



**Statement by Mr. Rati IONATAMISHVILI, Member of the Parliament of Georgia  
at the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of State Parties  
to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  
12 June 2024, New York**

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to address you today on behalf of my country, Georgia, a proud and independent nation where the rule of law, human rights, principles of transparency, and both traditional and European values are upheld to the highest standards. A year ago, I stood before you discussing Georgia's anticipation of receiving candidate status from the European Union, highlighting the significant contributions of Georgian individuals with disabilities in this journey, particularly in the context of global peacekeeping efforts. Today, I am pleased to announce that Georgia has achieved EU candidate status, and we continue our dignified pursuit of full membership in the European Union. In 1991, Georgia was the first republic to reject Soviet occupation and the first to gain independence from the Soviet Union—a history we hold in great esteem. Despite challenges, we have preserved our sovereignty, and Georgia now plays a crucial role as a "middle corridor" in linking European and Asian trade routes.

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to emphasize the importance of the overarching thematic focus of current session on disability inclusion which represents a cornerstone for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. Looking ahead of the Summit of the Future, let us reiterate our commitment to further advance the disability rights with leaving no one behind.

One of the areas that we also address within this session is the protection of the persons with disabilities in humanitarian emergencies. In this regard, it is imperative to recognize that occupation poses primary threat.

The impact of human rights and humanitarian law violations is particularly severe for persons with disabilities, among all ethnic groups residing in Russia-occupied territories of Georgia. The situation becomes even more aggravated due to the pressure exercised by the Russian Federation and its occupation regime on the UN Agencies and INGOs operating in Abkhazia region which are focused on the improvement of humanitarian and human rights conditions of the conflict-affected people.

In conclusion, 2024 marks the year of the Summer Olympics and Paralympics—a significant event for the 1.2 billion disabled individuals worldwide and for every global citizen. The Paralympic Games exemplify the ideals of equality, peace, and freedom. I am confident that the day is not far when we will achieve Paralympic success alongside our Georgian Abkhazian and Ossetian brothers and sisters.

No to occupation! Yes to peace and equality.