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The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, and would like to refer to the note verbal dated February 13, 2023 regarding contributions to the thematic, that will look at how persons with disabilities are included and contribute to peacebuilding processes. In that regard, the Permanente Mission has the honor to attach herewith contribution of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the afore-mentioned report.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, the assurance of its highest consideration.



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## Questionnaire Received from Special Rapporteur on Rights of Persons with Disabilities

1. Please describe your engagement strategy for promoting conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction, and peacebuilding, and share the current policy and other documents if any.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, represented in King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief), has set a number of strategic objectives for relief and humanitarian aid to be provided to distressed people, including persons with disabilities, in areas of conflicts, clashes, or disasters. These objectives include the following:

### Organization:

- Establishment of King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center as an active, efficient and flexible organization.
- Building a team of skillful, professional and experienced employees.

### Relief and Humanitarian Work:

- Providing external humanitarian aid, relief and charitable assistance by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- Developing partnerships with leading organizations in humanitarian work.
- Developing an effective mechanism that ensures rapid response to humanitarian crises.
- Maximizing the impact of aid provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ensuring sustainability of that aid by promoting supervision, follow-up and evaluation processes.

### Enablers:





- Attracting and qualifying volunteers to participate in relief and humanitarian work.
- Developing effective fundraising models.
- Building a strong network of supporters and donors.

In addition, Article (28) of the Basic Law of Governance stipulates that “The State shall facilitate job opportunities for every able person”, to allow citizens, without exception, to participate in building the nation economically and politically and to participate in public life, whereby guaranteeing persons with disabilities the right to participate in all public life arenas without discrimination.

**2. Please explain how existing strategies and policies to promote conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction and peacebuilding ensure the inclusion and engagement of persons with disabilities and the organizations that represent them?**

- The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) is implementing a project for the rehabilitation of children recruited and affected by the armed conflict in Yemen. Launched from Ma'rib Governorate in September 2017, this project is a Saudi qualitative humanitarian initiative that focuses on rehabilitating children recruited and affected by the armed conflict and reinstating them to their natural lives and providing them with the necessary social support. The project aims to do so by integrating those children in society, enrolling them in schools and providing the necessary follow up, in addition to rehabilitating them psychologically and socially by delivering rehabilitation courses to them and to their families. The project also aims to educate parents of those children about the dangers of recruiting children, and works to create a sound family environment by holding awareness and





educational courses and promoting awareness of the laws that criminalize child recruitment. Since its inception, the project has benefited 530 children, while the number of indirect beneficiaries including parents and others amounted to 6065 beneficiaries.

- KSRelief has actively engaged in providing support and finance to artificial limb centers that provide free services to the injured with amputated limb through the Artificial Limbs Program. The program aimed to provide prosthetic limbs with high quality to the patients, train national personnel on artificial limbs manufacturing technologies, build the capacities of health institutions to ensure the localization and sustainability of services, in addition to the rehabilitation of patients to be productive persons who are able to work and lead their normal lives. KSRelief also adopted a project for demining and clearing Yemeni lands. The spread of those large quantities of mines led to the death of thousands of children, women, and the elderly, and caused permanent disabilities overburdening health and treatment facilities, and inflicting numerous losses for individuals and society.

**3. Please describe the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction and peacebuilding by providing concrete examples, and what are the steps taken to facilitate this participation? Please provide also a description and characterization of the participation in terms of impact.**

KSRelief provides a lot of humanitarian, relief and development aid to more than (86) countries around the world, in partnership with international, regional and local





partners in the beneficiary countries. The list of international partners includes a number of international organizations such as (the World Health Organization, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OSHA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the World Food Programme), in addition to a number of other international organizations and national government agencies.

**4. Please indicate how existing strategies and policies take into account the inclusion of persons with disabilities among asylum-seekers, refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons in conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction and peacebuilding through concrete examples, for example with regard to safe and inclusive conditions for return to conflict-affected areas. What are the steps taken to facilitate their inclusion and participation? Please also provide description and characterization of their participation in terms of impact.**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of the largest receivers of visitors (refugees). It provides them with free treatment and education, endeavors to ensure their integration into society across all regions of the Kingdom and provides them with education in public schools and job opportunities. It is noteworthy that the percentage of refugees in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has reached 5.5% of the total Saudi population. The





Kingdom provides them with aid and assistance through the services provided by the General Directorate of Passports in addition to the health and education sectors.

### **Inclusion and Participation of Persons with Disabilities**

**6. How is the active participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in promoting conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction and peacebuilding is encouraged?**

KSRelief provides a lot of humanitarian, relief and development assistance to more than (86) countries around the world, in partnership with international, regional and local partners in the beneficiary countries. Numerous humanitarian programs and initiatives were implemented to deliver relief aid to millions of beneficiaries all over the world. This relief and humanitarian aid include the following:

- Providing external humanitarian aid, relief and charitable assistance by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- Developing partnerships with leading organizations in humanitarian work.
- Developing an effective mechanism that ensures rapid response to humanitarian crises.
- Maximizing the impact of aid provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ensuring sustainability of that aid by promoting supervision, follow-up and evaluation processes.

**9. Please describe the conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction and peacebuilding programs you have developed, financed and/or implemented**





that cover persons with disabilities or their representative organizations. What are the key challenges, lessons learned and best practices?

KSRelief takes into account that the projects and programs it delivers are diverse according to the beneficiaries and their conditions they are in or went through. The aid provided covers all relief and humanitarian aid areas (including relief security, camp management, shelter, early recovery, protection, education, water and environmental sanitation, food, health, support for humanitarian operations, logistics, emergency communications).

The Saudi Development and Reconstruction Program for Yemen (SDRPY) was launched as part of the Kingdom and its leadership effort to secure the needs of the Yemeni brothers and to implement development projects, initiatives and programs in various vital sectors such as health, education, energy, transportation, water, agriculture and fisheries, and other development programs. SDRPY also rebuilds the infrastructure and capabilities of Yemeni government institutions.

**11. Please indicate whether the obligations set out in Article 32 “(International Cooperation” of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were taken into account when developing policies and strategies to promote conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction and peacebuilding.**

The agreements to which the Kingdom has acceded are considered part of its national law. Believing in the importance of international cooperation, the Kingdom has built many partnerships with regional and international organizations, supported the





participation of a number of its citizens with disabilities in international organizations, and has taken some other measures in this regard.

- In the field of regional cooperation, the Kingdom participated with the rest of the Arab member states in adopting the "Arab Decade for Persons with Disabilities 2004-2013".
- The Kingdom submitted a proposal to the Council of Arab Ministers for Social Affairs at the League of Arab States to set an "Arab Day of Persons with Disabilities", and the Council approved this proposal in 2007.
- On June 2, 2009, the Kingdom organized a symposium on how to effect the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. On the sidelines of this symposium, specialized workshops were held to qualify engineers working in Arab estates secretariats to include persons with disabilities in the planning of buildings. In addition, the Kingdom held the first and second International Conferences on Disability and Rehabilitation.
- At the level of international cooperation with international organizations to realize some of the objectives of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Kingdom has already signed a joint cooperation program document with UNICEF. This cooperation has yielded many programs and activities with UNICEF, including the Kingdom's donation to UNICEF to support the eradication of polio.
- Additionally, there are many Saudi qualified persons with disabilities who participate and hold membership in regional and international committees. For example, a Saudi citizen with a disability is a member of the Committee on the Rights of





Persons with Disabilities. Also, there is a qualified Saudi woman with hearing disability holds the membership of the Women's Committee representing deaf people in the Arab Organization for Persons with Disabilities. She is also a member of the Organizing Committee of the First Regional Conference of Arab Deaf, which is organized by the Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities in cooperation with the European Disability Forum with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation.

- The Kingdom also gained membership of the Rehabilitation International organization, after concluding an agreement with Rehabilitation International (ACTA Committee) to facilitate mobility and accessibility at persons with disabilities centers according to international standards, in addition to delegating a group of male and female employees to attend seminars and training workshops on how to Implement the agreement.
- On December 9-10, 2012, the Kingdom hosted the Global Conference on Universal Access, which was held in Riyadh under the auspices of the King Salman Center for Disability Research. Dozens of international and Saudi experts participated in the event developing designs for urban areas and roads that facilitate access by persons with disabilities to such roads and areas as well as to the utilities serving them.
- In October 2014, the Kingdom hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Disability and Rehabilitation, during which many distinguished researchers on disability were honored.
- Furthermore, a national talent has previously headed the Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments (GAATES) that is based in Canada.





- Moreover, the official delegate of the World Federation of the Deaf to the national project to educate deaf women about the importance of early detection of breast cancer is a female Saudi qualified citizen with hearing disability. She was also a delegate of the Arab Federation of Organizations Working with the Deaf to the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters from 2005 – 2011, in addition to acting as a Liaison Officer of the Arab Region at the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters from 2011 to the date hereof.

**12. Please describe whether the obligations set out under Article 29 “Participation in Political and Public Life“ of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were taken into account when developing policies and strategies to promote conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction and peacebuilding.**

The agreements to which the Kingdom has acceded are part and parcel of its national law. This can be seen in the opportunities offered to persons with disabilities to participate in public life on an equal footing with other persons through appointment, which is always based on competence and qualification regardless of the physical shape. For example: the position of Grand Mufti of the Kingdom, which is one of the highest posts in the state, was held by three persons with visual impairments for consecutive sessions. The Council of Senior Scholars, which is considered one of the most important governmental bodies, also includes among its members people with visual impairments, and the Shura Council also includes members with physical and sensory disabilities. In addition, the Human Rights Commission and other university and institute faculties include members of people with disabilities.