



# Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General  
26 September 2025

Original: English

---

## Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### Concluding observations on the initial report of Kiribati\*

#### I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Kiribati<sup>1</sup> at its 797th and 799th meetings,<sup>2</sup> held on 18 and 19 August 2025. It adopted the present concluding observations at its 806th meeting, held on 22 August 2025.
2. The Committee welcomes the initial report of Kiribati, which was prepared in accordance with the Committee's reporting guidelines, and thanks the State Party for its written replies<sup>3</sup> to the list of issues prepared by the Committee.<sup>4</sup>
3. The Committee appreciates the fruitful and sincere dialogue, held online, with the State Party's delegation, which included representatives of the relevant government ministries.

#### II. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the legislative, administrative and policy measures taken by the State Party to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and to implement the Convention since its accession in 2013, in particular the following:
  - (a) The adoption of the Inclusive Education Policy, in 2015;
  - (b) The establishment of the Disability Inclusive Unit in the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs, in 2015;
  - (c) The adoption of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code, in 2016;
  - (d) The introduction of the Disability Support Allowance, in 2017;
  - (e) The adoption of an implementation plan for the Te Rau N Te Mwenga Act (Family Peace Act), in 2017;
  - (f) The adoption of the National Disability Policy and Action Plan 2018–2021, in 2018;
  - (g) The adoption of the Building Act, in 2024;
  - (h) The release of the Disability Monograph, in 2025.

---

\* Adopted by the Committee at its thirty-third session (11–26 August 2025).

<sup>1</sup> [CRPD/C/KIR/1](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [CRPD/C/SR.797](#) and [CRPD/C/SR.799](#).

<sup>3</sup> [CRPD/C/KIR/RQ/1](#).

<sup>4</sup> [CRPD/C/KIR/Q/1](#).



### III. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

#### A. General principles and obligations (arts. 1–4)

5. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) Despite several constitutional reviews, disability has not been included as a ground for discrimination under section 15 or as a protected category under section 3;

(b) The recommendations from the 2022 legislative review conducted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) have not been implemented;

(c) The stand-alone Disability Inclusion Bill has not been enacted;

(d) The updated National Disability Policy and Action Plan 2023–2026 remains under revision and there is insufficient disability-specific budget allocation, monitoring, coordination and collaboration across ministries to ensure a whole-of-government approach to its implementation;

(e) The State Party has not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

6. **The Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Amend the Constitution to ensure that disability is included as a ground for discrimination and as a protected category;**

(b) **Implement the recommendations of the 2022 ESCAP legislative review by progressively adopting, repealing or amending domestic legislation and policy frameworks to ensure harmonization with the Convention;**

(c) **Enact stand-alone legislation on disability inclusion to translate Convention provisions into the legal framework;**

(d) **Finalize the revision of the National Disability Policy and Action Plan 2023–2026, ensure that each ministry’s budget includes a disability-specific allocation and ensure a whole-of-government approach to its implementation, including through training and skills-building on the Convention across ministries;**

(e) **Consider expediting the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.**

7. The Committee is concerned that there are insufficient mechanisms and resources across all ministries to ensure the close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, such as the Te Toa Mataoa, including in the outer islands, in all decision-making processes affecting them.

8. **The Committee recalls its general comment No. 7 (2018) on the participation of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention, and recommends that the State Party strengthen mechanisms and resources to ensure that persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, such as Te Toa Mataoa, are closely consulted and actively involved in decision-making processes affecting them, including in the design, implementation and review of national policies, such as the National Disability Policy and Action Plan 2023–2026, the Disability Inclusion Bill and the Kiribati 20-Year Vision 2016–2036.**

#### B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)

##### **Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)**

9. The Committee is concerned about the prevalence of inequality and discrimination experienced by all persons with disabilities throughout Kiribati, the lack of

anti-discrimination protections and redress and the fact that the denial of reasonable accommodation is not understood as discrimination or proscribed by law.

**10. The Committee recalls its general comment No. 6 (2018) on equality and non-discrimination, and targets 10.2 and 10.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, develop and adopt an anti-discrimination framework that prohibits all forms of disability-based discrimination, including the denial of reasonable accommodation and intersectional discrimination, and provides persons with disabilities who are victims of discrimination with legal remedies, redress and support.**

#### **Women with disabilities (art. 6)**

11. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The insufficient inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in the design and implementation of gender programmes and policies, such as the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development 2019–2022, in all consultation and decision-making processes affecting women and in the programmes and activities of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs;

(b) The lack of support and resources for women and girls with disabilities to be able to participate and engage, through their representative organizations, in consultations, programmes and activities, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation and accessible processes and events.

**12. The Committee recalls its general comment No. 3 (2016) on women and girls with disabilities, and targets 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Develop strategies and protocols for the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in the design and implementation of gender programmes and policies, in all consultation and decision-making processes affecting women and in the programmes and activities of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs;**

(b) **Work in partnership with and provide sufficient resources to women and girls with disabilities, through their representative organizations, to facilitate participation in consultations, programmes and activities, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation and accessible processes and events.**

#### **Children with disabilities (art. 7)**

13. The Committee notes with concern the insufficient inclusion of children with disabilities in the design and implementation of policies and programmes focused on children and young people, including the National Youth Policy and Action Plan 2018–2022, and those focused on disability, including the National Disability Policy and Action Plan.

**14. Recalling its joint statement, issued in 2022, with the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee recommends that the State Party develop a comprehensive disability-inclusive child rights policy and strategic plan to consolidate and take action to advance the rights of all children throughout the State Party, including through mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in the design and implementation of policies and programmes focused on children and on disability.**

#### **Awareness-raising (art. 8)**

15. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The high prevalence of stigmatization, prejudice, stereotyping and harmful attitudes, which have a detrimental impact on the lives of children and adults with disabilities throughout the State Party;

(b) The insufficient inclusion of organizations of persons with disabilities in awareness-raising activities, and cases where organizations of persons with disabilities were named in grant applications but subsequently were not included in the activity for which the funding was granted.

**16. The Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Develop an awareness-raising action plan, with adequate resources, time frames and measurable outcomes, to implement the awareness-raising priority area of the National Disability Policy and Action Plan with a view to facilitating understanding of the Convention and countering stigmatization, prejudice, stereotyping and harmful attitudes at the family, church and community levels across all islands;**

(b) **Ensure that awareness-raising on the rights of persons with disabilities is delivered with adequate resources and in partnership with persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations.**

#### **Accessibility (art. 9)**

17. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The fact that, despite the adoption of the Building Act in 2024 and the completion of a national accessibility audit, most existing public buildings, including courthouses, healthcare facilities and schools, and housing remain inaccessible, and that there is no clear plan, budget or time frame for their renovation;

(b) The absence of accessibility standards and measures for public transport and information and communications technology, and the lack of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with existing accessibility requirements.

**18. Recalling its general comment No. 2 (2014) on accessibility and Sustainable Development Goal 9 and targets 11.2 and 11.7 of the Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Promote the principle of universal design in the revised National Disability Policy and Action Plan;**

(b) **Expedite the renovation of existing public buildings, as identified in the national accessibility audit, to bring them into compliance with accessibility standards;**

(c) **Collaborate with the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility, donors and development partners on technical assistance to develop transport accessibility legislation and standards to address the inaccessibility of transport and associated sea, land and air infrastructure;**

(d) **Develop accessibility legislation, standards and compliance mechanisms for information and communications technology, including for emergency phone lines;**

(e) **Develop and implement procurement policies that ensure that contracts and donor partnership agreements include disability-inclusive provisions for compliance with accessibility requirements and the principle of universal design.**

#### **Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11)**

19. The Committee recognizes the vulnerability of the State Party to the impact of climate change and disasters and notes with concern:

(a) The insufficient attention paid to the situation of persons with disabilities in the Climate Change Policy, the Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan and disaster legislation.

(b) The lack of disability-inclusive measures in disaster preparedness and response, including accessible early warning systems, evacuation services and shelters, and reports that humanitarian aid, including food, clean drinking water and proper sanitation, is not available to persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

20. Recalling the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and the Committee's guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:

(a) Ensure the inclusion of a disability perspective in all national frameworks on climate change and disaster risk reduction, including the Climate Change Policy, the Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan and disaster legislation, to safeguard the rights and livelihoods of persons with disabilities;

(b) Ensure that persons with disabilities have access to humanitarian aid on an equal basis with others, including through adequate funding, and that related information and communications are accessible to persons with disabilities, including with regard to protocols for evacuation in situations of risk, humanitarian emergencies and disasters, evacuation centres, emergency relief assistance, early warning systems, community needs assessments, assistive devices, sanitation facilities and decision-making processes.

#### **Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)**

21. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The absence of effective law and policy guarantees to ensure that persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, can exercise their legal capacity on an equal basis with others;

(b) The lack of supported decision-making mechanisms and services, which results in reliance on substitute decision-making by families and others.

22. Recalling its general comment No. 1 (2014) on equal recognition before the law, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:

(a) Review national legislation to ensure that persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, are not deprived of their legal capacity in practice;

(b) Establish supported decision-making mechanisms and services that ensure the provision of individualized support and respect for the autonomy, will and preferences of persons with disabilities;

(c) Develop awareness-raising campaigns and capacity-building programmes for all stakeholders, including the families of persons with disabilities, community members, healthcare professionals, public officials, the media, the judiciary and members of parliament on the recognition in practice of the legal capacity of persons with disabilities and on supported decision-making;

(d) Ensure the effective, independent participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the reform process and in the training of relevant personnel in the recognition of the legal capacity of persons with disabilities and in the mechanisms of supported decision-making;

(e) Organize and provide resources for the development of information on supported decision-making, in accessible formats, including digital formats, Braille, sign language and Easy Read, to be disseminated to persons with disabilities and their families.

#### **Access to justice (art. 13)**

23. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) Barriers faced by persons with disabilities in access to justice on an equal basis with others, including the physical inaccessibility of courtrooms and other public facilities,

the absence of qualified sign language interpreters in administrative and judicial proceedings and the limited availability of documents and information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities;

(b) The lack of reasonable and procedural accommodation, in particular for persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;

(c) Insufficient knowledge, training and awareness among legal aid lawyers, police officers and members of the judiciary on working with and representing persons with disabilities.

**24. The Committee recalls the International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities and target 16.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Accelerate action to comply with the findings of the national accessibility audit by renovating existing public buildings, including courthouses, police stations and all judicial and administrative facilities, and guarantee the provision of qualified sign language interpreters and documents and information in accessible formats, including Braille, Easy Read and audio, in all judicial and administrative proceedings;**

(b) **Guarantee reasonable and procedural accommodation for persons with disabilities, particularly for persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, to enable their effective participation in all stages of judicial proceedings;**

(c) **Strengthen capacity-building programmes for the judiciary and justice-sector professionals, such as prosecutors and law enforcement officials, including police officers and prison personnel, on the provisions of the Convention and on access to justice for persons with disabilities, including on procedural accommodation for persons with disabilities.**

#### **Liberty and security of the person (art. 14)**

25. The Committee is concerned about the existence of legal provisions in the State Party, including section 5 of the Constitution, section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Mental Health Bill, that allows for persons with disabilities to be deprived of their liberty on the basis of their impairment.

**26. Recalling its guidelines on the right to liberty and security of persons with disabilities and its guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies, the Committee recommends that the State Party repeal all legal provisions and amend draft legislation that allow for the deprivation of liberty of persons with disabilities on the basis of impairment.**

#### **Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 15)**

27. The Committee is concerned about the absence of explicit safeguards to protect persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, from forced medical treatment in health facilities or in the community, about the lack of independent monitoring of facilities and community treatment orders and about the absence of accessible complaint and redress mechanisms.

**28. The Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Explicitly prohibit forced medical treatment of persons with disabilities, including community treatment orders;**

(b) **Establish an accessible monitoring and complaint mechanism with sufficient financial, human and technical resources to ensure that persons with disabilities are not subjected to forced confinement or treatment, including in the home or community, and to investigate and punish perpetrators of practices that may amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.**

**Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (art. 16)**

29. The Committee positively notes the Family Peace Act and its implementation plan and other policies and programmes to protect persons from exploitation, violence and abuse, including gender-based violence. However, it is concerned that these measures are not fully inclusive of or accessible to persons with disabilities; for instance, there is an absence of accessible shelters, counselling and complaint mechanisms, and there is limited community awareness and training of police, healthcare and social service personnel in addressing cases of violence against persons with disabilities.

30. **Recalling its statement of 25 November 2021 on the elimination of gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities, and targets 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party take a coordinated approach to address all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse experienced by persons with disabilities, including gender-based violence, by ensuring that the implementation plan for the Family Peace Act and other violence prevention mechanisms and the National Disability Policy and Action Plan are coordinated and contain measures to address the inaccessibility of shelters, counselling and complaint mechanisms and limited community awareness and training for police, healthcare and social service personnel.**

**Protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)**

31. The Committee is concerned about the limited data on the practice of forced sterilization and contraception within the State Party, including at the family level, and the absence of legal and policy measures to protect against forced sterilization and contraception.

32. **The Committee recommends that the State Party conduct research, including in the outer islands and among families, to examine the prevalence of forced sterilization and contraception and the situations in which they occur, and take all necessary legislative and policy measures to prohibit such practices.**

**Liberty of movement and nationality (art. 18)**

33. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) Persons with disabilities face barriers in obtaining birth certificates, identity documents and passports, particularly those living in the outer islands;

(b) There is a lack of reasonable accommodation in administrative procedures and limited decentralization of civil registration services.

34. **The Committee recommends that the State Party take effective measures to guarantee the full enjoyment of the rights to liberty of movement and to nationality for persons with disabilities. In particular, the State Party should:**

(a) **Ensure universal and accessible birth registration of all children with disabilities, including in the outer islands, through mobile and digital civil registration services;**

(b) **Accelerate the establishment of a national identification system that is accessible to persons with disabilities and provides for reasonable accommodation in all administrative processes;**

(c) **Decentralize access to passports and identity documents, including through mobile outreach and digital platforms, to ensure equal access for persons with disabilities in the outer islands.**

**Living independently and being included in the community (art. 19)**

35. The Committee is concerned about the limited possibilities for persons with disabilities to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live, mainly due to the absence of in-home support, personal assistance, community services and accessible housing.

36. **The Committee recalls its general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community and recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Develop national strategies and guidelines on community-based inclusive development and work with donors and development partners, faith-based organizations and community leaders to implement community-based inclusive programmes across all islands;**

(b) **Strengthen the social protection schemes, such as the Disability Support Allowance, to better cover costs associated with in-home support, personal assistance and community services;**

(c) **Support families with members with disabilities, including financially, in undertaking modifications to their homes and gaining access to assistive devices and technologies.**

#### **Personal mobility (art. 20)**

37. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The limited availability and affordability of mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, which remain largely dependent on external donor support;

(b) The lack of trained personnel for the fitting, repair and maintenance of mobility devices, the concentration of services in South Tarawa and the absence of a comprehensive national strategy to guarantee personal mobility for persons with disabilities across all islands.

38. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **In cooperation with relevant donors and development partners, take the measures necessary to facilitate access for all persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, to quality mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies at an affordable cost, particularly in the outer islands, and to provide for the fitting, repair and maintenance of these devices through the Tungaru Rehabilitation Service and community-based approaches;**

(b) **Ensure the affordability of assistive devices by introducing incentive measures, including tax and custom exemptions, for the purchase of assistive equipment and devices for persons with disabilities.**

#### **Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information (art. 21)**

39. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of recognition in law of Kiri Sign Language as an official language, the limited training in the use of sign language and the limited availability of sign language interpretation in all areas of life;

(b) The absence of legal measures for persons with disabilities to seek and receive information in accessible formats, and the gaps in providing persons with disabilities, particularly persons who are deaf, deafblind or blind and persons with intellectual disabilities, with information and support for communication;

(c) The barriers faced by persons with disabilities in gaining access to public information and communication, including information through television programmes, websites and other media services and digital means.

40. **The Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Legally recognize Kiri Sign Language as an official language, promote the use of sign language in all areas of life and ensure the training and availability of qualified sign language interpreters;**



(b) **Take legal measures to guarantee the right of persons with disabilities to seek, receive and impart information on an equal basis with others, ensuring a sufficient budget for the provision of information in accessible formats, including accessible digital formats, Braille, Easy Read, audio, captioning and augmentative and alternative communication;**

(c) **Ensure the accessibility of all public information and communication platforms, including television programmes, websites and other media services, by adopting accessibility legislation, with specific reference to accessibility standards, mandating captioning and sign language interpretation in broadcasting and ensuring compliance through monitoring mechanisms.**

#### **Respect for privacy (art. 22)**

41. The Committee is concerned about the absence of legal and policy measures to protect the privacy of persons with disabilities, particularly with regard to personal, health and rehabilitation information, and the reliance of existing safeguards on informal ethical practices rather than enforceable standards.

42. **The Committee recommends that the State Party adopt legal and policy measures guaranteeing the right to privacy of persons with disabilities, including explicit provisions on the confidentiality and protection of personal, health and rehabilitation information in the Disability Inclusion Bill and other relevant legislation, and establish clear standards and protocols for the handling of such data, including an explicit requirement to obtain the informed consent of persons with disabilities.**

#### **Respect for home and the family (art. 23)**

43. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls, face stigmatization, discrimination and barriers in exercising their rights to marry, to found a family and to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children despite the fact that there are no legal restrictions on these rights;

(b) There is a lack of accessible sexual and reproductive health services for persons with disabilities and of measures to support parents with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities, and a risk of family separation in the absence of adequate State support services.

44. **The Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Take measures to eliminate stigmatization and discrimination against persons with disabilities in marriage and family life, including through legislative measures and awareness-raising campaigns, particularly to address negative stereotypes about women and girls with disabilities;**

(b) **Ensure that sexual and reproductive health services are accessible to persons with disabilities, including through training of healthcare workers, provision of information in accessible formats and the physical accessibility of facilities;**

(c) **Develop and implement support services for parents with disabilities and for families of children with disabilities, to enable them to exercise their parental responsibilities and obligations on an equal basis with others and to ensure that children with disabilities can grow up in their families with access to appropriate community-based support.**

#### **Education (art. 24)**

45. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Many children with disabilities, particularly in the outer islands, continue to face barriers to inclusive, quality education;

(b) There is a lack of accessible school infrastructure, a limited number of teachers trained in inclusive education, insufficient accessible learning materials and inadequate provision of assistive devices;

(c) The Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs, which was established and continues to be operated by a faith-based organization, is not formally integrated into the national education system, relies heavily on external donor support and has insufficient and unstable funding, staffing and resources, which limits its capacity to provide quality education to children with disabilities and to contribute effectively to advancing inclusive education across the country.

**46. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, and target 4.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Ensure the full implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy and allocate adequate financial and human resources for its effective application on all islands;**

(b) **Allocate sufficient resources to make all schools, including those in the outer islands, physically accessible and adequately equipped by upgrading infrastructure in line with international accessibility standards, expanding teacher training in inclusive education and ensuring the provision of adequate and accessible learning materials and assistive devices, including in accessible digital formats, Braille, audio, Easy Read, and augmentative and alternative communication, and ensure that funding provided by donors is spent in a disability-inclusive manner and guarantees accessibility for persons with disabilities;**

(c) **Integrate the Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs into the formal national education system to ensure sustainable funding, adequate staffing and alignment with inclusive education policies, while at the same time strengthening the School's role in supporting and complementing inclusive education in mainstream schools, including in the outer islands;**

(d) **Closely monitor and report on the enrolment and educational attainment of all children with disabilities, evaluate the results obtained through the Inclusive Education Policy, undertake audits of school compliance with the Convention and adjust school policies to address shortcomings and improve the results.**

#### **Health (art. 25)**

47. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The limited access for persons with disabilities, particularly those living in the outer islands, to healthcare services due to the centralization of specialized services in South Tarawa;

(b) The shortage of qualified health personnel and the lack of training of healthcare professionals in the rights of persons with disabilities and inclusive practices;

(c) The limited access for persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities, to sexual and reproductive health services;

(d) Insufficient measures to ensure that the free and informed consent of persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities is required for medical treatment.

**48. Recalling targets 3.7 and 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Continue the process of decentralization and strengthening of health services to ensure equal access for persons with disabilities on all islands, including through community-based approaches such as mobile outreach teams, training of**

**primary healthcare workers and the integration of support services into local clinics and community centres;**

(b) **Increase the number of qualified healthcare personnel and provide systematic training for all healthcare professionals in the rights of persons with disabilities and inclusive practices, including communication, accessibility and the provision of reasonable accommodation;**

(c) **Ensure accessible and inclusive sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls with disabilities, including through the provision of information in accessible formats and training of health workers;**

(d) **Guarantee the right of all persons with disabilities to healthcare only with their free and informed consent, including through supported decision-making measures;**

(e) **Ensure the accessibility of health infrastructure in line with international standards, make online information accessible, provide sign language interpretation and ensure the accessibility of public transport to and from medical facilities.**

#### **Habilitation and rehabilitation (art. 26)**

49. The Committee acknowledges the establishment of the Tungaru Rehabilitation Service in 2013. However, it is concerned about:

(a) The continued centralization of rehabilitation services in South Tarawa, which creates serious barriers for persons with disabilities living in the outer islands;

(b) The shortage of qualified rehabilitation personnel, the irregularity of outreach services and the lack of integration of habilitation and rehabilitation into community-based services and the national health system.

50. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Expand and decentralize rehabilitation services beyond South Tarawa, including through mobile outreach and community-based approaches, to ensure access for persons with disabilities in the outer islands;**

(b) **Increase the number and capacity of qualified rehabilitation professionals, including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, prosthetics and orthotics specialists and psychologists, through training and retention measures, and integrate habilitation and rehabilitation into the health system and community services to ensure continuity of care and availability of assistive technologies and related professionals across all islands.**

#### **Work and employment (art. 27)**

51. The Committee notes with concern the low levels of employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, the limited measures in place to facilitate their access to employment, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation in the workplace, the lack of inclusive vocational training opportunities and the barriers created by stigmatization and inaccessible workplaces.

52. **Recalling its general comment No. 8 (2022) on the right of persons with disabilities to work and employment, and target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Adopt and enforce legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of impairment in employment, including a clear obligation for employers to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in the workplace and in all processes related to recruitment, hiring, advancement, retention and promotion, as well as safe working conditions and labour entitlements, such as insurance, paid leave, benefits and a retirement pension;**

(b) **Promote inclusive vocational training and skills development programmes that are linked to sustainable employment opportunities, including self-employment, entrepreneurship and the development of cooperatives;**

(c) **Introduce measures and incentives to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, including in the private sector, and ensure the accessibility of workplaces and work environments;**

(d) **Raise awareness of the right to work of persons with disabilities among employers and the wider public to combat stigmatization and promote the capabilities and contributions of workers with disabilities.**

#### **Adequate standard of living and social protection (art. 28)**

53. The Committee recognizes the disproportionate impact of poverty, geographical isolation and climate change on the standard of living of persons with disabilities, particularly those living in the outer islands, and notes with concern:

(a) The fact that eligibility assessments are based primarily on medical criteria and do not involve multidisciplinary teams and that different levels of allowance are granted depending on the perceived type of impairment;

(b) The insufficient social protection scheme, including the Disability Support Allowance, to ensure access for persons with disabilities and their families to an adequate standard of living;

(c) The absence of accessible housing and limited access to water and sanitation measures, particularly in the outer islands.

54. **Recalling the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals on empowering and promoting the economic inclusion of all persons, irrespective of disability status, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Review and reform the mechanisms for assessing eligibility for social welfare schemes by moving away from a medical model, involving multidisciplinary teams made up of such professionals as social workers and occupational therapists and ensuring that assessments do not discriminate between types of impairment;**

(b) **Strengthen the social protection system to guarantee an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities and to cover additional disability-related expenses, including by increasing the adequacy and coverage of the Disability Support Allowance, including for persons with disabilities living in the outer islands;**

(c) **Develop and refurbish accessible housing for persons with disabilities and ensure access to water and sanitation for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, paying particular attention to the needs of persons with disabilities in the outer islands.**

#### **Participation in political and public life (art. 29)**

55. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The limited accessibility of polling stations, voting procedures and materials and the lack of accessible election-related information, taking into account the diversity of persons with disabilities;

(b) The low level of participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life.

56. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Ensure that electoral legislation recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to vote on an equal basis with others, including by removing any limitation on the right to vote or participate in elections due to disability, including intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;**

(b) **Take targeted, adequately resourced measures to ensure access to electoral processes by persons with disabilities, including by ensuring the accessibility of polling stations, voting materials and election campaigns and the use of Braille, audiovisual materials with sign language interpretation, and other methods of communication;**

(c) **Take specific steps, including affirmative action, to increase the representation of persons with disabilities in public life, in decision-making positions and in elected political bodies.**

#### **Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (art. 30)**

57. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of policies, programmes and accessible facilities to promote access to cultural events, artistic expression, recreational activities, tourism and sports opportunities for persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, beyond those targeting persons with disabilities;

(b) The limited opportunities and support for the participation of persons with disabilities in arts and sports, including the lack of necessary devices and equipment and the insufficient support to the Kiribati National Olympic Committee for the development of inclusive sports, particularly for children with disabilities;

(c) The fact that the State Party has not yet ratified the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.

58. **The Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Allocate resources to implement policies and programmes to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in cultural, recreational, tourism and sports activities;**

(b) **Ensure the effective development and participation of persons with disabilities in sport, support those pursuing careers in the arts and sport by providing devices and equipment, and provide sufficient support to the Kiribati National Olympic Committee for the development of inclusive sports for persons with disabilities, in particular for children with disabilities;**

(c) **Ratify the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled and implement it in national law.**

### **C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)**

#### **Statistics and data collection (art. 31)**

59. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The insufficient skills in implementation of the Washington Group short set of questions on functioning and the lack of disability awareness among national statistics officers and enumerators;

(b) The limited collection and coordination of disability-related data across ministries and the insufficient analysis of data contained in the Kiribati Disability Monograph 2025 to inform resource allocation and policy measures across ministries.

60. **Recalling Sustainable Development Goal 17, in particular target 17.18 on significantly increasing the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Train and build the capacity of national statistics officers and enumerators on the implementation of the Washington Group short set of questions on functioning, disability awareness and the rights of persons with disabilities;**

(b) **Analyse the data contained in the Kiribati Disability Monograph to inform resource allocation and policy measures across all ministries, including measures within the National Disability Policy and Action Plan.**

#### **International cooperation (art. 32)**

61. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The insufficient focus in donor investment and partnerships on advancing the implementation of policies and programmes that address specific critical gaps for children and adults with disabilities, such as the provision of assistive devices and wheelchairs and the associated maintenance and repair capability, the development of sign language interpretation services and sign language training, and technical assistance for developing accessibility standards and an anti-discrimination framework;

(b) The lack of bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements and programmes that benefit persons with disabilities, such as international worker schemes and climate refugee agreements.

62. **The Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Strengthen efforts to work with donors to ensure that investment and partnerships focus on specific critical gaps for persons with disabilities and that all donor investment includes disability-specific indicators and disability-inclusive design and delivery;**

(b) **Establish bilateral and multilateral agreements and programmes that benefit persons with disabilities, including international worker schemes and climate refugee agreements;**

(c) **Strengthen its cooperation for the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032, the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.**

#### **National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)**

63. The Committee is concerned that there is no national human rights institution in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) in the State Party.

64. **The Committee recommends that the State Party establish a national human rights institution with a broad mandate on the protection of human rights and with adequate human, technical and financial resources, in full compliance with the Paris Principles.**

65. The Committee is concerned that the State Party has not designated or established an independent monitoring mechanism to promote, protect and monitor implementation of the Convention, with a budget and designated functions, that involves the effective and independent participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations.

66. **The Committee recommends that the State Party take into account its guidelines on independent monitoring frameworks and their participation in the work of the Committee and designate or establish an independent monitoring mechanism in compliance with the Paris Principles, equipped with sufficient resources and authority to monitor the implementation of the Convention.**

## IV. Follow-up

### Dissemination of information

67. The Committee emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. With regard to urgent measures that must be taken, the Committee would like to draw the State Party's attention to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 6 and 8, on general principles and obligations, 18, on accessibility, 20, on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, and 46, on education.

68. The Committee requests the State Party to implement the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. It recommends that the State Party transmit the concluding observations for consideration and action to members of the Government and parliament, officials in relevant ministries, and members of relevant professional groups, such as education, medical and legal professionals, as well as to local authorities and the media, using modern social communication strategies.

69. The Committee requests the State Party to disseminate the present concluding observations widely, including to non-governmental organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities, and to persons with disabilities themselves and members of their families, in national and minority languages, including sign language, and in accessible formats, including Easy Read, and to make them available on the government website on human rights.

70. The Committee strongly encourages the State Party to involve civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, in the preparation of its periodic report.

### Next periodic report

71. The combined second to sixth periodic reports are in principle due on 27 October 2035, under the simplified reporting procedure. The Committee will establish and communicate the exact due date of the combined periodic reports of the State Party in line with a future clear and regularized schedule for reporting by States Parties<sup>5</sup> and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting for the State Party. The combined periodic reports should cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

---

<sup>5</sup> General Assembly resolution 79/165, para. 6.