



IDA's Compilation of CRPD Committee's Concluding Observations

*Article 21 CRPD
(Freedom of expression and opinion,
and access to information)*

October 2022

Article 21 - Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice, as defined in article 2 of the present Convention, including by:

- a) Providing information intended for the general public to persons with disabilities in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities in a timely manner and without additional cost;*
- b) Accepting and facilitating the use of sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication of their choice by persons with disabilities in official interactions;*
- c) Urging private entities that provide services to the general public, including through the Internet, to provide information and services in accessible and usable formats for persons with disabilities;*
- d) Encouraging the mass media, including providers of information through the Internet, to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities;*
- e) Recognizing and promoting the use of sign languages.*

**Bangladesh
China
Indonesia
Japan
Lao People's Democratic Republic
New Zealand
Republic of Korea
Singapore
Hungary
Jamaica
Switzerland
Venezuela
Djibouti
France
Estonia
Albania
Australia
Ecuador
El Salvador
Greece
India
Iraq
Kuwait
Myanmar
Cuba
Niger
Norway
Rwanda
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Spain
Turkey
Vanuatu
Algeria
Bulgaria
Malta
Philippines
Poland
South Africa
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Haiti
Nepal
Russian Federation
Seychelles
Slovenia
Sudan
Latvia
Luxembourg
Montenegro
Morocco
Panama
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Armenia
Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Canada
Cyprus
Honduras
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Jordan
Bolivia
Italy
United Arab Emirates
Uruguay
Chile
Portugal
Serbia
Slovakia
Thailand
Uganda
Brazil
European Union
Kenya
Qatar
Ukraine
Cook Islands
Croatia
Czech Republic
Dominican Republic
Turkmenistan
New Zealand
Denmark
Republic of Korea
Azerbaijan
Costa Rica
Australia
El Salvador
Paraguay
China**

There are no recommendations on Mexico, Lithuania, Mauritius, Germany, Mongolia, Belgium, Ecuador, Mexico, Sweden, Austria, Argentina, Hungary, Peru, Spain and Tunisia.

Bangladesh

43. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The insufficient recognition of Bangla sign language as an official language of deaf persons, and the limited number of trained sign language interpreters for use in the judicial process and at public functions;
- (b) The absence of information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, including Braille, Easy Read, tactile communication, accessible multimedia as well as written, audio, human-reader and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, including accessible information and communication technology, particularly in rural and remote areas;
- (c) The insufficient number of accessible private and public websites as well as captioning and sign language, and audio-description on television for deaf, blind and visually impaired persons respectively;
- (d) The lack of financial resources to provide training for sign language interpreters and for professionals in the application of Braille and Easy Read formats, tactile communication, accessible multimedia as well as other augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication.

44. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Recognise Bangla sign language as an official language;**
- (b) Take all necessary measures, including legislative and policy measures, to ensure that information provided to the general public is available to persons with disabilities in accessible formats, such as Braille, sign language, captioning, Easy Read, audio-description and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication, including in rural and remote areas;**
- (c) Adopt and implement legislative and policy measures aimed at ensuring that television stations provide their programmes in accessible formats as captioning, sign language and audio-description for deaf and blind and visually impaired persons, including ensuring that public and private websites are made accessible;**
- (d) In consultation with representative organisations of persons with disabilities, provide financial resources for the training of qualified sign language interpreters, including relevant professionals in the use of tactile, Braille and Easy Read formats.**

China

42. The Committee observes with concern the lack of access to media, telecommunication and information and communications technology services for persons with disabilities, in particular for persons with visual impairments.

43. The Committee recommends that the State party be guided by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 and take appropriate measures to:

- (a) Recognize the Chinese sign language at the constitutional level, promote access to and the use of sign languages (Chinese sign language and the Natural sign language) in all areas of life; ensure the availability of qualified sign language interpreters; and ensure close consultation and engagement with the deaf community, especially in schools and universities;**
- (b) Allocate sufficient funding for the development, promotion and use of accessible communication formats, such as Braille, interpretation for the deafblind, sign language, Easy Read, plain language, audio description, video transcription, captioning and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication.**

44. The Committee is deeply concerned about the reports of continuing pressure on, and censorship of, human rights defenders and civil society organizations for their advocacy work on disability rights; and of reprisals against them, in particular for their cooperation with the United Nations.

45. The Committee urges the State party to take all measures necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to enjoy the right to freedom of expression and opinion,

including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, including in their cooperation with the United Nations.

Hong Kong

73. The Committee is deeply concerned about the reports of reprisals against and continuing pressure on human rights defenders and civil society organizations for their advocacy work, including on the rights of persons with disabilities. The Committee further notes with concern the use of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to brand human rights defenders as "foreign agents" and to bring charges of terrorism and sedition against them; to restrict human rights organizations' access to foreign funding; and to restrict and repress the legitimate activities of human rights organizations, including organizations of women with disabilities.

74. The Committee urges Hong Kong SAR, China to:

- (a) Urgently repeal and independently review the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security Law in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to ensure it is both human rights and international law compliant;**
- (b) Take prompt action to release human rights defenders with disabilities who were arbitrarily deprived of their liberty under charges of terrorism and subversion of national security;**
- (c) Adopt measures to ensure that human rights organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities operate in safe environments and can seek, receive and use funding from foreign or international sources, without undue impediments.**

Indonesia

48. The Committee notes with concern:

- (a) The lack of age-appropriate mechanisms to ensure access to information, communication, assistive devices and assistive technologies and sign language for children with disabilities;
- (b) The lack of sign language interpreters and programs to ensure that Deaf people have access to sign language interpreters of their choice in official interactions;
- (c) The lack of information in accessible formats, such as Easy Read, plain language, captioning, sign language, Braille, audio description, and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication from government, public and private media outlets, and on websites that provide public information.

49. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Establish age-appropriate mechanisms to ensure access to information, communication, assistive devices and assistive technologies and sign language for children with disabilities;**
- (b) Implement measures, in close consultation and active involvement of the Deaf community to increase the number of sign language interpreters and to facilitate access to sign language interpreters of choice for official interactions;**
- (c) Establish a legal and policy framework to ensure the accessibility of all public information, including from television and media services, for all persons with disabilities in accessible formats such as Braille, deafblind interpretation, sign language, Easy Read, plain language, audio description, captioning and subtitles, and allocate adequate funding for implementation.**

Japan

45. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) Lacks in providing information and supporting communication of all persons with disabilities, including those with more intensive support, such as the deafblind;
- (b) Barriers faced by persons with disabilities in gaining access to public information and communication, including on television programmes and websites, and gaps among local governments;

(c) The lack of recognition in law of Japanese sign language as an official language, lack of training of sign language and lack of sign language interpretations across all areas of life.

46. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Develop legally binding information and communication standards at all levels to ensure the accessibility of information provided to the public, including on websites, television and media services;**

(b) **Allocate sufficient funding for the development, promotion and use of accessible communication formats, such as Braille, deafblind interpretation, sign language, Easy Read, plain language, audio description, video transcription, captioning and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication;**

(c) **Recognize in law Japanese sign language as an official language at the national level, promote access to and the use of sign language in all areas of life, and ensure the trainings and availability of qualified sign language interpreters.**

Lao People's Democratic Republic

38. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The insufficient provision of information in accessible formats and of communications technology, in both public and private media outlets, and absence of accessible websites that provide public information;

(b) The lack of recognition of the Lao sign language as an official language;

(c) The lack of professionals trained in the use of sign language and tactile, Braille and Easy Read formats, particularly for persons who are deaf, deafblind, blind or visually impaired, persons with intellectual disabilities, and autistic persons;

(d) The cancellation of the radio programme "Friends of the Disabled" dedicated to disseminating essential information to and about persons with disabilities, due to insufficient funding in 2010.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Ensure that information provided to the general public is available to persons with disabilities in accessible formats, such as Braille, sign language, Easy Read, plain language, captioning, audio-description and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication, and ensure that websites are accessible and comply with the standards developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium;**

(b) **Recognize the Lao sign language as official language, promote the access to and the use of sign language in all areas of life, and ensure the availability of qualified sign language interpreters;**

(c) **Guarantee a pool of qualified relevant professionals trained in the use of tactile, Braille and Easy Read formats, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities;**

(d) **Re-establish the "Friends of the Disabled" radio programme, and consider integrating broadcasting and community engagement across social media platforms, and similar initiatives led by persons with disabilities.**

New Zealand

43. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) Gaps in the provision of government information in accessible formats, such as Easy Read, sign language, Braille, and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication;

(b) The shortage of New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreters, including trilingual interpreters who can interpret between NZSL, English and Te Reo Māori.

(c) The limited television channels that provide captioning and audio description with funding only provided on a yearly basis;

(d) The lack of specific initiatives to increase the provision of accessible information and communications for Māori persons with disabilities.

44. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Strengthen implementation of the Accessibility Charter by expanding its coverage to local authorities and district health boards, and increasing funding and capacity for the provision of accessible information and communication formats and technologies;
- (b) Implement incentives and increase funding for the training and employment of sign language interpreters, including trilingual interpreters who can interpret between NZSL, English and Te Reo Māori, and adopt a national standardised accreditation framework for sign language;
- (c) Adopt legislation to ensure captioning and audio description is provided on television channels with funding security;
- (d) Develop specific initiatives to increase the provision of culturally appropriate, accessible information and communications for Māori persons with disabilities.

Republic of Korea

43. The Committee is concerned:

- (a) About the insufficient provision of information in accessible formats and of information and communications technology, such as Easy Read, plain language, captioning, sign language, Braille, audio description, and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication, in both public and private media outlets, and in particular on the websites that provide public information, and the lack of access to information and communications technology by persons with disabilities;
- (b) That the provision of Broadcast Programs Accessible for the Persons with Disabilities fails to include requirement for provision of adequate accessible information through easy-to-read/easy-to-understand content and through other access formats, modes and means of communication.

44. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Ensure the accessibility of all public information, including television and media services, for all persons with disabilities in accessible communication formats such as Braille, deafblind interpretation, sign language, Easy Read, plain language, audio description, captioning and subtitles by allocating adequate funding for its development, promotion and use, and ensure access to information and communications technology appropriate for the diversity of persons with disabilities;
- (b) Review the Guidelines on the Provision of Broadcast Programs Accessible for the Persons with Disabilities to include standards on providing adequate accessible information through Easy-to-Read/Easy-to-Understand content and through other access formats, modes and means of communication.

Singapore

39. The Committee is concerned about the infringement on freedom of expression and opinion, peaceful assembly and freedom of association of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the national legislation and its practical application, and about reports of reprisals against and continuing pressure on civil society organizations for their advocacy work on the rights of persons with disabilities.

40. The Committee recalls its general comment No. 7 (2018) on the participation of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention, and recommends that the State party recognize the role of civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, as human rights defenders, prohibit any reprisals against individuals and organizations and take effective measures to protect the free exchange of ideas in the civic space. It also recommends that the State party revise its national legislation, in particular the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act 2019, the Foreign Interference (Countermeasures) Act 2021, the Administration of Justice (Protection) Act 2016 and the Public Order Act 2009, in accordance with the Human

Rights Committee's General Comments No. 34 (2011) and No. 37 (2020), and adapt the jurisprudence of all administrative bodies and courts applying it accordingly.

41. The Committee notes with concern:

- (a) The lack of recognition of the Singapore sign language as an official language;
- (b) Barriers faced by persons with disabilities in gaining access to public information and communication, including to websites and media services, and the absence of legally binding information and communication standards for non-governmental websites and media services to ensure accessibility to information provided to the public.

42. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Recognize the Singapore sign language as an official language and promote access to and the use of sign language in all areas of life, ensure the availability of qualified sign language interpreters, and ensure close consultation and engagement with the deaf community, especially in schools, universities and other settings;**
- (b) Enact legally binding information and communication standards for public and private websites and media services to ensure the accessibility of information provided to the public for all persons with disabilities.**

Hungary

44. The Committee observes with concern the lack of access to media, telecommunication and information and communications technology services for persons with disabilities, in particular for persons with visual impairments, in the State party.

45. The Committee recommends that the State party be guided by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 and take appropriate measures to:

- (a) Ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise their right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice, including but not limited to sign language, Braille, Easy Read, symbol systems, induction loops, subtitles, audio description, transcription and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication;**
- (b) Fully transpose the Audiovisual Media Services Directive ((EU) 2018/1808) into the State party's legislation.**

Jamaica

38. The Committee is concerned:

- (a) About the insufficient provision of information in accessible formats and of information and communications technology, such as Easy Read, plain language, captioning, sign language, Braille, audio description, and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication, in both public and private media outlets, and in particular on the websites that provide public information, and the lack of access to information and communications technology by persons with disabilities;
- (b) That despite the widespread use of Jamaican Sign Language, it has not been recognized as a national language, and that the Special Education Policy in which it would be made official is pending adoption.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Ensure the accessibility of all public information, including television and media services, for all persons with disabilities in accessible communication formats such as Braille, deafblind interpretation, sign language, Easy Read, plain language, audio description, captioning and subtitles by allocating adequate funding for its development, promotion and use, and ensure access to information and communications technology appropriate for the diversity of persons with disabilities;**
- (b) Strengthen sign language training, and that sign language be recognized as an official language of the State party.**

Switzerland

41. The Committee notes with concern:

- (a) The lack of recognition of the three Swiss sign languages as official languages;
- (b) Barriers faced by persons with disabilities in gaining access to public information and communications, including on websites and media services.

42. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Recognize the three Swiss sign languages as official languages at both the federal and the cantonal levels, promote access to and the use of sign languages in all areas of life, ensure the availability of qualified sign language interpreters, and ensure close consultation and engagement with the deaf community, especially in schools, universities and other settings;

(b) Develop legally binding information and communications standards at the federal, cantonal and municipal levels to ensure the accessibility of information provided to the public, including at public events and on websites, television and media services;

(c) Allocate sufficient funding for the development, promotion and use of accessible communication formats, such as Braille, deafblind interpretation, sign language, Easy Read, plain language, audio description, video transcription, captioning and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication.

Venezuela

38. It is of concern to the Committee that:

(a) There is no information on compliance with the Act on Social Responsibility in Radio, Television and Electronic Media, which makes compulsory the use of subtitles, translation into Venezuelan sign language and other necessary measures, and that not all official websites are accessible;

(b) Venezuelan sign language is not recognized as an official language;

(c) Certified interpreter training courses are inadequate or insufficient to meet the demand for translation services from deaf persons;

(d) Persons with disabilities do not have accessible and easily available information on the implementation of programmes and policies that concern them or on the action taken by the National Council for Persons with Disabilities.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take steps to promote access to information and communications in public services and in the media in accessible formats, including news broadcasts and television and radio programmes;

(b) Recognize Venezuelan sign language as an official language of the State party;

(c) Increase the number of certified interpreter training courses with the effective participation of organizations of deaf persons in identifying their specific needs;

(d) Disseminate widely information on the implementation of programmes for persons with disabilities by the Government and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities in accessible media and formats.

Djibouti

37. The Committee observes with concern:

(a) The absence of a national sign language;

(b) The insufficient level of information in accessible format for persons with disabilities, including Braille, sign language and Easy Read formats and the lack of teachers and relevant professionals trained in the use of such assessable means and formats;

(c) Limited accessible information over websites and television channels for persons with disabilities, including those who are blind, deaf or hard of hearing.

38. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Support deaf persons and their representative organizations to develop a national sign language and recognize it as an official language;**
- (b) Develop a pool of qualified sign language interpreters and teachers trained in the use of tactile, Braille and Easy Read formats;**
- (c) Adopt measures to strengthen the work of the National Commission on Communication, including through allocating adequate budget, to ensure the accessibility of information on television and websites, for all persons with disabilities, particularly for blind or partially sighted persons.**

France

44. The Committee observes with concern:

- (a) Information about the lack of access to broadcasting services and audio-visual content, including public debates, movies in French on media (TV);
- (b) That sign language is recognised only in certain areas, such as education;
- (c) That sign language interpretation is not recognised as a profession, and the lack of professional requirements and specific training for sign language interpreters;
- (d) The lack of information about measures aimed at facilitating the exercise of the right of persons with disabilities to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice.

The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Ensure access to public and private broadcasting services and audio-visual content, through the sign language interpretation, subtitles audio-description and in accessible and usable formats for persons with disabilities;**
- (b) Recognise French Sign Language as an official language, including at the constitutional level, and promote access to and the use of sign languages in all areas of life;**
- (c) Recognise professional status to sign language interpreters, set up the professional standards of sign language interpretation, and deliver systematic and extensive trainings of language interpreters;**
- (d) Develop augmentative and alternative, and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication of their choice by persons with disabilities, including Braille, Easy Read and autism referent persons.**

Estonia

42. The Committee observes with concern:

- (a) Information about the lack of access to sign language interpretation and speech-to-text services for hard-of-hearing and deaf persons, particularly in education programmes, employment, health services and cultural activities, and in rural areas;
- (b) The low number of sign language interpreters;
- (c) The lack of measures to facilitate the use of Braille;
- (d) The barriers faced by persons with vision impairments, deaf or hard-of-hearing persons and persons with intellectual disabilities in gaining access to public information and mass media, including television and public media services.

43. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Ensure access to sign language interpretation and speech-to-text services for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons in all areas of life;**
- (b) Strengthen measures, including through grants and other incentives, to increase the official training of sign language interpreters, including at the university level, and adopt measures to raise awareness about deaf culture and the Estonian sign language;**
- (c) Adopt a strategy to promote the teaching and use of Braille in society and allocate financial resources to facilitate access to the equipment necessary for producing information in Braille;**

- (d) Ensure the accessibility of all public information, including television and media services, for all persons with disabilities in accessible communication formats such as Braille, deaf-blind interpretation, sign language, Easy Read, plain language, audio description, captioning and subtitles by allocating adequate funding for its development, promotion and use;
- (e) Take measures to transpose into the State party's legislation Directive 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 amending Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) in view of changing market realities.

Albania

37. The Committee is concerned:

- (a) That there is a lack of data on national action plans or long-term strategies to strengthen the availability of accessible services and information, including media services and Internet pages provided to the public in sign language, captioning, Braille, Easy Read and plain language;
- (b) That sign language is not adequately recognized as an official language of the State party;
- (c) About the insufficient measures to increase access to sign language interpretation services and other means and modes of communication for persons with disabilities.

38. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Implement national action plans or long-term strategies with a clear roadmap to strengthen the availability of accessible information and communications services open to or provided to the public, including media services, telecoms operators and the Internet pages in sign language, captioning, Braille, Easy Read and plain language;
- (b) Adopt effective legislation and strategies to ensure the full recognition of sign language and provision of Braille with the involvement of the relevant organisations of persons with disabilities;
- (c) Adopt capacity-building programmes, including training on accessible modes, means and formats, including Easy Read and sign language, and provide sign language interpretation for services open to the public.

Australia

41. The Committee is concerned that, besides a provision under the Disability Discrimination Act, there are no legally binding information and communications standards that require information to be fully accessible.

42. The Committee recommends that the State party develop a plain language law requiring government agencies to use clear communication and that it also develop legally binding information and communications standards so that information, particularly all information about significant changes to laws, policies, systems and obligations, is provided in accessible modes, means and formats, including Braille, Easy Read and sign language (Auslan), and that communication supports are routinely available. It also recommends that the State party promote and support the use of sign language (Auslan) and take steps to ensure the availability of qualified sign language interpreters.

Ecuador

39. It is of concern to the Committee that:

- (a) Measures to promote access to information provided in the media in accessible formats are lacking and not all government websites are accessible;
- (b) Ecuadorian Sign Language is not recognized as an official language of the State party;
- (c) Qualified interpreter training courses are not sufficient or adequate given the number of deaf persons.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Take steps to promote access to information and communications in public institutions and in the media in accessible formats, including news broadcasts and television and radio programmes;**
- (b) Recognize Ecuadorian Sign Language as an official language of the State party;**
- (c) Increase the number of certified interpreter training courses with the effective participation of organizations of deaf persons in identifying their specific needs.**

El Salvador

42. The Committee is concerned:

- (a) By several government websites that continue to be inaccessible, and that there is no legal provision ensuring the existence and availability of information in accessible formats;
- (b) About the limited availability of professional Salvadoran Sign Language interpreters, and the lack of an official register of Salvadoran Sign Language interpreters and of technical aids for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

43. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Ensure that all government sites are accessible, and adopt measures to promote the use of accessible communication formats by the media sector such as websites and television and radio programmes that are provided to or open to the public;**
- (b) Increase training courses for qualified Salvadoran Sign Language interpreters, and establish a register of Salvadoran Sign Language interpreters.**

Greece

32. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The barriers that persons with disabilities face in accessing information, particularly in the public sector, owing, inter alia, to the lack of documents in accessible formats and the lack of sign language interpretation;
- (b) Insufficient information on national action plans or long-term strategies to improve the accessibility of persons with disabilities to information, including audiovisual media services and the Internet, by, inter alia, providing sign language interpretation, captioning and documentation in Braille and Easy Read formats.

33. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that providers of services to the public, particularly public broadcasters, telecommunications operators and public libraries, progressively provide information for persons with disabilities in accessible formats, such as sign language, Braille, Easy Read formats and captioning, based on an established and monitored action plan. It also recommends that the State party adopt effective measures to facilitate the use of sign language, Easy Read formats and Braille, with the active involvement of the relevant organizations of persons with disabilities.

India

44. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The lack of recognition of sign language as an official language and the very low number of sign language interpreters;
- (b) The lack of measures to provide Easy Read and tactile forms of communications and to improve information services, particularly for augmentative and alternative communication;
- (c) The low number of television channels that provide closed captioning and sign language interpretation, and the attitudinal barriers in private broadcast service providers regarding accessibility of information for persons with disabilities.

45. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Recognize sign language as official language, allocate public resources to provide training and increase the availability of sign language interpreters in court proceedings and in health-care, education, leisure, religious and cultural services;**

- (b) **Ensure that all persons with disabilities have access to all public information and services using augmentative and alternative communication, Easy Read, plain language, tactile communication and accessible digital Internet-based services, taking account of internationally recognized accessibility standards;**
- (c) **Enforce the national broadcast legislation that introduced sanctions for lack of compliance with the accessibility requirements.**

Iraq

39. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The lack of official recognition of Iraqi sign language, the insufficient number of vocational training programmes in sign language interpretation and the limited involvement of persons with disabilities in the teaching of sign language and in the certification of sign language interpreters;
- (b) The insufficient provision of information and communications technologies and of information in accessible formats such as Easy Read, plain language, captioning, sign language, Braille, audio-description and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication;
- (c) The inaccessibility of most television programmes and websites.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) **Officially recognize Iraqi sign language, increase the number of vocational training programmes in sign language interpretation and of persons with disabilities among sign language teachers and establish, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with hearing impairments through their representative organizations, a mechanism to certify the quality of sign language interpretation services;**
- (b) **Promote and facilitate the use of Easy Read and other accessible formats, modes and means of communication and facilitate persons with disabilities' access to information and communications technologies, including through the provision of low-cost software and assistive devices to all persons with disabilities, including those living in rural areas;**
- (c) **Redouble its efforts to ensure the accessibility of television programmes and government websites, ensure that private entities providing services to the public through the Internet do so in accessible formats and also ensure that websites comply with the standards developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium.**

Kuwait

42. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The absence of a coherent policy to promote and protect the right of access to information and communications in accessible formats, including Braille, accessible digital formats and Easy Read;
- (b) The limited use of sign language and the lack of recognition of Kuwaiti sign language.

43. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) **Develop a coherent policy to ensure access to information and communications in accessible formats, including Braille, accessible digital formats and Easy Read;**
- (b) **In close consultation with and with the active participation of organizations of deaf persons, raise awareness about sign language and promote the learning of sign language, the availability of qualified sign language interpreters and the use of sign language in all settings, particularly in education, the workplace and community settings;**
- (c) **Recognize and use Kuwaiti sign language as an official language, having due regard for the language of communication of choice of persons with disabilities.**

Myanmar

41. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The shrinking space for the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, that affects persons with disabilities;
- (b) The insufficient provision of information intended for the general public to persons with disabilities in accessible formats and technologies, in both public and private media outlets;
- (c) The lack of access to information and communication technology and the absence of accessible websites for persons with disabilities;
- (d) The lack of relevant professionals trained in the use of sign language and tactile, Braille and Easy Read formats, particularly for persons who are deaf, deafblind, blind or visually impaired and persons with intellectual disabilities.

42. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Take all measures necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to enjoy the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, including in its efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16;**
- (b) Adopt and implement legislative and policy measures to ensure that information provided to the general public is available to persons with disabilities in accessible formats, such as Easy Read, plain language, captioning, sign language, Braille, audio-description and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication;**
- (c) Ensure access to information and communications technology taking into account the diversity of persons with disabilities, including by ensuring that websites are accessible and comply with the standards developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) ;**
- (d) Develop a pool of qualified sign language interpreters and other relevant professionals trained in the use of tactile, Braille and Easy Read formats, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities.**

Cuba

37. The Committee is concerned about the insufficient provision of information in accessible formats and information and communications technology, such as Easy Read, plain language, subtitles, sign language, Braille, audio-description, and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication, in both public and private media outlets.

38. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that information provided to the general public through mass media is available to persons with disabilities in accessible formats, such as Braille, Easy Read and sign language, and technologies appropriate for different impairments, including by ensuring that websites are accessible and comply with the standards developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium. It further recommends that training on sign language is strengthened and that sign language be recognized as an official language of the State party.

Niger

35. The Committee is concerned about the absence of information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, including Braille, sign language and Easy Read; the low level of information provided to persons with disabilities in the electronic media; the lack of accessible websites for persons with disabilities; the absence of a national sign language; and the lack of trained teachers in sign language, tactile, translators on Easy Read and Braille.

36. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Support deaf persons and their representative organisations to develop a national sign language and recognize it as an official language; and establish a pool of qualified sign language interpreters and teachers in tactile, Braille and Easy Read translation skills;**
- (b) Adopt appropriate legislation and measures to ensure that website owners and designers make their websites accessible to persons with disabilities, especially for blind or visually**

impaired persons, and ensure that television stations provide news and programmes in accessible formats, especially for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Norway

33. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The insufficient provision of information and communication in accessible formats and technologies, such as Easy Read, plain language, captioning, sign language, Braille, and audio-description, particularly in official interactions;
- (b) The lack of accessibility of most television live broadcast and mass media;
- (c) The Broadcasting Act that only requires commercial television broadcasters with more than five percent viewers to caption their broadcasts for a limited time from 6pm to 11pm.

34. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Increase the provision of accessible information and communication formats and assistive technologies available, which are appropriate for persons with disabilities, including web accessibility, sign language, captioning, Braille, Easy Read and plain language in relation to all public services;
- (b) Increase the accessibility in mass media, particularly in live broadcasting;
- (c) Strengthen requirements of the Broadcasting Act to ensure captioning of all broadcasters at all times.

Rwanda

39. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) The provision of information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities is not mandatory under article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 01/09/MININFOR of 10 August 2009;
- (b) Sign language is not recognized as an official language under the law, that the Rwanda sign language dictionary is yet to be finalized and that sign language interpretation services are not fully available;
- (c) Persons with disabilities do not have access to public information and mass media in accessible formats, and to information technology, on an equal basis with others.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Review article 2 of the aforementioned ministerial order to make mandatory for both public and private media to provide information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities;**
- (b) Recognize Rwandan sign language as an official language, expedite the completion of the Rwanda sign language dictionary and put into place training, standardization and certification programmes for sign language interpreters and ensure that sign language interpretation services are available to persons who are deaf;**
- (c) Ensure access to public information for all persons with disabilities, and develop and use accessible communication formats and technology for mass media, including websites and software applications, and ensure access to information technology for persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others.**

Saudi Arabia

39. The Committee is concerned at:

- (a) The non-recognition of Saudi sign language as an official language in the State party's legislation, as well as at the absence of certification programmes and code of ethics for sign language interpreters;

- (b) The insufficient number of teachers trained in sign language and tactile formats, and of translators able to render texts in Easy Read and Braille;
- (c) The absence of captioned services in Arabic language on TV programmes and public events, the small display of sign language interpreters on TV, and female sign language interpreters covering their faces in public meetings resulting in inaccessibility;
- (d) Slow progress in the implementation of accessibility standards for websites.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) **(a) Adopt legislation to ensure the full recognition of the Saudi sign language as an official language, teach it in schools, and develop a mandatory certification programme and code of ethics for sign language interpreters;**
- (b) **Reinforce training of teachers at all educational levels in tactile format, Braille and Easy Read translation skills;**
- (c) **Ensure that public broadcasters, telecom operators and organizers of public events provide information in accessible forms such as Easy Read, captioning for all persons with disabilities, and that sign language interpreters are displayed large enough on TV, as well as that their faces are visible to ensure accessibility;**
- (d) **Redouble efforts to ensure the implementation of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to all public websites, and encourage private entities providing services through the internet do so in accessible formats for all persons with disabilities.**

Senegal

37. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The lack of recognition of sign language as an official language in the State party;
- (b) The limited number of trained teachers in sign language, tactile, Braille and translators on Easy Read, particularly for persons who are deaf, deafblind, blind or visually impaired and persons with intellectual disabilities;
- (c) The inaccessibility of websites and television channels to provide information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, particularly those who are blind, deaf or hard of hearing.

38. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) **Adopt concrete measures to recognize and promote sign language as an official language;**
- (b) **Develop a pool of qualified sign language interpreters, and teachers in tactile, Braille and Easy-Read translation skills;**
- (c) **Adopt appropriate legislation and effective measures to ensure that all websites are accessible to persons with disabilities, especially persons who are blind and visually impaired and that television channels provide news and programmes in accessible formats, including audio-description, sign language and captioning, especially for persons who are blind, deaf or hard of hearing.**

Spain

39. The Committee is concerned about the limited availability of:

- (a) Sign language interpreters in the State party;
- (b) Technical aids for persons with hearing impairments due to the eligibility age limits and lack of measures to ensure affordability;
- (c) Public information and mass media in accessible and usable formats for persons with disabilities.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) **Ensure full access to sign language interpretation services for persons who are deaf and increase the training of sign language interpreters, particularly in rural areas;**
- (b) **Ensure all persons with hearing impairments are eligible for affordable technical aids;**
- (c) **Take measures to promote accessibility of websites and mobile applications in the private sector;**

(d) Develop and use accessible communication formats, such as Braille, deaf-blind interpretation, sign language, Easy Read and plain language, audio description, captioning, subtitles and others, for mass media and public information, and allocate adequate funding for their development, promotion and use, in accordance with articles 24 (3) and 29 (b) of the Convention, as well as general comment No. 2 (2014) on accessibility and art. 7 of the European Union Directive 2018/1808.

Turkey

44. The Committee is concerned about the absence of:

(a) A mechanism to certify qualified Turkish Sign Language interpreters, and insufficient measures to disseminate and promote the use of Turkish Sign Language in public offices, schools, cultural facilities;

(b) Sufficient measures to provide persons with disabilities living in rural areas with information in accessible formats, including in Braille, Easy Read and accessible information and communications technology;

(c) The insufficient enforcement of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and the low percentage of public websites compliant with these guidelines and that only some broadcasters apply sign language interpretation and audio description.

45. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) In conjunction with organizations of Deaf persons, establish a mechanism to ensure the quality of interpretation services;

(b) Promote and facilitate the use of accessible formats, modes and means of communication, including in Braille, Easy Read, and grant persons with disabilities, including those living in rural areas, access to information and communications technology, including the provision of low-cost software and assistive devices;

(c) Redouble its efforts to ensure accessibility of government websites, ensure that private entities providing information service through the internet do so in accessible formats for all persons with disabilities, and apply sanctions to broadcast companies in case of lack of compliance with accessibility standards.

Vanuatu

36. The Committee is concerned about the challenges faced by persons with disabilities to exercise their right to freedom of expression and access to information due to the lack of information in accessible formats and communication barriers. It is also concerned at the lack of official recognition of sign languages.

37. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Continue its efforts to facilitate that the local Deaf community, in cooperation with the regional and international Deaf community, develop a national sign language for recognition by the State party, provide training of sign language interpreters and introduce a certification system;

(b) Adopt legislative and other measures to improve the availability of all public information in accessible formats, such as the use of Braille and Easy Read.

Algeria

36. The Committee is concerned by the absence of a coherent policy to promote and protect the right of access to information in accessible formats including Braille, Easy Read and to officially recognize Algerian sign language.

37. The Committee recommends that the State party develop a coherent policy for the promotion and protection of information in accessible formats including Braille, accessible digital formats, Easy Read and the recognition of Algerian sign language.

Bulgaria

43. The Committee notes with concern that Bulgarian Sign Language is still not officially recognized and that Bulgarian Sign Language Act is yet to be adopted. It is also concerned about lack of government support for the work being done to provide information in Easy Read. Furthermore, it is concerned about insufficient implementation of the EU Directive

2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies.

44. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Officially recognizes Bulgarian Sign Language by adopting and implementing the Bulgarian Sign Language Act;**
- (b) Take measures to provide information in Easy Read and strengthen the efforts and entities that are already supporting and using Easy Read and other accessible formats;**
- (c) Take measures to progressively implement the European Union Directive 2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies in order to ensure full accessibility of websites.**

Malta

31. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The insufficient provision of information in accessible formats and information and communication technologies, such as Easy Read, plain language, subtitles, sign language, Braille, audio-description, and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication;
- (b) The lack of accessibility of most television broadcast and mass media, beyond news bulletins and political debates;
- (c) The limited number of sign language interpreters.

32. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Increase the provision of accessible information and communication formats and technologies, which are appropriate for persons with disabilities, including web accessibility, sign language, subtitles, Braille, Easy Read, plain language, and tactile, augmentative and alternative means of communication in relation to all public services;**
- (b) Ensure that persons with disabilities have access to television broadcast and mass media;**
- (c) Adopt capacity-building programmes, including the training of sign language interpreters, and ensure the availability of sufficient sign language interpreters.**

Philippines

38. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The lack of recognition and support of the specific cultural and linguistic identity of persons who are deaf through the promotion of the Filipino Sign Language and deaf culture;
- (b) The lack of Easy Read materials available for persons with intellectual disabilities;
- (c) The fact that the Sign language interpreter subtitles were not enacted by the Congress, and that the bill of Filipino Sign Language has yet to be adopted.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt R.A. No. 7277 Section 22, and Rule VI A and other related measures to ensure persons with hearing impairments be provided with language subtitles in its newscast program.

Poland

36. The Committee is concerned about the lack of:

- (a) Promotion of Braille, augmentative and alternative modes of communication, including Easy Read;
- (b) Accessibility of public e-services for persons with disabilities;
- (c) Effective implementation of the Act on sign language due to its narrow scope, lack of clarity and obligations for public and private service providers to make sign language interpretation available, especially in health care services;
- (d) Clear obligation within the Broadcasting Act for the use of sign language interpretation, subtitles and audio description at TV and radio programmes; it is further concerned by formal requirements in the Copyright Act that hinder the use of sign language.

37. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Develop the use of Braille, augmentative and alternative modes of communication and Easy Read across all sectors;**
- (b) Expedite the adaptation of websites of public institutions to the needs of all persons with disabilities and carry out regular monitoring;**
- (c) Update and give effect to the Act on sign language to ensure effective implementation of the rights of deaf persons, including access to sign language interpretation in all sectors at the expense of the State;**
- (d) Develop clear and progressive obligations for public and private broadcasters within the Broadcasting Act for the use of sign language interpretation, subtitles and audio description, and amend the Copyright Act to ensure unrestricted access to interpretation into sign language for all broadcasts.**

South Africa

38. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The slow pace in amending the Constitution to reflect the adoption of the South African Sign Language as an official language of deaf persons;**
- (b) The lack of sufficient teachers trained in sign language, tactile, translators on Easy-Read Braille, the inaccessibility of websites and inability of television stations to provide information in accessible formats for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing;**
- (c) The lack of meaningful consultation with representative organisations of deaf persons in assigning sign language interpreters at important national functions.**

39. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Expedite the amendment of the constitution to reflect the adoption of the South African Sign Language as the 12th official language and conduct effective training for sign language interpreters;**
- (b) Adopt legislative provisions to ensure that information provided to the general public through the mass media is available to persons with disabilities in accessible formats, such as Braille, Easy-Read and sign language, and technologies appropriate to different impairments, including by ensuring that websites are accessible and comply with the standards developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C);**
- (c) Make the rights of persons with disabilities as an integral part of the teacher-training courses mandatory and ensure that television stations provide news and programmes in accessible formats for all persons with disabilities, including deaf persons.**

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

38. The Committee is concerned about the very limited public information that is accessible to persons with disabilities, including through sign language interpretation, tactile, braille and Easy Read and other alternative forms of communication in both public and private media outlets. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of standardisation, recognition and implementation of sign language as an official language.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Consider adopting the bill on the right to access information and eliminate any limitation that hinders the exercise by persons with disabilities of their freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others, including by ensuring that website owners and designers make their websites accessible to persons with disabilities, especially blind, and visually impaired persons;**
- (b) Adopt concrete legal and implementation measures to standardise, recognize and use sign language as an official language and to be taught in schools; develop a pool of qualified sign language interpreters, and teachers in tactile, Braille and Easy Read skills and ensure that television stations provide news and programmes in accessible formats, especially for deaf, deaf-blind and hard of hearing persons.**

Haiti

38. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) Delays in the development and recognition of Haitian sign language and the limited number of sign language interpreters;
- (b) The insufficient provision of information in accessible formats and technologies such as Easy Read, plain language, subtitles, sign language, Braille, and audio-description, particularly in official interactions;
- (c) Inaccessible information in the media, including radio, television, newspapers and public websites.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Codify Haitian sign language and expedite the enactment of legislation to recognize it as an official language for official interaction;**
- (b) Take measures to improve accessibility of information and communication formats and technologies, which are appropriate for persons with disabilities, including web accessibility, sign language, subtitles, Braille, Easy Read and plain language in relation to all public services and implement capacity-building programmes for personnel delivering services to persons with disabilities, including training in Braille, Easy Read, tactile communication and sign language;**
- (c) Increase accessibility in the media, particularly in live broadcasting.**

Nepal

33. The Committee is concerned at the absence of a Centre for Sign Language Research and Training of Sign Language Interpreters, and at the absence of a state system for certification and approval of sign language interpreters' qualification.

34. The Committee recommends that the State party take appropriate measures to establish a Centre for Sign Language Research and Training of Sign Language Interpreters, and ensure their certification involving representative organisations for the deaf.

Oman

39. The Committee is concerned about the absence of standards to ensure the accessibility by persons with disabilities of information provided to the public, including through the media, in particular for persons that are blind, visually impaired, deaf or have a hearing disability, and persons with intellectual disabilities. The Committee is also concerned about the insufficient number of teachers trained in sign language, tactile, Easy Read and Braille to ensure accessible formats to persons with disabilities.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Adopt legislative provisions to ensure that information provided to the general public through mass media is also available to persons with disabilities in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of impairments, for example, Braille, sign language and Easy-Read, including by ensuring that web sites are accessible and comply with the standards developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C);**
- (b) Continue to promote sign language, including by expanding the "Understand Me" programme and through the establishment of a visual communication service, as well as intensify training and accreditation programmes for sign language interpreters.**

Russian Federation

44. The Committee welcomes that the number of sign language interpretation hours has recently increased. It is however concerned about the insufficient number of sign language interpreters and non-transparent monitoring of quality of their services with special regards to public service providers. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of public service information available in Easy Read format. It is furthermore concerned about the lack of information on the implementation of the recently ratified Marrakesh treaty.

45. The Committee urges the State party to establish clear and binding obligations and standards for public services in ensuring info-communication accessibility with regard to all types of disabilities with the relevant and effective safeguards after consultations with organizations of persons with disabilities. In relation to this, according to paragraph 141 of written replies (CRPD/C/ RUS /Q/1/Add.1) to the list of issues, the Committee recommends to set up a national register to monitor in a transparent manner the facilities of particular importance to persons with disabilities. The Committee recommends that the State party provide information on the progressive implementation of the Marrakesh treaty based on a clear roadmap in its next periodic report.

Seychelles

35. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The insufficient accessibility to all, public and private services of information and communication, including TV and Internet, for all persons with disabilities, especially for persons with intellectual disabilities;
- (b) The insufficient provision of sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication, including Easy Read, by public authorities at the national and municipal level;
- (c) The lack of implementation of the Law on the use of the Slovenian sign language.

36. The Committee recommends that the State party develop time-bound strategies and allocate budget for ensuring:

- (a) Accessibility of information and communication provided by all, public and private, mass media services, including TV and Internet, for all persons with disabilities;**
- (b) The development of standards of the use of sign language, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, including Easy Read, and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication, including mobile applications, and its implementation in overall public and municipal sector;**
- (c) Recognition of the Slovene sign language as an official language in the State party, and training of sign language and tactile interpreters as well as teachers, public authorities, parents on Slovenian sign language.**

Slovenia

35. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The insufficient accessibility to all, public and private services of information and communication, including TV and Internet, for all persons with disabilities, especially for persons with intellectual disabilities;
- (b) The insufficient provision of sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication, including Easy Read, by public authorities at the national and municipal level;
- (c) The lack of implementation of the Law on the use of the Slovenian sign language.

36. The Committee recommends that the State party develop time-bound strategies and allocate budget for ensuring:

- (a) Accessibility of information and communication provided by all, public and private, mass media services, including TV and Internet, for all persons with disabilities;**
- (b) The development of standards of the use of sign language, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, including Easy Read, and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication, including mobile applications, and its implementation in overall public and municipal sector;**
- (c) Recognition of the Slovene sign language as an official language in the State party, and training of sign language and tactile interpreters as well as teachers, public authorities, parents on Slovenian sign language.**

Sudan

43. The Committee is concerned about how little public information is accessible to persons with disabilities, including through sign language interpretation, tactile, braille and Easy Read and other alternative forms of communication in both public and private media outlets. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of recognition of sign language as an official language.

44. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Consider adopting the bill on the right to access information and eliminate any limitation that hinders the exercise by persons with disabilities of their freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others, including by ensuring that website owners and designers make their websites accessible to persons with disabilities, especially blind and visually impaired persons;

(b) Adopt concrete measures to recognize sign language as an official language and to be taught in schools; develop a pool of qualified sign language interpreters, and teachers in tactile, Braille and Easy Read skills and ensure that television stations provide news and programmes in accessible formats, especially for deaf and hard of hearing persons.

Latvia

34. The Committee is concerned about the absence of a comprehensive legal framework to ensure that both public and private entities providing services to the general public and mass media providing information, including through the Internet, do so in accessible forms and formats for all persons with disabilities, including Easy Read formats on websites, subtitling and sign language interpretation on television.

35. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a comprehensive legal framework to ensure that all information and communications provided to the general public are available to all persons with disabilities, including access to the Internet, Easy Read texts, subtitling, Braille and sign language interpretation.

Luxembourg

38. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The insufficient provision of information and communication in accessible formats and technologies, such as Easy Read, plain language, subtitles, sign language, Braille, and audio-description, particularly in official interactions;

(b) The lack of accessibility of most television live broadcast and mass media;

(c) The lack of official recognition of sign language and the limited number of interpreters;

(d) The insufficient number of Easy Read translators.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Increase the provision of accessible information and communication formats and technologies, which are appropriate for persons with disabilities, including web accessibility, sign language, subtitles, Braille, Easy Read and plain language in relation to all public services;

(b) Expedite the enactment of legislation to recognize German sign language with a possibility of using it in official interaction, and promoting other sign languages to respect the multilingual character of the State party;

(c) Adopt capacity-building programmes, including the training of Easy Read translators and sign language interpreters, and provide sign language interpretation for services open to the public;

(d) Increase accessibility in mass media, particularly in live broadcasting.

Montenegro

40. The Committee is concerned about the largely insufficient availability of public information and mass media for persons with disabilities in accessible and usable formats, such as Braille, deaf-blind interpretation, sign language, easy and plain language, audio description, captioning, subtitles and others. It is also concerned about:

(a) The non-recognition of Montenegrin sign language as an official language and the State party's insufficient efforts to effectively promote and facilitate the use of sign language, as well as the use of all other alternative methods and accessible formats of communication, particularly when persons with disabilities are engaged in official interactions;

(b) The absence of information about the established and reliable procedures to apply for sign language interpretation in public proceedings and in public life events.

41. The Committee recommends that the State party develop and use accessible communication formats, as listed above, for mass media and public information, and allocate adequate funding for their development, promotion and use, in accordance with articles 24 (3) and 29 (b) of the Convention, as well as general comment No. 2 (2014) on accessibility. In this regard, it also recommends that the State party provide for the full legal recognition of the sign language of the Montenegrin deaf community and of Braille.

Morocco

42. The Committee is concerned about the lack of a unified sign language in Morocco that can be taught in public and private schools and recognized as an official language of deaf persons. It is also concerned about the lack of teachers trained in sign language and tactile formats and of translators able to render texts in Easy Read and Braille, the inaccessibility of websites and the inability of television stations to provide information in accessible formats for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

43. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Adopt concrete measures to develop a unified Moroccan sign language that will be recognized as an official language of deaf persons and taught in schools, develop a pool of qualified sign language interpreters and teachers trained in tactile format, Braille and Easy Read translation skills and ensure that television stations provide news and programmes in accessible formats, especially for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing;**

(b) **Adopt appropriate legislation and measures to ensure that website owners and designers make their websites accessible to persons with disabilities, especially blind and visually impaired persons;**

(c) **Expedite action on the adoption of the bill on the right of access to information and eliminate any limitation therein that hinders the enjoyment by persons with disabilities of that right.**

Panama

44. The Committee regrets how little public information is accessible to persons with disabilities, including through sign language interpretation, audio description and Easy Read on television.

45. The Committee recommends that the State party make accessible the broadcasting of all public information, especially with regard to national processes of concern to all inhabitants and to emergency situations and/or natural disasters, irrespective of the media used, for all persons with disabilities, through accessible formats and technology adapted to the various types of disabilities, which should also be available in the native languages of the country's indigenous communities.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

46. The Committee notes with concern:

- (a) The limited provision of accessible information from public services and authorities and the insufficient obligatory standards for making websites accessible and for monitoring ICT-accessibility;
- (b) The insufficient resources for the education and training of sign language interpreters and the insufficient availability of and access to high-quality educated sign language interpreters, especially in relation to education, employment, health and leisure activities;
- (c) The lack of training and education for families, classmates and co-workers in high-quality sign language communication in order to better provide for the inclusion within the community of deaf persons and hard of hearing persons.

47. The Committee recommends that the State party, in consultation with organizations representing persons with disabilities:

- (a) Identify outstanding gaps in the implementation of obligatory accessibility standards on information channels based on ICT;**
- (b) Ensure that legislation provides for the right to high-quality sign language interpretation and other forms of alternative communication in all spheres of life for deaf persons and hard of hearing persons, in accordance with the Convention;**
- (c) Allocate resources for the education of children with hearing impairments, their families and others, such as classmates and co-workers, in British Sign Language and tactile language.**

Armenia

35. The Committee is concerned that accessibility of information and communication is very limited for persons with disabilities, and that:

- (a) Training of sign language interpreters is insufficient, resulting in an inadequate number of interpreters in public and private services, and that television programmes lack subtitles for persons with hearing impairment;
- (b) Accessible technologies and formats of information and communication, including Internet websites and easy-read formats, are critically limited, particularly for persons with visual impairments and those with intellectual disabilities, and the use of Braille is restricted to specialized, segregated settings;
- (c) Sign language is not recognized as an official language of the State party.

36. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Invest in the systematic training of sign language interpreters and provide sign language interpretation in public and private services, and ensure that television programmes are duly interpreted and subtitled for persons with hearing impairment;**
- (b) Adopt accessible information and communication formats and technologies that are appropriate for persons with disabilities, including web accessibility, Braille and easy-read and plain formats, in relation to all public services;**
- (c) Recognize the use of sign language in official interactions.**

Bosnia and Herzegovina

38. The Committee is concerned that there is a lack of data on the existence of a standardized unified Braille code to enhance its usage in education and employment, as well as on available applications of information and communications technology. It is also concerned that there is a lack of information on procedures for deaf persons to request sign language interpretation in public proceedings and in public life events, with the exception of in the justice system and as regards effective access to electronic media.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that public broadcasters and telecoms operators provide information in accessible forms such as Easy Read, closed captioning and subtitling for all persons with disabilities, and that it adopt effective legislation to ensure full recognition of sign language(s) and Braille.

Canada

39. The Committee is concerned by:

- (a) The lack of official recognition of sign languages and that the training programmes for sign language interpreters do not meet minimum requirements to provide a high quality of interpretation;
- (b) The limited amount of information in easy-read or any other augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and communication technologies for persons with disabilities;
- (c) The absence of information about compliance with standards of accessibility for websites in the public and private sectors.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Recognize, in consultation with organizations of deaf persons, American Sign Language and Quebec Sign Language (Langue des signes Québécoise) as official languages and their use in schools, and establish jointly with organizations of deaf persons a mechanism to certify the quality of interpretation services and ensure that opportunities for continuous training are provided for sign language interpreters;**
- (b) Promote and facilitate the use of easy-read and other accessible formats, modes and means of communication and grant persons with disabilities access to information and communications technology, including through the provision of software and assistive devices to all persons with disabilities;**
- (c) Redouble its efforts to ensure the accessibility of government websites and ensure that private entities providing services through the Internet do so in formats accessible to all persons with disabilities;
- (d) Translate the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into sign languages.

Cyprus

45. The Committee notes with concern that funding for sign language interpreters is inadequate and that their appearance in broadcasting is limited. It is furthermore concerned about the insufficient availability of sign language interpretation in public services and leisure and cultural facilities, and about the limited opportunities to learn and communicate in Cypriot sign language and tactile communication.

46. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Allocate sufficient financial resources for high quality education of sign- language interpreters in the area of public services, leisure and cultural activities and in broadcasting;**
- (b) Recognize and promote the right for persons with hearing and/or visual impairments, including deaf and deafblind persons, and their environment, including family members, to learn and communicate in Cypriot sign language and tactile communication, including by developing a Cypriot sign language dictionary, to ensure their participation and recognition in all spheres of life on an equal basis with others.**

47. The Committee is concerned about the absence of any effectively guaranteed access to information by persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities in accessible, alternative and augmentative modes and formats of communication.

48. The Committee recommends that the State party support the development and promotion of augmentative and alternative modes of accessible communication for and to persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities. It also recommends that the State party monitor effectively the compliance of the use of augmentative and alternative modes of communication with international standards, especially regarding persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities.

Honduras

47. Al Comité le preocupa la no aplicación de las normas sobre la accesibilidad en programas oficiales televisivos, relativos a procesos electorales o en situaciones de emergencia y desastres naturales, así como la ineficacia de los mecanismos administrativos y judiciales en caso de incumplimiento. Le preocupa también que las normas y los procedimientos sobre el uso del braille, la lectura fácil y otras formas de comunicación no se ajusten a lo dispuesto en la Convención. Asimismo, le preocupa la falta de formatos accesibles y tecnologías adecuadas a los diferentes tipos de discapacidad.

48. El Comité recomienda al Estado parte que adopte las medidas necesarias para asegurar la aplicación de la normativa relevante y que transmita, en medios y formatos accesibles y tecnologías adecuadas a los diferentes tipos de discapacidad, toda información pública destinada a la población en general, particularmente la referida a procesos nacionales y a situaciones de emergencia y/o desastres naturales. Asimismo, le recomienda que promueva el reconocimiento oficial de la lengua de señas hondureñas, y del sistema braille como código oficial de lectoescritura de las personas ciegas y sordociegas.

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

42. The Committee is concerned by:

(a) The lack of recognition of Persian Sign Language and the limited provision of sign language interpreters;

(b) The lack of availability of accessible information and communications technology for persons with disabilities, including easy-read; and

(c) The lack of accessible public information, including accessible websites.

43. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Recognise Persian Sign Language as official language and its use in schools, and establish jointly with organizations of deaf persons a mechanism to certify the quality of interpretation services ensuring opportunities for continuous training for sign language interpreters;**

(b) **Promote and facilitate the use of easy-read, other accessible formats, modes and means of communication and grant persons with disabilities access to information and communications technology, including the provision of assistive technologies to all persons with disabilities, including those living in rural areas; and**

(c) **Ensure accessibility of government websites and those of private entities which provide public services.**

Jordan

41. The Committee notes the absence of standards to ensure the accessibility by all of information provided to the public, including through the mass media. It is concerned that the State party has not formally recognized sign language.

42. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Adopt legislative provisions to ensure that information provided to the general public is also available to persons with disabilities in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of impairments, in a timely manner and at no additional cost;**

(b) **Officially recognize sign language and promote its use, including by intensifying training and accreditation programmes for sign language interpretation.**

Republic of Moldova

40. The Committee is concerned that sign language is not adequately recognized as an official language of the State party, that insufficient training given to sign language interpreters has resulted in an inadequate number of interpreters in public and private services and that deaf children lack access to bilingual education. It is also concerned that the provision of technology and accessible information and communication formats, including easy read, is

severely limited, particularly for persons with visual impairments and those with intellectual disabilities.

41. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Recognize sign language as a means of communication in official interactions;**
- (b) Invest in training sign language interpreters and provide sign language interpretation for services open to the public and ensure that deaf children have equal access to quality, inclusive education;**
- (c) Use accessible information and communication formats and technologies that are appropriate for persons with disabilities, with special regard for children with disabilities in inclusive education, including web accessibility, Braille, easy-read and plain formats in relation to all public services.**

Bolivia

51. The Committee is concerned that Bolivian sign language is not recognized as an official language of the State party, which limits the freedom of expression and communication of persons with disabilities, particularly in terms of accessing and availing themselves of public services such as health, education, justice and others.

52. The Committee recommends that the State party expedite the recognition of Bolivian sign language as an official language, promote the accreditation of qualified Bolivian sign language interpreters throughout the State party, and increase the availability of sign language interpreters in public services in order to promote the integration of the culture and linguistic identity of deaf persons, in collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities.

Colombia

50. The Committee is concerned about the limited progress made to provide persons with disabilities with access to information, using accessible modes, means and formats of communication, and the lack of resources for implementing Act No. 1680 of 2013.

51. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the provision of adequate economic, human, technical, digital and other resources to facilitate access to information in accessible modes, means and formats of communication and to adequately implement Act No. 1680 of 2013, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities.

Ethiopia

45. The Committee is concerned that freedom of expression of persons with disabilities is restricted and that necessary support is not provided for them to fully enjoy that right.

46. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that freedom of expression is protected in law and in practice for persons with disabilities, and that necessary support is provided for them to fully enjoy that right, including by the provision of reasonable accommodation.

47. The Committee is concerned that Ethiopian Sign Language is not recognized as an official language of the State party and at the lack of or insufficient number of trained and qualified sign language interpreters.

48. The Committee recommends that the State party take all legislative and other measures to significantly increase the number of trained and qualified sign language interpreters throughout the territory and to recognize and promote the use of sign language as an official language.

Guatemala

55. The Committee is concerned that persons with disabilities are limited in their communication and access to information due to the lack of accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities. It is also concerned that indigenous persons with disabilities are not provided with any such support for communication and access to information in their native languages.

56. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt the necessary measures to ensure the implementation of its legislation on access to information and communication in

order to facilitate the access of all persons with disabilities to accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities. The latter should also be available in the native languages of the country's indigenous communities. The Committee further recommends promoting the official recognition of Guatemalan Sign Language and of Braille as the official reading and writing code for blind and deaf-blind persons.

Italy

49. The Committee is concerned at the lack of official recognition of sign language, and its limited use in broadcast purposes. It is also concerned about the lack of acknowledgement of Braille and tactile communication as effective tools for the education of blind or deaf-blind persons.

50. The Committee recommends that the State party expedite the enactment of legislation on the proposed provisions to remove communication barriers, recognize the Italian sign and tactile languages and promote inclusion for deaf and deaf-blind persons and those with hearing disabilities in general. It also recommends that the State party significantly increase the provision of sign language in public broadcasting, and that it take concrete measures to ensure the teaching of standardized Braille to blind persons and tactile communications to deaf-blind persons to enable them to gain access to information, rather than assistive technology alone.

United Arab Emirates

39. The Committee is concerned that the sign languages of the United Arab Emirates are not officially recognized and that efforts to train qualified sign language interpreters have been insufficient.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to officially recognize the sign languages of the United Arab Emirates and to intensify its efforts to train qualified sign language interpreters.

Uruguay

47. Al Comité le preocupa la no aplicación de las normas sobre la accesibilidad en programas oficiales televisivos, relativos a procesos electorales o en situaciones de emergencia y desastres naturales, así como la ineficacia de los mecanismos administrativos y judiciales en caso de incumplimiento. Preocupa también que las normas y los procedimientos sobre el uso del Braille, la lengua de señas y otras formas de comunicación no se ajusten a lo dispuesto en la Convención.

48. El Comité recomienda al Estado parte que adopte las medidas necesarias para asegurar la aplicación de la normativa relevante y que transmita, en modos, medios y formatos de comunicación accesibles, toda información pública destinada a la población en general, particularmente la referida a procesos nacionales y la relativa a situaciones de emergencia y/o desastres naturales.

Chile

45. Al Comité le preocupa que la lengua de señas chilena y el sistema Braille no sean reconocidos como oficiales en el Estado Parte. También le preocupa la no aplicación de las normas sobre la accesibilidad en programas oficiales televisivos (Ley núm. 20422), relativos a procesos electorales o en situaciones de emergencia y desastres naturales, y la ineficacia de los mecanismos administrativos y judiciales en caso de incumplimiento.

46. El Comité recomienda al Estado parte que reconozca como oficiales la lengua de señas chilena y el sistema Braille y haga accesible la transmisión de toda información pública en cualquiera de los medios de información, particularmente la referida a procesos nacionales

que afectan a todas las personas, y la relativa a situaciones de emergencia y/o desastres naturales.

Portugal

40. The Committee is concerned about the lack of access to information and Communication for persons with disabilities in the State party due to the lack of accessible formats and appropriate technologies for different types of disabilities, such as sign language, including tactile-sign language and braille, augmentative and alternative communication modes, and other accessible means, modes and formats of communication chosen by persons with disabilities, including easy-read formats.

41. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt the necessary measures to ensure enforcement of its legislation regarding access to information and communication in order to facilitate access by persons with all types of disability to accessible formats and appropriate technologies for all kinds of disability, such as sign language and interpreters of tactile-sign system, braille, augmentative and alternative communication modes, and other accessible means, modes and formats of communication chosen by persons with disabilities, including easy-read formats. Furthermore, it recommends that the State party promotes the official recognition of Portuguese sign language and the braille system.

Serbia

43. The Committee is concerned that a national Braille authority has not been established yet in Serbia to guarantee the existence of a standardized unified Braille code needed for extensive enhancement of its use in education, employment and applications of ICT.

44. The Committee recommends that the State party take necessary steps to establish the Serbian national Braille authority and ensure creation of the standardized Serbian Braille code.

Slovakia

61. The Committee is concerned about the lack of registered sign language interpreters and the lack of sign language interpretation on public television, in courts of justice and in public services such as education, health and social care.

62. The Committee recommends that the State party significantly increase the numbers of trained sign language interpreters to provide services in public broadcasting, courts of law, and other public areas.

63. The Committee is concerned that a national Braille authority has not yet been established to guarantee the existence of a standardized unified Braille code needed for extensive enhancement of its use in education, employment and information and communications technology applications.

64. The Committee recommends that the State party encourage the establishment of a Slovak national Braille authority and ensure the creation of a standardized Slovak Braille code.

Thailand

41. The Committee is concerned at the lack of availability of public information and mass media for persons with disabilities in accessible and usable formats, that Thai Sign Language is only recognized in a government resolution of 17 August 1999 signed by the Permanent Secretary for Education on behalf of the Government, and that provision of sign language interpreters in public offices is very limited, especially in rural and remote areas.

42. The Committee recommends that the State party develop and use accessible communication formats, such as Braille, tactile formats, sign language, easy-read and others, for mass media and public information ensure the accessibility of government

websites, and take with concrete and effective measures to control and monitor accessibility and apply sanctions for non-compliance. It also recommends that the State party officially recognize Thai Sign Language in legislation to ensure its full and effective application in the State party and increase training and certification initiatives to ensure the availability of professional Thai Sign Language interpreters.

Uganda

42. The Committee is concerned about the lack of public information in Braille and of sign language interpreters, the non-recognition of Ugandan Sign Language as legally enforceable, the lack of trained teachers in sign language, tactile communication, easy-read teaching material and Braille to make it beneficial to persons with disabilities. It is also concerned about the inaccessibility of websites, the absence of easy-to-read information and the inability of television stations to provide information in accessible formats for deaf persons and persons with visual impairments.

43. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take measures to recognize Ugandan Sign Language as an official language with enforceable duties in the State party, improve access to information through, inter alia, Braille, public information, increasing the number of sign language interpreters and recognizing that deaf persons have a substantive right to use Ugandan Sign Language as an official language, train teachers in sign language, tactile communication, Braille and easy-to-read formats;

(b) Require television stations to provide news and programmes of national importance in accessible formats, in particular for deaf persons.

(c) Ensure that government websites and websites targeting the public are accessible to persons who require easy-to-read texts, and ensure that owners and designers of websites make them accessible to persons with disabilities, particularly persons with visual impairment;

(d) Invest significant resources in training of sign language interpreters and introduce a certification system, particularly in rural areas, to ensure greater availability and enhanced quality of sign language interpretation in public services, and develop a sign language dictionary.

Brazil

38. The Committee is concerned that information intended for the general public, including official pronouncements and political campaigns, is still not fully available in accessible formats, such as Braille, Brazilian sign language (LIBRAS), and other accessible modes, means and forms of communication, including easy to read format.

39. The Committee recommends the State party to provide the necessary resources and training to ensure that all information intended for the general public is available in a timely manner in accessible formats and technologies.

European Union

54. The Committee is concerned that across the European Union persons with disabilities cannot always access information and communication in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities, including in sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and other accessible means, modes and formats of communication of their choice, including easy-to-read formats.

55. The Committee recommends that the European Union take measures and enforce the implementation of its legislation on access to information and communication to facilitate access in accessible languages, formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities, including in sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and other accessible means, modes and formats of communication of their

choice, including easy-to-read formats, for all persons with all types of disabilities and to promote official recognition of sign language and braille.

EU Institutions compliance with the Convention (as public administrations)

82. The Committee is concerned that not all websites of various European Union institutions are fully implementing accessibility standards. It furthermore notes with concern the lack of information in sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and other accessible means, modes and formats of communication, including easy-to-read format.

83. The Committee recommends that the European Union take necessary measures to ensure full application of web accessibility standards to websites of all European Union institutions and to offer information in sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and other accessible means, modes and formats of communication of persons with disabilities' choice, including in easy-to-read format, in official interactions.

Gabon

48. The Committee is concerned at the lack of availability of public information and mass media for persons with disabilities in accessible and usable formats such as Braille, sign language, easy to read, and others and at the absence of steps being taken to officially recognise Gabonese Sign Language in the law.

49. The Committee recommends that the State party develop and use accessible communication formats, as listed above, for mass media and public information, allocating adequate funding accordingly, and officially recognising Gabonese Sign Language and Braille and taking steps to establish training and certification for professional Gabonese Sign Language interpreters.

Kenya

39. The Committee is concerned by:

- (a) The limited provision of sign language interpreters in public offices and to facilitate access to public services free of charge; and
- (b) The lack of information on information and communication technologies at low cost for persons with disabilities, including those living in rural areas.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Establish jointly with organizations of deaf persons and Kenyan sign language interpreters, a mechanism to certify the quality of interpretation services and ensure that opportunities for continuous training are provided for interpreters; and
- (b) Strengthen measures to grant access by persons with disabilities to technologies of information and communication, including by the provision of low cost software and assistive devices for all persons with disabilities, including those living in rural areas.

Qatar

39. The Committee is concerned about the State party's actions, without the full participation and consultation of persons with hearing impairments, to standardize sign language in the Arabic region.

40. The Committee urges the State party to recognize and promote the use of Qatari Sign Language and to ensure the involvement of and consultation with the Qatari Deaf community in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of all sign language policies, projects and activities of the State party at the national and regional levels.

Ukraine

38. The Committee notes with concern the lack of accessible public broadcasting services, as well as limited number of sign language interpreters for the users of public services.

39. The Committee calls upon the State party to allocate sufficient financial resources for training and hiring of sign language interpreters in the area of public services and ensure sufficient amount of broadcasting services accessible to persons with hearing impairments.

40. The Committee is concerned about the significant reduction of government support for Braille and audio publication as well as the absence of Ukrainian language audio description and captioning from video content.

41. The Committee calls upon the State party to take measures to invest in Braille and audio publications as well as make available Ukrainian language audio description and captioning of video content.

Cook Islands

41. The Committee is concerned at the lack of access to ICT, the availability of Braille, sign language, easy read and digital communication.

42. The Committee recommends that the State party, in accordance with General Comment No. 2:

(a) Enact legislation to ensure that all information and communications provided to the general public are available to all persons with disabilities in accessible formats, including sign language, Braille and other accessible modes, means and formats of communication, and ICTs;

(b) Make sign language and Braille training available so sign language and Braille can be used by Deaf and Blind cook islanders in schools and in public;

Croatia

31. The Committee remains concerned by the failure to provide all information in accessible formats and to effectively promote and facilitate the use of Croatian sign language as Croatia's official sign language, as well as the use of all other forms of accessible formats of communication.

32. The Committee recommends the State party to further its effort to adapt the e- citizens project to meet the need of people with disabilities and to ensure that they have access to information on equal basis with others by promoting and facilitating the use of easy to read, Braille, audio formats, and other augmentative and alternative communication in official interactions, and by making public websites accessible. It further recommends that the State party adopt and foresee measures to effectively and timely implement the Act on Croatian Sign Language and Other Forms of Communication Support for the Deaf and Deaf-blind Persons, including its regulation, in close consultation and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities. It is also recommended to ensure that deaf persons are provided with sign language interpretation in all judicial procedures.

Czech Republic

40. The Committee notes with concern the lack of investment of resources into sign language interpretation and lack of trained sign language interpreters, which restricts the effective enjoyment of right to use the Czech Sign Language by the deaf persons and their families.

41. The Committee calls upon the State party to allocate sufficient financial resources for training and hiring of sign language interpreters that would enable deaf persons to effectively enjoy the right to use the Czech Sign Language.

42. The Committee notes that the State party still has not amended the Act No. 231/2001 Coll., which should make audiovisual content of broadcasts accessible to persons with hearing or visual impairments.

43. The Committee calls upon the State party to amend the Act No 231/2001 Coll., and ensure the accessibility of audiovisual content of broadcasts to persons with hearing or visual impairment.

Dominican Republic

40. Preocupa al Comité que todavía no se haya reconocido la lengua de señas dominicana como lengua oficial en el país, y la ausencia de estrategias para la formación profesional de intérpretes de lengua de señas dominicana y una entidad que los certifique.

41. El Comité recomienda al Estado parte adoptar inmediatamente legislación que reconozca la lengua de señas dominicana como lengua oficial e implemente una estrategia de formación en lengua de señas dirigida a personal del sector público, promueva la formación profesional de intérpretes de lengua de señas y aliente la inclusión de la enseñanza de lengua de señas en instituciones educativas desde el nivel de primaria.

Turkmenistan

39. The Committee is concerned about the insufficient measures taken to ensure that all information is provided to persons with disabilities in accessible formats. It is also concerned that standards and procedures on the use of Braille, sign language and other forms of communication, are not in compliance with the Convention. It is particularly concerned that sign language is only considered as a means of interpersonal communication and not as an official language on its own.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party take steps to ensure accessible communication formats in line with international standards by allocating adequate funding for their development, promotion and use with the involvement of the relevant DPOs, as well as for professional training for sign language interpreters, teachers, parents and family members of the deaf included. The State party should also recognize State sign language as an official language.

New Zealand

41. The Committee notes the limited number of sign language interpreters in the State party.

42. The Committee recommends that the Sign Language Board work to ensure funding for the training and employment of sufficient numbers of sign language interpreters, as well as an increased use of New Zealand Sign Language in all aspects of life, including educational and cultural activities.

43. The Committee is concerned that it is still the case that Maori people with disabilities find it more difficult to access information in their own language. Maori people who are deaf find accessing information in New Zealand Sign Language even more difficult, owing to the lack of interpreters from Maori into New Zealand Sign Language.

44. The Committee recommends that greater efforts be made to enable Maori and Pacific people with disabilities, and especially those who are deaf and deaf-blind, to access information.

Denmark

44. The Committee is concerned that certain groups of deaf persons, in particular children born deaf who have been implanted with cochlear implants, are reportedly prevented from learning and communicating in Danish Sign Language. The Committee is also concerned that the recent amendment to the Danish Language Council Act does not promote Danish Sign Language through research or training.

45. The Committee recommends that the State party recognize the right of all deaf persons and born deaf persons to have the possibility to learn and communicate in Danish Sign Language, regardless of medical treatments undergone; take effective measures to promote Danish Sign Language as a communication method, without necessarily resorting to speech therapy; carry out research into Danish Sign Language, including the development of a Danish Sign Language dictionary; and promote the use of Danish Sign Language in all

areas of deaf persons' lives to ensure their participation in particular in employment, education and cultural life. The Committee furthermore recommends that the Government of the Faroe Islands recognize Faroese sign language as an official language.

46. The Committee acknowledges that Braille is an important communication tool for blind persons in education and employment. It is, however, concerned that education in Braille is not systematically provided to all blind pupils, as they are scattered and few in number. The Committee is also concerned that the decentralized structure and responsibility of municipalities may not be appropriate to maintaining such a specialized tool, and that the State party perceives a risk of dilution of knowledge in education with specialized support, as indicated during the dialogue.

47. The Committee recommends that the State party establish a Braille Council tasked with promoting, preserving and enhancing knowledge and use of Braille as a communication tool for blind persons, including in education.

48. The Committee is concerned that the State party does not effectively guarantee provision of information to people with intellectual and mental disabilities, in accessible, alternative and augmentative modes and formats of communication.

49. The Committee recommends that the State party accord equal recognition to the development and promotion of augmentative and alternative modes of communication that are accessible to people with intellectual and mental disabilities. The State party should take appropriate measures to ensure that all actors are familiar with the established standards for using augmentative and alternative modes of communication and should put into place effective monitoring procedures that prevent acts of substituted information and communication, especially in decision-making mechanisms regarding people with intellectual and mental disabilities.

Republic of Korea

41. The Committee is concerned that the sign language used in the Republic of Korea is not recognized as an official language in the State party and that the draft law declaring Braille as an official script is still pending before the National Assembly. It is also concerned that the regulation ensuring access to broadcast material for persons with disabilities, in particular television programmes, includes a standard on programming quantity but fails to include standards to ensure the quality of the programmes and to provide adequate accessible information through sign language, closed-captioning, descriptive video/audio description, easy-to-read/easy-to-understand content and through other access formats, modes and means of communication.

42. The Committee encourages the State party to recognize Korean Sign Language as an official language of the Republic of Korea, and to adopt the draft law recognizing Braille as an official script of the State party. It further recommends that the regulation on ensuring access to broadcast material for persons with disabilities include standards on programming quality and on providing adequate, accessible information through sign language, closed-captioning, descriptive video/audio description, easy-to-read/easy-to-understand content and through other access formats, modes and means of communication.

Azerbaijan

34. The Committee also notes that while progress has been made to provide information in accessible formats and to effectively promote as well as to facilitate the use of braille and sign language, gaps still persist.

35. It should also develop the use of other accessible formats of communication in line with international standards by allocating adequate funding for their development, promotion and use as well as for professional training of sign language interpreters and teachers including for the public service, in accordance with articles 9, 21, 24, paragraph 3, and 29 (b) of the Convention in cooperation with DPOs including deaf persons' organisations.

Costa Rica

41. The Committee is concerned that information disseminated through the media is not accessible in Costa Rican sign language and that institutions – in particular, institutions working to protect the rights of persons with disabilities – do not have sign language interpreters.

42. The Committee recommends that the State party comply with legislation on the Costa Rican sign language interpretation of news programmes broadcast by the media, and on the hiring of Costa Rican sign language interpreters in institutions, in particular those working to safeguard human rights.

Australia

43. The Committee is concerned by the failure to provide all information in accessible formats and to effectively promote and facilitate the use of Australian sign language (Auslan) as Australia's official sign language and the use of all other forms of accessible formats of communication (deafblind interpretation, braille, easy and plain English, audio description), in particular when persons with disabilities are in official interactions.

44. The Committee recommends that the State party recognizes Australian Sign Language as one of the national languages of Australia and develops the use of other forms of accessible formats by allocating adequate funding for their development, promotion, and use in accordance with Articles 24(3) and 29 (b) of the Convention.

El Salvador

45. The Committee is concerned that Salvadoran sign language does not enjoy official recognition and that insufficient steps have been taken to develop and provide augmentative and alternative communication. It is also concerned at the limited access to and promotion of Braille and other forms of accessible communication for persons with visual impairments, especially new information technologies.

46. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Recognize Salvadoran sign language as an official language and encourage its dissemination, including through the training of professional interpreters, and its use as a means of ensuring access to information for persons with hearing impairments;

(b) Ensure that the necessary resources are available to provide public information in accessible formats, including augmentative and alternative communication for persons with intellectual or psychosocial impairments and accessible information technologies for persons with visual impairments.

Paraguay

53. The Committee takes note with satisfaction of the adoption of Act No. 4336 of 2011, making it compulsory to use sign language in information and news broadcasts in the audiovisual media. It is nevertheless concerned that this effort is not sufficient to guarantee freedom of expression and opinion and access to information, in particular in public and private services and institutions for the general public.

54. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt the Act giving official recognition to sign languages used by persons with disabilities and ensure that all public information is available in accessible forms and formats, in accordance with the Convention.

China

71. The Committee takes note of the difficult situation of persons with hearing impairments in accessing information due to lack of official recognition of the significance of sign language

by Hong Kong, China. The Committee is concerned about the lack of training for and services provided by sign-language interpreters.

72. The Committee recommends that Hong Kong, China, increase training for and the services provided by sign-language interpreters. It should also recognize the public examination and assessment of such interpreters.