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STATEMENT

BY

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**DEPUTY MINISTER FOR DISABILITY AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NAMIBIA**

AT THE

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 15TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF
STATE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES**

13 JUNE 2023

NEW YORK

1. Sixteen years ago, the Government of the Republic of Namibia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and its protocol. By doing so, we showed our committed to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all Persons with Disabilities.
2. This commitment enabled us to consolidate and implement what we were in the process of advancing at a national level, namely the National Disability Council Act, 26 of 2004, which served to establish a body that monitors the implementation of the National Disability Policy of 1997.
3. As a state party to the CRPD, I am pleased to share with you that Namibia has complied with its obligations under article 35 of the CRPD as the Government of the Republic of Namibia, and submitted its State Report in 2022. Additionally, the Organizations of Persons with Disabilities submitted their Shadow Report in 2022.
4. In our efforts to strengthen our national frameworks, Namibia is in the process of reviewing the National Disability Council Act, and National Policy on Disability with a view to harmonize and align them ensuring consistency with relevant regional and international instruments. At the same time, as we endeavor to build an inclusive society, this exercise seeks to address issues pertaining to the needs and rights of Persons with Disabilities by eliminating barriers that hinder the effective, efficient and full participation of Persons with Disabilities in the Namibian society.
5. The reviewed legislation and policy will ensure that Persons with Disabilities are provided with the same opportunities and rights as persons without disabilities. It will also help to promote social inclusion and reduce stigmatization of Persons with Disabilities by shifting public attitudes toward greater acceptance and understanding. Therefore, these are critical frameworks in advancing the rights and needs of Persons with Disabilities in Namibia because it will algin to international law which shifted from a medical model to the human rights, social and developmental model when dealing with disability.

6. This further provides an opportunity for Namibia to consider the domestication of the UNCRPD principles into statutory law as well as to implement legislative measures referred to by the UNCRPD to ensure the rights of Persons with Disabilities are not only legally acknowledged but comprehensively protected in Namibia.
7. Despite the legal framework in place, Namibia like many other states still has a lot to do in terms of implementation of programmes designed to benefit Persons with Disabilities given the vastness of Namibia with those in rural areas often at risk of being left behind.

Mr. President,

8. The Namibian Constitution, Article 95 calls upon the State to ensure that all citizens have the right to fair and reasonable access to public health facilities and services in accordance with the law.
9. In response to the supremacy of the Constitution, Life Skills based Health education is embedded in the National Policy on Sexual, Reproductive and Child Health through the provision of equitable, accessible and affordable services to eligible clients, irrespective of their creed, age, gender, religion, political affiliation or socio-economic status.
10. The Government of the Republic of Namibia, through the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MHSS) provides Family Planning, Antenatal Care, Postnatal Care, PMTCT, HTC (HIV Counselling and Testing), HIV, SRHR, SGBV, PrEP, PEP, HPV, and mental health services at health facilities, mobile outreach, drop-in centers, youth centers, schools and communities. Furthermore through our Inclusive education policy of 2013, efforts are under way to ensure attitudinal change amongst educators with an intention to widen and broaden educational support services.
11. The Ministry of Health and Social Services through the MoU signed with the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture provides outreach services to school

where they offer education on Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) and provide SRH services including the provision of Family planning for school-going adolescents including those with disabilities.

Mr President,

12. These are but a snapshot of our efforts to facilitate promote inclusion and enable people living with disabilities broader access to opportunities. My delegation greatly appreciated this annual opportunity to reflect on our progress and learn from other delegations about innovative ways they are working to better integrate people with disabilities into their societies.