Honorable chair:

As a matter of fact, the right of work and employment is one of the fundamental human rights for all people including persons with disabilities, according to the article 27 of the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Accordingly, MAAT for peace, development and human rights is condemning the violations of the convention towards those vulnerable persons in Arab region.

Persons with disabilities are challenging a very high unemployment rate when compared to people without disabilities, this is because of the lack of awareness about the capabilities of those people to work productively, and because the laws and regulations related to their employment is not enforced effectively.

In addition to this, persons with disabilities are facing the challenge of stereotypes culturally or socially, which make them disappointed and discouraged to be included in economic activities and work.

Honorable committee: please, kindly note the huge difference in the unemployment rate for people with disabilities when comparing to others.

For instance, among men, in the Arab region, the difference is even more striking, with 65% of adults employed compared to 28% for males with disabilities. Moreover, when looking at the impact of institutional and legal reforms on economic activity and employment rates, these frameworks have not yet achieved holistic social inclusion of persons with disabilities in society. Persons with disabilities in Arab countries face barriers in finding jobs- which is one of the fundamental human rights and substantial key to enabling equal participation of persons with disabilities in social and economic life.

Accordingly, MAAT for peace, development, and human rights is asking the honorable committee to include the following in its general comment:

Inviting all countries that are not yet state parties in the convention to ratify it as soon as possible; through multilateral dialogue with those states. As we also invite all countries to effectively enforce the rules, laws, and regulations related to disability employment and work, bided by the article 27 of the convention.

All states in the Arab region are highly recommended to raise awareness about the importance of providing persons with disabilities with their rights of open, inclusive, and accessible work places. And it is highly important to have a national strategic action plan to work on changing the cultural and social stereotypes about disability; this could be implemented by establishing an observatory committee to supervise the creation of such a national strategy, and to supervise the implementation of workshops and trainings for all governmental officials, university professors and teachers on the disability inclusion.

It is highly important to conduct a disability awareness campaign, for recruiters, managers, and HR persons to rase awareness on disability employment and removing stereotypes about them, and it is suggested that all countries should submit a report to the CRPD annually to report about the progress achieved in this regard.

Providing persons with disabilities with the needed encouragement and community support for them to be motivated, and providing them with the necessary training, rehabilitation, whether it is technical or vocational, to be able to perform their tasks effectively.

It is highly recommended to stop emotional treatments for persons with disabilities, and all institutions (schools, universities, or families) should deal with them positively and with supportive attitude.

Arab states should work on increasing the awareness of entrepreneurship, forming small businesses, and cooperatives for persons with disabilities, and all states are highly recommended to provide all training, and facilities needed for persons with disabilities to start their own small projects; as it is suggested to exempt the persons with disability from taxes on the establishment of new startups and small enterprises, also, it is recommended to establish business incubators for persons with disability to give them guides to start their own businesses, and to establish a startups fund to help persons with disability that are not able to implement their ideas into a real business due to the lack of money or insufficient funding.

Finally, it is important to give priority to persons with disability who belong to any of indigenous or ethnic group and eliminate any hate speech or discriminative practices against them.