



GOVERNMENT OF KIRIBATI

GoK (14) DPF (Presentation 01)

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS FORUM

Tarawa, Kiribati

13-14 March 2014

AGENDA ITEM 4: Population (Health)

CONCEPT NOTE ON HEALTH POPULATION

Purpose

This note will highlight the impact of population, health issues and programmes and ways forward under the MHMS.

Background & Issues:

Population growth has been a challenging issue and the alarming growth rate of 2.2% annually has caused overcrowding, particularly in South Tarawa. A Reproductive Health Policy has been completed and an Annual Workplan is ready to be implemented. The Kiribati Family Health Association is taking a leading role in reproductive health. Issues of logistics and supplies of quality services and access to family planning drugs and commodities to all clinics are ongoing. UNDP is the current donor partner with reproductive health but more resources are required to meet demand. Work has commenced with government agencies and other stakeholders on a population strategy.

Maternal and child health are still key challenges for Kiribati. 40% of mothers still have their children delivered outside the public hospital system. Problems include the lack of skills and capacity of maternal care attendants, particularly in the outer islands and the quality of maternal and child health facilities and equipment. Another problem is that quality health information and data requires improvement and the lack of reporting is an issue for the outer islands. The Kiribati Child Survival Strategy has been developed and is in the process of being implemented.

Communicable diseases are endemic in Kiribati and most of them are associated with overcrowding and poor hygiene. Outbreaks are very common. Some successes have occurred. The ongoing delivery and sustainability of the TB and Leprosy Control Programs are on track. The ongoing National Plan for Lymphatic Filariasis and manage morbidity has been implemented. The implementation of the National HIV and STI Strategic Plan has been compromised since the Global Fund has come to an end. Access to, and use of, safe water and basic sanitation are the best ways of promoting improved hygiene. However, water and sanitation remain large issues with South Tarawa the biggest challenge.

Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are lifestyle problems which are associated with unhealthy eating behaviour, lack of exercise and poor habits such as smoking and drinking excessive alcohol.

NCDs as a proportion of total deaths, all ages (2008)	69%
Proportion of population who are overweight (BMI $\geq$ 25 kg/m ²)	81.5%
Proportion of population aged 25-64 years with $\geq$ 3 NCD risk factors	72.7%
Proportion of population with elevated fasting blood glucose ($\geq$ 6.1 mmol/L) or currently on diabetes medication	28.1%

So far, only South Tarawa has been covered in the moves to strengthen the integration of NCD interventions into primary health care. A Bill to strengthen initiatives around tobacco control and alcohol misuse along with the regulations have just been passed. A food regulation to strengthen initiatives around healthy eating has just been approved. A lack of space and lack of ongoing community engagement has inhibited the strengthening of initiatives on physical activity. Only South Tarawa has been covered in strengthening initiatives to prevent and manage diabetes. The recent appointment of two qualified doctors will assist in the improvement of mental health services.

The increase in population has caused a high demand on health services stretching the gaps needed to improve health equity. The high hospital occupancy rate (above 100%) is an indicator that hospital services are overextended. Specialists are still in short supply which has limited the effectiveness and efficiency of health services delivery. However the number of doctors, nurses and allied health workers are increasing. A workforce plan is underway. Hindrances to quality medical services include a limited budget to meet the demand. A qualified biomedical engineer is required to assist in implementing a formal asset maintenance and replacement program for infrastructure and equipment. A new database has been added to the three hospitals to improve the system for the collection, analysis, and reporting of information.

Recommendations:

Replenishment of ongoing programmes as follows:

- the Reproductive Health Policy Annual Workplan implementation
- the Kiribati Child Survival Strategy implementation for maternal and child health issues including quality health data and reporting improvement
- CDs programme implementation with focus also on water and sanitation
- NCDs programme implementation to outreach the whole of Kiribati
- Hospital services improvement for increased population (specialists, biomedical engineer, infrastructure & equipment etc.,)