



*'We Support We Protect'*

**Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre**

Bairiki, Tarawa

Kiribati

Office: 75021000

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Universal Periodic Review  
Stakeholder Submission for the Review of Kiribati

## **I. Introduction**

1. The Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre (KWCS) is a feminist non-profit non-government organisation with a specific role in supporting women and children who are survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).
2. KWCS goal is to ensure that I-Kiribati women and children experiencing violence have access to quality, timely, rights-based counselling and the KWCS service is safe, ethical and comprehensive.
3. KWCS was established on 31 January 2018 under the supervision and management of the Kiribati Family Health Association (KFHA) but it became an independent centre on 1st July 2019.
4. KWCS received funding support from the Government of Australia and technical support from UN Women.
5. In this submission, KWCS highlights the current major issues of domestic violence and discrimination against women due to limited support to women's NGOs to deliver programs to women in rural and urban centres and the discriminatory clause that is entrenched in the Constitution of Kiribati.

## **II. Government to provide support to Women's NGOs to fulfil obligations pursuant to article 14 of CEDAW**

6. Kiribati is a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), through government's commitment under article 14, very little and little impact have been achieved because the approach it used does not really touch women and girls at the grass root levels.
7. The government should provide grants to women's NGOs who have strong connection with women and girls at the grass root level through gender and life-skills programs. These women's groups are in the frontline providing support and empowerment programs to women and girls both in rural and urban areas.
8. **Recommendation:** KWCS urge the government to allocate special grants to support the operation of Women's organisations such as KWCS and Aia Maea Ainen Kiribati (AMAK) the umbrella organisation for Women's group in Kiribati.

## **III. Revision of the Constitution of Kiribati**

9. The Constitution is a supreme law of Kiribati that guarantee the protection and freedom of an individual regardless of sex. However, the interpretation of this provision (*Chapter II section 15 (3), section 22*) allows discrimination against women and the obvious consequences of this provision are entrenched in a number of laws in Kiribati.
10. In 2010, the recommendation to amend the Constitution was tabled in the eighth session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group, in May 2010 but very minimal attempt has been done until today. Two proposals by private members to amend the discriminatory

clauses stated above were moved in 2014 could not achieve the constitutional amendment benchmark.

11. **Recommendation:** KWCSO urge the government as a matter of priority to revise the entire section that refers to this matter in the Constitution.
12. **Recommendation:** KWCSO call upon the government to consider subsequent amendments of all legislation that is discriminatory in effect to women.

#### **IV. Ratification of International human rights covenants**

13. Kiribati is a party to a few human rights Conventions, (*CRC, CEDAW & CRPD*) and notable commendation to its recent ratification of *UNCAT*. However, more focus to key covenants would place Kiribati on stronger foundation when following suit to global efforts and practices and moving forward with accession to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). but not the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Kiribati UPR recommendations in its first cycle 2010 and second 2015 refers.
14. **Recommendation:** KWCSO call upon and urge the government to consider the ratification of ICCPR and ICESCR.

#### **V. Community Awareness on Te Rau n te Mwenga Act 2014 (Family Peace Act)**

15. According to the 2010 Study on Violence against women and girls in Kiribati, the prevalence of domestic violence in Kiribati is the highest in the Pacific region. Key implementing partners in particular the Kiribati Police Service (KPS) are required to understand the seriousness of domestic violence and to be able to enforce the law however, it has become evident in some incidences that several Police officers have not been able to execute their duties fully due to some misinterpretation and understanding of their roles and obligations specified in Te Rau n te Mwenga (*Family Peace*) Act. A slight omission on the part of law enforcement officers would have drastic implications on women and children in this case.
16. **Recommendation:** KWCSO urge the government as a matter of priority to continue to conduct Law Enforcement Officers ongoing trainings on Gender, attitudes change towards domestic violence, Gender Based Violence and te Rau n te Mwenga Act.