TRANSFORMATION TOWARD SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT SOCIETIES: SIDS PERSPECTIVE

KIRIBATI PERSPECTIVE AS SIDS & LDC
WEDNESDAY, 11 JULY 2018
CONFERENCE ROOM 4

SDG 6: Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation For All

• My presentation is focused on SDG 6
• Globally, there is alarming concern that freshwater resources are increasingly scarce. There are also abundant of undrinkable water (97.3% is ocean water) compared to drinkable water
• This calls for urgent attention to give serious thinking & actions collectively without further delay to ensure availability & sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
• Freshwater is connected to Our Life, Our Health and Our Well Being

HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM: IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY FOR SIDS COUNTRIES TO SHARE, LEARN & A CHANCE TO BE HEARD & SEEN

• SIDS - small nations highly vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change and ecosystems degradation, compared to bigger mainland countries
• The issue of freshwater resources in SIDS faces many of the problems experienced in other developing countries such as inadequate technical and financial resources and capacities
• I am thankful for the opportunity to participate & to share our experiences BUT importantly to learn from each other in this global high level deliberation
• SIDS smallness and remoteness for many countries including Kiribati often made us hardly heard and seen
• This opportunity also enhances the UN SDG's theme of 'No One Is To Be Left Behind'
KIRIBATI - A CONTINENT OF OCEAN

KIRIBATI - BACKGROUND

- Atoll nation of 33 low-lying islands (2m above sea level) dispersed over 3.5 km². Total land area of Kiribati: 811 km².
- Country population is 110,000: over 50% residing on the capital island of South Tarawa.
- South Tarawa; just over 15.76 km² in size & population density of over 4,900 km².
- Highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of global climate change.
  - Prolonged drought (affecting the quality of the only source of freshwater lens).
  - Kiribati has been hit by the recent prolonged drought affecting the quantity and quality of the underground freshwater.
  - Sea level rise/Seawater inundation of the atolls.

CURRENT SITUATION IN KIRIBATI

- Brackish freshwater resources - the foundation of life on the atolls.
- BUT our main and only source of underground freshwater lens: provides very limited supply of safe & drinkable water.
  - Example: Reticulated freshwater for use by South Tarawa residents - supplied from fresh groundwater reserves extracted from a total of 23 galleries in Tarawa and Buta; the total sustainable yield from the groundwater lenses is only 2,010 m³/day.
  - Use of rainwater catchments (rainwater tanks) is STILL not enough to augment supplies from the reticulated systems in South Tarawa, particularly during droughts.
- Porous nature of atoll soils make underground water sources highly vulnerable to wastes & pollution.
- Climate change & climate variability - additional threats to freshwater resources security throughout Kiribati.
- Water & sanitation facilities are not sufficient.
- National water policies & legislations are in place but limited to some extent.
ACHIEVEMENTS THAT ENHANCE 'Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies'

- Water and sanitation improvement projects - South Tarawa Sanitation Improvement Sector Project (DSSP), EKIBATI II & III etc.
- To improve health of communities on South Tarawa & outer islands through:
  i. Rehabilitation of the existing seawage and salt water flushing systems
  ii. Rainwater harvesting systems
  iii. 24/7 piped water access in 11 pilot communities on South Tarawa to address drought impacts on water resources

- FAO Project - KOFWAP - Kiribati Outer Island Food and Water Project
- Major components of the project:
  i. Provision of rainwater harvesting systems
  ii. Promoting farming and consumption of nutritious foods
- Important contribution of this Project: It enabled these communities to access clean drinking water and nutritious foods resulting in a 69% decrease in diarrhoea and dysentery for under 5-year-old children since 2015

- National efforts to control wastes and pollution
  i. Enforcement of the Environment amended Act 2007 (Pollution provision, Environment Licensing System)
  ii. Kiribati joined the Clean Sea Campaign in 2017
- Construction of communal rubbish collection points on South Tarawa

CHALLENGES

- Kiribati are faced with unique limitations and barriers (natural, environment, economic, and social) to water management. Some of these include:
  i. Geography, fragmentation, and remoteness of the islands over the vast ocean
  ii. Land tenure and land scarcity - land owners encroaching on to water reserve sites which are already being leased by Government
  iii. Enabling environment is limited in terms of policy and legislation & public support
  iv. Limited financial & technical resources and capacities to implement and enforce water policies and legislations
  v. Water related technologies (conservation, harvesting, and dissemination): expensive, inappropriate and not sustainable
  vi. Environmental problems and issues (e.g. increased wastes & pollution) including global climate change

Conclusion/Recommendation

- Water is essential for life on earth for health and well being including economic growth & development. Water plays a vital role in achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals.
- These highlight the important roles of water governance and water management which MUST at all times, be established to meet the increasing demands for water usage.
- All stakeholders must have the right mindset & effective enabling environment to allow for availability & sustainable management of water and sanitation at the country levels.
- The FAO Project in Kiribati – KOFWAP is one success story in the outer islands where community participation in harvesting and managing their water supplies from the water tanks.
- Despite many limitations, challenges, and issues that undermine ongoing efforts to achieve availability & sustainable management of freshwater resources and sanitation, EKIBATI is still working hard to achieve a sustainable and resilient society.
- But we need all the help and assistance we can get now. This is prominent with the global climate change problem that respects no national jurisdictions and boundaries.
- WE STRONGLY BELIEVE IN OUR 'EKIBATI VISION IN 20 YEARS PLAN – KV20', a long term plan that provide the hope and the future of our people and our country.
Kam bati n rabwal
Thank you all for your attention!