**Terms of Reference 2017**

**Civil Society Coordination Mechanism for the Conference of States Parties**

**I.** **Background**

1. The Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is held annually. Article 4.3 of the CRPD calls for States Parties to closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities through their representative organizations in the implementation of the CRPD and other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to their rights.

2. The COSP provides opportunities for civil society, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities and their families (DPOs), to actively engage in the preparation and planning of the Conference. The civil society coordination mechanism, open to all interested civil society colleagues, will enhance this opportunity by providing a means for DPOs and other civil society stakeholders to advocate with a unified voice for inclusion in all elements of the Conference.

**II.** **Objectives of the Civil Society Coordination Mechanism**

3. The objective of the Civil Society Coordination Mechanism is to engage with the Conference of States Parties Bureau, the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under the Division for Social Policy and Development in the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs and other relevant stakeholders to ensure greater substantive engagement of civil society in the COSP. The Mechanism is intended to bring to life the right to participation of all persons with disabilities in decision-making as mandated in CRPD Article 4.3 and to meet the intent of the disability community’s slogan, “nothing about us without us.”

**III.** **Membership**

4. Membership of the Civil Society Coordination Mechanism is open to organisations of persons with disabilities, non-governmental and other organisations working on the rights of persons with disabilities, and non-governmental donors working in this space.

5. Membership in the Steering Committee is open to those who participated in the first two calls of the Civil Society Coordination Mechanism in 2016 and thus, demonstrated commitment, as well as to new participants, as outlined below.

6. This ToR refers to the present composition of the Steering Committee and the Working Groups. The composition of the Committee and Groups will evolve over time to meet the standards set out in point 16 below.

**IV.** **Methods of Work**

7. Meetings of the Civil Society Coordination Mechanism Steering Committee will be held on a monthly basis via webinar and include CART and International Sign to ensure accessibility.

8. The IDA Secretariat will coordinate the technical facilitation of the meetings, as well as maintain official records of meetings, lists of participants, and action steps.

9. The IDA Secretariat will be responsible for updating the Bureau of the Conference of States Parties on decisions made by the Mechanism which are relevant to the Bureau’s work. The Civil Society Coordination Mechanism Steering Committee may also nominate representatives to attend Bureau meetings on an ad hoc basis.

10. Meetings will utilize the text of the CRPD as well as General Comments from the CRPD Committee as key references for Mechanism governance purposes.

11. In the case of conflict between priorities affecting different sub-groups of persons with disabilities, all attempts will be made to resolve the conflict in a way that is win/win, satisfactory to all, in keeping with the principles stated in this document.

**V. Principles**

12. The Civil Society Coordination Mechanism is committed procedurally and substantively to the principle of nothing about us without us.

13. The Mechanism is committed to fostering outcomes, which are equally relevant to all persons with disabilities, irrespective of type of disability or impairment, and irrespective of geographic location. Special attention will be paid to those in the most difficult circumstances or situations.

14. All persons with disabilities and sub-groups of persons with disabilities have a right to decide issues concerning them.

**VI.** **Steering Committee**

15. A Steering Committee was established by stakeholders who participated in the first two calls of the Civil Society Coordination Mechanism (22 January 2016 and 24 February 2016) and expressed interest in joining the Steering Committee[1]. Membership is considered on an annual basis; Steering Committee members will be requested to confirm or decline membership for the following year at the end of each calendar year.

16. The Steering Committee will be comprised of a maximum of 20 participants who must be able to commit time to ensure the work of the Civil Society Coordination Mechanism is achieved. A time commitment is expected from Steering Committee members; membership may be revoked if three consecutive meetings of the Steering Committee are missed by any member, following discussion by the Steering Committee.

17. The Steering Committee composition must strive to meet the following criteria:

a. 50% + 1 members must be representatives of organisations of persons with disabilities

b. Equal representation of disability constituencies, including under-represented and emergent groups, and referencing Article 1 of the CRPD

c. Rural and remote representation

d. Regional balance

e. Gender balance

18. An open call for nominations to the Steering Committee will be held to fill any remaining seats on the Steering Committee. In the instance of large interest from the open membership call, members of the Steering Committee will vote on and select the remaining participants, considering the above criteria.

19. All members of the Steering Committee who are representatives from organizations of persons with disabilities must come from organizations with clear governance structures, consultative processes, and meaningful accountability mechanisms towards the public and/or their membership.

20. The Steering Committee will be responsible for the following activities:

a. Creation and oversight of substantive Working Groups

b. Selection of speakers/civil society representatives to voice experiences of being a person with a disability and/or a parent of a child with disabilities and based on proposals coming from the COSP Working Group

c. Final sign off on all speeches and messaging, as well as wide dissemination among all stakeholders at COSP

d. Final sign off on theme and programme of the Civil Society Forum or Civil Society Hearing

e. Possible collaboration on events or meetings during the COSP

f. Final sign off on person nominated by the Mechanism to report back to the Bureau

**VII.** **Working Groups**

21. The Steering Committee will create Working Groups to engage in specific areas of the COSP, as follows:

a. Civil Society Forum (topics, selection of speakers, invitations, Member State co-sponsorship, technical and accessibility support)

b. Fundraising for Steering Committee calls, provision or arrangement of reasonable accommodation for the calls, and possible language translation

c. Conference of States Parties (Engagement with COSP Bureau on advocacy regarding civil society space, input on COSP panel themes and speaker proposals, and development of guidelines to ensure State member delegations are inclusive of persons with disabilities)

d. Messaging and Speeches (preparing common messages and joint statements, with input from the wider civil society audience)

e. Informing and training the participants of the team of civil society representatives referenced in 16.b. above

22. Working Groups will comprise a minimum of 6 participants and a maximum of 9 participants, and will be open to any member of the Steering Committee and up to 3 other members of the Civil Society Coordination Mechanism, to ensure broad and diverse representation in each Group.

**IX. Amendment of ToR**

23. This ToR may be amended in writing after consultation and agreement by two-thirds of the members of the Steering Committee, and by majority vote of the members of the Civil Society Coordination Mechanism.