



**Kiribati Statement at the First Session of the Intergovernmental
Negotiating Committee to develop a legally binding instrument on
plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-1), Punta
del Este, Uruguay (28 November 2022)**

Delivered by Josephine Moote, Deputy Permanent Representative of
Kiribati to the United Nations

Mr. President

Distinguished Delegates,

Since this is the first time that Kiribati takes the floor, please allow me to share with you warm greetings and blessings from the President, The Government and the people of Kiribati on whose behalf I am pleased to be here. I am deeply honored for this opportunity to address this first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. I wish to begin by greeting you all in my Kiribati language, “ Kam na bane ni mauri” meaning Blessings be upon you all.

Mr. President

Like other delegations allow me to congratulate you as you take this important role of leading our deliberations and assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation.

I wish to convey with deep gratitude, our appreciation to the Government of Uruguay for the very warm hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in this beautiful country of yours.

Kiribati greatly appreciates this opportunity to participate at this first substantive session of the Plastic Pollution Intergovernmental Conference which we believe is not only timely but also critical particularly for small island nations like Kiribati which are increasingly threatened by the ever-increasing amount of plastic being produced by land-based industries and more and more of such plastics ending up as wastes in the world's oceans.

Our participation in this Conference is rooted in our belief that plastic pollution is a transboundary problem requiring multilateral measures. We are grateful to UNEP and South Pacific Environment Programme SPREP who continue to provide the information and data we needed to make our participation in this historic process both meaningful and science - based. I also wish to extend our sincere thanks to the facilitators for their unwavering commitment in their guiding and leading roles and to all who contributed to making this first intergovernmental session possible. I believe our presence today to address the 1st Session of the Inter-Governmental Negotiating Committee is testament of our strong will to collaborate mutually in building an effective and practical regime to address plastic pollution.

As a Small Island Developing State, we are facing real, immediate and unique vulnerabilities linked to our geography and small size making us susceptible to natural disasters in particular adverse impacts of climate change. Marine Waste and pollution are among the top priority concerns of

the Kiribati Government that continue to threaten the health of our ecosystems, marine resources which in turn affect the health, wellbeing and livelihood of our people. An estimated 13% of Kiribati's waste stream is comprised of plastic, and recent studies indicate a daily plastic waste generation of approximately 9.7 tones which have accumulated in landfills and environment. This amount is significant for small island state like Kiribati with lack of capacity and minimal proper treatment options to treat such waste other than landfilling. The current recycling facility recover 40% of plastic bottles. Despite our challenges in adapting to the severe impacts of climate change and disasters overwhelming our local resources, Kiribati remains committed to address plastic pollution. Kiribati has produced the Kiribati Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy 2020-2030, identifying plastic waste as the top waste stream.

There has been a national effort to reduce plastic consumption and plastic pollution being put in place, which includes the banning of the single use shopping bags, disposable nappies and ice block plastic bags. In 2019, Kiribati has joined other Pacific Islands endorsed the Pacific Regional Declaration on the Prevention of Marine Litter and Plastic pollution and its Impacts and which is consistent with the Kiribati integrated environment policy which is in its final draft version provides an overarching national long term policy strategy and framework for integrating environment protection, management, and mainstreaming environment protection into all economic and socio-cultural sectors. However, the lack of resources including limited land space, technical capacity to manage such wastes in environmentally sound manner has severely impeded the ability of government to effectively implement its policy. We acknowledge the assistance from our generous

donor partners who have supported us in our projects for a safer and healthier environment.

At the global level, science and reports have shown the world's cities produce 2.2 billion tones of waste every year more than the amount produced a decade ago. That said pollution is not a new phenomenon and proper management of wastes in their different forms, in particular plastic, must be our priority. This is why we are committed to be part of this legal framework to ensure that our environment and "oceans" continue to be protected from plastic pollution. As an Ocean State, our vast ocean provides us with abundant resources- the ocean is the mainstay of not only our economy, but our sustainable lives, our culture and our future.

Kiribati recognizes that while there is an obligation for us all to work towards an agreement that covers full lifecycle of plastic and promotes circular economy to support Sound Management of Plastic wastes, we are keen to see consideration of the Small Island Developing States special circumstances, who are not major producer but are affected by its impacts. . It is also important to ensure that the agreement specify clear mechanisms for capacity building, technical and financial assistance and technology transfer for the equitable sharing among parties involved.

As we strive for the new robust and ambitious legally binding instrument on plastic pollution including in the marine environment, we should not allow ourselves to depart from the narrative of working together in true spirit of multilateralism to be able to put in place an instrument that is workable,

doable and implementable not only by the few capable and resource rich states but by all.

Let me conclude by sharing with you all our traditional Kiribati blessings of Te Mauri, Te Raoi, aoTe Tabomoa. May health peace and prosperity be with us all. Thank you.