



Oral Statement at the 45th Session of the Human Right Council

Item 6: UPR Outcome of Kiribati

Date: 28th September, 2020

Delivered by: Mr. Constantine D'Abreu

Madame President,

Climate change fundamentally threatens the future of the people of Kiribati. Their livelihoods, culture and customs are threatened. On current projections, if decisive action is not taken, it is estimated that most atolls could become uninhabitable by the mid-21st century. Climate change has a multiplier effect in its impact on the fundamental rights of the people of Kiribati – it makes life less secure, water less safe, food security less certain, and children more prone to disease and infection.

ERI particularly welcomes Kiribati's acceptance of recommendations relating to ensuring the provision of clean drinking water and access to water services and sanitation for all, adequate health services for all the population, the protection of the rights of sectors of the population that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, especially women and children, the empowerment of women, and the adoption of an inclusive and participatory approach to the implementation of community-based climate adaptation initiatives.

A sense of place is central to the people of Kiribati and their identity. The impact of climate change could force many to move out from their homelands. This will lead to a loss of rights to place. Cultural practices are integral to life in Kiribati and include traditional songs, special family-owned skills, relationship to land, music and dance. They are at risk. The impacts of climate change on cultural rights and cultural heritage is an urgent human rights issue and needs to be acknowledged and responded to.

ERI therefore urges the Kiribati Government to recognise the protection of culture as essential to human dignity and identity, and to ensure that the culture, land, and places for future generations are safe, so that cultural practices and values can continue.

Finally, we note that the aspirations of the Kiribati Government's KV20 development plan deserves the support of the international community, in terms of resources and development assistance.

Thank you.