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Statement submitted by Christian Blind Mission, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The International Disability and Development Consortium is a global consortium of 26 disability and development non-governmental organizations, mainstream development non-governmental organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities supporting disability and development work in more than 100 countries around the world. Currently, International Disability and Development Consortium is actively engaging in monitoring of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, advocacy efforts in the 2030 Agenda and within the United Nations system, including the work of the Commission on the Status of Women.

International Disability and Development Consortium welcomes the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which provides an important forum for raising awareness about the rights of women and girls with disabilities. International Disability and Development Consortium encourages the Commission on the Status of Women to adopt an agreed conclusion that contains guidance to identify issues for States and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to address promotion and fulfilment of the rights of women and girls with disabilities in their policies and programmes.

International Disability and Development Consortium welcomes and celebrates the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the commitments made by the Heads of State and Government from all Members of the United Nations toward the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda is based on human rights and gender equality — essential for sustainable development and key to creating an inclusive society for all, including women and girls with disabilities. For women and girls with disabilities, inequality goes beyond the barrier of unequal access to buildings, development programmes or services. Women and girls with disabilities encounter inequalities in all areas of their life and throughout their whole life cycle.

Women and girls with disabilities comprise 17 per cent of the world's female population, yet their issues have traditionally remained invisible, both within the disability and women's rights movements. Women and girls with disabilities experience multiple forms of discrimination based on their gender and disability, as well as other factors, such as age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

In particular, women and girls with disabilities are subjected to gender-based violence, neglect, maltreatment, harassment and exploitation both within and outside the home, at school, in the workplace, in the community and when confined in institutions. This includes sexual violence, rape (including marital rape), forced marriage, forced sterilization, female genital mutilation, sexual and economic exploitation and other harmful practices.

Girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to harmful practices exercised by their family or communities; newborn girls with disabilities are more likely to be murdered in different regions across the world for want of a family's capacity or willingness to take care of a child considered to be a burden, and girls with disabilities are three to five times more likely to be sexually assaulted and raped than girls without disabilities. Despite the grave nature of these violations, access to justice frequently remains out of reach for many women and girls with disabilities due to legal, attitudinal, communicational, informational and physical

barriers, leaving them without access to justice, remedies or redress. In addition, it is recognized that there are numerous areas in which women and girls face inequalities, including education, employment, participation in political spheres and health care. These inequalities and discrimination lead women and girls with disabilities and their families to exclusion from society and often to situations of poverty and extreme poverty. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has found that the prevalence of multiple discrimination against women and girls with disabilities is not sufficiently addressed in legislation and policies; there is a lack of or insufficient participation of women with disabilities in decision-making processes in public and political life; a lack of inclusion of a gender perspective in disability policies and of a disability rights perspective in gender policies; and a lack of, or insufficient specific measures to promote the education and employment of women with disabilities.

The 2030 Agenda mandates the elimination of poverty, achievement of sustainable economic growth and combating discrimination and vulnerability. Despite the strengths of the 2030 Agenda — in making commitments to empower persons with disabilities under a number of goals and targets — it has failed to include references to women and girls with disabilities under Goal 5. However International Disability and Development Consortium is confident that the overarching aim of the 2030 Agenda — to realize all goals and targets — will be achieved in accordance with human rights, through gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (Preamble), including women and girls with disabilities.

To address inequalities faced by women and girls with disabilities, we must connect the 2030 Agenda with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Gender and disability are inextricably linked, yet the intersection between the two remains disconnected. Despite interconnectedness, disability and gender are generally viewed separately (in their own silos) from both legal and policy perspectives, and issues that crossover are responded to separately rather than through a common approach. Therefore, Member States must ensure that the implementation of Goal 5 focuses on the most marginalized women and girls, including those with disabilities.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda also must be carried out with coherence within existing internationally recognized standards and commitments, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Thus, in order to realize the inclusion and empowerment of women and girls with disabilities, we recommend that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities serve as a guiding document for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Fundamental to this intersection is ensuring women and girls with disabilities are included in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the Agenda.

Recommendations:

- International Disability and Development Consortium recommends that national and regional Sustainable Development Goals strategies are developed in an open, inclusive and participatory way by bringing governments and organizations or persons with disabilities, including representatives of women with disabilities, together in order to ensure their perspectives are included.

- Capacity building and new institutional settings are required: decentralized local governments must work closely with persons with disabilities to ensure the realization of the 2030 Agenda and to ensure that their rights are fully recognized.
- A positive allocation of funds and financial resources for a participatory, transparent and inclusive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals must be a prerequisite, including on local levels. Governments must prioritize investments that elevate barriers — institutional, attitudinal, communicational, physical to participation in society, in particular for women and girls with disabilities.
- Member States must commit to a transparent and participatory system for the definition of national indicators, as well as a broad disaggregation of data. This will be critical for ensuring that no one is left behind and that those furthest behind are reached first in the national contextualization of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. States must systematically collect data on women and girls with disabilities with respect to all government sectors and all rights, including discrimination, violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, access to justice, and use of disaggregated data and results of studies to develop laws, policies, programmes, awareness-raising campaigns and training. Each of these must be directed to State actors, service providers, civil society and women's rights organizations, as well as to women and girls with disabilities and their families, to ensure the effective and meaningful participation of women and girls with disabilities in society.
- There must be a roadmap for the communication and dissemination of information on the 2030 Agenda at national, subnational and local levels, allowing for women and girls with disabilities to be aware of and for follow-up on progress on implementation.
- Member States must commit to accountability, follow-up and review at local, national, regional and global levels. We expect our Heads of State and Government to commit to establishing inclusive national baselines, national data collection and management systems, participatory and inclusive monitoring and reporting mechanisms for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as to agree to public, inclusive and participatory national review mechanisms.
