**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 QUESTIONNAIRE ON DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

***April 2020***

**ITALY’S REMARKS**

**Introduction**

Italian Authorities thank the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities and want to provide the following contribution to the questionnaire on disability-inclusive international cooperation.

**Turning to the specific issue**

With regard to the specific questions raised, Italy would like to highlight that persons with disabilities are just under a billion and represent around 15% of the world population. It is estimated that around 80% of them live in developing countries, where the condition of disability is associated with poverty, exclusion, discrimination, with serious social, economic and cultural repercussions. Italy is recognized internationally as a reference point for policies in this sector and the Italian Cooperation has always adopted an inclusive and participatory approach in policies and interventions in the sector involving representatives of civil society, institutions and Italian academic world.

In this direction, the approval of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified by more than 180 countries and by the European Union itself, marked a turning point also on international cooperation policies and the European Strategy itself on disability 2010-2020 has provided adequate attention to people with disabilities in bilateral agendas and in development and emergency programs. In line with the international reference standards:

- In November 2010 the Disability Guidelines were approved, drawn up on the basis of the provisions of the CRPD <https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2010-07-01_LineeGuidaDisabilita.pdf>;

- In 2013, the Disability Action Plan of the Italian Cooperation was adopted <https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/B_01_Piano_Azione_ita.pdf>.

The Action Plan comprises five pillars, each of which encompasses concrete actions related to 1. Policies and strategies - Tools for planning and monitoring disability policies at national level; 2. Inclusive planning; 3. Accessibility and usability of environments, goods and services; 4. Humanitarian aid and emergency situations which include people with disabilities; 5. Enhancement of the experiences and skills of civil society and businesses. It has been included in the "Biennial Action Program of the Italian Government on disability" (D.P.R. October 4, 2013);

- In 2015, various documents were produced in the sector useful for the formulation and monitoring of initiatives, in particular in the field of physical accessibility of buildings, inclusive education and humanitarian aid. A mapping of the initiatives "Inclusion, disability, international cooperation: the experience of Italian Cooperation 2009-2014" was also carried out;

- In 2018 the first Guidelines of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) in the sector were adopted: "Guidelines for disability and social inclusion in cooperation interventions" <https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/LINEE-GUIDA-DISABILITA-2018.pdf>;

- On December 3, 2019, International Disability Day, the research "Disability and International Cooperation: participation and inclusion - The experience of Italian Cooperation 2016-2017" was launched https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content /uploads/2019/12/survey-disabilita%CC%80-2016-2017.pdf, which was attended by 72 implementing bodies among CSOs, International Organizations and AICS offices. The research used the application of the "disability marker" inserted in the AICS information system which allowed a precise analysis of investments in the sector, identifying both the projects specifically dedicated to disability and those in which disability is a component of transversal activity (mainstreaming).

This work is the result of a collaboration between AICS, civil society, universities and external experts in the sector with the aim of presenting the commitment of AICS in disability, in the two-year period 2016-2017, which compares the planned actions, investments and results obtained. It is important to note that the internal tool of the "disability marker", adopted since 2014 by the Italian Cooperation, has in fact overcome the lack of a specific OECD-DAC code for disability and has allowed the identification of the research sample of this survey. . In this regard, it is necessary to specify that "The Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT)" approved in June 2018 the introduction of a "policy marker" on the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities. The marker was included in the "Reporting Directives in November 2018". The work of the Italian Cooperation was therefore far-sighted having foreseen, already in 2014, the need to insert a useful tool for the collection of timely data on the commitment in the sector. In the current document, the AICS Guidelines for Disability of 2018, despite being subsequent to the period covered by the research, have been used to offer a useful benchmark for future studies and better planning of activities in the sector. Using the marker tool, information on projects dedicated to disability was found in the general information system of AICS. For humanitarian aid and demining projects, reference was made to the data of the AICS Emergency and Fragile States Office. Specifically, this work takes into consideration all the projects that in the two-year period 2016-2017 had: n movements: finalized commitments4 (commitments) and disbursements n disability marker assignment: score from 0 to 3.5. 124 projects have been identified; 104 of these were considered useful for research purposes. Projects that have not yet started or are in the process of being started have been excluded. The executors of the 104 projects were asked to participate in a research conducted through an online questionnaire - in Italian and English - using the CAWI6 methodology. The questionnaire was drawn up by a specially created Scientific Committee. 72 questionnaires were completed. The responses obtained were analyzed on the basis of specific items in order to have a scenario useful for planning future activities in the sector also with a view to mainstreaming. This work contains thematic boxes whose contents are the result of the collection of information relating to the questions "Qualifying elements and lessons learned" provided by the implementing bodies of projects.

**Conclusions**

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