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**11th Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**Interactive Dialogue on Implementation of the Convention between States Parties and the UN System**



**Statement by**

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Your Excellencies,

Dear colleagues and friends,

It is with great pleasure that I deliver these words to the Conference on behalf of OHCHR. And it is a particular honour to address you at this pivotal moment within the history of the United Nations, as it commits itself to transformation from within and throughout to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

First, let me say that we wholeheartedly support the Secretary-General’s decisions to develop a policy, action plan and accountability framework to strengthen system-wide accessibility and the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities. We know that it is only through our concerted efforts that this can be achieved. To this end, we need to improve our coordination to:

* Align policies across the system;
* Invest in capacity building- including within UN field presences and UNCTs to ensure the approach is consistent down to the grassroots level;
* Strengthen partnerships with organisations of persons with disabilities; and
* Adopt and embrace a vision of the UN that includes persons with disabilities in all roles- from UN volunteers to the post of the Secretary-General.

We think this new commitment truly reflects the theme of this year’s Conference: leaving no one behind through the full implementation of the CRPD. And, as the sub- and cross-cutting themes demonstrate, this requires efforts across all sectors and at all levels.

Inevitably, it is incumbent on States to change their policies, ensure allocation of budgets and resources consistent with the CRPD, and to avoid investment in those practices that serve to entrench segregation and exclusion. Action must be taken to redesign systems to ensure that they act as enablers for persons with disabilities and empower them toward sustainable development.

So, yes, much of this is incumbent upon States, but it is also the responsibility of the private sector, of international cooperation actors, and of we as UN agencies and entities, to contribute to the strengthening of these systems and approaches- including for women and girls with disabilities.

As we have been discussing over the past days, women and girls with disabilities continue to fall through the cracks of the agenda on the rights of persons with disabilities on the one side, and that of gender equality on the other. Women and girls with disabilities must participate across all agendas, and barriers for their participation must therefore be removed, entirely, including those laws, policies and practices that propagate multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against them.

Excellencies,

We cannot afford complacency. We have experienced first-hand what happens when we do. In this respect, we too warmly welcome the results of the election of six women into the CRPD Committee and we commend States for their efforts to bring the Committee closer to a gender balance. But, we must keep at heart the lesson that we cannot take inclusion for granted. We must remain vigilant at all times, weigh in favour of action, and lead by example.

This also means ensuring that women and men with disabilities have the same opportunities to lead and have a say in who we choose as are our leaders, and in the mandates with which we entrust them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Participation in public and political life is both a human right and a democratic imperative that strengthens our communities and institutions and their capacity to respond to all of their members. Laws and practices restricting or denying legal capacity and the exercise of the right to express one’s views, to vote, and to stand for election, threaten our democracies and our rights. We must ensure the accessibility of information, communications and all processes to ensure that persons with disabilities participate and contribute on an equal basis with others.

To conclude, I’d like to touch upon the data deficit. As we embark on the 2020 round of censuses, time is of the essence if we are to fulfil the 2030 Agenda’s call for data disaggregation. To this end, we reiterate our support for the use of the short set of questions developed by the Washington Group and the UNICEF/Washington Group module on Child Functioning. We believe that these instruments are the only available tools that can hope to significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data. OHCHR calls on States to make use of these tools within this coming census round to establish the necessary baseline to allow us to measure the impact of the SDGs on persons with disabilities, to enable us to honour the global commitment to leave no one behind and to build societies that are dignified, equal and human rights-based, and that celebrate the full diversity of the human family.

I thank you for your attention.