

FACT SHEET

Kiribati



International
Labour
Organization

Background

- At the time of the last Census in 2005, Kiribati's 33 atolls and reef islands with a total land area of 726 square kilometres had a population of some 92,500. Kiribati's urban population on South Tarawa was some 40,000, crowded into 16 square kilometres;
- Kiribati has a human development index (HDI) of 0.515 which is one of the lowest ratings in the Pacific. The modern economy is extremely limited in Kiribati with tourism being the only sector with potential to grow. Kiribati's outer islands are largely characterised by fishing and subsistence agriculture;
- Kiribati has a highly youthful population. In 2005, 37% of the population were below 15 years of age and the median age was 20.7 years. Only a fraction of job seekers find formal employment in Kiribati and unemployment rates among school leavers being invariably higher than for other population groups;
- I-Kiribati have a tradition to work aboard foreign vessels as seafarers and fishermen. The Marine Training Centre (MTC) and the Fisheries Training Centre (FTC) are major post-secondary training institutions training students to achieve the level of rating;
- I-Kiribati have migrated under the Pacific Access Category (PAC) scheme which was introduced by New Zealand in 2002. Kiribati also participates in the pilot scheme of the "Recognised Seasonal Employer" (RSE) Work Policy in New Zealand under which New Zealand employers can recruit workers from some Pacific Island Countries for seasonal work in the horticulture and viticulture industries since April 2007. The first lot of 70 I-Kiribati RSE workers went to New Zealand in 2007 and returned again to New Zealand for the 2008 work season. In 2009, only 20 I-Kiribati have gone to New Zealand;
- There is a lack of reliable labour market data in Kiribati since no labour market survey has been conducted. The main source of labour market data is the five-yearly population census with the most recent census conducted in 2005.



Kiribati National Flag

ILO in Kiribati

- Kiribati became a member of ILO in 2000;
- Kiribati ratified the eight Fundamental Conventions, four of which were ratified in 2009;
- Achieving the desired international labour standards, implementing ILO Conventions ratified by Kiribati as well as fulfilling the reporting obligations have been a focal area between ILO and the constituents;
- The tripartite constituents are the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development (MLHRD), the Kiribati Trade Union Congress (KTUC), the Kiribati Major Employers' Organisation (KIMEO), and the Kiribati Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCDI);
- Some of the relevant labour issues in Kiribati include the need to explore further employment opportunities for I-Kiribati overseas and to improve skills development to meet the local and overseas labour market demand, labour law implementation and industrial relations, the introduction of an appropriate minimum wage fixing process, improving employers' compliance with OSH, and introducing adequate social security;
- ILO has developed an in-depth understanding of the particular needs of the constituents and has helped to build the capacity of the tripartite constituents through technical assistance, training programmes and the supply of equipment;
- Under the past technical cooperation project "Social Security in Pacific Island Countries", funded by the Netherlands, ILO has conducted a social security study in Kiribati;
- ILO's "Sub-regional Programme on Education, Employability and Decent Work for Youth in the Pacific Island Countries", funded by the Netherlands, was also launched in early 2008



Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP)

The first Decent Work Programme (DWCP) which details ILO cooperation activities with Kiribati for the period 2009 – 2012, based on tripartite consultations, was signed on the 21st December 2009, Nadi, Fiji

Priority 1. Promotion of decent employment opportunities, including for young women and men

Outcome 1.1: Improved implementation of Vanuatu's modernised labour legislation in compliance with the International Labour Standards.

Outcome 1.2: International Labour Standards are broadly ratified and significant progress is made in their application in line with fundamental principles and rights at work.

Priority 2. Application of the ILS and Kiribati's labour laws

Outcome 2.1: Significant progress in the application in law of the Fundamental Conventions and the ILS.

Outcome 2.2: Significant progress in the application in practise of the new labour legislation.

Priority 3. Capacity building of tripartite partners

Outcome 3.1: The value of workers' and employers' organizations for existing and potential membership is increased.

Outcome 3.2: The enforcement of national labour standards is improved through strengthened labour administration.

Outcome 3.3: Tripartite partners are strengthened and an effective tripartite social dialogue mechanism is established to make tangible progress in promoting Decent Work.

Outcome 3.4: Improved socio-economic data are collected and used in policy formulation.

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