

Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 35th Session

Universal Periodic Review of Kiribati

Statement by Australia

20 January 2020

Thank you, [President/Vice President]

Australia commends Kiribati on its efforts to strengthen human rights, including development of a *National Youth Policy*, *National Disability Policy*, and *National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development*. We also acknowledge the progress Kiribati has made in expanding access to essential services – particularly education and health.

Australia commends the steps taken to reduce violence against women and girls, and notes this remains a significant challenge within the existing criminal justice framework.

Australia recommends that Kiribati:

1. Carries out, in full, the *Family Peace Act (2014)* Implementation Plan in order to counter domestic violence and support survivors.
2. Enacts legislation to strengthen criminal procedures, police powers and evidence laws relating to all forms of violence against women and girls, and ensures that survivors have access to legal safeguards including protection orders and civil orders.
3. Ensures universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is incorporated into the next *National Development Plan for 2021 – 2025*, consistent with UNFPA technical guidelines.
4. Repeals sections 153 – 155 of the Penal Code and decriminalises all forms of consensual sexual relations between adults, including between adults of the same sex.

[191 words]