



Statement by Kiribati

Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD beyond 2014

9 October, 2014 New York

Mr President

Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen”

Allow me to start by sharing with you all our traditional greeting of 'Kam na bane ni Mauri'. May Health and Peace be on each and every one present today.

Ladies and gentlemen, 20 years has passed since Cairo and we can all agree that much has been done and achieved as reflected in the recent Global ICPD Beyond 2014 Review. However, as also reflected in the Global ICPD Beyond 2014 Review, much more needs to be done. Inequitable distribution of the gains from the 1994 Programme of Action remains a key challenge, a challenge compounded by the ever-changing landscape of global development, the ever changing needs and demands of our societies and peoples.

Ladies and gentlemen, very clear and consistent messages emerged from all countries studied under the Global ICPD Beyond 2014 Review. These include the urgent need to eradicate all forms of inequalities, the importance of reflecting our population demographics and dynamics in our development agenda and recognizing that investing in our people, young, old, women and girls, men and boys is of paramount importance. For the underlying message conveyed in Cairo remains valid today as it did 20 years ago.

It is not about the numbers, IT IS ABOUT PEOPLE. It is about you and I. It is about our children and their children's children.

Ladies and gentlemen, our leaders in 1994 were innovative and courageous enough to formulate and advocate the 1994 Cairo Program of Action. Today, we need to ensure that we continue with what is just and what is right for our people, our people in the global sense. For what is important and what was reflected 20 years ago and continues to be pertinent today, is that our responsibility is not limited to the borders that define who we are as individual nations, but should encompass who we are as global citizens of this one global village.

Investing in our people, means investing in the future of our future generation. It is investing in ensuring that our children and their children live a life without prejudice, a life with the ability to make informed choices, a life where such choices are facilitated and supported by the services available to them, a life without barriers to what is rightfully due to them as basic necessities of life, a life they can call their own and does not adversely impact others or is being adversely impacted by others.

Furthermore investing in our people, underlines the strong linkages with the need to preserve our environment for future generations, the paramount need to ensure that our one planet Earth is preserved to be able to sustain the lives of future generations to come.

Ladies and Gentlemen, two weeks ago, we concluded one of the most successful conferences convened by the Secretary General on Climate Change. We applaud the leadership and this very positive initiative by the Secretary General. For those of us in the frontline of impacts of climate change, we welcome this renewed focus and the rallying by the UN membership behind the Secretary General's call for ambitious announcements and action. The real challenge now is in translating those commitments and announcements made into action on the ground.

At that same Conference, we heard the moving voice of a very talented young woman, Kathy, a poet from our part of the world from the Marshall Islands. Her voice represent the apprehension, the concern and the voice of mothers from low-lying countries like ours who lament

what the future hold for their children and their children's children in the face of climate change.

Surely, we the membership of this family of nations and the millions of mothers like Kathy around the world, share or should share the same ultimate goal...to leave to our children and grandchildren a future that is better than what we inherited from our forefathers.

Mr President, I am sure you also agree with me that this should underscore the sustainable and inclusive development goals that are currently under development for the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Our world of today is as diverse as our world of yesterday – where diversity ranges from our development progress, our diverse economic growth, our diverse population demographics, our physical and geographical realities, our security challenges, just to name a few.

However, such diversity should not be a divisive factor in the development of a new global development and economic order. It is the very essence and reason why we need a new development framework. We have reached that stage in global development where we can no longer ignore the intricate linkages between our individual national development paths with that of our neighbours and the world as a whole.

To ignore such intricate linkages is to ignore those other fellow global citizens who are and will become marginalized, who are and will become vulnerable through no fault or no choice of theirs.

Ladies and gentlemen, as an example, the melting of the massive sheets of ice in the Arctic region due to climate change will not only have a severe impact on life in that Arctic region but will also result in the demise of future generations on the other side of the globe.

In particular, on the most vulnerable low-lying atoll island nations like mine who are currently at the frontline of climate change and sea level rise. And while we may be on the frontline now, when we fall, others will be on the frontline including the many many millions of people who live in human settlements, communities, towns and cities on low lying coastal areas around the globe.

M President, immediate and urgent global action is required NOW on Climate Change. Climate Change is a survival issue, it is a security issue, it is a human right and a human dignity issue. Acknowledging it as such will be advocating the ICPD beyond 2014's goal of: 'To ensure sustainable development by placing the human rights of all people and individual well-being at the heart of the future development agenda'

The time to act is now. It is no longer about what caused it and who is responsible. It is about what we can do individually and collectively as good global citizens about it.

The future of our people, the future of our world will depend on visionary and innovative leadership. Leadership that understands and acknowledges the barriers and the challenges to equitable distribution of gains, and most importantly takes the necessary steps to address such challenges and barriers to ensure no-one is made to be worse off or left behind.

What we are discussing today, is very much relevant to the discussions that took place a month ago in Samoa at the Third International Conference on SIDS and two weeks ago during the Climate Change summit and the general debate that followed. The Millennium Development Goals have guided us to where we are now, and we certainly will support a post 2015 Development Framework that not only builds on the Millennium Development Goals, but is also reflective of the challenges we face today, embracing and channelling the diversity of the world into sustainable and inclusive development agendas that leaves no-one behind.

Ladies and gentlemen it is a must that we act now and that we work hand in hand to achieve our ICPD goals beyond 2014. Strong leadership from the United Nations is key and I take this opportunity to commend the United Nations Secretary General and the Executive Director of the UNFPA in advocating visionary and all-encompassing Program of Actions that include not just the unmet challenges of yesterday, but the challenges of today and tomorrow, such as climate change, in the post 2015 Development Framework.

With these few words, let me close by sharing with you all our traditional and inclusive blessing of Te Mauri Te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa...meaning May Health, Peace and Prosperity be with each and everyone of us.