

## **Opening statement for the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD**

Dear Excellencies,

We are in an extremely important juncture for disability inclusion in the development agenda as we are heading to the Summit of the Future, with the Pact of the Future, the Declaration on Future Generations and the Global Digital Compact as pivotal documents that will shape our common vision of the development agenda, even beyond 2030. As such retaining existing disability rights language in current drafts along with mentions of inclusion, accessibility and vulnerable groups is the minimum that can be done.

The Committee has continued holding dialogues with States parties. With more than 130 dialogues held so far, we are learning lessons around matters influencing the enjoyment of rights of persons with disabilities. It is critical to continuing addressing these recurrent issues including:

- the need to effectively ensure participation of persons with disabilities, particularly the most marginalised.
- gender mainstreaming in policy design and implementation
- the situation of youth with disabilities including accessing an inclusive education adequately funded,
- social protection floors as we prepare for the World Social Summit in 2025,
- support and care systems, in the context of deinstitutionalization processes
- the impact of climate change on persons with disabilities,
- preparedness for disasters including armed conflicts,
- The impact of artificial intelligence and neurosciences in the enjoyment by persons with disabilities on their self-determination, autonomy, will and preferences.

The current Conference of States parties will discuss technology innovation, persons with disabilities in situations of risks, and decent work and sustainable livelihood. We should ensure that our discussions revolve around persons with disabilities as agents of change, through their active involvement and meaningful consultation in all stages of policy design, implementation, and monitoring.

This conference is an opportunity to further consider how digital technologies are evolving in an unprecedented way, posing human rights and ethical challenges. We need to ensure that persons with disabilities, particularly the most marginalised, participate fully in all spaces and fora where these discussions are taking place to guarantee access to affordable and accessible technologies, the protection of data and the respect of their family and private life.

Let's not forget that thousands of persons with disabilities currently live in countries and regions devastated by armed conflict, human-made and climate-related disasters. We need to urgently involve them and address the multifaceted risks that have put us off track in the implementation of many sustainable development goals. The Committee is developing a general comment on article 11 of the Convention, on persons with disabilities affected by situations of risks, including humanitarian emergencies, armed conflict, and disasters. We intend to adopt a draft later this year and thus would like to invite all States parties to engage in this process.

With 191 ratifications, the Convention has almost reached universal ratification, testifying about the international commitment to the inclusion of persons with disabilities. However, the meeting time and staffing resources of the Committee have not increased since 2014. The liquidity crisis affecting the regular budget of the UN secretariat is exacerbating this situation and has forced us to cut down our August session and to postpone the consideration of some reports.

Thus, we call on States parties to as a matter of urgency ensure:

- Provision of adequate funding allowing meeting time and suitable staffing resources to enable the committee to reach its objectives and the availability of online and hybrid modalities of participation.
- Support all UN entities move forward in the implementation of key goals and targets of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, particularly in ensuring accessibility to conference facilities as well as ensuring that key documents of intergovernmental bodies and human rights mechanisms, are available in accessible formats and that protocols related to reasonable accommodation are implemented.

On another note, in regard to the elections to be held this morning, the Committee adopted a statement in March, 2024, calling states parties to ensure gender parity and equitable geographic representation.

Let me finish my statement by paying tribute to Sir. Robert Martin, from New Zealand and 3 other members of the Committee that have passed away in 2024. They dedicated their lives to the advancement and empowerment of persons with disabilities. May they rest in peace.