



COSP17: Joint Statement by the Group of Friends of Persons with Disabilities

11 June 2024 (874 words, maximum 5 minutes)

I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.¹

This year's overarching theme, "Rethinking disability inclusion in the current international juncture and ahead of the Summit of the Future," reflects the evolving landscape in which we seek to ensure the full, effective and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in society on an equal basis with others. As we navigate these changes, it is crucial that our efforts are consistent with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The roundtable discussions at this Conference underscore the importance of inclusion, accessibility, and resilience.

We recognize the transformative potential of technology to enhance the lives of persons with disabilities, while at the same time recognising the potential risks and challenges they may face if the use of technology does not respect human rights and is not done in an inclusive way. International cooperation is crucial to overcoming access barriers by addressing the root causes of accessibility issues. We urge the United Nations, Member States, and stakeholders to ensure that technology development is inclusive, accessible, and respects human rights.

Persons with disabilities are often disproportionately affected in situations of risk, including humanitarian emergencies, armed conflict, disasters and by the impacts of climate change. We emphasize the importance of mainstreaming the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities in humanitarian responses and disaster risk reduction, as well as the implementation of systemic approaches, policies and programmes that are inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities and in line with Article 11 of the Convention, and interconnected with humanitarian, development and peace fields. In this context we would like to highlight the important three report-series on armed conflicts and disability written

¹ List of GoF membership: Argentina; Australia; Austria; Belgium; Bolivia; Brazil; Bulgaria; Canada; Costa Rica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; European Union; Finland; Germany; Greece; Guatemala; Hungary; Italy; Jamaica; Liechtenstein; Mexico; New Zealand; Palau; Panama; Philippines; Poland; Republic of Korea; Romania; South Africa; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Türkiye; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom; United States of America.

by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN Security Council Resolution 2475 of 20 June 2019.

Furthermore, we acknowledge that war generates disability on a large scale, resulting in a wide range of physical, sensory, cognitive, and psychological impairments. By prioritizing peace and inclusivity, it is possible to mitigate the devastating consequences of war and to foster a more just and compassionate global community.

We are at a critical juncture with an opportunity to leverage decent work as a key lever for ending poverty and reducing inequalities while promoting the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Urgent actions are needed to address the barriers and as well as multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by persons with disabilities, and in particular women and girls with disabilities. We call for the establishment of care and support systems and the adoption of age-sensitive and gender-responsive policy approaches to promote decent work and sustainable livelihoods for persons with disabilities. Legislative, financial, and regulatory measures should encourage and support employers to hire and retain workers with disabilities. By advancing these efforts, we can empower persons with disabilities to navigate career development, succeed in the open labour market, and pursue sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families. We also call on States Parties to the CRPD to uphold their obligation to provide persons with disabilities equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds.

Looking ahead to the Summit of the Future and the World Social Summit, we call on Member States to mainstream the rights and inclusive development of persons with disabilities and commit to accessibility, inclusion and the establishment of human rights-based care and support systems in the Pact for the Future, including the Global Digital Compact, the Declaration on Future Generations as well as the Political Declaration of the World Social Summit.

We also welcome the valuable guidelines, tools and training on disability inclusion and accessibility that have been developed to support implementation of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. The Strategy plays a central role for systemic and structural change on disability inclusion across the UN system. We urge the UN to accelerate the implementation of the strategy and integrate these tools into its operations and structures, thereby ensuring sustainable institutional capacity for meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities. We recognize the UNPRPD Fund as a vital mechanism uniting the UN, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, and Governments to advance disability inclusion, having supported over 100 programs and transformative policy changes in 93 countries. We also look forward to the Global Disability Summit 2025 as an opportunity to create and leverage stakeholder commitment to disability inclusive transformation, especially in the Global South.

Universal ratification of the Convention remains a critical goal. We urge those countries that have not yet ratified the CRPD to consider doing so and to consider ratifying its Optional Protocol.

Finally, we reaffirm our respective commitments to the implementation of the CRPD and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in full partnership with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations building a future that upholds the principle of the disability movement: “nothing about us without us”.

Thank you.