

Save Our Country



My name is David Katoatau – I am the 2014 Commonwealth Games gold medallist weightlifter – from the disappearing island of Kiribati. Everyday my people fear for their lives as their homes are lost to the rising sea levels. We live on an atoll with nothing but flat land and ocean surrounding us. We have nowhere to climb and nowhere to run to. As a sporting representative of my country, I am begging you to save us.

A few days ago CNN delivered the catastrophic news about El Nino; Kiribati will be wiped off the face of the earth in less than 30 years. Scientists and world environmentalists predict that the high temperatures expected in the next twelve months will change weather patterns and tide levels.

Hearing this news, I have never felt so helpless in my life. As a sportsman I have offered everything to my country but I cannot save it. On behalf of all the people who will die for the country that will no longer exist and for the culture which will long be forgotten, I am asking for your help.

Last year I built myself the only home I could afford – a tebuia, a traditional hut – right next door to my parents. A few months later, it was destroyed by waves.

As a 31 year old man from Kiribati, I am one of the few lucky ones. I achieved my dream of participating in the Olympic Games in 2008/2012 and hopefully next year I will compete at the Rio Olympics. The schools I have visited in Kiribati and the thousands of children I have met aspire to be something great. How do I lie to them and say their dreams are possible when our nation is disappearing?

I beg the countries of the world to see what is happening to Kiribati. The simple truth is that we do not have the resources to save ourselves. We will be the first to go. It will be the extinction of a race. Open your eyes and look to the other low lying level islands around the Pacific – they will soon fall with us.



*In the not
too distant future
we will all drown.*

David Katoatau - Kiribati