Chairperson, dear colleagues,

Malta commends the initiative of the United Nations Committee. As Minister for Inclusion and Social Wellbeing, I would like to emphasise that Malta recognises the value of ensuring dignified, gainful employment for all, as a means to ensuring greater participation and inclusion in society.

Employment advisors at JobsPlus, Malta’s public employment service, work with disabled jobseekers in order to develop tailored Jobseeking Action Plans. JobsPlus’ Bridging the Gap Scheme supports disabled persons who are registering as unemployed, in their transition into employment, through work exposure schemes.

A Job Bridge Training Centre was set up, offering accredited courses, focused on the acquisition of pre-employment skills. The Headstart programme replicates employment conditions, supporting disabled jobseekers to increase skills and employability. Disabled representatives sit on JobsPlus’ Board, further to applicable legislation.

Training placements have been provided by Agenzija Sapport, Malta’s service provision agency for disabled persons. These combined further training for prospective disabled employees, as well as employers, together with job matching, job coaching and job mentoring. The latter are also part of the remit of the Lino Spiteri Foundation, a public-social partnership providing profiling and guidance, job coaching and corporate outreach.

The Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability’s participation in the 100 Mirrors initiative offered coaching and mentoring for disabled women, by other disabled women who were successful entrepreneurs. The Commission’s Malta Business Disability Forum brings together 9 key national stakeholders, including DPOs.

Finally, protections in Malta’s existing legal and policy instruments will be supplemented by new legislation, giving the UNCRPD direct effect in Maltese law, and by a National Strategy. 2021 will be an indeed pivotal year for the Maltese disability sector.

Malta will engage with disabled persons in this process, as we are doing between the 21st and 26th of March, where best practice examples, including in employment, are being showcased in my Ministry’s campaign, co-produced with the Malta Down Syndrome Association, to mark World Down Syndrome Day.

Thank you.