



KIRIBATI STATEMENT TO THE 28TH ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Secretary General,
Distinguished delegates,

I bring you all warm greetings Kam na Mauri from the Government of Kiribati and my delegation.

Mr. President,

My delegation wishes to congratulate you and your Bureau as you lead our work and assure you of our delegation's full support. We join other delegations in thanking the Government and people of Jamaica for their usual warm hospitality and continued support of the Authority.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Rima Browne from Cook Islands for her achievements and being awarded the 2023 Secretary-General's Award for Excellence in Deep Sea Research. Like other Pacific delegations we are proud of your achievement and wish you every success in your work.

In referring to the Secretary General's report, Kiribati welcomes the report and commends the strong leadership of the Secretary-General and the tireless support and contributions of those involved in crafting the important report we have before us.

We recognize that ISA already contributed to 12 of the 17 SDGs and we commend the significant progress accomplished in implementing the different high-level actions and associated outputs identified in the Strategic Plan and High-Level Action Plan for 2019 – 2023.

We believe that the unique role of ISA to ensure a responsible management and development of the resources of the Area for the benefit of mankind requires not only strategic and inclusive partnerships between government, national and international stakeholders but also full support and strong commitment from the secretariat and ISA staff members. In this connection Kiribati recognizes and appreciates the Secretariat for the great effort to the work of the SG, in ensuring that the ISA deliver efficient and productive services for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

Mr. President,

Kiribati recognize the important mandate of ISA for developing capacities of developing states and appreciates the excellent work being done in that regard and we welcome the nomination of National Focal Points, which include Kiribati. Advancing women empowerment and leadership in ocean affairs and scientific research are essential and we commend ISA for its excellent leadership role in this regard. We underline the importance of scientific research that identify and measure the magnitude of such adverse impacts on our fisheries especially the tuna fisheries and highly support efforts on this.

Kiribati wishes to make reference to the Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth project and commends its implementation by the Authority in partnership with UNDESA. We appreciate the ongoing supports and grateful of the positive support received from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation for this vital initiative. Kiribati recognizes the recent workshop that was co-hosted by the Kingdom of Tonga on “Charting a course for responsible and sustainable management of seabed minerals of the Blue Pacific Content”. We recognize these commitments as very positive development initiatives, as

we endeavor to strengthen our capacity and resilience as small Islands and as a sponsoring state.

We recognize the Council's obligation under section 1, para 15 to the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI (11) of the Convention, and thus shared the view with many others regarding the need to advance negotiations to ensure that a sound and robust regulatory framework are put in place as well as other necessary frameworks such as the REMP, appropriate ICE mechanisms and fiscal regime for equitable benefit sharing.

Kiribati, being one of the closest countries to the CCZ, welcomes further deliberations that ensures the effective protection of the marine environment as imposed by the legal regime set out in Part XI (11) and to follow the precautionary approach under ISA rules, regulations and procedures as well as measures to effectively address implications in the event of transboundary harm to the marine environment of national jurisdiction. Of significance to note, is the roadmap to be released this year which we acknowledge and support as it will add value to the decision-making processes and bolster sustainable development practices regarding mineral resources, particularly those concerning environmental preservation and monitoring of activities conducted in the Area.

We note the persisting challenges in advancing negotiations on this framework and we are grateful for a number of new strategic partnerships established to support implementation of mandate and competences of ISA. We welcome and join the call on increased partnerships with scientific and research organizations from all corners of our ocean in particular from developing states.

With regard to the Finance Committee, Kiribati commends the work and efforts made by the Finance Committee to develop options for benefit sharing mechanisms. We support the establishment of the Common Heritage Fund envisioning support to research projects and capacity development initiatives particularly to developing states. Additionally, we

invite the Finance Committee to develop options for appropriate models for allocating financial or non-financial benefits on this matter.

Kiribati deeply appreciates the important contributions of Contractors in providing trainings and capacity opportunities to developing states, of which, nationals of Kiribati have also benefitted from. Furthermore, Kiribati is pleased to acknowledge that its Contractor - Marawa in cooperation with the Secretariat has committed to ensuring that all of its ISA training programs are gender balanced. Kiribati is also pleased to note Marawa's call for applications for training placements to the ISA Deep-Dive e-learning programme. We believe this eLearning platform, titled "Deep Dive", will bring tremendous added value to the work of the Authority through supporting the development of capacities and skills of young professionals and experts.

Mr. President,

We recognize specific efforts made in advancing deep-sea literacy and note the quality of publications and research papers produced by the Secretariat to support critical discussions under development. With respect to the two technical studies published during this reporting period, we take note and appreciate the presentation of such studies, with particular interest on Technical Study 33 on potential interactions between fishing and mineral resources related activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction; a spatial analysis, in consideration of Kiribati's main income which are derived from fishing related activities. In this vein, Kiribati, as a Sponsoring State, also welcomes the discussion papers that were recently published regarding the Effective Control and Rights and obligations of ISA and the Sponsoring State with respect to activities in the Area. We encourage the Secretary General and Secretariat to continue this effort.

Mr. President,

The sustainable development of Deep-Sea Minerals aligns well with the Kiribati Vision for 20 Years (KV20) which places significant emphasis on impactful development strategies

to enable the realization of sustainable development from our marine resource among others yet taking into account rigorous environmental protection.

Finally, and in closing, let me please bestow upon this esteemed assembly the traditional Kiribati blessings of Te Mauri, Te Raoi, ao Te Tabomoa, meaning “Health, Peace and Prosperity”

Kam rabwa, Thank you all.