

**Statement by: Amb. Daintowon Domah Pay-Bayee**  
**Chairperson/Executive Director, National Commission on Disabilities, Liberia**  
**at the 16th Session of Conference of States Parties to the Convention on The Rights of**  
**Persons with Disabilities, United Nations Headquarters**  
**New York, 13th - 15th June 2023**

**Theme: " Harmonizing national policies and strategies with the CRPD: achievements and challenges"**

**Sub Theme 1: Ensuring equal access to and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services for persons with disabilities**

**Sub Theme 2: Digital accessibility for persons with disabilities**

**Sub Theme 3: Reaching the under-represented groups of persons with disabilities**

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Thank you Chair,

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

I bring you greetings from His Excellency, Dr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, and the Community of Persons with Disabilities in Liberia.

We acknowledge the critical importance of this session's Theme and Sub-Themes to ensuring the welfare of people with disabilities globally and particularly welcome the focus on sexual and reproductive health for persons with disabilities. We believe that equal access to sexual and reproductive health services can only be achieved if persons with disabilities are informed, and empowered to make independent decisions about their bodies and sexuality; and these should be granted as a legitimate human right.

Chair,

In Liberia, we continue to strive to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities in all matters relating to marriage, family, parenthood, and relationships, including in the areas of family planning, fertility, and family life and also ensuring equal access to health services for persons with disabilities, through Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) and population based public health programmes. With support from Sweden, we validated the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Training Manual for PWDs.

We also participated in the first-ever National Conference on SRHR in Liberia and came up with an “Amplifying Rights Network” Position Statement, a joint effort with Amplifying Rights Network (ARN), The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), and other SHR actors in Liberia, to have a space for jointly promoting and popularizing SRHR through accurate information, free of stigma and discrimination for greater freedom of choice about sexual health.

Most importantly, the National Commission on Disabilities (NCD) upon our ascendancy instituted a Regular First Tuesday Women with Disabilities (WWDs) Monthly Meeting where we discuss issues around SRHR and welfare of women with disabilities.

Chair,

Our government continues to prioritize the harmonization of national policies and strategies to ensure the welfare of people with disabilities. In fact, we started a little early in 2005, prior to the adoption of the CRPD, with the establishment of the National Commission on Disabilities (NCD), an Autonomous Body charged with oversight responsibilities for the community of persons living with disabilities in Liberia. Three (3) officials of the Commission are Members of the President’s Cabinet. The Commission charged with oversight responsibilities for the community of persons living with disabilities in Liberia in terms of reviewing, influencing and formulating policies, as well as monitoring every service delivery. Most importantly, the Commission is structured at the level of the Districts, Counties and Regional in ensuring that truly no one is left behind.

We have a revised National Action Plan (NAP 2023 – 2027) which aligns with the National Strategic Disabilities Roadmap (2021-2026), both signed by His Excellency, Amb. George Manneh Weah, President of Liberia for the full inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Liberia. The roadmap will look at the development of the lives of PWDs from the Grassroot while the NAP will address it from the Policy perspective.

We also worked with the Liberia Labor Congress (LLC) and the Ministry of Labor in ensuring the development of a Decent Work Manual for Persons with Disabilities with support from the ILO.

Chair,

We've made significant progress, but there is still more to do. Hence, Liberia is seeking support and international partnerships to:

- Conduct of a national survey to gather aggregated data for economic and social empowerment of PWDs,
- Creation of a National Registry for Persons with Disabilities as the Commission in collaboration with the National Identification Registry,
- And Development of a National Sign Language program

Thank you for your attention.