



**Statement of the President of the Republic of Kiribati to the United Nations at its
80th Session to be delivered on September 24, 2024
Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.**

President of the General Assembly
Head of States and Governments
Secretary General of the United Nations,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

In His Holy Name and on behalf of the Government and People of Kiribati I extend our warm greetings to you all: **Kam na bane ni mauri**

I am honoured to warmly congratulate you, Madam President, on your election to preside over this historic 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly and I wish you every success as you guide these important deliberations.

Madam President, we commend your theme: “**Better Together: 80 Years and More for Peace, Development, and Human Rights**”, reminding us of the enduring importance of multilateral cooperation in addressing global challenges. For Kiribati, it underscores the value of working collectively to advance peace, safeguard human rights, and promote sustainable development.

Your Excellencies,

Kiribati welcomes the initiative of the Secretary General to reform the United Nations for the challenges and realities of the 21st century. Importantly, it responds to members' needs, especially Small Island Developing States (SIDs) and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). These countries are faced with unique and special circumstances that require targeted assistance and support from the UN. The Secretary-General's UN80 Initiative is a crucial step toward a more effective UN. In this context, we encourage reforms that remove duplication, improve efficiency, and ensure that mandates most vital to vulnerable nations such as climate action, sustainable development, and resilience are protected and enhanced.

Kiribati is proud that, since joining the UN, we have been contributing in our own way to its mandates and initiatives. On international peace and security, Kiribati has actively supported the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, particularly in the implementation of Articles 6 and 7, efforts which we jointly coordinate with Kazakhstan. We fully support the United Nations' push for a world free of nuclear weapons and are committed to addressing the man-made disasters like dumping of nuclear waste, radio water discharges, traversing of nuclear-powered submarines and testing that pose grave risks to our ocean's fragile health.

Advocating for a nuclear-free ocean and world should be backed by our commitment to peace and security. Kiribati has strengthened governance in the capital and is now

working with outer islands to improve accountability, develop initiatives, manage assets, and enhance customer service. These efforts are essential for peace and security.

Aligned with our KV20 Roadmap to transform Kiribati into a healthy, wealthy, and peaceful nation, police officers support UN peacekeeping missions. Kiribati actively engages in social and cultural initiatives for peaceful living. Gospel Day, now celebrated across Kiribati, unites faith-based groups to worship together, fostering respect, unity, and peace. We hope this approach promotes religious tolerance worldwide, making it a better place to live.

Peace, security, and respect for the UN Charter are essential for sustainable development. Kiribati is committed to the SDGs, emphasizing SIDS' unique

circumstances. Along with other SIDS in the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), we aim for resilient prosperity through technological and digital solutions. These innovations are vital to overcoming challenges from geographical isolation and limited scale. While Kiribati has technological constraints, we see digital solutions as key to enhancing public services, education, commerce, and climate resilience.

Your Excellencies,

Kiribati faces climate challenges but remains resilient. While some narratives claim our islands are sinking, we have traditional and modern strategies to adapt and thrive. Our efforts, aligned with international climate goals, focus on building resilience, protecting livelihoods, and preserving our culture. We urge global action to limit warming to 1.5°C and support frontline states through the Loss and Damage Fund.

We welcome and commend the International Court of Justice in its landmark decision giving us firm hope and assurance that Kiribati and other vulnerable countries will continue to exist in light of climate change impacts. This milestone demonstrates what the Blue Pacific can successfully achieve collectively and, that is to secure the full legal certainty and permanence of our maritime zones, irrespective of the impacts of climate change.

The Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) is particularly important for Kiribati, as it captures the combined effects of economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities that are not fully reflected in income-based measures alone. By incorporating the MVI into development planning and international support, SIDS like Kiribati can better access

resources, build resilience and implement effective strategies to achieve sustainable development, despite our structural limitations.

Kiribati's ocean is vital for its identity, economy, and food security. Protecting marine life, fighting illegal fishing, and supporting the BBNJ Agreement are key to sustaining livelihoods and ecosystems. IUU fishing causes over \$600 million annual loss, a moral and economic injustice that could fund universal child health care. Guided by the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific and recent UN Ocean Conference outcomes, Kiribati believes these issues can be addressed through strong, multilateral ocean governance based on UN principles.

Your Excellencies,

As part of Kiribati's efforts to support the Global Ocean commitments to protect and sustainably manage the marine resources we have committed to increase the value of our tuna and maximise economic returns and at the same time ensure that this resource is protected for our future generations through the Parties to the Nauru Agreement or PNA.

Access to sustainable and renewable energy is fundamental to advancing development and resilience in Kiribati, Small Islands States and Pacific Islands Forum family at large. Kiribati is investing in clean energy technologies such as solar lights at household levels to reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels. We call for enhanced international

cooperation and financing to accelerate the transition to sustainable energy systems that are accessible, affordable, and climate resilient.

Your Excellencies,

The role of education, youth, and women in building resilient communities is vital. Investing in quality education, promoting gender equality, and empowering young people are key to sustainable development, innovation, and social cohesion. We support initiatives that foster youth leadership and women's full participation in economic, political, and social spheres. Sports, culture, and traditional knowledge further boost community resilience, health, and belonging, supporting peaceful, sustainable societies. Healthcare in Kiribati faces challenges from the dispersed islands. To improve, the government will

introduce sea ambulances and advanced medical services to enhance capacity and reduce the need for overseas referrals.

Your Excellencies,

Equitable and predictable development financing is vital for Kiribati's future. Reforming the international financial system, improving access to concessional finance, data sustainability, and bridging the digital divide are key to enabling states to meet development goals. The Blue Pacific recognizes the challenge of accessing climate financing and supports the establishment of the Pacific Resilience Facility, led and owned by members, with \$162 million pledged to fund it. Kiribati highlights the importance of the Doha Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries, which mobilizes international support for the most vulnerable. We await the UN Financing for Development Conference,

hoping it provides concrete solutions to improve access to finance for those in need. These efforts are crucial for LDCs like Kiribati to build resilience and promote sustainable development.

Kiribati reaffirms its belief in the fundamental principles of multilateralism as the cornerstone for addressing global challenges collectively. By embracing cooperation, solidarity, and multilateral engagement, we can shape a future in which all nations, particularly the most vulnerable, can thrive and prosper.

In this endeavor, we draw inspiration from the wisdom of our fore-fathers, who taught us that by working hard in resilience and peace, we can secure enough to prosper. This enduring principle guides Kiribati's approach to sustainable development, resilience, and

multilateral engagement, reminding us that collective effort and peaceful collaboration are the foundations of lasting progress.

Allow me to close by bestowing upon the United Nations and all its members and all its staff our traditional blessings of Te Mauri, Te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa meaning Abundant Health, Peace and Prosperity.

I thank you. Kam bati n raba