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1. Background.

AMAK (Aia Maea Ainen Kiribati) was founded when the women's movement began in Kiribati by a very few women's group that existed that time. In 1968, the colonial government established the Women Affairs unit under the Ministry of Health and Family Planning to oversee the development of these existing women's group. After the country's independence and the government's restructure, the women affairs unit was transferred to the Ministry of Environment and Social Affairs which then followed by the setup of AMAK in 1982. AMAK became quasi-government in 1995 until 2010 when it separated from the government. In 2011, AMAK registered as an NGO under the Incorporated Society Act.

AMAK is now the mother association that coordinates women's group under the direction of a council called the National Council of Women consisting of representatives from member organisations. A president and Vice-President leads the council as executives who are elected for a term of 3 years by a General Assembly during a conference which is held every 3 years.

AMAK's objective is to provide coordination, conduct research and trainings, formulates development strategies and plans and establish networks and seek assistance for members locally and abroad.

Membership in AMAK is currently by 35 women's group from all the islands of Kiribati. These members are **RAK, IREKENRAO, Ueen Te Makeke, GIRL GUIDES KGGA, MOWIA, HOLY LEAF, KECEA, KWTNA, RELIEF SOCIETY, DORCAS, AKIBE, KIRIBA, Te Toa Matoa, K-WAVE, Te Nikabubuti, Aia Botaki Ainen Butaritari, Te Toka ni Marakei, Ainen Marewen Abaiang, UKETI, Ueen Benita, Ueen Tetoaki, Marewen Aranuka, Ueen Abemama, Marewen Nonouti, Ueen Tabiteuea Meang, Ueen te Ueanikai, Te Tina ni Botaki, Reitan Nanoia Ainen Onotoa, Tanimwarutamu, Matangareia Ainen Tamana, Ngareia Ainen Arorae, Ueen te Bitati, Nei Baneawa, Nei Tiwita and Ainen Teeraina.**

This report is a joint submission by all the members of AMAK who have given support to the making and submission of this report. This is AMAK's first UPR report but the recommendations raised in this report are based on the Human Rights Council's recommendations to the State report in the 1st round of the UPR reporting, 2010.

2. Right to Health

Recommendation 72 requires the Government to continue implementation of programs aimed at ensuring that all its people have free quality health and education services.

AMAK thanks the government for accepting this recommendation but is concerned that:

- i. The Central Hospital's facilities are not enough to meet the demands of the population. It is experienced that patients may not be admitted because the hospital is full and in some occasions, can only be admitted if they bring their own beddings because the hospital does not have enough beds.
- ii. The hospital for the Southern islands which is supposedly for the people from this part of the country (located at one of the islands in the South), is not fully equipped in terms of facilities such as beds and technical equipment for medical staff.
- iii. Access to hospitals and medical clinics is difficult to people with disabilities because of the lack of ramps, comfortable and special waiting rooms and efficient services to these members of the population.
- iv. There are not enough doctors to tend to patients and as a result there is a lack of quality medical care available to patients and people generally in Kiribati.

3. Recommendation:

AMAK recommends that the government considers the following:-

- (a) Review and assess the capacity of the central hospital in terms of workers and the facilities to confirm the need for improvement in the service,
- (b) Upgrade and improve the status of the Southern Islands hospital to provide quality medical services for the people in the Southern islands,
- (c) Consider improving accessibility of all its hospitals and clinics to enable people with disability to access the services,
- (d) Consider increasing scholarships for more students to study medicine and incentives to prevent doctors from leaving the country for higher pay overseas.

4. Right to Education

- i. Recommendations 75 and 78 require the government to further strengthen its educational system to guarantee unrestricted access to education for every member of the population and upgrade the efficiency and the skills of teachers.
- ii. AMAK thanked the government for accepting these recommendations but is concerned that:
 - (a) The Inclusive Education Policy under the Education Act (2013) which caters for the improvement of access to mainstream education by people with disabilities is still in draft form and no implementation of this concern has been made,
 - (b) There is not enough vocational schools to accommodate the pressing need for such institutions by youths who are the majority members of the population,
 - (c) Pre-schools remain unregulated and remain unsupported by government. The Compulsory Education Order 2006 does not extend to this level of education,
 - (d) Corporal punishment in schools is still evident despite the fact that this has been abolished by the Education (Amendment) Act 1997.

5. Recommendation

AMAK recommends that the government consider the following:-

- (a) Finalizing the Inclusion Education Policy by the end of 2014 and implement it fully by the end of 2016,
- (b) Review the potential of setting up a specialized school for the people with disability as an alternative to providing access to mainstream education particularly for people with sight and hearing disabilities,
- (c) Review the feasibility of setting up more quality vocational schools to meet the demand of youths and the population,
- (d) Include preschools under the compulsory education regulation and consider setting up government preschools,

- (e) Abolish the practice of corporal punishment in schools and impose alternative forms of discipline for students.

6. Rights to employment

- i. Recommendations 43, 44 and 47 require the government to abolish all provisions of laws and regulations that do not provide equal rights to women, amend laws and change policies and practices that either expressly discriminate against or perpetuate discrimination and the marginalization of women and approve laws and implement programs that ensure the elimination of gender inequality, in particular, access to dignified working conditions, credit, land ownership and basic social services.
- ii. AMAK thanked the government for being prepared to consider these recommendations but is concerned that:-
 - (a) The government rejected the Bill to amend the Constitution to include sex, gender and sexual orientation as grounds for discrimination introduced privately by a Member of Parliament in the last parliament session, April 2014,
 - (b) Although the Employment (Amendment) Act 2008 prohibits discrimination against sex, this law prohibits women from manual labor jobs and the restricts the hours of work for women,
 - (c) There remains an inconsistency between the Employment Act and the National Conditions of Service (NCS) on the provision of maternity leave. Both allows 6 weeks leave before birth and 6 weeks after and also allow paid maternity leaves for 2 occasions only however the Act allows maternity leaves with 25% deduction to women's salary for the 3 and continuous births while the NCS allows the leave without pay,
 - (d) There are restrictions on the recruitment of women as police officers and it has been observed that although the intake is by merit, this requirement does not extend to women.

7. Recommendation

AMAK recommends that the government considers:-

- (a) Accepting the recommendations and set a plan for implementation of such recommendations and others as well. The NGOs must be involved in this planning and the implementation progress.
- (b) Amending the Constitution to include sex and gender as a prohibited ground of discrimination. This must commence within 3 years of this review.
- (c) Amend the Employment Act and the NCS to consistently provide the same maternity leave and to abolish the restriction of the number of paid maternity leaves. Furthermore, the government must consider allowing the same benefit to adoptive mothers and extends it to allow men to take paternity leaves,
- (d) Reviewing and reforming the recruitment policy or strategy of the Kiribati Police Service. Merits must be given to both men and women equally.

8. Domestic violence

- i. Recommendations 45, 58 and 59 require the government to amend its laws, including the Bill of Rights, to protect against discrimination on the basis of sex and to prohibit violence against women, including domestic violence, make available better support networks to protect women victims and proceed with the National Plans of Action on disabilities and eliminating violence against women.
- ii. AMAK thanked the government for being prepared to consider recommendation 45 and accepting recommendations 58 and 59 but is concerned that:-
 - (a) The new Family Peace Act (2014) has not been assented by the President after passing in April 2014 and the government has no implementation plan for this most needed Act,

- (b) The government's National Policy and Action Plan to Eliminate Sexual and Gender Based Violence (2011 -2021 which has been finalized and the Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy which is still in draft form, are different instrument with similar objectives. Having separate instruments will cause duplication and lack of coordination on the work to eliminate violence against women,
- (c) Commitments and motivation of partners especially from the government organization in providing assistance under the SAFENET is lacking. The government' technical and financial support to NGOs partners is also insufficient,
- (d) The establishment of a Gender Based Violence Unit at the Ministry of Health and Medical Services means another development on the area of domestic violence particularly however there is no clear referral system for domestic violence cases between the police and medical workers, there is no specialized trained doctors or nurses to do the medical checkup, no private clinics for such sensitive cases or counselors for the victims.

9. Recommendation

AMAK recommends that the government considers:-

- (a) Accepting recommendation 45 and set a plan for implementation of such recommendations and others as well. The NGOs must be involved in this planning and the implementation progress,
- (b) Assenting the Family Peace Act (2014) and developing a National Action Implementation Plan which should include training for the police, judiciary, education, health and all stakeholders under the Act to implement the Act. Alternatively, the government may consider incorporating the plan into the existing finalized Plan on Sexual and Gender Based Violence,
- (c) Reviewing all existing policies and plans that relates to sexual, gender and domestic violence and incorporate and synchronized them for better coordination,
- (d) Review the SAFENET operation procedures or protocols to study the partners' commitment and capacity. This review must also identify the officers within the government partners who has the commitment and the motivation to work under the SAFENET,
- (e) Consider providing expanding the Gender Based Violence Unit within the Ministry of Health and Medical Services to include a comprehensive service for victims of domestic and sexual violence that respects the sensitivity of their case and experiences.

10. Participation in political life

- i. Recommendation 12 requires the government to guarantee that its laws and policies are in conformity with the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women and to take measures to combat practices that perpetuate discrimination against women and their marginalization, particularly with regard to their inheritance and citizenship, and adopt specific legislation properly penalizing domestic violence and promoting the participation of women in political life.
- ii. AMAK thanked the government for being prepared to consider this recommendation but is concerned that:-
 - (a) There are only 4 women out of 46 members of parliament and 7 out of 232 councilors at the Local government,
 - (b) The difference in the number of women in parliament and local government compared to men demonstrates persistent gender discrimination and the government has not agreed to introduce or impose a Temporary Special Measure to reserve seats for women to compete for these political positions.

11. Recommendation

AMAK recommends that the government:-

- (a) Confirms its acceptance of the recommendation,
- (b) Consider imposing a Temporary Special Measure to reserve seats for women to compete for parliament and the local government.

12. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground.

- i. Recommendation 1 requires the government to establish a committee to study human rights conventions to pave the way for acceding to such conventions.
- ii. AMAK thanked the government for accepting the recommendation and further highlighted in response to the UPR working group that the State Report on the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) will be finalized before the end of 2010, but is concerned that:-
 - (a) The CEDAW report has not been finalized. As of the 5th of June 2014, the CEDAW initial report was due in 2005, the second periodic report was due in 2009 and the third periodic report was due in March 2014,
 - (b) The State Report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) had been submitted in 2005 after a delay of 10 years and now, as of the 5th of June 2014, the second report was overdue in 2011,
 - (c) The only CRC report submitted in 2005 was from the State and this demonstrates the lack of awareness by the NGOs and dissemination of information, networking and partnership on the part of the government,
 - (d) The State Report on the Convention on the Rights of People with Disability will due in 2015 but for this convention, delay may also happen.

13. Recommendations:

AMAK recommends that the government considers:

- (a) Synchronizing the work on the CEDAW, CRC and CRPD reports and complete the CEDAW and CRC reports by the end of 2014 and have the CRPD ready by 2015,
- (b) Incorporating the Kiribati CEDAW Advisory Committee, the Kiribati National Advisory Committee on Children and the Kiribati Non-Government Organisations, Faith-Based Organisations and Disability Advisory Committee for better coordination of the work on reporting and implementation of the CEDAW, CRC and CRPD,
- (c) Strengthening its partnership with NGOs and cooperation in the reporting as well as the implementation processes,
- (d) Supporting and providing opportunities in terms of trainings and workshop, to enhance the capacity of NGOs to report on the respective conventions.

14. Climate change

- i. Recommendation 81 requires the government to study the possibility of developing a national environment charter or similar instrument to define the role and responsibility as well as the coordination of action by all relevant parties including civil societies.
- ii. AMAK thanked the government for accepting this recommendation but is concerned that although NGOs and civil societies are involved or consulted in the formulation of the national policies and frameworks on climate change, there are not enough trainings and opportunities for capacity building on climate change the implementation of the policies or frameworks.

15. Recommendation

AMAK recommends that the government strengthen the involvement of NGOs and civil societies in the formulation of national policies and frameworks on climate change and provide opportunities for trainings and capacity building on climate change and implementation.