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Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation of human rights instruments

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2019

[on the report of the Third Committee ([A/74/399/Add.1](#))]

74/144. Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto: accessibility

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution [72/162](#) of 19 December 2017 and its previous relevant resolutions, as well as relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council and of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions,

Recalling also the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the need for persons with disabilities to be guaranteed the full enjoyment of their rights and freedoms without discrimination,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,¹ the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities² and the Optional Protocol thereto,³ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,⁴ the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁵ the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination⁶ and all other relevant international human rights instruments,

¹ Resolution [217 A \(III\)](#).

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 2518, No. 44910.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 660, No. 9464.



Recalling the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,⁷ the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030⁸ and the New Urban Agenda,⁹

Reaffirming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹⁰ which is inclusive of persons with disabilities and in which Member States pledged to leave no one behind, recognizing that the contributions of persons with disabilities are important to its full and effective implementation, and acknowledging that Member States, while implementing the 2030 Agenda, should, inter alia, respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without discrimination of any kind,

Welcoming the fact that, since the opening for signature of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto on 30 March 2007, 162 States and 1 regional integration organization have signed and 180 States and 1 regional integration organization have ratified or acceded to the Convention and 94 States have signed and 96 States have ratified the Optional Protocol,

Noting with appreciation the work and activities that have been and continue to be undertaken in support of the Convention and towards the fulfilment and mainstreaming of the rights of all persons with disabilities, particularly through, inter alia, the Conference of States Parties to the Convention, the Under-Secretary-General and Senior Adviser on Policy, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, other human rights treaty bodies, the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the rights of persons with disabilities, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility, the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action,

Noting the need for Member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders to further strengthen the normative framework on disability, including the rights of persons with disabilities, in line with the pledge of leaving no one behind contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to consider disability as a global issue, cutting across the pillars of the United Nations,

Welcoming progress towards mainstreaming disability, including the rights of persons with disabilities, in the work of the United Nations, and noting with appreciation the launch of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and the leadership of the Secretary-General to bring about transformative and systematic change on disability inclusion across the United Nations system,

Welcoming also the contributions of the Steering Committee on Accessibility to improving the accessibility of United Nations premises, conferences and meetings, and information and communications, and notes other disability-related initiatives such as the Global Disability Summit,

Welcoming further the observance of international disability-related days, including “World Autism Awareness Day” on 2 April 2019 on the theme “Assistive technologies, active participation”, which promoted accessibility for persons on the autism spectrum to affordable assistive technologies in order to eliminate the barriers to their participation on an equal basis with others, as well as the observance of World Down Syndrome Day on 21 March 2019 on the theme “Leave no one behind in education”, which focused on inclusive and accessible education,

⁷ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

⁸ Resolution 69/283, annex II.

⁹ Resolution 71/256, annex.

¹⁰ Resolution 70/1.

Taking note with appreciation that the 2018 *Disability and Development Report*¹¹ presents an overview of the status of accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the persistent gaps in this regard, and identifies good practices and recommended actions in accessibility for the effective implementation of the Convention and the disability-inclusive achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Recalling that persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others, including in relation to their access to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, in both urban and rural areas,

Expressing concern that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, which limit their enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others, and recognizing that the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is crucial to making progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets,

Recognizing the importance of accessibility for persons with disabilities to the physical, social, economic and cultural environment, to health and education and to information and communications, and the need to identify and eliminate prejudice, discrimination, obstacles and barriers that limit the access of persons with disabilities to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or available to the public, in both urban and rural areas, on an equal basis with others,

Emphasizing that accessibility is a precondition for persons with disabilities to live independently, participate fully and equally in all aspects of life and fully enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others, and recognizing the importance of accessibility measures, including through the use of universal design and assistive technologies, as a means of investing in society as a whole and as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda,

Recognizing the need to take into account the specific challenges linked to accessibility for older persons with disabilities, especially those faced by older women with disabilities,

Recognizing also the need to promote and protect the human rights of all persons with disabilities, including those who require more intensive support to attain and maintain maximum independence, full physical, mental, social and vocational abilities and full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life,

Recognizing further the benefits of universal design as a means of designing environments, including technologies, products, programmes and services, that are inclusive and accessible to all, recognizing that universal design should not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities, and recognizing also that the application of universal design from the initial stages of any development could help make the building of accessible physical environments, as well as information and communications technologies and systems, much less costly than retrofitting adaptations to remove barriers to accessibility,

Recognizing that accessibility measures, such as standards, laws and policies, should include reasonable accommodations which are necessary and appropriate

¹¹ United Nations publication, Sales No. 19.IV.4.

modifications and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure that persons with disabilities may enjoy and exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others,

Recognizing also that persons with disabilities are often disproportionately affected in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters and in their aftermath, and that they may require specific protection and safety measures, recognizing further the need to support further participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the development of measures and decision-making processes relating thereto, in order to ensure disability-inclusive risk reduction and humanitarian action, and recognizing the special coping mechanisms developed by persons with disabilities to withstand the effects of conflict and natural disasters,

Recognizing further the contribution of family members towards the full and equal enjoyment by persons with disabilities of their human rights, including through participation in organizations which empower persons with disabilities to have a voice and full control of their own lives, and recognizing the need for States to raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level, regarding persons with disabilities and to foster respect for their rights and dignity, including accessibility,

Recognizing the need for States to accelerate the development, implementation and mainstreaming of strategies that respect, protect and fulfil the rights of all persons with disabilities, including women and girls, to the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights, without discrimination, by adopting legislation, policies and programmes that are inclusive of and accessible to all persons with disabilities, and affirming that realizing their human rights requires their full, effective and meaningful participation and inclusion in all aspects of public, political, economic, cultural, social and family life, on an equal basis with all others,

Recognizing also that information and communications technologies, including assistive technology and devices, have shown their potential to strengthen the exercise of human rights, and that they can create conditions enabling persons with disabilities to fully enjoy their human rights and can contribute to their social inclusion and empowerment and allow them to live independently in the community on an equal basis with others and to fully, effectively and meaningfully participate in society and in the workplace,

Emphasizing the right to privacy and the respect for data-protection regulations and standards in all uses of information and communications technologies and systems,

Welcoming the positive role of civil society in the promotion and implementation of accessibility for persons with disabilities, and stressing the importance of closely consulting and actively involving persons with disabilities, including women and girls, through their representative organizations, in the development and implementation of legislation and policies that affect their lives and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, thereby minimizing the risk of creating barriers to accessibility for all persons with disabilities,

Stressing the need for capacity-development efforts aimed at empowering persons with disabilities and their representative organizations to ensure equal access to quality education, full and productive employment and decent work on an equal basis and without discrimination to persons with disabilities, including by promoting access to inclusive education systems, skills development, volunteering opportunities and vocational and entrepreneurial training in order to enable persons with disabilities to attain and maintain maximum independence,

Acknowledging the importance of taking measures to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities in order to eliminate discrimination, stereotypes, prejudices

and other barriers which constitute a major impediment to their full, equal and effective participation in society and the economy, as well as in political and public life,

Concerned that the continuing lack of reliable statistics, data and information on the situation of persons with disabilities at the national, regional and global levels contributes to their exclusion in official statistics, policies and programmes, and in this regard recognizing the need to intensify efforts to build the capacity of Member States, and to strengthen, at the national level, data collection, analysis and use of data disaggregated by disability, sex and age for specific indicators, using appropriate measurement tools, including, as appropriate, the United Nations Children's Fund Module on Child Functioning and the Washington Group short set of questions on disability and other data-collection methodologies, to support the development of evidence-based policies and programmes that are accessible to and inclusive of persons with disabilities, including women and girls, on an equal basis with others,

1. *Calls upon* those States that have not yet done so to consider signing and ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities² and the Optional Protocol thereto³ as a matter of priority;

2. *Encourages* States that have ratified the Convention and submitted one or more reservations to it to review regularly the effect and continued relevance of such reservations and to consider the possibility of withdrawing them;

3. *Requests* United Nations agencies and organizations, and invites intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to continue to strengthen efforts undertaken to disseminate accessible and easy-to-understand information on the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto, including to children and young people to promote their understanding, and to assist States parties in implementing their obligations under those instruments;

4. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on accessibility and the status of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto,¹² and the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the rights of persons with disabilities;¹³

5. *Calls upon* those States that have not yet done so to consider signing and ratifying the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled;

6. *Emphasizes* the importance of mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of relevant sustainable development strategies, and encourages States to apply a human rights-based and gender-sensitive approach and to intensify their efforts to advance the rights of persons with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹⁰ consistent with their international obligations;

7. *Encourages* States to review and repeal any law or policy that restricts the full and effective participation in political and public life of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others or discriminates against persons with disabilities, including with regard to accessing a service or facility open to the public, and to establish accessible and effective channels of redress for discrimination on the basis of disability;

8. *Urges* States to take steps to eliminate multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities through repealing discriminatory laws, policies and practices, to take all effective measures to remove any other barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities in accessing the

¹² A/74/146.

¹³ A/74/186.

physical, social, economic and cultural environment, transportation, health and education, information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public and to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all rights stipulated in the Convention;

9. *Calls upon* all States to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, on an equal basis with other children, in recognition that discrimination against any child on the basis of a disability is a violation of the inherent dignity and worth of the child, to enhance inclusion and address barriers faced by children with disabilities, including addressing discriminatory, attitudinal and environmental barriers to their participation and inclusion in society and in the community, to develop gender- and age-sensitive policies and capacities to ensure the rights and address the particular needs of children with disabilities, including children in vulnerable situations, including migrant children, children without parental care, children in street situations and child victims of trafficking, and those affected by climate change, and to prevent and respond to cases of gender-based violence;

10. *Recommends* that Member States take into account the needs and requirements of older persons with disabilities in national development plans and national policies, including through the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability, and encourage communities to develop targeted services for older persons with disabilities;

11. *Calls upon* States to develop, adopt and promote national accessibility standards and guidelines, in close consultation with persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations and other relevant stakeholders, which include the promotion of universal design and also include minimum standards for the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public, in both urban and rural areas;

12. *Also calls upon* States to regularly review accessibility standards and laws, as appropriate, in close consultation with persons with disabilities, including through their representative organizations, national human rights institutions in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles),¹⁴ where they exist, and other stakeholders, and to use data in compliance with data-protection regulations and standards in order to identify, assess and address gaps to ensure that persons with disabilities can access the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public on an equal basis with others;

13. *Further calls upon* States to promote other appropriate forms of assistance and support to persons with disabilities to ensure their access to information, and to provide information intended for the general public to persons with disabilities using accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities in a timely manner and without additional cost;

14. *Calls upon* States to ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement and that persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and

¹⁴ Resolution 48/134, annex.

other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community;

15. *Also calls upon* States to promote and facilitate access to and sharing of accessible and assistive technologies, especially new and emerging ones, including information and communications systems, mobility aids, assistive devices and other assistive technologies, by persons with disabilities, and to promote research and development in this regard, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost and at an early stage;

16. *Urges* States to consider laws, policies and procedures relating to public procurement to ensure that persons with disabilities can access any service or facility open to the public on an equal basis with others;

17. *Calls upon* States to continue to take appropriate measures to raise awareness and to provide training and other support to public officials, service providers and other relevant stakeholders on accessibility issues facing persons with disabilities, and to address discrimination, stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices in order to promote the provision of accessible and inclusive public services and facilities that take into account all aspects of accessibility, including the rights of persons with disabilities;

18. *Encourages* States to disseminate information to and work with the private sector, including employers and other relevant stakeholders, to implement accessibility measures for any facilities or services that are open or provided to the public that take into account all aspects of accessibility for persons with disabilities;

19. *Urges* States to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities, including women and girls, in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters, and ensure that their specific needs are addressed, such as access to basic services, including health-care services, rehabilitation assistance, psychosocial support and educational programmes, as well as transportation and information and communications technologies and systems on an equal basis with others;

20. *Calls upon* States to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access inclusive, quality primary, secondary and tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others and to facilitate the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in education by taking appropriate steps through the provision of information in accessible and alternative communication formats, reasonable accommodation and other support as required;

21. *Also calls upon* States to strengthen efforts to empower all persons with disabilities and enhance their participation and promote their leadership in society through taking measures to address and remove all barriers that prevent or restrict their access and full inclusion and participation in the community on an equal basis with others, including in the government and public sector, the private sector, civil society and all branches and bodies of the national monitoring system of the Convention, and to work to ensure that persons with disabilities are closely consulted and actively involved, through their representative organizations, in the design, implementation and monitoring of all legislation, policies and programmes which have an impact on their lives;

22. *Encourages* States to provide support to existing organizations and promote the creation of organizations, including civil society organizations and networks of persons with disabilities, as appropriate, and to promote and support persons with disabilities in taking leadership roles in public decision-making bodies

at all levels, recognizing the importance for States of having an open, inclusive and transparent engagement with civil society in the implementation of measures on persons with disabilities;

23. *Calls upon* States to collect and analyse data disaggregated by income, sex, race, age, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographical location and other characteristics relevant to national contexts to assist, inter alia, with the identification and eradication of barriers and all forms of discrimination, including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, that prevent persons with disabilities from enjoying all the rights stipulated in the Convention, to guide inclusive policy planning and to be used on an ongoing basis to assess and advance accessibility, and also calls upon States to improve data-collection systems for adequate monitoring and evaluation frameworks on the implementation of the Convention and the Sustainable Development Goals for all persons with disabilities;

24. *Urges* States and other relevant stakeholders, including national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles, where they exist, to continue to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by, inter alia, supporting the disaggregation of data by disability, sex and age for specific indicators, using appropriate measurement tools, including, as appropriate, the United Nations Children's Fund Module on Child Functioning and the Washington Group short set of questions on disability and other data-collection methodologies, to assist States in measuring the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 associated targets and programming policies in the context of the Goals;

25. *Encourages* States, United Nations entities and relevant international organizations, inter alia:

(a) To ensure that international cooperation is disability- and gender-sensitive and inclusive, including through the implementation of disability markers to monitor the implementation of programmes and the collection of data and statistics on persons with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators, as well as other international frameworks;

(b) To support, promote and strengthen international cooperation and assistance, and enhance partnerships and coordination, including South-South cooperation, among themselves and with the active participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, as well as other relevant civil society organizations and stakeholders, in strengthening the means of implementation of the Convention and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through the mobilization of financial resources, technical cooperation and facilitation of access to and sharing of accessible and assistive technologies on mutually agreed terms;

(c) To facilitate and support capacity-building initiatives aimed at fostering the exchange of technical knowledge, information and other programmes at the regional and international levels relating to good practices in achieving accessibility outcomes and to promote international cooperation that is accessible and inclusive of persons with disabilities;

26. *Recalls* its decision on accessible seating for representatives with disabilities in resolution [73/341](#) of 12 September 2019 on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, and in this regard welcomes the note by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the Secretariat implementing the decision;

27. *Invites* the Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities to address and engage in an interactive dialogue with the General Assembly annually, under the item entitled “Promotion and protection of human rights”, as a way to enhance communication between the Assembly and the Committee;

28. *Calls upon* the United Nations system, including its agencies, funds and programmes, within their respective mandates, to continue to work collaboratively to accelerate the full and effective mainstreaming of disability inclusion into the United Nations system, including by implementing and reporting on the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy across its programmes and operations;

29. *Invites* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session a progress report on steps taken by the United Nations system towards mainstreaming disability inclusion, including implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, within existing resources;

30. *Calls upon* Member States, the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders to take part in implementing the recommendations endorsed by the Steering Committee on Accessibility in June 2019;

31. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session a report on the rights of persons with disabilities with a focus on the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in decision-making processes, including good practices and challenges in the implementation of the Convention in that regard, in consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, relevant United Nations agencies, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Children’s Fund, taking into account the views of relevant stakeholders and using existing available materials, and to include a segment on the status of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto;

32. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to maintain the levels of resources required by the relevant offices in the United Nations system for the fulfilment of their tasks with respect to their work on the rights of and inclusive development for persons with disabilities.

*50th plenary meeting
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