**ITALY**

***Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation***

*Inter-ministerial Committee for Human Rights*

*Comitato Interministeriale per i Diritti Umani*

**ITALY’S CONTRIBUTION**

**TO THE DRAFT GENERAL COMMENT ON ARTICLE 15 OF THE CONVENTION ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS: *SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS***

***February 2020***

**ITALY’S REMARKS**

**Introduction**

Italian Authorities thank the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural rights and want to provide the following contribution to the Draft General Comment on article 15 of the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural rights (*Science and economic, social and cultural rights*).

First of all, with regard to the conclusions contained in paragraph 89 on “A human right to science”, Italy suggests disclosing the content of the said conclusions also at the beginning of the text (i.e. in section “I. Introduction and basic premises”), in order to highlight, from its very beginning, the final outcome of the commendable work done by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural rights.

In addition, with regard to paragraphs 41 and 42 on persons with disabilities, Italy would like to highlight the following.

Often the products and services that are the result of scientific progress do not take into account the special needs of people with disabilities. An environment where products and services are more accessible makes a more inclusive society possible and facilitates the independent lives of people with disabilities.

In this regard, the European Union, with Directive 2019/882 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019, on accessibility requirements for products and services, established as an objective the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States, relating to accessibility requirements for products and services to ensure access based on the principle of non-discrimination.

Differences in national accessibility requirements have discouraged individual professionals, SMEs and micro enterprises in particular from launching business initiatives outside their national market. National, or even regional or local, accessibility requirements set by Member States differ in both coverage and level of detail. These differences have a negative impact on competitiveness and growth due to the additional costs incurred for the development and marketing of accessible products and services for each national market, this situation is to be overcome with the Directive 2019/882. The fragmentation between national regulations reduces the benefits of sharing experiences with national and international counterparts.

The approximation of national measures at Union level is therefore necessary for the proper functioning of the internal market in order to put an end to the fragmentation of the market for accessible products and services.

Furthermore, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities approved by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 December 2006 represents an important result achieved by the international community as an international binding instrument for States Parties. The aforementioned Convention provides that the parties take adequate measures to guarantee people with disabilities, on an equal basis with others; access to the physical environment, transport, information and communications, including information and communication systems and technologies, and other open equipment and services. For this reason, access to scientific progress is essential. The CRPD invites to promote research and development, as well as to encourage the provision and use of new accessible technologies, mobility aids, devices and support technologies.

**Conclusions**

Italian Authorities take this opportunity to reiterate their firm willingness to continue cooperating with all relevant UN Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures and mechanisms.