## The situation of persons with disabilities affected by disasters in

## Peru, Ecuador and Colombia

### Statement by the

### Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

#### Adopted during the Committee’s seventeenth session, held from 20 March to 12 April 2017 in Geneva

1. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expresses its solidarity with Peru, Ecuador and Colombia where several parts of the countries are under emergency due to severe flooding and mudslides which have led to significant human and material losses, and it offers its deepest condolences to the families, friends and communities of the victims.
2. In this context, the Committee recalls that persons with disabilities are among the most disproportionately affected during the occurrence of natural disasters as they face greater barriers to: escape immediate danger and reach safe areas; remain with and account for their family members; access information and assistance; and navigate relief measures, infrastructure and services on an equal basis with other survivors. Further, women and girls with disabilities are rendered particularly vulnerable as the risk of experiencing sexual violence, abuse and exploitation is heightened during these situations.
3. The Committee recalls that persons with disabilities have the same rights as all other persons affected by natural disasters, and calls on the authorities of Peru, Ecuador and Colombia to give priority attention to take appropriate measures to address their specific requirements, in accordance with their obligations under Article 11 of the Convention, in line with Goal 11 of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development and guided by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. States shall take all necessary measures to ensure the the safety of persons with disabilities and facilitate their equal access to the full array of emergency responses and services provided. The delivery of humanitarian aid should consider the urgent requirements of persons with disabilities and should provide for their access to disability-specific services, including support.
4. The Committee stresses the need to promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches which ensure that preparedness and disaster risk reduction measures, emergency evacuation procedures and early warning systems reach all persons with disabilities regardless of the physical environment, transportation, information and communication barriers, and take all necessary measures to eliminate such obstacles. Humanitarian needs assessments should be inclusive of, and accessible to persons with disabilities, and collect sex, age- and impairment disaggregated data.
5. States should also ensure that all post-emergency reconstruction and rebuilding efforts are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities; applying principles of universal design in all reconstruction and rebuilding programmes, including public buildings and spaces, water and sanitation points, information and communication infrastructure, technologies and services. Persons with disabilities may need assistance to rebuild their homes, whether in urban or rural areas. While the reconstruction of homes that were partially damaged or totally destroyed by the floods and mudslides is underway, it is urgent that persons with disabilities are provided with dignified and accessible living spaces for daily use according to their requirements.
6. Further, it is imperative that States and all humanitarian and emergency prevention and response actors include persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of disaster risk preparedness, resilience, reduction and recovery policies and strategies and to ensure inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation in decision-making in this respect.
7. The Committee calls on the international community to support the efforts of Peru, Ecuador and Colombia to address the situation of persons with disabilities during the current emergency situations, in line with Articles 11, 32 and 37 of the Convention, Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Committee makes an urgent appeal to the specialized agencies within and outside the UN system, including the funds and programmes, and international development and humanitarian actors and other relevant bodies, in coordination with the authorities of these countries, to adopt strategic programs and action plans towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities affected by these natural disasters.

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