Good morning,

Bonjour,

Sabah al kheir or marhaba,

(Good morning in sign language?)!

Today, I am speaking to you on behalf of all persons with disabilities.

This year is a moment to celebrate:

* The Importance of inclusion and participation of all persons with disabilities and their organizations in the preparation of the Conference, and the Conference itself.
* Article 4.3 of the CRPD states that we should work together to put in place strong laws that will protect and respect all our rights.

Let me explain why the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities is so important:

* I am a self-advocate
* Self-advocacy is about me and my life and no one knows me better than me.
* I know my rights and I am ready to fight for them.

* As a self-advocate I talk about what is important to me and to my friends who cannot talk.
* As a self-advocate, I talk about my rights, my feelings, I help people understand.

Let me give some examples about the work of the self-advocates:

In my country, Lebanon, People with disabilities had no right to vote

But for us, self-advocates, it was important to choose who will represent us. So we worked with our government and we changed the law.

Now, we know that we can vote and we will vote during the next election.

We worked to have inclusive education in Lebanon and I am happy to say that the change has started.

We also worked with the refugees with disabilities and talked about their rights. Together we are stronger.”

Today my friends and I, the people in this room, want you to know that we all are ready to help you to make this world a better place to live for all of us.

Let us, all, link the change in economy, education, and health to the full participation of persons with disabilities.

You have the power and the authority to change the law and we have the knowledge about what concerns us.

We are ready to work with you. So let us all work together.

Thank you.