**Updated Kiribati Game-Changing Pathways Now and Into 2030 and Beyond**

**30 December 2021**

“Transforming the Kiribati Food System Towards 2030 - making it Stronger - Equitable - Healthier to I-Kiribati & Friendlier to Kiribati Atoll Environment.”

**Brief Background - National Food System Dialogue**

Since the 5-day National Dialogue that was conducted in July this year, 2021; the key stakeholder ministries of the Ministry of Environment, Lands, and Agricultural Development, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development (MFMRD), the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS), the Ministry of Commerce, Industries and Cooperatives (MCIC), the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Office of *Te Beretitenti (President Office)* which houses the Disaster National Office (DNO), and the Kiribati Chamber of Commerce & Industries still cling hard to the belief that they still have an important call to transform the Kiribati Food Systems.

After the United Nations Food Summit event in September 2021 and after posting the first consensus National Pathways on the UNFSS website; the abovementioned stakeholder ministries sent a signal to the National Convener requiring more improvements and realignment of the National Pathways. This request was also motivated with the UNFSS Team’s advice that countries can further improve their inputs in the first draft National Pathways so they can take full ownership on them and in ensuring that the Pathways are doable, deliverable, and most relevant to the context of Kiribati and the current Kiribati Government Policies and Visions for next 20 years (KV20).

**The Second Round of Consultations - Individual Meetings with Key Stakeholder Ministries**

The NCo arranged the timing with the stakeholder Ministries and as shown below; this is the Individual Consultation schedule that had been successfully carried out:

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| **Date** | **10am - 11am** | **2.00pm - 3.00pm** |
| Fri 8 Oct 21 |  | Fisheries Tanaea (MFMRD) |
| Thur 14 Oct 21 | Nutrition Office (MHMS) |  |
| Tues 19 Oct 21 | National Disaster Office - OB Bairiki |  |
| Tues 17 Oct 21 |  | KCCI Betio |
| Wed 17 Nov 21 |  | ECD MELAD Bikenibeu |
| Thur 18 Nov 21 |  | Commerce MCCI Betio |
| Fri 3rd Dec 21 |  | Curriculum Division of MOE |

It is from this event that the same stakeholder ministries were able to gather three broad game-changing pathways with their activities and checked on them again against their own divisional and ministerial strategies for the next 3 years. The stakeholders with their own respective team members then reviewed the pathways and activities together that are most relevant to their ministry or related to their programmes. They found ways to treat these pathway activities as their priorities based on the guiding points provided during the July National Dialogue, the Food Systems Pre-Summit, and the World Food Summit.

**Guiding Questions in the Articulation of Kiribati Game-Changing Pathways**

The guiding broad questions were derived from the Kiribati Game-Changing Pathway Statement:

“Transforming the Kiribati Food System Towards 2030 - making it Stronger - Equitable - Healthier to I-Kiribati & Friendlier to Kiribati Atoll Environment.”

1. Is our Kiribati Food Systems weak that we need to make it stronger? Does this mean that there is a poor productions and supply of food in Kiribati? Or does it mean that there are still people that go without foods? Is food getting scarcer in Kiribati?
2. Is our Food System unfair in some way that we need to make it equitable? Does food access in Kiribati getting inequitable and inaccessible that some people can afford or have access to while others do not have that access?
3. Is our Food System responsible for the Health status of our people so we need to make it Healthier? Is it unsafe for the public?
4. Is food production, preparation, and market getting unsafe for the public and destructive to the physical atoll environment of Kiribati?

These are the broad but frank and straightforward questions that each stakeholder ministry was pondering upon and to conduct the necessary review of their own divisional and ministerial programmes that support food security - production, preparation, transportation, packaging, and marketing. Their collective alignment in this exercise are now being incorporated in these revised National Pathways.

**The Revised Kiribati Game-Changing Pathways**

1. **Healthy Population - Our Shared Responsibility & Obligation**

Below are the practical and doable activities that the stakeholder Ministries are already engaged in delivering and will factor in their divisional and ministerial programmes:

1. Ministry of Education (MOE):
2. Through its Curriculum Development and Resource Center (CDRC), the MOE is now working on a curriculum that focuses on **Importance of Nutrition** and **Importance of Home Gardening.** The Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) in Kiribati will partner MOE in this exercise which will start from February 2022.
3. The MOE will start in February 2022 to realize the **Free Lunch Programme** policy to all public schools. The main work on this programme is to ensure that the meals to be served freely to all students in the country are fresh, safe and nutritious. The GGGI in Kiribati will partner MOE in this exercise which will start from February 2022.
4. Ministry of Environment, Lands, and Agricultural Development (MELAD):
5. Through its Agriculture & Livestock Division (ALD); the MELAD will continue to support the ongoing home and community gardening efforts in the capital and all of the outer islands. The FAO, GGGI and NGOs (Live & Learn and FSP Kiribati) will continue to partner MELAD in this exercise;
6. The ALD will step up the supply of advice, planting materials, water improvements, and direct support to farming activities to farming cooperatives and associations. The FAO, GGGI, and NGOs will continue to partner MELAD in this exercise;
7. The ALD to revive the Fruit Processing Facility that had been closed down after the successful trial back in 2008. This is also in fulfillment of Government manifesto. There was no budget then in the past to launch the facility but this time MELAD and the Ministry of Commerce, Industries and Cooperatives (MCIC) have agreed to revive it and to start seeking funding for it. The two stakeholder Ministries will quickly work on the new location, another trial operation, pandanus and other local fruits supply requirements, and business plan, and later on to tender out the project to the private sector. The Fruit Processing will focus on the production of pandanus products which have been scientifically proven to possess highest carotene or Vitamin A, which is most lacking in Kiribati at this time. Potential partners will remain FAO, SPC, GGGI and local NGOs. The Kiribati Chamber of Commerce & Industries will also be part of the project right from its inception to privatization.
8. Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS):
9. Through its Public Heath Division; the MHMS will actively work with CDRC of MOE on the curriculum that rightly features Importance of Nutrition and Home Gardening. GGGI will meet financial costs of the exercise;
10. Formulation and Eventual Enforcement of Basic Nutrition Standard across all institutions like hospitals, boarding schools, restaurants, road and public food vendors. MHMS and UNCEF to continue to work on this in 2022 taking into account the nutrition crisis which has now become a National Disaster.
11. MFMRD, MHMS, & MELAD
12. These Ministries to review their Acts and develop new Regulations to control the use and harvest of land and marine resources, the proper disposal of wastes, home piggery & poultry control measures, and to ensure the sustainable use and harvest so the atoll land and marine (inshore & offshore resources) will continue to thrive for generations to come;
13. **Strengthening the Supply Value Chain of Blue & Green Foods in the Country**

The main objective of this Pathway is to strengthen food production, supply and local produce markets. As it is now, access to green and blue foods is not equitable as only the working families with businesses can continue to access them in their daily diets. The rest will continue to rely on affordable high-energy foods (rice, flour, and noodles (identified as root cause of NCD in Kiribati). The overall aim is to ensure the ‘abundance’ of healthy fresh foods from farms and from the sea in the Tarawa market as well as in the outer islands.

There are 3 key players of this pathway; the MELAD, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development (MFMRD), the MCIC, and Kiribati Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI):

1. MELAD:
2. Through its ALD, MELAD will continue to provide the rightly-sized enabling assistance and facilitation programme to home-gardening and community gardening initiatives. The key objective is to ensure that each household in the country can produce its own foods. As in the first Pathway; the GGGI, FAO, and NGOs are partners in this exercise. Also through this programme that the price of local foods, which is very high right now, will naturally come down making it affordable and accessible to everyone;
3. MELAD to complete its Lease Lands Arrangement with the Lands Department and landowners on the farm plan use of idle lands in all of outer islands. As more people now reside in Tarawa due to work; they have left behind their land portions under-utilized or not used at all. These lands are now filled with shrubs and bushes. MELAD therefore has initiated a National Farming Programme on these idled lands using the Land-Use Lease arrangement specific for this purpose. Results of the initial talks with some landowners has been positive as the landowners readily agreed to the proposal as their other option to generate additional revenues on their idled lands and to have their land tilled for their own use at end of the lease;
4. ALD, alongside local farmers, to step up its commercial farming programme in Tarawa so it can assist to supply the market with more variety of vegetables for people to have a wider variety of food choices. ALD will also continue its commercial activity of selling fresh eggs, animal feeds, seeds and planting materials and farming materials like composts. The aim is to slowly handover these activities to private farmers once they have proven to possess the capacity to take over;
5. MFMRD:
6. The MFMRD through its Offshore & Inshore programmes is determined to maximise benefits form its vast marine resources by facilitating the efforts of fishermen and fishing cooperatives;
7. Continue to provide active support to outer island fish centers and ice makers to encourage sustainable operations of the equipment and catch supply to Tarawa market;
8. MFMRD, MELAD, MCIC, KCCI:
9. These Ministries to provide the right level of support to the private sector that involves in commercial vegetable, poultry, piggery farming, and fishing. Also to support the Kiribati Coconut Development Ltd (KCDL), the Central Fish Producers Ltd (CPPL), and the private operators to increase the quantity and quality of their productions on animal feeds, coconut virgin oils, cooking oils, body oils, soap and other coconut-based cosmetics, toddy sugar and sweeteners.
10. ALD to launch its training to farmers in Tarawa and the outer islands on Climate Smart Farming. Provision of training materials and direct visits to farming communities and associations have already started and will step up in 2022. GGGI will continue to be the leading partner in this exercise. NGOs and private farmers will also be invited to take part freely in this programme;
11. These Ministries together with the KCCI to establish a cost-effective collection system of local farm produce and fish catch from the outer islands to Tarawa to avoid duplication of efforts. The main aim is to ensure the steady supply of affordable fresh local foods (fish and vegetables) from outer islands to Tarawa, the capital where more than 50% of the national population resides. Also the aim is to provide employment opportunity for farmers and fishermen in the outer islands;
12. These Ministries and the KCCL to support the KCDL and CPPL in their research and development programmes so more nutritional and cost effective products and value-added products could be further developed and be sold to the public at reasonable prices. Furthermore the aim of the key stakeholder Ministries and the KCCI is to slowly relinquish KCDL, CPPL, and ALD’s involvements as the private sector picks up the capacity and eventually takes over.
13. **Strengthening Kiribati Food and Nutrition Security**

The stakeholder Ministries admit that Kiribati food security is volatile and prone to shortage once international ship schedules miss their calls to Tarawa. This points to the longterm issue that Kiribati is 90% relying on imported foods. The stakeholder Ministries with the ambitious plans of the KV20 is working hard to find cost effective and sustainable solutions - to reduce the reliance on imported foods by encouraging local production of imported foods.

On this Pathway, the KCIC, KCCI, MELAD, and the MFMRD will continue to work on practical solutions that are sustainable and cost effective. In the process, these stakeholder Ministries agreed to work on the activities listed below but to be always mindful NOT to disrupt food security in the country.

1. MCIC, MELAD, MFMRD, and the KCCI:
2. These stakeholders will start by identifying imported food types that can be locally replaced over time such as sugar, vegetables and root crops, sugar, sweeteners, eggs, tinned fish, frozen sea foods, and cooking and body oils, soaps, and animal feeds;
3. MELAD, MFMRD, MHMS
4. The MHMS is needed here to advise on the nutrition side of the work in taking stock of the local supply capacity of the above-mentioned items. To evaluate the potential capacity versus the demand trend and forecasts on same items;
5. MCIC, MELAD, MFMRD, and the KCCI
6. Develop the right level of support and incentive to all national food production players like the State-owned-Enterprises (KCDL and CPPL) and the private sector so their production, processing and packaging capacity can increase over time to compete with the imported food items and at the same time to foster the nutritious quality of the local produce - making it more competitive to the imported food items;
7. KCCI, MELAD, and KCIC:
8. The private sector to start importing very affordable vegetables and root crops from the neighbouring island countries in the Pacific region. In the meantime, trade talks had begun a year ago with Solomon islands. The reality that Kiribati atoll conditions are harsh for farming these produces; in not mentioning the increasing population and demand, it would take many more years, more efforts, and more resources for Kiribati farmers to be able to provide the needed quantity of local produce. These stakeholders will continue in 2022 to work together on this plan. It is envisaged that in the first quarter of 2022, the supply of imported vegetables from the neighbouring countries will satisfy the local demand at a very affordable price;
9. Though the above activity seems to kill the national production efforts; it remains necessary in the immediate term to ensure food and nutrition security in the country at an affordable price. Nonetheless this activity does not affect local production in other food areas. The longterm work to replace certain types of imported food items will continue since it will benefit more Kiribati own producers.

**The Way Forward - To Transform Kiribati Food Systems**

As mentioned in the first draft; the Cabinet is not very keen in the idea of setting the Kiribati Food Systems Task Force, as the leading authority to coordinate all of the above National Pathways.

During this Individual Consultation with key stakeholders, the idea of the Kiribati Food Systems Project Office was identified as better alternative for the national coordinating body. To have this Project Office in place at the earliest is the best way forward before the momentum dwindles. The Kiribati NCo is now seeking resources for the setting of this Project Office planned to be housed under the MELAD.

**Another Round of National Dialogue with All Food Actors**

Also during the Individual Consultation, the stakeholder Ministries saw the need to convene another National Dialogue that will count in the same players involved in the first National Dialogue but this time to include the reps from the Outer Island Councils.

All pathways and their activities will include the Island Councils as well the Church-based groups, and Youth and Women groups. The **Strengthening the Supply Value Chain of Blue & Green Foods in the Country Pathway** will need the active roles and support of the Island Councils - especially in the mobilizations of farming and fishing gear and supports to outer islands, the Land Lease farming arrangement, and the many other roles in supporting farmers and fishermen in the outer islands.

The NCo will continue to seek resources for this planned National Dialogue so it can take place in early 2022. It is planned that during this dialogue the National Game-Changing Pathways will be reviewed once again. At the same time the Ministerial and Divisional Strategies and Programmes for the next 3 years will be checked again against the Pathway Activities presented here.

All food systems actors remain excited and ready to work on their respective pathway activities and to stay united with all other actors so the entirety of the pathways can be meaningfully merged and moved forward together to transform Kiribati Food Systems.

**Conclusions**

Kiribati is a small atoll nation with its unique way of life. With its weak economy and heavy dependency on imported foods; it still has the potential to change difficulties into benefits. This will only be true with the right level of support from its development and coalition partners, the United Nations, and the International Community.

The national concern on the degrading health of Kiribati population - adults and children stands now as a driving force to quickly transform Kiribati Food Systems. Additionally, the fragility of Kiribati’s physical environment needs immediate protection. The Government and people of Kiribati remain hopeful as they now commit to move forward on their Pathway Activities within the timeframes of the UN-Sustainable Goals 2030 and the KV 20 - 2036.

The mindset of the people remains the corner stone for change and this is the starting point to cultivate in this Food System Transformation - as now seen in the first Pathway Activity.

In whatever small way Kiribati is doing in transforming its own Food Systems; it is hoped that Kiribati will also contribute in saving planet earth - our one and only home so it can continue to provide opportunities and benefits to generations to come.

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