



**Statement by Dr. Vindhya Persaud, Minister of Human Services and Social Security of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana for the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,**

**June 13-15, 2023**

Madam Chair,

It is often said that a nation is judged by how it treats its most vulnerable populations. We must do everything in our power to understand and recognize the unique challenges that persons living with disabilities endure each day which often stem from physical barriers, discrimination, and lack of access to resources.

Their human rights must be respected and resilience built to withstand daily challenges as well as those related to disasters, climate change, technological and other threats.

Guyana's constitutional and legislative frameworks encompass equal rights for all. Our comprehensive and inclusive policies and programmes, which are data-driven, are transforming the lives of persons living with disabilities through access to social justice, education, healthcare, psychosocial support, food security and by reducing all forms of discrimination and violence.

As Guyana seeks to harmonize national policies and strategies with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, government is making significant budgetary allocations and investments to improve the quality of lives of persons with disabilities, including through digital connectivity and

learning, creation of spaces for free technical and vocational skills development, housing and entrepreneurship. This is based on the understanding that for independence, equal participation and personal growth, access must be a lived reality.

Central to this, is the meaningful engagement of persons living with disabilities in the development of policies and programmes and in decision-making.

The government of Guyana recognizes the need for a life course approach. Children with disabilities are now recorded in a database, paving the way for research, and effective and timely health and educational intervention. Persons are being trained to provide specialized care and to support parents and caregivers. Day and Night Care as well as Early Childhood Centers are being developed.

Persons living with permanent disabilities receive monthly financial assistance until they qualify for pension.

Government of Guyana is also providing free assistive aids to encourage participation in everyday school, work, and life activities.

Chair,

Guyana reaffirms our commitment to breaking down the physical, attitudinal, and institutional barriers that prevent persons living with disabilities from enjoying the lives they want and deserve and ensuring their rights, dignity, and respect.

I thank you!