

INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY ALLIANCE – IDA

EUROPEAN DISABILITY FORUM – EDF

CRPD Committee Opening of its 21st session, March 11 2019.

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Thank you Chairperson.

It is my honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the International Disability Alliance – IDA and the European Disability Forum - EDF. IDA is an alliance of 8 global and 6 regional networks of organizations of persons with disabilities, comprising all the diversity of constituencies of persons with disabilities, and organizations in more than 180 countries. EDF is an independent Non-Governmental Organisation that defends the interests of 80 million Europeans with disabilities. It's a platform which brings together representative organisations of persons with disabilities from across Europe.

The International Disability Alliance and the European Disability Forum wish, first of all, to congratulate the election and incorporation of the 7 new experts into the Committee, of which 6 are women, notably improving the gender composition of the Committee. IDA and EDF look forward to witnessing increasing

the Committee's jurisprudence in relation to the rights of women and girls with disabilities, and more references to the intersectionality between gender and disability, among others.

IDA and EDF also extend their warmest congratulations to Mr Danlami Umaru Basharu for his election as the Committee's Chairperson for the next two years. We are sure that the close collaboration between the Committee and IDA and EDF will continue strengthening the participation of civil society, in particular, organizations of persons with disabilities, including women and children with disabilities, in the different processes conducted by this treaty body.

The International Disability Alliance has a technical secretariat that provides support to organizations of persons with disabilities, including organizations of women and children with disabilities, to participate in the different processes within the UN system, supporting their advocacy to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities across the CRPD Committee and other UN treaty bodies, the Human Rights Council, General Assembly and the High Level Political Forum, among other very important mechanisms UN-wide.

Regarding this Committee's ongoing work:

IDA and EDF welcome the Committee's decision to initiate the work towards a general comment on article 11, as the SDGs and environmental changes, but not least important,

humanitarian crisis, pose serious challenges to the inclusion of persons with disabilities worldwide. Growing evidence is showing that persons with disabilities continue to be left behind, and that there is an urgent need for these issues to be addressed from a human rights model of disability, thus a general comment on article 11 will be a long-awaited guidance to world leaders on how to properly include persons with disabilities, including women and children with disabilities, in humanitarian response.

We are also looking forward to learn about the advancements on the work of the joint CRC-CRPD working group on children with disabilities. As many events are taking place this year to celebrate the 30 year anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is a major concern that children with disabilities are not treated equally as other children. As the rights of persons with disabilities slowly advance in many areas of participation, children with disabilities are still subjected to neglect and abandonment, making up more than 40% of all children placed within institutional care settings, and the majority of them with the only possibility of attending segregated special schools. We hope that the Committee will continue its growing efforts to ask States parties to implement de-institutionalization plans, and to seriously commit to providing the necessary support services for persons with

disabilities, particularly children with disabilities, to be included in the community and within family environments.

Twelve years have passed since the adoption of the CRPD by the UN General Assembly, and the CRPD Committee has also reached its 10th anniversary of highly productive work and ground-breaking jurisprudence. This has included highly valuable standards for the interpretation, and implementation of the provisions included in the CRPD. However, it seems that some of the most controversial issues of the rights of persons with disabilities face serious challenges and even pushbacks. We refer to the full recognition of legal capacity, forced institutionalization, and the understanding and implementation of inclusive education, among other topics.

We wish to ask the Committee to continue its efforts to strongly call out to States parties to amend or repeal obsolete mental health laws that allow for the deprivation of liberty of persons on the grounds of their real or perceived disability. This battle should also include mainstreaming these human rights standards in the work of other UN treaty bodies, as we still note with much concern the big discrepancies on the approach of concluding observations and general comments between the CRPD's jurisprudence and that of the mainstream human rights mechanisms. In relation to deprivation of liberty, we particularly welcomed the statement adopted by the CRPD Committee against the draft additional protocol to the Oviedo Convention

of the Council of Europe on the involuntary treatment and placement of persons with psychosocial disabilities, which bluntly violates international human rights. We recently called the CEDAW Committee to adopt a similar statement, mainstreaming the issue that disproportionately affects women, including those with disabilities.

Finally, but not less important, IDA and EDF wish to congratulate this Committee, particularly its Secretariat, for its leadership by making its procedures more accessible to persons with disabilities. However, again, we note with concern that this very good practice has not been established as the standard for other treaty bodies and less by the UN system as a whole. We strongly urge the Conference Services and all other relevant authorities, to take the opportunity of the undergoing accessibility assessment, to undertake the necessary structural and budgetary reforms to make the UN system more accessible for all.

We thank you very much for this opportunity to salute the Committee experts, Secretariat, UN agencies and civil society, and wish the Committee a very fruitful 21st session and 11th pre-session.