



# Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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## Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Fifth session

New York, 12-14 September 2012

### Report of the fifth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

#### I. Introduction

1. In accordance with article 40 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly resolution 61/106) and as agreed during its fourth session, the fifth session of the Conference of States Parties was held in New York from 12 to 14 September 2012 to discuss the implementation of the Convention. The theme of the session was “Making the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities count for women and children”.

2. The Conference included four formal meetings. At its 1st meeting, on 12 September, elections were held in accordance with article 34 of the Convention in order to appoint nine members to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Two round tables, entitled “Accessibility and technology” and “Children with disabilities”, were held at the 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 12 and 13 September, respectively. The 4th meeting, held on 14 September, included an interactive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention by the United Nations system. In addition, an informal meeting entitled “Women with disabilities” was held on the afternoon of 13 September, co-chaired by members of the Bureau of the Conference and representatives of civil society organizations.

#### II. Opening of the meeting, election of members to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and general debate

3. The 1st meeting was called to order by Mårten Grunditz (Sweden), President of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, who formally opened the Conference.



4. The Conference adopted the provisional agenda (CRPD/CSP/2012/1), and orally amended it to include an additional sub-item, entitled “General debate”, as item 4 (a), and to renumber the remaining sub-items accordingly.
5. Pursuant to rule 25, paragraph 5 (c), of the rules of procedure, 10 non-governmental organizations were accredited to the Conference (see annex I).
6. Opening statements were made by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Lenin Moreno, Vice-President of Ecuador, the Chief of the Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Yannis Vardakastanis, Chair of International Disability Alliance.
7. The Conference then proceeded to agenda item 3, Election of the members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
8. The election was conducted by OHCHR and the Office of Legal Affairs. The following nine candidates were elected as members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for a term of four years beginning in January 2013. They included five newly elected members: Diane Mulligan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Safak Pavey (Turkey), Monthian Buntan (Thailand), László Gábor Lovász (Hungary) and Martin Mwesigwa Babu (Uganda) and four re-elected members: María Soledad Cisternas Reyes (Chile), Ana Pelaez Narvaez (Spain), Silvia Judith Quan Chang (Guatemala) and Mohammed Al-Tarawneh (Jordan).
9. The Conference then proceeded to consider agenda item 4 (a), General debate.
10. Statements were made by 30 States parties.<sup>1</sup> Statements were also made by one signatory<sup>2</sup> and one observer.<sup>3</sup> These statements informed the Conference of progress made both in the implementation of the Convention and, in particular, in the realization of the rights of women and children with disabilities through the promotion of environmental and technological accessibility.
11. Written statements were received from five States parties<sup>4</sup> and from one signatory.<sup>5</sup>
12. Many States expressed both their gratitude to the Bureau of the Conference for its dedication to the work of the Conference and their satisfaction that the Conference had now been established as an important mechanism for promoting the implementation and monitoring of the Convention. Many States observed that the Conference offered a unique opportunity for States parties and other stakeholders to exchange information and experiences in the implementation of the Convention. Concrete examples of national implementation measures on priority issues, such as accessibility, gender and children, were discussed. Several States noted the need for

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<sup>1</sup> Argentina, Australia, Austria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Egypt, El Salvador, Germany, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Mauritius, Morocco, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union.

<sup>2</sup> Japan.

<sup>3</sup> The International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions.

<sup>4</sup> Belgium, Brazil, Guatemala, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Qatar.

<sup>5</sup> Israel.

improvements to the programming and organization of the Conference. Specific suggestions included the allocation of more time for the interactive, in-depth exchange of views between States and for sharing experiences and good practices, both during the general debate and in all round-table discussions.

### **III. Round-table discussions**

13. The Conference held its second set of meetings on the afternoon of 12 September and the morning of 13 September. These meetings consisted of presentations by a panel of speakers from round tables 1 and 2, followed by interactive discussions. Following the presentations, the Chairs of the two round tables opened the floor to questions and discussion. The President's summaries of the two round tables are provided in annex II.

#### **Round table 1: Accessibility and technology**

14. Round table 1, entitled "Accessibility and technology", was chaired by Jakkrit Srivali (Thailand). Presentations were made by four panellists: Hiroshi Kawamura (Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) Consortium), Frances West (IBM), Inmaculada Placencia-Porrero (European Commission) and Sean Cruse (United Nations Global Compact). The panellists discussed a number of articles of the Convention and especially article 9, which outlines the issue of accessibility and technology.

#### **Round table 2: Children with disabilities**

15. Round table 2, entitled "Children with disabilities", was chaired by Raymond O. Wolfe (Jamaica). Presentations were made by five panellists: Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu (Ministry of Women, Children and People with Disabilities of South Africa), Nick Alipui (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), Ximena Rivas (National Service for Disability of Chile), Marta Santos Pais (Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children) and Jenny Nilsson (World Federation of the Deaf Youth Section). The panellists discussed key issues, identified challenges and made strategic recommendations for the achievement of the rights of children with disabilities.

### **IV. Informal meeting on women with disabilities**

16. On the afternoon of 13 September, an informal meeting was co-chaired by Adam Kosa (Hungary) and Maryanne Diamond (International Disability Alliance). Presentations were made by Yassine Fall (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), Rachael Kachaje (Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled), Myra Kovary (Network of Women with Disabilities), Erzsebet Foldesi (National Federation of Disabled Persons' Associations of Hungary), and Carlos Ríos Espinosa (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). The speakers discussed key issues related to the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities from a gender perspective.

## **V. Interactive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention by the United Nations system**

17. The 4th meeting of the Conference, held on the morning of 14 September, was chaired by the President. The meeting considered agenda item 4 (d), Interactive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention by the United Nations system. Presentations were made by representatives of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, OHCHR, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Panellists offered examples of the ways in which United Nations entities were promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, supporting Member States in the implementation of the Convention in their respective policies and programming and collaborating through the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

18. Ronald McCallum, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, provided an update on the work of the Committee and highlighted the need to schedule more time for both meetings and webcast services of the Committee. He also underscored the fact that responsibility for refugees with disabilities fell within the sphere of the Convention.

19. Shuaib Chalklen, Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development, informed the Conference of his work in promoting the Convention, especially pertaining to the rights of children and women with disabilities.

20. After a short round of questions and answers, summaries of the two round tables and the informal meeting were presented.

21. During the dialogue with the United Nations agencies, representatives of several States took the floor, expressing their satisfaction with the work of the Conference, as well as the progress made by the United Nations system in implementing the Convention. Representatives of several States also raised concerns regarding the Conference services and programme, particularly in relation to documentation, translation and interpretation. Specific reference was made to the importance of making Conference information available in all official languages.

## **VI. Closing of the Conference**

22. In closing the Conference, the President called for universal ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol. He identified the upcoming high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development as a key opportunity to promote a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond and emphasized that disabled persons' organizations should play a central role in this context. He noted that the conference documents of the fifth session would be available online (see para. 25).

## **VII. Other matters**

23. In addition to the provisional agenda, the Conference had before it conference room papers on the election of the members of the Committee on the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities under article 34 of the Convention, a compilation of legislative measures undertaken to implement the Convention and discussion papers on technology and accessibility for round table 1, on children with disabilities for round table 2 and on women with disabilities for the informal meeting.

24. The conference room papers, as well as statements made at the opening of the Conference, the interactive round tables and other discussions, as well as related information, are available from [www.un.org/disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities) under the heading “Fifth Conference of States Parties” or <http://papersmart.un.org/crpd>.

25. Under agenda item 5, Other matters, the Conference agreed to hold its sixth session in 2013, the exact date of which would be determined after consultation on the availability of conference services.

## **Annex I**

### **Non-governmental organizations accredited to the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at its fifth session**

In accordance with rule 25, paragraph 5 (c), of the rules of procedure of the Conferences of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and following a no-objection procedure, the following non-governmental organizations were accredited:

1. Atlas Alliance
2. Council for Exceptional Children
3. Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
4. Federation of Ethiopian National Associations of Persons with Disabilities
5. International Center for Autism Research and Education
6. Neil Squire Society
7. Jatiyo Trinomul Protibandhi Sangstha (National Grassroots Disability Organization)
8. One Billion Strong
9. RIOincluir — Obra Social da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro (Social works of the City of Rio de Janeiro)
10. World Future Council Foundation

## Annex II

### **President's summary of the fifth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

#### **Round table 1: Accessibility and technology**

1. Round table 1 was chaired by Jakkrit Srivali (Thailand). The panel discussed key issues concerning accessibility and technology, the progress made and challenges faced in promoting accessibility in development, and the utilization of technologies to enable and empower persons with disabilities to participate in all aspects of society and development.

2. Hiroshi Kawamura (DAISY Consortium), using DAISY (Digital Accessible Information Systems) as an example, demonstrated how properly designed and developed technologies could make a big difference in enabling persons with disabilities to have equal access to information and knowledge. He noted that the software, based on DAISY standards, offered many features such as adjustable font size, reading speed and highlighting of text, when used with screen readers. DAISY could assist persons with various types of learning impairment — auditory, visual, tactile/kinetic or psychosocial. Accessible technologies such as DAISY were critical tools for ensuring not only universal access to education, but also effective for disaster reduction and emergency preparedness.

3. Frances West (IBM) provided a market perspective on accessibility and technology. She observed that assisting persons with disabilities was not only important in itself, but was also appealing from a business perspective, as ageing societies and persons with disabilities represented new global business opportunities. IBM had recognized the need for assistive technologies both for its customer base and for its diverse, 500,000-strong workforce. IBM believed in inclusion for innovation and that the best ideas came from people of diverse backgrounds, including disability. The growth of the mobile workforce had created an expanding market for applications that could be used by persons with all types of disability. She emphasized the importance of public-private sector partnerships, including the integration of public standards into private sector implementation and solutions.

4. Inmaculada Placencia-Porrero (European Commission) explained that the European Union (EU) and its member States shared the responsibility for implementation of the Convention. Under the EU framework, accessibility was considered to include the prevention and elimination of obstacles that posed problems for persons with disabilities in using products, services and infrastructure. Within this concept, the EU has sought to enhance accessibility in three main thematic areas: transport, information and communications technology (ICT) and the built environment. EU best practices in this regard have included increased training, research and policy attention, cost-benefit studies and multi-stakeholder consultations.

5. Sean Cruse (United Nations Global Compact) explained that the United Nations Global Compact was a strategic policy initiative for businesses that were committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption.

By so doing, business, as a primary driver of globalization, could help ensure that markets, commerce, technology and finance advanced in ways that benefited economies and societies everywhere. The United Nations Global Compact had conducted a study of its business partners in 2012, examining their performance relating to disability. Mr. Cruse noted that businesses had benefited greatly from hiring and retaining persons with disabilities. Companies should thus be encouraged to engage in private-public partnerships. He also emphasized the important role of Governments in creating enabling environments that facilitated positive initiatives by businesses.

6. Representatives of Egypt, El Salvador, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania identified the lack of financial resources as a major obstacle to the development and provision of accessible technologies for persons with disabilities. Representatives of Canada, Germany, Mexico, New Zealand and Sweden shared their experiences and practices in promoting accessible technologies and the benefits thereof. The representative of Thailand stated that accessibility should be one of the highest priority topics at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development to be held in 2013 and he suggested that accessibility should be an integral part of disaster risk reduction policies, programmes and activities.

7. In response to comments and questions, Mr. Kawamura explained that there were some resources and tools, such as DAISY-based software, that were open-source software, available free of charge. He noted that the current version of DAISY was compatible with the popular e-pub format and had the capacity to synchronize motion pictures with text. Ms. Placencia-Porrero emphasized that there were many assistive resources available at little or no cost. She also stressed the importance of setting clear accessibility regulations and standards and monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Ms. West noted that the cost of information and communications technology had dropped dramatically in recent years and that, given the growing number of companies now willing to build accessible technologies into mainstream products, costs would continue to drop.

#### **Round table 2: Children with disabilities**

8. Round table 2 was chaired by Raymond O. Wolfe (Jamaica). The panel discussed a range of issues pertaining to the rights of children with disabilities, including participation in decision-making processes, access to education, support for parents of children with disabilities and violence against children with disabilities.

9. In his opening remarks, the Chair highlighted the vulnerability of children and stated that children with disabilities required more attention, greater care and nurturing, tolerance and guidance. Yet, too often, children with disabilities were subject to discrimination and abuse. These remarks prefaced interventions from a diverse panel of speakers from various regions and United Nations agencies.

10. Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu (Deputy Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities of South Africa), spoke about the need to strengthen capacity and mechanisms relating to universal access and design measures and standards. She called for improved enforcement mechanisms to ensure implementation of the Convention, including the establishment of responsive appeal mechanisms for parents of children with disabilities. She pointed out that it was essential to provide

support for organizations of parents and youth, empowering children and youth with disabilities to participate in decision-making processes. Although progress had been made over the past 10 years, education still needed to be made more inclusive. The lack of early interventions, access to justice and transportation were some key barriers to inclusiveness for children with disabilities.

11. Nick Alipui (UNICEF) addressed four main issues: the importance of the Convention and its effective implementation; the issues at stake; the steps that needed to be taken next; and partnership requirements necessary to strengthen programmes for children with disabilities. Mr. Alipui noted that UNICEF had been actively utilizing the Convention to empower children and was using a multiple indicator cluster survey to gather statistical data on the situation of children with disabilities and their families. He announced that the 2013 edition of the UNICEF flagship publication, *The State of the World's Children*, would be devoted to the theme of children and youth with disabilities.

12. Marta Santos Pais (Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children) outlined patterns of violence against children with disabilities. Children with disabilities had less access to justice, violence against children with disabilities was often invisible and perpetrators acted with impunity. Due to stigma and prejudice, violence against children with disabilities was often portrayed as less serious than violence against others. Girls with disabilities were particularly vulnerable, often suffering physical violence as children, followed by sexual violence later in life. Despite this bleak picture, there was some cause for optimism, partly due to the Convention and its rapid ratification by many States. In order to address violence against children with disabilities effectively, the following must be undertaken: adequate investment in early childhood education; promotion of public awareness for professionals working with children with disabilities; legal and policy reforms; participation of disabled youth and children in decision-making processes; ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure; and incorporating disabled children's concerns and perspectives into the protection of the rights of children under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

13. Ximena Rivas (National Service for Disability, Chile) noted that States have made progress in securing the rights of children with disabilities, but much more work needed to be done, especially in the field of early childhood education and learning. Ms. Rivas stressed the need for a rights-based approach, as well as concrete public policies focused on children with disabilities. In particular, there was a need to address low school attendance rates and inadequate social services.

14. Jenny Nilsson (World Federation of the Deaf Youth Section) opened her presentation by noting that only a small proportion of the participants at the Conference of States Parties were under the age of 30, which was a problem, as youth with disabilities should be stakeholders in relevant decision-making processes. This situation was the same in the non-governmental sector; the small number of youth-led disability organizations demonstrated a lack of support for the involvement of youth with disabilities in the disability movement. Ms. Nilsson advocated mainstreaming the use of sign language around the world.

15. At the request of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Conference also received a compelling presentation from 11-year-old Rabjyot Singh about his experience as a disabled primary school student. Rabjyot Singh stressed the importance of his

understanding of his own rights and his need for support for the environment in which he lived, so that he could participate in educational and other activities in his own community.

16. Following the presentations by the panellists, representatives from Argentina, Egypt, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kenya, the Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, the Sudan and Sweden took the floor to express their views on the situation of children with disabilities and pose questions to the panellists.

17. The main issues highlighted during the discussions related to the stigma associated with disability and the particular challenges facing children with disabilities, the lack of early interventions and access to justice, both special concerns in the context of education, and the challenge of inaccessible public transportation. Many of the speakers emphasized the importance of involving children in decision-making processes that affected their lives and of providing adequate support to their parents. The representative of Disabled Persons International (United Kingdom) emphasized that all the articles of the Convention, not just article 7, were relevant for children with disabilities.

18. A bilingual approach to the use of sign language, particularly in educational facilities, was also advocated and it was proposed that national media be encouraged to increase and enhance the use of closed-captioning features in their broadcasts.

#### **Informal session: Women with disabilities**

19. The informal session was co-chaired by Adam Kosa (Hungary) and Maryanne Diamond (International Disability Alliance). The panel discussed the situation and key issues concerning the realization of the rights of women with disabilities.

20. In opening, Mr. Kosa remarked that women with disabilities lacked access to essential services that were critical to the enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. He provided a number of examples showing how women with disabilities faced double discrimination. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities set out to promote gender equality and empowerment for women with disabilities. The question was, through what concrete measures and actions was the Convention to be implemented? In this context, he mentioned the new law in Hungary that protects the rights of all persons, without discrimination.

21. Yassine Fall (UN-Women) stated that it was well known that women and girls with disabilities faced discrimination on the basis of disability. This was exacerbated by conflict, age, ethnicity, economic status and multiple disabilities. She highlighted several projects implemented by UN-Women promoting the rights of women with disabilities. Ms. Fall stated that more needed to be done and that women and girls needed to participate. She called for increased cooperation between the different entities of the United Nations, suggesting that the Commission on the Status of Women could invite members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to attend meetings of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

22. Rachel Kachaje (Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled) explained that, together, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provided a comprehensive approach to protecting the rights of women with disabilities. She highlighted three aspects of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women: that States parties should take measures to empower the full access of women to education, labour and the political process; that gender-based violence was a form of discrimination; and that informal and traditional practices discriminated against women. She placed particular emphasis on women's empowerment.

23. Erzsebet Foldesi (National Federation of Disabled Persons' Associations of Hungary) noted that, although the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had already been in existence for three decades and the Convention on the Rights of Children for two decades, neither had led to significant progress in the protection of the rights of girls with disabilities. There were other human rights mechanisms that were also highly relevant to women with disabilities, such as the universal periodic review, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Committee against Torture. Citing examples from Hungary, Ms. Foldesi stressed the need for women with disabilities and their organizations to engage with those instruments when advocating for their rights.

24. Carlos Ríos Espinosa (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) highlighted the complexity of the causes of violence against women and children. Mr. Ríos stressed the importance of article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on living independently and being included in the community, noting that many countries had not yet made significant progress in implementing this article, especially with regard to women and girls. Mr. Ríos urged States to establish mechanisms that investigated and prosecuted violence against women and provided adequate training for caregivers in hospitals and institutions.

25. Myra Kovary (International Network of Women with Disabilities) discussed issues related to violence against disabled women. Violence itself was a major cause of mobility disabilities, blindness, deafness and other forms of disability. Women were often the target of violence, which was more likely to be inflicted on persons with disabilities than on others. She noted that in cases such as those involving forced institutionalization or forced psychiatric treatment, even States have engaged in violence against women with disabilities. She said that, although the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was an extremely important instrument, the advocacy role of disabled women themselves was critical for its implementation. In this regard, disabled women and their organizations needed support and empowerment. She also stressed the role of women with disabilities in shaping legislation, arguing that countries had the most to learn from those who had suffered the most.

26. In the question and discussion segment, representatives from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, New Zealand, Nigeria, the Sudan and from civil society organizations, posed comments and questions pertaining to the empowerment of young women with disabilities, reproductive rights, proportional representation of women with disabilities in United Nations committees and programmes, the mainstreaming of issues relating to women with disabilities in other women's programmes and the inclusion of a gender perspective in all programmes.

27. The panel highlighted the critical need to include all women with disabilities — including girls, older women, and indigenous women — in all aspects of the work of the United Nations system on gender. States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women were encouraged

to take measures to address equality for women with disabilities and to include the participation of women with disabilities in the design, implementation and evaluation of relevant policies. Finally, the panel recommended that the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development to be held in 2013 should focus on women with disabilities, in relation to economic empowerment and effective educational and employment opportunities. This dimension should also be an integral part of the international development process beyond 2015.

### **Interactive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention by the United Nations system**

28. The President of the Conference opened the meeting, welcoming the panellists. The panellists introduced the programmes and gave concrete examples of the progress made by United Nations entities in supporting the implementation of the Convention.

29. Daniela Bas (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) outlined the efforts of the Department to include disability in the global development agenda at various international forums, including the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. She also referred to the role of the Department in linking the normative work of the United Nations with operational activities at the country level — through technical cooperation targeted at strengthening national capacity — to enhance the implementation of the Convention. She highlighted particularly the need for data and statistics on disability and development and the importance of a disability-inclusive development agenda beyond 2015.

30. Akiko Ito (secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) spoke specifically on the status of efforts to promote internationally comparable data and statistics on disability for the monitoring and evaluation of disability-inclusive development. Statistics were crucial to making persons with disabilities more visible and essential for informing adequate legislation, policies and programmes. Ms. Ito informed the meeting that, of the 119 countries reviewed so far in the 2005-2014 census round, 82 countries, or 70 per cent, had collected information on disability, whereas only 54 per cent had done so in the previous census round (1995-2004). The report of the Secretary-General, entitled “Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond” (A/67/211) provides more detail and also contains a recommendation for the initiation of a periodic United Nations global report on disability and development.

31. Craig Mokhiber (OHCHR) spoke of the work of OHCHR in promoting the ratification and implementation of the Convention through its country teams and the production of knowledge products, training tools and materials. OHCHR has supported the Committee on the Rights of Disabled Persons and has trained civil society organizations to monitor progress in the implementation of the Convention. Mr. Mokhiber mentioned several studies and reports produced by OHCHR, including a thematic study on the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life and a report on violence against women and girls with disabilities. Finally, he highlighted OHCHR work on improving standards for accessibility, while acknowledging that, despite progress, much work had yet to be done for the United Nations to become fully accessible to people with disabilities.

32. Cecilia Martínez de la Macorra (UN-Habitat) highlighted the issue of disability in the context of urban development and the importance of making cities friendly and more inclusive and sustainable for all. She observed that cities built and maintained in ways that fully took into account the needs of the disabled worked better for everybody. She mentioned two projects that UN-Habitat has been working on in this regard, stressing the importance of the participation of persons with disabilities to ensuring accessible spaces in cities. She emphasized that the creation of public spaces was not just about design. It was also essential that such spaces be used properly, to ensure that the city was usable and friendly to all. She called upon Member States to form partnerships at the local, national and international levels. Ms. Macorra underscored the importance of data and their use for policy- and decision-making, including the promotion of inclusive education. She emphasized that financial limitations should not be an excuse for inaction, as proper management of resources would ensure efficient and effective allocation.

33. Selim Jahan (UNDP) highlighted the moral and development implications of disability issues. He outlined the work of UNDP at the analytical, programmatic and country levels, which included facilitating dialogue, supporting the ratification of the Convention and exploring models for the delivery of legal services. UNDP was currently developing an internal guidance note on applying the Convention in UNDP programming. Mr. Jahan provided information about the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which is a partnership between six United Nations entities (the International Labour Organization, OHCHR, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO)). The Multi-Donor Trust Fund set up by the Partnership was aimed at supporting the capacities of Governments, as well as organizations of persons with disabilities, to implement the Convention effectively.

34. In the next phase of the dialogue, the Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development, highlighted his commitment to particularly vulnerable groups, especially women and children with disabilities. He then presented a statement from WomenEnabled that underlined the importance of ensuring that women with disabilities participated in all United Nations committees and meetings. The Special Rapporteur called for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development to be held with transparency and the full participation of persons with disabilities.

35. The Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities congratulated those elected to the Committee and highlighted the prominent roles of persons with disabilities on the Committee. He clarified that the rights of disabled refugees were covered under the Convention and appealed for additional time to be allocated for meetings of the Committee.

36. The meeting then proceeded to take questions and interventions from the delegations of Egypt, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Panama, the Philippines, Qatar, South Africa, Sweden, and Thailand, as well as representatives of WHO and the Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments (a civil society organization). Representatives of Egypt, Kenya and Qatar asked panellists to elaborate on programmes that had successfully translated policies into concrete action and representatives of South Africa and Thailand expressed concern regarding the current status of accessibility of information and communications

technology. The representative of Israel informed the Conference of its recent ratification of the Convention and the representative of the Philippines highlighted the importance of allocating funding for disability-related initiatives, emphasizing that disability should be a priority in national budgeting. Many delegations emphasized the importance of coordination between United Nations entities and Member States and the need to improve the accessibility of United Nations facilities and services. The representative of UNDP responded with information on the newly established Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs provided information on the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability, which can provide small grants.

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