



Remarks by Her Excellency Arya Ali, First Lady of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana at the 17th Meeting of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability

11-13 June 2024, New York

Theme “Rethinking disability inclusion at the current international juncture and ahead of the Summit of the Future”

Time: 3 mins.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates

In a truly inclusive and sustainable world, persons with disabilities must be empowered to live a life with dignity and respect; a life where they can realize their potential.

What is the reality?

In developing countries, the majority of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed and many children with disabilities do not attend school.

The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities created necessary momentum for removing institutional and attitudinal barriers and promoting the full participation of persons with disabilities in society. Guided by the Convention, Guyana enacted disabilities legislation and adopted a multifaceted approach to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy equal treatment, focusing on education and empowerment.

Guyana is taking a life course approach to support persons with disabilities. A register of persons with disabilities is informing government policies and guiding interventions.

All persons living with permanent disabilities are eligible to receive monthly financial assistance throughout their lives. Assistive and mobility aids are also provided free of cost. We are providing specialized support for children through widespread training of teachers.

In 2023, Guyana established the Mahaica Disability Complex – a training and empowerment centre which provides vital skills training. This is complemented by business grants and interest-free loans.

As First Lady of Guyana, I am leading an initiative to establish a Business Centre to advance financial independence and economic empowerment of persons with disabilities who will offer a range of products and services to Guyana's growing consumer market.

In the digital age, where technology holds unprecedented power to bridge gaps and foster inclusion, Guyana is placing emphasis on enhancing digital connectivity and using technology to provide learning opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Developing countries with limited human and financial resources face major challenges in providing necessary support for persons with disabilities. Limited institutional, technological and financial capacities remain barriers in small economies with competing demands.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Guyana calls for greater international financing for Disability-Inclusive Development in developing countries.

I thank you.