Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, and Colleagues.

In Kiribati, we bestow to each other the traditional blessings of *te mauri, te raoi* ao *te tabomoa* OR good health, peace and prosperity. These are the aspirations we hold for each member of our community, especially our most vulnerable: indigenous peoples, youth, women and girls, persons with disabilities, people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, and the elderly.

Civil society in Kiribati acknowledges the Kiribati government's progress towards implementing the 2030 Agenda, as reflected in its 2nd VNR Report. We particularly welcome the government's targeted focus on expanding access to safe water on Betio and South Tarawa. For a large ocean state like Kiribati, freshwater security remains our defining vulnerability, intensified by rising sea levels, frequent king tides and prolonged droughts driven by Climate Change.

We call for greater investment in community-managed solutions, including solar water distillation systems and rainwater harvesting co-designed with implementation led by village leaders and local communities.

We also commend ongoing investment in infrastructure and coastal protection. However, rapid urbanization and population pressures continue to strain housing, sanitation and waste management systems with direct consequences for public health. We urge that future infrastructure development embraces nature-based solutions and meaningfully involve youth and indigenous communities in planning and decision making.

Finally, sustainable development cannot be achieved while women continue to face violence behind closed doors. Domestic violence remains a serious challenge in Kiribati, sustained by a culture of silence that too often **denies victims justice**. We call for immediate and stronger actions that break the silence, protect women, empower communities and ensure no one is left behind.

Achieving the SDGs requires genuine partnership between the government, civil society and communities. Together, we can build a Kiribati where te mauri, te raoi ao te tabomoa are not merely blessings we bestow upon one another, but the lived reality of every citizen. I thank you - Kam rabwa.