Submission to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Regarding Article 11 of the CRPD

March 7, 2023

The World Institute on Disability welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the Day of General Discussion regarding persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

The World Institute on Disability (WID) was established in 1983 by Judy Heumann, Ed Roberts and Joan Leon as one of the first global disability rights organizations founded and continually led by people with disabilities.

I want to acknowledge the loss on Saturday of Judy, who was not only WIDs founder but the globally beloved “mother of Disability Rights”.

Judy played a central role in every point in the CRPD, and her voice will always be imbedded in this landmark global disability rights effort.

Judy was very supportive of my work on disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and WID’s commitment to the leadership of disabled people before, during and after disasters and throughout our climate and environmental justice work.

Judy was very supportive of WIDs establishment of the Global Alliance for Disaster Resource Acceleration, and we were last together at a meeting with the US State Department 10 days ago on the one year anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

GADRA was established in 2020 to address the ongoing failure of humanitarian resources to reach disability-led organizations in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

In the absence of progress in supporting disaster-impacted communities, GADRA connects Disabled Persons Organizations with humanitarian resources from corporations and foundations to accelerate assistance directly to disabled persons organizations to serve their disaster impacted community.

Humanitarian relief via government and the various UN entities is not reaching these local leaders or the disabled people they serve. The impact on their ability to serve their community is devastating. GADRA has been assisting DPOs in Haiti, Columbia, Puerto Rico, Ukraine and now Türkiye and Syria in the absence of other humanitarian aid.

Article 11 calls for all countries to take all necessary measures for the protection and safety of people with disabilities. This is clearly not happening. Further, I want to take this opportunity to point out that important resources to strengthen community capacity are excluding North America. It remains unclear why North America is not included in funds for training and participation in global Article 11 initiatives.

For people with disabilities impacted by disasters, geography and politics must never be used to deny the basic opportunities for protection and safety firmly imbedded in Article 11. Lets jointly affirm prioritization of the needs of all disaster and conflict impacted individuals with disabilities and ensure DPOs are prioritized with humanitarian assistance regardless of geography or politics.

Sincerely,

Text, letter

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Marcie Roth

Executive Director and CEO