



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Thirty-third session

Summary record of the 799th meeting*

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 19 August 2025, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Kim Mi Yeon

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* No summary record was issued for the 798th meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 35 of the Convention (continued)

Initial report of Kiribati (continued) (CRPD/C/KIR/1; CRPD/C/KIR/Q/1; CRPD/C/KIR/RQ/1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Kiribati joined the meeting via video link.*

Articles 10–20

2. **Mr. Tamon** (Country Task Force) said that he wished to know what practical measures were being taken, in particular in connection with citizenship and immigration laws, to ensure that persons with disabilities could exercise their rights to citizenship of the State Party on a basis of equality with others. He wished to know, too, what was being done to ensure that persons with disabilities had access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance, that they themselves managed. In addition, he wondered what steps were being taken to raise awareness of the availability of the age-, gender- and impairment-sensitive support services that would enable persons with disabilities to live independently in the community.

3. **A representative of Kiribati** said that one recent step that had been taken to promote independent living was the adoption of a plan, which would be implemented later in the year, to deliver the disability support allowance to beneficiaries' homes. Ways of increasing awareness of the services available to persons with disabilities would be considered, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, as part of the upcoming review of the Kiribati National Disability Policy.

4. **A representative of Kiribati** said that anyone, including persons adopted by nationals of Kiribati, could apply to become a citizen of Kiribati. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration made the decisions on naturalization applications.

5. **Mr. Tamon** said that he would welcome more information on the measures that had been taken to increase the budget for the provision of mobility aids and other assistive devices or technologies to persons with disabilities. In particular, he wondered what was done to secure funds from international partners with a view to ensuring that wheelchairs, for example, were available to such persons.

6. **A representative of Kiribati** said that the Government set aside around \$180,000 a year to ensure that wheelchairs, walking aids, prosthetic limbs and other mobility aids were available to the people who needed them. Because of the high demand for such aids, the Government had maintained partnerships with international donors such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Wheelchairs for Kids Australia, a charity established with the assistance of Rotary International. Those partnerships had made it possible to distribute around 300 wheelchairs and 70 prostheses a year.

7. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** (Country Task Force) asked whether there was an emergency telephone number and, if so, whether it was accessible to persons with disabilities, persons who were deaf or hard of hearing in particular.

8. **Ms. Jacobs** said that she wished to know what the local cultural sterilization methods were that, according to the State Party's initial report, were potentially being used in close-knit family units, whether any steps were being taken to ensure that no one was subjected to such sterilization without consent and, more broadly, what changes were being made to the approaches that had been taken within the framework of the Eliminating Sexual and Gender-based Violence Policy and National Action Plan 2011–2021.

9. **Ms. Gamio Ríos** said that it would be helpful to know whether SafeNet, a grouping of front-line providers of services to survivors of domestic violence, was accessible to deaf persons and persons with intellectual disabilities.

10. **A representative of Kiribati** said that, although a number of emergency phone lines had been set up, they were not yet accessible to callers who were hard of hearing.

11. **A representative of Kiribati** said that the Eliminating Sexual and Gender-based Violence Policy and National Action Plan, to which a draft revision had been made in 2023, would address attitudes and assumptions about the sexuality of persons with disabilities.

12. **Ms. Kayess** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that she wondered why sterilization or the prevention of pregnancy was seen as a means of preventing gender-based violence.

13. **A representative of Kiribati** said that there was an after-hours phone line for callers who were experiencing mental health emergencies. Victims of gender-based violence, for their part, were admitted to hospitals for emergency medical assessments. There, they were given a medical report that they could submit to the law enforcement authorities or the courts and, if necessary, medication to prevent unwanted pregnancy.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 10.45 a.m.

Articles 21–30

14. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that the delegation could elaborate on the measures that were being taken to ensure that persons with disabilities on the outer islands had access to information and could communicate with the authorities. In particular, she wondered how deaf persons and persons with intellectual disabilities could get the information they needed, especially in the event of disasters or other emergencies, and how they could make their views known.

15. **A representative of Kiribati** said that the administrative social welfare officers of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs facilitated the provision of information to the residents, including persons with disabilities, of the outer islands. Efforts were still being made to ensure that newspapers and news broadcasts were made available in formats accessible in particular to persons with visual impairments or who were hard of hearing.

16. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she wondered what measures had been taken – in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, for example – to ensure that the constitutional right to privacy of such persons was respected.

17. **A representative of Kiribati** said that all individuals in his country had the right to privacy and other constitutionally guaranteed rights. Everyone was equal before the law.

18. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she would nonetheless welcome specific examples of action that was taken to ensure that persons with disabilities were not subjected to violations of their right to privacy.

19. **A representative of Kiribati** said that measures taken to protect the privacy of persons with psychosocial disabilities receiving mental healthcare services included conducting initial assessments in closed rooms and maintaining the confidentiality of information provided by recipients of care.

20. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she wished to know what steps the State Party had taken to ensure that persons with disabilities were able to enjoy their rights in relation to marriage, family and parenthood on an equal footing with others. She would particularly like to hear about measures taken to remove barriers to the enjoyment of those rights by persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities.

21. **A representative of Kiribati** said that there had been a debate on whether persons with psychosocial disabilities should undergo sterilization, but it was their right to decide whether or not they wished to undergo that procedure. While, in some cases, babies born to unmarried women with disabilities had been cared for by their mothers' families, in others, it had been necessary for such children to be placed with foster parents.

22. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she would appreciate more information on how the rights of persons with disabilities in relation to marriage, family and parenthood were upheld, whether persons with disabilities who disagreed with measures taken could lodge complaints in a disability-inclusive and accessible process and how it was ensured that such complaints were duly considered.

23. **A representative of Kiribati** said that, under the Family Peace Act, applications for domestic violence protection orders – which courts must hear as a priority – could be filed on behalf of persons with disabilities who were unable to file such applications themselves.

24. **A representative of Kiribati** said that, in 2024, a young woman with a psychosocial disability had complained that she had been sexually assaulted. The authorities had responded to her complaint by carrying out a physical examination, which had confirmed the assault, and the case had been referred to the police for further investigation.

25. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she would welcome information, if available, on the number of complaints made by persons with disabilities that had been followed up on by the police and referred to the courts and on any mechanisms that had been set up to monitor the handling of such complaints.

26. She wished to know what steps the State Party would take to transition from using special schools to more inclusive approaches to provide children with disabilities, particularly those living on the outer islands, with high-quality education on an equal footing with others. She would be interested to know whether the State Party monitored and followed up on the educational attainment of children with disabilities.

27. **A representative of Kiribati** said that, while Kiribati had made important progress in providing children with disabilities with inclusive education, it continued to face significant challenges in that area. The Inclusive Education Policy served as a guiding framework for ensuring that children with disabilities fully enjoyed the right to education, while one of the objectives of the Education Sector Strategic Plan for the period 2024–2027 was ensuring the provision of high-quality and inclusive education. In 2017, 25 teaching assistants had been trained at Kiribati Teachers' College to work in inclusive classrooms. In 2018, the number of model inclusion schools had been increased to nine – four primary schools, two junior secondary schools and three senior secondary schools. In 2019, a course on inclusive education and student well-being that had been developed by specialists in inclusive education at the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia had been introduced and was now compulsory for all teachers. While programmes for children with disabilities were conducted on the outer islands, a lack of resources, particularly human resources, was impeding efforts to provide children with disabilities living on those islands with inclusive education, with the result that they were still obliged to attend the special school in South Tarawa.

28. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she would like to hear what the State Party intended to do to improve the situation for children with disabilities living on the outer islands.

29. **A representative of Kiribati** said that the Ministry of Education planned to set up model inclusion schools on the outer islands if it was able to obtain the necessary funding.

30. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she wished to know how the State Party ensured that persons with psychosocial disabilities, including those living on the outer islands, enjoyed access to healthcare on an equal footing with others and how persons with those disabilities and their representative organizations had been involved in efforts to ensure that they did. She wondered what steps had been taken and what progress had been achieved in implementing the recommendations on health services and the alignment of mental health laws with the Convention that had been issued by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific following its legislative review in 2022.

31. **A representative of Kiribati** said that, in addition to drafting the mental health bill in line with the Convention, the Government had recently launched the National Health Strategic Plan for the period 2024–2027, whose objectives included improving healthcare services and access to them for persons with disabilities and persons who lived on the outer islands. In 2024, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services had established a multidisciplinary mobile team comprising specialists from different medical fields, including mental healthcare, with a view to providing improved assessment, care and treatment services for all persons with disabilities. The team had been deployed to three islands since 2024. The Ministry also had a mental healthcare outreach team that conducted awareness-raising, screening and case management activities.

32. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she wished to know whether the State Party planned to improve the availability of habilitation and rehabilitation services, particularly on the outer islands, including by improving the availability and affordability of assistive technologies and associated support and repair services.

33. **A representative of Kiribati** said that a number of measures had been taken to improve habilitation and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities in Kiribati. As part of efforts to decentralize such services to better meet the needs of persons with disabilities living in the Line and Phoenix Islands, a rehabilitation centre had been set up on the island of Kiritimati and a specialist in prosthetics and orthotics had been deployed there since 2019. Equipment had been obtained for the centre, and relevant personnel were waiting for housing to become available on the island so that they could relocate there. Attempts to provide persons with disabilities in Kiribati with assistive devices had been hampered by a lack of appropriate storage facilities, which had prevented the Government from procuring such devices in bulk, while a number of donated devices had become unusable due to improper storage. Working with partners, the Government had made efforts to obtain and adapt storage containers in which stocks of such devices could be kept. Almost all rehabilitation service staff had received basic training in working with wheelchair users, and some staff had received more advanced training that they were now passing on to their colleagues. Such training had recently been provided with the assistance of experts from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

34. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she would appreciate more information on the availability, affordability, use and maintenance of assistive devices that did not require large amounts of storage space, such as screen readers, hearing aids and devices facilitating alternative and augmentative communication.

35. **A representative of Kiribati** said that hearing aids, most of which were donated by visiting teams, were provided to hard-of-hearing persons by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services. The Ministry did not currently provide screen readers or devices facilitating alternative and augmentative communication but planned to do so in the future.

36. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she would welcome an explanation as to how legislation on the protection of persons with disabilities from discrimination in employment had been aligned with the Convention. She wondered how persons with disabilities in employment were able to exercise their right to enjoy reasonable accommodation in both the private and public sectors. She wished to know what measures the State Party had planned to increase the number of persons with disabilities employed in the open labour market and in the public sector.

37. **A representative of Kiribati** said that most employers in the private sector did not currently provide reasonable accommodation. In response, a national employment policy had been developed under which the Building Code would be reviewed with a view to improving its requirements on the provision of such accommodation in the private and public sectors.

38. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she would like to know whether, particularly in the public sector, any efforts had been made to provide reasonable accommodation beyond alterations to physical working environments, for example, through the adaptation of schedules or the use of assistive technology.

39. **A representative of Kiribati** said that the Employment and Industrial Relations Code provided that employers must provide reasonable accommodation when employing persons with disabilities. Such accommodation could include both alterations to the physical environment, such as the installation of ramps, and the provision of services such as sign language interpretation. The national employment policy included plans to strengthen the provision of all types of reasonable accommodation.

40. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she wished to know what steps the State Party had taken to fulfil its commitment to incrementally and sustainably developing social protection and poverty alleviation strategies for persons with disabilities, including by helping to cover extra costs associated with disabilities, and the results of those efforts. She wondered how persons with disabilities and their representative organizations had been involved in designing such programmes and which organizations had taken part in that process. She

would appreciate more details about the process used to assess the eligibility of applicants for social assistance for persons with disabilities and the qualifications of the professionals who performed such assessments.

41. **A representative of Kiribati** said that recipients of the disability support allowance received financial support on a monthly basis. Persons who had been diagnosed as having a psychosocial disability and who had been receiving treatment were eligible to receive the allowance if, as a result of their condition, they had been out of work for longer than six months. Assessments related to mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities were conducted by a psychiatrist.

42. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she would like to know whether steps had been taken to determine the impact of the disability allowance on the lives of persons with disabilities, in particular whether it was sufficient to lift them out of poverty and enable them to afford personal assistants or assistive devices. She wondered whether assessments of individuals with psychosocial disabilities were conducted solely by psychiatrists or by multidisciplinary teams .

43. **A representative of Kiribati** said that persons with disabilities were free to choose how they spent the disability allowance. The Government planned to introduce a mechanism to monitor the impact of the allowance once it had secured the necessary financial support.

44. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that the delegation might describe whether the State Party intended to improve the accessibility of polling stations and electoral information and address the other barriers faced by persons with disabilities who wished to vote. She was keen to learn about any reasonable accommodation made for persons with disabilities for whom polling stations and electoral information remained inaccessible. It would be helpful to know whether the voting rights of persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities were restricted and whether steps had been taken to ensure that electoral rules were aligned with the Convention.

45. **A representative of Kiribati** said that the Election Commission had taken steps to guarantee the participation of persons with disabilities in recent elections, with a view to ensuring that they had equal opportunities to exercise their right to vote. Persons with disabilities who were unable to vote without assistance were entitled to authorize their next of kin to cast the vote on their behalf. Such persons were visited at home in order to obtain their consent to the assisted voting procedure.

46. **A representative of Kiribati** said that individuals with psychosocial disabilities were entitled to vote provided that their mental condition was stable. Those who were housed in care institutions were transported to polling stations so that they could vote.

47. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she would be grateful for more information on what had been done to guarantee that persons with disabilities were able to participate in cultural, recreational, leisure and sporting activities on an equal footing with others. Details of any steps taken towards the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled would also be welcome.

48. **A representative of Kiribati** said that the national paralympic committee, the members of which included persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, was working to develop the range of inclusive sporting activities available. Efforts were being made to secure more funding for such activities and promote the participation of persons with disabilities in sport. The participation of persons with disabilities in cultural life was also being enhanced. The matter of the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty remained under consideration by the Government.

49. **Ms. Gamio Ríos** said that she wished to know whether the State Party made sufficient financial support available to families in which at least one parent or child had a disability, with a view to preventing the children concerned from being separated from their parents. It would be interesting to learn how many young people with disabilities had participated in the “Yes I do” programme, the aim of which was to eliminate domestic violence, and what impact that programme had had. In that connection, she was curious to know what had been

done to raise awareness among persons of disabilities of the various protection programmes available to them.

50. **Ms. Fefoame** said that she would appreciate information on the measures taken to ensure that women and girls with disabilities had access to sexual and reproductive health education. In view of reports that girls had been abused on their way to and from school, she wished to hear about what had been done to prevent that abuse and what mechanisms were in place for reporting and addressing such incidents. An indication of the number of deafblind students who attended inclusive schools would be welcome.

51. **Ms. Gabriili** asked whether, given that persons with disabilities were disproportionately affected by climate change and sea level rise, the State Party had taken steps to develop adaptation and mitigation programmes that focused specifically on improving the living conditions of such persons.

52. **A representative of Kiribati** said that the Youth Division of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs ran sexual and reproductive health programmes in schools, as part of which students were taught how to prevent pregnancy and made aware of the channels through which they could seek advice. It was hoped that the programme, which was currently being run in schools in the capital city, would eventually be rolled out on all the islands. The Ministry had also established specific pathways for reporting any abuse against children, including those with disabilities.

53. **A representative of Kiribati** said that a programme to promote gender equality and respectful behaviour that contributed to the development of safe learning environments was being rolled out in schools throughout the country.

54. **A representative of Kiribati** said that the Kiribati National Experts Group provided police officers with technical and strategic advice on managing climate change and disaster risk. An island disaster committee comprising local councillors, police officers, social workers and medical personnel had been set up to address any disasters that occurred on the outer islands and report them to the capital-based authorities.

55. **Ms. Kayess** said that the delegation might confirm whether responsibility for running the special education school for children with disabilities was being transferred to the Ministry of Education and, if so, whether the Ministry would draw on the expertise of staff at that school to develop inclusive schools throughout the State Party, including on the outer islands. She wondered whether assistive devices were provided free of charge to all persons with disabilities, not just those who were currently receiving rehabilitation services, and whether they could also be repaired and updated free of charge.

56. **Ms. Dondovdorj** said that she wished to know what concrete steps had been taken to strengthen the recognition of Kiribati Sign Language and increase the availability of sign language interpreters. It would be useful, too, to learn whether the development of an inclusive information technology programme had helped improve the accessibility of public information. With regard to education, she was keen to know whether reasonable accommodation was provided to ensure that children with disabilities were able to attend school.

57. **Mr. Nwanoro** said that he wished to know what proportion of persons with disabilities in the State Party were employed and whether there was a specific unemployment allowance for unemployed persons with disabilities. It would also be useful to learn more about the measures in place to enable all persons with disabilities to vote in elections, including measures to improve the accessibility of polling places and voting procedures. In that regard, he wondered how many persons with disabilities held elective positions.

58. **Mr. Makni** said that he would welcome information on the steps taken to ensure the involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities in internationally-funded development projects and on the outcomes of such projects for persons with disabilities themselves, in particular in terms of employment. He, too, would welcome detailed information on the allowances available to persons with disabilities, including confirmation as to whether eligibility for disability-related allowances was conditional on being unemployed.

59. **Mr. Corporán Lorenzo** said that he wished to know whether there were public guidelines on the provision and use of wheelchairs and whether persons with disabilities were involved directly in mobility assessment processes concerning them. He also wished to know whether tourist sites and tourist activities were accessible to persons with disabilities.

60. **A representative of Kiribati** said that the special school was currently run as a non-governmental organization and had not yet been registered by the Ministry of Education. The Government collaborated with the school to support the transition, where appropriate, of children from the special school to mainstream schools, where they were treated equally. The families of children who wished to transition to a mainstream school must provide a valid birth certificate to confirm their child's identity and age, a medical report from a qualified doctor recommending necessary accommodations and academic information from the special school. Following the transition process, additional teaching assistance and assistive devices were provided. Students with disabilities were granted extra time during examinations to ensure fairness.

61. **A representative of Kiribati** said that prescriptions for assistive devices, including wheelchairs, were issued after a full evaluation by trained rehabilitation staff, such as physiotherapists and prosthetists. Wheelchairs were properly sized and fitted to ensure they were comfortable and safe, and they could be customized to meet specific needs. Training was provided for both users and caregivers on how to use the wheelchair, carry out safe transfers and apply mobility techniques. Maintenance and repairs were handled by service providers free of charge to keep the devices functional and safe.

62. **A representative of Kiribati** said that measures were being taken to promote the recognition and use of Kiribati Sign Language. Funding was being sought to strengthen training in the language, which would be delivered by the Kiribati Deaf Association for front-line service providers and staff of the Disability Inclusion Division with the aim of improving their communication skills and facilitating the delivery of services.

63. **A representative of Kiribati** said that there were currently no accurate figures available on the number of persons with disabilities employed in the private sector. The National Statistics Office was planning to carry out a labour survey in late 2025, subject to funding availability. The National Employment Policy promoted job opportunities for persons with disabilities, and there were plans to introduce a quota for the employment of persons with disabilities in every workplace.

64. **A representative of Kiribati** said that a disability-friendly approach had been introduced to election processes, including home visits for individuals who could not travel to a polling station. For voters with speech or hearing impairments, sign language interpreters were provided to assist during voting. While improvements were still needed, efforts were under way to make elections more inclusive, subject to the availability of funding.

65. Persons with disabilities received a monthly allowance based on four categories of severity of disability, ranging from \$50 per month for the mildest disabilities to \$80 per month for those with the most severe disabilities. They could receive the disability allowance concurrently with other benefits, such as the unemployment allowance – \$150 every three months, until the age of 59 – and the senior citizens allowance – \$200 per month, from the age of 60.

66. Integrated climate-risk vulnerability assessments had been conducted on the outer islands and South Tarawa, covering the specific challenges faced by persons with disabilities and providing strategies for cost-effective protection against climate risks. Consultations and awareness-raising activities had also been conducted to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all climate change-related processes.

67. **A representative of Kiribati** said that the Building Code had been incorporated into domestic legislation, thereby ensuring compliance with accessibility requirements in the tourism sector.

68. **A representative of Kiribati** said that her country had made significant strides in promoting accessibility, education, healthcare and legal protections for persons with disabilities. Challenges persisted, but with the sustained financial support and technical assistance of its regional partners, the Government planned to allocate more resources to

disability-inclusive programmes and services and work closely with civil society to ensure that the voices of persons with disabilities were heard and represented in decision-making processes, to advance the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in Kiribati.

69. **Mr. Tamon** said that he wished to thank the delegation for its cooperation in the constructive dialogue. Progress had indeed been made but there was a need to accelerate the implementation of the Convention through legislative and policy changes and to promote the meaningful participation of organizations of persons with disabilities in decision-making and monitoring. He hoped that the Committee's recommendations would be acted on promptly.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.