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STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED BY HONOURABLE DAKOA YAA NEWMAN,
MINISTER FOR GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF GHANA, DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE
17TH CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS
OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (CRPD) UNDER THE THEME:
“RETHINKING DISABILITY INCLUSION AT THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL
JUNCTURE AND AHEAD OF THE SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE”,
11TH JUNE 2024, GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL

Honourable Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I am honoured to address the seventeenth session of the Conference of State Parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

2. **Chair,** Ghana has long been committed to the principles of inclusion and non-discrimination enshrined in the CRPD. As a signatory to the Convention since 2012, we have made significant strides in our efforts to promote the rights and participation of persons with disabilities.

3. We recognise that the current international context presents both opportunities and challenges for advancing disability inclusion. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, has had a disproportionate impact on persons with disabilities, exacerbating existing inequalities and barriers to accessing essential services.

4. To ensure systemic inclusion of disability at all levels of national development, Ghana has developed strategies in its National Development Medium-Term Policy Framework 2022-2025 and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection's Medium-Term Development Plan 2022-2025.

5. In consonance with SDG 11, the Government of Ghana has made significant efforts in developing programs and interventions through collaborations with other government agencies and civil society organisations. Key initiatives include the Common Fund for Persons with Disabilities which has provided essential support to over a thousand individuals at decentralised levels. Our inclusive education programs have significantly increased the enrollment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. We have also updated the Ghana Building Code to include accessibility standards for public buildings, transportation, and infrastructure. These initiatives, along with others such as the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) cash grant and the National Health Insurance Scheme's coverage for assistive devices, demonstrate our unwavering commitment to disability inclusion. In line with the UNCRPD, Ghana is adopting a new Persons with Disabilities Law to replace the Persons with Disability Act 2006 (Act 715).

Chair, to address the challenges confronted by persons with disabilities, Ghana proposes the following strategic directions:

6. **Firstly**, we must strengthen international collaboration. By promoting joint programs, resource sharing, training, and regional networks, we can foster shared solutions that amplify our collective impact. Enhancing data collection and sharing through integrated data systems and a global repository of best practices will enable countries to learn from each other and adopt effective strategies.

7. **Secondly**, it is crucial to implement targeted training programs and provide technical expertise to support disability-inclusive policies. Supporting initiatives that provide financial resources for disability-inclusive projects and encouraging partnerships between governments, private sector companies, and civil society organizations will help leverage additional resources and expertise.

8. **Thirdly**, comprehensive policies that integrate disability inclusion across all sectors must be developed. We must aid in the creation and enforcement of laws protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Developing awareness campaigns that promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities and strengthening advocacy networks will ensure that their voices are heard in policy dialogues and decision-making processes.

9. **Moreover**, promoting the development of affordable assistive technologies and ensuring accessible digital platforms will drive progress. Implementing mechanisms for regular progress reporting and including provisions for persons with disabilities in emergency response plans will ensure their safety and inclusion.

10. **Chair**, the Summit of the Future is a pivotal moment to elevate disability inclusion on the global stage. As we look ahead, it is imperative that we place disability inclusion at the forefront of the global development agenda. By embracing these strategic directions, we can work together to redefine and reimagine a more inclusive, equitable, and accessible future for all.

11. **In closing**, I urge all member states to commit to these strategic directions and work collaboratively towards a world where disability inclusion is a reality for all. Let us seize this opportunity to ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you.