

**Statement
by the Minister of Social Policy of Ukraine
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General Assembly General debates
Conference of States Parties to the Convention
on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Ladies and gentlemen, dear participants and delegates of the conference, today I have the honor to address you on an extremely important topic - ensuring a barrier-free and safe space for our citizens with disabilities in the context of a full-scale war.

Our state systematically works to protect the rights of people with disabilities.

However, today in our country, due to Russian aggression, no one feels safe. Due to constant Russian attacks and shelling, people are injured every day. The number of people with disabilities is increasing. We also get a new portrait of such a person with a disability. Since 1922, disability occurs as a result of landmine injuries, contusions, and combat operations.

And these are young, active people seeking self-realization and employment. The Government of Ukraine, together with the help of international partners, is doing everything possible to realize this request of millions of our people. To this end, we are implementing a comprehensive reform of employment support for people with disabilities. Employment in Ukraine should be simple, comfortable and affordable for them.

We also reformed rehabilitation for people with disabilities. We have created multidisciplinary teams together with doctors, social workers, prosthetists and rehabilitation specialists. We are also digitizing a huge number of services so that help is provided in a high-quality, timely, remote manner.

What challenges does Ukraine face in protecting the rights of people with disabilities? In the temporarily occupied territories, the situation of people with disabilities is practically unknown. Very often they are deprived of access to the most necessary things that guarantee their survival. Only the de-occupation of this part of Ukraine will help us restore and protect their rights.

Russian aggression on the territory of Ukraine has also brought mental health issues to the fore. Today, more than 70% of the population feels anxiety due to constant attacks and a sense of danger for their own lives. That is why, on the initiative of our first lady Olena Zelenska, we started the program "Mental health. How are you?". As part of this program, we are implementing and developing a Center for Vitality, where every person will be able to receive psychosocial support.

We in Ukraine also make every effort to ensure that our people with disabilities have decent access to all the benefits they need, to give them the opportunity to realize themselves socially, to ensure the right to work, to have the opportunity to create families and simply live safely. But without the support of the international community, these tasks are extremely difficult for us.

I am sincerely grateful to everyone for the continued support of Ukraine in the effort to build a barrier-free and safe space for people with disabilities.

Thank you.