



**CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS
CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION, SEVENTH SESSION
Vienna, Austria, 6-10 November 2017**

SPECIAL EVENT

MAKING SDG 16 COUNT IN THE PACIFIC

**8 November 2017, 9 a.m.- 10.30 a.m.
CONFERENCE ROOM M06**

On behalf of the people and government of Kiribati and in Jesus name, I greet you all by saying – KAM NA BANE N MAURI.

It is an honor for me this morning to address this very important special event for the Pacific Island Countries. And before I share my Government's position on the theme of today session – which is making the SDG 16 count in the Pacific, I thank the Director of the UNODC Division of Treaty Affairs for chairing this session and the United Nations Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption Project (UN-PRAC) for organizing it for us – Pacific Island Countries and our fellow SIDS. I also thank our distinguished panelists who will be shedding more lights on the importance of different aspects of anti-corruption and the SDG 16 in the Pacific from their own national perspectives.

During the opening session on Monday, I had tried to emphasize the importance of the special and unique challenges facing the SIDS, including all of us – Pacific Island Countries – and more importantly that acting against corruption is imperative to the achievement of any of the Sustainable Development Goals. Further I *highlighted* that the fight against corruption therefore should be a priority for the international community, including small island developing States.

As you may all agree with, we in the Pacific have common challenges and needs facing us despite the fact that we have different development levels and

progresses. What is common to us all is our unique Pacific way in which we can easily have one voice and general consensus and we can push for a common agenda in any international conferences.

Our meeting at this point in time, to discuss the Pacific case in relation to the SDG 16, comes with no surprise because we all believe that corruption is increasingly becoming an imperative development issue for the region and we are here to set a signal to all state parties that we are committed to fight corruption in the Pacific and achieve SDG 16.

Let me share again my poem on my national flag, which features the frigate bird, the sun and the ocean, which inspires us to act in many ways.

Shine Away Corruption

**“Shining rays of the Kiribati sun
Will find you wherever you try to hide
Corruption
Rays of colour and hope to beat you
Rays of blue, white, yellow and red to replace you
Rays of perpetual love to swamp you
Rays crossing the equator and the dateline to melt you
Rays from within the centre, the paradise of the world to shine through
you
Shiny-bright, good-filled rays of the Cross will burn
Corruption”**

“Like the frigate bird we must soar high above corruption

“Like the sun we must shine light upon integrity

“Like the ocean we must surf away from corruption

“Like the sacrifice on the cross we must transform and start anew”

It's time for Kiribati and our Pacific neighbors to “Shine away Corruption”. We need to build on our efforts for greater transparency and accountability and cleanse our communities of corruption. We should recognize the fact that

corruption could undermine and prevent our efforts to address our existing development challenges, even weaken our resilience against climate change impacts.

While we I-Kiribati people are at the center of the world and we love to sing, dance and recite poetry, we know that we have to work together on this planet if we are to fix climate change and eliminate corruption. Thus, Kiribati was proud to join this family of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2013 and seriously commit to its Review Mechanism.

As we are members also of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Kiribati has a strong commitment to the SIDS framework and I am honored to have tabled a specific SIDS Resolution during this Conference of State Parties.

Kiribati encourages all States parties and other development partners to continue supporting the implementation of anti-corruption reforms in small island developing States, through bilateral, regional and international provision of technical assistance, including by addressing technical assistance needs identified through the Implementation Review Mechanism. Kiribati was proud to be part of the Pacific, which became the first region to have completed all of its UNCAC reviews in the first cycle.

Kiribati urges States parties and other development partners to support small island developing States in their efforts to implement and monitor Sustainable Development Goal 16; Goal 16 is dedicated to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels; in many ways Goal 16 is the key cross-cutting goal of the SDGs. If we cannot achieve fairness, justice and reduce corruption, all our strongest efforts in climate action and poverty alleviation will be wasted and not benefit those who are most in need.

Kiribati also urges the small island developing States to take steps towards strengthening good governance in the area of land and ocean resources management, as well as anti-corruption frameworks with the aim of building resilience against the impacts of climate change in small island developing

States, with the support of the International communities and relevant UN bodies.

In particular, Kiribati highlights the importance of building integrity and of preventing and eliminating corrupt practices in public institutions and the public sector, given the severe impact of corruption on the efficiency of public services, citizens' confidence in public institutions and the cost of public transactions.

At a national level, Kiribati has strengthened its commitment to realizing the benefits from UNCAC and we have set our ambitious goal which is well reflected in our 20 years plan document called the KV-20/Kiribati Vision in 20 years – that Kiribati will become a corrupt free society by the year 2036.

Kiribati has recently launched our national anti-corruption strategy. This was very much a partnership process from all levels of the I-Kiribati community. We established a national anti-corruption committee to coordinate its development, and now oversee its implementation.

As part of Kiribati's commitment toward anti-corruption and the implementation of the UNCAC – My Cabinet had decided to hold a national high-level panel discussion on anti-corruption early next year which aims at achieving a national political declaration to fight and prevent corruption.

On a regional level, I am also ready to take the leadership role in working together with all leaders in the Pacific region on the fight against corruption through the achievement of SDG 16 in order to make the Pacific region, a better place to live for generations of today and tomorrow. While on this note, I wish to announce that Kiribati is ready to host the Pacific Leaders meeting on anti-corruption next year as a necessary step to strengthen the political leadership on this issue in the Pacific region. In my meeting with the UNODC Executive Director – Mr Yuri Fedotov on Monday, I had share with him my intention to host Pacific leaders meeting in Kiribati next year where we could come up with a

regional platform specifically in relation to the implementation of the Convention and SDG 16 and he is committed to provide the necessary support.

Our Pacific region is known to rich in unique culture and tradition, with strong Christian values which embedded in peoples' heart and mind. In particular, our *pacific way values* that are the underlying basis for our strong pacific cooperation and solidarity, is indeed our comparative and special advantage which we need to maintain and uphold.

So, I believe the special event today will not ONLY highlight the importance of the SDG in the pacific but I expect that in this session, we – the Pacific Islands Countries will be able to emphasize the need to work together as a region to make the SDG 16 count for us.

In conclusion, I wish the session is constructive, meaningful and fruitful.

My traditional blessings of Health, Peace and Prosperity (Te Mauri, Teraoi ao Tebomoa) be bestowed upon all of us.

Kam rabwa and thank you all.