

Madam Chair/ Mr Chair

Excellencies,

Distiguished delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I am truly honoured to present the Kiribati Government's statement for the Civil registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific which is part of my portfolio in my capacity as Minister for the newly established Ministry for women youth and Social Affairs.

2. Madam Chair/Mr Chair

I would also like to congratulate and show our full support for your nomination as Chair of this Conference.

3. Madam Chair/ Mr Chair

Kiribati is a country of twenty-three atolls with a total population of 103,248. According to the 2010 census Kiribati is faced with an alarming and overwhelming

population growth particularly in the urban areas. If the current population growth for Urban areas and the rest of Kiribati remains as it is then the population of Kiribati will double in 30yrs and the population for urban areas will double in 15 years.

4. In August this year (2014) Government launched the Kiribati Population Policy (2014-2034) to address the growing magnitude of population related problems. It provides a broad statement from Government that set the tone for how to go forward with addressing population related issues and concerns.

5. With the fact that CRVS has provided statistics of vital events occurred in our population at specific period and can be used to estimate the size and growth of a population, infant mortality rates, maternal mortality ratio and so forth , Government fully support the initiatives and programs to implement the regional action framework.

6. Under the framework of the Pacific Vital Statistics Action plan, Kiribati has made significant progress in reaching this goal.

7. We have established a CRVS Committee, completed the rapid assessment and are working to finalize the comprehensive assessment and are committed to finalizing an action plan.

8. Like other Pacific Island nations, we have made political commitments through the declarations from the Pacific Ministers of Health (in 2011, 2013, and 2014), and the Heads of Planning and Statistics meeting (2013).

9. Our government has allocated budgetary resources to ensure critical positions in CRVS are established and maintained including at the island council level.

10. We still face many challenges in the implementation of the regional action framework in Kiribati. Amongst them are barriers of remoteness, lack of communication, lack of knowledge and access to registration right and services. Further support is required in building local capacity and strengthening and resourcing existing structures and bodies that play a key role in implementing the regional action framework. We would appreciate the continuing support from our International Regional Donor Partners.

11. Madam Chair/ Mr Chair

I would like to raise an issue that has not been discussed as yet at this conference but one that affects Kiribati substantially. I speak of the impact of climate change and its relationship to CRVS. Kiribati is not only susceptible but currently experiencing the impact of climate change and as our esteemed President Anote Tong has stated, rising sea levels will eventually submerge our home.

12. A functional, accurate and timely CRVS system is therefore not just a goal or ambition for us, but a must. We

must have accurate CRVS so that we can plan accurately for the future of our population. We must record every person in our nation, we must keep up to the minute statistics on our population and we must use this to plan for a future that is as yet uncertain.

13. This is why our government is investing resources in CRVS, why we are working with our partners in the Pacific to improve our system and why the Regional Action Framework is important for Kiribati.

14. It raises CRVS at the national, regional and global level as a critical issue, mobilizing not only our government but we hope other governments in the region to share good practices, and for our development partners to support investments in this critical work.

15. We welcome the decade of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics and the partnership that this offers us to meet our goal of universal birth registration, timely registration of deaths, and accurate cause of death data.

16. Kiribati is committed in policy, in our law, and in our actions to a fully functioning, universal, timely and accurate CRVS system by 2024 for all our people of Kiribati.

17. Before I conclude I would like to take this opportunity to thank our regional partners and donors who have assisted us in our endeavor to implement the regional action framework and other regional and national CRVS commitments.

18. “Te Mauri, Te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa”

19. Good Health, Peace and Prosperity be bestowed upon each and every one of us.