



STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI

Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) Statement - Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, Antigua and Barbuda.

Interactive Dialogue 3: Levering data and digital technologies and building effective institutions for a resilient future in SIDS

Delivered by Ms. Josephine Moote, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kiribati to the United Nations

28 May 2024

Chair,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Kiribati acknowledges the critical role of data and digital technologies in building resilient futures for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). As we gather at this fourth SIDS conference, we recognize the importance of leveraging these tools to enhance government processes, improve service delivery, and empower our citizens.

In 2019, Kiribati approved a national ICT policy aimed at leveraging digital technology to enhance government processes and services. This policy outlines key enabling factors necessary for digitalizing government processes, including establishing nationwide connectivity infrastructure, strengthening regulatory and legal foundations, improving digital literacy, and transforming government services.

Kiribati is not up to par with its technological advancement and innovation as compared to other SIDS and LDC member countries. However, to date, the government has invested significantly in connectivity infrastructure, subsidizing mobile infrastructure establishments on all islands across Kiribati. This initiative has supported mobile providers in establishing a functional network on Kiribati's outer islands, bridging the digital divide and enhancing access to digital services for our citizens.

In 2021, Kiribati enacted a comprehensive Cybercrime Act and an Electronic Transaction Act, providing foundational safeguards for our citizens concerning the internet and misuse of digital technologies. These legal frameworks complement our digital development initiatives and support our ambition to transform into a digital economy. We see this as a proactive approach to safeguard our digital resilience.

Furthermore, in 2021, Kiribati approved the Digital Government Masterplan, which lays out a roadmap for transforming current government processes and services by leveraging digital technology. The establishment of the Digital Government Office (DTO) in 2022 further supports government-wide digitization efforts, streamlining resources and enhancing coordination across all government sectors.

Chair, Kiribati is implementing the Digital Government Masterplan through the Kiribati Digital Government Project, supported by a \$12 million grant from the World Bank. This project aims to strengthen the DTO, establish regulatory and legal frameworks, enhance cybersecurity, and develop digital infrastructures, including a national portal serving as a one-stop shop for all government information and services.

Finally, Kiribati reaffirms its commitment to leveraging data and digital technologies for building effective institutions and resilient futures in SIDS. We believe that by harnessing the power of digital technology and data, we can overcome our challenges and achieve sustainable and resilient development for our people and our planet.

Thank you.