

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir**  
**President of General Assembly**

13<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the  
Rights of Persons with Disabilities

United Nations Headquarters, New York

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Excellencies,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this 13th Session of the Conference of States Parties, to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

I welcome the theme of this year's Conference, "A Decade of Action and Delivery for Inclusive Sustainable Development: Implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda for Persons with Disabilities."

Excellencies,

It is easy, while under the shadow of COVID-19, to press pause on the commitments we have made. This is understandable; the entire planet is faced with a crisis, unparalleled in scale and mired in uncertainty.

Yet, this too shall pass. With news each day of vaccine developments, and with a collective effort to ensure vaccines for all, with fair and equitable access, we have reason to hope of an end to this crisis.

This makes it all the more important, that we do not ignore our long-term goals, particularly those, that have been painstakingly crafted over decades, and which focus on those most vulnerable.

Allow me to make three brief points to this end:

▶ First, as we look to the longer-term recovery from COVID-19, we must embrace the Sustainable Development Goals, as our blueprint, for a sustainable, resilient recovery from COVID-19. The Decade of Action on the SDGs, while seemingly setback by the pandemic, can be a springboard, to bounce back further and faster. As we pour incredible amounts of resources into the recovery effort, let this be guided, by the principles espoused in those Goals.

▶ Second, the needs of those most vulnerable, must always be at the forefront of our thoughts. Consider for a moment, the frustration of women and girls with disabilities, particularly those in developing countries, who have struggled to overcome, obstacle after obstacle, to secure education, or healthcare, or jobs and livelihoods. We owe it to them, to ensure that, our efforts now, help to recover the losses incurred, and to expedite progress where needed.

▶ And finally, let us ensure that, our recovery efforts include, the voices and leadership of persons with disabilities. As they have so clearly stated, “nothing for us, without us”. As the world undertakes this unparalleled recovery effort, let us highlight, the experience and leadership of persons with disabilities, in addressing COVID-19. At the same time, efforts to ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities, in recovery planning, must be made.

Excellencies,

In closing, allow me to emphasize that, as with Sessions past, the needs of persons with disabilities, remains a priority for the 75th Session. Accessibility is crucial, to facilitating the participation of persons with disabilities, and, as such, mainstreaming disability, throughout the United Nations system, must remain a consistent priority.

Thank you.