Your Excellences

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

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We are gathered here as members of the global community especially small island developing states from the pacific region because what we will discuss in this Conference are relevant and very important to us all.

The Government of Kiribati remains committed to principles of the ICPD and the Ministerial Declaration of the 6th APPC adopted in 2013.

Since the last review on the implementation of the ICPD program of actions, I now pleased to share our Government experiences in implementing the ICPD in terms of our national key achievements, gaps and challenges particularly on critical thematic areas of the ICPD.

The Government of Kiribati is embarking on a long term national plan known as the KV-20 (Kiribati Vision 20 covering years 2016 – 2036) which recognizes, amongst other things the importance of human capital as one of the main pillars for national development. This reinforces the linkage between population and development. Furthermore this emphasizes the fact that development should be realized when there is improvement in the welfare and living standards of the population. However Kiribati as a small nation and economy – our population are still facing many socio-economic and environmental challenges.

Climate change vulnerability and impact:

Climate change remains regarded as our existential threat and security issue to our people and country, to which we are very vulnerable to its impact especially on innocent children and women. It really undermines our effort to achieve our economic growth and sustainable development because it affects the lives and welfare of our people. Despite that we have done a lot at the national level in terms of putting place national policies and coordinating mechanisms to address impacts of climate change this challenge requires a global commitment and solution. Therefore Kiribati remains committed toward global efforts to build our resilience against climate change impacts. In Kiribati, climate change is no longer a scientific debate, it is a real issue that requires solution and action now not later.

Reproductive Health:

Reproductive health becomes a main concern in Kiribati because we are facing alarming health risks and challenges in Neonatal mortality, Infant Mortality especially the under 5 mortality, Maternal mortality, to name a few. Based on the official record Kiribati is ranked high in most of these health risks such as 59.1% for under-5 mortality in 2015 and 54% in 2016, The NCD is also another major health problems currently affecting our people health condition and becomes the main cause of adult mortality.

Significantly, the Government recognizes that sexual and reproductive health issues contribute to our alarming population growth trend and unfavourable people health condition especially our women and children and that it requires greater attention and necessary action of the Government and people. The Government has and continues to adopt the whole of Government approach in addressing this reproductive health.
Adolescents and Young People

Evidently, the government also recognises the increasing social, environmental, and economic challenges facing youth today such as youth unemployment (69%), high adolescents birth rate (49%).

In responding to this challenge, the Government sees the need to have a national Youth Policy which would guide the actions of the Government, key stakeholder and development partners to address these issues. The youth represents around 29.4% of the population of Kiribati and their proportion will grow in the next decades. Because of this, it becomes a great concern for the Government as the economy may not be able to sustain and support such an increasing population.

But since our youths are the future leaders of Kiribati they need to be empowered and placed in the centre of our development agenda. They are indeed our invaluable asset and not liability and for that they need nurturing and support through sustainable and practical program from the Government, key stakeholders and development partners.

Gender and Sexual Domestic Violence

The Gender based violence both reflects, and reinforces, inequality between men and women. The 2008 Kiribati Family Health and Support Study (KFHSS) found that 68% of women (2 in 3) between the ages of 15 and 49 years who have ever entered into relationships have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence, or both, by an intimate partner. Government has responded by establishing the National Approach to Eliminating Sexual and Gender-based Violence (ESGBV) Policy and Strategic Action Plan 2011-2021, a major, Whole of Government Initiative. Currently implementing the ESGBV Shared Implementation Plan.

As one of the countries having high rate of domestic violence -- the GoK is committed to address gender based violence at the national level. The GoK had legislated the Family Peace Act, The Family welfare and Child Protection Act. However we are facing challenges in implementing this Act such as to lack of enforcement on the part of the Government agencies due to technical and financial constraints. At the regional level, Kiribati keeps implementing the Pacific Minister Declaration known as the MANA declaration which provides inspirational guidance for national efforts in ending gender and sexual domestic violence. At the international level, the Ministerial declaration principles have been embraced into our national systems which require further investment of resources and commitment on the part of the Government, international communities and development partners.

Overall Progress in achieving ICPD and Ministerial Declaration:

As a member of the International Conference on Population and Development, Kiribati still has difficulties and challenges in achieving expected objectives and outcomes of the Ministerial Declaration. However we continue to do our best at our own disposal and with the support and assistance from our development partners to address such challenges and problems which are effecting the lives and welfare of our people.

But we are so confident that the outcome of this very important global review on ICPD implementation may further enhance our commitment toward achieving the objectives of the ICPD.

Kiribati alone cannot be able to fully implement its obligations under the ICPD especially the objectives of the Ministerial declarations it is therefore development partners and members of the international communities are kindly invited and welcome to provide assistance and support.
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