

# A Strategic Plan for Community and Economic Development in Betio, Kiribati 2008-2012

This report was produced by a community-based citizens task force appointed by the Betio Town Council at a three-day workshop with help from facilitators provided by the Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs (MISA) and the Kiribati Sustainable Towns program, a project funded by the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID). Its first annual review and revision was accomplished by the task force 6/09.

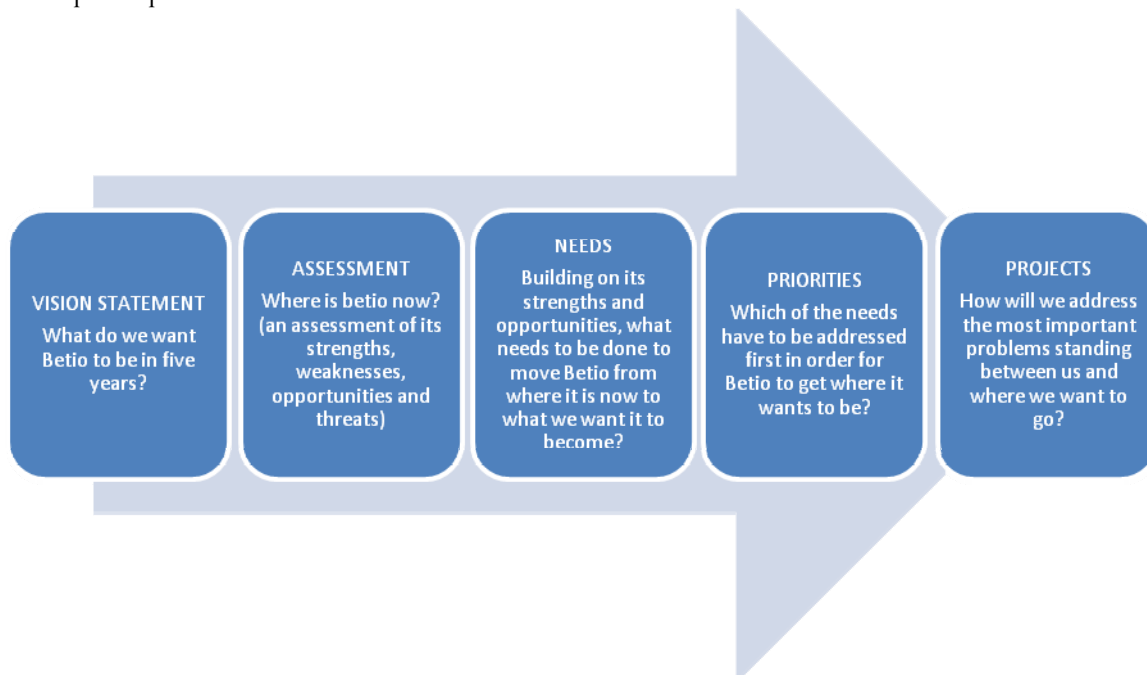
**BETIO STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE**

June 17, 2008 (rev 6/09)

# A Strategic Plan for Community and Economic Development in Betio, Kiribati 2008-2012

## METHODOLOGY

The citizens task force appointed by the Betio Town Council used a five-step process to produce this strategic development plan:



The Betio task force also analyzed important parts of the Kiribati Development Plan: 2008-2011 that spoke to issues that relate to local government and aspects of community and economic development that affect local government.

## VISION STATEMENT

**Betio will be a beautiful city, recognized throughout the Pacific Region as a wonderful place to live, visit, work, shop, play and learn.**

## ASSESSMENT

The Betio study group applied a technique called a ‘SWOT analysis’ to assess the current condition of the Betio’s urban area. In the process, the group developed a list of Betio’s strengths and weakness, and potential opportunities available and threats it may face as Betio moves from where it is now to where it should be in five years.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• fishery</li><li>• education (Catholic school, Marine Training Center, KTI)</li><li>• port facility</li><li>• war relics</li><li>• small businesses</li><li>• boat yard</li><li>• sports complex</li><li>• water supply</li><li>• land reclamation plan</li><li>• native hospitality</li><li>• strong cultural tradition</li><li>• maneabas (community centers)</li><li>• health care system</li><li>• climate and weather</li><li>• absence of natural calamities (earthquakes, cyclones)</li><li>• clean sea water</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• overpopulation</li><li>• land tenure issues (squatters, land ownership disputes)</li><li>• sewage and sanitation problems</li><li>• cultural change (particularly as western and Japanese influence impacts youth)</li><li>• pollution (sea and lagoon)</li><li>• mosquitoes and diseases</li><li>• public education system</li><li>• sand removal from the lagoon and man-made coastal erosion</li><li>• road system</li><li>• overharvesting fish</li><li>• stray animals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• attention from international donors</li><li>• fishery</li><li>• terrorist-free country</li><li>• cheap labor</li><li>• sports facility</li><li>• global economy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• fragile environment</li><li>• global warming</li><li>• draught</li><li>• tsunami</li><li>• overpopulation</li><li>• HIV/AIDS</li><li>• traffic congestion</li><li>• social problems (youth unrest)</li><li>• global economy</li><li>• quality of imports flooding the country</li></ul>

## IDENTIFYING AND PRIORIZING NEEDS

Based on the SWOT assessment it completed, the Betio Task Force identified and listed 21 needs that had to be addressed if Betio was to be able to reach the goal described in the Task Force’s Vision Statement.

After a list of needs was developed, each task force member had five votes to cast to determine which needs on the list were most urgent and had to be addressed first in order for Betio to be able to become what the Vision Statement describes.

On the next page is the List of Needs, in order of priority as determined by the members’ votes (6/08). (The number of votes each need received is noted in parenthesis.)

## LIST OF NEEDS (prioritized)

- create more jobs (10)
- build proper toilet facilities (public and private) (6)
- improve educational infrastructure (facilities, support services, equipment) (7)
- improve feeder roads (village and neighborhood roads that serve residences and provide access to main roads) (6)
- more efficient land use (5)
- reliable, regular water supply (5)
- port passage on the ocean side (middle of Betio) (5)
- expand and upgrade health facilities (4)
- regularize land tenure (4)
- better use of existing sports and recreation facilities (3)
- control in-migration and population growth (2)
- upgrade wharf and port facilities (1)
- more tourist facilities and better tourism promotion (1)
- more opportunities for community involvement in public affairs (1)
- support programs and policies that encourage out-migration (return to outer islands and immigration to Kiritimati Island) (1)
- improve animal control (1)
- need to preserve culture and tradition (1)

The following were noted as needs, but received no votes during the prioritization exercise: develop land for shops and markets; create more places for recreation and sport; money for business start-ups and expansions; improve road signage.

When the Betio Strategic Planning Task Force met in June, 2009 to review progress made since their plan was implemented (June, 2008), they determined that economic development and job creation initiatives mentioned in their plan were well underway and that concerns about overcrowding, sanitation, roads and water issues could be first addressed in the Betio Redevelopment District (STP area designed for upgrading) and scaled up to other areas in Betio. Then they re-examined the rest of their List of Needs and developed a new Priority List

## 2009-10 LIST OF NEEDS (prioritized)

- **development of the Betio Shopping Center, improvement to two other shopping districts (14)**
- **Women and Youth Center (13)**
- **explore the feasibility of developing a waste-to-energy facility (10)**
- **organize a study trip to a place like Betio that has faced and overcome similar challenges (9)**
- **construction, rehabilitation of feeder roads outside the Betio Redevelopment District (STP area upgrading target) (8)**
- **create a boat passage for fishermen on the oceanside, improve boat ramp (7)**
- **establish a Battle of Tarawa monument at Red Beach clean-up the beach (7)**
- **improve and expand sports and recreation facilities (including new gym) (7)**

The rest of the nominated needs received two or fewer votes: community garden plots behind the council building, regularize land tenure, expand use opportunities for locals at the Sports Complex, control in-migration, develop a pilot erosion control project near the sea wall.

### PROJECTS

With an eye on the Vision Statement and attention paid to the prioritized List of Needs it developed, the Strategic Planning Task Force developed Projects that, if implemented, will serve to move Betio from where it is to the kind of community described in the Vision Statement. Sometimes the projects were developed to address several of the identified needs at the same time.

PURPOSE: Create more job opportunities

#### Economic Analysis

The town council should hire a qualified consultant to analyze Betio's economy and make recommendations, based on the analysis, about what types of businesses and jobs ought to be maintained and expanded, created and developed. The town government will: produce a scope of work for the consultant that describes exactly what advice the council seeks; arrange for requests for proposals (RFPs); evaluate the RFPs the council receives; award and administer a contract for services.

The consultant's report will be delivered to appropriate GOK ministries and any locally based economic development agencies. The task force will monitor progress acting on the report's recommendations. The consultant's report will be the basis for decision-making regarding job creation as it relates to Betio's economic development activities'

Estimated cost: \$20,000

Funding source: NZAID, AUSAID and local match (money or in-kind contributions)

Project term: 2 months from award of contract

Project initiation – Betio Town Council

Project oversight: Strategic planning task force

STATUS: underway. Draft TOR written. Consultants to be hired third quarter 2009.

#### Economic Development Authority

The Betio Town Council should set up a Betio Economic Development Authority. BEDA will be a non-profit, semi-independent local government agency that is responsible for promoting Betio to perspective international businesses looking to expand in the Pacific region, seeking low-wage skilled labor. BEDA's small staff can provide advice to perspective and existing small businesses in Betio and support services for them (for a modest fee).

BEDA will also organize and manage a micro-loan program that helps local business start up or expand. (Loans will average \$500.) Staff (4): a director who has job promotion experience, a micro-loan specialist, a business assistance specialist, clerical support person.

BEDA's first responsibility will be to develop a business plan that makes it self-sustainable in 3 years. International donor help will be sought to start BEDA up and sustain it for its first 3 years. BEDA should be able to open its doors for the first time within 6 months of the town council approving its charter and by-laws.

Estimated cost (3 years): staff and other operating expenses -- \$180,000; micro-loan fund -- \$250,000

Funding source: Taiwan government, NZAID, ADB, AUSAID

Project initiation: Betio Town Council

Project oversight: BEDA board of directors made up of council representatives, community leaders, businesspeople

Project term: continuous

STATUS: pending. Detailed organizational and business planning is part of the economic analysis TOR. Project outline and recommendations will be provided as part of the economic development consultant's report.

#### Betio Redevelopment District

The town council should designate the area identified for upgrading in NZAID's Sustainable Towns Program as a redevelopment district. STP aims to do upgrading in the area (see map, next page), arranging improvements to basic public services and infrastructure: water supply; sanitation; solid waste management; access roads; drainage; electricity supply; street lighting; improvements to social, education, sports and recreation and health facilities.

BTC will appoint a citizens advisory board that represents all religious groups and civic and business organizations with interests in the district. The citizens advisory board will work closely with the BTC's Village Area Committee to help organize and promote and monitor all STP upgrading activities that happen within the district.

Best practices – Projects that work well in the redevelopment district will exported and restarted in other parts of Betio that need similar upgrading.

Estimated cost: \$1.5 million

Funding source: NZAID and partner donor agencies NZAID arranges to participate in the Betio Village upgrading project.

Project initiation: NZAID STP and BTC

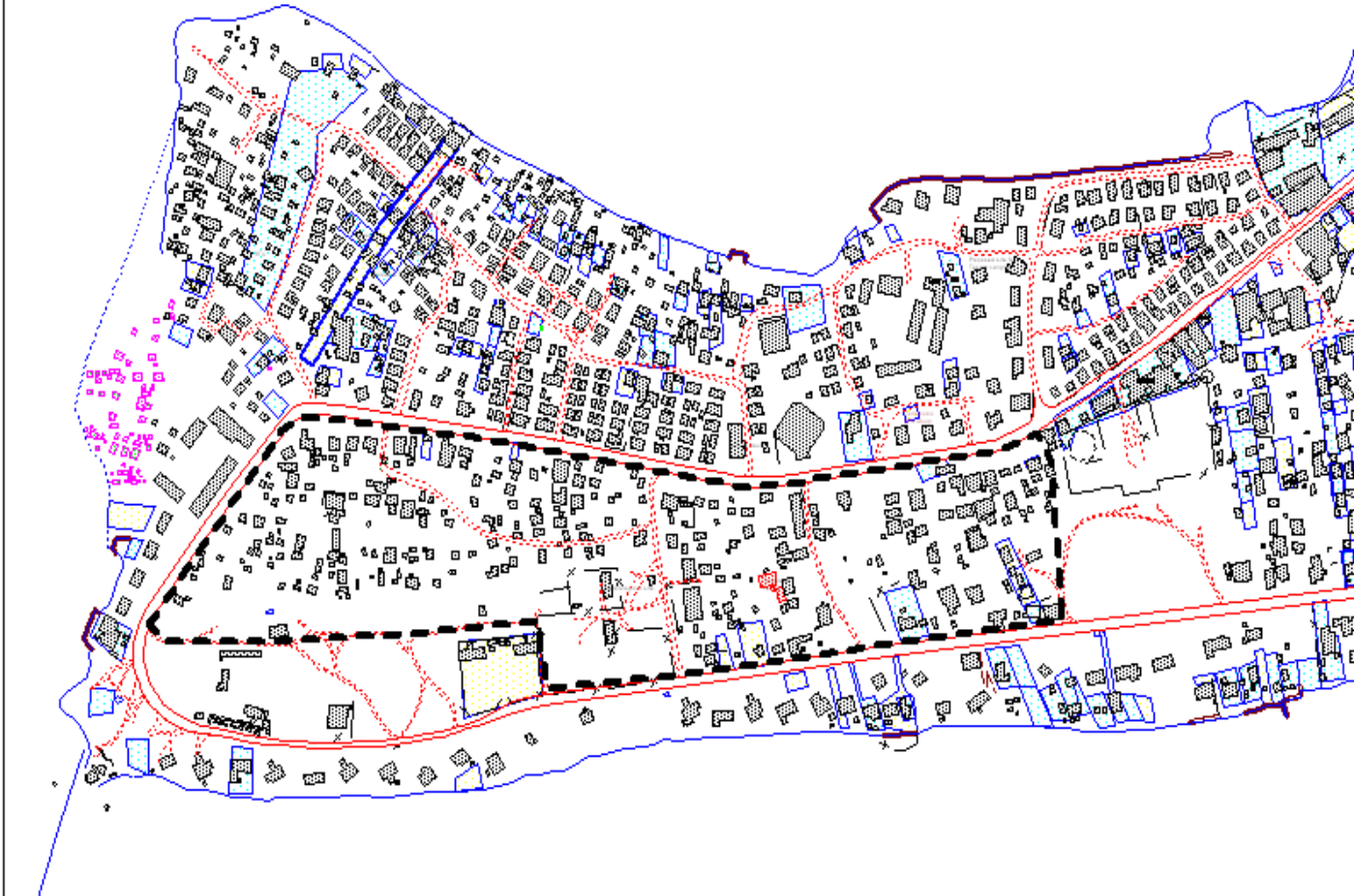
Timeline; technical and feasibility studies – 6 months; public infrastructure improvements – 5 years

Project oversight: BTC (village area committee) and the district's citizens advisory committee

STATUS: STP project underway. TORs are developed for first phase consultancies. Physical improvements expected to begin 2010-11, based on consultants' recommendations.

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## BETIO VILLAGE AREA



### Women and Youth Empowerment Center

A facility should be set up to train women and young people for the kinds of jobs the economic analysis identifies and BEDA's promotional work produces. Both groups represent a large part of the work force that are either unemployed or under-employed presently. Much of that problem is caused by the fact that women and youth often lack the skills businesses seek. The Center will be a place where classes can be offered in sewing, cooking, general office skills, carpentry, and vehicle maintenance.

WYEC can operate from office and workshop space provided by the Betio Economic Development Authority. Instruction can be arranged through civic and church organizations. The facility will provide necessary equipment and classroom and meeting space. Services and the Center's management will be the responsibility of a coordinator. BEDA's clerical assistant will provide clerical support.

The Center will require international donor support to establish itself and operate for its first three years. After that, modest fees for service and donations raised locally will sustain it.

Estimate cost: 3 years operation -- \$30,000 staff, \$120,000 equipment purchase and maintenance.

Timeline: WYEC can open its doors and begin operation at the same time BEDA does.

Management and oversight: BTC

Funding source: NZAID, government of Taiwan, AUSAID

### Garden Plots

As soon as possible, BTC should implement plans to provide a place for the community to grow vegetables. Land behind the town council building has already been designated for community garden plots. A fence needs to be built around it and soil needs to be provided and fertilized.

AKIBE, the association of Betio's women's groups, can manage and maintain the facility. The Taiwan government can help set it up (they have established similar facilities elsewhere in South Tarawa). Part of the income realized from the sale of vegetables sold that were grown on the plots can be dedicated to a operations and maintenance fund that will sustain the gardens.

Estimated cost: \$15,000 – fencing and setting up the gardens

Funding source: governments of Japan and Taiwan, NZAID

Timeline: 4 weeks after BTC approves the project

Management and oversight: AKIBE

### Boat Passage and Boat Ramp

A boat passage for local fishermen should be created on the ocean side of Betio so that users can have a direct access from the sea to the middle of Betio. The improvement will require that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) be made. The task force suggests that the EIA be the second part of a feasibility study that describes where the passage should be located and projects, the use it would get, how much it would cost to create.

The task force will manage the process that solicits a consultant and awards a contract. After the feasibility study and the EIA is delivered to the task force, it will develop a recommendation about how the project should be funded and present its findings to the Betio Town Council. Improvements to the boat ramp were included as part of the project at the task force's first annual review of the TDS.

Estimated cost: \$5000 – feasibility study and EIA

Funding source: AUSAID, NZAID

Timeline: 2 months

Oversight and management responsibilities: Betio Fishermen's Association

PURPOSE: Addressing land tenure and overpopulation issues

### Regularize land tenure

The task force advises that BTC take a bold and innovative approach to addressing land tenure issues within Betio's boundaries. It is the necessary first step to addressing population problems.

Most people in Betio live on land owned by the government. In many cases, the people who live on the land are squatters; in many other cases, people living on the land have leases but are paying no rents. These tenuous situations discourage landholders from properly maintaining the land on which they live and making and maintaining any improvements on it. And because the land is producing no income for the government that can be used to provide Betio residents and businesses with basic public services, the quality of life suffers.

The task force recommends that BTC seeks funds enough from an international donor to pay the Government of Kiribati the extended lease rate of \$1000/acre for all of the government-owned land in Betio on which people live. BTC will then allocate legal title to the occupied land and collect rents for it. Income from rents will be used to pay back the money paid to GOK and to fund public services for the residents. Everyone presently living on the land will be offered title to rent it for at least 25 years. The promise of being issued clear land title to their property will encourage people to pay their rents. BTC already has the staff infrastructure and the land registration data available and in place to manage the program.

BTC will control overcrowding on the plots through vigorous enforcement of its building codes and its public health regulations.

Timeline: the land ownership transition and leasing arrangement should take 12 months to implement  
Funding: \$300,000 no-interest loan needed for BTC to buy the leasehold from GOK; 12.5 years to pay it back  
Source: ADB, NZAID  
Management and oversight: BTC

### Control In-Migration

Every year hundreds of new households are established in South Tarawa, many by people who have no legal ownership or tenant rights to the land on which they choose to live. Many of them relocate in Betio. This causes a great strain on the public services the BTC tries to provide, Tarawa's fragile environment, and public health.

The task force believes in-migration can be discouraged by charging an arrival tax of \$20/person for everyone who gets off a boat at the port of Betio. The \$20 arrival tax will be refunded in full when the payer departs the port within 30 days of his or her arrival. The government of Kiribati already allows the outer islands to charge a \$2 departure tax, so there is some precedent for this kind of an arrangement in principle.

BTC has the staff infrastructure in place to manage the program. Whatever additional funds it may prove to need will be provided by forfeited arrival taxes paid by people who don't return to their outer islands within 30 days of visiting South Tarawa.

Timeline: 3 months to collect necessary approvals from the government of Kiribati, 3 more to put administrative mechanisms in place  
Funding: self-funded  
Management and oversight: BTC

PURPOSE: Improving sports and recreation opportunities

#### The sports complex

Betio has within its boundaries an excellent indoor/outdoor sports facility. However, it is presently under-used by Betio residents because they cannot afford to pay user fees charged by MISA. The task force advises that GOK more frequently market and use the Betio complex for national and international competitions for which they can charge spectators a modest ticket fee. That money can be used to maintain the facility instead of the pay-for-play system now in place that discourages any use of this outstanding facility for much of year, because local residents cannot afford it.

In exchange for establishing an arrangement like this, BTC can help provide maintenance of the facility.

#### Other public sports and recreation facilities in Betio

Providing high-quality opportunities for youth to participate in sports and recreation activities enhances their quality of life and diverts them from unconstructive and destructive behavior. Betio has sports and recreation facilities and programs but they suffer from neglect and the effects of overpopulation and overuse.

Four new outdoor multi-purpose courts (basketball, volleyball, tennis) need to build around Betio – three public facilities and one for the Catholic school. Each will cost \$25,000. The soccer field needs to have rocks removed from it. For best use, it needs to be sodded and lighted. Civic organizations and local residents can provide much of the labor required and assume maintenance responsibilities once the facilities are build, but international donors are required to provide most of the materials. Youth members of the task force asked that mention of the need for a new gymnasium be included as part of this project during the task force’s first annual review of the TDS.

Timelines: 4 months for new multi-use courts to be built; 3 months for improvements to the soccer field (regarding, grass, lights installed); 4 months to design and construct a new gymnasium

Oversight and maintenance: BTC and civic and church organizations

Funding: \$100,000, 4 new neighborhood multi-use courts; \$50,000, soccer field improvements; \$50,000, new gymnasium.

Source: AUSAID and community donations

#### Study Mission

Members of the Task Force thought it would be educational and of much practical value if arrangements could be made for a small delegation from Betio to visit a place with municipalities that has successfully dealt with similar problems that Betio faces: service delivery, health, sanitation and water, and economic development issues. The delegation, not to exceed six members, should be gender-balanced to the extent possible and be include equal numbers of members of the TDS task force (not councilors) and council members. The delegation can be appointed by the mayor. He will choose task force members from a list of volunteers provided by the task force.

KSTP’s urban councils advisor will work closely with the BTC mayor to determine a suitable place to visit, secure sponsorship for the study trip by a host from the venue, and help the mayor develop an itinerary for the trip. The trip should be arranged for sometime in early 2010 and its costs assumed by part of BTC’s 2010 KSTP allocation.

Estimated cost: \$30,000

### Betio Shopping Complex

BTC wants to develop a shopping center near the Sports Complex, on property fronting the loop road that it currently leases to a variety of business. The project will clear the area, construct a large, 2-story covered building on the site that will be owned and maintained by the town government. Commercial leases for shop space on the first floor, and office leases for businesses on the second floor will create income enough to support BTC's general fund, pay any debt incurred by borrowing money to construct the facility, and maintain the finished complex. This is a long-standing council project; detailed plans are already on file for the shopping center.

The council should also look to undertake similar projects in the BTC's other two smaller commercial areas, cleaning up the sites and fixing the buildings.

Funding needed: \$2 million (including \$400,000 to clean up and renovate the two smaller shopping districts). Possible sources of funds: World Bank, private investment (for first-come, first-served permanent floor space in the shopping center/office complex), Taiwan government. Funding assembled by end of first quarter 2010; project completed, building ready for occupancy, mid-2011; renovations in two other shopping districts completed late 2010.

### Waste-to-Energy Project

As part of a comprehensive look at the BTC's garbage pick-up and disposal service, consideration should be given building and running a waste-to-energy facility, where garbage is burned in an environmentally safe way, to produce steam, which is used to produce electricity. The power produced would then be sold to the government of Kiribati, Public Utilities Board (Ministry of Public Works). Income would be used to pay off debt incurred to build the facility and set up a segregated fund to maintain and operate the facility. The task force envisions this project as being done in cooperation with TUC.

KSTP has programmed and budgeted for a solid waste management feasibility study to be done in 2009. The task force suggests that a waste-to-energy plant be one of the things considered in the study. It should be written into the TOR that the consultant studies this alternative and develops a recommendation regarding its feasibility and cost. The consultant's report is due to be delivered in early 2010. The task force will reconvene after the report is received by BTC and TUC determine recommendations for next steps.

### Erosion Control Project

The ocean-side shoreline of Betio is particularly affected by erosion, a problem that seems to be aggravated by the effects of global warming and climate change. It is suggested that BTC organize a test plot at the end of Betio, near the sea wall. Innovative ways to stop shoreline erosion and build up land mass should be tested there. If these methods seem to halt erosion or build land mass, they should be replicated at other places along the shoreline.

Funding: \$300,000 should be provided by the governments of Australia, Japan or Taiwan, or international environmental protection donors agencies. Project managed by MLAD, in cooperation with BTC. Can be organized and begun by late 2009, as soon as funding is secured. MLAD can take the project lead and seek the funding. BTC should make their request known to MLAD so grant applications can be written.

### Red Beach Monument

A monument commemorating the Battle of Tarawa should be erected on Red Beach and the beach area adjacent to it should be cleaned up and maintained as a park. If American groups interested in having a memorial build on Red Beach can donate money to pay for it, BTC should work closely with them on the monument's design, designate the area around where the monument is placed as a park, and maintain it as such.

BTC should give notice to these American interests and whatever government of Kiribati agencies which need to be involved of this plan and intent and jointly develop a timeline for the project.

#### Betio Feeder Roads

Betio needs to improve the roads within its jurisdiction that feed the loop road that carries traffic to and from the town. That will hopefully be done as part of the STP's area upgrading project in Betio's redevelopment district (the STP-designated area for upgrading). But feeder roads need to be improved outside this area, too.

BTC has already planned for these improvements and the construction of a few new roads. Work can bid out to private contractors. The project should create at least 50 jobs and supports several locally based material and equipment providers.

Funding needed: \$3 million. Sources: ADB, governments of Kiribati and Taiwan. Project begins early 2010 (if funding commitments are secured for the 2010 budget year); is completed by late 2011.

#### Original BTC Strategic Plan Task Force

Kaiuea Temwaka, Unimwane Representative  
Tekena Teitiba, Betio Fishermen Association  
Kaitu Tibiriano, Roman Catholic Church Representative  
Airiin Tiikawa, Women's Representative  
Tororo Ritang, Island Community Worker  
Timaia Tuana, Kiribati Protestant Church Representative  
Teaki Kanoanie, Councilor  
Lawrence Muller, Councilor (former mayor)  
Tirae Bureeti, Former Councilor  
Teiraoi Tetabea, Former Councilor  
Freddy Raiha, Councilor  
Beia Ekebati, Councilor  
Pine Iosefa, Former Councilor  
Arobati Moantaeka, Councilor

#### Newly Added Members

Riiti U. Reiti, Betio Youth Association	Romano Reo, BTC mayor
Neneia Kaebwa, Betio Sports Association	Tebure Tokamaen, KPC representative
Tebuka Bwauke, Councilor	
Moomi Mamaia, Island Project Officer	
Sion Tanging, WIW (BTC)	
Tangariki Reete, Member of Parliament (Betio)	
Tiaon Matia, RCM	
Beitika Airam, Councilor	
Ngangata Kiaiai, AKIBE	
Tenea Atera, BTC	
Ioane Taun, BBB	
Tameri Binuea, Police	
Rereieta Teikori, Unimaanen Te Kauntina	
Bitamoana B. Teekea, Councilor	