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UNIVERSAL PERIODIC COMBINED STAKEHOLDERS' REPORT

A joint submission by:

Kiribati Family Health Association (KIFHA), Aia Maea Ainen Kiribati (AMAK), Irekenrao, Kiribati Scout Association, Te Waka O, Reitan Aine ni Kamatu (RAK), Assembly of God (AOG), Healthy Eita Maeao Association (HEMO).

I. Background

1. The Kiribati Women In Maritime Association (K-WIMA) was established on the 19th June 2018 through the assistance and support of technical team from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the Pacific Women in Maritime Association (PacWIMA) in Fiji. K-WIMA is registered and recognized by the Government of Kiribati through the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport & Social Affairs (MWYSSA) on Friday 8th February 2019 and officially launched in March 2019.
2. The association has been fully supported by the Ministry of Information, Communication, Transport & Tourism Development (MICTTD) through its Marine Division but independently managed by its Executive Committee (EC) comprising of the President, Vice President, Public Relations Officer, Administrator, Secretary, Treasurer and one (1) Independent member. Membership is increasing to thirty seven (37) females as for June 2019 from different maritime organisations and few Ministries.

Purpose

3. To enable the visibility of women and girls in the maritime sector and connect, educate and inspire women and girls and promote female maritime professionals in Kiribati.

Aims

4. Advocacy for gender equality, capacity building and promoting cooperation and exchange of knowledge and information.

Objectives

- a) Create a national network for K-WIMA members and involved in other internationally recognized female Associations in the maritime sector.
- b) Improve levels of competency by focusing on education and knowledge by strengthening educational and training opportunities in the state, region and international maritime sector.
- c) Be recognized by PacWIMA with a view of creating mutual support and sustainability.
- d) Establish partnerships with international and regional organizations, such as IMO, SPC, WMU, IMO-IMLI and other government agencies, private companies and regional groups in the implementation of its purpose.

II. Methodology and process for preparing the report

5. In order to write this shadow report, personal meetings were scheduled and conducted between K-WIMA EC and the Marine Training Center (MTC), South Pacific Marine Services (SPMS), Kiribati National Shipping Line (KNSL), Ministry of Fisheries & Marine Resources Development (MFMRD), Marine Division and Ministry of Employment & Human Resources (MEHR). In doing so, letters and emails were sent to these places as a method to collect data and other relevant information.

Existing reports available on some of the Ministries' website in Kiribati including reports from recognized international bodies were also used in the collection of data.

III. Issues & Recommendations

Unfair termination of women seafarers' employed on overseas vessels

6. The employment of women seafarers on foreign vessels has been the greatest achievement of the Kiribati Government to show its international commitment to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 on gender equality, CEDAW and UN Declarations of Human Rights. At the national level, this commitment has linked to the Kiribati Government long term vision (KV 20) under its Wealth Pillar which aims "to develop the natural capital, human capital and cultural capital to improve economic growth and reduce poverty". The employment of women seafarer falls under the human capital component of the wealth pillar which seeks to "create highly educated and skilled population, increase access to decent employment; develop a highly skilled, qualified and efficient work force and accessible and affordable quality healthcare system".
7. Existing reports and research confirmed that the employment of I-Kiribati seafarers on overseas ships has positive impacts on the economic and social development of the country. Connell, J & Brown PC, R. (2005) and Kiribati Development Plan (2016-2019) reported that remittances from seafarers are the single largest source of household income and employment. According to AusAID report (2012), an average of \$8.24 million which was equivalent to around 5.4 percent of GDP was remitted to Kiribati between 2005 and 2009. The latest data from SPMS on seamen's remittances from 2000 to 2014 revealed that remittances continued to increase since 2014 to around \$8 million.
8. Attempts to give females the opportunity to work on overseas vessels have started in the early 2000s when the Shipping Agencies of Kiribati (SAOK) recruited young female applicants to work on cruise ships managed by Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL). According to report commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the New Zealand Aid Programme (2014), SAOK used to employ between 200-300 seafarers and hospitality workers before it Kiribati women between 2004-2011/12 in steward and hospitality roles. However, it was reported that NCL has terminating the employment contract of women seafarers in 2011 without providing ground on such termination.
9. After an interview with one former NCL female crew, the following issues were highlighted:
 - a) Lack of appropriate training offered by the recruiting agent on house-keeping
 - b) Absence of pre-departure briefing from recruiting agent and information package of the country to board the ship at
 - c) Racial discrimination from other crew members on cruise ships especially from female Pilipino crew
 - d) Lack of privacy given that female crew of four from different countries share one room
 - e) Lack of reporting made by I-Kiribati female crews on acts of bullying and harassment

- f) Unfair treatment on the absence of maternity leave not offered to female crew from Kiribati when got pregnant but given to other female crew from other countries.
 - g) Instant termination of pregnant female crew from Kiribati while other countries have given the opportunity to return to cruise ships.
 - h) Unfair termination of female crews' employment on NCL cruise ships without providing ground of such termination or sufficient notice on such termination so that female seafarers could have time to sought assistance.
 - i) Losses of job opportunity given that some of female crews expect to get job promotions the year after the termination was done.
 - j) Unemployment and loss of income support for the family in Kiribati
 - k) Lack of support and interventions from the Ministry of Employment & Human Resources, MWYSSA and other relevant Ministries and agencies.
10. Similarly to what has been offered by NCL, the job opportunity for female seafarers has been expanded in 2004 when SPMS who is in partnership with MTC and is the only recruiting agent for German vessels in Kiribati recruited female seafarers who have completed their catering course with MTC. SPMS used to employ thirty women seafarers but their employment on German vessels has lasted in just three years. According to AusAID report (2012), the program was terminated due to reports that women from Kiribati got pregnant, one commit suicide, drink alcohol and provoke fighting between seamen counterparts. This report was confirmed by SPMS after doing an interview with the Captain but other factors that led to freezing the recruitment of women seafarers were also mentioned such as placement cost, demand from shipping owners and the bad experiences that had been encountered with women seafarers.
11. Similarly to SPMS response, the Captain Superintendent of MTC highlighted that the intake for women seafarers in 2004 was based on the demand from shipping lines. In his statement, he clarified that it is the responsibility of MTC to provide any maritime courses that are requested from shipping companies but not employment. However, Captain Superintendent affirmed that the intake for women seafarers will continue to freeze unless there is a demand for them in the labour market.
12. Women seafarers are also restricted to the inter departmental flexible (IDF) courses to become deck hand or engineer given the nature and severity of the job which is very demanding and not safe for them. This is another reason why the Kiribati Fishery Service (KFS) has never recruited female seafarers to work on its Japanese fishing fleets. The only job available for them is house- keeping and caterers.
13. In another interview with former SPMS female crew, the following issues are highlighted:
- a) Bullying and harassment from I-Kiribati seamen counterparts
 - b) Jealousy from seamen counterparts when female crew makes friends with other seamen from other countries.
 - c) Lack of reporting made from female crew on issues relating to bullying and harassment
 - d) Loss of job opportunity

- e) Unemployment and loss of income support for the family
- f) Lack of government support and interventions on the issue
- g) Lack of respect from seamen on women seafarers right and privacy
- h) Discrimination from seamen against women seafarers who have less involve with KIOSU meetings on the ship
- i) Feeling that seamen from other countries are more respectful and behave well toward female seafarers rather than I-Kiribati seamen counterparts.

14. Further investigations and attempts to confirm the information that it was the Kiribati Seamen's Wives Association (KISWA) who appealed to the Government of Kiribati to cease the employment of women seafarers were unsuccessful given that KISWA has been die out and the exact information on KISWA's involvement were not provided from MEHR, MWYSSA and SPMS.

IV. Conclusion

15. K-WIMA and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) acknowledge the important role of women seafarers not only as bread winner of the family but also the contribution they have made to the country's economic and social development so they see the termination of women seafarers unfair and a restriction to building their career on off-shore roles.
16. K-WIMA and NGOs further noted that there were significant gaps and favoritism on the side of seamen and their wives that caused the termination of women seafarers' employment without giving them the opportunity to represent their case as well as the lack of support and intervention from MEHR, MWYSSA and other relevant agencies in the first place. K-WIMA and NGOs noted that women seafarers have been victimized of causing troubles on the ship and have been targeted instead of having the government and other relevant agencies to weight the issue on both gender and offer appropriate supports.
17. Hence, K-WIMA and NGOs see the termination of contract of employment unjust and violations of the right of women seafarers as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948 Article 1, 2, 3, 22, 23 and the Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 2005 Article 3, 8 & 11 and Recommendations No.6 of the 2015 Universal Periodic Report.

V. Recommendations

K-WIMA and NGOs therefore jointly put up the following recommendation:

18. Call for the Ministry of Education (MOE) to include Sex Education and Human Rights in the School curriculum as part of early intervention programs so girls learn at younger age the importance of understanding sex and their rights.

19. Call for the government, through the MEHR to enforce the Maritime Labour Convention on all shipping owners and recruiting agencies that employ women seafarers from Kiribati.
20. Call for the government, through the MEHR to revise the guidelines governing the employment of Kiribati seafarers on board ocean going vessels and engage women seafarers, K-WIMA and other stakeholders in the revision.
21. Call for the government, through the MEHR to include provisions on Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) and mandates all employers to provide for EEO in the 2015 Employment & Industrial Relations Acts subsection i) & ii) and national conditions of service.
22. Call on the Government of Kiribati to reinstate the employment program of women seafarers on overseas vessels.
23. Call for the government, through the MEHR to coordinate the employment of women seafarers on NCL and Swire Ships instead of giving the private sector to manage it.
24. Call for the government, through the MEHR to organize partnership talks with recruiting agencies, MTC, K-WIMA and women NGOs to see what the demands are from shipping owners on women seafarers with the aim to strengthen the employment of women seafarers and their career on board the ship.
25. Call for the government through SPMS to consider recruiting women seafarers and employing them on vessels where no I-Kiribati seamen work at.
26. Call for the government through SPMS to consider recruiting women seafarers on its vessel with zero alcohol policy.
27. Call on the government to enact law or policy governing maritime or other similar institutions to conduct adequate preparations for women to work on vessels.
28. Call on the government through MTC to consider increasing the age of recruited female intake so these female are more mature and understand how to protect and prioritized their right while working on the ship.
29. Call for the government through MTC to include the program from KIFHA on STI/HIV Aids and Counseling for women from KWCSC as part of teaching program or awareness to women seafarers in addition to what MTC offers on Social responsibility, First Aid and Firefighting.
30. Call for the government through MTC to offer 100 % commitment to its Gender Policy that has been incorporated in its Quality Manual which aims to strengthen policies and practices for training and employment to ensure the safety and well-being of women and to increase participation of women in seafarer training and employment.

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