

Commonwealth Secretariat statement for the 17th Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities General Debate

Mr Chair,

It is my pleasure to address the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Commonwealth Secretariat welcomes the theme of this year's meeting. It mirrors the importance Commonwealth Heads of Government attached to protecting the rights of persons with disabilities at their 2018 and 2022 meetings. Disability inclusion is amongst the priority policy areas on the agenda for their meeting in Samoa this October.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, with the meaningful participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities, assists our member states in implementing the Convention. This includes, providing guidance on national policies, capacity building, and technical assistance with legislative review processes. We engage a wide array of stakeholders - policy makers, senior government officials, national human rights institutions, national women's machineries, election management bodies, disabled peoples' organisations, and youth networks.

We also raise awareness amongst member states about practical measures for implementing the Convention and addressing key issues affecting persons with disabilities in the Commonwealth. For example, twenty-five of our members are small island developing states that are at acute risk from environmental harms. We encourage members to adopt inclusive policies that address the challenges climate change and natural disasters pose to persons with disabilities.

In all our activities, we emphasise an intersectional approach to account for the diverse vulnerabilities that persons with disabilities, including those from under-represented groups, experience. This includes ensuring that a disability lens is applied to the agendas and delivery of our ministerial meetings.



Mr Chair, disability inclusion is an essential precondition for fulfilling human rights and achieving the SDGs. The Commonwealth Secretariat remains steadfast in supporting member states to implement the Convention and build a resilient common future.

Thank you.