

Promoting women's participation in Kiribati's maritime sector

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On 18 May 2022, women in the maritime sector across the globe commemorated the International Day for Women in Maritime. The theme of this year's celebration was "Training – Visibility – Recognition: Supporting a barrier-free working environment".³ In recognition of the gender imbalances within the maritime sector, this day is celebrated annually to acknowledge the shift and diversity in this sector towards the recognition of women. The Kiribati Women in Maritime Association (K-WIMA) used this commemoration day to celebrate the many I-Kiribati women who contribute to the current and future development of the maritime sector in Kiribati by launching the association's strategic plan for 2022 to 2027.

The K-WIMA five-year strategic plan comprises four pillars:

- Recognising women's leadership in and contributions to the Kiribati maritime sector.
- Creating opportunities and active representations of women in the maritime sector.
- Advocating and supporting decent work for women in maritime sector.
- Ensuring the visibility of women in maritime sector for sustainable future careers.

These pillars are designed to achieve goal 5 of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and focuses on gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.⁴ A key priority area of this goal calls for growing economic wealth and leaving no one behind in Kiribati's National Development Plan.⁵

K-WIMA's strategic plan for 2022 to 2027 is a milestone achievement for this organisation in promoting the recognition, visibility and capacity building of women in Kiribati's Maritime sector. The president of K-WIMA, Tiantaake Mariana, and the Honourable Minister of Information, Communication and Transport, Tekeuea Tarati, endorsed and launched the strategic plan. The minister's endorsement demonstrated the continuous support of the ministry to K-WIMA.

K-WIMA was established in 2018, through the assistance of the Pacific Community, the International Maritime Organization, and the Pacific Women in Maritime Association. K-WIMA was registered and recognised by the Government of Kiribati through the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs in February 2019, and officially launched in March 2019.

The development and launching of K-WIMA's strategic plan was made possible through the Pacific People Advancing Change Program (PPAC) under the Human Rights and Social Development Division. The programme supports Pacific-style advocacy campaigns on a range of critical human rights issues. With funding from the European Union, the Swedish and Australian governments, and the United States Agency for International Development, PPAC targets civil society organisations in the Federated State of Micronesia, Tonga, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The programme includes advocacy training workshops, ongoing mentoring, and the provision of small grants.

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³ International day for Women in Maritime. <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/PressBriefings/pages/IDWIM-2022.aspx>

⁴ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Sustainable Development. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>

⁵ Kiribati Development Plan 2020 and 2023. <https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/Kiribati%20Development%20Plan%202020-2023.pdf>



Launch of K-WIMA on 15 March 2019 at the Marine Training Center in Kiribati. (Image: ©K-WIMA)