



General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 March 2024

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-fifth session

26 February–5 April 2024

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Sikh Human Rights Group, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[5 February 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Treating Disability as Diversity

While awaiting the report of the Special Rapporteur on Rights of persons with disabilities - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities A/HRC/55/56 to be loaded, we have submitted our written statement with our suggestion, We believe that if disabilities and similar issues are considered as a spectrum of diversity, communities are more likely to assist with sensitivity and those needing assistance are not offended.

We think apart from the need to provide supporting services, financial support and some degree of independence, there is also a need to integrate people with 'disability' within society and particularly their communities to make their lives as productive and full as possible.

We have run a project on neurodiversity integration with community institutions. We do not see neurodiversity as a disability. By convincing community institutions that it is merely a feature on the diversity spectrum, we find that attitudes change. Community institutions are accommodating and respectful. They don't see children with neurodiversity as different but simply as part of nature's diversity.

Similarly there is a need to refocus community understanding of disability as merely nature's diversity of human form. Even if disability arises from a late onset illness or an accident, it can still be seen as a form of diversity.

While a rights approach is important in encouraging States to make the appropriate provisions for care and welfare of people with disabilities, the approach in community and society as to be complimented by rewording and rethinking understanding of disability.

Hence Sikh Human Rights Group has promoted a proposal for a Declaration on Diversity. We believe that disability is one of the forms of diversity that can be covered by such a declaration.

Such a declaration with encourage society and communities to accommodate disability with sensitivity, understanding and without treating it as a burden or 'otherness'.
