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President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, persons of all genders. I am deeply honored to address you here today.

Significant progress has been made in Iceland since we met a year ago.

In March, the Parliament approved the first National Implementation Plan, which outlined 60 actions to execute the articles of The Convention on The Rights of Persons With Disabilities.

In all our work, we have been guided by the purpose of The Convention. To promote, to protect and to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Everyone has the right to participate fully in society, on their own terms.

The National Implementation Plan was developed in co-creation with numerous parties, and representatives of people with disabilities led the work in shaping and prioritising the actions.

This year, we are placing a major emphasis on raising awareness, as increased knowledge and awareness in society about the rights of persons with disabilities and about the Convention will create a more fertile ground for us to implement all the actions of the National Plan.

Education is the foundation for increasing employment opportunities and, at the same time, improving quality of life. The focus here is on creating continuity between educational levels and increasing real opportunities for people with disabilities to enhance their skills and participation on the labour market.

The goal, as always, is for persons with disabilities to have equal access to effective education and to have the opportunity to thrive based on their merits and strengths - and not least, to get jobs where their full potential can be utilized.

Reforms on the disability pension scheme in Iceland are under way, with the aim of making it more transparent and fairer, raising the income of those who receive disability pensions, simplifying the system, reducing income-based deductions, and increasing incentives for employment. In March this year, I submitted a bill on these important matters to the Icelandic Parliament.

Also, pending the decision of the Parliament, is a bill on an independent National Human Rights Institute fulfilling the Paris Principles. The Institute is considered to

be a prerequisite for enshrining the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into law in Iceland.

Best regards from Iceland.