

Kiritimati Island Water Project and Kiritimati Island Energy Sector Programme construction commences

Written by Zarin Khan

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A ground-breaking ceremony was held on Kiritimati Island, Kiribati on 23 March 2017 to mark the start of the construction phase for the Kiritimati Island Water Project and the Kiritimati Island Energy Sector Programme (KIESP).

The ground-breaking was hosted by the Ministry of Line and Phoenix Islands Development (MLPID). In his keynote address the Minister for MLPID, Honourable Mikarite Temari said, “Both projects are very important to the development of Kiritimati Island and are contributing to the implementation of the Line and Phoenix Islands Development Strategy.”

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He reaffirmed the commitment of his Government to facilitate the smooth implementation of these projects, and remarked, “The Government of the Republic of Kiribati is implementing its key policy initiatives aimed at improving people’s livelihoods, and that these projects when complete will contribute towards achieving this objective.”

The combined value of the Water and Energy projects is around Euro 12 million, jointly funded by the European Union and Government of New Zealand.

The representative of the National Authorising Officer/Ministry of Finance Teriba Tabe, stated that it was “timely to see the start of the construction phase and that Kiritimati Island stands to benefit from more development assistance from the European Union in the coming years.”

The Kiritimati Island Water Project, implemented by the Pacific Community in partnership with the Government of Kiribati and the European Union, has a budget of Euro 4.94 million. The aim is to provide safe and sustainable drinking water to communities in targeted areas of Tennessee and London. Three new water galleries will be constructed that will include twelve new solar submersible pumping systems, new solar chlorination systems, installation of a new 250,000 litre storage tank at London and a new Decca pipeline.

The Kiritimati Island Energy Support Programme, with a budget of Euro 7 million, aims to provide improved access to affordable, reliable and clean energy on Kiritimati Island, especially a high voltage network connecting the main population centres, two new power stations and a new solar facility. There will be some additional asset management planning and capacity building training included.

The Head of Infrastructure at the European Union Delegation for the Pacific, Jesús Lavina, based in Fiji, stated that “this ground-breaking is a concrete example of our commitment to development of Kiribati and of the significance EU-New Zealand partnership and coordination in addressing critical needs for the development of Kiritimati in particular.”

New Zealand High Commissioner to Kiribati, Michael Upton, based in Tarawa, asked that his congratulations and best wishes for the construction phase of the project be passed on, noting that reliable energy and water services are critical to well-being and sustainable economic development. He encouraged all parties to play their part in the partnership so that the target of

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completion by the end of 2017 is achieved. He also expressed his enthusiasm to visit Kiritimati Island to see firsthand the progress of this important programme.

SPC Deputy Director-General (Suva), Dr Audrey Aumua said: “The provision of safely managed drinking water and affordable and appropriate energy solutions are critical for human health and ensuring sustainable development, particularly for Kiritimati Island which experiences one of the most variable climates in the region. Delivering an integrated solution through this partnership approach has allowed the people living in Kiritimati Island to see a future that benefits from what the island and people have to offer.”

The joint initiatives form part of the EU-New Zealand partnership for sustainable development in the Pacific established in 2013.

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