

**UNESCO Workshop for Information Sharing
Roles and Relationships
Government, Parliamentarians, Civil Service and Media**

Tarawa, Kiribati
14-18 May 2007

COMMUNIQUE

The participants to the UNESCO Workshop for Information Sharing held on 14-18 May 2007 in Tarawa, Kiribati wish to sincerely thank UNESCO for its sponsorship of this important activity.

The participants also acknowledge the valuable contribution of the Kiribati Ministry of Communications, Transport and Tourism Development as well as the Broadcasting and Publication Authority for the arrangements. The participants especially thank the resource persons and all those who contributed to the discussions and the outcomes. The excellent venue provided by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is also greatly appreciated.

The workshop discussed the roles and relationships between Government, Parliamentarians, Civil Service and the Media. It brought together a cross section of representatives who discussed various ways to move forward on the sharing of public information.

A number of practical outcomes were agreed to and a more positive relationship has been established between these important branches of the community. The participants see great value in improving the flow of information to the public both from, and within, Government and Parliament. They also recognised the critical role required in this effort by the Government, Parliament, Civil Service and the Media.

As a result of this activity, a number of guidelines on improvements to the sharing of information have been discussed for consideration by representatives from Government, Parliament and the Civil Service. The media has adopted a draft Code of Ethics and a Kiribati Islands Media Association will soon be formally established to help improve standards and provide a range of services to its members and the public.

Some of these proposals will require further support to put them into place. Assistance from development partners such as UNESCO in this regard will be warmly welcomed.

The participants are confident that the valuable exchange of ideas during the UNESCO workshop will lead to practical measures that benefit the wider community.

KEY OUTCOMES

The UNESCO Workshop for Information Sharing, Roles and Relationships between Government, Parliamentarians, Civil Service and the Media was held on 14-18 May 2007 in Tarawa, Kiribati. The workshop participants committed to exploring ways of working with each other to help improve the flow of information to the public.

The workshop involved discussion by all parties on their respective roles, as well as proposals to move forward on improving the flow of information from and between their institutions to the public. The key outcomes of the workshop discussions follow:

GOVERNMENT, PARLIAMENT, CIVIL SERVICE:

The meeting recommended:

- the government and its ministries consider broader **information sharing guidelines**. These include consideration by government of the pro-active release of public information in ways that are easy for the public to access; greater openness and improvements in the flow of public information; and wider recognition of the right of the public to know how the government was operated in the public interest.
- a **whole-of-government website** as a resource tool to promote better flow of information about the government and Kiribati.
 - o Suggested topics for the website include general information on all the Kiribati islands; government policies and priorities; official statements and speeches; development projects; economic profiles; commercial and pricing information; cultural information and profiles; education and employment opportunities; RERF updates.
- a **Legislative Office website** as a resource tool for Parliament and other stakeholders.
 - o Suggested topics for the website include profiles of Parliamentarians; composition of Parliament; history of Parliament and its members; Minutes of Parliament proceedings; copies of legislation and updates; key documents such as the Constitution and Parliamentary Rules of Procedure; information on immunities and privileges; and links to related partners such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.
- that government ministries **review the information** on hand, determine what material is public, and explore better ways for people to access this material in a convenient manner.
- communication **skills training** be made available with development partners and local funding sources to be approached for support.

- the government **improve the flow** of information through measures such as:
 - o establishing and expanding information units and ministry radio programmes;
 - o considering the use of fact sheets for ministries to help improve and promote communications between and within the ministries, and with the public, as well as to spread the institutional memory within ministries;
- further consultations on a complaints procedure including how a local version may or may not work. Concerns included the independence of such a body, composition and how it might fit alongside existing avenues for redress such as Letters to the Editor or court action.
- the media be **more pro-active** in getting news rather than waiting for official events and invitations. In doing so, media should be mindful of good conduct, respect and professionalism.

MEDIA:

- A draft **Code of Ethics** was adopted based on four principles – balance, fairness, accuracy and honesty. The first draft will be expanded following consultations.
- A **draft Constitution** will be developed by early June for the Kiribati Islands Media Association. Further consultations will be held before the Constitution is adopted in July. This will open the way for KIMA to be formally registered and established.
- A draft **Complaints Procedure** requires further consultation with members and other stakeholders, after KIMA is established.
- Government will be asked to assist in the further **development of the media** industry, including through approaching potential development partners or assistance.

Tarawa, Kiribati

18 May 2007