

**HIS EXCELLENCY BERETITENTI TANETI MAAMAU'S STATEMENT**

*(On the Occasion of the Leaders Event of COP 23 Bonn, Germany, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017)*

COP 23 President, Your Excellency, Frank Bainimarama

Executive Secretary Espinosa

Excellencies

Heads of Delegations

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies & Gentlemen

I am proud to bring to you the voice and warm Pacific greetings from the people of Kiribati, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ- Kam na bane ni mauri!

We have gone past the stage of debates - what we all agreed in Paris in 2015, is what this global family demonstrated in their various important commitments. Sadly though, we continue to experience and witness the detrimental impacts of climate change, and we

cannot afford any longer to wait – ACTIONS with IMPACT is a critical task of this twenty third session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

I want to make it very clear at the outset that my Government has decided to put aside the misleading and pessimistic scenario of a sinking/deserted nation, and has replaced it with a bold scenario filled with great faith in the Mighty Hand, that made our islands, coupled with our people's unwavering love for their home land, and great determination to fight and/or adapt to climate change, with the help and support of our international partners and the entire world community. To this end, my Government is calling on this Conference, to recognize the significance of this new policy as a platform for the Kiribati Government's ambitious 20 year plan or KV20, to build and develop the nation in the face of climate change –that focuses on harnessing our resources on fisheries and tourism.

The continued conversation and predictions for Kiribati to sink in future are not only de-empowering but also contradictory to our current efforts to build our islands and transform

the lives of our people into a resilient, wealthy, healthy, and secured nation in line with our KV20.

We all know that climate change is not only about science, but more importantly, it is about the people, in terms of their social values, ethics and morals. In His inspiring message, His Holiness, Pope Francis reminded Pacific Leaders, and us all, of our shared responsibility, to take good care of Mother earth, to keep her safe, and to make sure that we leave behind the same kind of shared home, or even a better one, for our children and those who come after us.

I sincerely applaud the Government and people of Germany for their extra pledge of 50 million EUROS to the adaptation fund. The recent announcement of the GCF Simplified Approvals Process (SAP) for small scale projects, is greatly appreciated. Kiribati is also committed to integrate the principles of good governance to ensure transparency, efficient and accountable use of these resources, for the effective adaptation interventions and tangible results.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a “big atoll ocean state”, the oceans play a critical part in sustainable development, and in our daily lives, and I strongly join a call for oceans to form an integral part of the UNFCCC process.

Mr. President,

I wish to congratulate you for your able leadership in leading this historical COP 23 for the Pacific. I also take this opportunity to thank the Mayor and people of this historic city, the Government and people of Germany for the warm hospitality and welcome to our delegations. I would like to conclude by sharing with you all our traditional Kiribati blessings of Te Mauri, Te Raoi, ao Te Tabomoa, meaning health, peace and prosperity to us all.

Vinaka vaka levu, danke shoun (***pronounced danke sheern***), ao kam bati n raba.