCREASING THE DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS OF LABOUR MIGRATION					
S = short-term (2016). M = medium-term (2017-19 onwards).					
Strategic Area	Policy	Action Plan	S	M	Lead Agency(s)
Mainstreaming of labour migration	Mainstreaming labour migration in next Kiribati Development Plan and national policies.	• MLHRD will work with relevant ministries (including Office of the Beretitenti, MCIC, MFAI, MOE, MWYSA, MFED) and other stakeholders to link labour migration with climate change adaptation plans, and national policies on population, education, youth and women.	✓	✓	MLHRD
		• Commission a review of participation, by industry sector and occupation, of I-Kiribati who have been long-term residents in Australia and New Zealand, to provide information on possible employment opportunities for I-Kiribati at home.	✓	✓	MLHRD
Enhancing diaspora engagement	Examine opportunities for greater engagement with the Kiribati diaspora in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji.	• Identify key contacts in diaspora communities in New Zealand, Fiji and Australia with the aim of identifying opportunities for employment and business investment by I-Kiribati at home.	✓	✓	MLHRD
		• Government and Bank of Kiribati to explore options for bulk transfer of RSE/SWP worker remittances to reduce transaction costs for individuals.	✓		MLHRD, MFED, Bank of Kiribati
Improving transfer and use of re-mittances	Explore options for improving bank transfer processes and reducing costs of financial transactions for migrant workers.	• Examine options for the provision of financial literacy courses for migrants and their families, in association with the Bank of Kiribati, Business Promotion Centre within MCIC, KCCI	✓		MFED, MCIC
	Improve financial literacy of migrant workers and their families.	• Continue to conduct workshops on Financial Literacy for new seafarers and seasonal workers		✓	ANZ
	Improve available financial products.	• Examine options for the introduction of remittance backed financial products, in association with the Bank of Kiribati	✓		MFED
Supporting migrants' families	Counselling sessions for migrants' families	• Counselling for migrants' families on a variety of welfare and social issues		✓	MWYSA, churches
Facilitating re-integration of migrant workers	Ensure appropriate training for returning migrants	• Examine options for the provision of training for returning migrant workers in the areas of financial literacy, setting up a business, and finding productive employment, to be delivered by KIT	✓		MFED, MLHRD; KIT
	Enhancing skill recognition	• Explore strategies to set up formal mechanisms through which the overseas acquired skills of returnees are recognised in Kiribati.	✓		MLHRD, MoE

4.4 Improving the Administration of Labour Migration

Institutional capacity building

The Government recognises the need to develop and establish a coherent institutional framework in order to establish an effective and efficient administration of labour migration. MHLRD is the lead Ministry implementing the NLMP and is committed to working closely with other Ministries holding responsibility for particular aspects of the policy (see also Tables 2.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3). MLHRD is responsible for identifying responsible entities, estimating budgetary requirements and strategies to mobilise resources, and timeframes for implementation of the NLMP.

A three-tier structure will be used to coordinate activities, implement and monitor progress of the NLMP, comprised of the **Labour Mobility Working Group**, the **Secretaries' meeting** and the **Decent Work Advisory Board**. This means that existing committees will be used rather than new committees created.

The existing **Labour Mobility Working Group** under the leadership of MLHRD will be tasked with coordinating activities and monitoring progress and will have Secretariat's functions for the implementation of the **NLMP**. The development of terms of reference for the LMWG, which currently do not exist, will be a priority. The LMWG will collaborate with other existing committees such as the Trade Committee chaired by MCIC. Technical subjects will be addressed by sub-groups that will be formed on an ad hoc needs basis.

The **Secretaries' meeting** will be the mechanism for inter-ministerial consultation. It will provide a platform for MLHRD to consult with other relevant Ministries and Government institutions including MFAI, MCIC, MoE, MIA, MWYS, MFED, MFMRD, MCTTD, PSO, OB and MELAD

The **Decent Work Advisory Board** which will be established later in 2015 after the new Labour Bill becomes law will provide the platform for the social partners to be regularly consulted on the implementation of the **NLMP** (as an interim measure, the existing Decent Work Agenda Steering Committee will be used as a consultative platform for tripartite partners policy). MLHRD is committed to holding a social dialogue at least twice a year.

In addition to these three regular implementation and consulting mechanisms, MLHRD will organise an annual review workshop to discuss the NLMP's implementation and progress among a wider range of government and non-government stakeholders.

Improving data collection, management and dissemination

In light of the current lack of reliable labour market and labour mobility data in Kiribati, the Government is committed to improving data collection, management and dissemination of labour market and labour mobility data. A labour market database including labour demand and supply is proposed to be established. In regards to labour mobility, information will include data on population movements into and out of Kiribati, migrant workers' wages, savings and remittances. Data on population movements of non-citizens and citizens are collected through Arrivals and Departure Cards. Until recently only the number of movements was tracked while no other information based on the cards was available because the passport numbers were not recorded. The Government is committed to improving the collection, management and dissemination of labour mobility data based on information derived from the Arrivals and Departure cards. This will allow it to collate information on the transfer of skills overseas and potential loss of capability in the domestic labour market, and helping to identify work opportunities that exist offshore. The Government is advised to seek technical support from international agencies to assist with capacity building in information management and dissemination systems.

There is need to single out the need to have current statistics on gaps in the international labour market. The TVETSSP is designed to produce a demand driven training facility that is tailored to the needs of the labour market internationally. For example- up to date statistics that shows the demand from time to time on nursing, seafarers, electricians, carpenters etc. By keeping to date with this info, we can change our training designs to suit the demand of the labour market and therefore contribute meaningfully to the overall program

International cooperation

In view of the fact that labour migration involves more than one country, and of the fact that Kiribati requires technical support of bilateral and multilateral development partners in the area of labour mobility, the Government is committed to promoting bilateral, regional and international cooperation in the area of labour mobility. In particular, it will collaborate with labour receiving countries in various stages of the migration process, including the identification

of employment opportunities overseas and the delivery of training in these areas, the delivery of pre-departure training, the protection of migrant workers while overseas, and the evaluation phase after the return of migrants. The Government will promote the signing of framework Memoranda of Understanding to formalise these areas of collaboration with the major migrant receiving countries, in addition to existing agreements with Australia and New Zealand covering the SWP and RSE specifically.

The Government supports cooperation with other Pacific labour sending countries, such as through the Pacific Islands' Labour Sending (PAILS) Forum, in particular in ensuring through policy coordination and advocacy that minimum employment conditions for migrant workers are met.

Table 4.4 Action Plan for Administration of Labour Migration

ADMINISTRATION OF LABOUR MIGRATION					
S = short-term (2016). M = medium-term (2017-2019).					
Strategic Area	Policy	Action Plan	S	M	Lead Agency(s)
Legislative/regulatory framework	Create effective framework for implementing and monitoring the NLMP and enhance inter-ministerial cooperation and establish social dialogue on management of labour migration.	• Review and clearly define roles of all ministries involved in labour migration process.	✓		Office of Beretitenti
		• Develop and implement TORs for existing Labour Mobility Working Group in regards to taking the lead role in implementing and monitoring the NLMP	✓		MLHRD
		• Use the Secretaries' meeting as a regular inter-Ministerial consultative mechanism on the NLMP	✓	✓	MLHRD
		• Use the Decent Work Advisory Board as a platform for social dialogue on the NLMP with social partners	✓	✓	MLHRD
		• Organise annual review workshop for Government and non-Government partners	✓	✓	MLHRD
Labour migration data management systems	Improve data collection, management and dissemination on the labour market and labour migration.	• Seek technical support from international agencies to build a comprehensive, centrally managed labour market information system in Kiribati.	✓		MLHRD
		• Complete assessment on sources and develop a dataset.	✓		
		• Explore opportunities for collaboration with other PIC labour sending countries in developing foreign employment labour market information system	✓		MFAI
		• Explore options for the collection of data on citizens departing long-term or permanently to monitor skill transfers overseas and potential loss of capability in domestic labour market, as well as helping identify potential work opportunities offshore.		✓	MLHRD
Bilateral and regional cooperation	Enhance collaboration with migrant receiving countries.	• Negotiate framework MoUs with Australia, New Zealand and other labour receiving countries	✓	✓	MFAI, MLHRD

5. INCEPTION, FOLLOW UP, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE NLMP

The Government of Kiribati recognises that the **National Labour Migration Policy** and Action Plan provides the overall principles and guidelines for the protection of migrant workers, for the promotion of opportunities for decent foreign employment, for enhancing the development benefits of migration and for establishing a robust framework to administer labour migration. As such the Government assumes full responsibility to carry forward the NLMP. The Government recognises that the Policy's success will depend on the roles and responsibilities placed on various Ministries, and other key stakeholders and actors involved in labour migration, and counts on their cooperation in the promotion of safe, well-managed migration opportunities for I-Kiribati men, women, and youth.

The MLHRD will be primarily responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the NLMP, with support from the other line ministries identified in the Action Plan. The Labour Mobility Working Group will monitor the Policy's implementation. The Secretaries' meeting will ensure continued inter-agency collaboration and the Decent Work Advisory Group will ensure the involvement of social partners.

Under the MLHRD's leadership, a process will be initiated to operationalize key components of the Action Plan, through identifying responsible entities, estimating budgetary requirements and strategies to mobilise resources, and timeframes for implementation. The support of international agencies, including the ILO, will be essential for the initial phase of operationalizing the Policy.

Given that the NLMP looks also at permanent migration and a long-term climate change adaptation strategy, it is necessary that the NLMP be reviewed every five years and new action plans to be developed.

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