

12th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD Opening Session: Civil Society Statement

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and friends:

I'm here today representing the disability movement. We are united, as a movement, to shift from words to action. Action for the people in this room, and for the more than one billion people we represent.

In the last year since we met in this very room a lot of significant progress has been achieved in the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities:

- the first ever Global disability Summit held in London in July 2018 which was cohosted by UK and Kenyan government as well as the International disability Alliance;
- the creation of the UN disability inclusion strategy that was just announced by the Secretary-General. We would like to very much welcome the work of the UN on making its organization and programs inclusive of persons with disabilities and their rights;
- persons with disabilities were for the first time included in the deliberation of the Security Council in December.

These new developments will de facto create a new demand on organizations of persons with disabilities at all levels. For example, for the UN disability inclusion strategy to be truly successful and sustainable a meaningful involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities at the national level as well as at the regional and global level is a must. This demand will create a new strain on the capacities of organizations of persons with disabilities to deliver. Therefore, a strategic thinking is needed on how to urgently strengthen organizations of persons with disabilities to serve as partners to many of the stakeholders, including UN and member states in delivery of new commitments as well as CRPD and SDGs.

Further, unfortunately, we continue to report on number of setbacks and obstacles, especially from the implementation of the CRPD and SDGs at the national level:

- we continue to hear reports of our partners at the national level that services for persons with disabilities are being cut in the fiscal space for implementation of the rights is continuing to shrink;
- implementation of the agenda 2030 is still not inclusive of persons with disabilities at the national level;
- very concerning promotion of mental health debate that is not inclusive of human rights-based approach and especially of participation of persons with psychosocial disabilities.

Yesterday, over 400 representatives from Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, Civil Society, Governments, Multilateral Organisations, and the Private Sector met to discuss these obstacles as well as to see how best organizations of persons with disabilities can contribute and act as partners to many of the positive developments and new commitments of the world leaders and to many of you in this room. We had reflections on what is the current state of play in the promotion of rights of persons with disabilities, on capacity building, and on protecting the rights of children with disabilities.

Collectively, we wish to share the following message:

- We recognise the need to increase the meaningful consultation and involvement of persons with disabilities, and their organisations, in all decision-making processes
- We call for increase investment in, and partnership with, a diversity of organisations of persons with disabilities, including the most marginalized groups. We urgently call for an investment in the capacity building of all stakeholders – government, multilaterals, and broader civil society - to implement the CRPD and agenda 2030 for persons with disabilities. We recognize successful practices in capacity building and call for such initiatives to receive additional support and be more readily available.

We have seen and experienced the extraordinary work we can do together. There is a lot to celebrate indeed. Especially from the Global disability Summit last year we feel that the new wave of movement to promote rights of persons with disabilities has been started and we believe that we share today a unique opportunity and responsibility to benefit from this wave and

to once for all start taking the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities seriously.

Thank you.