



# **THE GOVERNMENT OF KIRIBATI**

## **HIGH-LEVEL STATEMENT**

Delivered by

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**Fifth Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC**  
**Bonn, Germany**

**2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1999**

**KIRIBATI STATEMENT FOR THE HIGH- LEVEL SEGMENT**  
**Fifth Conference of Parties , UNFCCC**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1999, Maritim Hotel, Bonn**

Mr. President, Sir  
Honorable Ministers  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset allow me to congratulate you, and through you the Bureau members for your election to these very important positions in the Conference. Under your guidance, we feel assured that this conference, and other UNFCCC meetings on the way to COP6, will achieve great success in creating better understanding, building confidence, and generating flexibility among the negotiating parties. Here in Bonn, we can not help but sense and witness peace and prosperity that the people of Germany must relish after they had pulled down the "Iron Curtain". Perhaps this could be a parallel model, to what we should achieve at COP6 if we would be prepared to replace any "Iron curtain" around our interest, with a seeing through "glass curtain". In such a case, we will be able to appreciate and be concerned about the "sources of life" (to use the Chancellor's words again), throughout the world.

Of the world geophysical environments, the lowest platform on which life exists are the islands; this is why their total landmass is very small. Kiribati is one of these islands and we associate ourselves with the statement given this afternoon by Ambassador Slade of Samoa, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Islands States. We ask that Parties accord more confidence to the concerns advanced by small islands about the devastating impacts of climate change and sea level rise which we are experiencing now. If the UNFCCC fails in its objectives for the most vulnerable of the world ecosystems then clearly the rest of the ecosystems is endangered.

During the negotiations of the UNFCCC, small islands focussed much attention on mitigation issues, requesting higher percentages for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by Annex I Parties. In these negotiations, AOSIS members are now urging also for timely assistance for adaptation measures. In silence we all have suffered increasingly from more frequent and more severe cyclones, droughts and impacts of sea level rise. Our simple plea is that the international community should take its collective responsibilities seriously before it is too late for all of us.

Mr. President Sir, thank you for your attention.