



Statement by Sweden in the interactive dialogue on Kiribati

*Delivered by Counsellor Anna Jakenberg Brinck,
Geneva, January 19 2015*

Mr President,

Sweden welcomes the delegation to the UPR process and thanks it for presenting the national report.

In early 2014 a number of women in Kiribati were murdered by their husbands. The public reaction was strong and the government presented a proposal to amend the penal code in order to reinstate the death penalty. The proposed amendment passed a first reading in parliament in August. Since then, the proposal has been debated in Kiribati. The opposition and the leading churches have come out against a reinstatement of the death penalty. A second reading is scheduled in December, following which a decision by the president is needed for the amendment to be passed.

Sweden recommends Kiribati to halt any plans to reinstate the death penalty.

The Education Act 2013 came into force in 2014 and includes prohibition of corporal punishment. Prohibition in schools was achieved in 1997. Nevertheless, the Committee on the rights of the child has estimated that corporal punishment of children in the home is a wide-spread problem in Kiribati.

Article 226 of the Penal Code 1977 prohibits cruelty to children but also states: "Nothing in this section shall be construed as affecting the right of any parent, teacher, or other person, having the lawful control of a child or young person to administer reasonable punishment to him." Following from the same article, corporal punishment is also lawful within the day care system.

The text of the Children, Young People and Family Welfare Act 2013 does not prohibit all corporal punishment, nor does it repeal the Penal Code right "to administer reasonable punishment".

The Family Peace Act for Domestic Violence 2014 has been enacted. We have yet to see the text but indications are that it does not prohibit corporal punishment of children.

Sweden recommends Kiribati to repeal the right “to administer reasonable punishment” and to clearly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, including the home

Thank you, Mr. President