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**RSC-C00852 (KIR): KIRIBATI ROAD UPGRADING
 REPORT ON PROJECT DISCLOSURE AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION
 20 – 21 September 2010.**

Project Disclosure Team –

1. Moanataake Beiabure – Ministry of Public Works and Utilities (MPWU)
2. Taati Eria – Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development (MELAD)
3. Bwere Eritaia – local consultant/meeting facilitator
4. Sam Sesega – ADB Land Resettlement Specialist

Introduction –

ADB's Public Communications Policy requires the Bank to work with the borrower/client to ensure that relevant information (whether positive or negative) about social and environmental safeguard issues is made available in a timely manner, in an accessible place, and in a form and language(s) understandable to affected people and to other stakeholders, including the general public, so they can provide meaningful inputs into project design and implementation.

This brief report describes the Project Disclosure and Community Consultations process for the Kiribati Road Rehabilitation Project conducted by the Ministry of Public Works and Utilities (MPWU) on the 20 – 21 September 2010 with the support of the ADB/World Bank. The objective is to present the Project to the public, particularly the local communities that will be directly affected, and to inform and to raise awareness, and, as part of the project design process, to provide an opportunity for them to express any views, concerns and issues that will be considered in subsequent project detailed design.

Public Notification –

The public was informed of the impending consultations and disclosure via the radio on the week-end (Saturday and Sunday) before the consultations on the 20 and 21 September. Public notices were aired on two radio channels (one FM and one M) informing the general public of the purpose of the Public Disclosure meetings, extending an open invitation to all interested members of the public and providing information on venues, dates and times. The delay in public notification was due to uncertainty with venues – the third venue (Kaibangaki) was only confirmed on Friday 17th after a previously targeted one was cancelled due to community differences over who was to authorize to use of the maneaba.

Complementing radio notices, it was decided that we would approach the local communities directly through the church pastors. Consequently, on Saturday 18th, the local consultant (Bwere Eritaia) and myself went to all three communities, discussed the consultations with the Maneaba

Committees and local pastors, and delivered letters explaining the Public Disclosure and inviting the public to the meetings. It was agreed that letters would be read out at the end of the Sunday service. Special request was made for women to be present.

Involvement of MWPU and MELAD –

Assisted by the local consultant, MPWU coordinated the Public Disclosure process. In a coordinating meeting I requested on Friday 17th to go over logistics, MELAD informed us that they will not be directly involved in presenting the environmental and land issues, as it would compromise their regulatory role under their legislation. MELAD however was happy to be represented during the presentation to clarify any environmental and land related issue that MPWU and the Team may have difficulty with.

Meeting Process and Presentations -

For each community meeting, the Project team would arrive early (30min) to set up the presentations (powerpoint, banner etc), and to confirm arrangements for refreshments¹. While awaiting the start of the meetings, participants were handed a copy each of the Project Information Booklet (PIB) translated in Gilbertese to read. The meetings were facilitated by the local consultant, who called the meeting to order, gave introductory remarks, invited a local representative to give the opening prayer, and introduced the team. After this, Moanataake of MPWU made his presentation of the Project.

Moanataake's presentation (using powerpoint) covered (i) physical scope of the project (ii) main environmental issues and (iii) main land and involuntary resettlement issues. The presentation was in Gilbertese. The MELAD representative (Taati Eria, Environmental Education Officer) was present in all three meetings, and provided translation so that I could record all issues raised and assist Moanataake in responding and clarifying some of the issues related to the resettlement framework and involuntary resettlement that arose. She also assisted in responding to environment related questions.

After the presentation, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and or comment. There was no time limit, the session continued until no more issues were raised. Afterwards, refreshments are served, and during this time, some general discussion and exchange continued before final words of thanks were exchanged, following which the local facilitator concluded and closed each meeting.

Key Issues Raised by Communities –

The following are the main issues raised in all three communities wherein Project Disclosure took place.

1. Compensation

¹ The local communities catered for refreshments for each of the respective meetings, based on an agreed per head price. Arrangements for these were made earlier by the local consultant and confirmed on Saturday before the meetings on Monday and Tuesday.

Questions were asked on who and what assets are eligible for payment of compensation. Leaseholders also sought clarifications if they were entitled to compensation on their crops and other assets.

2. Width of the Road (10m)

Moanataake's presentation expounded on the 10m road reserve stipulated in the Protection of Public Highways Act 1990. This consists of 3.5m on each side from the road center, and 1.5m on either side for footpaths. This issue was one of the more contentious, with people expressing concerns that many houses will be affected if this is enforced. Moanataake however also explained that there will be flexibility in the design to minimize adverse impacts, including not having footpaths in some areas if this will result in major resettlement impacts.

3. Lack of prior consultations with landowners for feeder roads

Landowners in Kaibangaki community in particular, were concerned that their feeder road is proposed for upgrading without their prior agreement. It transpired that there were some outstanding land issues underpinning this concern, which the landowners had previously raised with the Council.

4. Feeder road has not been compensated

Landowners in Kaibangaki's strong objections to the Project are due to the fact that their land (400m long) taken for the feeder road has never been compensated. One vocal land owner (woman) took a more conciliatory line and proposed compensation be paid before the Project goes ahead. Others less conciliatory proposed the closure of the feeder road, and the use of another existing feeder road (100m further)² to complete the loop back to the main road.

5. Lack of prior consultations before passage of Protection of Public Highways Act 1990 wherein 10 road reserve is stipulated.

Participants in all three communities expressed concerns about the lack of prior consultations before the passage of this legislation, and its requirement for a 10m road reserve. Many people objected to this.

6. Access to service lines

Several people expressed concerns about access to service lines. Experience with the Japanese built Betio road was cited wherein people had to dig up the road in several locations to access water and electricity lines.

7. Eligibility of leaseholders for compensation

Banereaba residents who were leaseholders asked if they are entitled to compensation for their crop and assets.

² A feeder road directly opposite the Otintai Hotel runs through the Agriculture Department fruit tree orchard.

8. Environmental impact – dust and water pooling

Two environment related comments were expressed in all three meetings. The concern was whether the road will completely eliminate dust and water pooling and all the health issues related to them. A follow-up point made was that people should claim compensation from the Government if the new road fails to eliminate current problem related to dust and water pooling.

9. Design suggestions –

Several specific comments were made regarding the design of the proposed upgrade. These include having a tar-sealed surface, having roads similar to those in Christmas (concrete), realigning the road completely to hug the coastline on the Oceanside to reserve limited land for settlement, locating bus-stops in front on clinics, and others.

10. Future consultations

There is high expectation that further consultations will be held in the future to discuss design details, which Moanataake indicated remains to be finalized. It was explained that there will be subsequent consultations directly involving affected people, and to mainly discuss compensation issues and other details of the resettlement plan. Notwithstanding there is an expectation that similar community-wide consultations will take place.

Some Observations –

1. Participation of women –

The number of women was significantly lower than men. Except for Banreaba, the women were just as vocal and active in their participation as men. It was noted that the active and vocal women were land owners. The meeting facilitator made it a point to encourage questions and comments from women.

2. General atmosphere

Except for part of the meeting in Te Kaibangaki when landowners expressed displeasure with the lack of prior consultations, and compensation for the feeder road, the atmosphere during all three consultations was cordial, constructive and highly positive.

Overall Assessment of Disclosure –

The 3 community meetings were attended by the following people –

Community	Total Participation	Men	Women
1. Banraeaba	31	28	3
2. Te Kaibangaki	28	19	9
3. Bikenibeu	66	50	16

The level of community participation and interest is indicated by the above numbers, which is assessed very high. The meetings not only raised the level of community awareness of the Project but there was also excitement in the knowledge that the meeting was part of the design process, with all views to be considered seriously.

Overall, responses and comments were positive, constructive and supportive of the Project. The main issues have been summarized above. In most cases, responses and questions sought clarifications. In some cases, we were able to provide explanations that were deemed satisfactory. In other cases, the questions could only be answered once the detailed designs are completed. As a result, there is expectation of another round of consultations once detailed designs are completed.

Of specific interest are the strong objections from Kaibangaki landowners regarding the lack of compensation for the feeder road and their non-support for the project as a result of this. The local landowners were adamant they will request the Council to close the feeder road, and will continue to resist the Project until outstanding compensation is paid. Similarly there were concerns in all three communities over the lack of consultations when the legislation stipulating the 10m road reserve was passed.

In Banraeaba and Bikenibeu, community support is strong, recognizing at the same time that some issues (particularly compensation, location of bus-stops and the final lie of the road and whether or not houses etc will be affected) remain to be resolved.

There were no concerns raised regarding ownership of the existing main road.

Conclusion –

The Project Disclosure was highly successful both in terms of community participation but also in the level of awareness and understanding that was raised of the Project amongst the local communities. Concerns and issues that were raised are highly relevant and useful as part of the project design process.

Acknowledgement -

MPWU's contribution particularly in the person of Moanataake, made the consultations highly successful. MELAD's contribution through the involvement of the Environment Education Officer is appreciated. Likewise the local consultant was invaluable in translating and organizing the printing of the PIB, negotiating with communities for venues, refreshments and other logistics, and in facilitating the meetings.

Annex 1 - QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS MADE DURING PROJECT DISCLOSURE –

Community 1 - Banraeaba

10:00 am, 20 September 2010 -

Context: This community is by the main road 20 minutes drive from Mary's Motel (Not far from Tarawa Motors). Participants were mainly men with one woman attending and three others who joined in after preparing refreshments. The majority of participants are leaseholders.

1. Will the Project include other feeder roads?
2. For some crowded parts of South Tarawa, better access roads from the main road are badly needed. Will this Project address this need?
3. The width of the road has changed since colonial times without any public consultations. The 10m road reserve in the legislation is something the Government passed without any consultations.
4. What are mitigating measures for houses that are very near the road?
5. For lease holders, what compensation are they entitled to?
6. Once the new road is completed, the issue of public safety will be important given the speed with which vehicles will be going. This is a concern that Government should consider. Safety programmes should be planned.
7. The scope of the Project should also include other more densely populated feeder roads.
8. The proposed width of the road (10m) will have a big impact on roadside houses. How is the Project going to address this?
9. The bus stops will mean people will have to walk some distance and will not be dropped off in front of their own places. This is an inconvenience for old and disabled people.
10. The new law stating a 10m reserve was passed without any consultation. Now it will pose many problems.
11. Will there be follow up consultations once detailed designs are completed?
12. Expressed appreciation and support for the Project and asked when the follow-up consultations will be held.
13. Road humps should be designed differently. Some existing humps in Betio are too high for most vehicles.
14. The Japanese built roads in Betio are inferior in quality. It did not last long. This Project should learn from that experience and make sure the new road is of better quality.
15. Expressed hope that this Project will benefit local people more, unlike some previous projects (e.g. Taiwanese funded projects) which brought their own people and did not employ any locals.
16. If there a Committee for this Project? If so, will there be representatives from different villages on it?
17. Expressed strong support for the Project and urged that implementation should start soon to cure all the road and transportation problems faced by the people.
18. Will there be employment for locals from the Project?
19. Proposed all employment generated by the Project to be coordinated through the National Employment Register (NER).

20. Bus-stops should be located near all clinics.
21. Does the Project include installation of streetlights?

Community 2 - Te Kaibangaki Village
2:00pm, 20 September, 2010

Context – This community is on the feeder road near the Otintaai Hotel, turning off the main road at about 200m from the entrance into Otintaai Hotel. The road is partly on Government leased lands with 400 meters running through freehold customary land. The feeder road was established in the late 1980's initially to only as far as the Government facilities and offices on the Oceanside. Later, as more people settled the area, the road was extended through freehold customary land for the remaining 400m to complete the loop back to the main road. It transpired during the course of this consultation that customary landowners have not been compensated for the road. Consequently, during the consultations, the affected landowners expressed strong opposition for the Project unless they are compensated first.

Questions and issues raised – (listed in the order in which they were expressed)

1. For feeder roads, will it be the same width as the main roads?
2. Will the Project make adequate provisions for service lines? This comment recalled the experience of Betio after the Japanese built road, wherein locals dug up the road to access service lines.
3. How wide are the feeder roads? Is the road reserve the same as the main road?
4. Will there be compensation?
5. What about land that are not yet leased to Government? Will these be leased?
6. Who owns the feeder roads?
7. Part of the feeder road is on freehold customary lands and to date, landowners have not been compensated for this road. This landowner strongly disapproves of the Project which will take more land, yet without compensation paid first. He proposed closing the feeder road that runs through his land, indicating that they had raised the matter with the local council already. He also proposed that (to accommodate closing the road on his land) the feeder road should instead be realigned to link up with the existing feeder road that enters the Agriculture Department orchard directly opposite Otintaai Hotel.
8. Government should liaise closely with landowners before deciding on which feeder roads to upgrade. This landowner (a woman) recalled previous effort to establish access roads in other parts of Tarawa which were blocked by landowners.
9. Another landowner expressed concern at the lack of direct consultations with customary land owners.
10. Another woman landowner: Expressed concern with the lack of consultations with landowners before deciding on which feeder road to be upgraded. She strongly advised that Government should sit down with customary landowners to discuss issues of land ownership and compensation, including compensation for the existing feeder road.
11. Supportive of the Project but suggested pavement should not be concrete but bitumen.
12. How long is the road going to last?
13. When is the next consultation going to take place?

14. How much is the loan from ADB and World Bank?

Community 3 – Bikenibeu
10:00am, 21 September 2010

Context: This church maneaba is about 2-3m from the roadside thus there were concerns about the 10m reserve and its impact on the maneaba. The main road in this community runs through freehold customary land with government leased land on the Oceanside. Participants were both leaseholders and landowners. Several in particular were retired public servants (one a former senior Ministry of Finance official). Questions below related to the political motives of the Government etc were from them. Of particularly interest, women were most vocal in this community, asking as many questions if not more, as men.

Questions/Comments made –

1. How long is 10 meters? (Note: this was in response to Moanataake's presentation wherein he asserted that the Protection of Public Highways Act stipulates a road reserve of 10m).
2. Why didn't the Government consult the public before passing the 10m road reserve legislation?
3. Have you carried out an assessment of how many houses will be affected?
4. Is there flexibility in the road alignment to minimize direct impacts on roadside houses, fences etc.?
5. How about relocating the entire road to the Oceanside to avoid loss of homes etc.?
6. Will there be compensation for affected properties?
7. Expressed support for the Project but noted that the Government should properly manage the process of assessing impacts and compensation to minimize or avoid upsetting many people.
8. Why is the Government asking for an ADB/World Bank loan for this Project when the elections are so near?
9. Local companies should be contracted to build the road. The last time overseas companies were used (Japanese companies), the road they built is already badly damaged.
10. Roads should be built like those on Christmas Island.
11. Concern expressed about the amount of dust now, which will be worsen once the road construction starts.
12. Does the Government have the capacity to build roads? The last time roads were built was by the colonial powers.
13. Will there be compensation for the maneaba fence should it be removed to accommodate the road?
14. Will houses that have not been registered under the building permit regulation be entitled to compensation if they are affected?
15. Will the loan from ADB/World Bank have any direct impact on the people? Who is going to pay it?
16. Will the road once completed solve the existing problem of dust and diseases associated with it? If no, will the Government compensate people who will be sick from these environmental conditions?

17. How will people's access to service lines (particularly water and electricity) be affected by this Project?
18. Summation – the elder landowner spoke on behalf of the meeting to expressed their full support for the Project. He stressed the importance of getting the road upgraded for the many benefits that it will bring. He recognizes also the various issues related to land ownership and compensation but was positive that they could and would be worked through. He advised that the Government implement the project as soon as possible.

Annex 3 – Some photos - Banreaba



Top: Participants reading PIB while awaiting the start of the Consultations.
Middle: Moanataake (Bwere in the foreground) making his presentation.
Bottom: Participant making a point.

Annex 4 – Some photos – Kaibangika



Top: Local Facilitator Bwere Eritaia with Taati Eria of MELAD (sitting).
Middle: Men listening in the maneaba; some women preferred to listen from the back.
Bottom: Contemplating afternoon tea!

Annex 3 – Some photos – Bikenibeu



Top: The best turn-out was at Bikenibeu
Middle: One of the local landowners and community elder expressing strong support for the Project.
Bottom: Men and women listening and participating.