



**New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations
Te Aka Aorere**

16th Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**New Zealand Statement delivered by
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Ministry of Disabled People**

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Tēnā koutou katoa. [Greetings everyone]. It is an honour to participate in this year's Conference.

Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. Last year, Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People was established - the first in the world of its kind. Whaikaha is a Māori word, which means being strong in our resolve.

As a disabled woman I am proud to be the Ministry's first Chief Executive. The Ministry is responsible for:

- Lifting the profile of disability and influencing better outcomes in line with our nation's founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi;
- Supporting other government agencies to incorporate disability perspectives into their work;
- Transforming disability funding and support.
- Implementing the Convention and New Zealand's Sign Language Strategy, Disability Strategy and Action Plan.

Our Disability Strategy sets the direction for realising the Convention and was developed in close consultation with civil society. Its vision is that New Zealand is a non-disabling society – a place where persons with disabilities have equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations, and all New Zealanders work together to make this happen.

I want to acknowledge the work of New Zealand's Independent Monitoring Mechanism, who under Article 33 of the Convention, continue to monitor our progress.

New Zealand continues to champion disability rights globally, and supports efforts to remove barriers to inclusion. As co-chair of the UN Group of Friends of Persons with Disabilities, we have a strong focus on driving collective action to advance the full participation and empowerment of persons with disabilities.

We will co-facilitate the biennial resolution on the implementation of the Convention in Third Committee this year, alongside Mexico. This resolution will focus on addressing the rights of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies. We call on all UN member states to support progress in this important area.

We are working on initiatives to address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including for Indigenous Peoples with disabilities.

In the Pacific region, New Zealand provides core funding to the Pacific Disability Forum to support implementation of its Strategic Plan for 2021 to 2025.

Our shared efforts towards disability inclusion are a critical element of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in a way that truly leaves no one behind – at home, in our region and internationally.

We recognise and support the important role that human rights defenders, civil society organisations, and multilateral partners play in advancing disability inclusion. The voices of persons with disabilities were essential during the development of the Convention, and they remain critical to its successful implementation. Aotearoa New Zealand will continue our efforts to support the international community's shared ambitions to achieve the full realisation of the rights of all persons with disabilities.

Thank you.