

**Statement of the Republic of Kiribati
At the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development
agenda, New York, 19th January 2015**

Opening remarks;

Co-facilitators, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;

I bring warm greetings from the people and the Government of the Republic of Kiribati to this very important occasion.

Kam na bane ni mauri!

At the outset, allow me to congratulate the outstanding effort of the secretariat, facilitators and those who have put so much effort in tirelessly organising the post 2015 intergovernmental negotiation meeting that we are all gathered in here today. I commend your hard works and in particular express deep appreciation for making Kiribati participation possible.

The convening of the post 2015 intergovernmental negotiation in all respect is one very important occasion where the global voices are heard and considered for the betterment of humanity as a whole. I joined countries who have given their statements before me to applaud their efforts in sharing their experiences and opinions in how we as a global community can collectively and effectively all work together to achieve a better future for our children and the future generation of our nations.

I on behalf of the people and the Government of Kiribati am very honoured to also share today perspectives with actions from my country's experience with a positive hope to contribute to ways forward to a better future we all wanted.

In opening, I would like to first of all thank Ambassadors, respective chairs and distinguished representatives/speakers of the G77 and China, AOSIS, LDC and PSIDS for addressing agreements or positions reached of the aforementioned bodies which Kiribati is part of and strongly support.

Before addressing my country's perspective on the post 2015 agenda, allow me first to briefly give a short profile of Kiribati for those who are unfamiliar of our situation.

Kiribati is made up of 33 atolls and small reef islands in the central Pacific dispersed over 3.5 million square miles of the mid Pacific Ocean. The islands rise no more than 3 feet above sea level and to date rapidly experiencing the impact of climate change due to sea level rise.

Like any other country, Kiribati is still facing many ongoing challenges of which some are getting even severe compared to the previous years due to the unstoppable impact climate change, isolated geographical location, limited capacity and resources, increasing population and many more.

Despite the challenges Kiribati continue to battle with climate and others like rapid increase of population posing consciousness on the land space and resources, the rise in youth-unemployment, health issues resulting from lack of facilities and expertise, isolation from market continue to prevent Kiribati to actively participate in trade, transportation issues whereby the dispersed islands within a 3 million square kilometers of ocean remains isolated, you name but a few. Kiribati had introduced policies and guidelines and support programs to address these challenges and also continue to engage and work closely with the Civil Society, Private Sector/Business Community, Women Organizations and Youth Organizations.

We do acknowledge with deep appreciation and gratitude to our traditional donor partners, International and Regional Intergovernmental Organizations and friends of Kiribati who are presented in this meeting for their continuous support and assistance to the many projects and programs that help with the development in Kiribati.

Kiribati considers this meeting is very important and vital as we members of the International Community given a chance to tally and to stock take on our progress from the current Millennium Development Goals and to share lessons learned and in particular the challenges we continue to experience with the belief that the Post 2015 Development Agenda is built on the MDG and national circumstances are taken into account.

It is imperative that the Post 2015 Development Agenda is fully supported with a strong sense of ownership, it is meant for all of us to own it and it will be very effective if it is designed to promote multilateral cooperation with an aim to bring greater and fair global partnership with goodwill and a vision to provide a space to strengthen a linkage to regional agenda to enhance a prosperous connection and linkage to all.

Co-facilitators and distinguished delegates

A major challenge for low lying islands like mine that the people and Government of Kiribati will continue to voice out to the world is climate change. Because of the low lying structure of my country including the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, Tokelau, the Maldives and others, we are already experiencing major challenges from climate change including loss of territory from coastal erosion, brackishness and salt water intrusion affecting our drinking ground water supplies and food crops that we heavily rely on for survival, the relocation of all communities, and a general sense of apprehension about what the future will bring.

Kiribati to date have done so much for climate change including establishing and implementing adaptation programs like the building of sea walls in most affected local communities; the planting of mangrove trees to limit the impact of coastal erosion; progress work on disaster risk management and many more. Amid the effort put into addressing climate change, Kiribati realizes that more work needs to be done and stand ready to do whatever it takes for Kiribati to overcome or hinder the impact of climate change with support from development partners.

Kiribati acknowledged that the adaptation work is ours to implement and monitor but we cannot do it alone given our limited resources and therefore we needed understanding, support and cooperation from our development partners and the global community.

In having said that, I wish to reiterate that climate change is not only destroying our pathway to development, it comprise human rights, where in some part of Kiribati, people's rights to enjoy and to live in their ancestral homes and their rights to own a property are compromised as they were forced to relocate to other places due to coastal erosion because of climate change.

It is important to understand that climate change will be a long-range moral and policy issue that will continue to be complex to understand, difficult to handle and eventually could offer economic benefit in return as well as losses to bear.

It is therefore essential that we as an international community family, We will need to build an agenda that could give us the strengths and opportunities in order to survive and economically sustained to get the future we want for our children and our children's children.

From these few words, I bestow upon you all our traditional blessings from Kiribati, Te Mauri, Te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa, (with Good Health, Peace and Prosperity)

I thank you all...!