



YOUTH CALL TO ACTION KIRIBATI

Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for a sustainable future for young people in all their diversity.

Situational Analysis

Access to clean water remains a critical challenge in Kiribati. Rainwater and groundwater are the primary sources of water, but access remains unequal; those who cannot afford water tanks must rely on communal sources or neighbours. In areas like Antenon, Eita, and Bikenibeu, groundwater is brackish or saline, making it unfit for consumption. Furthermore, less than half of households own proper toilets in Tarawa. The rest are using community toilets and public toilets which are poorly maintained. Composting toilets were introduced in outer islands as a water-saving solution, but because no maintenance plans or budgets were established, these systems quickly broke down and were abandoned, forcing many to go back to the

practice of open defecation.

The lack of clean water and sanitation creates a dangerous intersection with health, gender, and climate resilience. High rates of water-borne diseases and neonatal mortality are directly linked to contaminated sources, while the burden of fetching water from communal tanks often falls heavily on young women and girls when household supplies fail, impacting their time for education and personal safety. Furthermore, climate change exacerbates these issues as rising sea levels and king tides cause saltwater intrusion into the fragile groundwater lenses that youth depend on for survival, turning essential drinking water into a health hazard.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address these challenges, the government and development partners should prioritise subsidising

rainwater harvesting systems specifically for low-income and youth-led households to ensure

Co-convened by



In collaboration



In partnership



equitable access across Tarawa and the outer islands. Additionally, there must be a concerted effort to revitalise composting toilet initiatives by involving youth in the long-term maintenance and community education of these waterless technologies. By integrating local youth leadership, these sanitation projects can overcome previous maintenance failures and provide a sustainable, water-saving alternative that protects our groundwater from contamination.

SDG 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Situational Analysis

- » Only 10% of households currently access clean energy, primarily through the main powerhouse. The cost of electricity has doubled recently due to global fuel price spikes linked to international conflicts. While solar energy is widely used in outer islands, the initial setup cost remains prohibitively high for most youth in the main island who are struggling with basic utility bills.
- » Energy insecurity directly impacts the quality of healthcare and the safety of vulnerable groups. Unreliable energy sources jeopardise the cold-chain storage needed for life-saving vaccines at local clinics, while the lack of affordable lighting in urban and rural areas compromises the safety of young women at night and limits their ability to study or engage in economic activities after it gets dark. From a climate perspective, transitioning from diesel-reliant generators to renewable solar energy is Kiribati's primary contribution to global mitigation, yet this transition is currently stalled by high entry costs for the younger generation.

Recommendations

- » The national energy policy should include the creation of a micro-finance scheme or grant program specifically for youth entrepreneurs to establish solar maintenance and installation businesses, fostering both green jobs and energy independence. Furthermore, the government should implement "green rates" or subsidised electricity tariffs for essential youth services, including schools and community centers, to ensure that the rising cost of fuel

does not deprive the next generation of digital connectivity and educational opportunities.

SDG 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Situational Analysis

- » Kiribati's youth face a 43% unemployment rate, highlighting a massive gap in industrial development. Resilient infrastructure is needed not just for transport, but for digital connectivity. While mobile coverage is expanding, the internet remains expensive, limiting youth participation in the global digital economy and remote learning opportunities.
- » Sustainable infrastructure is a prerequisite for health and gender equity in a changing climate. Resilient healthcare facilities must be built to withstand intensifying storms and coastal erosion to ensure continuous service for mothers and children. Digital innovation also offers a pathway for young women in remote islands to access markets and higher education without leaving their communities. However, all such infrastructure remains at risk unless it is strictly "climate-proofed" against the projected sea-level rise of 2030 and beyond.

Recommendations

- » Development strategies should focus on aligning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs with the specific skills needed for climate-resilient construction and ICT management. By establishing youth-led "Innovation Hubs," the government can provide the space and high-speed internet necessary for young I-Kiribati to develop local technological solutions for food security and sustainable tourism, effectively bridging the gap between traditional industry and the modern digital economy.

SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES & COMMUNITIES

Situational Analysis

- » Rapid urbanisation in South Tarawa has led to

overcrowding, waste management crises, and extreme pressure on public services. Urban expansion is currently straining the limited land and water resources of our atolls, leading to the growth of informal settlements that lack basic services.

- » The sustainability of our communities is intrinsically linked to public health and disaster risk. Overcrowding in urban areas facilitates the rapid spread of communicable diseases and places an immense burden on the healthcare system. For young women, poorly planned urban spaces often lack safe public transport and lighting, increasing their vulnerability. Moreover, without integrated disaster risk management, these dense communities remain highly exposed to the immediate threats of coastal flooding and extreme weather events.

Recommendations

- » Government planners must formally include youth representatives in the Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan (KJIP) to ensure that urban development projects reflect the needs of the generation that will inhabit these cities. Additionally, the government should support youth-led cooperatives in “waste-to-value” projects, such as community-wide recycling and composting initiatives. These programs not only manage the urban waste crisis but also provide employment and empower youth to take ownership of their local environment.

SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Situational Analysis

- » Kiribati relies heavily on international aid and regional partnerships to fund its development. However, youth perspectives are often missing

from the high-level coordination and decision-making processes that determine how these funds are used.

- » International partnerships are the backbone of Kiribati’s ability to tackle complex issues like NCD policies and climate adaptation. These partnerships must ensure that data collection is disaggregated by gender and age to identify and address the specific barriers faced by young people. Without transparent partnerships and robust data, Kiribati will struggle to access the international climate finance required to protect its islands and the health of its citizens.

Recommendations

- » To make partnerships more inclusive, the government should institutionalise youth volunteer programs within projects, allowing local youth to gain technical knowledge and experience while ensuring projects are culturally grounded. Furthermore, there should be a commitment to “data democracy” by training youth to participate in national SDG monitoring. This ensures that the lived realities of young people are accurately captured in national reports, making our international partnerships more accountable and effective.

The APFSD country and sub-regional briefs were developed through collective discussions and engagements between youth advocates at the APFSD Youth Forum in Bangkok on 18-20 February, 2026. The Kiribati country brief was drafted by country facilitator Ueakeia Tofinga Tabutoa. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.