



APRC 36th session

Honorable Minister's Speech
HM Ruateki Tekaiara

Mr. Chair,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen

Greetings from the people and the Government of the Republic of Kiribati –
Kam na Mauri.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our region now relies more than ever on solidarity and partnerships in order to combat the impacts of the pandemic and other challenges such as climate change. I commend the work of FAO in helping member countries meet these challenges and in the same vein I also commend the outgoing Chair for the excellent leadership rendered to our region during his tenure. I also congratulate the incoming

chair and I offer Kiribati's support in the important responsibility that you have selflessly assumed on behalf of the region.

Mr Chair

Striving to do better in the face of global challenges is the only option for us as a global community, for what we strive to do good today will make a better tomorrow.

Mr, Chair

Developing the agriculture sector is an important priority for my Government to help our people overcome health, social and economic challenges. Given the fragile environment of Kiribati, interventions in the agriculture space have and will continue to place environmental considerations at the fore. My

Government is keen to build on the work we are doing with partners on climate smart agriculture and roll out the programme to all the rural islands. For Kiribati, it is important that the technology introduced not only suits the conditions of our small islands but is also cost effective to local farmers.

Strengthening food systems is also priority for Kiribati to ensure food is accessible, affordable, safe and of both quality and enough for the people. Improving the value chain right from production to consumption to ensure actors along the value chain play their critical role efficiently and effectively is very important.

An important component in the value chain is the reliability of imported farming inputs. The recurring disruption in supply chains caused by the pandemic also affects farming production through farming inputs such as livestock feed. In order to better support our local farmers, we are exploring domestic production of livestock feed.

Mr. Chair

With limited agricultural production, Kiribati continues to rely on imported foods and thus strengthening of border control is important to protect threats to our natural resources from foreign pests and diseases. However, the imported food that we rely on for sustenance is also the main source of health risks and environmental concern through food packaging for Kiribati. I am

sure, other countries experience the same problem as being dumping grounds for unhealthy foods and we urge collective actions on ensuring good food is being traded.

Mr. Chair,

We need to do better as a global community if we are to overcome the unprecedented challenges are facing today. Doing better also means stronger and genuine partnerships and equitable sharing of resources and know-how, so that no one is left behind.

In closing, I bestow upon us all my country's traditional blessings of Health, Peace and Prosperity.

Thank you Mr. Chair.