



International
Labour
Organization

The ILO in Kiribati



Key Facts and Figures

Population (2012): 101,000

GDP per capita (2012): US\$ 2,121

Labour force (2010): 39,000

- 21,000 male
- 18,000 female

Labour force participation rate (2010): 59.6%

- 66.8% male
- 52.3% female

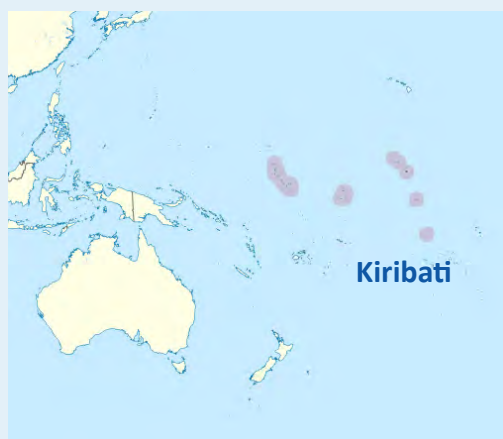
Unemployment rate (2010): 30.6%

- 27.6% male
- 34.1% female

Youth unemployment rate (2010): 54%

- 47.6% male
- 61.8% female

Kiribati is an island nation in central Pacific Ocean straddling the equator. The remoteness of Kiribati presents a major challenge to its economic and social development. Transport difficulties internationally and domestically create barriers to trade and decent living conditions. Scarce natural resources, unfertile soil and fragile environment make Kiribati susceptible to food security issues and climate change.



Kiribati has begun to see an upswing of economic growth from 2011 after experiencing large plunges in early 2000s. New infrastructure projects and a number of industries opening up for foreign investment are expected to further boost economic development.

Increasing urbanisation has drawn more and more people from rural areas to the cities. However, the new urbanites face huge challenges finding jobs as they lack the skills and knowledge needed for paid employment. And they have to give up farming, the traditional way of making a living for many Kiribatians because there is not enough space for subsistence agriculture in the urban settings. Consequently, only about half of the labour force in Kiribati are engaged in paid employment. Most of the paid workers are engaged in low-skilled professions such as wholesale and retail, repair of motor vehicles, agriculture and fisheries and manufacturing.

To generate more qualified workforce, the Government of Kiribati has put education high on the agenda of the Kiribati Development Plan 2012-2015, which aims to provide basic education and professional skills to improve functional literacy and numeracy especially for young people. Vocational training is also a macro strategy forming part of the plan.

Sources: ILO KILM.

Ratified Conventions

Kiribati has ratified ten ILO Conventions including eight Fundamental Conventions:

- C.29 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930
- C.87 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948
- C.98 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949
- C.100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951
- C.105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (Not in force)
- C.111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958
- C.138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973
- C.182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999

The ILO - Who We Are

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the UN specialized agency dealing with work and workplace issues, and related rights and standards. Its overarching goal is to achieve decent work for all so everyone benefits from working conditions that offer freedom, equity, security and human dignity. In working towards this goal the ILO has four principal strategic objectives:

- To promote and realize standards, and fundamental principles and rights at work.
- To create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment.
- To enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all.
- To strengthen the relationship between workers, employers and governments, and encourage social dialogue.

Founded in 1919, the ILO is the only surviving major creation of the Treaty of Versailles, which established the League of Nations. It became the first specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946.

The ILO in Kiribati

Kiribati became a member of the ILO in 2000. The ILO Country Office for South Pacific Countries in Fiji manages the ILO work in Kiribati.

Current areas of work

In response to Kiribati's social and economic needs and in line with strategies and activities spelled out in its national development plan, the ILO in consultation with the tripartite constituents developed the Decent Work Country Programme (2009-12). The DWCP promotes decent work as a key component of development policies and at the same time as a national policy objective of governments and social partners. The priority area for the DWCP (2009–12) are:

- Promotion of decent employment opportunities, including for young women and men.
- Application of the ILS and Kiribati's labour laws.
- Capacity building of tripartite partners.



The DWCP (2009-12) has successfully made the following achievements in the priority areas:

- Reviewed and finalized the draft National Action Plan (NAP) on Youth Employment and promoted youth entrepreneurship and enterprise development through the provision of ILO business training packages (SIYB & KAB).
- Produced career counselling materials and organized training of career counsellors.
- Promoted entrepreneurship development in the Kiribati Institute of Technology.
- Introduced business training for creative industries in schools in Kiribati.
- Evaluated and implemented the Private Sector Attachments Scheme including its sustainability.
- Completed legislative review of and amendments to the laws and trained the Maritime Department on how to implement MLC, 2006.
- Completed gap analysis with respect to law, policy and practice in Kiribati including legislative amendments and the application of the Work in Fishing Convention and raised awareness amongst tripartite constituents of the benefits of ratification and implementation of the Work in Fishing Convention.
- Developed a policy paper to support the establishment of the minimum wage.
- Provided amendments to the OSH Bill.
- Strengthened institutional capacity of workers' and employers' organizations.

The DWCP has laid a good foundation for the ILO to further consolidate its support and assistance in addressing the challenges in the world of work and promoting decent work for all in Kiribati.

Social partners

The Kiribati Trade Union of Congress (KTUC) represents the main unions in Kiribati, with 10 affiliated unions. The Kiribati Major Employers Organization (KMEO) and The Kiribati Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) are two major employers' organizations. The Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development (MLHRD) is the key ministry in dealing with labour issues.

The International Labour Organization

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the UN agency for the world of work. It was founded in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the principle that universal and lasting peace can only be achieved if it is built on social justice. The ILO is the only 'tripartite' United Nations agency that brings together representatives of governments, employers and workers to shape policies and programmes for social justice and decent working and living conditions for all women and men. For this it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969. The ILO is also responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards (Conventions and Recommendations). This unique arrangement gives the organization an edge in incorporating 'real world' knowledge about employment and work into its activities.



ILO Country Office for South Pacific Island Countries

FNPF Place, 8th Floor, 343-359 Victoria Parade

Suva, Fiji

Tel.: +679 331 3866, Fax.: +679 330 0248

Email: SUVA@ilo.org

www.ilo.org/suva



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