

14COSP Side Event: Promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in just transition towards a sustainable economy.

Organizers: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland - International Labour Organization

Co-Sponsor: International Disability Alliance

17 June 2021

Good morning to everyone:

The Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations on Disability and Accessibility, apologizes for not being able to be here, for reasons beyond her control, and has asked me to represent her. She thanks all the organizers for the invitation to this important event.

1) Among the challenges for persons with disabilities to access employment opportunities are:

- According to the Convention, it is necessary to focus on Awareness-raising (article 8 CRPD)

“States Parties undertake to adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures”

The most important ones, for this purpose are the promotion of awareness raising throughout society, regarding persons with disabilities, and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices, and promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities.

At the same time, promote recognition of the skills, merits and abilities of persons with disabilities, and of their contributions to the workplace and the labour market.

In addition to this obligation of the States, we are all responsible for spreading awareness, and particularly towards public-private employers, either as pwd’s organizations, as local governments, as education sector at all levels, as media, as stakeholders or as individuals.

- A second challenge is the access to education and lifelong learning. (article 24 CRPD)

States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education, realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning.

This includes the availability and access to technology (article 9 CRPD). We must remember the right of access for persons with disabilities to information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet, particularly in these times of pandemic and distance education.

Without education and training there will be no access to Jobs.

- Regarding Work and employment (27 CRPD)

As we know, States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others.

However, we need to highlight the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, especially about the recruitment conditions, as we found lack of accessibility and reasonable accommodation in them. For example, it is important to bring down the barriers to generate job opportunities for pwd, and this is done through having access to the information of the position, reasonable accommodation for application, interviews, and communication of the process.

- Finally, there is not equal recognition to pwd before the law, regarding legal capacity, on an equal basis with others, in all aspects of life.

Most of the internal laws limit or deny legal capacity of persons with disabilities.

Therefore persons cannot sign contracts by themselves.

It is important to continue working to derogate these legal barriers, changing the substitute will system to the will model with supports and safeguards.

2) Our recommendations to ensure that Just Transition initiatives create opportunities for persons with disabilities are the following:

- Wide promotion of the CRPD.
- Full-scale promotion of international labor laws and ILO recommendations that serve as the basis for just transition. For example, the recommendations of COP25, such as:
 - Submit their climate action plans and timeframes;
 - Resolve the financing of climate action worldwide;
 - Resolve how to support countries affected by the impacts of climate change;
 - Establish financing of loss and damage from climate change.
- Incorporation of labor laws into public policies and national plans of the Ministries in each country and take them to local realities, with an emphasis on accessibility and reasonable accommodation for pwd.
- Collaboration for this purpose between government authorities, local authorities, public-private employers, workers and stakeholders, with the support of international organizations.
- Promotion of the Guiding Principles on Human Rights and Business of the Human Rights Council.
- Contribution of organizations of persons with disabilities, to introduce and implement the concept of just transition. Civil society is crucial to catalyze change.

The promotion and implementation of the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda in relation to the just transition are fundamental. Especially the following:

8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

14: Conserve Life below water

15: Protection of life and land

4 Education that ensure all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles.

And a final recommendation: In the accountability to the HLPF, countries could report on the inclusion of pwd in Green Jobs.

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Our suggestion is that Organizations that represent persons with disabilities generate advocacy actions and networking with UN Agencies and States Parties, to include this issue at COP26.

María Soledad Cisternas Reyes.