

Population Strategy National
Taskforce



GOVERNMENT OF KIRIBATI

Bairiki, Tarawa

Policy Paper No: 01

KIRIBATI POPULATION POLICY 2014-2034

This policy is applicable to all Government Department, Non-Government Organisations, Faith Based Organisation, and Communities of the Republic of Kiribati.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1. TITLE

1.1. Kiribati Population Policy

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1. The Government of Kiribati is committed to addressing its population related issues in partnership with the community and its development partners through managing the 'Current Population' demographics and setting the groundwork for a desired 'Future Population' growth rate, demographics and distribution.

3. PROBLEM

3.1. Kiribati is faced with an alarming and overwhelming population growth particularly in the urban areas. According to the 2010 census, if the current population growth for South Tarawa and the rest of Kiribati remains at it is then the population of Kiribati will double in 30 years while the population for Tarawa will double in 15 years. Most notably, due to the fact that many women are now entering child-bearing age, Kiribati population will keep growing for decades even if the fertility rate declines.

3.2. The population growth has contributed to increasing social and economic problems relating to unemployment, overcrowding particularly in the urban areas and increasingly inadequate public and social services. Limited public resources restrict government's ability to keep up with the population growth and corresponding issues. Kiribati general environment and land availability are also under pressure to support the growing population.

3.3. For these reasons, the Government in conjunction with its community and development partners sees the importance of establishing an urgent and immediate policy to address the growing magnitude of population related problems. Government clearly sees the need and importance for increased involvement of the community through 'faith-based organizations' and 'non-government organizations' given government's limited resources and ability to keep up with population related issues. Government acknowledges that these organizations have unlimited access to the community at all levels and at any time, which is in itself a valuable source of information and mode of communication and outreach to the community. Government also values the support from its development partners given their expertise and knowledge that would help guide the implementation of this policy.

3.4. This policy provides an overall guideline to address the issue. Government broadly classifies the issues into two streams, namely 'Current Population and Future Population'

4. PURPOSE

4.1. The purpose of the population policy is that it provides a broad statement from government that sets the tone for how to go forward with addressing population related issues and concerns. Broadly classifying the issues into two streams provides a basis by which the population implementation strategy will be formulated as follows:

- 1) Current population – What can government do now with its available resources to address the current population issues along the lines of a growing young population, unemployment, urbanisation and poor living standards,
- 2) Future population – what can government do now and in the future with its available resources to address the future population issues along the lines of stabilizing population growth, improved living standards and increased economic growth.

5. SCOPE

5.1. In tackling the population issue through the two broad streams of ‘Current Population’ and ‘Future Population’, the implementing strategy accompanying this policy will cover the following sectors that are impacted by as well as contribute to population issues:

- a) Health and Social Welfare
- b) Education
- c) Economic and Employment Opportunities

5.2. The implementation strategy will complement and support work currently being done as well as facilitate work that needs to be done by government, the community and development partners to address the population issues within the above sectors.

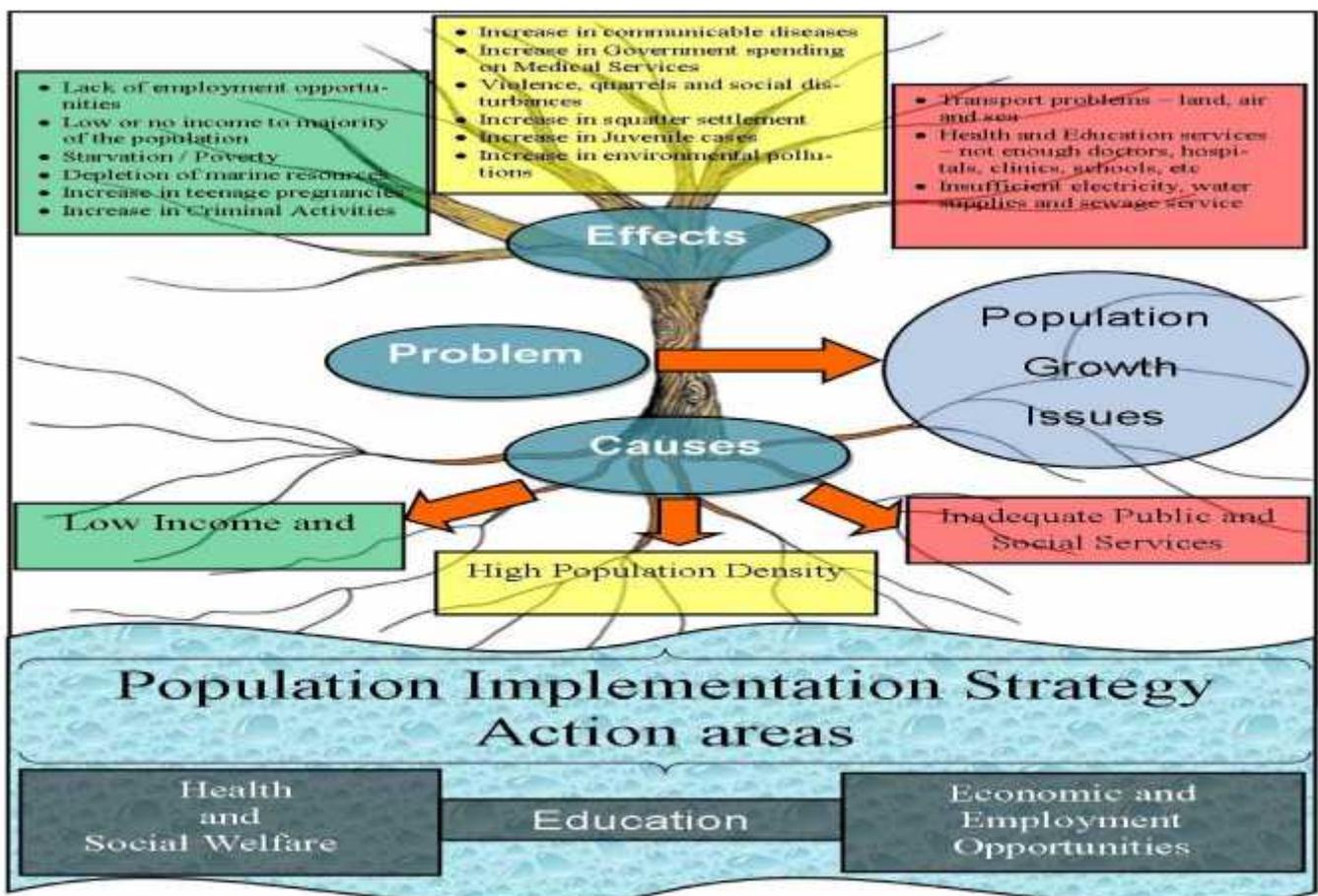
5.3. The policy and implementation strategy understands that an integrated approach is crucial where solutions come from the people themselves rather than being dictated by Government. It underscores a comprehensive and community owned approach that advocates a ‘Healthy Family’ theme through supporting and facilitating what needs to be done now to address the ‘Current Population’ issues and what needs to be done now for a desired ‘Future Population’.

5.4. Furthermore it incorporates work being in done in other areas such as facilitating economic growth and employment opportunities on the understanding that the indirect benefit of economic growth and increased employment as seen in more developed economies is the reduction in population growth and population related issues.

6. OBJECTIVES

- 6.1. The main objective of the policy and the implementation strategy is to set achievable targets, timelines and formulate steps aimed at addressing the main concerns arising from population issues. It is aligned with the Kiribati Development Plan, particularly around its main objective of improving the overall livelihood of the I-Kiribati people.
- 6.2. The main concerns arising from current population trends are presented through the problem tree method which looks at causes, effects and solutions. From the problem tree, the main concerns have been broadly classified as follows:
- High population density and overcrowding
 - Low household income and lack of employment
 - Inadequate public and social services.
- 6.3. Understanding the contributing factors to the above main concerns is essential. It will act as a guide towards potential remedial and possibly preventive actions.
- 6.4. It is also essential to understand the resource and capabilities of the key stakeholders as this will determine the achievable goals and timelines outlined in the implementation strategy.

Problem tree picture 1



The problems tree above metaphorically illustrates a problem of population growth which involves avoidable and unavoidable population growth showing problems of the current population. The Government of Kiribati wishes to achieve its goal to sustain and maintain the tree to bear fruits and leaves in 20years time for the future population. The solutions to the causes and effects of population growth which acts as fertilizer and mineral for the future population will be actioned in the Population Implementation Strategy, therefore the tools and manpower will require an integrated approach for Government, Faith Based groups and other stakeholders to work together as a team which is reflected in the formation of the Population Strategy National Taskforce.

7. POPULATION IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

7.1. Whilst the population policy is a broad statement by government that sets the tone for how to go forward with addressing population related issues, the population implementation strategy is a detailed plan of activities.

7.2. In relation to the population related issues and concerns, the population implementation strategy should cover but not be limited to the following:

- The strategies and plans to raise the productivity of our population,
- The target increase in employment and target year by which to achieve this increase,
- the strategies and plans to encourage movement back to the rural areas,
- The strategies and plans to expand public and social services coverage of the population,
- the target population growth rate and target year by which this population growth rate is to be achieved,
- The target desired family size and the target year to achieve such size,

7.3. Taking into consideration that strategic plans already exist and work is already being done by key stakeholders, the population implementation strategy will consolidate these strategies and work plans with a view to provide a holistic approach towards addressing key population issues and concerns. Where there are gaps on existing strategies and work plans, support and assistance to key stakeholders will be given to formulate short and long term strategies and work plans that will complement and feed into the over-arching policy and implementation strategy.

8. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1. This policy is set up to address a highly complex national problem. The complexity around the issue and particularly the implementation requires a coordinated, integrated and harmonised approach. Participation and contributions from government, the community and development partners is a must and strongly encouraged. It also understands that outreach to the community is only possible through partnership with 'faith-based organizations' and 'non-government organizations'. The implementation of the policy will be detailed and outlined in the *Kiribati Population Policy Implementation Strategy* (KPPIS) that will be a document that is implementable, achievable and incorporates all key stakeholders' views, strategies and action plans. The KPPIS will also clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of each key stakeholder.