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DRAFT STATEMENT

Pacific regional consultation on Internal displacement

To co-chairs of Technical Working Group on Human mobility, a member of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, my fellow Pacific Representatives, colleagues, and members of the Human mobility technical working group

Allow me to greet you in our traditional and customary way of: KAM NA BANE N MAURI.

It is an honour for me to deliver on behalf of the Government of Kiribati, a statement on best practices and lessons learned in relation to the topic of internal displacement.

In Kiribati, disaster and climate change-induced displacement was first recorded in 2015 and secondly in 2019. The first one happened in 2015 was due to impacts of Tropical Cyclone Pam that struck several Pacific countries. The displaced community voluntarily move to safer plots further in land and establish new settlement there. In 2019 displacement was happened due to impacts of flash flooding and storm surges in which members of one village evacuate to centres for temporary settlement.

Currently, Government does not have any guidelines or policies specifically on relocation and so most displacement happened voluntarily. However, Kiribati had established and strengthened coordination mechanism, institutions and legal frameworks for climate change and disaster risk management. Firstly, there is a new act namely Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Act 2019 and the regulation, the Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan for CC and DRM 2019 - 2028,

Kiribati Climate Change Policy 2018. The legal framework embraces inter-relation of climate change and disaster and provide relevant provisions on governance arrangements to address disaster and climate issues in a most effective and coordinated arrangement. The new Regulation for DRMCC Act 2019 detailed this arrangement and detailed responsibilities of Government and other actors to address issues of climate change and disaster at different levels. The regulation also detailed arrangement for evacuation centre which include establishment of Minimum standards for these centres, Memorandum of Understanding between Government and local community on their responsibilities and obligations to provide and maintain services at these centres. In addition, the Office of Te Beretitenti also administers the Disaster Fund which provides annual budget for emergency response including assisting evacuated communities especially in terms of providing safe drinking water at evacuation centers and safe shelters which accommodates needs of different gender groups.

Although Kiribati has strengthened legal framework for climate and disaster risk management, it is however still not clear in the current arrangement for how Government will deal with displacement that are induced by climate change and disasters. There act has a gap in not amplifying arrangement for displaced people due to impacts of disasters and climate changes. As such, issues with how the rights of displaced people after disaster events be supported by Government remains unsolved. However, the Government support in preventing and responding to disaster impacts to prevent displacement, is well detailed in the current legal framework. This is often done through long term planning for safeguarding private, communities, and public infrastructures and services such as in the case of relocation of public schools from high risk or exposure zones to safer zones.

With the gaps that Kiribati currently has in terms of internal displacement, it is in the best interest of the Government to strengthen this area in future. Through our engagement in this regional platform for human mobility, it is our hope that Kiribati in the future, will improve legal framework for addressing climate change and disaster induced displacement. We are aware that lack of technical capacities in this area is our main constrained and therefore always relied on technical expertise from our regional partners.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is what Kiribati has prepared for this consultation and I would like to conclude by bestowing on us all, the traditional Kiribati blessings of Te Mauri (Health), Te Raoi (Peace) ao te Tabomoa (Prosperity).

Thank you all.