



**KIRIBATI STATEMENT
57TH SESSION OF THE CPMMISSION ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT.
APRIL 29TH-MAY3RD 2024**

MADAM CHAIR
EXCELLENCIES
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

Allow me to extend my congratulations on your election as Chair of the Fifty-Seventh Session of the Commission on Population and Development. Kiribati is confident in your leadership, and I want to assure you of my country's full support.

I want to begin by reiterating and reaffirming Kiribati's commitment and support to the ICPD Program of Action including the Asia Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development.

Since 1994, Kiribati implemented its priorities related to ICPD Programme of Action and engaged in the periodic reviews of ICPD. In this journey, we have made good progress and experienced persistent and emergent challenges.

Today the world gathers once again , as it had done so for the past several decades since the United Nations established the Commission

on Population on 3rd October 1946 which later led to the establishment of the Commission on Population and Development in December 1994, five years before Kiribati became a member of this Family of Nations.

Although our membership of the United Nations only began 26 years ago, our survival and development, as islands people, began hundreds of years back when our people first settled and organized themselves into a Tungaru society with a common language and culture based on the respect for ancestral beliefs and customs.

Madam Chair,

Interestingly, the Commission's recognition of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production as key drivers of natural resource depletion, climate change , biodiversity loss, pollution and malnutrition are nothing new to our people. It is a normal part of our DNA already engrained in our traditional and customary practices. These cultural traits are vital for our long-term survival, health and wellbeing in very limited land space.

Despite our moderate and conservative patterns of consumption and production, we cannot escape the impact of globalization and modernization sweeping across our small islands as evident in the threats of climate change, nuclear weapons proliferation and the destructive impacts of violent conflicts, wars and terrorism to name a few.

Madam Chair

The government of Kiribati is fully committed to make life better for all its people in line with its 20-year development road map referred to as the KV20.

The KV20 is Kiribati's 2016-2036 development plan aiming for a prosperous, healthy, and peaceful nation by 2036. It focuses on maximizing benefits from fisheries and tourism to drive growth across sectors through interlinked development.

Madam Chair,

Since the goals of the PoA set by past meetings of (ICPD) are closely aligned with those of the KV20, I am pleased to say that Kiribati has launched the following KV20 - driven policies and programs during the past eight years. These have impacted positively on the economic wellbeing and livelihood of the people.

The majority of the unemployed population living in the outer islands employ themselves by cutting and selling copra to the National Copra Marketing body at a highly subsidized price. This has enabled them to afford a way of life comparable to or even better than those employed in the Government and private sector.

All unemployed persons between the ages 18 and 60 are paid unemployed benefits of \$100 a fortnight. A similar allowance is paid to persons with disabilities, the amount of which is dependent on certain medical measures of disability. Senior citizens, 60-year-old and over, are entitled to a monthly allowance of \$100 a fortnight.

Like other Pacific Islands, Education is free and compulsory from primary level to the end of year 12. University education is free for those who meet the scholarship eligibility requirement. A student loan scheme is also available for students whose scholarship awards are terminated due to factors beyond their control.

Health is free for all medical cases that can be treated locally, and overseas referral is available for all non-terminal patients and sent only to certain designated hospitals overseas.

Madam Chair,

These are costly undertakings that require huge financing. Fortunately, Kiribati's huge tuna rich ocean provides sufficient fish license revenue capable of shouldering these heavy fiscal burdens. With improved protection and management of these natural assets and with the continuing strong support of the United Nations through its agencies like CPD, UNFPA, UNDP and others have enabled Kiribati to build resilience for overcoming the many unique challenges standing in its development path as a small island nation. Kiribati is confident of achieving its KV20 goals and thereby achieving the sustainable development goals for its people by 2036.

Thank you.