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**Statement by Mr. Danlami BASHARU**

**Interactive dialogue with the United Nations system on the  
implementation of the Convention (item 5 (c): chaired by Ecuador,  
President of the Conference**

**CHAIR COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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

3 December 2020

New York

President of the Conference Espinosa,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Disability inclusion is critical for the rights of persons with disabilities. Just as important, disability inclusion is critical to maintain the United Nations system relevant and fit for purpose. In launching the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, or UNDIS, in June last year, Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, stated that “Disability Inclusion is a fundamental human right” and “central to the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

The UNDIS is as an effective tool to assist all parts of the UN and its workforce to recognise the rights of persons with disabilities. It is a comprehensive strategy to transform the organization from its current overall state into one that reflects and implements the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities over the next decade. In so doing, UNDIS will enable the UN system to remain pertinent in its role of supporting Member States to achieve their international human rights, development, and humanitarian commitments.

So how do we include persons with disabilities in the work of the UN system?

Articles 4.3 and 33.3 of the Convention call upon the meaningful involvement and participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes. This mandate should be upheld also throughout the work of the Organization.

The COVID-19 pandemic and measures to respond to it have shown that persons with disabilities have not been at the decision-making table. Decisions regarding our lives continue to be taken over and above our heads without regard to our concerns. This has led to persons with disabilities being left at greater risk and over-represented in COVID-19 infection rates and fatalities.

The United Nations system should put in place mechanisms to engage with persons with disabilities through their representative organisations. Persons with disabilities should be encouraged and supported to participate in all disability-specific issues and broader issues.

The ultimate goal of UNDIS, mirroring the CRPD Convention, is for persons with disabilities to benefit equally in society and to ensure that the Organization does not contribute to perpetuating inequality. Much remains to be done by the UN System to ensure equality and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities. One particular way to include persons with disabilities in the organization is through guaranteeing accessibility. Allow me to recall, “accessibility is a precondition for persons with

disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society”, as the Committee has stressed. We need to rethink the way in which the Organization interacts with persons with disabilities at The UN system at its headquarters but also at the regional and country levels and should ensure access to the built environment, information and communications, and facilities and services open to the public, and continue to remove barriers to access. There cannot be inclusion without accessibility and vice versa. Human resources, procurement, conference services, and programmes and projects should uphold accessibility throughout all stages of their work.

The UNDIS also calls for the development of an adequate framework for the provision of individual, disability-specific reasonable accommodation so that persons with disabilities can fully participate and be included in all situations and activities. Screen reading technologies, and other specialised assistive technologies, personal assistance, or the re-scheduling or reorganizing activities could be forms of reasonable accommodation responsive to persons with disabilities. Equal participation of persons with disabilities as employees at the UN requires the recognition of reasonable accommodation that may vary for every person. I reiterate the call for the establishment of a voluntary fund for reasonable accommodation within the United Nations system and beyond to give full effect to UNDIS. The CRPD Committee remains at your disposal in the development of an adequate reasonable accommodation framework.

Please allow me to conclude with these words of Secretary-General Guterres. He said: “We must do much more to address discrimination and exclusion — particularly against girls and women with disabilities. We must do much more to ensure full accessibility to schools, health care and services, the workplace, leisure and recreational activities, sports, and all areas of life. We must also do much more on transportation, infrastructure and information and communications technology to make our cities, rural areas, and societies inclusive.” On behalf of the Committee, I reiterate its support to the UN system to implement UNDIS, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Thank you.