



76th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY TE BERETITENTI TANETI MAAMAU
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI
“Food Systems Summit”
21 SEPTEMBER 2021

Mr. President,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

In His Holy Name, greetings from the People and the Government of the Republic of Kiribati:
“Kam na mauri”

My fellow world leaders, today we gather to discuss something very essential to the survival and wellbeing of mankind – and that is, food.

In every culture, food plays an important role and the people’s interaction with food is determined by culture and the environment. The culture of the Kiribati people is deeply rooted in food, and every event, whether big or small, is marked with gathering of family and communities and sharing of food. How we prepare, eat and store food has long been determined by the natural and fragile environment we live in and the traditional technologies at our disposal.

With globalization, there have been drastic changes to the way we live and view the world, and this is particularly true in the way we prepare and consume food. The variety and supply of food has multiplied, with highly processed imported food becoming the popular choice based on acquired taste, convenience and affordability.

From the findings of the Kiribati Food Dialogue, we are reminded that food not only affects and determines the people’s health and well-being but extends to impact our fragile atoll environment, through various components of the food system. As a country heavily reliant on imported and low nutrient foods, Kiribati ranks among the highest in NCD prevalence. At the

same time, we are importing waste that come in the form of food wrappings and packaging which add further to environmental problems from waste and pollution which is further exacerbated with the absence of proper recycling and well-functioning waste management facilities.

My Government has set out a 20-year vision to transform Kiribati into a wealthy, healthy and peaceful nation. This people-centric vision relies on healthy population which needs to be powered by good nutritious food.

I have faith in human ingenuity, collaboration and partnership to continuously innovate and transform the global food system to ensure food security, environmental integrity and resilience in the face of climate change and in the wake of the global pandemic we are in now.

Te Mauri te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa meaning Abundant Health, Peace and Prosperity to us all.

I thank you.