

# Kiribati

## KEY FACTS

**Official name:** Ripaberikan Kiribati (Republic of Kiribati) (pronounced Kiribas)

**Head of State:** President (Beretitenti) Anote Tong (BTK) (since 2003; re-elected 13 Jan 2012)

**Head of government:** President (Beretitenti) Anote Tong

**Ruling party:** Boutokan te Koaua (BTK) (Pillars of Truth) (since 2003; re-elected 28 Oct 2011)

**Area:** 810 square km (33 islands and atolls)

**Population:** 105,000 (2012)\*

**Capital:** Bairiki (on Tarawa)

**Official language:** I-Kiribati, English

**Currency:** Australian dollar (A\$) = 100 cents)

**Exchange rate:** A\$1.10 per US\$ (Jul 2013)

**GDP per capita:** US\$1,646 (2012)\*

**GDP real growth:** 2.50% (2012)\*

**GDP:** US\$173.00 million (2012)\*

**Inflation:** 2.00% (2012)\*

**Balance of trade:** -US\$96.00 million (2012)\*

**Foreign debt:** US\$34.00 million (2012)\*

\* estimated figure

Like many other small Pacific islands Kiribati has few national resources. The future of the country depends to a large extent on the Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund (RERF), which had been created in 1956 when the economy of Kiribati was heavily dependent on the phosphate exports which accounted for 50 per cent of the government's revenue. The Fund was financed by phosphate earnings over the years and now acts as a stabiliser fund. With the loss of phosphate earnings, the Fund has to be carefully husbanded. Maintaining growth of the RERF is key to ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability.

The government, under President (Beretitenti) Anote Tong, that took office in January 2012 presented its first budget in April, showing a widening of the fiscal deficit, reflecting a scheduled increase in infrastructure spending. The deficit will be partly funded by an RERF draw-down, raising concerns about the fund's long-term sustainability after draw-downs averaging around A\$17 million (US\$16.3 million) in the last four years. Keeping annual demands on the fund to a level that can be met from its income will require extensive fiscal consolidation.

According to the *Asian Development Bank Economic Outlook 2012* the economy grew by 3.0 per cent in 2011 largely due to stronger retail activity. Inflation was 7.7 per cent (compared with deflation of 2.8 per cent in 2010) because of increased food and fuel prices. Government revenue collection in 2011 was about 20 per cent lower than in the previous year and 9 per cent below budget estimates. This fall stemmed from a decline in the value of income from fishing licences and a poor fishing season. (Licences are paid in US dollars, which depreciated against the Australian dollar, used by Kiribati as its currency.)

GDP is projected to climb by 3.5 per cent in 2012 with the start of major development partner-funded infrastructure projects, such as road building, as well as airport and seaport reconstruction. Over the next two years, inflation is projected to drop to 5.5 per cent and then increase to 6.0 per cent, reflecting expected movements in international food prices.

## COUNTRY PROFILE

### Historical profile

1892 Kiribati became part of the British colony of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands and was administered by the West Pacific High Commission in Fiji.

1942 The islands were occupied by the Japanese during World War II.

1957 Christmas Island (now renamed Kiritimati) became a site for British nuclear testing. The tests went on for six years.

1963 Transition to independence began, with the formation of legislative and executive councils under the supervision of a British governor general.

1975 Ellice Islands seceded and formed the separate entity of Tuvalu.

1979 Became the fully independent Republic of Kiribati.

1982–91 Iremia Tabai won the first three post-independence presidential elections in 1982, 1983 and 1987. Constitutional restrictions prevented Tabai contesting the 1991 elections that were won by Teatao Teannaki.

1994 Teburoro Tito of the Mwaneaaban te Mauri Party (MMP) was elected president.

1995 The government unilaterally moved the International Date Line eastwards to ensure the country's collection of islands were all designated as being within the same day.

1997 China built a satellite-tracking base on Kiribati's main atoll on a 15-year lease.

1998 President Tito was elected to his second term.

2000 Caroline Island was the first inhabited place to greet the new century, the name of the island was changed in celebration of the event to New Millennium.

2001 The Pacific Islands Forum, of which Kiribati is a member completed its negotiations to bring 14 Pacific island countries into a free trade agreement, known as the Pacific Islands Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA). The government of President Tito suffered heavy losses in the second round of parliamentary elections.

2002 Parliament passed newspaper registration laws, giving powers to ban the publication of newspapers that face complaints.

2003 Teburoro Tito (MMP) won presidential elections. President Tito lost a motion of no confidence and parliament was

dissolved. In the resulting general elections the ruling MMP won 16 seats, the Boutokaan te Koaua (BTK) (Pillars of Truth) won 17. Anote Tong (BTK) was elected president. Kiribati established diplomatic relations with Taiwan, but also offered to honour the lease of the satellite tracking station with China; however, China rejected the offer, dismantled the station and severed diplomatic relations. 2005 Kiribati joined the International Whaling Commission.

2006 Kiribati designated an area of 184,700 square km in the Phoenix Islands as the world's third largest marine reserve. Kiribati appealed to the United Nations for action on global warming amid concerns about rising sea levels.

2007 The BTK won parliamentary elections with 18 seats. MTM won seven and independents 19 seats. In presidential elections, incumbent Anote Tong won about 65 per cent of the vote, his next closest rival, Nabuti Mwemwenikarawa, won about 33 per cent.

2008 The Phoenix Islands Protected Area was increased to 410,500 square kilometres to become the world's largest marine reserve.

2010 Air Pacific resumed its services (cancelled in 2008) following the upgrade of the airstrip on the island of Kiritimati. The UK's *The Sunday Times* alleged that Kiribati (among other countries) was bribed by Japan to vote in favour of Japan's killing of whales for scientific reasons at the International Whaling Commission. The denial by Kiribati of the allegation was based on the government's stance that 'everything has to be harvested in a sustainable manner' and all travel expenses were paid for from a fund provided by donor countries.

2011 The World Bank provided US\$2 million in emergency funding for importing food for 60,000 people (60 per cent of the population) due to food shortages that resulted from a government funding shortfall for shipping costs. Since 2008, Kiribati experienced both extreme weather and adverse financial conditions that drained public coffers so that rising shipping costs reduced the quantity of affordable foods. The grant paid for shipping costs, specifically to outer islands. In parliamentary elections held in October, the BTK won 15 seats, United Coalition Party (UCP) 10, Maurin Kiribati Pati three; all remaining seats were won by independents.

2012 In the presidential election held on 13 January, incumbent Anote Tong (BTK) won 42.18 per cent of the vote, Tetaua Taitai 35 per cent and Rimeta Beniamina 22.8 per cent; turnout was around 68 per cent. On 9 March the government approved the purchase 6,000 acres of land

in Fiji to accommodate the entire population of Kiribati. According to President Tong, this measure is a last resort to be used when rising sea levels inundate Kiribati. On 12 April the Kiribati Development Plan 2012–15 (KDP) was approved by the cabinet. On 24 July, the plane wreckage of US aviator Amelia Earhart was located on a reef off a remote Kiribati island.

2013 In early October President Tong said that he was concerned by the new government in Australia's scrapping of its Climate Commission. He pointed out that Australia, unlike many of the low-lying Pacific islands, was not so vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

### Political structure

#### Constitution

The 1979 constitution created an independent republic with a president as head of state, executive government, judicature and public service. A provision for citizenship of Kiribati also includes special status of Banaba and Banabans, as well as fundamental rights of freedom for individuals.

#### Form of state

Independent democratic republic; it is a member of the Commonwealth.

#### The executive

Executive power is exercised by a popularly elected *beretitenti* (president), for a four-year term, limited to three terms. The president is elected by the people from among three candidates nominated by the Maneaba (house of assembly) from its ranks. The president is head of state and head of government and appoints a cabinet composed of a president, vice president, 10 ministers from the house of assembly and an *ex officio* attorney general.

#### National legislature

The unicameral Maneaba Ni Maungatabu (house of assembly) consists of 46 members elected for four-year terms in multi-seat constituencies. One

appointed member represents the Banaban community (most of whose inhabitants were evacuated from the Banaba Island during phosphate mining and now live on Rabi Island in Fiji). The speaker is an appointed post from outside the membership of the house of assembly and the attorney general is an *ex officio* post.

Universal suffrage begins at aged 18.

#### Last elections

21/28 October 2011 (parliamentary); 13 January 2012 (presidential)

**Results:** Parliamentary: Boutokaan Te Koaua (BTK) (Pillars of Truth) won 15 seats (out of 28), United Coalition Party (UCP) 10, Maurin Kiribati Pati (MKP) three. Presidential: Anote Tong (BTK) won 42.18 per cent of the vote, Tetaua Taitai 35 per cent and Rimeta Beniamina 22.8 per cent; turnout was around 68 per cent.

#### Next elections

2015 (parliamentary and presidential)

### Political parties

#### Ruling party

Boutokaan te Koaua (BTK) (Pillars of Truth) (since 2003; re-elected 28 Oct 2011)

#### Main opposition party

Maneaban te Mauri (MTM) (Protect the Maneaba)

### Population

105,000 (2012)\*

Overpopulation is a problem, particularly on Tarawa, which has some 30,000 inhabitants. Nearly 3,000 i-Kiribati have resettled on Kiritimati (formerly Christmas Island), the country's easternmost island, the largest coral atoll in the world. Tabuaeran (formerly Washington) and Teraina (formerly Fanning) are also being resettled.

**Last census:** 7 December 2005: 92,533

**Population density:** 124 inhabitants per square km (2010). Urban population 44 per cent (2010 Unicef).

**Annual growth rate:** 1.6 per cent, 1990–2010 (Unicef).

## KEY INDICATORS

## Kiribati

	Unit	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Population	m	0.10	0.10	*0.10	*0.11	*0.11
Gross domestic product (GDP)	US\$bn	0.14	0.13	0.15	0.17	*0.17
Gross national product (GNP)	US\$bn	-0	-0	-0	-0	
GDP per capita	US\$	1,304	1,304	1,479	1,593	*1,646
GDP real growth	%	-2.4	-0.7	1.8	1.8	*2.5
Inflation	%	11.0	8.8	-1.4	2.8	2.0
Industrial output	% change	-	-1.6	-	-	-
Agricultural output	% change	-	1.4	-	-	-
Current account	US\$m	-1.0	-5.0	-34.0	-38.0	*-12.0

### **Ethnic make-up**

Predominantly Micronesian, with some Polynesian.

### **Religions**

Roman Catholic (52 per cent), Protestant (Congregational) (40 per cent), Seventh-Day Adventist, Islam, Baha'i Faith, Latter-day Saints and Church of God.

### **Education**

The Junior Secondary School (JSS) programme aims to provide universal access to basic secondary education. Almost all the outer islands (except Teraino and Tabuaeran) and South Tarawa have junior secondary schools.

Higher education, including both university level programmes and post-secondary vocational/technical training, is provided by the government and the regional institution, University of the South Pacific (USP). The government also operates two tertiary institutions on South Tarawa: Tarawa Technical Institute and Kiribati Teachers College.

**Literacy rate:** 92.2 per cent, adult rate.

**Compulsory years:** six to 15

**Enrolment rate:** 67.8 per cent gross school enrolment.

### **Health**

The government has collaborated with the World Health Organisation (WHO) to strengthen its primary healthcare services. WHO's technical support has brought down the infant mortality rate and increased life expectancy.

Improved water sources are available to 47 per cent of the population.

There is one general hospital in Tarawa and a number of health centres in the more populated islands. There are few doctors. Medical facilities are of the most basic kind and there are no pharmacies. Excessive alcohol consumption has become a very severe problem both socially and medically. Diabetes linked to a western diet is widespread.

### **HIV/Aids**

There has been a significant increase in infections on Tarawa.

**Life expectancy:** 65 years, 2004 (WHO 2006)

**Fertility rate/Maternal mortality rate:** 4.1 births per woman, 2004 (WHO 2006)

**Birth rate/Death rate:** 31 births per 1,000 population; 8.6 deaths per 1,000 population (2003).

**Child (under 5 years) mortality rate (per 1,000):** 60 per 1,000 live births (WHO 2012)

### **Welfare**

The government has instituted a bonding system requiring all trained personnel to serve the country for at least the same number of years that it has funded their

training. The retirement age, which was previously 50 years for all government employees, has been increased to 60 years for doctors and 55 for other categories.

### **Main cities**

Bairiki, (capital, on Tarawa, estimated population 50,171 in 2012), Taburao (4,409), Bonriki (4,191), Temaraia (3,076), Butaritari (2,607), Tabukiniberu (2,117).

### **Languages spoken**

English is used for official communications and is widely understood in the capital, Tarawa. It is used less on the outer islands where i-Kiribati is the norm. In the i-Kiribati language the letters 'ti' are pronounced 's' (Kiribati is pronounced Kiribas).

### **Official language/s**

I-Kiribati, English

### **Media**

Despite the lack of independent news outlets the government-owned radio and newspaper provide an appropriate level of press freedom.

### **Press**

The Newspaper Registration Amendment Bill allows publications to be deregistered and stopped when faced with complaints. The *Kiribati Independent* was closed down on 22 June 2012, due to a breach in its newspaper registration requirements. Observers claim the closure was politically motivated following several articles exposing government corruption and mismanagement.

**Weeklies:** The government-owned *Te Uekera* is published in I-Kiribati and English; the *Kiribati New Star* is an independent newspaper.

**Periodicals:** There are no newsagents and only limited copies of overseas papers and magazines are sold in shops. Religious organisations publish newsletters and periodicals in I-Kiribati with local news and stories relevant to their readership. *Te Itoi ni Kiribati* and *Kaotan te Ota* for Catholic and Protestant communities respectively.

### **Broadcasting**

Kiribati is a member of the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association ([www.cba.org.uk](http://www.cba.org.uk)), which promotes best practices in broadcasting.

**Radio:** The only radio station in operation is Radio Kiribati broadcasting in AM and FM, which provides a national, public network. External services from the BBC and VOA may be received on short-wave radios.

**Other news agencies:** ABC Pacific Beat: [www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat](http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat)  
Pacific News: [www.pacificmagazine.net](http://www.pacificmagazine.net)

Pacific Islands New Association (Pina): [www.pina.com.fj](http://www.pina.com.fj)

### **Economy**

Kiribati lacks both human and natural resources; the infrastructure is weak, the islands remote and the soil poor, with frequent droughts. This, together with a traditional land tenure structure, makes the islands unattractive to large-scale agricultural activity. The principal source of foreign exchange comes from the Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund (RERF), which was set up to invest funds from the now depleted phosphate mining operation on Banaba Island. Income from the RERF enables the government to cover fiscal deficits and to buffer year-to-year movements on the current account. As the global economy slowed in 2008–09, so the value of the RERF assets (more than 40 per cent below the peak in 2000) weakened, which led to a jump in annual drawdowns from 3.0 per cent of GDP in 1997–2001 to 14.5 per cent (2002–07) and 15.7 per cent in 2008, to offset larger fiscal deficits. The RERF balance was projected to rise to US\$572 million in 2010 and US\$515 million in 2011. The economy fell into recession in 2008 with GDP growth of -2.4 per cent, with unemployment as high as 30 per cent. Agricultural production rose to 28.6 per cent of GDP in 2009, the service sector constituted 61.8 per cent and industry 9.5 per cent. GDP growth rose to 1.4 in 2010, and was estimated to have remained stable at an estimated 1.8 per cent in 2011.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) external risks have increased for Kiribati, as the three main sources of income – investments, fishing licence fees and remittances, which together account for one-third of GNP – can be adversely affected by the global economy. The agricultural sector is mostly subsistence farming. Almost all manufactured goods are imported, while commodity exports include copra (coconut flesh), seaweed and fish.

Kiribati's large (around 3.5 million square kilometres – some six times the area of France) Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is a major source of fishing licence revenue. Tourism could be a major source of foreign earnings but its isolation in the Pacific Ocean and the lack of infrastructure limits development. Game fishing and bird-watching are an attraction for visitors to the island.

Kiritimati (Christmas) Island has been used for landings of unmanned space shuttles operated by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (Jaxa). Japan is leasing land on Kiritimati to build a spaceport, and according to the

agreement will spend US\$12.9 million over the period 1999–2012. Japan is also funding the building of storage and handling areas at the island's fishing port.

#### External trade

Kiribati is a member of the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (Sparteca) along with 12 other regional nations, which allows products duty free access by Pacific Island Forum members to Australian and New Zealand markets (subject to the country of origin restrictions).

Much of Kiribati's foreign revenue is provided through leased fishing rights, remittances and international aid and operates with a trade deficit that is not balanced by export trade.

#### Imports

Principal imports are fuel, vehicles, machinery, food, manufactured goods, miscellaneous manufactures and chemicals.

**Main sources:** Australia (36 per cent of total in 2011), Singapore (17.7 per cent), Fiji (13.4 per cent).

#### Exports

Principal exports are copra (over 60 per cent), aquarium fish, dried shark fins and seaweed. Tuna is exported from Kiribati waters by foreign fleets under license.

**Main destinations:** Morocco (14.1 per cent of total in 2011), Australia (13.2 per cent), Hong Kong (6.7 per cent).

#### Agriculture

The agricultural sector accounts for about 15 per cent of GDP and around 60 per cent of exports.

Agricultural development is limited by poor soil quality. There are commercial and government-owned copra plantations on Teraina (Washington) and Tabuaeran (Fanning) islands, but peasant smallholdings are more usual. Most copra is exported to Europe by the Copra Co-operative Society (CCS).

Flour, sugar and rice are replacing the traditional breadfruit and taro in the national diet, increasing reliance on imports. There are programmes to upgrade subsistence fisheries to small commercial enterprises.

Deep-sea fishing is carried out by foreign fleets under licence in the immense Kiribati Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In September 2006, a second Kiribati and EU contract under which Spanish, French and Portuguese purse seine and long-line fishing boats are to be allowed to catch tuna in the EEZ. The latest deal emphasises the promotion of sustainable and responsible fishing.

Typically, the annual catch for home consumption is over 32,000t including both fish and other seafood.

In April 2010 the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) (eight island states

including Kiribati) collectively agreed to close to *purse seine* fishing in 4.55 million square kilometres of high seas in their area, from 1 January 2011, to vessels licensed to fish in their waters. The area involved stretches from Palau and Papua New Guinea in the west to Kiribati in the east, from the Marshall Islands in the north to Tuvalu in the south; it holds an estimated 25 per cent of the world's tuna supply.

On 12 April 2011, a summit of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) concluded its strategy for a policy of sustainable fishing in the Pacific. The PNA treaty, which was established in 1989 and expires in 2012, is seen as in need of an overhaul. As a collective region (FSM, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, PNG, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu) control around 25–30 per cent of world stocks of tuna. Only 5 per cent of sales revenue is returned to the PNA and ministers called for specific changes, including an increased share of profits, PNA crews on-board *purse seine* vessels (minimum 10 per cent), conservation and management measures including a limit to fish trapping (fish aggregating devices (FADs)), net mesh rules and the establishment of an observer agency and fisheries information management system.

#### Industry and manufacturing

Small-scale manufacturing industries include clothing, furniture and handicrafts.

#### Tourism

The Phoenix Island Protected Area is included on Unesco's World Heritage List as the largest designated marine protection site. It conserves one of the largest intact oceanic coral archipelago ecosystems in the world. The Millennium Islands are located just over the international date line and are the first islands in the world to celebrate the new year.

Travel and tourism is vital to the economy and in 2010 it contributed a record 20.4 per cent of GDP (US\$30 million), likewise employment in the sector was a record 17.8 per cent (4,900 jobs) and visitor receipts were 15.4 per cent of total exports in 2010. The results were slightly lower in 2011, as rising inflation in travel costs caused a downturn in visitor numbers. Although Kiribati has all of the assets that a tropic paradise could offer visitors, palm fringed lagoons with white sandy beaches it is also at risk from global warming and rising seas. Its infrastructure is underdeveloped and there are water restrictions in place, so that a significant increase in tourist numbers could damage or overwhelm the picturesque but fragile tropical idyll. Nevertheless, upgrades of the international airports on Tarawa and Kirimati

began in 2011 as work also began on upgrading two major roads on Tarawa.

#### Environment

The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) reported in 1999 that, due to global warming, two uninhabited islands in the Kiribati group, Tebua Tarawa and Abanuea, had disappeared beneath the waves, others have almost gone, and the main islands suffer severe floods from high tides. The Phoenix Islands Protected Area, the world's largest marine reserve of 410,500 square kilometres was created by Kiribati in 2008. It includes the planet's biggest intact coral archipelagos with an estimated 120 species of coral, 520 species of fish, some of which have only recently been discovered, large sea turtle populations and important seabird nesting sites. Kiribati is one of the low lying islands with most to loose through global warming and the government was unhappy at the lack of commitment by countries worldwide to limit their emission of greenhouse gases, outlined by the Kyoto agreement and the UN-backed conference in Copenhagen (Denmark) in December 2009. Two uninhabited islands in the Kiribati group, Tebua Tarawa and Abanuea, disappeared beneath the waves in 1999 and others have almost gone, the main islands suffer severe floods at high and king tides.

#### Hydrocarbons

There are no known hydrocarbon reserves and Kiribati does not import natural gas or coal. It relies entirely on imported oil products, of distillate, jet fuel and gasoline, to meet its fuel requirements at around 230 barrels per day.

#### Energy

There are publicly owned generators on Tarawa and Christmas Island and private generators on Banaba and others, producing annually around 6.5 million kilowatt hours.

#### Banking and insurance

There is no central bank in Kiribati and the sole commercial bank is the Bank of Kiribati. The government does not buy and sell foreign exchange.

#### Time

GMT plus twelve hours

#### Geography

Kiribati comprises 33 atolls in three principal groups, within an area of about 3.6 million square km (two million square miles) in the mid-Pacific Ocean. The country extends about 3,870km (2,400 miles) from east to west and about 2,050km (1,275 miles) from north to south. Nauru lies to the west and Tuvalu and Tokelau to the south.

Most islands are low-lying coral outcrops covered in poor soil, except for Banaba, which rises to 80m with good planting. Kiribati has no hills or freshwater streams on any of its islands and relies on wells and stored rainwater.

### **Hemisphere**

Straddles the equator, with most islands in the southern hemisphere.

### **Climate**

Temperatures range from 25–33 Celsius. The wet season extends from Dec–May and rainfall variation is high in most of the islands. A gentle breeze from the easterly quarter is predominant. The westerly gale (Oct–Mar) can be unpleasant.

### **Entry requirements**

#### **Passports**

Required by all and must have six months validity from date of arrival.

Proof of return/onward passage and sufficient funds are also required.

#### **Visa**

Required by all, except citizens of UK and most Commonwealth countries and Pacific Islanders, for up to either 20 or 30 days, dependent on business, tourist and nationality criteria. Contact the nearest consulate for further information (some details are given at [www.embassy-avenue.jp/kiri/visa/index.html](http://www.embassy-avenue.jp/kiri/visa/index.html)). Citizens of Australia, Japan and US require visas.

#### **Currency advice/regulations**

There are no restriction on the import or export of foreign or local currencies. Travellers cheques in Australian dollars avoid extra exchange fees; they are accepted in main banks and some shops.

#### **Customs**

Personal effects are allowed duty-free. Strict quarantine laws govern the import of plants, or parts of plants, vegetable matter or soil, clay or earth, animals and/or animal products.

Visitors are not allowed to take out of the country human remains, artefacts over 30 years old, traditional fighting swords, traditional tools, dancing ornaments or suits of armour.

#### **Prohibited imports**

Firearms, ammunition, explosives and indecent publications.

### **Health (for visitors)**

#### **Mandatory precautions**

Vaccination certificate for yellow fever is required if travelling from an infected zone.

#### **Advisable precautions**

Vaccination for diphtheria, tuberculosis, hepatitis A and B, polio, tetanus, typhoid are recommended. There is also a rabies risk. It is advisable to boil water before drinking. Dengue fever is occasionally reported.

### **Hotels**

In addition to the islands' four hotels, there are rudimentary rest houses. All hotels provide laundry services. Travellers cheques are seldom accepted.

A 10 per cent service charge is added to all hotel bills. Tipping is not customary.

### **Public holidays (national)**

#### **Fixed dates**

1 Jan (New Year's Day), 8 Mar (Women's Day), 18 Apr (Health Day), 12 Jul (Independence Day – three days), 7 Aug (Youth Day), 7 Oct (Education Day), 25–26 Dec (Christmas).

#### **Variable dates**

Good Friday and Easter Monday (Mar/Apr) Gospel Day (Jul), Human Rights Day (Dec).

### **Working hours**

#### **Banking**

Mon–Fri: 0930–1500 for all branches of Bank of Kiribati except Bikenibeu which opens from 0900–1400 and Kiritimati Island branch which opens between 1230 and 1330.

#### **Business**

Mon–Fri: 0800–1230, 1330–1615.

#### **Government**

Mon–Fri: 0800–1230, 1330–1615.

#### **Shops**

Shopping on Tarawa is very limited. Mon–Sat: 0700–1900 (some shops open until 2030).

### **Telecommunications**

#### **Telephone/fax**

A telephone service is available throughout urban Tarawa. Radio telephone links available to most outer islands.

#### **Mobile/cell phones**

There is a limited GSM 900 service available.

#### **Electricity supply**

240V AC, 50 cycles. Appliances with the standard Australian type three-pin plug will operate within South Tarawa.

#### **Weights and measures**

Metric system (Imperial units also used).

#### **Social customs/useful tips**

In official correspondence i-Kiribati adopt the western convention of signing their names with initials and surname, but it is customary (and more polite) to address people by their first name. Women should not go out in shorts or short dresses especially on the outer islands. Bikinis should not be worn.

#### **Getting there**

##### **Air**

**National airline:** Air Kiribati

**International airport/s:** Bonriki International (TRW) on Tarawa.

**Other airport/s:** An upgrade to the airstrip on the island of Kiritimati in 2010

resulted in the resumption of an air service by Air Pacific, which had been cancelled since 2008.

**Airport tax:** Departure tax A\$20; except transit passengers.

#### **Surface**

Government ships operate between Fiji and Kiribati. The remoteness of the islands restricts the number of large vessels which call. The international ports are Betio (on Tarawa), Banaba and Kiritimati.

### **Getting about**

#### **National transport**

**Air:** Air Kiribati provides inter-island plane connections several times a week to most of the islands. Charter flights can be arranged.

**Road:** There are 30km of asphalt road on Tarawa and Christmas Island.

**Buses:** A large fleet of privately owned buses operates an efficient and inexpensive mode of public transport from the airport to the main centres on South Tarawa. They may be flagged down anywhere on the main road; users may get off anywhere they wish. Buses operate daily from Betio to Buota 0600–2100.

**Water:** Passenger ferries operate between the islands.

#### **City transport**

**Taxis:** Taxis are available on Tarawa but cannot be booked, nor do they have meters. Charges are high.

#### **Car hire**

An international driving licence is required. Driving is on the left side of the road. In general, car hire is available on urban Tarawa and Kiritimati only.

## **BUSINESS DIRECTORY**

The addresses listed below are a selection only. While World of Information makes every endeavour to check these addresses, we cannot guarantee that changes have not been made, especially to telephone numbers and area codes. We would welcome any corrections.

#### **Telephone area codes**

The international direct dialling (IDD) code for Kiribati is +686, followed by area code (below) then subscriber's number.

Abaiang: 33

Abaokoro, Tarawa: 31, 32

Abemama: 41

Aranuka: 40

Arorae: 49

Bairiki, Tarawa: 21, 22, 23, 24

Betio, Tarawa: 25, 26

Bekenibeu, Tarawa: 28, 29

Fanning, Tabuهران: 83

Kiritimati: 81, 82

Onotoa: 45

Tabiteuea, North: 43

Tabiteuea, South 44

**Useful telephone numbers**

Fire, police, ambulance: 999  
Tungaru Central Hospital, Nowerewere,  
South Tarawa: 28-100.

**Chambers of Commerce**

Kiribati Chamber of Commerce, PO Box  
550, Betio, Tarawa (tel: 26-351; fax:  
26-332; e-mail: kcc@tski.net.ki).

**Banking**

Bank of Kiribati Ltd, PO Box 66, Bairiki,  
Tarawa (tel: 21-095; fax: 21-200; e-mail:  
bankofkiribati@tksl.net.ki).

Development Bank of Kiribati, PO Box  
33, Bairiki, Tarawa (tel: 81-224; fax:  
81-444; e-mail: bokxmas@tksl.net.ki).

**Travel information**

Air Kiribati, PO Box 274, Bikenibeu,  
Tarawa (tel: 28-088/093; fax: 26-204).

Air Marshall, PO Box 104, Bairiki,  
Tarawa (tel: 21-578; fax: 21-579).

Air Nauru, Tobaraoi Travel, Tarawa (tel:  
26-567; fax: 26-000).

Air Tungaru Corporation, PO Box 274,  
Bikenibeu, Tarawa (tel: general 28-088;  
reservations 21-214).

Authentic Atoll Tours, PO Box 296,  
Bangantebure, Bikenibeu, Tarawa (tel and  
fax: 28-454).

Tarawa Agency, PO Box 274, Bikenibeu,  
Tarawa (tel: 28-088, 28-165; fax:  
28-216).

**National tourist organisation offices**

Kiribati Visitors Bureau, PO Box 261,  
Bikenibeu, Tarawa (tel: 28-287/288; fax:  
26-193).

**Ministries**

Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tour-  
ism, PO Box 510, Betio, Tarawa (tel:  
26-157, 26-158; fax: 26-233).

Ministry of Education, Bikenibeu, Tarawa  
(tel: 28-091; fax: 28-222).

Ministry of Environment, Bairiki, Tarawa  
(tel: 21-099; fax: 21-120).

Ministry of Finance and Economic Plan-  
ning, PO Box 67, Bairiki, Tarawa (tel:  
21-082; fax: 21-307).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PO Box 68,  
Bairiki, Tarawa (tel: 21-342; fax: 21-466;  
email: mfa@tksl.net.ki).

Ministry of Health and Family Planning,  
Bikenibeu, Tarawa (tel: 28-081; fax:  
28-152).

Ministry of Line and Phoenix Group, Bairi-  
ki, Tarawa (tel: 21-449).

Ministry of Trade, Industry and Labour,  
Bairiki, Tarawa (tel: 21-097; fax:  
21-167).

Ministry of Transport and Communica-  
tions, Betio, Tarawa (tel: 26-435; fax:  
26-193).

Ministry of Works and Energy, Betio,  
Tarawa (tel: 26-192; fax: 26-343).

**Other useful addresses**

Abamakoro Trading Ltd, PO Box 492,  
Betio, Tarawa (tel: 26-568; fax: 26-415).

Asian Development Bank (ADB), South  
Pacific Regional Mission, La Casa di  
Andrea, Fr. Dr. W. H. Lini Highway; PO  
Box 127, Port Vila (tel: (+678-2) 23-300;  
fax: (+678-2) 23-183; email:  
adbsprm@adb.org; internet:  
<http://www.adb.org/SPRM>).

British High Commission, PO Box 61,  
Bairiki, Tarawa (tel: 21-327; fax:  
21-488).

Broadcasting and Publications Authority,  
PO Box 78, Bairiki, Tarawa.

General Post Office, Bairiki (tel: 21-080).

Kiribati Co-operative Wholesale Society  
(tel: 26-092; fax: 26-224).

Kiribati National Library and Archives, PO  
Box 6, Bairiki, Tarawa (tel: 21-245; fax:  
28-222).

Kiribati Shipping Corporation, PO Box  
495, Betio, Tarawa (tel: 26-195; fax:  
26-204).

Office of the Attorney General, Bairiki,  
Tarawa (tel: 21-242).

Philatelic Bureau, Ministry of Transport  
and Communications, PO Box 494,  
Betio, Tarawa (tel: 26-515; fax: 26-193).

Telecom Kiribati Ltd, PO Box 72, Bairiki,  
Tarawa (tel: 21-287; fax: 21-010).

Tungaru Central Hospital, Bikenibeu,  
Tarawa (tel: 28-081).

**Other news agencies:** ABC Pacific Beat:  
[www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat](http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat)

Pacific News: [www.pacificmagazine.net](http://www.pacificmagazine.net)

Pacific Islands New Association (Pina):  
[www.pina.com.fj](http://www.pina.com.fj)

**Internet sites**

South Pacific Tourism Organisation:  
<http://www.tcsp.com/kiribati/index.html>

Kiribati homepage:  
[http://www.trussel.com/f\\_kir.htm](http://www.trussel.com/f_kir.htm)

Government site:  
<http://www.tskl.net.ki/kiribati/>