**United Nations Observance of the International Day of Care and Support (2024)**

**Date:** Tuesday 29 October 2024, 10:00 am-12:00 pm EST

**Theme:** Transforming Care Systems: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of Beijing+30

**Location**: New York / ECOSOC Chamber United Nations Headquarters.

**Format:** In-person with streaming via UN Web TV

**Organizers**: UN Women (lead for 2024); ILO and OHCHR (co-organizers for 2024)

**Co-sponsorship**: Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mexico, Philippines, Spain.

**Language:** English with translation to Spanish and French

**Remarks - UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities for the segment “Rights of Caregivers and care recipients”**

***According to you as Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, what are the policy changes that still need to happen to ensure the recognition and the rights of Persons with Disabilities?***

Thank you for your question, and let me first say what a privilege it is to be here with all of you today, as we gather to mark the second International Day of Care and Support. I’d like to extend my deepest thanks to UN Women, OHCHR, and the ILO for organizing this vital event and for inviting me to share my thoughts with you.

The theme of today’s event couldn’t be more timely or relevant to me. It aligns perfectly with the work I am deeply committed to around gender equality and the rights of persons with disabilities, which will be the focus of my efforts in 2025.

As the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, my mission is to ensure that their rights are championed and protected at every level—national, regional, and international. One issue I’ve been following closely is the urgent need to build care and support systems that are robust, resilient, and responsive to gender, disability, and age—while fully upholding human rights.

I firmly believe that investing in the transformation of care and support systems represents a key opportunity. By doing so, we can create frameworks that promote the independence, autonomy, and inclusion of persons with disabilities, ensuring that their human rights are respected—whether they are providing or requiring care and support.

To build care and support systems that are inclusive and rooted in human rights, we must move away from institutionalized models of care and support and focus on developing community-based services. We must also ensure that those providing unpaid care and support —who are so often women and girls, including women with disabilities, older women, and women who are migrant workers—receive the recognition and support they deserve, respecting their right to decent work. This transformation requires accessible infrastructure, inclusive social protection, and products designed to meet the needs of those requiring care and support, as well as those providing it.

This can only be achieved with the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities. Their voices and lived experiences must be central to shaping care and support systems that truly meet their needs.

There are still significant challenges. Women and girls with disabilities not only encounter barriers as recipients of care and support, but also face struggles when providing it themselves. Likewise, many women who provide care and support for persons with disabilities—whether they are children or adults—shoulder these responsibilities with little to no support. These realities will be at the heart of my thematic work in 2025.

I plan to explore how key international frameworks—the CRPD, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Sustainable Development Goals—can better complement one another to strengthen the rights of women and girls with disabilities, and to use the momentum of the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform to spotlight the ongoing challenges they face in realizing their full human rights.

I also want to focus on the critical role of families and relatives—especially women—who provide care and support for persons with disabilities. When families are not adequately supported, it’s not just those providing care and support who suffer—the rights of persons with disabilities are at risk, exposing them to abuse, neglect, and institutionalization.

The CRPD Committee already acknowledged the importance of support for family and informal care and support providers. States must ensure that they receive the resources they need, so they, in turn, can support persons with disabilities to live independently within the community.

In conclusion, we need policy changes that benefit both those who require care and support and those who provide it. By supporting both groups, we can ensure that States meet their obligations under the CRPD, while building a more inclusive, equitable future for all.

Thank you.