

HON. BANUERA BERINA STATEMENT

(On the occasion of the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction,
New Delhi, 3 to 5 November 2016)

Mr Chairman,
Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished participants;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

Allow me to begin by expressing warm greetings and gratitude from His Excellency President Taneti Mamau and the people of the Republic of Kiribati to the Government and good people of India for the kind invitation to Kiribati to participate in this session.

I wish to acknowledge with appreciation the warm welcome and excellent hospitality accorded to my delegation since our arrival and especially the memorable reception that was put up for all of us last night.

I also wish to thank the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for its contributions and continued support towards this regional platform.

Mr Chairman,

Last year was a momentous period for disaster risk reduction. The adoption of the Sendai Framework as a successor to the Hyogo Framework for action on disaster risk Reduction, followed by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris agreement, have paved the way for greater focus and attention towards reducing disaster risk and building resilience of our respective communities and peoples to disasters.

Mr Chairman,

The challenge facing us this year and beyond is transforming all of these global commitments into tangible national and local actions and therefore my government welcomes this timely gathering as a catalyst towards the fulfillment of these commitments.

Mr Chairman,

For low lying island nations such as Kiribati, reducing disaster risk and adapting to climate change, are not only pertinent to the development and well being of our people they are also vital for our survival as a nation. Indeed, the degree of our fragility and insecurity will certainly worsen with the continuing unabated adverse effects of climate change.

Last year, while the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction was inaugurated in Sendai, Tropical Cyclone Pam was wrecking havoc in Kiribati, destroying homes, key infrastructures and precious ground water resources.

As I speak today, my country is again on high alert as we face one of the most extreme dry seasons we have had in years. This can turn into a major disaster should the forecasted La Nina comes into effect later this year or early next year.

Most of the disasters threatening Kiribati were unheard of. Never in our living memory had we been subjected to calamities such as rising sea levels that climate change has brought on to our shores.

This is why, Mr Chairman, my country is unrelenting in its resolve to implement the principles and priorities outlined in Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement to ensure that our people's well being, safety and resilience is given the utmost priority.

At the beginning of this year, our new government put forward concrete plans to tackle the threat of disasters especially those caused by climate change. We have established a parliament committee on climate change, and we are also in the process of reviewing our existing legislations to ensure that our national disaster laws are current, and relevant. We have also streamlined our programmes on climate change and disaster risk reduction to ensure efficiency of efforts.

Mr Chairman,

I am very much encouraged by the discussions in this Ministerial Conference. I have no doubt that the ensuing deliberations will put forward a plan, that will further accelerate and enhance what we have already done in our various countries and more importantly; one that will provide the necessary support and capacity for

implementation at the local and community level. This is especially critical for countries like Kiribati where limited resources often diminish capacity to act. My country therefore looks forward to an implementation plan that also provides for the “how to” at the national and local level.

Mr Chairman,

In closing, allow me to bestow on you and all Distinguished Participants our traditional blessing of Te Mauri, Te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa; Health, Peace and Prosperity.

Thank you.