



Te Kommunique

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & IMMIGRATION

January -February
NEWSLETTER

New Zealand Foreign Minister Visits Kiribati and Strengthens Bilateral Partnership -18th Feb – 20th Feb 2026



The Rt Honourable Winston Peters, Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand, recently concluded a successful official visit to Kiribati, the first visit by a New Zealand Government Foreign Minister since 2019. Upon his arrival in Tarawa, the Foreign Minister was formally welcomed by the Honourable Alexander Teabo, Minister for Information, Communications and Transport. The visit reaffirmed the strong and longstanding partnership between Kiribati and New Zealand.

During his time in Tarawa, the Foreign Minister held productive discussions with the Vice President of Kiribati, Dr Teuea Toatu. A key highlight of the visit was the signing of the Te Mauri Dialogue, which formalises the special connection between Kiribati and New Zealand and sets out a shared vision for continued cooperation and partnership between the two countries.

The leaders' discussions focused on strengthening cooperation and reaffirmed the importance of Pacific-led regional mechanisms, particularly the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), in fostering regional solidarity and cooperation. These discussions come at a time of increasing geopolitical challenges, highlighting the importance of unity and collaboration among Pacific nations.

In addition to high-level meetings, the Foreign Minister also met with other government ministers and members of the community. He visited the New Zealand-funded New Betio Hospital, where he announced several initiatives aimed at supporting Kiribati's development priorities, including:

- NZ\$20 million to strengthen Kiribati's health sector
- Renewed support for labour mobility opportunities for Kiribati citizens
- Increased funding to enhance water security

These announcements reflect New Zealand's continued commitment to supporting Kiribati's development and resilience. The visit further strengthens the enduring partnership between the two countries and reaffirms their shared commitment to regional cooperation, stability, and prosperity.



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The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defense of Australia, His Honourable Richard Marles' official visit to Kiribati.



17 to 18 February 2026, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence of Australia, the Honourable Richard Marles, visited Kiribati. Upon his arrival at Bonriki International Airport, he was warmly welcomed by the Honourable Minister Bootii Nauan and the Australian High Commissioner, Mark Foxe. Deputy Prime Minister Marles has visited Kiribati on several occasions, beginning with his first trip in the early 2000s with his wife, during which they travelled to Tarawa, Abaiang, and Butaritari. During his visit to Kiribati, Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles had the pleasure to meet with His Excellency Te Beretitenti Taneti Maamau where they discussed Kiribati and Australia's shared priorities for a peaceful, stable and prosperous region. He also met with the Vice President of the Republic of Kiribati, His Honourable Dr. Teuea Toatu, and attended the launch of the Delta Wharf & PMU Workshop Upgrade. This visit marked Deputy Prime Minister Marles' second official trip to Kiribati in his capacity as Deputy Prime Minister of Australia.



Governor General of Tuvalu visit to Kiribati 6th to 10th February



His Excellency the Governor General of Tuvalu, Reverend Sir Tofinga Vaevalu Falani and his delegation arrived on Tarawa on the 6th of February this year after they concluded their visit to Nauru.

The delegation was received and welcomed at the VIP lounge at Bonriki airport and were accorded with the highest protocol during their stay. Governor General Reverend Sir Tofinga who has paternal and maternal ties to Kiribati was reinstated as the head of state of Tuvalu in 2021 was also a former student of Tangintebu

Theological College.

During his visit, the governor General paid a courtesy visit to His Excellency Te Beretitenti Taneti Maamau. He also had a chance to tour the island, attended the Sunday service at Tangintebu. He also had the opportunity visit his families and met with the Kirivalu community on Tarawa.

His Excellency, Te Beretitenti Taneti Maamau hosted a dinner reception for the Governor General and his delegation on Monday, the 9th of February. The team departed Tarawa the following day to Fiji.



Deputy Assistant Secretary of the US State Department visit to Kiribati
13th 16th February



Deputy Assistant Secretary Mr. Seth Bailey, arrived in Tarawa on Friday, February 13, 2026, Accompanied by the Washington Desk Officer for Kiribati and a Political and Economic Officer from the U.S. Embassy in Suva, the group was officially welcomed at the Bonriki International Airport VIP Lounge by the Officer-in-Charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Dr Tearinaki Tanielu



6th Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship Program by the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service in New Delhi, India, 12th – 30th January



From January 12th to 30th, Evelyn Tikau Webb completed the 6th Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service in New Delhi, India. This three-week program helped her build expert skills in global safety and international security.

Global Training Course for Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) National Contact Points (NCPs) in Geneva, Switzerland | 18-19 February 2026



From February 18th to 19th, 2026, Tioti Batuaao attended the Global Training Course for Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) National Contact Points in Geneva, Switzerland. This specialized program focused on managing national responsibilities and improving security protocols related to the prevention of biological weapons. His participation has significantly strengthened our capacity to handle international safety standards and national security reporting.



Executive Training Programme for Diplomats from Pacific Island Countries from 9 to 20 February 2026



Reti Angimarau participated in A two-week Executive Training Programme on Austria, Diplomacy and International Affairs in Vienna, which provided in-depth exposure to contemporary diplomacy, multilateral engagement, and leadership in a complex global environment.

The programme covered key thematic areas including public diplomacy, international security, geopolitics, international law, human rights, gender equality, digital diplomacy, anti-corruption, EU current issues, and international negotiations. Participants gained both strategic and practical skills directly relevant to the work of Pacific Island States, particularly in navigating complex multilateral forums as small island developing states.

Practical sessions strengthened capabilities in public speaking, cultural diplomacy, and negotiation, while discussions on digital diplomacy highlighted how technology is reshaping diplomatic engagement in the 21st century.

Study visits to the United Nations Office at Vienna, the Austrian Parliament, and the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs provided firsthand insight into Austria's diplomatic architecture and international role. Cultural activities, including visits to Schönbrunn Palace and a traditional Viennese Heuriger dinner, further strengthened people-to-people and cultural understanding.

The programme was organised by the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, whose support and professionalism were widely acknowledged. Participants from across the Pacific region, including Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Nauru, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, Palau, Solomon Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia contributed to rich exchanges and reinforced strong Pacific solidarity.

Overall, the programme strengthened knowledge, professional networks, and inspiration, reaffirming the Pacific's active role in global diplomacy and highlighting Austria's commitment to building meaningful and lasting partnerships with Pacific Island countries.



Fostering the Digital Economy through AI and Data Governance 2nd to 6th February



**Japan-Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century (JSPP21)
Fostering the Digital Economy through AI and Data Governance
2 to 6 February 2026**



February 2nd to February 6th, 2026, Mr. Buraieta Lawrence Yeeting and Mr. Aberau Arthur Tekiaa participated in a training program in Singapore focused on Fostering the Digital Economy through AI and Data Governance. Throughout the course, they had the valuable opportunity to present our country's current initiatives and sharing local good practices in digital development. By engaging with international experts and regional peers, they explored strategies for integrating artificial intelligence into public services and establishing robust data management systems





Te Mauri Te Raoi Te Tabomoa

Thank you for reading!



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