

Kiribati Country Report on Disaster Management and Communication

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Introduction

Kiribati

- ◆ an island nation located in the central tropical Pacific Ocean
- ◆ consist of 33 atoll islands scattered over 1,351 square miles (3,500 km²) near the equator
- ◆ each island is located separately
- ◆ population of the country is about more than 90,000.
- ◆ there is a major change and development in Kiribati in relation to information and communication technologies however the current legal framework existing in Kiribati remains the same as there is no existing national policy or any specific provision in the disaster and telecommunication laws dealing with disaster communication

Disaster Threats in Kiribati

- ◆ Due to its geographic location, Kiribati rarely experiences fast onset natural disasters such as cyclones and earthquakes
- ◆ However, faces numerous slow onset disasters such as drought, effects of climate change, sea-level rise as well as other disasters caused by human behaviour such as disease outbreak like HIV/AIDS and road accidents

Disaster Management

- ◆ The *National Disaster Act 1993* provides for the organisation and management which is necessary to ensure mitigation of, preparedness for, response to and recovery from disasters in the country
- ◆ this Act has not been implemented

National Authorities involving in disaster management

- ◆ Central oversight and coordination for disaster management is provided by the Office of Te Beretitenti (OB) through the recently established division of National Strategic Risk Management (NSRM)
- ◆ A technical working group designated as the Climate Change Study Team (CCST) is currently based in Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development (MELAD) and chaired by a senior MELAD official

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- ◆ CCST is made up of national climate change specialists and officials from the most concerned ministries
- ◆ CCST monitors climate change nationally and globally, and assesses the vulnerability of islands and investments or activities to climate-related risks
- ◆ CCST reports to the National Adaptation Steering Committee (NASC) currently based in Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MFED)
- ◆ NASC is chaired by the Secretary to OB and includes senior officials from concerned ministries and representatives of churches, the private sector and non-government organisations
- ◆ NASC is serviced by the Kiribati Adaptation Project secretariat
- ◆ NASC has been concerned with inter-Ministry co-ordination and the inclusion in Ministerial Operational Plans of Climate Change Adaptation-related activities
- ◆ NASC reports to and advises OB, and through OB in collaboration with relevant ministries, it advises the Cabinet on Climate Change Adaptation matters
- ◆ Cabinet decisions are advised to NASC and implemented by responsible ministries
- ◆ There are also non-governmental agencies such as the Kiribati Red Cross Society that has its own disaster management scheme.

Communication in Kiribati

- ◆ The *Telecommunication Act 2004* is an act to provide for and regulate telecommunications systems and services and related matters
- ◆ One of the main objectives of the Act is to promote development of telecommunication systems and services in accordance with international standards, practices and public demand
- ◆ Fixed line telephones and radio telephones are the two most common means of communication available in the country
- ◆ Mobile phones and internet are available only in the capital (South Tarawa)
- ◆ There are 2 radio broadcast stations and 1 television station
- ◆ Telecom Services Kiribati Ltd and the Kiribati Red Cross Society have emergency satellite phones which are kept for emergency purposes
- ◆ Section 72 of the *Act* provides for Government's power to waive existing regulatory barriers which may impede the use of any telecommunication equipment or resources

Conclusion

- ◆ The current status of telecommunication system in Kiribati assists in determining the country's ability to respond to disaster communication issues
- ◆ In terms of its resources and facilities, Kiribati needs extensive financial and technical assistance to enhance its communications capabilities in order to reduce loss of life, damage to property and livelihoods, and damage to the environment caused by disasters
- ◆ Formulation of a national regulatory framework dealing with disaster communication and the integration of emergency telecommunication action plan into such regulatory framework is necessary to enable Kiribati to provide prompt telecommunication assistance during disaster periods