

**REVIEW ON RIO DECLARATION ON ENVIRONMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT (AGENDA 21)**

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ABSTRACT

The Report is about Kiribati's National Strategies for Sustainable Development. The Environment Act and the National Development Strategies 2000- 2003, the basis for the country's policies and strategies, are described. The strengths and weaknesses in implementation are diagnosed in relation to the organisational structure, the institutional capacity, resourcing, political and legislative supports. The Report examines the extent to which the principle of sustainable development is integrated into the economic, social, political and ecological dimensions of national development. An examination of waste management and pollution control as a national critical environmental issue is also made.

Kiribati's strategies on education, training and public awareness on sustainable development are also described and diagnosed. A Vision Kiribati's National Strategies for Sustainable Development is embodied in the Report's recommendations. It is strongly recommended that a revamped, re-organised and well-funded Environment and Conservation Division exists. The provision of proper training and recruitment of suitably qualified staff to deal with critical areas, such as waste management and pollution control, is essential to solve the long-term problem of institutional incapacity. It is imperative that sustainable financial resources, as opposed to short-term aid-funded projects, are provided to create and maintain these critical areas under proper professional management. The rejuvenation of a Kiribati National Task Force on the Environment, appointed by the Cabinet, is crucial to give a new lease of life and direction for the country's national strategies for sustainable development in the long run.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Pacific Resources Centre and the Kiribati Women Federation (AMAK) were instrumental in arranging for the conduct of a workshop of non-government representatives to discuss Kiribati's progress and constraints on sustainable development since 1992.

The Workshop was well attended by representatives of non-governmental organisations, including the youth, the women, the indigenous landowners, and the business community, the Churches, local government, unions and resource experts from the Environment and Conservation Division. The invaluable contributions of the participants are noted in the writing of the Report.

The full support of the Secretary and officials of the Ministry of the Environment and Social Development in providing guidance, and progressive reports on the particular sub-sectors of the ECD is crucial in the production of this review.

Kam bati n raba.

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the 8th session of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development in April 2000, it was recommended that the 2002 review of the RDED Agenda 21 should result in action-oriented decision and renewed political commitment and support for sustainable development from both government and civil society. The review should focus on areas where further efforts are needed to implement A21, and measures are identified for their further implementation, including sources of funding.

In collaboration with the Pacific Resources Concern Centre and the Kiribati Ministry of Environment and Social Development, the AMAK organised a workshop of non-organisations in January (22-23), 2002 to discuss a review of the A21 issues as presented from Kiribati NGOs perspectives.

Discussions were held with the Head of the Environment and Conservation Division of the Ministry of Environment and Social Development, and a perusal of the progress reports of the Division's activities was conducted.

The Government of Kiribati is committed to the principles of sustainable development, but is being faced with organisational and management, institutional, resourcing and social problems.

These problems can be overcome if sufficient funds are made available from local and international sources to carry out the necessary programmes of education, training and public awareness so as to empower both the young I-Kiribati and the old people to become more sensitive to the significance of sustainable development.

2. Kiribati's National Strategies for Sustainable Development

Kiribati's national strategy or planning process is embodied in the newly enacted Environment Act and the government's policies as enunciated in the National Development Strategies 2000 - 2003.

2.1 The Environment Act

Objects of the Act

The Environment Act was enacted in March 2000. The objects of the Act were to provide for and establish integrated systems of development control, environmental impact assessment and pollution control; to prevent, control and monitor pollution; to reduce risks to human health and prevent the degradation of the environment; and to protect and conserve the natural resource threatened by human activities (section 3).

The Act provide overall management and control of the Ministry of Environment and Conservation Division by the Minister acting in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet (section 6).

Functions of the Minister

The Minister is empowered to ensure that the quality of the Kiribati environment, balanced against the need to promote sustainable development is protected, restored and enhanced (section 6a). The Minister is responsible for the management in the control and prevention of pollution; setting national standard on pollution facilitating legislative frameworks for environmental planning, collaborate with other authorities on environmental issues, promote community participation in environment decision-making, allowing freedom of access on environment and study of the environment (section 6).

Development Consent

Section 14 provides that Ministries consent must be sought before a development, prescribed in section 12, takes place. The developer is required to comply with specified conditions as set out in sections 14 to 19.

Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)

Section 21 empowers the Minister to publish notice proposed development inviting public comments before the Minister makes a decision on whether to give or not to give development consent.

Monitoring environmental aspects of development and costs

Section 28 empowers the Secretary to carry out the monitoring of a development only in accordance with the advice of Cabinet or any relevant authority. The costs of such monitoring are to be borne by the developer.

Control of Pollution

The Act against causing pollution and noxious discharge, and allows the discharge of waste to prescribed premises under license. (Section 30-34). Section 45 provides that discharge from vehicles; vessels and aircraft comply with the prescribed discharge standards.

The National Development Strategies specify that the environment policy priorities 2000 - 2003 are as follows:

- Seeks awareness, compliance and enforcement of the Environment Act
- Develop process and procedures for development control. EIA and pollution licensing
- Conduct community awareness and education programs on protecting the environment, managing natural resources, environment health and sanitation
- Protect water reserves
- Protect landfill sites for managed waste and refuse disposal to minimise lagoon and coastal
- Protect lagoon ecology
- Improve coastal protection for threatened areas
- Encourage conservation promotion areas
- Draw attention to detrimental use of foreshore areas

2.2 Strengths and Weaknesses in Implementation

Organisational and Management System

The Environment and Conservation Division of the Ministry of Environment and Social Development, under the political accountability for the Minister responsible, the administrative direction of the Secretary, and the professional guidance of the Co-ordinator, is responsible for the management of the Environment Act and the government's environmental policies. Their respective responsibilities and obligations are clearly provided for in the new legislation. The Cabinet, the Beretitenti, the Minister, the Secretary, the Environmental Inspectors (EI), and relevant authorities, and the developer are assigned specific responsibilities and obligations under the Act. The Cabinet lays down policy directions to the minister for the administration and implementation of the Environment Act (section 5).

The Beretitenti appoints the Environment Inspectors in accordance with the advice of the Public Service Commission (section 5.2). Section 9 allows the Beretitenti to direct any public authority either to do anything that contributes to the objects of the Environment Act or to refrain from doing something that detracts from the ideals of sustainable development.

The responsibilities and accountabilities of the Minister are clearly set out in the Act (sections 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 26, 52, 53).

The statutory functions of the Secretary deal with administrative procedures as I the issuance of development control licenses and maintaining a register of development applications, impact assessments, reports and development consents (sections 25, 28, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42).

The Inspectors' responsibilities are provided for in the relevant section 10, 22.2, 22.3, and 41.

The developer's responsibilities and obligations are spelt out in sections 14, 15, 16, 22.1, 23, 27, 28, and 29.

Institutional capacity

The human resource capabilities are inadequate, project funded and generally lacking in skills and expertise.

Although the Environment Act has given the Minister and designated government officials the mandate to deal with environment matter, the ECD faces serious problems of understaffing and lack of technical expertise and training.

There are only three personnel with suitable qualifications in environmental science, and the demand for more qualified personnel to deal with specific areas of the environment is a major institutional constraint. The training of technical staff in various sectors of environmental

management, such as coastal zone management, degradation, and the impact of increasing population is badly needed.

The current ECD staffing is already stretched because of limited staff lack of suitably trained staff, and by limited financial support. Expertise is now sought focus regional and international organisations.

Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership needs strengthening both in further training and wider experience.

The ECD is headed by a Co-ordinator who is the principal professional adviser to the Minister on environmental issues. As and when required, the services of specialists on national environmental problems are pursued through bilateral and multilateral or regional organisations.

Inter-institutional co-operation and coherency are essential between the Ministry of Environment and other stakeholders, including other government ministries, quasi-government and non-government organisations, if the goals of environmental policies and strategies are to be effectively and efficiently implemented.

In spite of the Government's commitment towards sustainable development, certain government ministries evinced apathy and suspicion towards the novel idea of sustainable development in Kiribati. As a result, the inter-ministerial meeting of the Kiribati Task Force on Environment had become defunct because of officials' lack of interest and commitment on environmental issues. The onus is therefore on the Government to ensure that its policies and legal requirements of the Environment Act are complied by its own ministries, statutory organisations and companies. Senior Government Officials must assume the responsibility of role model in environmental matters if the rest of the community is to be convinced and committed to the principles of sustainable development.

Resourcing

As a developing island nation with serious economic drawbacks, Kiribati is naturally plagued with the usual problems of the inadequacy of knowledge, technology, and financial and social resources available for implementation. The budget for environment programmes is also very limited.

There are, however, potentially beneficial linkages with the international community capable of providing such resources. It is suggested that the national government adopt a policy of facilitation rather than intervention in assisting NGOs in their direct dealings with international organisations.

It is to be noted though that the increasingly popular idea of over-dependency on both national and international assistance has proven counterproductive to the spontaneous self-help and commitment of the local community. The NGOs must therefore be supported to be able to stand on their feet, if they are to become viable agents of national sustainable development in the long run.

Political Support

In view of the novelty of the concept of sustainable development with I-Kiribati and despite on-going awareness and education on environmental programmes, generally there is limited political support for sustainable development, especially in the urban areas of Betio, South Tarawa and Kiritimati.

The rest of the country, which is predominantly rural and culturally traditional in lifestyle, and less populous than the over crowded urban areas, had been able to follow an environmentally friendly traditional lifestyle. Customary principles and practices of conservation and management of terrestrial and marine resources are still adhered to by the majority of I-Kiribati following a subsistence lifestyle in the outer islands.

Environmental enhancement and improving the quality of life is the responsibility of all I-Kiribati, and it is imperative that all sections of Kiribati society contribute positively towards these goals. The Churches, the Councils, the traditional leaders (Unimwane and rorobuaka), the Women and Youth all have leading roles to play in promoting sustainable development.

Legislative Support

Sustainable development should be a non-partisan issue because of its national significance.

The only major legislative and regulatory concern that needs to be addressed relates to the effective enforcement of the Act due to the paucity of legal environmental expertise and the effectiveness of the national enforcement agencies.

The drafting of the Act and regulations took considerable time to accomplish because of lack of legal expertise in environmental matters. External legal expertise was sought to overcome the problem. Legal literacy on environmental issues is crucial if the law enforcement agencies and the courts are to administer and enforce the law properly.

2.3 Recommendations for improving the national strategy and its implementation:

2.3.1 Establishment of a fully-fledged Environment & Conservation Division.

The establishment of a fully-fledged, well staffed and a reasonably well funded Environment & Conservation Division under the overall management of an experienced and qualified manager is crucial to the long-term success of the environmental national strategy. The ECD re-organisation can be done within two years given the necessary financial input.

2.3.2 Improving the Environment Act 2000

In light of the experience with the management of the Environment Act, it may be desirable to make necessary amendments so as to make the Act more effective. The current Act provides for extensive authority to the Cabinet, the Minister and the Secretary. There is no statutory requirement for these offices to consult with the technical expertise. In the interests of governance and transparency, it is imperative that both the political and administrative authorities are compelled legally to consult with their professional environmental advisers.

It is suggested that the establishment of the Environmental Division under the overall management of the Manger of Environment be provided for in a revised Act.

2.3.3 Enactment of Complementary and Subsidiary Legislation

The principles and provisions of the Environment Act must be complemented or reinforced in similar legislation affecting the environment such as in the fisheries, lands and marine resources. Litter legislation in Kiribati would enhance the waste management objectives of the Act.

2.3.4 Education and Public Information

Changing I-Kiribati attitude from one of apathy to sensitivity towards sustainable development is crucial to achieving successful environmental strategic planning and implementation. This may involve the resuscitation of traditional and customary principles and practices of conservation, which can be adapted and integrated into the contemporary national strategic planning.

The continuing development of educational curricular on environmental issues for use across the educational spectrum will be a major step forward to wards "brainwashing" the young generation towards a more environmentally friendlier civil society.

It is also suggested that the Ministry of Education makes the environment subject an examinable subject for the national examinations.

3. INTERGRATION AND PARTICIPATION

Co-operation and Commitment of Environmental Stakeholders

The involvement and co-operation of all major stakeholders, including the non-government organisations (NGOs) and the private sector, in environmental planning and management is essential if the national environmental strategies are to be achieved. The lackadaisical attitude of certain senior government officials towards sustainable development had been a serious impediment in the effective and efficient environmental planning and management. It is suggested that strong leadership be asserted so as to encourage commitment on the part of senior government officials and non-government participants to meet more regularly and discuss environmental issues under the auspices of a newly created national coordinating body, such as the Kiribati Task Force on the Environment.

In order to justify the participation of the NGOs and the private sector in the planning process, the government must be more considerate and positive in trying to integrate their views in the decision making process and policy pronouncements. The government has tended to be oblivious of the useful contributions made by NGOs and the private sector. As a result, the latter tend to shy away from being actively involved in environmental forums.

As a matter of policy and legal requirement, the ECD is committed to an integrated approach and broad-based participation in its endeavor to formulate national sustainable development strategies, plans and programmes. However, the task has met with mixed success. Whilst the support of the private sector and the non-government ministries have been rather slow to show positive support for the environmental concerns of the ECD. Government ministries have been rather slow to become integrated in the planning and implementation processes.

The Ministry of Works and Energy has been the main culprit. The ECD has enlisted the advice of the MWE on several environment issues, but there has never been a response! The Fisheries and Agriculture Divisions have demonstrated willingness to work closely with the ECD on environmental issues affecting the sea and land.

There has not been any national co-ordinating mechanism in Kiribati since the demise of the Kiribati Task Force in the Environment (KTFE). The co-ordinating role is being assumed by the ECD, and it has to depend on the goodwill of the different stakeholders, both in public and in private, for their participation in national sustainable development planning and implementation.

There is a need for a more formal and effective co-ordinating mechanism to be established. An administrative arrangement has not been very successful as evidenced by the collapse of the KTFEW and the frustration of the ECD to obtain co-operation from other government sectors.

It is suggested that a proposed co-ordinating mechanism may have to be provided for in the Act or in the regulations. The proposed body will function as the Board of Directors or Task Force for the ECD and members are to be nominated from the major public and private environmental players and appointed by the Cabinet.

4. NATIONAL CRITICAL ISSUES

One of the critical issues facing Kiribati is the management of waste and the control of pollution.

1.1 Review of National Action

In accordance with the Environment Act, pollution control licenses (PCL) had been issued to major industries in the country. Development consent application forms had been sent to various government ministries undertaking development projects. Generally, the response from government ministries is very poor.

Discharge from vehicles, vessels and aircraft not measured because of lack of measuring equipment, the Ringelman smoke chart. Section 47 of the Environment Act in relation to monitoring of unreasonable noise cannot be done due to unavailability of equipment.

Section 33 prohibits discharge of human and animal waste in public places.

Difficulty to enforce due to lack of proper sanitation facilities.

Licensing of waste collectors of solid and hazardous wastes.

1.2 Main Accomplishments and Implementation Failures

The dissemination of legal requirements on waste disposal and pollution control and to the public and private sectors. Workshops and meetings with stakeholders discussing their responsibilities and obligations under the Act had been conducted.

1.3 Organizational and Management system

The Environment and conservation Division is mandated to deal with waste disposal and pollution control management, and although present management and staff are inexperienced. They are aware of its legal responsibilities and obligations. However, there is limited staffing with expertise to deal effectively with the issue.

Institutional Capacity

The institutional capacity needs strengthening through staff training in the form of practical attachments and academic training in the region.

Resourcing

The Division has not sufficient knowledge, technology, and financial and social resources to be able to carry out its legal obligations. The testing and monitoring equipment are still required for the emission of smoke and sound.

Political Support

In spite of much publicity, through inter-government meetings, workshops and seminars, commitment to the principles of sustainable development is pretty raw and there is considerable effort to sustain more awareness and commitment on the part of all stakeholders, including government and statutory bodies.

Legislative Support

Both the Environment Act and the regulations had taken time to complete and became operative because of the unavailability of legal drafting expertise locally. The assignments had to await constancy work from international sources. After two years in operation, the need for amending the Act has become obvious, and this will require technical assistance from overseas.

Comments on Measures taken on planned to overcome implementation failures

Capacity building needs

Kiribati needs to allocate more scholarships on environmental studies and specialising in the critical national environmental issues, such as on waste management and pollution control, coastal and ocean management, and climatic changes.

Consider the re-setting up of Kiribati National Task Force on the Environment to ensure other government bodies are closely involved in the enforcement of the provisions of the Environment Act and the regulations.

Suggestions of major corrections needed to help solve critical issues

That funding sources are identified to provide the necessary training needed to strengthen and improve capacity of Waste Management and Pollution Control section of the Environment and Conservation Division.

Suggestions of additional measures to be undertaken by international community

The international community through the United Nations may wish to consider the possibility of providing the funds for the training, or the costs of technical assistance as recommended above.

5. Global Critical Issue: Education, Training and Public Awareness

Integration of Education, Training and Public Awareness in Environmental Planning.

The integration of education, training and public awareness has been very much part of the environmental planning process from the outset. So many workshop and seminars had been conducted with the major, interested stakeholder, including all government related bodies (ministries, statutory, government owned companies, Island Councils,) and non-government organisation, including the youth groups, the women's organisation, the church group, the landowners, and the business community.

Advocacy campaigns on the cleaning up of the environment, use of the mass media (national paper and broadcasting services), school competitions, posters, essays singing competitions and drama displays had been employed to enliven public awareness on the principles of sustainable development.

The teaching of environment issues is already taking place in Class 1 to 6 in the primary schools. Unfortunately, the subject is not an examinable subject for the national Common Entrance Examination, and naturally the children's interest decreased. Environmental issues become absorbed in the social science subjects in the junior secondary schools; however, in Forms 4 (Year 9) and Form Five (Year 10) there is more focus on the subject. There is lesser focus on the subject in Forms 6 and 7.

The University of the South Pacific has been offering an undergraduate programmes in environmental science as well a post-graduate programme. Kiribati is a member of the USP Council.

In addition, Kiribati students had undertaken environmental studies at Australian and New Zealand universities.

Implementation Problems

The major problem facing Kiribati in relation to the implementation of Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 is sustaining the campaign and advocacy programmes on the environmental issues.

This is achievable through the provision of funds extendable for at least a 10 years period or until such time there is a noticeable change in the thinking on the part of the Kiribati people. The general public apathy is a major constraint towards sustainable development.

The accomplishments on sustainable development in the Education System?

The teaching of environment issues in the primary schools is major achievement. Environmental specialists to talk on their areas of expertise may improve classroom teaching with practical sessions, such as field trips and visits.

Solution to implementation Problems?

Intensive campaigning through the media, especially the broadcasting services. Making the environment subject an examinable subject from Class 1 to Foundation studies. The education curricular and materials on the environment needs regular updating. The need for a permanent course designer on the subject is therefore imperative. The position has been vacant for two years, and there are no plans for recruitment.

Recommendations to improve institutional effectiveness for Environmental Education.

1. There is a greater need for more qualified teachers with knowledge on sustainable development both for the formal and non-formal education areas.
2. The Kiribati College of Education to provide a course on sustainable development for students.
3. The Curriculum Development Division to establish a section focusing on sustainable Development and be responsible for the production of a national curriculum and relevant courses materials on the subject.
4. In conjunction with the Curriculum Division, similar materials are appropriately produced for the non-formal education sector. The materials are targeted for the grassroots level who need to be involved in non-formal education programmes run by trained non-formal educators.
5. The use of the mass media, the paper and the broadcasting services, must be maximised.

7. The Way Ahead : Kiribati's Vision for Sustainable Development

The current Kiribati's national strategies for sustainable development are not as effective as they should be because of the inherent and administrative constraints facing the government and its citizens. The idea of sustainable development as an essential ingredient of national planning is yet to be fully accepted in a system which is plagued with financial constraints, institutional incapacities and social conservatism. A forward looking strategy for sustainable development needs to overcome these basic socio-economic problems. This really requires the empowering of I-Kiribati through education, proper training and intensive campaign on environmental issues.

The following recommendations are put forward for consideration in laying a basis for creating a vision of sustainable development for Kiribati in the next decade:

1. Consolidate on the existing system with a view to establishing a fully-fledged Ministry of Environment on its own rather as an adjunct of another ministry. The new Ministry

should have its own expertise on critical issues pertinent to the country. Training for these key roles should be earmarked as part of the national human resources planning.

2. The current Environment Act must be reviewed in light of experience.

3. The new Act must make it mandatory that the following are provided for in the revised Act:

- creation of National Task Force on Environment.

- integration of sustainable development in economic planning

4. Review the education curriculum to update environment issues in the education programmes.

5. Enhance institutional capacity through local and overseas training, including practical attachments.

6. Sustaining public awareness programmes through use of local media with the provision of annual budgetary allocations.

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Rio +10 Consultation Workshop Expenditures

21st-22nd January 2002

Budget Received			\$4,013.89
Stationaries			
Manila Folders	35 x .55	\$	19.25
Photocopy papers	1 box x 47.50	\$	47.50
Writing pad	10 x 2.50	\$	25.00
Ball pen	3pkts x 6.00	\$	18.00
Pental Markers	6 pcs x 1.80	\$	10.60
Cellotape	1 x 3.20	\$	3.20
Paper Cover Charts	15 x 2.35	\$	35.25
Stable Machine	1 x 14.15	\$	14.15
Radio Announcement		\$	23.00
Hire of Power Point Equipment		\$	50.00
Catering Day1			
Morning Tea	30 x 2.50	\$	75.00
Afternoon Tea	30 x 2.50	\$	75.00
Lunch	30 x 6.00	\$	180.00
Catering Day2			
Morning Tea	29 x 2.50	\$	72.50
Afternoon Tea	29 x 2.50	\$	72.50
Lunch	29 x 6.00	\$	174.00
Venue Hire	2 days x 50.00	\$	100.00
Participants Allowance			
12 participants	12 x 10 x 2 days	\$	240.00
Transportation			
Transportation hire	3 Days x 55.00	\$	165.00
Drivers Fee	3 Days x 10.00	\$	30.00
Resources/ Facilitators Fee Day 1			
Resources	4 x 40.00	\$	160.00
Facilitator	1 x 40	\$	40.00
Asst. Facilitator	1 x 20	\$	20.00
Resources/ Facilitators Fee Day 2			
Facilitator	1 x 40	\$	40.00
Resource	1 x 20	\$	20.00
Asst. Facilitator	1 x 20	\$	20.00
Report Writing Fee		\$	1,000.00
Total Expenditures		\$	2,729.95
Remaining Balance for the Rio +10 Consultation Workshop			<u>\$1,283.94</u>

