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2016 Social Forum*

Report of the Co-Chair-Rapporteurs

Summary

In accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 29/19, the Social Forum was held in Geneva from 3 to 5 October 2016. Participants considered the promotion and full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities in the context of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The present report contains a summary of the discussions, conclusions and recommendations of the Forum.

* The annex to the present report is circulated as received, in the language of submission only.



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I. Introduction

1. The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 29/19, reaffirmed the Social Forum as a unique space for interactive dialogue between the United Nations human rights machinery and various stakeholders, including civil society and grass-roots organizations.¹
2. The 2016 Social Forum was held in Geneva from 3 to 5 October. It focused on the promotion and full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities in the context of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The President of the Council appointed the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Jorge Lomónaco, and the Deputy Permanent Representative and Chargé d'affaires a.i. of New Zealand, Carl Allan Reaich, to the United Nations Office at Geneva, as the Co-Chair-Rapporteurs of the Forum.
3. The programme of work was prepared under the guidance of the Co-Chair-Rapporteurs, with inputs from relevant stakeholders. The present report contains a summary of the proceedings, conclusions and recommendations of the Forum. The agenda of the Forum and the list of participants is contained in annexes to the present report.

II. Opening of the Social Forum

4. Mr. Lomónaco recalled that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had entered into force very rapidly. It had left behind the medical welfare model to fully recognize persons with disabilities as rights holders and as active and autonomous members of society. He urged States to ratify or accede to the Convention and its Optional Protocol as a matter of priority. There was still much to be done, as persons with disabilities, especially women and children, continued to face barriers to their equal participation and suffered violations of their rights. New Zealand and Mexico had renewed their commitment to the principles of the Convention and called upon States to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities at all levels.
5. The President of the Human Rights Council, Choi Kyong-Lim, said that since 2009 the Council had mainstreamed the topic, held annual interactive debates and created the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities. The universal periodic review process was an effective tool to promote ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol. The Council had also created the task force on secretariat services, accessibility for persons with disabilities and use of information technology, which worked to enhance accessibility at the Council. He encouraged States to continue to ensure that issues related to the rights of persons with disabilities were represented in their debates and decisions.
6. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reaffirmed the commitment of his Office (OHCHR) to advancing the human rights of persons with disabilities. The topic had become a priority and a cross-cutting issue in the work of OHCHR. Monitoring had been improved within the universal periodic review, the Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development while the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had made tremendous advances. It was time to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with due regard to the

¹ For further details on the Social Forum, see www.ohchr.org/EN/issues/poverty/sforum/pages/sforumindex.aspx.

Convention. OHCHR was developing tools to enable the design and monitoring of policies, endorsed the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and supported the development of guidelines on persons with disabilities in humanitarian contexts.

7. The Chair of International Disability Alliance, Colin Allen, commended Mexico and New Zealand and the Group of Friends of the Convention for their leading role; he welcomed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, which had brought a human rights dimension to development; the strengthening of the Committee; the establishment of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur; and United Nations bodies working to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities. Remaining concerns included repeated attacks against such persons, limitations on establishing families, forced sterilization, segregation, medication without consent and limitations on the exercise of legal capacity. Diversity must be embraced, and partnerships reinforced, to achieve full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities.

8. A video was screened which highlighted that 10 years after the adoption of the Convention, persons with disabilities were entitled to the full spectrum of human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination. The Convention had promoted the full participation of persons with disabilities in all spheres of life, challenging customs, stereotypes, prejudices, harmful practices and stigma relating to persons with disabilities. Yet huge challenges remained in achieving the full enjoyment of rights by all persons with disabilities.

III. Summary of proceedings²

A. Setting the scene: from needs to rights — advances and challenges

9. The Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations, Georgi Panayotov, President-elect of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention for 2017-2018, said that Bulgaria attached particular attention to the protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities and was ensuring their participation and well-being, with a focus on children and youth. Bulgaria had advocated for the inclusion of the human rights of persons with disabilities in the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Conference of Parties was a vital platform, bringing together a range of stakeholders, and it was important to ensure the full participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the implementation of the Convention.

10. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Catalina Devandas Aguilar, stated that the Convention had influenced the 2030 Agenda and driven national and international strategies. It had given persons with disabilities a framework within which to advocate for their rights. However, many, in particular women and other marginalized groups, continued to face barriers. Discriminatory and harmful practices, such as involuntary sterilization, forced treatment, hospitalization and the use of restraints in school settings, remained. It was necessary to improve engagement with all stakeholders; increase technical assistance, cooperation and exchange of good practices; ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes; and strengthen the United Nations system to ensure the implementation of the Convention and the Goals.

² Statements and presentations made available to the Secretariat are available at: www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/SForum/Pages/SForum2016Statements.aspx.

11. The Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, María Soledad Cisternas, said that the Committee was committed to strengthening the treaty body system and the independence and impartiality of experts, and had an open relationship with the Conference of Parties. It had developed guidelines on issues such as simplified reporting for periodic reports; participation of civil society, national human rights institutions and monitoring mechanisms; and freedom and safety of persons with disabilities. The Committee had addressed such topics as the right to life, accessibility, women with disabilities, access to justice, equality before the law, legal capacity, freedom and security, inclusive education, prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, access to communication, freedom of opinion and the right to an independent life and to be included in the community.

12. The Chair of the China Disabled Persons' Federation, Zhang Haidi, said that safeguarding the human rights of persons with disabilities should start with an assessment of their needs and living conditions. A household survey of persons with disabilities in China had collected disaggregated data and helped understand those needs, informing policies and research, including the creation of two subsidy systems. China strove to promote barrier-free construction and support the rights to education and employment. Over the years, China had established rehabilitation centres for persons with disabilities, particularly children, and was establishing a university to train specialists in disability related rehabilitation. The international community should implement inclusive development strategies and integrate disability into international cooperation frameworks.

13. Following the presentations, representatives of Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Cuba, Iceland, Poland, Qatar, Russian Federation, South Africa, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, European Union, Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities, Association of Persons with Rheumatic Diseases Sri Lanka, Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, Dementia Alliance International, European Network on Independent Living, European Union of the Deaf, Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, Inclusion International, International Federation of Hard of Hearing Persons, World Blind Union, World Federation of the Deaf, World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry and World of Inclusion took the floor. Issues raised included social inclusion, targeted benefits and social services; international cooperation to strengthen organizations of persons with disabilities; inclusive education; ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled; risk and humanitarian emergencies; inclusion in labour markets; effects of poverty; women, children and refugees with disabilities; affordability of hearing aids and availability of captioning and sign language; visibility of psychosocial disabilities; reform of guardianship laws; and non-discrimination in abortion policies. The need for disability-disaggregated data, financial support, technological resources and binding obligations for effective implementation of the Convention was stressed.

14. In response, Ms. Zhang stressed that China had supported athletes with disabilities, prioritizing rehabilitation. Although China still had special schools for some children with disabilities, it tried to provide all children with the opportunity to enjoy inclusive education in regular schools. Ms. Devandas Aguilar said that the Convention would be implemented only when human diversity was accepted and embraced. Greater efforts were required to overcome challenges to the full participation of persons with disabilities in their communities, particularly in decision-making processes. Ms. Cisternas highlighted the Committee's contribution on issues such as legal capacity, education, the situation of women and refugees, and access to sign language within the United Nations system.

B. Persons with disabilities and human diversity: embracing diversity and awareness-raising

15. The Chair of the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities Youth Council, Peter Ochieng, said in a video message that inclusive education, employment and health, including sexual and reproductive health, were still a challenge for many youth with disabilities. The Convention's diversity approach would be important in engaging persons with disabilities and youth in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, allowing advocates to challenge all stakeholders to engage with persons with disabilities as rights holders rather than objects of charity. Youth with disabilities deserved an equitable and equal representation in all decision-making processes at all levels. He called upon States and all stakeholders to prioritize inclusive and meaningful participation of youth, including those with disabilities, in all programmes to implement the Goals.

16. A member of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Heisoo Shin, said that the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights safeguarded the equal rights of persons with disabilities. In its general comment No. 5 (1994) the Committee had stressed that persons with disabilities were entitled to all rights recognized in the Covenant. States parties were required to take appropriate measures, including through positive actions and appropriate preferential treatment, to reduce structural disadvantages. When considering States parties' reports, the Committee checked the situation of persons with disabilities. She said that educational programmes should promote mutual understanding of the Covenant and the Convention and that there should be greater participation of persons with disabilities in the work of the Committee.

17. The Director of the Centre for Disability Studies at the University of Leeds, Anna Lawson, stated that the Convention required States to collect appropriate information to formulate policies. That helped to identify barriers, inform campaigning and debate within countries and compile shadow reports for treaty-monitoring bodies. States were obliged to undertake or promote research and develop universally designed goods, services and facilities. Challenges included achieving meaningful involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities in setting widely disseminated and accessible research agendas; using different methodologies; gathering evidence about the lives of people in hard-to-reach situations; making research processes accessible and inclusive; developing ethical and health and safety research requirements; and facilitating multidisciplinary collaboration and transdisciplinary thinking.

18. A journalist specializing in gender and disability at Public Television of Argentina, Verónica González, said that persons with disabilities were excluded from producing information and were underrepresented as specialists. They were portrayed in a discriminatory way, as victims or, conversely, as superheroes. Information was not accessible to all audiences. In Argentina, Public Television covered diverse issues, such as sexuality, access to justice, sports, education and employment, with a human rights-based approach. The national law on accessibility of the audiovisual press included sign language, closed captioning and simplified language. The Convention had helped raise awareness on the diversity of persons with disabilities and to break down barriers and prejudices, and allowed persons with disabilities to learn about their rights. Similarly, recommendations of the Committee had allowed advocates to challenge policies that were not in accordance with the rights-based model.

19. During the interactive dialogue, representatives of Action on Disability and Development of Sudan, ASEAN Disability Forum, Dementia Alliance International, Global Alliance for Disability in Media and Entertainment, Include Me Too, Italian Network on Disability and Development, Mongolian National Federation of the Blind, National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda, People First New Zealand, World Federation of the Deaf

and World of Inclusion took the floor. Speakers addressed the need for quality training of media professionals to be provided by persons with disabilities, and to work with mainstream media instead of through separate programming; lack of opportunities for ethnic minorities; the need for presenting the holistic approach adopted in the Convention in order to reflect diversity; greater awareness on female genital mutilation, exploitation, witchcraft and accusations of possession; the need for reliable indicators for research, including quality of life indicators; engaging mass media to portray disability adequately; creating platforms for the participation of persons with disabilities in media; raising awareness on the full enjoyment of legal capacity; and removal of barriers for hard of hearing and deaf people in media and entertainment.

20. Responding, Ms. Shin stressed the need for more research on and understanding of disabilities, and especially to expose people to diverse perspectives from an early age through human connection. Persons with disabilities must be represented in national assemblies. Ms. Lawson proposed undertaking research on quality of life, which should not, however, be based on people's own perceptions. Researchers should disseminate results widely and work with funders to promote inclusion and diversity. Ms. González pointed to the need for research to explain violence and trafficking of women with disabilities. Journalists, politicians and others should not use inappropriate language with respect to people with disabilities.

C. Accessibility and non-discrimination: leaving no one behind

21. A representative of the Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global Network Asia Chapter, Pratima Gurung, stated that indigenous persons with disabilities faced multiple forms of segregation and discrimination, owing to customary values and practices, attitudes towards disability based on ethnicity and inappropriate services. Lack of understanding of cultural frameworks and community dynamics aggravated their exclusion. The impacts were not reported, and little debated. Social deprivations, insufficient service policies and challenging living conditions experienced by persons with disabilities had entrenched cycles of poverty. A one-size-fits-all approach to enhance accessibility for indigenous persons with disabilities was not feasible; rather, a participatory approach that considered differences in aspirations, social contexts and cultural preferences was required.

22. The Director of the Cuban Association of the Deaf, Alejandro Marzo Peña, described the Cuban national plan of action for persons with disabilities, which focused on civil society in the framework of the Convention and the Sustainable Development Goals. The health-care and education systems were free and universal. The social security law benefited persons with disabilities. The right to work without discrimination was guaranteed. Cuba had undertaken programmes that raised awareness, with the participation of stakeholders, and that focused on eradicating all barriers. Steps had been taken towards improving accessibility, including the use of sign language interpreters, Braille and technology to facilitate access to information. Cuba was working on an inclusive education system that would involve teachers, families and the community as part of the transformative development process of individuals.

23. A representative of International Longevity Centre Global Alliance, Silvia Perel-Levin, affirmed that ageist attitudes had obstructed the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities, including through inadequate pension schemes, lack of access to preventive health care or rehabilitation services and delayed, inadequate or undignified treatments for older persons. Age limits for disability benefits prevented such persons from seeking protection under the Convention. Challenges included a lack of legislation, monitoring, adequate quality standards and qualified caregivers. Yet specific references to older persons were rare in human rights treaties. States had to recognize the discrimination

faced by older persons, include them in consultations and ensure equal application of their rights under the Convention throughout their lives. The Committee should consider adopting a general comment on the rights of older persons with disabilities.

24. Hamad Bin Khalifa University Assistant Professor Dena Ahmed Saif Al-Thani pointed to the need for accessible computer interfaces. Concepts such as “inclusive design” and “universal usability” emphasized the role of potential users in developing computer systems and encouraged a growing trend towards inclusion of users with disabilities in usability studies and in assessing conformity with disability-related regulations. Inclusive research had addressed a gap in assistive technology by supporting the collaboration of persons with visual impairments with their colleagues. The results of the research were recommendations on software design that would support collaborative and cross-modal information-seeking from the ground up. A user-centric design approach was crucial when developing complex interfaces with multiple modalities.

25. During the interactive dialogue, representatives of Brazil, Pakistan, Association of World Citizens, Dementia Alliance International, Epidemic of Knowledge Campaign, European Network on Independent Living, Inclusion International, Indonesian Mental Health Association, International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, Pacific Disability Forum and World Blind Union took the floor. Speakers welcomed the Marrakesh Treaty and highlighted the Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention articles relevant to the autistic community. Other topics included accessibility standards during humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters; the need for a global treaty on the rights of older persons; sociological and medical studies on dementia; people with disabilities in the labour market; a social model inclusive of psychosocial disabilities; and universal accessibility in societies, including to transportation.

26. Ms. Gurung highlighted the different forms of accessibility with regard to the types of impairments. It was important for rights holders to bring the complex and sensitive nature of disability into the discussion. Mr. Marzo Peña underscored the need to increase the participation of and accessibility for people with disabilities, addressing issues such as education and employment. Ms. Perel-Levin acknowledged that the Committee had noted the existence of discrimination on the basis of disability and age, both separately and combined; a convention on the protection of the rights of older persons would address that issue. Ms. Al-Thani stressed the importance of developing knowledge in the academic sector and the website development industry as well as promoting collaboration among all stakeholders to ensure that regulations were enforced.

D. Strengthening equality and specific measures

27. The Chief Director of Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Department of Social Development of South Africa, Lidia Pretorius, noted that the Constitution of South Africa guaranteed equality and described measures to achieve it. The first level of measures aimed at ensuring that persons with disabilities had equitable access to services, fiscal spending and opportunities. The second sought to ensure access to appropriate accommodation. The third focused on affirmative action for redress and to level the playing fields. The fourth level aimed at reimbursing persons with disabilities and their families for disability-related expenditures. The national disability rights policy focused on strengthening governance and administrative systems with measures to promote equitable outcomes, including prioritizing underrepresented organizations of persons with disabilities and groups for State funding, and the development of a disability inequality index.

28. The Chair of the Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families, Ana Lucía Arellano, said that Latin America had achieved widespread progress in several areas. There were programmes for inclusion in

the labour market, including quotas, and policies on networks, support, reasonable accommodation and web and media accessibility. Surveys on disabilities had been undertaken and methodologies developed for universal access plans and public housing. Persons with intellectual disabilities were able to exercise their legal capacity in some jurisdictions. Despite the large number of ratifications of the Marrakesh Treaty, challenges remained. Organizations of persons with disabilities needed to participate in national monitoring systems and a community support-based system to increase educational and labour opportunities for persons with disabilities was needed.

29. A representative of the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda, Esther Kyozira, provided examples of national disability policies in that country. State programmes included affirmative action and equity measures on gender and disability for students with disabilities. Five seats in parliament and two seats in local governments were designated for persons with disabilities. There was a tax waiver on sunscreen lotions for persons with albinism and a grant for persons with disabilities in small business. The National Council for Disability monitored compliance, while the Equal Opportunities Commission handled complaints and ensured equal access and the Uganda Human Rights Commission monitored implementation of the Convention. Challenges remained in service delivery, participation, budgetary allocations and training. Organizations of persons with disabilities were advocating an inclusive education policy, guidelines for judicial officers and accessibility standards for buildings.

30. Representatives of Pakistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Saudi Arabia, Include Me Too, International Federation of Hard of Hearing People, Regional Network for Inclusive Education Latin America, Transforming Communities for Inclusion Asia, World Federation of the Deaf, World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, Public Television of Argentina and World of Inclusion took the floor. Issues addressed included reasonable accommodation in education; underrepresentation of certain groups in public life; accessible markets, education, media, transportation and travel; community-based systems; the role of committees for persons with disabilities; maternity support; ensuring rights under austerity measures; and the situation of persons with disabilities in prisons and psychiatric institutions. Speakers called for deinstitutionalization; separate discussions of psychosocial disability and intellectual disability; promoting dialogue with employers; assessment of and accountability for implementation of the Convention; and adoption of an internationally standardized classification of disabilities.

31. In response, Ms. Pretorius stated that reasonable accommodation should be understood as dynamic and context-specific, and personal assistance must not be imposed. It was necessary to overcome the barrier of high technology costs and to improve access to information and monitoring systems for statistical data. Ms. Arellano noted that although technology was available worldwide, not all countries were able to access it. There was a need to empower young people and to design global strategies to raise civil society's capacities and spaces for dialogue. Ms. Kyozira suggested that there should be a legal provision for reasonable accommodation in Uganda. Persons with disabilities must be properly empowered with access to information, technology and governmental support.

E. Meaningful participation and empowerment

32. A representative of People First New Zealand, Robert Martin, reported that the Government of New Zealand was working with organizations of persons with disabilities to implement article 4 (3) of the Convention and create a national disability action plan. Those organizations were helping to integrate issues relevant to persons with disabilities in the public policy agenda. One project had improved the health outcomes of people with a learning disability. He described a range of reasonable accommodations to assure self-

advocacy and effective participation by such persons. The combination of accessible meetings, accessible information and a meeting assistant ensured meaningful participation. Accessible meetings had to be inclusive and appropriately paced, with regular breaks and use of plain language with full names rather than acronyms. Trained meeting assistants put information in large font, went over the meeting papers in advance and provided explanations if required, among other tasks.

33. The President of the Mongolian National Federation of the Blind, Gerel Dondovdorj, said that persons with disabilities needed to participate in decision-making processes. In Mongolia, organizations of persons with disabilities had actively promoted the creation of disability policy councils within national ministries and in Ulaanbaatar City. Those organizations had actively participated in drafting legislation on the rights of persons with disabilities on the basis of the Convention and submitted written reports to the Committee. Persons with disabilities living in rural areas confronted challenges to participation. The fluctuating political scenario resulted in appointed officers lacking proper knowledge about the rights of persons with disabilities. All stakeholders needed technical assistance on such matters as knowledge of good practices, comparative policy analysis, training guidelines and training of trainers on the principles of the Convention.

34. Magistrate Pascal Benga Tonangoye of the Court of Auditors of Gabon said that the country's laws dealt only briefly with disabilities, and inclusion remained exclusively on paper. Education was free and obligatory, but three out of four children with disabilities could not read or write. There was a school for children who were hard of hearing, but it lacked infrastructure. Access to health care was expensive, physical assistance was not available and treatment of and statistics on persons living with disabilities were insufficient. There was no knowledge about the implementation of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and few public servants were persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities could not have legal recourse in certain cases of discrimination, and there was a need for access to Braille and sign language.

35. The President of the Arab Union for the Blind, Khalid Al Nuaimi, stated that there was a lack of infrastructure and policies to meet the needs of the visually impaired in the Middle East. He called for increased dialogue and participation. The Arab Union for the Blind had organized workshops on social, cultural and legal issues. It had provided stipends for pharmacological interventions in countries with insufficient availability, promoted pedestrian mobility and created rehabilitation and training centres. It had supported the translation of laws into Braille, facilitated access to Internet banking and conducted studies on how to expand job opportunities for the visually impaired. There was a need for increased awareness on the challenges that visually impaired persons faced, for accurate statistics on the nature of visual disabilities and for training for professionals.

36. During the interactive dialogue, representatives of Brazil, Down Syndrome International, Epidemic of Knowledge Campaign, Include Me Too, Inclusion International, Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global Network, International Federation of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, World Blind Union, World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, and World of Inclusion took the floor. They discussed accessibility as a fundamental human right; article 29 of the Convention on the right to vote and guardianship laws; harassment and bullying of children with disabilities; the need for quality access to information; participation of youth in decision-making; role of the Sustainable Development Goals in achieving equal participation; development of skills to enhance participation; information on political campaigns, educational texts and medical information; restructuring of data compilation methods and reliable statistics; vulnerability of indigenous persons in the context of climate change; participation and empowerment of family members of persons with disabilities.

37. In response, Mr. Al Nuaimi remarked that persons with disabilities had greater ambitions and could accomplish more than what had already been achieved. International organizations needed to take practical measures and produce accurate assessments of progress. Ms. Dondovdorj agreed that actions should allow greater participation of young persons with disabilities in decision-making processes, and urged States to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty. Mr. Tonangoye emphasized the need to take into account all the provisions of the Convention throughout the life of persons with disabilities. He urged the international community to support the participation and inclusion of all. Mr. Martin noted the role of grass-roots systems in informing people about their rights and how to speak up. He stressed the importance of the right to education of persons with learning disabilities.

F. Making development inclusive

38. The Special Adviser for International Disability Rights of the United States Department of State, Judith E. Heumann, reaffirmed in a video message the commitment of the United States to pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals domestically and internationally, in a disability-inclusive way. The Government supported disability-specific initiatives to address targeted needs and integrate disability more broadly. The Department of State encouraged the inclusion of participants with disabilities and disability issues in programmes; addressed inclusive education in dialogues with countries; provided technical assistance to civil society and Governments; and partnered with local organizations of persons with disabilities to advance effective implementation of the Convention, including in the inclusion of learners with disabilities in education programmes.

39. A member of the board of the Pan African Network of Persons with Psychosocial Disabilities, Michael Njenga, expressed the view that the Sustainable Development Goals had redefined the perception of Governments on persons with disabilities. The Convention represented a paradigm shift on the rights of persons with disabilities. Nonetheless, lack of robust statistical data on disability limited inclusive development programmes. The Government of Kenya had developed a national implementation plan that included advocacy and awareness-raising, mapping and engaging stakeholders, mainstreaming, and monitoring and evaluation. There was a need for representation and involvement of persons with disabilities in the institutions charged with implementation; developing actions to mainstream disability; building the capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities for advocacy; and increasing international cooperation, including funding for those organizations.

40. The Chair of the International Disability and Development Consortium, Priscille Geiser, described the Consortium's work in the Convention negotiations, facilitating participation and advocating for an article on international cooperation. Its members had been working to reflect disability in policies and pushed for persons with disabilities to be included in the Sustainable Development Goals. At country level, they provided technical assistance to member States, service providers and organizations of persons with disabilities; the engagement and advice of those organizations were crucial to achieve disability-inclusive development. Donor countries still needed to mainstream disability rights, enforce policies at all levels, from headquarters to field offices, and to track expenditure on international cooperation. Data disaggregation using comparable tools was a priority to identify gaps and take action.

41. The Senior Adviser on Children with Disability of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Rosangela Berman-Bieler, pointed out that stigma related to disability and barriers in the environment made it more difficult for children with disabilities to go to school, access health care and participate fully. Children with disabilities faced exclusion from the workforce, perpetuating cycles of poverty and affecting their families, especially

girls, who did not attend school owing to caregiving responsibilities. It was important to ensure cross-cutting disaggregation of data on disability. Countries had to monitor and report progress on inclusive education, including accessibility of educational facilities and materials.

42. Representatives of Asia Pacific Women with Disabilities, Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, Dementia Alliance International, Include Me Too, Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global Network, Indonesian Mental Health Association, International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations, Italian Network on Disability and Development, Movimento Down, Sense International, World Blind Union, World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, Foschiani Asociados and World of Inclusion spoke during the dialogue. Participants called for international strategies for inclusive education for people affected by leprosy. They discussed action plans on disability and development; contextualized education models to implement article 24 of the Convention; access to educational materials; access to financial and technical resources for empowerment; grass-roots implementation of the Convention; synergy between the Convention and the Declaration on the Right to Development; exclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities from recruitment programmes; and inclusion of children with disabilities in private schools.

43. In response, Ms. Berman-Bieler reported that UNICEF was working on a universal design format for textbooks for children with disabilities and modules on mental health. She highlighted the importance of sustainable and inclusive development to address intersectional issues. Ms. Geiser called for adequate resources and coordinated approaches to address the needs of groups that faced the greatest discrimination. Mr. Njenga urged a more comprehensive approach, moving beyond medical models of disability. He stressed the importance of learning from country experiences and working with national human rights institutions.

G. Strengthening accountability

44. The Chief of Programme for Persons with Disabilities at the Defensoría del Pueblo of Peru, Malena Pineda Ángeles, said that the Defensoría had facilitated reform of the Civil Code to eliminate guardianship and strengthen the legal capacity of persons with disabilities. It promoted professional training to end social prejudice, invisibility and vulnerability, and encouraged a human rights approach to public participation, freedom of opinion and speech, mental health, informed consent to treatment, access to health-care insurance, reproductive health, an end to compulsory institutionalization and access to justice, including for persons declared unfit to stand trial. Inclusive education and pedagogical support were prioritized. The Defensoría would strengthen its structure and resources and increase interaction with organizations of persons with disabilities.

45. The Disability Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission, Alastair McEwin, stated that the Disability Discrimination Act aimed to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities, ensuring equal rights before the law. The Commission investigated and reconciled complaints of discrimination and could establish disability standards, helping to embed discrimination law within the community and exemplify accessibility practices, including television captioning. The Commission also scrutinized and proposed legislation, identifying trends and issuing guidelines for human rights compatibility. It conducted inquiries on issues such as barriers to employment for persons with disabilities and older persons and promoted a national disability insurance scheme.

46. Senator Godliver Omondi of Kenya said that parliaments were active participants through the allocation of budgetary resources and their oversight of implementation of the

Convention at all levels. They could create institutions and hold them accountable. Laws had to ensure equality; control over land, property and inheritance for everyone; and access to health care, transport and information infrastructure. Kenya sought to secure the participation of youth, women and persons with disabilities in all spheres through affirmative action. However, public policies had failed to achieve desired outcomes because of mismanagement of resources and failure to monitor implementation closely. Parliaments must ensure continuous monitoring and evaluation in order to make timely and necessary changes.

47. The President of the World Federation of the Deafblind, Geir Jensen, recalled that the role of rights holders in monitoring implementation of the Convention was reinforced by the principle of full participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities and by the general obligations of States parties to consult with and involve such persons and their organizations in decision-making processes. The International Disability Association and its partners had strengthened these organizations' capacity in several countries to increase their involvement in law-making processes, budget analysis and institutional arrangements, resulting in strengthened capacity of United Nations mechanisms. There was a need for more understanding of United Nations mandates and working methods, as well as full inclusion of underrepresented groups, such as persons with autism, deaf-blindness and intellectual disabilities.

48. Representatives of Peru, Mexico, Association of World Citizens, International Lawyers.org, Dementia Alliance International, Niger Federation of Persons with Disabilities, Transforming Communities Asia and World Federation of the Deaf took the floor. Issues raised included State accountability; lack of State resources for statistical data collection; shared educational aid and assistance among States; legal capacity; inclusion of students with disabilities in English- and French-speaking schools in Africa; the failure of States to fully include organizations of persons with disabilities in planning implementation of the Convention; including sign language in legislation; and the role of civil society and persons with disabilities in measuring implementation of the Convention.

49. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Pineda Ángeles encouraged coordination among rights defenders and with Governments to promote the rights of all persons with disabilities, highlighting the added benefits of reports on key issues. Mr. McEwin emphasized collaboration with civil society to ensure a participatory and inclusive approach to planning and implementing legislation. Senator Omondi shared experiences from Kenya on representation and participation of persons with disabilities in political processes, including the agendas of commissions dealing with issues of women, youth and other marginalized groups. Mr. Jensen noted that a public interpreter guide service could be a tool linking persons with deaf-blindness, authorities and societies at large.

H. Round table: informing policy

50. A representative of Transforming Communities for Inclusion Asia, Bhargavi Davar, called for inclusion of people's experiences and voices in policy and research, especially those marginalized by exclusion and multiple discrimination. Auto-ethnographic detailing often discredited people and made their experiences invisible. Incapacity laws negated the personhood of women with disabilities. Denial of a person's voice and personhood resulted in abuse, violence, exploitation, forced institutionalization and other ignominy. Policy research should be informed by values and practices, providing evidence that non-discrimination is intersectional and layered. Informed consent to research should be an unconditional and safeguarded legal area, including strict regulation of psychopharmaceuticals, invasive medical practices and clinical trials.

51. A research coordinator at the Office of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Alberto Vásquez Encalada, highlighted the gap in data collection regarding rights, services, cost of disability and good practices. Quantitative and qualitative empirical research should replace anecdotal evidence to enhance understanding of best practices in different areas such as disability determination and inclusive, community-based interventions. Disability research should follow the human rights-based and participatory approach of the Convention, involve persons with disabilities and their organizations, acknowledge and engage persons with disabilities as rights holders, and respect and protect the will, diversity and preferences of the persons with disabilities involved.

52. A representative of the Disability Research Initiative of Melbourne Law School, University of Melbourne, Yvette Maker, affirmed that research was crucial to informed, validated, transparent and effective policymaking. Ireland used research in drafting a decision-making bill and Australian states were using advocacy and research findings to reassess guardianship laws. To fill gaps in data, indicators of compliance and identification of good practices and to strengthen capacity for research, funders should support disability research proposals and researchers with disabilities. Research agendas should reflect the priorities of organizations of persons with disabilities, the process should be accessible and participatory, and research outputs should be widely accessible and promote rights under the Convention.

53. Representatives of Spain, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, ASEAN Disability Forum, Mongolia National Federation of the Blind, Niger Federation of Persons with Disabilities, People First New Zealand and World of Inclusion made statements on several issues including meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities and incorporation of research on that group of persons in governmental and commercial policies and practices; the right to inclusive education; challenges faced by women with disabilities; research on justice systems; public policies to meet the needs of persons with disabilities; the need for credible and accurate data on the status of those persons and adequate funding to conduct studies and censuses; and the importance of collaboration and solidarity within and between countries to realize the rights of persons with disabilities.

54. In response, Ms. Davar noted that human rights models should replace outdated medical models as the basis for research. She highlighted gaps, including the need for greater collaboration between academics and civil society in undertaking research. Mr. Vásquez Encalada noted the need for strong frameworks in facilitating participatory research processes and called for stronger links between civil society and research institutions in collecting and using data. Ms. Maker addressed participatory research as a means to avoid misrepresentations in evidence-based policy, as well as the importance of good research in aiding justice systems. She prioritized the need for adequate funding and collaborative approaches to research.

I. Realizing the human rights of persons with disabilities

55. A member of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Theresia Degener, noted that fewer than 30 States had yet to sign the Convention and that some States parties could improve compliance by withdrawing reservations or declarations. Stakeholders should work to understand and promote a human rights model of disability, i.e., that rights could not be gained or taken away based on personal features, and move away from a medical model of disability. Governments and organizations of persons with disabilities should make use of the Committee's recommendations, including designating national human rights institutions as independent monitoring mechanisms. Organizations of persons with disabilities could translate recommendations into feasible national action plans. She welcomed efforts of national jurisprudence to clarify aspects of the Convention,

including by demonstrating that the disenfranchisement of people with disabilities was an infringement of their constitutional rights.

56. The National Secretary for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of Brazil, Roseane Cavalcante de Freitas Estrela, said that Brazil gave the Convention constitutional status and normative changes had enhanced implementation. Brazil proposed a plan for the development of assistive technologies and a horizontal approach to developing a systemic perspective on the rights of persons with disabilities. The Government strove to integrate this work with the 2030 Agenda, collaborating with civil society and other States. Nearly 2.6 million people with disabilities received an allowance and improvements had been made in education, availability of technology and technological resources, gender equality, reducing infant mortality and fighting HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

57. The Chair of Indonesian Mental Health Association, Yeni Rosa Damayanti, said that hundreds of thousands of persons with psychosocial disabilities had been imprisoned in social and medical institutions and forced to accept medical treatment. National and local regulations must accord with the Convention. Obstacles to such harmonization included reluctance to view the rights of persons with disabilities as human rights, lack of awareness of the Convention among government officials and inadequate training for advocacy groups. Ms. Damayanti suggested that disability rights should be integrated into wider social movements, including labour, legal aid, farmers', women's, environmental, urban and anti-corruption movements, and recognized as a cross-cutting issue to be raised by all sectors of civil society.

58. During the interactive dialogue statements were made by representatives of Brazil, Gabon, Indonesia, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Alliance Defending Freedom International, European Network on Independent Living, European Union of the Deaf, Niger Federation of Persons with Disabilities, Sense International and World of Inclusion. Speakers addressed the need for cooperation among organizations of persons with disabilities and for companies and other stakeholders to respect and fulfil human rights; equality of rights for persons with disabilities in all forums; streamlined international cooperation for realizing Convention rights; the need for the Committee to clarify key Convention terminology; accountability of States parties to the Convention; discrimination practised through pregnancy screening tests to detect genetic conditions that offered parents reproductive choices; and equal penalties and exclusionary practices in justice systems.

59. In conclusion, Ms. Cavalcante de Freitas Estrela emphasized the role of monitoring committees in furthering local and national realization of rights, and stated that in Brazil, work towards ensuring environmental sustainability had been linked to issues of inclusion of and access for persons with disabilities. Ms. Degener remarked that legal obligations applied equally to all people with respect to both realization of rights and responsibilities. Prevention measures based on the medical model of disability were not in line with the Convention, and persons with disabilities should be engaged as agents for social change. Ms. Damayanti called for human rights models of disability rather than institutionalization and treatment with harmful medications.

J. The future we want - Part I

60. The Director of Complaints and Investigations of the Uganda Human Rights Commission, Ruth Ssekindi, said that persistent negative attitudes and lack of disaggregated data on issues related to persons with disabilities remained obstacles. A comprehensive revision of policy frameworks with inclusive participation was needed, using a rights-based approach to development. There was also a need for indicators on including persons with disabilities in decision-making and for setting accessibility

standards and measures in all sectors, to ensure compliance with the Convention. Judicial engagement should be increased in areas where precedents were needed. National human rights institutions should mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities and all parties should pursue opportunities for increased collaboration and dialogue among all stakeholders. Adequate resources should be allocated to support those efforts.

61. The founder of the Global Alliance for Disability in Media and Entertainment, Patricia Almeida, stated that media could help reshape mainstream perspectives on disability and stimulate a culture of acceptance, non-discrimination and inclusion. States should take concrete actions to realize their obligations to ensure the media were compliant with the Convention. Engaging persons with disabilities in the media would help address issues, including by educating media workers on their rights and violations thereof, the pervasiveness of stereotypes and the need for accessible platforms. The creation of public and private disability media that included persons with disabilities as communicators would help realize their rights.

62. The Chair of the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Kirstin Lange, called for a coordinated approach to ensure that persons with disabilities were engaged as partners in development and humanitarian processes. International organizations' capacity-building should include appropriate mechanisms to promote inclusion in all areas of development. International cooperation agreements should include measures such as disability markers, budget allocation for humanitarian and development programming, systems of data collection, mechanisms to monitor progress and support for stakeholders in developing guidelines on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention. Acknowledgement of the diversity of persons with disabilities and intersectional discrimination should be at the centre of programming.

63. ILO Senior Disability Specialist Stefan Trömel described efforts to bring together businesses and disability inclusion initiatives; peer-to-peer conviction among companies was a powerful means for promoting inclusion of persons with disabilities in business. The Sustainable Development Goals presented opportunities for integrating the rights of persons with disabilities in the private sector by showing that overlooking persons with disabilities was harmful to business. ILO worked to support national business and disability networks and encouraged the media to showcase positive practices. The public sector should promote employment and support inclusion of persons with disabilities. The Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights also promoted the inclusion of human rights in private sector agendas.

64. In the ensuing dialogue, representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, the United Nations Development Programme, ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, Foschiani Asociados, Global Alliance for Disability in Media and Entertainment, National Disabled People's Organisation in Timor-Leste, National Forum of Women with Disabilities of Pakistan and Regional Network for Inclusive Education in Latin America made statements. They called for mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities in development programming and private sector compliance with rights obligations, including Internet accessibility. Speakers addressed the importance of information systems and adequate resources in realizing the right to education for persons with disabilities; national-level initiatives to incorporate their rights in plans and actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals; training programmes for persons with disabilities; media's role in reflecting human diversity and accelerating social change towards inclusion; and good practices to fulfil public service quotas.

65. Responding, Mr. Trömel noted the interrelated and interdependent nature of rights and the need to move beyond legislation to inclusive practices for persons with disabilities in employment, the media and other areas. He also acknowledged difficulties in meeting

public service quotas. Ms. Almeida stated that Governments as well as the private sector must do more to meaningfully implement the Convention. Ms. Lange emphasized the role of international organizations in supporting implementation and highlighted the need for governmental accountability.

K. The future we want - Part II

66. The Chief Executive Officer of the National Forum of Women with Disabilities of Pakistan, Abia Akram, said it was critical to uphold human rights ethics and involve persons with disabilities in research processes. Recent research on disability from the human rights perspective of the Convention had influenced policy and practice at all levels. Organizations of persons with disabilities could lead discussions and decisions on topics and priorities for study. More research was needed on disability in contexts such as poverty reduction, non-discrimination, education and health. Good research would make a difference in the lives of all persons with disabilities and their communities. It was important to increase the number of researchers in the field of realizing the rights of persons with disabilities.

67. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Victor Arturo Cabrera Hidalgo, affirmed that the recognition of persons with disabilities within the 2030 Agenda enriched the efforts of States in the implementation of the Convention. He highlighted the efforts his country had made to promote a rights-based approach after ratifying the Convention, taking into account the full participation of civil society. Ecuador's progress included the adoption in 2014 of a law on equality that focused on five specific groups, including people with disabilities. Although labour and inclusive education were challenges, the number of persons with disabilities who were studying had increased. Ecuador encouraged all States to ratify and implement the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

68. The Senior Adviser for Global Social Policy at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Eppu Mikkonen-Jeanneret, affirmed the need to ensure adequate resources to implement the rights of persons with disabilities, both by making available disability-specific funds and mainstreaming rights throughout international cooperation programmes. In Finland, a disability marker was included within data systems and was systematically monitored along with gender and human rights markers. That data system helped ensure a positive impact, meaningful participation and adequate support by allowing the Government to monitor all new projects that received federal funding on the basis of those markers. All new projects that received funding must have considered either a specific disability project, a distinct disability component, or take into account participation and accessibility issues. The objective was to better understand where disability funding went, with a view to evaluating strengths, weaknesses and possible synergies so as to allow strategic planning.

69. The President of the West African Federation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, Alzouma Maiga Idriss, stressed that all legal, physical, administrative and communication barriers must be removed and persons with disabilities recognized as equal partners in the development agenda. States should consult persons with disabilities and their representative organizations on what affected them. Financing for sustainable development needed to reach out to the most marginalized groups and include requirements related to disability. All data should be disaggregated to account for disability. United Nations mechanisms must respect, promote and protect the rights of all persons with disabilities, especially the full exercise of their legal capacity and their full and effective participation.

70. During the interactive dialogue, statements were made by representatives of Mexico, Pakistan, Dementia Alliance International, Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global

Network, Mongolian National Federation of the Blind, National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda, Niger Federation of Persons with Disabilities, World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry and Public Television of Argentina. Speakers discussed national efforts to achieve empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities by addressing diversity; the potential added value of a United Nations database of practical educational materials on the rights of persons with disabilities; opportunities for rights-based advocacy; the need for more interpreters and guides to support persons with disabilities; segregation of persons with disabilities in schools; and issues facing women with disabilities, including forced sterilization and lack of quality health care.

71. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Akram noted the importance of including women and girls with disabilities in political processes such as voting. Mr. Cabrera stated that the Convention must be mainstreamed throughout policies. He stressed the need for greater visibility of persons with disabilities and their rights, and for sharing good practices. Ms. Mikkonen-Jeanneret underlined instruments for implementing a human rights-based approach in governmental work, particularly by monitoring projects funded by international cooperation for compliance with international human rights standards, and urged continued and increased involvement by civil society, taking into account specific contexts. Mr. Maiga Idriss urged that the rights of persons with disabilities be realized on the ground, and echoed remarks about the harmful impacts people faced because of a lack of necessary support.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

72. In closing, the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights underlined the need to move beyond abstract expertise even as the need for more research and knowledge management with respect to the lived experience of persons with disabilities became apparent. Civil society must be empowered in order to hold the duty bearers and other actors accountable. Business was an influential actor for enhancing the dignity of persons with disabilities, through employment, innovation, services, and platforms for leadership, participation and other contributions. Greater recognition of the challenges, and engagement by all actors, in the context of humanitarian crises were needed to secure human dignity for all people. The movement of persons with disabilities demonstrated that human life was precious and that everyone was entitled to human dignity.

A. Conclusions

73. Several conclusions emerged from the 2016 Social Forum, some of which were presented by the Co-Chair-Rapporteur, Carl Allan Reaich, in his closing remarks. Mr. Reaich noted that participants had recalled important advances made since the adoption of the Convention. So far, 169 States and the European Union had ratified the Convention and 92 had ratified its Optional Protocol; nine sessions of the Conference of States Parties had been held. The Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had been created, and it had reviewed 47 States and adopted four general comments and 14 views on individual communications. The universal periodic review had also contributed to promoting the Convention. At the national level, legislation and policies were being reformed or developed. Further, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development contained explicit references to persons with disabilities and inclusive language.

74. The disability community needed to be engaged in mainstream policymaking to ensure understanding of key issues on the rights of persons with disabilities as part of

human diversity. Participants had stressed the importance of universal ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol. In addition, reform of national legislation and policies should be promoted to ensure the adoption of the human rights-based approach to disability. This included taking a twin-track approach, through mainstreaming and targeted action, for the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in society. Institutional frameworks for implementation and monitoring of the Convention were being put in place or reformed, and had to be strengthened to face the challenges ahead.

75. There was a need for increasing international cooperation and resources; consistent mainstreaming of disability throughout international cooperation; systematic involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities; and funding for research in key areas. International organizations, including United Nations agencies, bodies and mechanisms, had taken positive steps to include the rights of persons with disabilities in their work and were expected to increase their attention to the situation of all persons with disabilities. They could contribute further to better implementing the human rights and development frameworks at all levels, including in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals in accordance with the Convention. The efforts of OHCHR to develop guidelines in that regard, with support from the European Union, were appreciated. Further, there was a need to include the private sector in the implementation of the Goals and the Convention, including through initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

76. National human rights institutions were essential in monitoring implementation of the Convention, particularly by mainstreaming disability-related issues and establishing focal points. They provided technical support and capacity-building to organizations of persons with disabilities, facilitated their dialogue with Governments, contributed to enhancing access to justice and engaged with international human rights mechanisms. Participants had also highlighted the influence of private and public media on access to information and public perceptions of disability, and pointed out that they often lacked knowledge of the Convention. Finally, academia was central to reflecting good practices on combating stereotypes and providing inputs to foster compliance with the Convention. Nevertheless, direct participation by and involvement of persons with disabilities as well as increased research were needed in this field.

B. Recommendations

77. Participants at the Social Forum strongly recommended universal ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol and ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty. States parties should harmonize their legislation with the Convention and adopt the human rights-based approach to disability in policy design, particularly with regard to non-discrimination, including multiple and intersectional discrimination; provision of reasonable accommodation; equal recognition before the law; accessibility; inclusive education; poverty reduction; and independent living.

78. States should ensure the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in decision-making processes, including by providing them with unconditional support, capacity-building, technical assistance and promotion of self-advocates, among other actions. Focal points that would coordinate efforts towards implementation and support decentralization were key for policymaking. While seeking to comply with their immediate obligations, States should also ensure appropriate budget allocations for fulfilling their progressive

realization obligations, support monitoring mechanisms, facilitate access to disaggregated data and develop human rights indicators.

79. International cooperation should aim at increasing disability-specific funding and promoting research. States and donors must mainstream disability throughout international cooperation and ensure the participation of persons with disabilities. Policies should be enforced at all levels, from headquarters to field-level agencies, to ensure implementation. Means of tracking inclusion, such as disability markers, should be implemented. Well-developed data-collection systems would allow for improved design and assessment of projects. International organizations should further engage in the promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities.

80. The United Nations system should adequately consider the rights of persons with disabilities in all its work and increase internal coherence as well as cooperation with country teams to strengthen their capacity on the Convention and support States to implement policies that are inclusive of these persons and respectful of their rights. The United Nations system must increase its direct support to representative organizations of persons with disabilities, facilitating access to capacity-building and resources.

81. National human rights institutions needed to be independent and well resourced, and their complaint mechanisms needed strengthening. They should mainstream disability-related issues in their work, with focal points to support disability-specific issues. In particular, their engagement with parliament and the judiciary was crucial to ensure that legislation was compliant with the Convention, effective access to justice and remedies. They should increase efforts to provide technical support and capacity-building to organizations of persons with disabilities and to facilitate their dialogue with Governments and engagement with international human rights systems.

82. States and other stakeholders should develop a disability network on media, involving private and public media, persons with disabilities, communicators and representatives of the target audience, to contribute to the implementation of article 8 of the Convention. Such a network would aim at combating stereotypes; promoting appropriate language; portraying persons with disabilities as rights holders; ensuring access to information by implementing accessibility standards in all media, including on websites; increasing visibility and mainstreaming; and promoting journalists with disabilities devoted to non-disability-specific news. States should develop observatories and other mechanisms to monitor and report on media compliance with international standards and domestic laws.

83. The private sector must be involved in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in accordance with the Convention. Multi-stakeholder initiatives should develop guidelines, exchange good practices and promote actions including adopting the human rights-based approach to disability, mainstreaming persons with disabilities as consumers, implementing universal design, and expanding production and reducing costs of disability-specific products. Public procurement should contribute to the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities. Academic and research institutions must adopt a human rights-based approach to research. States, donors and those institutions should increase resources for research on how the rights of persons with disabilities could be applied to development and policymaking, particularly with regard to access to justice, data collection and multiple forms of discrimination.

84. The Human Rights Council and other United Nations human rights machinery must remain seized of the matter. In particular, the Council should disseminate the

conclusions and recommendations of the 2016 Social Forum and undertake further actions to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in accordance with the Convention. The Council should call upon all States and relevant stakeholders, in the fulfilment of their mandates, to consider the present conclusions and recommendations in moving forward in advancing the agenda on the rights of persons with disabilities at all levels. Finally, the Council should implement the measures suggested by its task force on secretariat services, accessibility for persons with disabilities and use of information technology.

Annex

List of participants

States Members of the Human Rights Council

Algeria, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Cuba, Ecuador, Ethiopia, France, Georgia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nigeria, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, South Africa, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czechia, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu.

Non-Member States represented by observers

Holy See, State of Palestine.

Intergovernmental organizations

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, European Union, International Development Law Organization.

United Nations

International Labour Organization, International Telecommunication Union, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, World Intellectual Property Organization.

Non-governmental organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities

Action on Disability and Development International, African Commission of Health and Human Rights Promoters, African Disability Forum, Alliance Defending Freedom International, Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities, Arab Union for the Blind, ASEAN Disability Forum, Asia Pacific Women with Disabilities, Association of Persons with Rheumatic Diseases, Association of World Citizens and People's Health Movement, Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, Centre indépendant de recherche et d'initiatives pour le dialogue, China Disabled Persons' Federation, Company of the

Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Cuban National Association of Deaf People, Dementia Alliance International, Down Syndrome International, Epidemic of Knowledge Campaign, European Network on Independent Living, European Union of the Deaf, Future Hope International, Geneva for Human Rights-Global Training, Global Alliance for Disability in Media and Entertainment, Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities Youth Council, Handicap International, Include Me Too, Inclusão Eficiente, Inclusion International, Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global Network, Indonesian Mental Health Association, International Association for Hospice & Palliative Care, International Disability Alliance, International Disability and Development Consortium, International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations, International Federation of Hard of Hearing People, International-Lawyers.org, International Longevity Centre Global Alliance, International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, Italian Network on Disability and Development, Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families, Mongolian National Federation of the Blind, Movimento Down, My Right, National Disabled People's Organization in Timor-Leste, National Forum of Women with Disabilities of Pakistan, National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda, Niger Federation of Persons with Disabilities, Pacific Disability Forum, Pan African Network of People with Psychosocial Disabilities, People First New Zealand, Regional Network for Inclusive Education in Latin America, Sense International, Spanish Organisation of the Blind, Transforming Communities for Inclusion Asia, Turkey Youth Communication Platform, West African Federation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, Women Education and Culture Foundation, World Blind Union, World Federation of the Deaf, World Federation of the Deafblind, World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry.

National human rights institutions

Australian Human Rights Commission, Defensoría del Pueblo de Perú, German Institute for Human Rights, Uganda Human Rights Commission.

National ministries and departments

Department of Social Development of South Africa, International Disability Rights of the United States Department of State, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Ministry of Economic Development of Poland, Ministry of Education of Brazil, Public Television of Argentina.

Academic institutions

Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Nalsar University of Law, University of California Berkeley, University of Leeds, University of Melbourne.

Media organizations

Public Television of Argentina

Private sector

EID Belgium, Foschiani Asociados, World of Inclusion.

Independent experts

Catalina Devandas Aguilar, Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities.
