



REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI

NATIONAL STATEMENT BY

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**47TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION & DEVELOPMENT: HUMAN
PROGRESS AND SUSTAINABILITY**

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(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

Chairman, Excellencies, distinguished delegates.

I would like to congratulate you Mr Chairman and members of the Bureau on your election and assumption of that important role, together with the Secretariat in organizing this very important meeting. We from the Kiribati assure you of our full support and cooperation.

ICPD Beyond 2014

Mr Chairman

We from Kiribati also align ourselves to the statements made by Bolivia on behalf of G77 and China, Cook Islands on behalf of Pacific SIDS and Nauru as Chair of AOSIS.

Chairman

In the twenty years since Cairo, the world has made progress in terms of women's rights; educational attainment; population health and life expectancy; human right protection system and the one billion of the global population that has been moving out of extreme poverty. Yet there remain a significant portion of this global population that continue to be marginalized whether through birth, gender, race, religion, geographic location, or station in life. Most often, they remain marginalized through no choice of theirs and in some cases it is through the actions of others. Moreover the global population continues to grow and there is minimal progress on women's status, maternal health and child marriage.

Mr Chairman,

Kiribati has a young population with the youth comprising of more than 50% of the total population. Our youth face a multitude of challenges ranging from a lack of access to information and quality reproductive health service; mental health and suicide; alcohol abuse; vulnerability to family abuse and climate change. 57% of the unemployment population in Kiribati are our young people.

The Government through ministries concerned together with churches, Youth Groups and NGOs notably the Kiribati Family Health Association have and continue to address these challenges facing our youth. We think that it is imperative that we listen and work with our youth, include them in development dialogue and create an environment that ensures they have a part in shaping a viable planet to sustain them and the generations ahead. Our youth are our resources and are our future leaders and we must take responsibility to include and prepare them for that future.

Mr Chairman.

Our population growth rate is 2% per annum; while the population growth rate in the urban areas is 4.5% per annum, due to the high birth rate and internal migration. Maternal death due to complications during pregnancy or child birth persists while the

unmet needs of married women for contraception was 28% in 2013. The child mortality rate has dropped to 47 deaths per one thousand in 2012.

To date, the majority of women and girls are not fully aware, or have been prevented from accessing sexual and reproductive health services. Unintended pregnancy is therefore still very common. In addition; domestic violence against women persists, despite the intensive national campaign on ending violence against women in the country.

Mr Chairman

We recognise that there is much much more that needs to be done and we are working on this for we strongly believe, it is not about statistics, economic indicators or economic benchmarks. It is about people, it is about us, our children and their children.

We have developed programs in partnership with our churches, traditional leaders, our NGOs, youth groups and civil society to address these multifaceted population and development challenges.

A major recent success has been the inclusion of ALL major Churches in the national push to address population issues. This is a direct result of moving away from previous approaches and focus on family planning towards a more inclusive and wholistic focus on family health.

We also value our partnerships with regional and international partners, for they have helped in getting us this far. But for these partnerships to be more effective on the ground, it is important to emphasise that nationally owned and driven priorities should be the starting point, not priorities developed here in New York or elsewhere.

Mr Chairman

We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to ensure that we make informed policy decisions and pursue national programs and actions that bring about improvement to the quality of life for our people. As global citizens, it is equally important, that we pursue development responsibly, and not at the expense of our neighbours, our brothers and sisters and our one home, our planet earth.

Mr Chairman,

We acknowledge that it is also our responsibility to ensure that our people, our minorities and those most vulnerable in our communities do not live in fear of discrimination, fear for their lives, in fear of the eventual destruction and eventual loss of their homes, that their very survival should be in question.

Mr Chairman,

We cannot therefore...not talk about climate change when we discuss population and development issues.

Climate change poses challenges of major proportions to the global community and especially so to low-lying nations like mine who are at the frontline of all this. Indeed, the most recent findings of the IPCC simply confirms our worst fears and demand our attention NOW.

Mr Chairman

We cannot continue to ignore our planet's global environmental limits in pursuit of ever rising production and consumption levels. We cannot continue to ignore how climate change affects the lives of all people, but particularly the poor and marginalized, who have the least capacity and resources to adapt, and those who contribute the least to this major global calamity.

Wetherefore emphasis the critical importance of the integration of Climate Change and sustainable environment into the ICPD Population and Development agenda and the Post 2015 Development Agenda .

Mr Chairman.

I conclude by re-affirming our support from Kiribati to you Mr Chairman, to the Bureau and to the work of the ICPD.

I thank you