



# Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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## Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Twenty-second session

### Summary record of the 494th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 10 September 2019, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Basharu

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by parties to the Convention under article 35**

*(continued)*

*Initial report of Kuwait (continued) (CRPD/C/KWT/1, CRPD/C/KWT/Q/1 and CRPD/C/KWT/Q/1/Add.1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Kuwait took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Alawadhi** (Kuwait) said that the Public Authority for Disability Affairs had called upon the Ministry of Justice to review the language used in domestic law and had written to a number of other government bodies to encourage them to abide by internationally approved norms when referring to persons with disabilities and to avoid pejorative terms. In addition, the Public Authority had organized a series of workshops at which persons with disabilities had produced a book entitled “Language of Inclusion”, which had been widely circulated among public institutions.
3. Under Act No. 8 (2010), persons with disabilities had the right to choose their own caregivers. It was important to note that a caregiver was not the same as a court-appointed guardian. Caregivers were appointed by the Public Authority and were responsible only for the care and well-being of the person in their charge. They had no right to interfere in that person’s financial or legal affairs.
4. Recent amendments to Act No. 8 meant that the Public Authority could now provide hearing aids to hard-of hearing persons, particularly children, while persons with motor disabilities could be provided with a wheelchair of their own choosing, following due medical consultation. Moreover, the amendments conferred equal rights on all Kuwaiti women who had a child with disabilities, irrespective of the nationality of the child’s father. Other amendments currently being considered by the National Assembly included a new definition of disability, in line with that contained in the Convention, as well as provisions on non-discrimination, freedom of expression, the right to life and the right to take legal action.
5. **Ms. Abdulrahman** (Kuwait) said that the State was constitutionally obligated to protect all citizens and residents in times of natural disaster or war, and the Ministry of the Interior had formulated special plans to ensure the safety of persons with disabilities in such circumstances. The plans included training for staff in educational institutions for persons with disabilities, public safety requirements such as disability-friendly signage and alarms, and the formation of emergency teams and civil defence committees to ensure the well-being of persons with disabilities during evacuations.
6. **Ms. Almebilesh** (Kuwait) said that, since its creation, the Public Authority for Disability Affairs had distributed some 10,000 hearing aids and 7,000 wheelchairs of various categories, all of which met high-level international standards. Persons with disabilities could contact the Public Authority online or via a number of recently opened branch offices in the country’s governorates, and the services provided were likewise free of charge.
7. **Ms. Abdulrahman** (Kuwait) said that, under the Constitution, all citizens had equal rights and duties before the law, without discrimination. An individual’s legal personality commenced at the moment of birth and terminated at death, and all persons who had attained the age of majority were entitled to conduct their own legal affairs. The courts could appoint an assistant to act on behalf of a person with a disability but solely on condition that the disability was such as to hinder the person concerned, without such assistance, from understanding or expressing an opinion on the matter in question. If the person with a disability was incapable of conducting his or her legal affairs, even with the help of an assistant, the courts could empower the assistant to act on that person’s behalf if failure to act risked damaging the interests of the person concerned.
8. **Mr. Alzayed** (Kuwait) said that in cases involving persons whom illness, old age or mental disability had rendered incapable of making decisions regarding their own treatment, family members could make those decisions on their behalf. The Kuwait Mental

Health Centre had 97 beds, 83 of which were currently occupied. It provided care for all persons with mental health issues, including persons with intellectual disabilities, some of whom had also been victims of assault. Treatment continued even after discharge, with periodic home visits to ensure that patients were fully rehabilitated and reintegrated into society.

9. **Ms. Almebilesh** (Kuwait) said that State-run shelter institutions provided care for persons who were unable to live independently. They had existed for some time in two separate locations and provided services to some 580 individuals, both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, who had been admitted either at their own request or by court order. No new cases were being accepted and a national rehabilitation centre was in the process of being established.

10. **Ms. Alawadhi** (Kuwait) said that the Public Authority for Disability Affairs received complaints from inmates with disabilities in the country's prisons. It then conducted evaluations to determine whether action was required and, as necessary, carried out prison visits to investigate further.

11. **Ms. Almebilesh** (Kuwait) said that the authorities were currently considering alternatives to residential institutions for persons with disabilities to enable them to live independently. Under Act No. 8 (2010), persons with disabilities who met the relevant criteria were granted preferential access to housing welfare for a period not exceeding five years, depending on the type and degree of their disability. Thus far, 5,000 persons had benefited from that provision. In addition, financial support had been provided to 27,000 persons with disabilities, with amounts ranging from \$17,000 to \$33,000 depending upon the degree of disability. Persons with disabilities were able to access public services free of charge.

12. **Mr. Talal Almutairi** (Kuwait) said that the International Committee of the Red Cross visited the country's prisons three or four times a year to ensure that conditions were in line with international standards, also in respect of prisoners with disabilities. Additional visits were carried out by local civil society organizations, as well as by the National Office for Human Rights, which was an independent institution that abided by the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles). United Nations special rapporteurs had also made a number of unannounced visits to the country's prisons. The Ministry of the Interior had plans to develop prison structures in Kuwait with facilities where prisoners could meet with their families and child-care centres for the children of inmates.

13. **Ms. Alawadhi** (Kuwait) said that many people in residential rehabilitation institutions, particularly non-Kuwaitis, had no family living in Kuwait to support them. The closure of the institutions was, therefore, a long-term process that would last a number of years so that appropriate solutions for such persons could be found.

14. **Mr. Alghunaim** (Kuwait) said that it was important to recall his country's history. In the recent past it had suffered an invasion and occupation, which had led to widespread destruction and displacement. Victims of the conflict had included children, many of whom had lost their parents, and one reason the institutions had been created was to protect and care for such children.

15. **Ms. Alhussaini** (Kuwait) said that Kuwait made efforts to ensure that all buildings were accessible to persons with disabilities. Act No. 206 of 2009 contained disability access specifications that had to be respected in the planning of any new buildings. Authorization would not be granted for any construction projects that failed to meet those specifications. The Public Authority for Disability Affairs had provided the Council of Ministers with a plan for the restructuring of existing buildings to make them accessible to persons with disabilities which the Council of Ministers had referred to the Kuwait Municipal Council. The Public Authority had begun to inspect disability access facilities in private schools and to take action, including the imposition of fines, against institutions that failed to comply with the necessary requirements.

16. **Mr. Alghunaim** (Kuwait) said that disability access requirements were applied not only to buildings on Kuwaiti territory but also to Kuwaiti embassies and consulates abroad.

17. **Ms. Abdulrahman** (Kuwait) said that access to justice was vital for the preservation of human rights, and all citizens and residents of Kuwait had a constitutionally guaranteed right to appeal directly to the public authorities, to seek redress before the courts for any violations they might have suffered and to challenge the constitutionality of any piece of domestic legislation before the Constitutional Court.

18. Under Act No. 8 (2010), the Government was required to provide persons with disabilities with the facilities and services necessary to enable them to exercise all their civil and political rights on an equal footing with others. Two administrative circulars had been issued, one in 2008 and another in 2014, delineating specific measures intended to facilitate access for persons with disabilities to the mechanisms of justice. Those measures included the designation of special contact points at offices of the Ministry of Justice, exemption from certain administrative fees, the allocation of parking places, sign language interpretation and other forms of assistance such as special lifts and seating arrangements.

19. **Ms. Alawadhi** (Kuwait) said that children with disabilities whose parents were unknown were placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and provided with free education and health care. They were assigned social workers and enjoyed the same rights and freedoms as other children. The Government was making efforts to increase the number of foster carers. Children with disabilities who had lost their parents were placed with guardians, who received cash benefits for taking care of them. Articles 26 to 28 of Act No. 8 (2010) provided for appropriate measures to be taken where guardians committed violations.

20. The Government attached major importance to access to justice for persons with disabilities. Of the 950 or so cases that had been referred to the courts concerning violations of the rights of persons with disabilities, rulings had been pronounced in favour of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs in over 700.

21. **Ms. Abdulrahman** (Kuwait) said that Act No. 21 (2015) on the protection of the rights of the child established negligence, physical maltreatment and psychological abuse as specific offences and provided for the formation of child protection teams and the establishment of protection centres for child victims of abuse. Complaints regarding such abuse could be made by parents, guardians or social workers, or by victims themselves via a free hotline. Child protection centres employed social workers, doctors and psychiatrists.

22. **Mr. Alzayed** (Kuwait) said that the Ministry of Health was empowered to receive complaints of child abuse and had a special mechanism for dealing with cases involving persons with disabilities, of which 34 had been registered. Once evidence of abuse had been gathered, complaints were referred to the courts and victims received care in child protection centres or psychiatric facilities where appropriate.

23. **Ms. Alawadhi** (Kuwait) said that, to ensure the implementation of article 5 of Act No. 8 of 2010 on the provision of specialized services for persons with disabilities in all government institutions, the Public Authority for Disability Affairs had issued communications to all government agencies, some of which had responded positively. It was currently organizing visits to various agencies to ensure that officers were appointed to provide specialized services to persons with disabilities.

24. Most people over the age of 65 were not considered persons with disabilities. However, some of those who had been assessed before 2017 had been issued with disability certificates.

25. **Mr. Alabdjalil** (Kuwait) said that the Government attached great importance to ensuring universal access to art and culture. For example, the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters had taken measures to ensure the reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities at a global book fair held in the country and to provide sign language interpretation at cultural events.

26. **Ms. Alawadhi** (Kuwait) said that children with learning difficulties and slow learners had been included in Act No. 8 of 2010 under a later amendment in order to provide a legal framework for the coverage of their school fees by the Government. The Public Authority for Disability Affairs had consulted with experts, drawn up strategies and set up high-level committees on inclusive education, employment and accessibility. It

conducted unannounced visits to special schools to ensure that they met standards with respect to infrastructure, curricula and teaching. The licences of three special schools had been revoked following such visits.

27. **Mr. Alghunaim** (Kuwait) said that freedom of movement was respected in his country and no distinction was drawn between nationals with disabilities and other nationals.

28. **Ms. Almebilesh** (Kuwait) said that forced abortion and forced sterilization were criminal offences. Article 147 of the Criminal Code provided for imprisonment of 10 years for persons convicted of such acts.

29. **Mr. Alfarhan** (Kuwait) said that the term “Bidoon” was used to designate illegal residents or stateless persons who had deliberately concealed their nationality, which had later been determined by the Government based on family trees and official documentation. Such persons – of whom there were fewer than 90,000 – received free education and health care. Moreover, Bidoon with disabilities benefited from rehabilitation and mobility services, and those with severe disabilities received assistance with paperwork and other formalities. Statistics for the past five years demonstrated that illegal residents, including those with disabilities, had not been deprived of any particular services.

30. **Mr. Talal Almutairi** (Kuwait) said that Kuwait had put in place a number of measures to prevent abuse against women and children, including those belonging to vulnerable groups. Complaints in that regard could be submitted to a social police authority established by the Ministry of Interior and were investigated by experts. Psychiatric and health-care support were provided to victims. The National Assembly was prioritizing the discussion of a bill on domestic violence, and a building had been allocated for use as a centre for the protection and support of domestic violence victims.

31. **Ms. Alawadhi** (Kuwait) said that abuse against persons with disabilities in any setting could be reported to the Public Authority for Disability Affairs by victims themselves or officers investigating such cases. No complaints of violence against women with disabilities had been filed as yet; however, any such complaints would be investigated in strict confidentiality and referred to the courts where appropriate.

32. **Mr. Alghunaim** (Kuwait) said that the low number of cases of abuse against women, children and persons with disabilities could be attributed to the principles of Islam, which were deeply embedded in Kuwaiti culture.

#### *Articles 21 to 33*

33. **Ms. Gamio Ríos** said that, whereas Act No. 8 (2010) on the rights of persons with disabilities contained separate chapters on inclusion in society and social care, neither appeared to contain any reference to such fundamental principles as deinstitutionalization, community networks or accommodation for independent living. She therefore wished to know whether there were any fully fledged social inclusion networks or programmes in the country to allow persons with disabilities to live independently. She understood that persons with disabilities could choose their own caregivers; however, she would like to know what support they received to live independently and make their own decisions. The State party should align its terminology with that of the Convention, which did not refer to either “severe” or “moderate” disabilities. Given the importance of comprehensive health care – and not just rehabilitation services – for persons with disabilities, she wondered whether health-care facilities were accessible to wheelchair users and other persons with disabilities and whether staff were suitably trained to assist such persons. Lastly, she wished to know who decided that persons with disabilities did not have the capacity to express their wishes regarding their own medical and psychiatric care.

34. **Mr. Buntan** said that, in the light of the reply to the question raised in the list of issues concerning nationality, to the effect that citizenship was a sovereign matter, he would like to know whether there was any legal basis in the State party for rejecting applications for citizenship on the ground of disability.

35. He would like to know how compliance with the requirements of the framework for web accessibility were enforced. It would be useful to know how many government

websites were in conformity with the framework and whether there were any measures to provide information in accessible communication formats such as Easy Read and tactile sign language.

36. Further data on the share of students with disabilities attending mainstream schools and those attending special schools would be welcome. It would also be helpful to have an account of the guarantees of accessibility and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in mainstream schools.

37. He wished to know how many persons with disabilities held elective office or public positions in Kuwait. He wondered whether the State party had plans to accede to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled. Lastly, noting that the Public Authority for Disability Affairs was the focal point in the Government for matters relating to the implementation of the Convention, he wondered whether there were independent mechanisms to monitor the rights of persons with disabilities. If so, what role did persons with disabilities and their representative organizations have to play in them?

38. **Ms. Fefoame**, said that article 24 (b) of the Personal Status Act, No. 51 of 1984, placed restrictions on the right of persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, especially women, to marry. In particular, that law left discretion over whether a person was medically qualified to enter into marriage to the judge. She would like to know whether any steps had been taken to abolish that and other discriminatory provisions governing family matters. She wondered what accessible modes of communication were available to guarantee the participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral process, in accordance with article 29 of the Convention. She wished to know what was being done to encourage broader participation of women with disabilities in political and public life at all levels. In addition, more information on the social protections afforded to older persons with disabilities would be appreciated.

39. **Mr. Rebrov** said that it was not clear whether there were any laws or regulations that specified the status of sign language in Kuwait. Good access to information for persons who were deaf greatly depended on qualified sign language interpreters. According to information available to him, there were only eight such interpreters in the country. Further details of the available training in sign language interpretation and the number of assistants for deafblind persons would be useful. He would like to know whether members of national organizations of deaf people were recruited as experts for sign language interpretation training and whether they were involved in the accreditation of sign language interpreters.

40. He had received reports that the Arabic sign language used in Saudi Arabia had been imposed on the rest of the Arab world. Every country should use its own national sign language, and national sign languages should be recognized and promoted. He therefore asked what measures the State party had taken to foster the development of Kuwaiti Sign Language.

41. **Mr. Alsaif** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would welcome updated information on measures taken to make a full transition from a segregated education system to an inclusive one, within the meaning of article 24 of the Convention, including data on reasonable accommodation in mainstream schools. He would be interested to hear more about efforts to raise awareness among teachers, education staff and students with disabilities and their parents about inclusive education. It would also be helpful to learn how access to the habilitation and rehabilitation services covered under article 26 was extended to rural areas. More details of the involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in habilitation and rehabilitation projects would be appreciated. Further data on the unemployment rate of persons with disabilities compared with the overall rate in the country would also be useful. Lastly, he would welcome an account of the steps taken by the State party to ensure that persons with disabilities were fully involved in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

42. **Mr. Schefer** said that he would appreciate clarification of whether the National Office for Human Rights, which the delegation had indicated undertook visits to places of detention, was still under the supervision of the Council of Ministers or whether the

necessary reforms had been introduced to bring that authority into line with the Paris Principles.

43. **Mr. Ruskus** said that, although Act No. 21 of 2015 on the rights of the child provided for the protection and rehabilitation of children with disabilities, it restricted the rights of those children to inclusive education depending on the type of disability they had, in clear violation of the Convention. He would therefore like to know whether any measures had been taken to ensure that all children had a right to inclusive education, regardless of type of disability. He also wondered what was being done to ensure that complaints of abuse by persons with disabilities in hospitals were properly handled. It would be helpful to know the extent to which doctors and medical staff were informed about the procedures for reporting child abuse.

44. **Ms. Kayess** said that she would appreciate details of the bill on domestic violence currently before the parliament and the national centre to combat such violence that the delegation had mentioned. In particular, she wished to know whether the bill would provide for a prohibition against marital rape, focus on the prosecution of perpetrators of violence rather than reconciliation, and ensure that victims of rape were not forced to marry the perpetrators based on the decision of a male guardian.

45. **Ms. Gamio Ríos** said that she would be grateful if the delegation could provide exact figures on the number of persons with disabilities who were living independently as a result of measures taken by the State party.

46. **The Chair** said that he would appreciate further information on the status of Braille in the country and the number of teachers qualified to teach Braille. He wondered what measures had been taken to ensure that the parental rights of persons with disabilities were protected, in accordance with article 23 of the Convention. He would also like to know what safeguards were in place to protect disadvantaged groups of persons with disabilities, such as women, refugees and persons from religious minorities, from discrimination in employment. He would be interested to know whether the State party had adopted the short set of questions developed by Washington Group on Disability Statistics for its censuses. He would be grateful if the delegation would take a human rights approach to answering the questions raised by the Committee.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.*

47. **Mr. Alabdjalil** (Kuwait) said that his Government sought to ensure that access to information was provided to persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others. The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, to take one example, had a website to ensure that all persons were included in society and informed about daily cultural events. There were also specific sites for persons with hearing impairments.

48. **Ms. Alhussaini** (Kuwait) said that some 25 programmers in various government bodies had received training under the national framework for web accessibility since its establishment in 2018. The Government was currently following up on that training.

49. **Mr. Alajmi** (Kuwait) said that the parliament had passed Act No. 8 of 2016 governing the licencing of web-based publications. More than eight persons had been granted licences to operate websites since the introduction of that legislation. With respect to the issue of the representation of persons with disabilities in the media, of the 20 recently graduated journalism students who had trained to be newsreaders, 6 were persons with disabilities, all of whom were currently working for radio or television news programmes.

50. **Mr. Bader Almutairi** (Kuwait) said that the Ministry of Education had taken the necessary measures to ensure that persons with hearing impairments were provided with vocational training or an academic education at all levels on an equal basis with others. The Ministry had sign language specialists who taught students with hearing impairments. The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training also provided training to specialists in sign language and persons with hearing impairments.

51. A ministerial decision had been taken on the use of sign language. The standard Arabic sign language had been chosen, because, unfortunately, no Kuwaiti Sign Language training was available. However, standard Arabic sign language did not differ much from

Kuwaiti Sign Language. Furthermore, students were free to communicate in either sign language. The Al-Amal schools responsible for teaching sign language had 78 male teachers and 108 female teachers. According to the Ministry of Information, they had 12 sign language interpreters. There were also specialized courses provided to the staff of various government bodies. To cite one example, a sign language course had been offered in the Ministry of the Interior. Lastly, courses in sign language were available to anyone who was interested in learning it, with a view to increasing the use of sign language in Kuwait. Associations that represented persons with disabilities also provided such training.

52. **Ms. Abdulrahman** (Kuwait) said that the Constitution guaranteed freedom from interference with privacy, home and correspondence.

53. **Ms. Alhussaini** (Kuwait) said that there were adequate safeguards to protect the privacy of data collected on persons with disabilities. Both private and public publishing houses produced books in Braille. The Ministry of Education provided students with the necessary textbooks in Braille. The Government had also provided e-books to persons with visual impairments.

54. **Ms. Abdulrahman** (Kuwait) said that the law did not prevent persons with disabilities from marrying, provided that they were old enough and considered to be legally capable. Couples were also obliged to undergo premarital screening as a means to prevent the transmission of common hereditary diseases.

55. In 2015, legislation had been adopted to set up family courts across the country. Those courts ruled on cases concerning family disputes or conflicts, which were reported to them by special centres that worked to combat domestic abuse and violence. The courts worked alongside other competent authorities to review legislation on domestic violence, provide psychological support to victims, particularly children, and resolve issues that arose from the breakdown of family relations.

56. **Ms. Almebilesh** (Kuwait) said that the Public Authority for Disability Affairs attached great importance to the role of the family in caring for persons with disabilities. If individuals with disabilities were unable to take care of themselves, ideally one of their immediate family members should assume responsibility for assisting them. In a situation where the individual concerned had no close relative capable of providing such care, the Public Authority would refer the case to a special court to decide whether that individual should receive care at home or whether he or she should be admitted to an institution.

57. **Mr. Bader Almutairi** (Kuwait) said that, as part of efforts to develop an inclusive education system, all teachers in Kuwait received training on how best to assist students with disabilities. As far as younger children with disabilities were concerned, parents could enrol their children into special creches that had been set up in the country's six education catchment areas. Those creches were constantly reviewed in order to ensure that children with disabilities were included in the mainstream education system as smoothly as possible from an early age.

58. **Ms. Alhussaini** (Kuwait) said that approximately 8,500 students benefited every year from the education services provided by the Public Authority for Disability Affairs at 36 private schools located throughout Kuwait. The Public Authority had also set up a special committee to develop a road map for inclusive education, which was currently being reviewed to define more clearly the roles of the various stakeholders. The plan was focused on several key areas, including facilitating the socialization of students with disabilities and training teachers and school personnel in education methods specifically designed to cater for their needs.

59. The Public Authority also administered training centres for persons with disabilities. A rehabilitation component – such as speech therapy – was often provided as part of the courses, which included a vocational training programme for persons with intellectual disabilities. The Public Authority was committed to improving the quality of its services by opening new centres and overhauling existing ones, and training more persons with disabilities on how to use new technologies.

60. **Ms. Almebilesh** (Kuwait) said that Act No. 35 of 1962 and its amendments did not prevent persons with disabilities from exercising their right to vote. All persons over the

age of 21 had the right to participate in the electoral process by secret ballot. Moreover, a series of amendments to that legislation had been proposed, as outlined in paragraph 116 of the replies to the list of issues, which were aimed at ensuring accessibility and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.

61. **Mr. Talal Almutairi** (Kuwait), referring to the Committee's questions concerning the political participation of persons with disabilities, said that in the past there had been several members of parliament with disabilities and that they had all participated fully and effectively in the work carried out by that legislative body.

62. **Ms. Almebilesh** (Kuwait) said that the Government had worked with an expert from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to draft and implement a strategy designed to create more employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Under that strategy, local authorities and private companies with over 50 employees were obliged to ensure that persons with disabilities accounted for at least 4 per cent of their workforce. Inspections were carried out to ensure that organizations respected that obligation and fines were handed down for non-compliance. A campaign had also been conducted to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the banking sector. The campaign had been a success and had led to the recruitment of 30 persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities received the same salary as other employees, even though the length of their working day was reduced by two hours. They were also exempt from national service duties.

63. **Ms. Alawadhi** (Kuwait) said that one of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs' main priorities was to promote the implementation of Act No. 8 (2010). In doing so, it worked with a range of stakeholders and reported back to the Government on both the improvements made and any obstacles to further progress. Those stakeholders included government departments, organizations of persons with disabilities and specific committees that had been tasked with enhancing accessibility at the local level. For example, the Public Authority worked alongside the Ministry of Health, which had set up a special unit to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities were respected and that they had access to the services they required.

64. **Mr. Talal Almutairi** (Kuwait) said that several mechanisms had been established to monitor the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in Kuwait. The National Assembly's Committee on Disability Affairs processed complaints submitted to it by persons with disabilities. A specific committee for persons with disabilities had also been set up within the National Office for Human Rights. Although that institution received a special allocation from the State budget, several members of its governing body represented civil society organizations and it carried out its work with full independence and free from any government interference.

65. **Mr. Alzayed** (Kuwait) said that no effort was spared in ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoyed the highest standard of health care, including reproductive health-care services, on an equal basis and without discrimination. Persons with disabilities, including children and persons living in rural areas, were provided with services that catered for their individual requirements by health-care professionals and hospital staff who had received specific training on disabilities. They enjoyed, and were informed about, the rights to free and informed consent and to live independently. Although discrimination was also prohibited in the provision of social security and social protection, certain insurance companies did not always accept to provide health-care coverage to individuals with disabilities. It was hoped that in the future those persons would enjoy access to such protection on an equal basis with others.

66. **Ms. Alhussaini** (Kuwait) said that there were special sports clubs for persons with disabilities, including a club for deaf persons. Kuwaiti athletes with disabilities participated in competitions and had even won prizes at international events.

67. **Mr. Alabdjalil** (Kuwait) said that the Government attached much importance to the provision of leisure opportunities for persons with disabilities. Of course, persons with disabilities were not limited to joining one of the five specific sports clubs for persons with disabilities.

68. **Mr. Alghunaim** (Kuwait) said that he wished to express his thanks to the Committee and to the civil society organizations present for the reports that they had submitted. By sending a high-level delegation to participate in the constructive dialogue, the Government of Kuwait had demonstrated its commitment to improving the situation of persons with disabilities in the country. It would take heed of the Committee's comments and recommendations in order to implement more effectively the provisions of the Convention. The Government firmly believed that the promotion and strengthening of human rights would lead to greater and more inclusive development in the country. The State of Kuwait was therefore committed to taking legislative and administrative measures, in line with Islamic values and the Constitution, to consolidate its human rights strategy and to raise awareness of the Convention.

69. **Mr. Alsaif** said that he wished to thank the delegation for participating in a frank, interactive and fruitful dialogue on the progress made regarding the rights of persons with disabilities in Kuwait. He urged the Government to accelerate that progress by moving from a medical approach to a human rights-based approach to disability, by taking legislative measures based on equality and non-discrimination, and by working to guarantee the full inclusion in society of persons with disabilities. In particular, special efforts should be made to eliminate the double discrimination experienced by women with disabilities, to implement a comprehensive national plan on accessibility and to include children with disabilities in the education system and society in general. He reminded the delegation that any new measures taken should be compatible with the Convention, the Committee's general comments and the Sustainable Development Goals.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*