



**STATEMENT BY VICE PRESIDENT & MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

HONOURABLE DR. TEUEA TOATU

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE ECOSOC HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**‘Accelerating the Recovery from the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and the Full
Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at All Levels’
New York, 10-14, 17-19 July 2023**

Mr President
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honored to address you all on the occasion of this High-level ministerial forum on behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Kiribati, I bring you all warm greetings ‘Kam Na Bane Ni Mauri’.

Mr President,

The theme of this Forum aptly describes the current trends and turn of events taking place globally post-Covid. In the context of my country Kiribati, the theme aligns well with the Kiribati Vision for 20 Years (KV20), which places significant emphasis on innovative and impactful development strategies to enable the full realization of the SDGs with the overarching goal of leaving no-one behind.

Excellencies,

As we continue to confront the unprecedented challenges brought about by the pandemic, we came to the realization that it is no longer acceptable to continue to rely heavily on the old ways of pursuing development, but we must start exploring, testing and adopting novel approaches that better address the circumstances of these new challenges.

One of the hard lessons COVID-19 has taught us is the gradual erosion and likely loss of our subsistence way of life, which has until now made us self-sufficient and self-reliant. The impact of COVID would have been significantly lessened if we had continued to rely on our locally produced or traditional foods instead of on imported goods

COVID-19 also awakened us to the reality about our medical facilities and services. Our hospitals and clinics had, for quite some time, been somewhat neglected. We clearly saw the inadequacies of our systems and personnel to deal with the pandemic but we are thankful to our development partners for the timely and generous assistance that has allowed us to cope with the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Our recovery path from COVID-19 has been paved by a focus on strengthening our healthcare and educational systems, social protection programs, including food and water security, improved access to proper sanitation and clean energy.

Recognizing the great potential of digitalization, Kiribati prioritizes the strengthening of digital infrastructure systems within all sectors of Government, for the efficient delivery of public goods and services as we believe these would add value to the quality of life for our citizens when properly harnessed and applied.

Excellencies,

We cannot argue in denial of the slow and uneven journey to economic recovery in the aftermath of the pandemic. While countries with advanced economies have been able to recover quickly, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including my country Kiribati, are faced with significant hurdles in their recovery efforts.

Excellencies,

As the target year of 2030 draws nearer, we must all rise together with greater ambition and determination, and with a stronger spirit of cooperation and collaboration at all levels so that our children and future generations can live in a world that is free from hunger, poverty, to name but a few, as promised by the United Nations and the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. President, it would be remiss of me to conclude my statement without acknowledging and thanking the UN Bodies and other development partners for their continued support to Kiribati. So with all sincerity, let me say “Kam bati n rabwa” or “Thank you very much!”

Finally, let me please bestow upon this esteemed Assembly the traditional Kiribati blessings of Te Mauri, Te Raoi, ao Te Tabomoa, meaning “Health, Peace and Prosperity”

May God Almighty bless us all.