



REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI

Statement

by

His Excellency Anote Tong

Beretitenti (President)

of the Republic of Kiribati

at the High-Level Plenary Meeting
of the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Friday 16 September 2005

(Check Against Delivery)

Co-Presidents

Colleagues

Secretary-General

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure for me to represent the people of Kiribati at this august gathering, to extend their greetings to you all and present their views on the agenda before us.

Kam na bane ni mauri!

At the outset, allow me to thank our gracious host, the people and Government of the United States for their hospitality. Allow me to also congratulate our Co-Presidents for their effective leadership and steering of this meeting which I am confident will result in a successful conclusion.

Excellencies

We gather here, on the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations confronted with the daunting and on-going challenge of making this world we all live in a better one for us, our children and their children.

The task before us is not an easy one. The decisions we make here will affect the future of our organization and the future of humanity.

Development

We all agree that development, in particular sustainable development, is fundamental to the achievement of international peace and security. We also agree that the main responsibility for the achievement of sustainable development lies with individual countries but we acknowledge the fact that the developing countries, in particular Small Island Developing States (SIDS), cannot achieve this on their own.

A more effective and meaningful partnership is required to achieve sustainable development. The frameworks for these partnerships have been developed over the past sixty years and include international initiatives such as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Brussels Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries, the Mauritius Strategy and the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, and the Monterrey Consensus.

Regional initiatives, such as the Pacific Plan, have also been or are in the process of being developed to encourage South-South cooperation. These initiatives will also benefit from these partnerships.

Excellencies

My Government is committed to progressing the development aspirations of our people. Our national policy objective is to **"achieve the equitable distribution of development benefits to all our people based on the principles of good governance"**.

We are committed to the Millennium Declaration and are on track in our national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These have been integrated and mainstreamed into our National Development Strategies formulated through a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder consultative process.

Implementation of our National Development Strategies is progressing positively. This is a result of a good partnership that has been forged between my Government, our development partners, civil society and the private sector. We recognize and value the inputs and involvement of all stakeholders in the development process.

We acknowledge the invaluable support our development partners have extended and call on them to assist in the implementation of the initiatives mentioned earlier, especially for the developing countries and SIDS.

We recall their commitment to increase their ODA to a level equivalent to 0.7% of their Gross National Income. We applaud those countries that have voluntarily met these targets and call on those who have yet to do so to exert more efforts in this regard.

Investment

Excellencies

We firmly believe that we are able to achieve sustainable development and reduce reliance on international aid assistance. The abundant fisheries resource within our Exclusive Economic Zone – currently being harvested exclusively by Distant Water Fishing Nations – could provide the basis for this. We are encouraged by the on-going negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU in the area of fisheries as this provides an opportunity for a genuine partnership through investment in the sector.

We seek to maximise returns from our fisheries resource and to this end endorse the report on the work of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at its sixth meeting, in particular:

- For resource owners to participate in fisheries activities in order to achieve better economic returns and to enhance their role in managing this resource;
- For Distant Water Fishing Nations to negotiate access agreements with developing coastal States on a basis that is equitable and sustainable; and
- For Distant Water Fishing Nations to progressively increase the participation of coastal states in the fishery, including the processing of the catch within the territory of the resource owners, thereby creating employment and further contributing to the sustainable development of developing Coastal States.

Environment

Excellencies

We note with deep regret and concern the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans causing thousands of deaths and extensive damage. We offer our deepest sympathies to those affected by this natural calamity and pray that they find peace and comfort during this difficult time.

This recent disaster is a stark reminder of the extreme vulnerability of all mankind, regardless of nationality, to the forces of nature. A vulnerability which is so many times more magnified for low lying small island states like Kiribati. I would like to place on record today our invitation to this august gathering to undertake a risk assessment of the likelihood of similar disasters occurring in small island states and to make a conscious decision on the most appropriate response.

We commend and are grateful for the efforts of those organizations and countries which are assisting us in our efforts to adapt to the short term effects of this phenomenon. But given their small land masses, there is a limit to the extent which populations of low-lying coral atolls can adapt.

Peace and Security

Excellencies

We agree that the foundation for sustainable development is a peaceful, secure and stable environment.

Disarmament and Non-proliferation

Excellencies

We are committed to international efforts towards disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, we have become a party to major international treaties addressing such challenges.

Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime

Excellencies

The new global challenges posed by terrorism and transnational organised crime do not respect borders. We must not be complacent in our efforts to collectively tackle this challenge.

Kiribati is committed to the international fight against terrorism and transnational organised crime. I am pleased that, yesterday I signed the thirteenth counter terrorism convention and deposited our instruments of accession with the Secretary-General to four of the counter terrorism conventions and major transnational organised crime treaties. We will also shortly be acceding to the remaining eight counter terrorism conventions with the appropriate depositaries.

We have also passed legislation to implement all counter terrorism conventions and major transnational organised crime treaties. While this is an important step forward, the challenge still lies ahead in the effective enforcement and implementation of these legislations. We will therefore continue to need assistance in those areas beyond our capacity.

Strengthening the UN

Excellencies

Kiribati firmly supports the comprehensive reform of this organisation to better align and equip it to effectively respond to the challenges of this ever-changing world. We also support the provision of sufficient resources to the organisation to fulfil its mandated role through the principle of equitable but differentiated responsibilities.

We reaffirm our commitment to the values and principles upon which the United Nations was founded. We recall Article 4 of the Charter inviting "all other peace-loving states" to join this global organisation. To this end, we reiterate our call for this organization to discard its exclusionary practices and embrace as equal partners all nations, such as Taiwan, which are able and willing to contribute to international collaborative efforts in the pursuit of global peace, security and development. For it is only when all nations are treated as equal partners in the international community can we expect significant strides to be made in our collective efforts.

Security Council

Excellencies

Kiribati supports the expansion of the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council to better reflect the realities of our world today. We strongly believe that Member States who are major contributors to UN programmes especially towards the maintenance of global peace and security should be accorded permanent membership.

We note that a deadline has not been set for the finalisation of negotiations on the Security Council reform and we urge that the same deadline for other components of the reform, for example the establishment of the Human Rights Council, be applied to the Security Council reform to maintain the momentum of this process.

Excellencies

Our peoples demand, and rightly so, that we, as world leaders, individually and collectively work to improve the world we live in. That is an important responsibility we have to the people we serve. To fulfil that responsibility we need to work together and address the challenges we all recognize - challenges to development, challenges to security in its widest context, and challenges to our working together as an international community.

Thank you.