

STATEMENT
BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
ARMENIA,
TATEVIK STEPANYAN
AT 17TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Excellences,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honor to address the 17th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Government of Armenia recognizes the special importance to the CRPD, having assumed profound reforms in the disability sector. Significant steps are being taken towards the progressive implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The ongoing reforms aimed at enhancing conditions for people with disabilities in Armenia are grounded in the 2021-2026 plan of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, alongside two pivotal laws adopted in 2021, "On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" and the "On Assessment of Person's Functionality."

Under the provisions of the law "On Assessment of Person's Functionality", significant reforms have been implemented in the disability assessment system.

A new system for assessing an individual's functionality has been introduced, based on the model of the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. This updated approach considers disability not only in the context of health issues but also incorporates social and environmental factors. By emphasizing human rights, this assessment model not only provides a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's challenges and needs but also facilitates the delivery of targeted services. Notably, the entire assessment process has been digitalized, with the introduction of the electronic disability assessment system "e-disability."

The Law "On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" has laid the groundwork for ensuring social inclusion, independent living and community integration of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, this legislation has streamlined the introduction of various new services. For example, starting from 2024, the personal assistant service has been introduced. Activities are underway to create independent living centers.

Excellences,

In the context of deinstitutionalization, there is a concerted effort to transform services. As part of this transformation, I would like to highlight the establishment of community small group houses. We consider it important not only to shift away from large institutions toward smaller group homes but also to uphold the rights of individuals with disabilities to live within the community and to be part of its social life. With the best interests of children with disabilities in mind, our efforts are directed towards arranging for their placement within family settings, whether with their biological families, through the provision of comprehensive support services, or in foster care arrangements. Home care services are being expanded to further facilitate family-based living arrangements for persons with disabilities.

The framework of reforms is complemented by the comprehensive programme for the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities for 2023 to 2027, which outlines priorities for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities and social inclusion over the next five years: ensuring accessible conditions, exclusion of discrimination, high-quality inclusive education, ensuring the rights to participate in cultural life, sports and entertainment, employment, protection and safety of persons with disabilities during emergency situations or martial law, etc.

We view the improvements in the process of provision of support funds as a significant achievement. Introducing a certification mechanism and establishing new quality requirements have been key steps in this regard. Presently, our focus is on expanding the list of supported services to align it with international standards.

Additionally, I would like to highlight our intention to extend the provision of services with the certification mechanism to the rest of services. Our experience has demonstrated that this approach fosters healthy competition among service providers, ultimately leading to improvements in quality.

Furthermore, we are conducting an assessment of the additional costs associated with disability to further enhance the effectiveness of our reforms. This assessment will calculate the additional costs borne by persons with disabilities across different life stages and sectors, based on the type of the disability they experience.

The reforms are carried through collaborative efforts, with active engagement from the government agencies, civil society, International organizations, and local communities, to ensure that reforms are inclusive, comprehensive, and responsive to the diverse needs of persons with disabilities.

I thank you.