

Press release

For immediate release

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## **Groundbreaking Ceremony Marks Start of Coastal Protection Works Under KACSI Project in Bonriki, Kiribati**

***Bonriki Village, Kiribati.***— The Government of Kiribati, in partnership with UNOPS and development partners, officially marked the commencement of coastal protection works for Site 2 of the Kiribati–Australia Climate Security Initiative (KACSI) with a groundbreaking ceremony held in Bonriki Village.

The event, hosted by UNOPS in collaboration with the Office of Te Beretitenti (OB), brought together national leaders, development partners, and the local community at Te Kawai ae Boou to celebrate the start of a critical infrastructure project aimed at strengthening climate resilience.

Distinguished guests included His Excellency Taaneti Maamau, His Excellency Mark Foxe, His Excellency Patitaoto Gagau, and UNOPS Representative Patricia Cambroner.

The KACSI project is designed to enhance coastal protection along the Bonriki water reservoir extending toward the international airport—an area highly vulnerable to coastal erosion and climate impacts. The works will involve the installation of geotextile seawalls, an innovative and climate-resilient solution aimed at safeguarding critical infrastructure and freshwater resources.

The implementation of Site 2 is expected to be completed within approximately 10 months.

“This project represents a significant step forward in strengthening Kiribati’s resilience to climate change,” said UNOPS representatives during the event. “By protecting vital water sources and infrastructure, we are investing in the long-term safety and sustainability of communities.”

Geotextile technology, newly introduced in Kiribati, has already been successfully



implemented in neighboring Pacific Island contexts. Site 1 of the KACSI project, located at Nowerewere, demonstrated the viability of this approach, paving the way for its expansion.

UNOPS is delivering the project in collaboration with a local contractor, Sunlight Enterprises, with support from the Office of Te Beretitenti and the Australian Government through Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

The ceremony also highlighted strong community engagement, with residents of Bonriki Village gathering to witness and celebrate the milestone. Their participation underscores the importance of locally driven solutions in addressing climate challenges.

The KACSI initiative continues to play a vital role in supporting Kiribati's efforts to adapt to climate change and protect its most vulnerable coastal areas.

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Notes to the editors:

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**About KACSI:** The Kiribati–Australia Climate Security Initiative (KACSI) is a climate adaptation project running from June 2023 to December 2026, aimed at protecting coastal areas in South Tarawa, Kiribati, from rising sea levels and erosion. The program is funded by the Australian Government and implemented in partnership with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre, and the Government of Kiribati.

**Pictures of the event:**



***Left to right: PM Patricia CAMBRONERO ARRIBAŞHE Te Beretienti Taaneti Maamau (President of Kiribati), HE Mark Foxe (Australian High Commissioner), HE Patitaotao Gagau (New Zealand High Commissioner) doing the ceremonial groundbreaking***



***UNOPS Representative PM Patricia CAMBRONERO ARRIBA giving her speech***



***His Excellency, Te Beretitenti Taaneti Maamau giving his speech***



***His Excellency Australian High Commissioner Mark Foxe giving his speech***