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**Summary of Iraq National Report**

 **On Sustainable Development Goals**

**& the CRPD**

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**Introduction**:

Disabilities is no longer a matter of concern to persons with disabilities, but has been expanded to include people and other interested parties working to raise awareness about the rights, issues and abilities of persons with disabilities, and their potential to become a productive force in the society. People with disabilities are less fortunate than others in terms of health status, educational attainment and employment opportunities, and are therefore poorer than other citizens, where some studies indicate that 4 out of every 5 persons with disabilities suffer from poverty. There are several reasons for this, including the lack of services available for them and the many obstacles they face in their daily lives. People with disabilities constitute the largest minority in Iraq; 80% of them are of working age.

Given that the rights of persons with disabilities cannot be ignored, the Sustainable Development Agenda of 2030 states that disabilities cannot be a cause or justification for the inability to benefit from development programs or the enjoyment of human rights. The framework for the goals of sustainable development includes 7 goals explicitly referring to disabilities, and 6 other target people who are living at risk situations, including persons with disabilities. These goals address key areas of development such as education, decent work, social protection, disaster resilience and mitigation, sanitation, transportation and non-discrimination. The new sustainable development agenda is specifically committed to promoting actions to facilitate access for persons with disabilities to public places and facilities, technology and services in urban and rural areas, on equal level with others.

**Challenges:**

• In the field of education, persons with disabilities are facing problems because of the lack of inclusive schools based on international standards, and the spread of illiteracy among them due to the lack of specialized cadres who are capable of providing the required education, as a result of negligence in the role of the state who is not doing its duty.

• In the area of ​​employment, the majority of persons with disabilities suffer from unemployment, including those with high qualifications, as a result of the non-activation of the article related to the allocation of 5% of public sector jobs and 3% of private sector jobs, in the law on the welfare of persons with disabilities, No. 38 of 2013.

• In the area of ​​laws concerning persons with disabilities, they urgently need to be activated and strictly penalize the violators. The crisis of the lack of political will to meet the demands of persons with disabilities remains the cornerstone of the aggravation of that problem.

• In the area of ​​training and empowerment programs, the State does not provide training and literacy programs in order to reduce the spread of ignorance and empower persons with disabilities.

• In the area of ​​accessibility, persons with disabilities continue to suffer from the lack of access to public facilities on the equal bases with other citizens. In additional to that, these persons are unable to exercise their full right to move and travel around, because of the lack of accessible means of public and private transportation. Moreover, the roads and sidewalks are not accessible and cannot be used by these persons. All of this constitute many obstacles to the implementation of their right to move and be independent.

**Methodology:**

A team composed of disabilities experts, academics, representatives of disabilities organizations and other concerned organizations, and volunteers with disabilities, was formed to prepare the report. A common methodology was developed with friendly organizations and associations operating in the Kurdistan Region, in accordance with the UN Convention and sustainable development goals, as follows:

**A - Defining tasks:**

1- Forming a steering committee consist of the Iraqi gathering of Iraqi Disabled Organizations (IGDO) and other relevant organizations

2- Reviewing national legislations, laws, regulations and strategies related directly and indirectly to the rights of persons with disabilities and their compatibility with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

3- Making sure that the report addresses all types of disabilities and covers all services, activities and areas without exception.

4- Making all the required efforts to insure that monitoring process includes positive and negative records concerning rights realization and sustainability.

5- Conducting a field survey of all activities of organizations of persons with disabilities.

6- Identifying gaps related to the rights of persons with disabilities.

7- Organizing a number of focus groups for different types of disabilities.

8- Providing the database of (IGDO) with data and information on persons with disabilities.

9- Conducting field visits to institutions and centers working in the area of disabilities.

10 - Making Interviews with experts, activists, representatives of governmental and international institutions and civil society organizations working in the field of disabilities in Iraq.

11. writing the first draft of the report and discuss it with other concerned organizations.

**B. Setting goals:**

1. Goal 1 (poverty eradication).

2. Goal 3 (making sure that everyone enjoys a healthy life and well-being lifestyle at all ages).

3. Goal 4 (ensuring fair and inclusive education for all and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all).

4. Goal 5 (Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls).

5. Goal 8 (promoting steady, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all).

6. Goal 11 (making all cities and settlements inclusive, accessible, safe and sustainable for all).

7. Goal 16 (Promoting the establishment of peaceful communities in which no one can be marginalized in order to achieve sustainable development, allowing everyone access to justice and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

8. Goal 17 (Enhancing means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development).

**Statistics of Persons with Disabilities in Iraq:**

Although there is no accurate central Statistics of persons with disabilities, the Ministry of Planning has adopted a disabilities survey in accordance with the Washington Group criteria for classification of level and type of disabilities. The results of the survey in 2013 showed that the percentage of people who have difficulty in vision, hearing, movement, understanding, perception or communication reached (8.4%). And if we consider that the population is today (36) million or more. The proportion of these people is 12%, thus the estimated number is more than (3) million person with disabilities and this figure is close to the data of the World Health Organization!

In 2016, the number of persons with disabilities which was measured by a Statistic conducted in the three safe provinces has reached:

14.8% visual impairment, 9.2% hearing impairment, 42.4% physical impairment, 21% intellectual disabilities, and approximately 12% disabilities related to communication and self-care. The same statistics indicate that the percentage of males among these persons was 57% compared to 43% for females. This may be attributed to many reasons, including the negative social stigma that does not allow some families to declare females with disabilities, which led to the low percentage of females compared to Males in the results of this survey.

The percentage of persons with disabilities in the age group (5-9) years has reached approximately 14%, followed by the age group (15-19) years 10%, and approximately 30% for the age group (5-24) years, which is the category of persons with disabilities in the different stages of education, kindergartens, primary, secondary and university.

The percentage of persons with disabilities in urban areas rises to 74% while their percentage is 26% in rural areas. The relative distribution of persons with disabilities depends on the percentage of population distribution based on the environment.

The survey data indicate that the percentage of persons with disabilities who belong to families with a low standard of living is 52.7%, while those who have average living standard is 42.6% and those who have good living standard is 4.6%. Regarding those who live at a very good level, they do not exceed 0.2%.

**Role of the State:**

At the institutional level, several ministries implement measures directly related to the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities to education, vocational training, health, food security, sports and youth activities, public service, work and employment, social protection, empowerment of women and child protection, and other areas. However, the public institution responsible for implementing and monitoring the implementation of the Government's policy on protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities is the welfare council of persons with disabilities and Special Needs in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, which coordinates all interventions in the area of disabilities.

The law specified the most important tasks that must be undertaken by the welfare council of Persons with Disabilities as the main body responsible for making policies and following-up on its implementation. The first paragraph of Article (3) of Law No. 38 of 2013, stated that: "to develop plans and programs to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities and special needs in accordance with the provisions of international law, conventions and covenants to which the Republic of Iraq is a party”.

With regard to the achievement of sustainable development goals, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and as a part of its work strategy, has adopted the sustainable development goals with their three dimensions: economic growth, social inclusion, environmental protection. The ministry has included these dimensions into its strategic plans, policies and mechanisms of action. These dimensions were turn into a strategic roadmap and the ministry tried to implement it through mobilizing all its resources and getting all development partners from international organizations, civil society, private sector and stakeholders to involve in the implementation process. The report on this matter contains a number of references on persons with disabilities in general, especially in the areas of poverty eradication, education, vocational training and other areas that concern vulnerable groups. It should be noted here that the executive and policy-making bodies who are responsible of forming policies and following-up on their implementation in Iraq are not allowed to ignore the general principles of the Convention while making any international, regional or bilateral cooperation agreement, so that they should not spend international grants or use international expertise to implement programs that do not conform to the principles of the Convention which its ultimate objective is to achieve full inclusion.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has announced that the Cabinet allocated 60 billion dinars in the 2017 budget for the care of persons with disabilities. These allocations will be continued in the following public budgets, while the ministry plans to establish a database for persons with disabilities in Baghdad and other provinces. The Law on disabilities No. 38 of 2013 aims to develop plans and programs to provide persons with disabilities with their needs, where the salaries of more than (35000) of the full-time personal attendants for persons with disabilities, were spent in Baghdad and other provinces.

The council stresses the need for the simplification of the procedures for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, and its cooperation with civil society organizations in order to allow these persons to enjoy the privileges guaranteed by the law in the health, educational, psychological and social areas. The number of beneficiaries with intellectual disabilities, from the salaries of the social protection network reached 739, while the number of beneficiaries with physical and sensory disabilities reached 1788 beneficiaries.

The Government recognized the rights of persons with disabilities not only in the sense of general living, but also in the field of employment and on the basis of equality with others, in order to allow these persons to have the opportunity to obtain decent work in accordance with the national employment policy. The Ministry wanted to integrate persons with disabilities who express their desire to work, in the private sector. The ministry also trying to establish strong relations with International organizations to provide technical support to these persons, such as include them in training courses to allow them to acquire vocational skills, appropriate to the conditions of their disabilities. The number of persons with disabilities constitutes about 15% of the country's total population. The Ministry has prepared an official database at each province level. The availability of these statistics assist with identifying the required needs and implementing all the privileges guaranteed by the disabilities law. However, this requires the availability of necessary techniques in order to insure that the statistical process is successful. The Government included within its implementation of the sustainable development goals 2017-2030 the welfare of persons with disabilities, because the law on disabilities is in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which was ratified by Iraq.

It is known that Iraq has signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012 and ratified it in 2013, but has not ratified the Optional Protocol so far. Based on that convention, the Federal Law on disabilities No. 38, was passed in 2013. The law did not use the right based approach but rather a welfare approach that did not meet the ambition of persons with disabilities. While the passing of the law on disabilities has an undeniable value and impact on both legislative and civil activism, there were reservations about the approach on which the law was built, as it did not reflect a real shift from the welfare model to the right based approach. It also failed to achieve the desired harmony with the principles, provisions and purpose of the Convention as a whole. But the important issue remains the daily practices and the barriers that face persons with disabilities who continue to be directly and indirectly discriminated against and excluded while exercising their rights, and when they attempt to access public services that are available for all. There is also another Law on Persons with Disabilities and with Special Needs, law 22 of 2011, which includes the rights and protection of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life, such as education, health, social welfare, accessibility, equality, etc. But most of the articles of this law have not been implemented on the ground, and organizations of persons with disabilities and other concerned organizations are trying to put pressure on the concerned parties to implement these laws and amend and develop them to meet the ambition of persons with disabilities.

**With regard to the situation of refugees with disabilities and the services provided to them**

It should be noted that Iraq is not a party and has not signed the UN Refugee Convention adopted in 1951. Despite that, and because of Iraq geographical location, the refugees continue to flow from Syria and from various nationalities to Iraq as a result of wars and armed conflicts, in search for safe haven. according to a report prepared by the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan-3RP in the month of May of 2018, (247057) refugees were recorded, 1000 of them are persons with disabilities from Syrian, Turkish and Iranian nationalities, and The majority of them (97%) live in the Kurdistan region of Iraq and 3% in other regions. The basic needs of persons with disabilities are still not provided to them, especially in the field of (Education, livelihood, food security, water, hygiene and health). Based on this, the exclusion of issues related to disabilities from emergency and disaster risks policies and programs, is a failure on the part of legislative and executive authorities.

The number of civil society organizations according to NGO Law 12 for the year 2010 has exceeded 3000 organizations, including many disabled people organizations (DPOs) working in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region in the area of providing services and awareness. They also participate in the efforts to amend the laws concerning persons with disabilities and pressure the concerned parties to implement them. As for the number of DPOs, the number of these organizations has exceeded 50, most of them work under the umbrella of the Iraqi Assembly disabilities organizations (IGDO). It is important to mention here that there is a forum for women with disabilities working under the umbrella of IGDO. As for the state support for these organizations, there is little support except for the organization of Kurdistan Region, where most of them are supported by the large parties in the region. Concerning the formulation and implementation of policies, the only leading organization in this regard is the Iraqi Gathering of Disabilities Organizations (IGDO), which prepared the report parallel to the government report on the implementation of the CRPD. Currently, the IGDO team is working with the executive authorities to amend the Law No. 38 of 2013 to make it in accordance with the articles of the UN Convention (CRPD). Also in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, there are a number of organizations, which exceeded 39 organizations working in the field of disabilities. The most important one of these organizations is Rose Organization, which contributed to the preparation of the law 22 on the people with disabilities in the region. As for the inclusion of disabilities issues in government programs to achieve the goals of sustainable development 2030, they do not rise to the required level, and may not exceed 5% in terms of implementation, due to the lack of adequate attention given to this segment of citizens.

**Goals of sustainable development; research and analysis:**

***- The first and second goals (eradication of poverty and hunger in all their forms):***

The first and second objectives are consistent in their strategies with article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Iraq has many laws and strategies that limit the problem of poverty, starting with the Iraqi constitution in 2005 to the law on Social Protection Network of 2014. But the past challenges of war, siege and violence have prevented most Iraq’s, including persons with disabilities, from having a decent standard of living. Despite poverty reduction policies and plans, but terrorism, displacement and widespread corruption on different levels, have also increased poverty and unemployment. Iraq also has one of the most important and largest reserves of oil, and it is an important agricultural country. Iraq also is possible to be a tourist country for its tourism and geographical diversity. However, previous wars deprived Iraqi citizens of an adequate standard of living, and poverty rates were the biggest economic challenge faced by the government, with a large proportion of Iraq's population at levels close to the poverty line.

On the basis of transparency, one-fifth of Iraq's population is below the poverty line despite the major increased in the oil revenues. However, GDP grew at a cumulative rate of more than 40% and at an annual rate of 7%. Consumption per capita grew by a cumulative rate of 9% amounting to 1.75%. Despite this growth, it has not been positively reflected on the poor persons with disabilities, where 20% of them is below the line of poverty. The Ministry of Planning of Iraq revealed that "the poverty rate in the country has reached the level of 30% in 2016, after recording 22% during the last survey in 2014. The reason behind this rise in poverty level is the occupation of (ISIS) to a number of provinces, in addition to the decline in oil prices in global markets which Exacerbated poverty". These events also showed the size of the large unemployment rate which reached the level of 42% among young people and especially graduates who are able to work. According to the statistics of international organizations, the highest rate of unemployment of these estimates is the one related to persons with disabilities, where it is estimated at (80%). In addition, poverty rates rose significantly in the Kurdistan region (12.5%), after it was only about 3%. A study showed that poor people, displaced persons and Syrian refugees access to social services, especially in remote and rural areas and some neighborhoods of poor cities, is full of obstacles, which make this segment of citizens much less likely to benefit from these services. On the other hand, field visits organized by IGDO indicate that persons with disabilities face double discrimination in rural areas and places of displacement, where Access to specialize and social services decrease to the point of destitution in some of these areas. Many people with disabilities and their families are forced to travel very long distances to reach rehabilitation, training or education centers, and are forced to cope with the inconvenience of high-cost and inaccessible transportation, take into consideration the level of poverty in these areas.

The Social Protection Network Law No. 11 of 2014, which covers all kinds of disabilities, provided salaries to persons with disabilities according to the poverty line criterion, where each Iraqi individual whose monthly income is less than JD 105,000 receives a salary according to this law. Article (15) in the fourth paragraph part (e) of Law No. 38 of 2013 "providing monthly aid to persons with disabilities and with special needs of those unable to work in accordance with the law”." Law No. 38 in Article (18) devoted a paragraph for the issuing of exemptions from Taxes and customs duties on vehicles. There is no doubt that the exemption of devices and equipment related to reasonable accommodations from customs duties and taxes will contribute significantly to the removal of many environmental barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing the social services.

The strategy of the relevant agencies, especially the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, to reduce poverty, is relying on allocating microfinance to those below the poverty line. This includes many categories (unemployed, beggars, widows, divorcees, persons with disabilities who are able to work, unstable families in healthy landfills and displaced persons returning to their housing areas and who are covered by the loan program and unable to obtain the loan within the age group (18 - 55) years, where the amount of the loan varies between (5 - 10) million dinars and based on the nature of the project. the ministry decided also to allocate fund to support small income-generating projects, in order to implement the Law No. (10) of 2012. This program is concerned with registered unemployed in the age group (18 - 45) years, it also includes people with disabilities of the following categories (displaced, those who are covered by industrial services law (30) and those who are covered by the Community Rehabilitation Fund), the amount of the loan will be depending on the nature of the project but no more than (20 million dinars).

**Means to achieve the goal:**

1. To include in the Law No. 38 of 2013 measures and provisions to ensure higher incomes to persons with disabilities, especially those in remote and rural areas, and enable them to access social services available for all without any discrimination.

2. To include disabilities issues related to social services in the strategic plans of the various bodies, depending on their field of specialty, for the purpose of improving the level of health, education and social protection, and with the participation of persons with disabilities and their organizations.

3. To activate the role of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs related to the article on concessional loans in accordance with the law.

4. The activation of the provision related to providing adequate housing for persons with disabilities and special needs by the Ministry of Construction and Housing, based on the government plan for housing and in accordance with international standards.

5. Ensure access of safe drinking water for persons with disabilities, without any obstacles and barriers by the Ministry of Water Resources and the concerned authorities in the provinces.

6. The Development of the database on persons with disabilities, indicating the age and gender classification, the geographical distribution of the poorest and their opportunities to access the social services, especially women with disabilities, in particular in remote and rural areas for the purpose of equality and non-discrimination.

**Goal 3 (Good Health):**

The third goal corresponds in its strategies with Article 25 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities CRPD. Article 31 of the Iraqi Constitution guarantees every Iraqi the right to health care and ensures prevention and treatment for them. Article (15) of the Law 38 on the welfare of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs provides preventive and curative services including preventive genetic counseling, conducting various laboratory tests for the early detection of diseases in order to take the necessary precaution, development and implementation of health education and preventive programs including conducting field survey for the early detection of disabilities, and providing medical and psychological rehabilitation and treatment services at different levels. This law also provides primary health care for women with disabilities or those who require special care during pregnancy, childbirth and beyond, granting free health insurance for people with disabilities and special needs, registering children born more vulnerable to disabilities and following up on their cases, and determining the degree of impairment by a specialized medical committee in accordance with the instructions issued by the Ministry of Health and which are related to the determining of degree of disabilities on 16/11/1998 in order to classify the categories of people with disabilities and the special needs covered by the provisions of this law.

With regard to the free consent of persons with disabilities in the field of health treatment services, as indicated in the paragraph on the goal 16 of this report, persons with intellectual and psychological disabilities face real discrimination with respect to their right to choose and decide on all therapeutic or rehabilitative medical practices because the fact that the legislator deprived them from their legal capacity. Moreover, the violation of the right of those persons to freedom of choice, self-determination and decision-making in the field of health, is exacerbated by the lack of reasonable accommodations and the absence of various forms of accessibility by the Ministry of Health.

The number of hospitals in the public sector reached (239) classified as public hospitals and women's and children’s hospitals, emergency hospitals and specialized hospitals, including (4) hospitals for medical rehabilitation. The number of primary health centers is 2331, and the number of the specialized centers is 126 centers, of which 21 are specialized for the rehabilitation of people with disabilities. The services provided by the Ministry of Health until 2014 were on a good level. According to the questionnaire of a number of people with disabilities and from different regions of Iraq, the majority of responses agreed that persons with disabilities are obtaining their right to the highest levels of health without discrimination on the basis of disabilities. The majority of responses also agreed that the right of persons with disabilities to access aids such as wheelchairs and prosthetic devices, is ensured. However, the disabilities law in Iraq did not mention the reasonable accommodations concept, accessibility, and training of medical personnel on human rights and disabilities issues especially on the right of persons with disabilities to decide on the kinds of medical treatment or rehabilitation which they would be subject to.

In the field of reproductive health, persons with disabilities face significant exclusion and discrimination in access to these services. The issue of pregnancy for mothers with physical or intellectual disabilities, is one of the important issues that may cause them a lot of psychological and social suffering; because this issue is governed by societal trends that are not limited to the general population, but also to the concerned specialists, including Doctors, obstetricians, psychological counselors, families and communities. The plan of the Ministry of Health did not include any measures that would allow women and girls with disabilities, to access maternity, childhood and reproductive health programs in general.

All the field visits carried out by the Monitoring Group to several health facilities and institutions in Baghdad and the rest of the provinces indicate that there is an almost complete absence of physical accessibility in these facilities in general. Besides the ramps at the entrances of the hospitals for general logistic purposes, there is a significant lack of accessibility inside the various health facilities. There is a clear omission of Indicative signs, and there are no cadres who can use sign language or lip reading to communicate with Deaf people, which often leads to the exclusion of these persons and prevent them from using these services except for urgent reasons. In the same context, the Law on the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities 38, the law of Public Health 89 of 1981 and the regulations and instructions issued by the Ministry of Health, didn’t include any measures concerning the right of persons with disabilities to access information and contents of various health campaigns regardless of their subject. Because most health prevention campaigns generally use images, graphics, and written phrases to convey the campaign message, people with visual impairments cannot benefit from them.

**Means to achieve the goal:**

1. Developing a national policy and plan of action in partnership with persons with disabilities and their organizations, to obtain the right to health on the basis of human rights principles and achieve the goals of sustainable development.

2. Complying fully with the free health insurance for persons with disabilities as stipulated in Law No. 38 and to issue health cards for the purpose of facilitating law enforcement.

3 - Importing high quality medicines and medical supplies, assistive devices and compensatory equipment, from good sources and in consultation with persons with disabilities and their organizations.

4. Amending The Public Health Act 89 of 1981, the Law 38 on the welfare of Persons with Disabilities and the laws and regulations of the Syndicate of Physicians and Pharmacists, to be in accordance with the CRPD and the goals of sustainable development, through providing reasonable accommodation and training of medical personnel as a requirement to allow persons with disabilities to exercise their right to health and to have equal access to all health services and facilities.

5. Establishing a mechanism to monitor and control public and private health facilities to ensure that the standards of accessibility and reasonable accommodations in health facilities and services are implemented by 2030.

6. Developing a guide on different forms of accessibility and reasonable accommodations that should be available to ensure that persons with disabilities benefit from medicine publications and campaigns carried out by health institutions, on equal basis with others.

**Goal 4 (ensuring good, equitable and inclusive education):**

The fourth goal corresponds in its strategies with Article (24) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities CRPD. Statistics from the Ministry of Education for the academic year 2017-2018 indicate that the total number of students with disabilities enrolled in regular schools, at the primary level is 15,683. The number of students in special classes between the first and fourth grades is 15,390, (98%), while the number of students with disabilities in the fifth and sixth grades is 293 (2%). The same statistics showed that the enrollment rate of male’s students with disabilities (8,471) in the primary level was 54%, while the percentage of females (7,212) in the same school level was 46%. Studies show that the largest number of students with disabilities who are studying within the special education system have learning difficulties. The limited number of students with disabilities enrolled in regular schools indicates that the vast majority are not enrolled in education at all.

**Basic problem:**

The basic problem is that the compulsory education law is not implemented for students with disabilities concerning the compulsory education level (6-12 years), besides the absence of a mechanism to support their enrollment and continuation in education. This has led to a high dropout rate among students with disabilities who are not enrolled now in education, and to see only a low proportion of students with disabilities reaches advanced levels of education. Some students with disabilities face a number of barriers to access education, including behavioral, institutional, environmental and physical attitudes, lack of trained teachers, lack of financial, human and material resources, lack of guidelines on implementing good practices in the fields of inclusion and equality in education, social stigma which faces children with disabilities at school by their peers with no disabilities, families and the society as a whole. One of the issues that hindered the implementation of educational inclusion is the adoption of practices related to disabilities- medical approach on children with disabilities, their teachers and their parents. These practices place those children in a position in which they are treated as sick people and they need help and affection, rather than adopting a human rights approach. As a result, children with disabilities, their parents and their teachers may put the blame on learning difficulties for their weakness and vulnerability rather than putting it on teaching ways and methods and on the learning environment. The results of the study conducted by the British Council in eight provinces of the Republic of Iraq indicated that the adoption of the medical model in addressing educational issues related to students with disabilities, which is rooted in the available practices related to the implemented policies, or existing regulations in schools or classrooms, is one of the main challenges facing inclusion and equality in education in Iraq. Therefore, current educational applications are based on the theory that disabilities exists in the person and not in the community and consequently these people must be treated in order to be described as active actors in their communities.

**The educational reality of persons with disabilities in Iraq:**

Students with disabilities receive their education in:

1. Specialized institutes: These institutes provide educational services for students with disabilities using the educational curriculum adopted in the regular schools. These institutes receive students aged between 6 and 16 years, each according to its specialty (hearing, visual, physical, intellectual). Rehabilitation institutes accept ages between (15 and 19 years).

2 - Special education classes: These classes are for students with disabilities and special learning needs, and they are in a limited number of regular schools and do not exceed 0.5% of the total number of regular schools. Special classes are from first grade to 4th grade in primary school and in a limited number of schools they go up to the sixth grade. There are no special classes after this educational level.

3. Inclusive regular classes: Some of the students with light disabilities such as hearing and visual impairment and students with difficulties in communication and language, attend regular classes between first and fourth grades, with their peers with no disabilities.

Prioritizing the educational needs of people with disabilities is important for the purpose of their inclusion in the education system. The importance of preparing a qualified educational team that is capable of implementing and supporting the educational inclusion of students with disabilities has the highest proportion (20.6%). Followed by the importance of the priority of providing accessible transportation to assist students with disabilities to get to their schools and removing the obstacles that prevent them from obtaining education, which has a proportion of (20.5%). while the importance of the need to provide accessible facilities suitable for the needs of people with disabilities has a proportion of (19.20%). Finally, the importance of the need for schools or institutes to be close according to the geographical distribution of persons with disabilities, came last with a proportion of (19.1%).

The highest level of enrolment of students with disabilities for education was at the primary level where it reached 12.3%, but gradually it goes down to reach 5% at the intermediate level. While in the secondary level it reached 2.5% and 1% in the high school diploma, While the rate continues to drop in the higher educational levels to reach a very low percentage which is not worth to mention. The survey also showed the highest rate of illiteracy among persons with disabilities, reaching 77%, this only would indicate the slow progress in the inclusion process of persons with disabilities in society.

Based on the results of studies and researches carried out in the field of education, and on the discussions with the group working on the subject of inclusive education, and after reviewing available statistics, programs, laws and procedures currently in place, eleven axes of equal importance and completing each other have been identified to be reviewed and reconsidered to improve and develop educational opportunities for students with disabilities in order to reach a very positive results in the area of inclusive education by 2030:

First axis: Legislative Environment.

Second axis: Promoting the culture of inclusive education.

Third axis: methods of identifying disabilities and referral to regular schools or specialized institutes.

4th axis: Accessibility of school buildings.

5th axis: Access to quality education.

6th axis: Educational Curriculum.

7th axis: Access to exams.

8th axis: Educational supervision.

9th axis: Training and educational development.

10th axis: Effective partnership between all relevant parties concerning the education of persons with disabilities.

11th Axis: Research and Studies.

**Financing the development of education for students with disabilities in Iraq:**

A major barrier which faces the implementation of inclusive programs is the financial resource. The costs of inclusive education and provision of the needs of students with disabilities is very high. Therefore, funding has an impact on the success and continuity of these programs or on their failure. The availability of funding may contribute to help some students with disabilities to continue their studies in which they would require financial support to finish their education. On the other hand, the lack of fund may result in the drop out of these students or never enrolled at all. The importance of the availability of fund related to the fact that the majority of persons with disabilities belong to families with limited incomes or from poor, social and economic environments that do not have the capacity to cover the additional costs which caused by the disabilities. Therefore, these students are in need for financial aid to stay in school and continue their studies, Unlike very few students who belong to other families that have the ability to provide their children with the needed support to help them obtain their education, but that segment is small when compared to the majority of the population who are poor or with low-income.

Although some services provided by national, international, governmental and non-governmental organizations may afford some financial resources to support the inclusion of students with disabilities, but these services are limited by a specific time period that may not contribute to their sustainability. Moreover, dependence on external financing may lead to unsustainable services that would fail to cover the continuous needs. In addition, the supporting process of educating some students with disabilities requires the use of assistive technology as a key factor to provide the necessary support and thus to achieve inclusion and equality for these students. However, the use of assistive technology to educating students with disabilities is almost unavailable in Iraq, Including (Braille books, electronic sign language system, large printing materials, screen readers and the learning technological tools used by teachers or students). The accessibility of electronic programs and devices adopted for all users, has not been given the required attention because of the high cost of these aids and therefore are not available for those who are in urgent need to benefit from them.

To support students who can take advantage of assistive technology to enroll in the education system, a provision of financial aid is required. This in itself is a challenge for supporters who really want to educate students with disabilities, but it must be seriously considered if the high rate of enrollment of students with disabilities and their benefit from quality education is the goal to be achieved.

Improve and provide access to education for students with disabilities requires the activation of compulsory free primary education and the provision of human, materialistic, financial and technological resources that are needed to support students with disabilities to continue their education beyond the compulsory education level.

**Means to achieve the goal:**

1. The Ministry of Education shall allocate a special budget within its budget to provide the education requirements for children with disabilities based on their needs.
2. The Ministry of Education shall work to provide education for all students with disabilities and at all levels of education by 2030.

3. The Ministry of Education shall overtake the tasks of monitoring and evaluating education system.

4. The Ministry of Education's shall work to make all school buildings and all facilities related to education accessible for students with disabilities.

 5. The Ministry of Education shall encourage the use of available and low-cost assistive technology.

6. The Ministry of Education shall encourage to design local assistive learning tools and publicize good practices to benefit from them.

7. The Ministry of Education shall coordinate and supervise the development of education for students with disabilities, and this can be done as follows:

• Provide quality education for students with disabilities under the supervision and management of the Ministry of Education.

• Develop supporting standards to reach quality education which can be the basis for the development of the current system under the supervision of the Ministry of Education in coordination with all stakeholders.

• Raise the capacity of special education supervisors, school principals and concerned staff in relevant ministries in accordance with the measures that insure inclusive and quality education.

• Develop a supervising and monitoring mechanism which insure the support for teacher's abilities and improve education opportunities for all students.

**Goal 5 (gender equality):**

The fifth goal corresponds in its strategies with Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). According to the statistics of the Women's Department, it currently cares for more than 447,000 families headed by women who are widows or with disabilities. This department is also supporting women in general and especially those with disabilities, to establish small income-generating projects, to empower them economically and socially, as a part of the campaign to empower women in the rural areas.

Promoting peace and security in Iraq requires active participation of women with disabilities in the process of building and development as it’s stipulated in the resolution 1325 of the year 2000, which is considered one of the important instruments to support women in the world, including women with disabilities in Iraq. This resolution motivates women to participate in the process of establishing security and peace and providing protection for women, including those with disabilities before, during and after any war or conflict. Iraq was the first country in the Middle East and North Africa to adopt the National Plan of Action for this Resolution, but unfortunately, in the absence of women with disabilities. It’s important for women with disabilities to participate in the implementation of the national plan of action for which a detailed budget has been allocated, and it includes:

1 - Participation of women including those with disabilities in the negotiations related to civil peace and political decisions-making that aim to increase their influence and strengthening their approach to their rights.

2. Improving the living conditions of women, especially those with disabilities, and ensuring their rights, and their access to services.

3. Promoting the participation of women including those with disabilities in the decision-making process at the national level.

4. Economic and social empowerment of women, especially those with disabilities.

5. Focusing on legislation and law enforcement in order to make them in accordance with international standards.

6. Resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation.

**Combating forms of violence against women:**

Violence against women with disabilities constitutes an obstacle facing the goals of equality, development and peace. This violence limits the enjoyment of women with disabilities to their rights and violate their human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also can be seen as the long-term failure concerning the protection and promotion of those rights and freedoms. Women with disabilities may be physically and sexually abused regardless of their income, class, culture and their low socio-economic status. Iraq has taken several measures to reduce violence against women:

* Developing The National Strategy for Violence against Women, which was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2013 and which was based on the principles of human rights, justice and equality. This strategy includes several aspects such as legal, legislative and institutional frameworks. It also includes the definition of violence against women, capacity building and empowerment of staff working in the field of violence against women, Provision of services for women including those with disabilities and Survivors of violence, Development of the budget allocated to gender issues, promotion of studies and research and Building cultural thinking for the child.

Establishing the families’ protection department, in 2008, the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers formed a Higher Committee headed by the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs to adopt a loud and clear policy that is particularly will insure the provision of services for victims of violence against women and their families, and respond quickly to any violence against family members.

No doubt women with disabilities are faced with multiple discrimination on the basis of disabilities, gender, and perhaps on the basis of social status, place of residence if they live in remote areas, and other grounds of discrimination. It is noticed that on the level of national policies and plans related to women in general, they do not adopt the issues of women with disabilities as a priority to be highlighted and addressed, such as the National Strategy against Violence against Women, the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women, the Emergency Plan and the National Plan under which women have a quota in political representation. This because they look at these issues through a service perspective based on the theory of special needs. This theory is built on the base of a medical approach, despite the opening of new horizons with the Women's Empowerment Department in the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

**Means to achieve the goal:**

1. Empower women with disabilities in health, education, employment and rehabilitation.

2. Include the rights and issues of women with disabilities in national strategies and plans for women, whether they are issued by a governmental or non-governmental entity, with the active participation of women with disabilities and their organizations.

3. Abolition of the mitigated judicial circumstance set forth in Article 417 of Penal Code 111 of 1969 related to committing the crime of abortion for the purpose of maintaining "honor and reputation".

4. Exclude punishments related to crimes committed against women from government amnesty decrees issued on the basis of political consensus within the national reconciliation program, and work to treat and rehabilitate women victims.

5. Pass the law on the Protection from Family Violence, criminalize circumcision and give special attention to women with disabilities in that law.

6. Establish an accessible hotline for women with disabilities to report any incident of violence, exploitation or assault based on disabilities, and provide reasonable accommodations including sign language, text messages and other forms.

7. Design programs to develop the capacities of women with disabilities and their organizations in the fields of human rights, the UN Convention and communication methods to contact relevant authorities in order to file a complaint and use the tools to resort to the judiciary system in case of any kind of violence, exclusion or discrimination.

**Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth):**

The eighth objective is consistent in its strategies with Article (27) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities CRPD. The eighth goal of the sustainable development goals is related to the duties of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs based on Article 15 part 4 paragraph C of Law No. 38 of 2013 and on Article 16 of the same law. These duties include protect families from poverty, develop a national policy on work opportunities in Iraq to address the problem of employment in cooperation with other ministries and governmental parties and international and local organizations and implement the national development plan and poverty reduction strategy.

And because of its economic importance, work has become a strategic goal of the sustainable development goals 2015-2030. In order to achieve productive employment for people with disabilities, to provide them with decent work and to provide employment opportunities for all of those who belong to working-age group under decent conditions, a document on employment policy was developed by the ministry of labor and social affairs in collaboration with a number of Iraqi university professors and ILO experts. The document which took 2 years to be prepare and which was finalized in March 2011, represented a national vision with an international perspective to address the unemployment rate and raise the level of employment in Iraq as well as implement the objectives related to work in the National Development Strategy and Poverty Reduction Strategy, which aim to reduce unemployment through economic growth as an engine to create new jobs. Some of the important policy objectives have been achieved, especially those related to the legislative situation. Law No. 38 of 2013 was adopted. It established a body for the welfare of people with disabilities and special needs aimed at caring for these people, fight discrimination against them, provide all the required needs to include them in the community, secure a decent life for these persons by creating jobs for them in the public and private sectors and work to raise awareness concerning their rights.

The Ministry of Labor is working with the Public Pension Department and other concerned parties to legislate and approve a new social insurances law in line with the new developments and with the provisions of the Constitution, legislations and international conventions in this regard. The draft of the new law contains provisions on non-mandatory insurance for self-employed workers, supporting those who lost their jobs and became without insurance, covering all those including persons with disabilities who work in the unorganized sector and developing the mechanisms to integrate this sector within the legal frameworks and make it in line with the conditions of the required protection.

Concerning programs, the program on small loans has been implemented to improve employment opportunities creation mechanisms, to support registered unemployed persons with disabilities through insuring self-employment opportunities for them by providing them with low interest loans for small projects through the Community Rehabilitation Fund which aims to integrate persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups in the society through their participation in economic and social life by establishing individual income-generating projects for the categories of women who were released from prisons, women with dependents, wives with severe disabilities and persons with disabilities of working age (20-60) years. It is important to mention that the maximum amount of the loan does not exceed 3,000,000 dinars. It is important to mention here that the percentage rate of unemployed persons with disabilities has reached 87.5%.

Through these legislations mentioned above, we could easily realize that there is a recognition of the right of persons with disabilities to work without any problems. But the legislators ignored the discriminatory practices that persons with disabilities faced in the field of work for decades because of the legislative texts that legitimize them on the basis of an inherited medical model, which does not give any attention to environmental and behavioral barriers, despite the fact that they violate the right of persons with disabilities to work, promote discrimination against them and exclude them from the labor market. Law No. 38 of 2013 and 22 of 2011 in the Kurdistan Region and Cabinet Resolution 205 adopted the quota approach, as a means of guaranteeing minimum number of jobs for persons with disabilities in the public, mixed and private sectors. But unfortunately, these laws didn’t specify any measures or rules to how this provision is going to be implemented, and obtaining this right will always be subject to the authority of the physician and what he sees through purely medical examination and diagnosis, in an unprecedented dedication to the authority given to doctors in determining the fate of persons with disabilities and whether they deserve to exercise their rights and freedoms on the basis of equality with others.

**Means to achieve the goal:**

1. Develop a national strategic plan for the employment of people with disabilities, accompanied by financial allocations within the general budget of the State through the welfare council for Persons with Disabilities and implement the quota system which was approved by the laws.

2. Amend national legislations and make them in line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities (CRPD), which includes items and measures that can be easily and quickly implemented to promote the right of persons with disabilities to work and vocational and technical training in an inclusive environment free of obstacles and barriers. Government Official and non-official bodies Public buildings, public buildings, temples, public and private facilities, old and new, which are needed by people with disabilities, but the policy of implementation does not rise to 5%.

3. Fulfill the opportunities and equality in this area and amend the conditions of medical committees and include disabilities experts in these committees and delete discriminatory statements wherever they exist.

4. Conduct accurate statistics on the extent to which persons with disabilities have access to the labor market and provide reasonable accommodation and forms of adaptation necessary to insure a sustainable and barrier-free work environment.

5. Develop low interest loans programs that take into account sustainable development and the requirements of reasonable accommodations related to productive and operational projects that people with disabilities seek to start, finance and develop.

6. Issue incentives and tax exemptions for private employers to motivate them to employ the largest number of people with disabilities in the private sector.

7. Empower organizations of persons with disabilities especially those for women, through training, loans, grants and other technical assistance.

**Goal 11 (accessibility):**

The eleventh goal corresponds in its strategy to Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Sustainable development can be achieved only through a major shift in the way we build and manage our cities, especially after increasing the migration from rural to urban areas, where extreme poverty is concentrated. The government must make cities safe and accessible and provide affordable housing. It also must make transportation accessible and create green areas. Law 38 on disabilities insures adequate housing for persons with disabilities and special needs in accordance with the Government's plan for housing. It also provided for making public transport accessible for the benefit of these persons and their families, in order to achieve equal opportunities on the same level with others. Law 22 of the Kurdistan Region also states that a person with disabilities has the right to mobility and easy access to transportation according to the kind and level of disabilities. The Government and the private sector are taking the appropriate steps to make the environment accessible in order to allow people with disabilities to move freely. The law obligates the government and official and non-official bodies to abide by the international, technical, engineering and architectural conditions and specifications that must be met in old and new public buildings, stadiums, temples, public and private facilities, which are needed by persons with disabilities. But the implementation policy does not rise to 5% of what is required to be done.

It is clear that Iraq does not have a clear policy of adequate housing for people with disabilities. As a result of the conditions that this country has already experienced and currently still going, Iraq has not been able to build an infrastructure that includes an accessible transportation network that serves all citizens, including persons with disabilities. There is no metro network above or underground in the capital or any other city, and buses have limited use and in certain areas only. They do not cover a large percentage of the capital and they almost don’t exist in the provinces and the remote areas, and certainly not accessible for people with disabilities.

Children with disabilities are more discriminated against in accessing schools except for private institutes. Regular schools normally are not accessible for wheelchairs and are often very far from where these children live. There are often problems with stairs, narrow entrances and unsuitable seating spaces or inaccessible health facilities. This is due to the lack of an inclusive education system in schools. Based on that, reaching universities is very difficult because of the lack of adequate infrastructure at the primary and secondary levels of education, which entrenches the lack of accessibility to higher education.

The narrow perspective of accessibility, as explained above, may explain the deterioration of accessibility in other areas related to modern technologies and the use of the Internet for people with different disabilities. Web sites and their contents in Iraq, including those of universities, public libraries and government agencies, are largely lacking accessibility which is based on international standards. This creates a real obstacle which faces people with disabilities in general, and people with visual disabilities in particular, and prevents them from accessing various electronic information and services which are available for all. Also, people with intellectual and hearing disabilities face the same difficulty in accessing websites, moreover, the accessibility in all its forms is almost completely absent for them.

**Means to achieve the goal:**

1. To amend the legislation relating to the rights of persons with disabilities to organize the building process and granting licenses, so that effective financial and administrative penalties are included.

2. To include accessibility issues in the strategies, plans and programs of the Ministries of Transportation, Construction and Housing and of the Secretariat of the capital, the Engineers syndicate and the private transportation council.

3. To include the principles of human rights and the rights of persons with disabilities and the concept of accessibility and its standers and mechanisms of its implementation and its social and economic impact, in the curriculum of the faculties of engineering, technical institutes and colleges of sociology and social work, which teach majors similar related topics.

4. To promote the concept of accessibility in its broad sense through the development of training and awareness programs targeting a wide range of bodies, ministries, civil society organizations and the private sector.

5- To adopt accessibility standers related to technical and electronic aspects for people with visual, hearing, intellectual, psychological and physical disabilities, in terms of modifying computer and communication and other electronic devices, and designing pages and websites of ministries, governmental and non-governmental bodies, universities, scientific institutes, libraries and companies. All in close cooperation, partnership and consultation with persons with disabilities and their organizations.

**Goal 16 (Access to Justice):**

The sixteenth objective corresponds in its strategies to articles 12 and 13 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This objective is intended to promote the existence of inclusive peaceful societies for persons with disabilities in order to achieve sustainable development, to provide for equal access to justice to strengthen the authority of law by building effective institutions subject to accountability, to reduce all forms of violence and related mortality and to insure that persons with disabilities have access to justice, by 2030. The Iraqi Constitution, in Chapter Two, calls for respect of the principle of equality and non-discrimination among all Iraq’s, including persons with disabilities and persons with special needs, concerning their rights and duties before the law. The Constitution affirmed respect for their rights and their inclusion in the society, which was clarified and organized in the law 38 on disabilities.

The Constitution also affirms the right of everyone to resort to the judiciary regardless of their nationality, origin or disabilities. The article states that "the right of all people to litigate and all courts are opened for all and protected from any interference in their affairs".

Iraq has not declared its reservation to any article of the International Convention, particularly article 12, on "legal capacity". However, Iraqi national legislations include serious forms of discrimination and violate the right of persons with disabilities to full legal capacity on an equal basis with others. Sometimes and in some cases, persons with disabilities are denied the exercise of their economic, political and civil rights. The Civil Code and the Personal Status Code stipulate that any person who is underage or has intellectual or psychological disabilities shall not be eligible to exercise his civil rights. In fact, these texts, which establish the general rule of dealing with persons with disabilities and in particular persons with intellectual and psychological disabilities. These texts contain the most extreme level of discrimination and exclusion which is based on unfair general provisions that prohibit the recognition of the legal capacity of persons with intellectual and Psychological disabilities. Such general rule in determining the conditions of legal capacity and depriving these persons from it, is contrary to the provisions of the World Charter of Human Rights, as well as a flagrant violation of the general principles of the UN Convention (Articles 1 and 3), as well as a clear violation of the provisions of the second paragraph of Article 12 of the same Convention.

In the area of property rights, legal conduct, financial management and making of contracts, the provisions of the Civil Code, the Personal Status Code and the Law of Notaries are very clear on restricting the freedom of persons with disabilities to exercise these rights on an equal basis with others. These restrictions can reach the point where they deprive these persons from exercising their rights and freedoms. In the area of the right to access banking services, the privacy of persons with disabilities is violated every time they attempt to exercise their right to open and use bank accounts independently, as banks in Iraq do not recognize the eligibility of people with visual and hearing impairments to benefit from these services.

In terms of prisons and the implementation of the justice rules, monitoring procedures conducted by the High Commission for Human Rights and civil society organizations for and of persons with disabilities showed that the practical situation of prisons and detention facilities in Iraq is clearly deficient in terms of setting up accessible rooms and facilities for people with disabilities. They have also identified a total lack of any accommodations for any kind of special needs in the detention facilities of the Interior and Defense Ministries, which exacerbates the suffering of these people, and makes this issue a source of concern for these agencies and organizations.

**Means to achieve the goal:**

1. To review national legislation and amend the provisions of legal capacity to achieve full recognition of persons with disabilities before the law on an equal basis with others without discrimination on the basis of disabilities.

2. To amend the guardianship provisions to achieve personal autonomy of persons with disabilities by providing the reasonable accommodations necessary for the person to have independent life.

3. To review and amend the banking regulations and instructions and remove all restrictions that prevent persons with disabilities from exercising their full right to open and use bank accounts independently and on an equal basis with others and without any discriminatory procedures, to ensure reasonable accommodations and accessibility in different banks and to Provide persons with disabilities easy access to all banking services.

4. To create environmental, behavioral and social conditions that encourage people with intellectual and psychological disabilities to participate in public life and to form organizations to defend their rights in line with the goals of sustainable development.

5. To include within the plans of the Supreme Judicial Council, the Ministry of Justice, the General Police Department and the social welfare departments provisions and measures to achieve the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in promoting equal access to judicial facilities and in all stages of litigation through consultation with persons with disabilities and their organizations to identify gaps and deficiencies and find solutions to deal with them.

6. To develop training and technical courses for employees of the judiciary and security services to achieve maximum equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in different stages of litigation. These include training on sign language and communication with people with hearing or intellectual disabilities, as well as providing Braille copies of litigation, minutes of the court session and court decisions. All of that should be done in consultation with persons with disabilities and their organizations.

7. To include disabilities issues related to prevent torture within the agendas of concerned parties, where persons with disabilities and their organizations have real representation and participation.

8. To Establish a monitoring and following up mechanism to protect children with disabilities from any practice involving torture, punishment or inhuman treatment that may be committed in education or social care institutions.

**Goal 17 (Partnership with international organizations and agencies):**

The seventeenth goal corresponds in its strategies to Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In order to support national efforts to achieve the goals of sustainable development, appropriate and effective measures should be taken in this regard and, as appropriate, in partnership with relevant international, regional and civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities. In additional to the law 38 on the welfare of Persons with Disabilities which provides explicit provisions on the promotion of international cooperation, in accordance with article 32 of the International Convention, there are some provisions that present the importance of international cooperation in promoting disabilities issues and the rights of persons with disabilities. The international donor organizations and bodies have increased their interest in supporting and including the rights and issues of persons with disabilities within the plans and projects they finance, following the ratification of the CRPD by the Government of Iraq. This support is limited to the stage of implementation of funded projects, with the ultimate aim of the full inclusion of persons with disabilities into the society by 2030.

**Means of achieving the objectives**:

1. To include within all strategies of the Ministry of Planning measures to ensure that international cooperation programs are comprehensive and inclusive of disabilities in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development 2030.

2. To establish coordination and consultation between the Ministry of Planning and the National council of Persons with Disabilities with persons with disabilities and their organizations, during the process of submitting project proposals for international support and funding, and during the implementation and evaluation of projects related to disabilities.

3. To develop and strengthen organizations of persons with disabilities in cooperation with human rights organizations and government agencies, in order to include the rights of persons with disabilities and their issues within the international cooperation and the inclusive development programs.

4. To review the donors' strategies and methods of work in the area of disabilities, so that persons with disabilities and their organizations are the primary reference in the design, implementation and evaluation of disabilities programs.

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