

**STATEMENT BY HON. LOVEMORE MATUKE (MP),  
DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR  
AND SOCIAL WELFARE, ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO  
THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS  
WITH DISABILITIES (COSP16): 13 to 15 JUNE, 2023**

**Chairperson,**

the overarching theme of this important Conference, is pertinent, relevant and timely as we endeavour to improve the wellbeing of people with disabilities. We have an opportunity to reflect on the harmonization of national policies and strategies with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to highlight challenges and achievements thereof, with a view to chart the best way forward.

We recognize the importance of promoting, protecting, safeguarding and respecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

In this regard, Zimbabwe has achieved the following:

- launched of the National Disability Policy 2021, aligned to our Constitution, and the CRPD.
- Established a National Technical Committee, comprised of all the relevant stakeholders, to steer the harmonization process.

- Establishment of projects targeted for persons with disabilities, to enable them to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country under the National Development Strategy 1.
- Repealed the Disabled Persons Act and replace it by a Persons with Disabilities Act, to guide the revision of laws to ensure disability inclusion.
- Promoted and facilitated the inclusion of unrepresented and underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities in policy formulation and implementation, in line with the cardinal principle of leaving no one behind.
- Installed digital infrastructure and setting up fully equipped communication centers in rural and urban districts for use by persons with disabilities.
- Working with partners, rolled out ICT training for persons with disabilities, throughout the country.

**Chairperson,**

Accessing sexual and reproductive health services by persons with disabilities, are critical. My government has established a national technical working group to promote and monitors access to healthcare by persons with disabilities, including sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.

A lot of progress has been realised, but more work still needs to be done, to get where we want to be. Zimbabwe is committed to share best practices and further enhance cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders, in pursuit of our goal of achieving the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in all facets of life.

**I thank you.**