



**Convention on the Rights
of Persons with Disabilities**

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

List of issues in relation to the initial report of Saudi Arabia

Addendum

Replies of Saudi Arabia to the list of issues*, **

[Date received: 14 January 2019]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The annexes are on file with the Secretariat and are available for consultation.



Replies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the list of issues in relation to its initial report submitted under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD/C/SAU/Q/1).

Introduction

1. This document contains the replies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to and its comments on the list of issues adopted by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in document CRPD/C/SAU/Q/1 (30 October 2018) in relation to the Kingdom's initial report,¹ submitted under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.² It should be noted that various legislative and procedural measures have been taken, designed to promote the principles and provide assurances of human rights, including the rights contained in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The most significant of these measures will be reviewed within the context of the replies to and comments on the Committee's questions.

A. Purpose and general obligations (arts. 1–4)

Reply to paragraph 1 of the list of issues

2. Various measures have been taken to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The most significant of these is the establishment of the Authority for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities, whose charter was adopted by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 266 (27 Jumada I 1439 AH/ 13 February 2018). The Authority seeks to deliver care to persons with disabilities, ensure that they have access to disability-related rights, improve the services provided by the relevant agencies, help the disabled to access proper care and habilitation and raise the level of prevention, taking the necessary measures to this end in coordination and cooperation with stakeholders. The Authority also seeks to define the respective roles of the various agencies responsible for the welfare of persons with disabilities. The Authority's charter defines its responsibilities, of which the principal ones are:

- Formulating policies, strategies, programmes, plans and instruments designed to achieve the goals of the Authority's various projects, including the allocation of funds in accordance with statutory procedures and monitoring project implementation after receiving the go-ahead, in coordination with stakeholders;
- Defining the respective roles of the various agencies with regard to persons with disabilities, adapting these in accordance with statutory measures and monitoring performance;
- Improving the level of services designed to meet the demands and needs of persons with disabilities, including education, treatment, habilitation, employment, ease of access to buildings and the provision of essential facilities to enable them to benefit from public utilities and services;
- Putting in place programmes to encourage the private and non-profit sectors to become involved with charitable work to help persons with disabilities;
- Promoting the position of persons with disabilities in society;
- Setting standards of compliance for agencies that deliver care for persons with disabilities including, for example, public transport, car parking, service delivery times and ease of delivery;
- Proposing government support programmes for community associations and foundations that provide care for persons with disabilities;

¹ Hereinafter referred to as "the report".

² Hereinafter referred to as "the Convention".

- Proposing support programmes to enable persons with disabilities to start up, manage and expand professional or commercial enterprises;
 - Defining and assessing service quality indicators;
 - Preparing studies, research, statistics and reports and encouraging disability research;
 - Representing the Kingdom at regional and international conferences, forums and seminars on disability and concluding agreements with international bodies with a view to benefiting from best practice, systems and research in this area, in accordance with statutory procedures.
3. Decision of the Minister of Labour and Social Development No. 70273 (11 Rabi II 1440 AH/ 18 December 2018) approved the implementing regulations for the Labour Law and annexes thereto, including annex 2 on the schedule of facilitating arrangements and services in the working environment for workers with permanent or temporary disabilities and workers suffering from illnesses that make them effectively disabled.
4. The King Salman Centre for Disability Research is a pioneering civil society institution that specializes in scientific research into issues and causes of disability and methods of prevention and treatment. The Centre's strategic goals include improving decision-making and planning, determining research priorities and employing the most up-to-date technology to improve our understanding of types of disability, as well as improving diagnostic and treatment capacities and developing ways of providing the disabled with tangible assistance. In addition to conducting scientific studies and research into disability, the Centre establishes educational and training facilities, focusing on scientific research into disability, and publishes periodicals, articles, studies and research papers. It has established an information centre and designed and developed databases on disability research. Furthermore, it contributes to raising social awareness of disability, of how to treat its causes and the best ways of caring for the disabled at home and in the community. The Centre works in cooperation with stakeholders to monitor recommendations and resolutions on disability.
5. The inauguration of the King Salman Award for Disability Research has helped to strengthen national capacities in disability study and research, raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities, improve care services and promote the principles set out in the Convention.
6. As regards universal access, work is continuing, in accordance with the guidelines of the Universal Access Programme, on the creation of an urban environment designed to enable persons with disabilities to live an independent life and integrate in society.
7. Growth has been recorded in the numbers of habilitation centres for disabled persons and in the quality of the services offered. There are now 38 government-run centres and 182 community centres providing day-care, representing an increased commitment on the part of specialized associations to providing services for the disabled. Some 7,816 persons are enrolled in comprehensive habilitation centres and 14,555 enrolled in community day-care. Financial assistance is provided for more than 445,000 cases, with in excess of 5 billion riyals allocated in the budget.
8. Saudi Vision 2030, adopted by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 308 (18 Rajab 1437 AH/ 25 April 2016), makes provision for persons with disabilities to access suitable employment and educational opportunities in order to ensure their independence and integration as active members of society and provide them with all the facilities and tools to put them on the path to success. The National Transformation Programme was launched to build the capacities and capabilities essential to achieving the ambitious goals of Saudi Vision 2030; this includes a number of initiatives designed to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. It should be noted that the establishment of the Authority for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities mentioned in paragraph 2, above, was an initiative of the National Transformation Programme. Furthermore, the Quality of Life Programme has been launched, designed to make Saudi Vision 2030 a reality by improving the lives of the individual and family and building a society in which everyone can enjoy a balanced lifestyle. Achieving the goals of the Quality of Life Programme will help to place Saudi Arabian cities on the list of the best cities in the world in which to live.

The Programme also seeks to improve the quality of life in the Kingdom by improving and upgrading infrastructure, transport, housing, urban planning, the environment, health care, economic and educational opportunities, security and the social environment.

9. Under its charter, the Authority for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities monitors government bodies to ensure that human rights-related laws and regulations and the conventions to which the Kingdom is a party are being implemented. These include the Disability Welfare Act and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It should be noted that Royal Order No. 13084 (27 Rabi I 1436 AH/ 18 January 2015) approves the formulation of a national human rights strategy in the Kingdom, embracing all the principles and tenets designed to protect and promote human rights in accordance with Islamic sharia, the Basic Law of Governance and other human rights-related laws and regional and international conventions to which the Kingdom is a party, while drawing on several regional and international declarations and action platforms in the light of the Kingdom's obligations. A committee consisting of governmental and non-governmental organizations is currently working on a draft strategy that will contain six themes: the legal framework, institutional capacities, civil society, the business sector, the culture of human rights and regional and international cooperation. These themes give rise to a number of subsidiary goals, programmes and initiatives covering all human rights.

10. The Anti-Harassment Act, promulgated pursuant to Royal Decree No. D/96 (16 Ramadan 1439 AH/ 31 May 2018), is designed to combat and prevent the crime of harassment, punish perpetrators and protect victims, while safeguarding the privacy, dignity and personal freedom of the individual guaranteed by Islamic sharia and statutory law. The Act adopts the principle of aggravating circumstances in respect of punishment, if the crime is committed against particular groups or in specific situations. Thus article 6 (2) stipulates that, if committed against a person with disability, the crime of harassment shall carry a punishment of not more than five years' imprisonment and/ or a fine of not more than 300,000 riyals.

11. The laws of the Kingdom are subject to regular and ongoing review to ensure that they keep pace with developments and the Kingdom's obligations under international instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Consultative Council (*majlis al-shura*) has a mandate to scrutinize laws and make such proposals as it sees fit. Under its charter, the Human Rights Commission expresses its views on current human rights-related legislation and participates in the scrutinization of bills.

12. Under the Civil Associations and Organizations Act, promulgated by Royal Decree No. D/8 (19 Safar 1437 AH/ 1 December 2015), associations concerned with the welfare of persons with disabilities receive government subsidies. Furthermore, a fund – the Association Support Fund – has been set up to support and develop the programmes offered by these associations to ensure they continue to operate. In 2017, government support to community associations and organizations, including those concerned with the rights of persons with disabilities, exceeded 700 million riyals.

Reply to paragraph 2

13. In addition to the duties of the Authority for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities, which involve raising the level of services in response to the requirements and needs of persons with disabilities and promoting their position in society, article 47 of the Basic Law of Governance stipulates: "The right of litigation shall be guaranteed equally for both citizens and residents of the Kingdom. The law shall set out the procedures necessary for this." Article 16 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that the victim or his representatives or heirs may initiate a criminal action in respect of all cases involving a private right of action and prosecute such a case before the competent court; in such circumstances, the court must summon the public prosecutor to attend. As such, persons with disabilities and associations concerned with disability rights have the right to resort to the courts on an equal basis with others.

14. It should be noted that many statutory laws, including those regulating the course of legal proceedings, contain provisions that take into account, explicitly or implicitly, the

situation and circumstances of persons with disabilities. For example, article 18 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that, if it appears to the court that there is a conflict of interest between the victim or his heirs and the victim's representative, the representative shall be excluded from the proceedings and another one appointed. Furthermore, article 100 states that a witness who is unable to attend may have his testimony heard *in situ*. Article 177 of the implementing regulations for the Code of Criminal Procedure states that, if the person whose testimony the court wishes to hear is dumb but able to write, his testimony may be put down in writing; the deaf person who can read shall be questioned in writing; and if a deaf or dumb person is illiterate, his testimony shall be recorded by an expert. It should be noted that persons with disabilities receive special treatment in court proceedings.

B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)

Equality and non-discrimination

Reply to paragraph 3

15. All laws and legislation in force in the Kingdom are based upon equality and non-discrimination, including discrimination on grounds of disability. Various measures have been taken involving the concept of positive discrimination for persons with disabilities to enable them to access and exercise their rights on an equal basis with others. Other measures seek to foreground principles such as integration in the community and equality of opportunity. The laws of the Kingdom guarantee that anyone who has suffered harm as a result of any kind of discrimination has the right to resort to the available means of redress. Numerous measures have been adopted to ensure reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities, such as the schedule of accommodation in the working environment for workers with permanent or temporary disabilities referred to above. It should be noted that denial of reasonable accommodation is a statutory offence that may entail appropriate punishment of offenders.

16. As regards the request for information on complaints of discrimination against persons with disabilities received by the Human Rights Commission during the period covered by the report, the Commission did not register any such complaints during the said period. It should be noted that, on 14 Rabi II 1438 AH (12 January 2017), the Commission held a workshop within the framework of the memorandum of understanding concluded in 2012 between the Kingdom, represented by the Human Rights Commission, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; a number of persons with disabilities took part in the workshop, alongside specialists from governmental and non-governmental organizations.

17. As regards measures taken to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities and legal remedies and sanctions for non-compliance, both the report and this memorandum contain information thereon. The Committee will be provided with further information during the session to discuss the report, to be held on 20–21 March 2019.

Women with disabilities (art. 6)

Reply to paragraph 4

18. The laws of the Kingdom make no distinction between disabled men and women in relation to disability-related rights. Measures have been taken to promote the role of women, including disabled women and girls, in all areas and particularly in political and public life. Thus Royal Order No. O/44 (29 Safar 1434 AH/ 12 January 2013) was promulgated, amending article 3 of the Consultative Council Act to make women full members of the Council, holding at least 20 per cent of the seats; previously women participated in Council business in an advisory capacity only. The Council currently has 30 female members and there is nothing in its regulations to prevent disabled women from becoming members.

19. Furthermore, both male and female citizens, including those with disabilities, take part in the management of public affairs through municipal councils, for which any citizen

– including persons with disabilities of both sexes – who meets the necessary conditions may stand as a candidate and be elected.

20. Woman and girls with disabilities take part in nominating candidates and voting in municipal electoral districts and measures have been taken to facilitate the participation of disabled female voters. Measures include allowing them to be accompanied by sign language interpreters to help them with the voting process and installing special facilities to enable them to take part in elections.

21. The Regions Act contains a number of provisions designed to promote the principle of participation in the management of public affairs. Thus article 15 states that a regional council is to be established at the seat of government in each region. Article 16 (5) of the Act states that membership of the council shall include not less than ten local religious scholars, experts and professionals, serving for a period of four years, renewable. This applies equally to persons with and without disabilities.

22. Committees formed in social development centres across the country represent one means of promoting participation, enabling individuals to state their needs and discuss their situation. Article 3 of the social development centres regulation (2007) states that centres established under the regulation are to focus on involving the local population in identifying their needs and providing material and moral support and personal commitment to implementing various programmes. Article 4 states that centres are to encourage local people to form committees to discuss the general needs of their region and local communities.

23. A number of programmes have been launched and measures taken to ensure that girls with disabilities have ready access to suitable education and means of transportation. These programmes and measures include:

- A total of 2,765 integration programmes in mainstream schools for girls, targeting more than 12 principal types of disability and involving 28,426 students; more than 377 integrated kindergartens with early intervention programmes in which more than 1,346 disabled children are enrolled;
- The Ministry of Education has introduced an educational vouchers scheme, involving grants awarded to Ministry-licensed educational institutions and related bodies to provide school places for certain male and female students, including those with disabilities;
- Continuing education programmes targeting women over the age of 21 who have not been enrolled in formal education, which seek to reduce the level of illiteracy in the Kingdom to the point where it can be announced that it has been completely eradicated among the 11–45 age group; continuing education programmes also seek to provide educational opportunities for other age groups in the form of flexible programmes designed to be delivered to illiterate women at home and in which they are encouraged to enrol and continue to learn;
- The formation of committees to facilitate admission to higher education of girls with disabilities by formulating guidelines for the exemption of certain disabilities from National Centre for Assessment examinations;
- The Ministry of Education, in the form of Tatweer Educational Transportation Company, provides free transport for male and female students in government-run mainstream schools; the free service covers 1,227,524 students, with due regard to the safety and security of disabled students of both sexes;
- The development of orientation and mobility programmes for blind women to help them identify focal points and enhance their relationship with the surrounding environment; the provision of technologies to assist mobility, such as white cane and laser cane, sonar-based devices, vision aids, GPS systems and Bluetooth devices for navigating buildings;
- The provision of means of personal transportation for women with disabilities, such as wheelchairs, chest belts and chest straps, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development.

24. Underlining the Kingdom's concern for the welfare of women with disabilities, more than 15 assessment, diagnosis and early intervention centres for girls have been opened in most cities in the Kingdom. These are equipped with the most modern equipment and aids for assessment, diagnosis and ongoing training, including audiometers, middle ear pressure devices, computer-based audiometers, devices for studying movements of the soft palate, devices for assessing hearing aids, hypernasality devices, programmable hearing aids and speech analysis laboratories. Additionally, they provide hearing aids and devices and training systems for girls' educational institutes. A handbook on early linguistic intervention has also been prepared. Furthermore, female speech teachers receive ongoing training in how to implement modern speech and language teaching programmes.

25. The Centre for Disabled Female Student Services, established in 1995, provides essential support for female students and members of the teaching staff with disabilities to help them achieve equality and integrate socially. In particular, the Centre aims to:

- Monitor and resolve the problems they face;
- Offer support to female students with disabilities to enable them to overcome academic obstacles;
- Provide essential equipment, devices and facilities to help female students and employees with disabilities carry out their academic, social and employment duties;
- Respect and take into account individual differences between female university students and guarantee their rights in all areas;
- Raise awareness among university staff of how to deal with the demands of persons with disabilities;
- Provide support to ensure the independence and success, academically and socially, of female students with disabilities;
- Provide the technology to facilitate the education of female university students with disabilities and enable them to learn;
- Provide the support staff and facilities on the ground to enable female students and employees to take part in all university events without hindrance.

26. Royal Order No. 905 (6 Muharram 1439 AH/ 26 September 2017) applies the provisions of the Traffic Act and its implementing regulations, including the issuance of driving licences, to men and women equally, including persons with disabilities; women began driving cars on 10 Shawwal 1439 AH (24 June 2018). Accordingly, women with disabilities who hold a driving licence can now drive private vehicles by themselves or with someone to help them. Vehicles may be adapted for disabled drivers.

Children with disabilities (art. 7)

Reply to paragraph 5

27. The laws of the Kingdom guarantee the delivery of care to children without discrimination and measures have been enacted to achieve this objective on a permanent basis. Furthermore, children from the weakest and most vulnerable groups, such as orphans, the disabled and those deprived of a family environment, receive special care. The Child Protection Act, promulgated by Royal Decree No. 14 (3 Safar 1436 AH/ 25 November 2014) provides legal protection for all children under the age of 18 from abuse and neglect. Article 2 of the Act affirms the provisions of Islamic sharia, statutory laws and international conventions to which the Kingdom is a party, which safeguard the rights of the child and afford protection from all forms of abuse and neglect. The Act seeks to raise awareness of and explain the rights of the child, particularly in relation to protection from abuse and neglect. The implementing regulations for the Child Protection Act, issued by Decision of the Minister of Labour and Social Development No. 56386 (16 Jumada II 1436 AH/ 5 April 2015), contains detailed provisions on implementing the Act. Thus article 2 seeks to protect the best interests of the child in all proceedings that concern him, whether involving public or private social care institutions, the courts, administrative authorities or other bodies.

28. Article 7 of the Child Protection Act stipulates that the child who lacks a proper family environment and may be vulnerable to abuse and neglect has the right to alternative care in a foster family, which will be responsible for his care and protection, or if no foster family is available, in a government-run, private or charitable care institution. The Act makes it clear that placing a child in an institution is the last resort. This is the situation on the ground in the Kingdom and the Ministry of Labour and Social Development is responsible for applying this principle by all possible means, in cooperation with government bodies and civil society organizations.

29. The Juveniles Act clarifies all the statutory measures for dealing with juveniles, including those with disabilities. Thus article 5 stipulates that a juvenile may only be arrested in the presence of his parent or legal guardian, unless caught red-handed. If caught red-handed, the juvenile's parent or legal guardian is to be informed immediately of his arrest. Article 7 only allows a juvenile to be detained for questioning if the public prosecutor believes it is in the interest of the case to do so. In all cases, juveniles may only be detained in care homes attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development. Article 11 states that a juvenile may only be questioned in the presence of a parent/ legal guardian, social worker or lawyer. Article 12 requires the home to prepare regular social reports on the juvenile, to be sent to the court. The Act further determines the measures or punishments to be imposed on juveniles; corporal punishment in any form is excluded. Thus article 15 stipulates the following:

1. If the juvenile is under the age of 15 at the time of committing a punishable act or acts, one or more of the following measures only may be imposed:

- (a) That he receive a reprimand and warning;
- (b) That he be bound over to live with one or both parents or legal guardian;
- (c) That he be prohibited from visiting certain places for a period of not more than three years;
- (d) That he be prohibited from practising a particular job;
- (e) That he be placed under supervision in his normal environment for a period of not more than two years;
- (f) That he perform community service for a period of not more than three years;
- (g) That he be placed in a social or correctional institution for a period of not more than one year, providing that he was at least 12 years old at the time of committing the punishable act.

2. If the juvenile is aged 15 at the time of committing a punishable act or acts, the stipulated punishments shall be applied, with exception of imprisonment; he shall thus be placed in a home for a period of not more than half the maximum term for the offence, with no minimum term set. If the crime is punishable by death, he shall remain in the home for a period of not more than ten years.

3. The court may sentence a 15-year-old juvenile who has committed a punishable act or acts to one or more of the measures stipulated in paragraph (1) of this article, if it believes that his moral conduct, past behaviour, personal circumstances or the circumstances in which he committed the punishable act(s) suggest that he will not reoffend.

4. The court shall charge a suitable enforcement body to monitor implementation of the measure(s) to which the juvenile has been sentenced.

5. The court may at any time impose one or more measures, terminate any measure or replace one measure with another.

30. Article 4 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, promulgated pursuant to Royal Decree No. D/40 (21 Rajab 1430 AH/ 14 July 2009), provides for a harsher penalty in cases

where the victim of the crime is a woman or child. Article 5 affirms that the consent of the victim shall be deemed irrelevant in respect of any of the crimes provided for under the Act.

31. The Protection from Abuse Act, promulgated pursuant to Royal Decree No. D/52 (15 Dhu'l Qaada 1434 AH/ 21 September 2013), is one of the principal national frameworks for addressing the abuse to which various groups in society, including children, may be subjected. The Act seeks to ensure protection from all forms of abuse, including ill-treatment, aggressive behaviour and neglect, offer help and treatment, provide shelter and social, psychological and health care, take the necessary statutory measures to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and punished and spread awareness within society of the concept of abuse and the impact it has on lives. The implementing regulations for the Protection from Abuse Act, issued pursuant to Decision of the Minister of Labour and Social Development No. 43047 (8 Jumada I 1435 AH/ 9 March 2014), contain a number of mechanisms to implement the provisions of the Act.

Awareness-raising (art. 8)

Reply to paragraph 6

32. Various measures have been taken to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities, including activities undertaken by government bodies within the framework of programmes designed to disseminate the culture of human rights and the awareness-raising activities of the Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Information and other bodies. These activities are designed to promote awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and eliminate discrimination against them. They focus on promoting social integration and equal opportunities, breaking down negative stereotypes and removing the social stigmatization of persons most vulnerable to abuse, including those with disabilities.

33. The King Salman Centre for Disability Research has published a book entitled, "Frame of reference for access to the general curriculum by pupils with disabilities", in partnership with the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States. The Centre has also held several training courses to train pedagogical supervisors in using this frame of reference. In 2017, a seminar entitled, "The rights of persons with disabilities in higher education" was held, in which more than 50 specialists took part. Furthermore, in April 2018, the Kingdom hosted the fifth International Conference on Disability and Habilitation, in which more than 100 specialists participated.

34. On 10 January 2017, the Human Rights Commission organized a forum on disability rights for civil society organizations in which some 650 persons, including those with disabilities, officials of governmental and non-governmental organizations and others with an interest in disability rights, participated.

35. The Human Rights Commission has launched various activities in most cities in the Kingdom on the rights of persons with disabilities, including lectures, seminars, workshops, training courses, awareness corners and activities to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. These raise awareness of the Convention and laws relating to the rights of persons with disabilities. The Committee has also produced a number of publications designed to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and these have been widely distributed across social media sites.

36. The Ministry of Education has implemented and taken part in various activities and events. It promotes special days and occasions for the disabled, in which 46 education departments across the country, including both boys and girls, take part each year. Reports on these are submitted to the General Directorate of Special Education of the Ministry of Education. The most significant of these activities and events have been:

- "Inclusivity and equality" – a forum on the employment of persons with disabilities (9–10 December 2018);
- "My initiative is the secret of my success" – a seminar accompanied by an exhibition of drawings by persons with disabilities (16 April 2018);
- Special education marathon (11 December 2017);

- The fourth “My breakthrough” [*intilaqati*] exhibition, marking the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (10–13 December 2018);
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities: “National vision for persons with special needs” (December 2018);
- Workshop on improving the teaching of persons with intellectual impairments (27 February 2017);
- Consultative meeting on autism and pervasive development disorders (13 February 2017);
- Educational policy programme on dyslexia (21–22 November 2018);
- Workshop on the preparation of individual pedagogical plans for autism spectrum disorders (8 November 2017);
- Programme on applying the mainstream curriculum to pupils with disabilities (Riyadh, 3–4 October 2018);
- Preparation of a training package, supervised and approved by the Ministry’s General Directorate of Teacher Training, to accompany a workshop entitled, “Auditory acuity and language in persons with cochlear implants” (1–2 March 2015).

Accessibility (art. 9)

Reply to paragraph 7

37. As regards the results of the assessment of accessibility conducted by the Ministry of Transport, be advised that this type of assessment is carried out on a regular basis in order to measure the progress made by the Ministry toward accessibility.

38. It should be noted that, with the Quality of Life programme, the Kingdom is seeking to ensure that infrastructure facilities are available across the country and not only in the major cities, that they can be easily accessed by public transport and that they are properly equipped to accommodate persons with disabilities.

39. Under article 3 of the Disability Welfare Act, architects and contractors are required to comply with architectural and construction specifications that meet the needs of persons with disabilities in places of habilitation, training, education, welfare and treatment, as well as public and other places covered by the Act. To this end, each competent body must issue the necessary executive decisions. To underline this, the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs directed, pursuant to Circular No. 44816 (8 July 2013), municipal councils, architectural firms and contractors involved in implementing public and private sector projects to comply with the conditions for disabled access contained in the Saudi Building Code. These conditions involve reasonable accommodation, universal access and other principles and concepts contained in the Convention.

40. As regards accessibility in rural areas, work is being carried out across the country, in accordance with the guidelines of the Universal Access Programme, to create an environment that will enable persons in rural areas with disabilities to access infrastructure, including government facilities.

41. The King Salman Centre for Disability Research organized a workshop with 12 government bodies to implement and promote the Universal Access Programme. The Centre is currently preparing a draft set of universal access standards, including intelligent accessibility using modern technology.

Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 10)

Reply to paragraph 8

42. Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 87 (7 Safar 1440 AH/ 16 October 2018) provides for the establishment of the National Risk Council, which brings together all relevant government bodies, and the creation of a subsidiary executive committee. It further approves the establishment of the National Risk Unit, which has the following duties:

- To conduct a comprehensive assessment of national risk, identify points of weakness and prepare, in partnership with the relevant bodies, a register of vital infrastructure and communications networks, as well as a general framework for disaster management and to submit these to the Council for approval;
- To create a centre of excellence to promote the culture of risk management and upgrade the skills of risk and emergency management experts;
- To support bodies concerned with disseminating public awareness of risk management;
- To create a disaster and crisis management centre attached to the Unit;
- To study and upgrade the level of risk preparedness and training within the general framework;
- To develop risk control and monitoring solutions.

43. The General Directorate of Civil Defence is in charge of risk prevention systems and measures and life-saving operations in emergency and disaster situations. Chapter 11 of the Saudi Building Code (SBC201), on the design and construction of facilities to enable access by persons with special needs, is the Directorate-approved reference standard. It should be noted that the General Directorate of Civil Defence has introduced an alarm, obtainable online for free, that enables persons with disabilities to seek help and assistance from Civil Defence in a few easy steps, commensurate with their abilities.

44. A number of awareness-raising films have been released that take into account the needs of persons with disabilities by incorporating sign language translation and the like. Contingency plans have been prepared to deal with all types of risk, paying due regard to evacuating and providing shelter for children, the elderly and the disabled, pursuant to the regulation on evacuation and shelter issued by Ministerial Decision (8 Shaaban 1422 AH/ 24 October 2001). Furthermore, essential health and social care services will be provided in shelters to be set up in emergencies by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour and Social Development under the duties and responsibilities of ministries and government agencies set out in the implementing regulations issued by Ministerial Decision (26 Shawwal 1407 AH/ 23 June 1987).

45. The Kingdom is committed to providing shelter to everyone affected by an emergency, particularly persons with disabilities. Article 14 of the Civil Defence Act states that the duties of the General Directorate of Civil Defence include providing food, clothing, shelter, medical treatment and cash assistance to survivors in times of disaster. The particular situation of persons with disabilities is taken into account in emergencies by calling upon bodies responsible for communications and overall planning, including stakeholders, to use sign language, Braille and other forms of augmentative and alternative communication. The needs of persons with disabilities are further taken into account when developing universal access guidelines, which include emergency evacuation standards.

Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)

Reply to paragraph 9

46. As regards supported decision-making for persons with disabilities in the areas of personal status, financial affairs and family matters of immediate concern to them, the criterion is that of capacity to act and there is no difference in this respect between persons with disabilities and others. If a disabled person enjoys full capacity, no transaction may be carried out by proxy on his behalf unless permitted by him of his own free and informed will and after all statutory procedures have been completed. If he is of diminished capacity (i.e. there exists an impediment to capacity, such as insanity), his acts shall be examined in terms of the benefit and harm they deliver. If they are entirely beneficial to him, they shall be considered sound. If they are entirely harmful, they shall be void. If they alternate between beneficial and harmful, they shall be voidable. On this basis, a disabled person can resort to means of redress, including the courts, if his right to recognition on an equal basis with others before the law is violated.

Access to justice (art. 13)*Reply to paragraph 10*

47. The Basic Law of Governance in the Kingdom guarantees the right of equality to everyone before the law. Thus article 47 stipulates: “The right of litigation shall be guaranteed equally for both citizens and residents in the Kingdom. The law shall set out the necessary procedures for this.” As such and in accordance with the international Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Kingdom recognizes persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others before the law.

48. In addition to what has been mentioned in the report and this memorandum regarding reasonable accommodation, certain provisions in the Kingdom’s statutory laws grant women, prisoners and the sick, including those with disabilities, precedence in respect of litigation and give persons with disabilities the right to call upon someone to help them state their case, such as a sign language interpreter, for example, or other type of help. The court can be called upon to provide this service.

49. Royal Order No. 25803 (29 Jumada I 1439 AH/ 15 February 2018) includes directives to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development to help the needy, including persons with disabilities, claim their rights. The most significant of these are:

- To coordinate and cooperate with the Saudi Bar Association regarding a periodic list of the names and titles of lawyers volunteering to provide legal aid, in implementation of article 13 (11) of the charter of the Saudi Bar Association;
- To conclude a memorandum of understanding with the Mawaddah Charity for the Reduction of Divorce and its Effects with a view to benefitting from its experience in legal fostering and providing legal aid and advice to deserving cases;
- To cooperate with the National Society for Human Rights to benefit from its expertise in providing legal aid;
- To maintain contact with licensed attorneys and encourage them to provide legal aid and advice to deserving cases;
- To benefit from the experience of developed countries in providing legal aid and advice to deserving cases.

50. The Ministry of Justice and King Salman Centre for Disability Research signed a memorandum of cooperation relating to the Universal Access Programme with a view to facilitating access to court premises by persons with disabilities and equipping courts in accordance with proper standards.

Liberty and security of the person (art. 14)*Reply to paragraph 11*

51. It is a condition of admission to and placement in permanent care in a home or social habilitation centre that persons enjoying legal capacity are excluded, save within narrow limits, such as if admission will help to protect and care for the person, and subject to his free and informed agreement. Some 7,888 cases, none of whom enjoy legal capacity, have been admitted to these centres because of personal and family circumstances.

52. Among the measures taken to upgrade social habilitation centres were three special workshops organized by the King Salman Centre for Disability Research and the Ministry of Labour and Social Development on an assessment manual for day care-centres. The workshops focused on the safety and security of persons with disabilities and stressed the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of personal information.

53. The current number of persons with disabilities deprived of liberty for penal reasons stands at 156 inmates and detainees.

54. Various training programmes have been held within the framework of the memorandum of understanding concluded between the Kingdom, in the form of the Human Rights Commission, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. These

include programmes designed to provide information on the human rights conventions to which the Kingdom is a party, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Justice Training Centre, established by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 162 (24 Rabi II 1435 AH/ 24 February 2014) provides instruction on the provisions of the international human rights conventions to which the Kingdom is a party, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, for judges, members of the public prosecution service, lawyers, military personnel, health care professionals, representatives of civil society organizations and other stakeholders.

55. Between 2013 and 2018, the Ministry of Interior held 62 training courses on human rights, attended by 1,470 trainees, helping to promote and enshrine the culture of human rights in the area of security. The Ministry, in the form of the General Directorate of Public Security, has arranged a number of lectures across the country, helping to develop the culture of human rights among public security personnel and raise awareness of the international conventions to which the Kingdom has acceded, including this Convention. Some 1,500 participants have benefitted from these lectures.

Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 15)

Reply to paragraph 12

56. The death penalty and corporal punishment, which are provided for under criminal law in the Kingdom, are compatible and not in conflict with the principles of international law. These punishments are only handed down in the most serious cases and within strict limits, as a final verdict delivered by a competent court after all judicial proceedings before all levels of court have been exhausted. Such cases are heard by a total of 13 judges, commencing with three judges of the first degree court. The judgment of the first degree court is then passed up to the court of appeal, where it is heard by a bench of five judges, even if none of the parties to the case has submitted an appeal. If the court of appeal upholds the judgment, it is passed up to the Supreme Court to be heard by five more judges (again, even if none of the parties has submitted an appeal). If the Supreme Court upholds the judgment, the judicial process concludes.

57. Article 15 of the Juveniles Act states that, if the crime committed by a juvenile is punishable by death, it shall be sufficient for him to remain in the home for a period of not more than ten years.

Freedom from exploitation, violence or abuse (art. 16)

Reply to paragraph 13

58. The laws of the Kingdom criminalize all forms of violence, including violence against disabled women, girls and children. Several laws have recently been promulgated that increase the power of the legal system to eliminate violence. These include the Protection from Abuse Act, which not only criminalizes abuse but also addresses the existence of social environments conducive to abusive behaviour, and the Anti-Harassment Act.

59. Abuse is a crime that requires urgent intervention in view of the physical, psychological and social damage it causes, and often occurs in situations that are beyond control and where perpetrators cannot be brought to account. As such, the law obliges anyone who knows of a case of abuse to report it immediately. Thus an employee who knows of a case of abuse must inform his employer at once and the employer must inform the authorities or police as soon as he learns of it. Persons with disabilities are one of the groups afforded protection by this Act. Together, the Protection from Abuse Act and Child Protection Act, referred to above, represent a legal assurance that violence against disabled women and girls is unacceptable.

60. Article 2 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, promulgated pursuant to Royal Decree No. D/40 (14 July 2009), outlaws all forms of human trafficking for purposes of sexual abuse, labour, forced servitude, begging, bondage, slavery or practices akin to

slavery, organ procurement or medical experimentation. The law defines the elements of the crime and, anxious to increase the level of protection afforded under article 4 thereof, treats cases where the victim is a disabled person or a child as requiring harsher punishment.

61. To strengthen the complaints procedure, a centre was opened on 20 March 2016, working around the clock to receive complaints of domestic violence via a single-number hotline (1919). Furthermore, protection teams have been formed in all regions and governorates to receive complaints. A report received by the centre is forwarded to one of the social protection committees found throughout the country. The centre completes the necessary procedures, provides assistance to victims and, if there is sufficient evidence of a crime having been committed, refers the case to the public prosecution service to carry out the statutory process in accordance with the Protection from Abuse Act.

62. The National Family Safety Programme has an important role to play in this area. This is a national programme designed to protect the family from violence by offering prevention and support programmes, raising awareness, building professional partnerships with specialists, governmental and non-governmental institutions and international organizations in order to ensure a safe environment for families in the Kingdom. The Programme operates a free, single-number hotline for children (116111), set up in 2008 in partnership with 14 government bodies and dedicated to supporting children under the age of 18, including girls with disabilities. The service is available to all children – citizens and residents – across the country without discrimination and lets children express themselves, submit complaints and receive advice. Specialists refer complaints and reports of ill-treatment, neglect and exploitation at home, school, in the neighbourhood or in public places to the competent bodies and follow-up with them to ensure that the child has received the appropriate service or protection in a timely manner. Messages are dealt with in a confidential manner to safeguard the child's security and safety. Thus contact numbers are only noted when forwarding the complaint to the appropriate body.

Reply to paragraph 14

63. Comprehensive habilitation centres are responsible for caring for and habilitating cases of extreme disability, both male and female, who are incapable of vocational habilitation and providing them with training through work and occupational therapy programmes. Teams consisting of members of the board and staff of the Human Rights Commission make inspection visits to centres across the country. Visits are based on normative foundations, principally the Disability Welfare Act, the statutes of the Disability Habilitation Programme, issued by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 34 (10 Rabi I 1400 AH/ 28 January 1980) and the obligations under the human rights conventions to which the Kingdom is a party, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A total of 42 centres have been visited, plus a unit attached to one of these facilities. A number of recommendations emerged from these visits, including the need to step up the training provided to workers, continue to improve the services offered to beneficiary groups, develop infrastructure and facilities and expand the provision of spaces for socializing and visits.

64. The Protection from Abuse Act and its implementing regulations contain provisions relating to the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims. Thus article 2 of the Act aims to provide help and treatment, shelter and essential social, psychological and medical care. Article 2 (3) of the implementing regulations states that the Ministry of Labour and Social Development shall work in coordination with public and private sector bodies to ensure the provision of shelter, assistance and moral, psychological, social, health and security-related support for persons subjected to abuse.

Protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)

Reply to paragraph 15

65. Article 2 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act outlaws all forms of human trafficking for purposes of sexual abuse, labour, forced servitude, begging, bondage, slavery or practices akin to slavery, organ procurement or medical experimentation, with maximum penalties of 15 years' imprisonment and/ or a fine of one million riyals. Article 5

states that the consent of the victim shall be deemed irrelevant in respect of any of the crimes provided for under the Act. Furthermore, under normal circumstances, the laws of the Kingdom do not permit any medical procedure to be carried out on persons with disabilities, including women and girls, without their free and independent consent.

Living independently and being included in the community (art. 19)

Reply to paragraph 16

66. Day-care centres admit persons with extreme, moderate, dual and multiple intellectual disabilities, who attend morning and afternoon periods of at least 5 hours each. The State pays care and habilitation costs for one period only. There are currently 191 centres providing habilitation and rehabilitation across the country, attended by 16,916 persons. It should be noted that opportunities for investors in these centres are being expanded and include State subsidy of transportation. Furthermore, health, psychological, social and pedagogical services are offered to persons with extreme and moderate disabilities, who do not benefit from the integration programmes in mainstream schools or private institutions. These centres offer the following services: physiotherapy, occupational therapy, work therapy, speech and communication therapy, behaviour modification programmes, social services, programmes and activities, pedagogical programmes and services, nursing services, personal care services and recreational programmes.

67. Home-care services are provided by a medical team and some 9,763 persons with disabilities have benefitted (52 per cent male and 48 per cent female). Furthermore, the Ministry of Health provides prosthetic devices to all who need them. Several specialist civil society organizations also provide prosthetic devices.

68. Some 113,380,000 riyals were spent on purchasing assistive devices for 15,285 persons with disabilities during 2017.

69. As regards the assignment of a personal assistant to a person with disabilities, in addition to the foregoing, Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 229 (2 Rajab 1431 AH/ 14 June 2010) requires the State to pay on behalf of a person with disabilities the fees for recruitment visas, exit/ re-entry visas and the issue and renewal of residence permits for a private driver, domestic worker and nurse. Some 310,915 visas for disabled persons have been exempted from fees at a cost of 621,830,000 riyals. Regarding the criteria for assigning a personal assistant to a disabled person, the role of the assistant is confined to providing help and assistance without in any way affecting the independence of their charge. If this criterion is violated, the aggrieved disabled person may have recourse to available means of redress, such as the Human Rights Commission. The Commission has mechanisms designed to monitor any violation of the rights of persons with disabilities and take the appropriate statutory measures.

Personal mobility (art. 20)

Reply to paragraph 17

70. Vehicles are modified to meet the needs of the disabled, whether as driver or passenger, in accordance with certain criteria. This may include installing a device to adjust the steering wheel, a seat that can be raised and lowered and a winch to enable wheelchair users to board the vehicle, as well as preferred type of vehicle (small car or family saloon). It should be noted that, at present, disabled drivers receive financial assistance and are then free to purchase the vehicle best equipped to suit their needs.

71. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development has provided 6,300 disability-equipped vehicles and transferred the sum of 150,000 riyals each to 5,709 persons with disabilities at a total cost of 856,350,000 riyals to enable them to purchase the vehicle that suits their needs.

72. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development provides financial assistance to enable persons with disabilities to purchase medical appliances and audiovisual aids. It is possible to apply for assistance in a variety of ways, including via the Ministry website. The

Ministry has made available a total of 113,380,000 riyals for the purchase of assistive devices, from which 15,285 persons with disabilities have benefitted.

73. As regards promoting the mobility of persons with disabilities in rural areas, the programmes of financial assistance for the purchase of medical appliances and specially equipped vehicles are available to all persons with disabilities who are eligible. Regarding the assisted vehicle purchase programme, inhabitants of rural areas have priority over and are assigned more points than urban dwellers.

Freedom of expression and opinion and access to information (art. 21)

Reply to paragraph 18

74. Several government bodies have adopted W3C standards for their websites and work is currently underway on applying these to all government websites. Bodies such as the Civil Status and Passports Department of the Ministry of Interior, municipal councils attached to the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and employment offices attached to the ministries of labour, civil service, education, social affairs and health, as well as several health organizations, provide facilities to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access information and services in the same way as the able-bodied. Several of these provide reception offices specifically for persons with disabilities and employ sign-language interpreters and guides for blind clients.

75. As regards the subsidy given to private entities to promote accessible information, article 4 (7) of the charter of the Commission for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities provides for government support for non-governmental associations and organizations that deliver services for persons with disabilities.

76. Sign-language interpretation is provided on Saudi television for news broadcasts and programmes relating to social affairs and disability.

77. The King Salman Centre for Disability Research, in cooperation with several academic bodies, has developed up-to-date audiovisual and developmental programmes to facilitate access to information by persons with disabilities.

Reply to paragraph 19

78. The Ministry of Health has implemented a number of programmes to train hearing impaired children who have undergone cochlear implants, and their families. The most significant of these were: an instructional and follow-up programme held in 2018 for families looking after children with hearing disabilities; a workshop entitled, “Auditory acuity and language in persons with cochlear implants” (1–2 March 2015); a training workshop entitled, “Auditory verbal habilitation for persons with cochlear implants” (17–19 April 2016), targeting speech and hearing disability teachers in kindergartens and primary schools; training was given to a number of male and female teachers in the operation and troubleshooting of ossicular devices and cochlear implant devices (4–6 November 2018); and a meeting was held between supervisors and families of persons with hearing disabilities entitled, “First dialogue meeting of the families of the deaf, the hearing impaired and persons with cochlear implants” (15 March 2018).

79. The King Salman Centre for Disability Research provides sign language interpretation services and runs training courses to teach sign language and promote its use. Saudi universities also have special education departments that teach and promote sign language and deaf culture through a range of community activities.

80. Sign language is officially recognized by the authorities in the Kingdom, as witnessed by the fact that judicial and government bodies employ sign language interpreters in the course of their work. The King Salman Centre for Disability Research holds regular courses to train specialists, stakeholders and families in how to communicate in sign language. It should be noted that the Centre is a member of the World Federation of the Deaf. Furthermore, the Saudi sign language society has been founded. This is a non-governmental organization that seeks to serve 750,000 people with hearing impairment, both male and female. As a specialized, professional body, the society strives to increase

the number of sign language interpreters by providing training and qualification. It also seeks to serve the deaf by facilitating contact with the community and ensuring that legal and procedural principles in the Kingdom are observed. The confidentiality of personal information in medical and judicial settings is guaranteed by interpreters.

Respect for privacy (art. 22)

Reply to paragraph 20

81. The right to privacy is just one of the human rights principles affirmed by the Basic Law of Governance, of which article 40 stipulates: “Correspondence by telegraph and mail, telephone conversations and other means of communication shall be protected. They may not be seized, delayed, viewed, or listened to except in the cases provided for by law.” Article 56 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates: “Postal and telegraphic correspondence, telephone conversations and other means of communication shall be inviolable and not subject to seizure, delay, surveillance or censorship except by a substantiated order and for a specified period of time as provided for by law.”

82. Similarly, article 3 of the Telecommunications and Information Technology Act, promulgated by Royal Decree No. D/12 (12 Rabi I 1422/ 4 June 2001), guarantees the right of access to public communications networks, devices and services at reasonable cost. It also stresses the obligation to uphold the principles of equality and non-discrimination at all times, protect the public interest and the interests of users and ensure confidentiality of communications and security of information.

Respect for home and the family (art. 23)

Reply to paragraph 21

83. Discrimination on grounds of disability in marriage, family, maternity, paternity or personal relations is forbidden under the laws of the Kingdom. The measures adopted to enforce the law prohibit and prevent discriminatory practices, ensuring continued protection and promotion of human rights while keeping abreast of contemporary developments and changes. The laws of the Kingdom are subject to regular and ongoing review to ensure that they keep pace with modern developments and the Kingdom’s obligations under international conventions.

84. Positive discrimination measures taken in support of persons with disabilities include the launch of collective marriage programs by several civil society organizations in the Kingdom, such as *Harakia* (Adult Disability Society). These organizations provide financial and social support, cover all the costs of marriage, help to find independent accommodation and monitor the situation of persons with disabilities after they get married.

85. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs organizes various family development programmes and activities, particularly for families whose health condition and social circumstances require help and support. These include families with one or more disabled spouse or disabled children. Under the statutes of the aforementioned Disability Rehabilitation Programmes, adopted by Decision of the Council of Ministers, persons with disability are provided with home care and reproductive assistance in the form of welfare services and artificial insemination free of charge. Individuals wishing to marry are given advice on the social and psychological aspects of marriage, family planning and healthy reproduction. Studies and research on the family are conducted.

86. The Ministry of Health has a varied role to play in family life, from health and prevention services to education. The Saudi Health Council requires all institutions in the Saudi health sector to implement programmes to promote healthy marriage, defined as a state of genetic compatibility and harmony between husband and wife. These programmes thus help to ensure sound family formation. The Ministry also holds seminars and prints and distributes educational publications on health and the family. The King Salman Centre for Disability Research has established several projects to determine the genetic causes of certain diseases and discovered more than 470 genetic defects linked to neurological, visual,

auditory and developmental disabilities, raising the possibility of preventing them in the future.

Education (art. 24)

Reply to paragraph 22

87. A national study was conducted in 2008 to assess how well students with disabilities in the Kingdom were integrated in mainstream schools. The study reached a number of conclusions, of which the following are the most significant:

- Male and female students with disabilities have made substantial pedagogical gains as a result of their integration in mainstream schools;
- Pedagogical integration provides disabled male and female students with a normal academic and social environment;
- Integration programmes in mainstream schools in the Kingdom are based on good infrastructure and enjoy a positive relationship with schools;
- The academic attainment of male and female students with disabilities shows all-round improvement as a result of their integration in mainstream schools;
- The positive impact of pedagogical integration greatly exceeds the negative effects.

88. Saudi Vision 2030 and its subsidiary National Transformation Programme contain a number of goals and initiatives designed to foster and protect the rights of persons with disabilities including, principally, a focus on developing special education for persons with disabilities by raising their levels of enrolment in mainstream schools, improving the quality of services and creating technical support centres to support the teaching and learning process.

89. The study made a number of recommendations, including continued expansion of pedagogical integration in the Kingdom, development and application of guidelines and criteria for the selection of schools, enforcement of the regulations for special education programmes and institutes and development of modern technology for the benefit of students with disabilities.

90. As regards measures taken to transform the system of education from a segregated to an inclusive one, the Ministry of Education has issued regulations and guidelines to consolidate the principle of integration. These include an organizational manual for special education (1437 AH/ 2016), a procedural manual for special education (1437 AH/ 2016), an early intervention manual (“Inclusive education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia”, 1438 AH/ 2017) and a model manual (“Inclusive education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia”, 1438 AH/ 2017). Furthermore, a programme of integrated solutions for special education (inclusive education) has been launched. This seeks to reconstruct the school to enable it to embrace all students in accordance with their capacities and needs. The idea is to implement inclusive education in partnership with a global education consultancy firm with a view to promoting integration in mainstream schools and developing procedural manuals and terms of reference for introduction in model schools. This involves the formulation of principles, parameters, rules, criteria, requirements, essentials, mechanisms and procedures to make schools a model environment for inclusive special education.

91. The Ministry has also taken numerous measures to achieve total or partial integration pursuant to the capacities and needs of male and students with disabilities. The most significant of these measures are the introduction of more special education programmes in mainstream schools, the professional development of teaching and administrative staff who work with disabled students and the provision of educational technology and aids for distribution to students free of charge.

92. The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health are combining efforts to provide support services for persons with disabilities. These include health units, support service centres, early detection services for newborn children at risk of disability, provision of Ministry of Health hearing aids to children up to the age of three, joint management of cases of disability, joint provision of services, case studies, raising awareness of diseases

that can result in disability, employment of Ministry of Health nurses in physical and health disability programs and reactivation of the mobile hearing assessment unit for girls and boys in order to address the delay in assessments due to the distances between villages and the centres where services are available and hearing aids are dispensed.

93. Within the framework of the support role played by civil society organizations in this context, the Ministry of Education has established a partnership with the Prince Mohammed Centre for Autism. Furthermore, the King Salman Centre for Disability Research, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, has organized more than 50 workshops on a number of programmes and projects relating to disability and education. These include drawing up standards and criteria for the early detection of learning difficulties, preparing pre-early intervention programmes, evaluating cases detected, training staff to apply criteria and methods, preparing frames of reference for the integration of persons with disabilities in mainstream education and implementing research projects focusing on the application of curricula for the blind and those with developmental disabilities.

94. More than 27 events have been held as part of the academic programme of the King Salman Centre for Disability Research, including a number of training courses for specialists and staff working in the field of special education and the families of persons with disabilities. In cooperation with several other bodies, the Centre organized a workshop on the future of higher education for persons with disabilities. It also organized a session devoted to the employment of persons with disabilities during the fifth International Conference on Disability and Rehabilitation and a forum on the employment of persons with disabilities (9–10 December 2018).

Health (art. 25)

Reply to paragraph 23

95. Health professionals working with persons with disabilities receive ongoing training and are able to participate in seminars and conferences on disability inside the Kingdom and abroad. Furthermore, programs are being prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development training centre in partnership with medical science faculties and specialized psychotherapy centres to train health specialists to deal with persons with disabilities, improve their skills and deliver best professional practice.

96. During the 2014 and 2018 international conferences on disability and rehabilitation, the King Salman Centre for Disability Research organized two workshops for health sector workers on how to communicate with persons with disabilities who are ill. The Centre also signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Ministry of Health to supply the Ministry with manuals on universal access for use in Ministry health facilities.

97. Approximately 172 billion riyals have been allocated to the health and social development sector in the 2019 budget, including 7.47 billion riyals allocated to Saudi Vision 2030 programmes and initiatives. It should be stressed that the financial, human and technical resources which have been allocated guarantee that persons with disabilities have access to high levels of health and social care. Furthermore, the funds set aside by generous order of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to support the disabled are an indication of his great concern for this section of the population.

98. The goals of the Primary Health Care Strategy (2010–2020) include improving the health of persons with disabilities. In 2003, the Ministry of Health initiated a programme to study genetic metabolic diseases and cases of hypothyroidism in newborn children throughout the Kingdom; this has had an impact on cases of early detection and reduced the incidence of the condition among newborns. To prevent and reduce the incidence of disability, Decision of the Minister of Health No. 140921/20/26 (30 Shaaban 1425 AH/ 14 October 2004) implements a national programme to prevent hearing impairment and deafness among children and elaborates a plan to implement this programme, involving the creation of specialist centres in several leading hospitals.

99. Comprehensive habilitation centres are a new type of centre for the care and habilitation persons with disabilities, consisting of vocational and social habilitation

sections for persons with severe disabilities. They were introduced to bring together all habilitation services for persons with disabilities in one unit for each of the sexes under the oversight of a single department. They offer all the services and benefits that separate social and vocational habilitation centres provide and have the same admission requirements.

100. The financial assistance offered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development covers assistive equipment, such as manual and electrical wheelchairs, medical beds and other equipment needed by persons with disabilities to make them self-reliant.

Habilitation and rehabilitation (art. 26)

Reply to paragraph 24

101. Social habilitation centres provide both habilitation and rehabilitation services, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychotherapy, behavioural therapy and social integration programmes. Day-care centres also provide these services, as well as speech and communication therapy. Centres can be found in towns and villages across the country, making them easy for beneficiaries to access. Furthermore, investors in day-care habilitation and rehabilitation facilities have all licensing costs paid in full by the Government. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development, in partnership with the Ministry of Civil Service, is always seeking to attract female habilitation and rehabilitation specialists to work in centres providing services for women and girls with disabilities.

102. To supplement the legislative and procedural measures relating to the care and habilitation of persons with disabilities, Decision of the Council of Minister No. 291 (4 Ramadan 1433 AH/ 23 July 2012) approved the regulations for non-governmental habilitation centres for the disabled, designed to encourage the civil sector to participate in the care and habilitation of persons with disabilities and help to develop the vocational, social, psychological, pedagogical, health, recreational and rehabilitation aspects of programmes for the disabled at vocational habilitation centres, social habilitation centres and day-care centres.

103. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development established the Directorate General for the Care and Habilitation of Persons with Disabilities, which seeks to provide care and habilitation in the form of integrated habilitation and social services for all categories of disabled persons, including those with intellectual, sensory or motor disabilities and with varying degrees of disability, including mild, moderate and severe. Services vary in accordance with type and degree of disability, from simple day-care to habilitation and vocational therapy, and are based upon the most up-to-date methods. An annual financial subsidy is provided, commensurate with degree of disability for those who do meet the conditions of admission, who cannot be admitted or whose families wish to look after them. The duties of the Directorate General include coordinating with the Ministry of Civil Service, labour offices and private recruitment agencies to find job opportunities for qualified persons with disabilities and identify and meet the manpower needs of the Directorate General head office and branches.

104. The Vocational Habilitation Department monitors measures relating to the provision of educational services for persons with paralysis, as well as habilitation services for those with physical, sensory or intellectual disabilities, to prepare them for employment in occupations consistent with their residual abilities and make them productive members of society capable of adapting to and interacting with society in a manner that enables them to integrate and participate in their family and social environments and gain self-confidence. Training is given to persons with disabilities who are able to follow it and the Department monitors such training inside and outside habilitation centres. The Department's goals consist in habilitating persons with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities by developing their special aptitudes and enabling them to acquire suitable skills. The Department supervises a number of vocational habilitation centres in the Kingdom, which specialize in the habilitation and training of persons with disabilities. The centres for men and centres for women all include a number of departments and units providing suitable vocational training for persons with disabilities in fields such as electrical work, refrigeration, carpentry, office work, typing and computing, secretarial work, painting,

engraving, decorating, landscaping, dressmaking, tailoring, housekeeping and switchboard operation.

105. In addition to vocational training, the vocational habilitation centres offer the following services: payment of a monthly allowance to trainees, provision of on-site accommodation, including catering, clothing and health-care and social services for those who live outside the town where the centre is located, and sports and leisure programmes at the centres. The centres work in cooperation with recruitment bodies to find employment for persons who have completed their training; they also provide financial support to help trainees launch individual projects in the areas in which they have been trained.

Work and employment (art. 27)

Reply to paragraph 25

106. Article 1 of the Civil Service Act affirms that, as general principle, applicants for public service are chosen on the basis of merit. This applies to all employees without exception. The main criterion is the commitment of staff, including persons with disabilities, to the functions and duties of the job as stipulated in law. The Ministry of Civil Service is keen to ensure the soundness of the measures taken and their consistency with the rules that govern the Service. To this end, it works in cooperation with government bodies to ascertain and oversee proper implementation of the rules and regulations governing the relationship between employee and employer. The Ministry further seeks to raise and develop awareness of employee rights by posting articles and employment guidelines on the internet and organizing forums and workshops to raise the competence of specialists employed by government bodies. A special department has been included within the organizational structure of the Ministry of Civil Service, charged with receiving employee complaints and studying these to ensure that proper procedures have been followed and that employees enjoy their rights in full as stipulated in law.

107. As regards promoting the employment of persons with disabilities, article 28 of the Labour Law stipulates that whenever the nature of the business allows for the recruitment of persons with disabilities who have received vocational training, all employers who employ 25 or more workers must ensure that at least 4 per cent of their total workforce is comprised of vocationally qualified persons with disabilities, hired either through recruitment offices or other channels. Employers must submit a list to the competent labour office detailing the jobs occupied by such persons and the wages of each. In 2008, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development issued a number of decisions with a view to encouraging private sector establishments to provide employment for persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with their abilities. The Ministry also issued a decision in 2012, regulating the calculation of monthly salaries and specifying which categories of person are subject to special treatment under the points-based Saudization programme (*nitaqat*); persons with disabilities who are capable of working constitute one of these categories. The decision sets out how to include persons with disabilities in calculating Saudization levels.

108. Numerous measures have been taken to promote the employment of persons with disabilities, chief among them being:

- The “*Tawafuq*” inclusive employment programme, designed to integrate persons with disabilities in the private sector; work is underway on improving services and introducing specific employment channels to serve persons with mental and psychological disabilities, including autism sufferers, through an initiative to expand vocational training and enable employment;
- An incentive bonus paid to trainees with disabilities in vocational habilitation centres enrolled in specific vocational diploma courses;
- The launch of a harmonization initiative designed to create suitable working environments for persons with disabilities by issuing certificates to companies that comply with the criteria enabling persons with disabilities to integrate with ease; more than 900 establishments have registered online to obtain the certificate, of which 150 have been awarded to date;

- Obliging employers of persons with disabilities to provide them with the full range of facilities and means of access.

109. Article 10 (11) of the implementing regulations of the Labour Law obliges establishments who employ persons with disabilities to meet certain workplace conditions and make reasonable accommodation. Paragraph 12 states that, when making inspection visits to establishments, labour inspectors must ascertain the number of disabled workers, the nature of their work and the type of arrangements and accommodation made for them.

110. The King Salman Centre for Disability Research advised the Human Resources Development Fund on a project entitled, “The design of employment capacity assessment criteria: a systematic way of matching the capabilities and capacities of persons with disabilities to vacancies in the local labour market.” This sets out in detail the criteria for employing persons with auditory, vision and motor disabilities. The Centre organized a workshop for staff of the Human Resources Development Fund to provide training in the workplace requirements of persons with disabilities, how to adapt the workplace to suit the disabled and how to deal with them. The Centre also supplied several chambers of commerce and private sector bodies with universal access criteria to enable the workplace to be adapted to receive disabled employees.

111. The number of persons with disabilities in formal employment stands at 65,391 in more than 30,000 establishments.

Adequate standard of living and social protection (art. 28)

Reply to paragraph 26

112. The number of Saudi citizens aged five and over with disabilities stands at 1,419,203 (742,102 males and 677,101 females).

113. Royal Order No. 24535 (25 Jumada I 1438 AH/ 22 February 2017) approves the method for calculating the absolute poverty line in order to measure the problem of poverty in the Kingdom. Work is underway on implementing the Order.

114. The housing subsidy regulation, adopted by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 82 (5 Rabi I 1435 AH/ 6 January 2014) prioritizes care for certain categories, such as the disabled, widows, divorcées, orphans, the elderly and the poor. Furthermore, extra points are awarded to families with one or more disabled member. The number of points increases with the number of disabled family members and degree of disability, giving them priority access to housing subsidy.

115. The Kingdom has taken a number of measures to eliminate poverty, including adopting the National Strategy for Social Development, prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development. In line with this strategy, substantial additional financial resources are allocated to a wide and diverse range of welfare services and social and economic support for the poor and groups with special needs, channelled through programmes of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development and community organizations.

116. Financial assistance of between 333 riyals and 1,666 riyals monthly is provided to persons with disabilities and the families who look after them, distributed at four levels as follows: 1,666 riyals per month, 1,166 riyals per month, 833 riyals per month and 333 riyals per month.

117. The number of persons with disabilities benefitting from support programmes stands at 460,824, for a total annual cost of 5.2 billion riyals.

118. To encourage enrolment in habilitation programmes by persons with disabilities, article 14 of the statutes of the Disability Habilitation Programme provides for payment of a monthly allowance of 400 riyals to each trainee with disabilities with effect from his date of enrolment in the Programme, including periods of leave. If the trainee is accommodated on-site, the allowance is reduced to 200 riyals per month. In both cases, 200 riyals is added to the amount received by those supporting a family. Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 157 (12 Dhu'l-Hijja 1400 AH/ 21 October 1980) increased the allowance for trainees with disabilities enrolled in vocational habilitation centres from 400 riyals to 800 riyals per

month and from 200 riyals to 400 riyals for those accommodated on-site; family support was increased from 200 riyals to 400 riyals per month.

119. Training is also provided for persons with disabilities who are unable to enter special or mainstream education. Programmes last between one and two years and offer students the opportunity to gain a vocational diploma in a variety of fields, such as computing, carpentry, bookbinding, refrigeration, electrical work, landscaping and plant nursery management. Graduates can apply for grants of 50,000 riyals to start commercial enterprises in their field of study.

Participation in political and public life (art. 29)

Reply to paragraph 27

120. The laws of the Kingdom guarantee citizens the right, without discrimination, to participate in political and public life. Thus article 43 of the Basic Law of Governance states that every citizen has the right to address the authorities on matters of concern to him. Persons with disabilities are also able to enjoy this right, occupying senior decision-making positions and taking part in municipal elections and chamber of commerce elections. Article 1 of the Civil Service Act states that merit is the basis on which employees are selected to hold public office. As such, there is nothing to prevent persons with disabilities holding senior posts in the State or occupying public positions. Furthermore, there are no statutory provisions that prevent persons with disabilities from exercising the right to vote or to nominate themselves as candidates for elected office. The Municipal Councils Act affirms the equal right of all citizens, including persons with disabilities, to vote in and stand as candidates for membership of a municipal council.

Reply to paragraph 28

121. The Government of the Kingdom supports associations and foundations that seek to protect human rights or particular aspects thereof. It also supports and encourages individual human rights activists, whom it considers as fundamental partners in human rights activity. Legislative measures taken to foster the role of civil society organizations include promulgation of the Civil Society Associations and Foundations Act by Royal Decree No. D/8 (19 Safar 1437 AH/ 1 December 2015). The Act aims to regulate, develop and protect non-governmental activity, contribute to national growth, promote the participation of citizens in community management and development, foster the culture of voluntary work and achieve social solidarity. It enables an association to be established by 10 persons and a licence to be obtained within 60 days from the date of completing the application papers, in order to facilitate the process. This Act and other pertinent laws guarantee the diversity and independence of civil society organizations.

122. The main functions of civil society organizations nationally include preparing draft legislation, overseeing implementation of laws and human rights conventions to which the Kingdom is a party and participating in the preparation of the Kingdom's contractual reports and Periodic Universal Review reports. Human rights organizations also compile reports assessing the rights-related performance of government agencies. The National Society for Human Rights, for example, publishes periodic reports on the human rights situation in the Kingdom, highlighting shortcomings and the causes thereof. Furthermore, several associations and organizations working in various areas of human rights, including the rights of persons with disabilities, prepare studies and reports and organize forums and interactive media activities designed to protect and promote the rights with which they are concerned. They are a permanent feature of human rights conferences, forums and events. The laws governing civil society organizations guarantee that they are able to conduct their business with complete independence.

Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (art. 30)

Reply to paragraph 29

123. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print

Disabled (2013) pursuant to Royal Decree No. D/109 (5 Dhu'l-Qaada 1439 AH/ 18 July 2018).

124. A number of initiatives have been launched within the framework of the Disability Welfare Act to facilitate access by persons with disabilities to the urban environment and information and to remove all obstacles to their participation. Article 2 of the Act stipulates that the State guarantees the right of persons with disabilities to access preventive, welfare and habilitation services. It encourages individuals and organizations to provide these services through the relevant bodies in each area; this includes disabled access to literary and cultural clubs and libraries across the Kingdom.

125. The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs has published a manual on the technical requirements, standards and specifications which must be observed when designing and upgrading municipal services for persons with disabilities in order to facilitate their mobility and when adapting public and private places frequented by persons with disabilities. Municipal councils and local authorities must comply with these and ensure that they are adhered to when issuing building permits for public and private sector buildings. The manual also covers the conditions which must be met when designing mosques and choosing their locations in order to facilitate access. The Ministry, working in coordination with the King Salman Centre for Disability Research, has also prepared a handbook on universal access to be consulted by municipal councils and local authorities when reviewing the design and implementation of all public and private sector facilities in order to avoid difficulties and facilitate mobility for all members of society, including persons with disabilities.

126. As regards measures taken to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to private and public sector cultural, recreational, tourism and sporting events and services, the General Sports Authority and related bodies observe the special rights of persons with disabilities in the design of all new sporting facilities. The Authority provides a wide range of services to persons with disabilities, including car parking close to facilities, passageways to facilitate access and conveyance to seating, special elevators to facilitate access to seating, disabled toilets, hospitality services and free tickets for disabled persons and their companions. The Authority provides trained staff, signposts, warning signs and safety equipment at its facilities.

C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)

Statistics and data collection (art. 31)

Reply to paragraph 30

127. To collect data on persons with disabilities, the General Authority for Statistics relies upon demographic surveys and surveys of individuals. Data on individuals with disabilities was collected from the demographic survey carried out in 2016 plus the Washington Group Short Set, covering difficulties in seeing, hearing, moving, communicating with and being understood by others, remembering and concentrating, and self-care. Also included were demographic, social and economic features, relationship between father and mother and normal place of residence.

128. The collection of data on disability and difficulties in functioning was extended in 2017 using the Washington Group Extended Question Set, designed to survey persons with disabilities. The main questions were adopted, alongside subsidiary questions to provide information of importance to disability-related bodies.

International cooperation (art. 32)

Reply to paragraph 31

129. As noted above, the Kingdom is supportive of non-governmental associations and foundations, including those working in the field of disability rights, and cooperates with regional and international human rights organizations through bodies such as the Human

Rights Commission. Article 5 (12) of the Commission's charter stipulates that it should work with national, regional and international associations and foundations and develop relationships with them in order to achieve its goals. The King Salman Centre for Disability Research has signed a number of memorandums of cooperation on exchanging scientific expertise, organizing conferences and undertaking joint visits. As mentioned, the Centre is a member of the World Federation of the Deaf. Furthermore, a joint programme of cooperation was signed with UNICEF, which has given rise to a number of programmes and activities, the most recent of which was a donation of 1.59 million US dollars by the Kingdom to UNICEF in Niger to fund the eradication of polio.

130. On 9–10 December 2012, the Kingdom hosted the International Conference on Universal Access, held in Riyadh under the auspices of the King Salman Centre for Disability Research. International and Saudi experts took part in elaborating designs for urban environments and roads to make facilities more accessible to persons with disabilities. In October 2014, the Kingdom hosted the fourth World Disability and Rehabilitation Conference, at which a number of outstanding researchers in disability-related fields were honoured. Furthermore, on 1–2 April 2018, the King Salman Centre for Disability Research hosted the fifth International Conference on Disability and Habilitation, attended by 4,188 persons from 18 countries and with the participation of more than 100 specialists from around the world. The Conference made a number of recommendations.

131. As regards implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals which relate to persons with disabilities, Saudi Vision 2030 and its subsidiary programmes and initiatives, which are fully consistent with the 2030 SDGs, protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the Kingdom is actively engaged in improving the living standards of and raising the level of services for persons with disabilities.

132. The Kingdom has taken a number of measures consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals which relate to persons with disabilities, as follows:

- Goal 3 (Good health and well-being): 38 comprehensive rehabilitation centres and 3,487 day-care centres have been established and work is underway on a set of initiatives to improve mental health; a traffic offences act is being developed in order to reduce road accidents;
- Goal 4 (Quality education): A group of early childhood and mainstream schools across the country have been upgraded to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and provide them with a high level of care and habilitation; persons with disabilities are given the technical and vocational skills to enable them to obtain decent work or become self-employed; equal access for persons with disabilities to all levels of education is promoted; the infrastructure at several education centres has been adapted to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and work is underway at other centres;
- Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth): The Labour Law requires all employers who employ 25 or more workers to ensure that at least 4 per cent of their total workforce is comprised of persons with disabilities; the “*Tawafuq*” programme is designed to promote the employment of persons with disabilities who are capable of working with a view to enabling them to become an active and productive force in the labour market, while also providing them with comprehensive support, job opportunities and support services;
- Goal 10 (Reduced inequality): Persons with disabilities who have the necessary academic and practical experience can hold high office and leadership positions; indeed, the laws of the Kingdom emphasize equality and non-discrimination, ensuring equality in respect of all opportunities and rights, with no difference in public sector wages; it should be noted that a national strategy for persons with disabilities and national strategy for social protection are currently being prepared, both of which will take into account the rights of persons with disabilities;
- Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities): The public transport system is being developed Kingdom-wide in line with the best international standards and most advanced technology, taking into account the needs of persons with disabilities in

order to make it easily accessible and safe; many green spaces and public areas have been created that are suitable for persons with disabilities;

- Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions): The Kingdom has introduced a number of laws, including the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and Protection from Abuse Act, which are designed to eliminate all forms of exploitation, violence and ill-treatment; access to justice is available to all; furthermore, the Kingdom is taking action to incorporate the needs of persons with disabilities and the recommendations of non-governmental associations and foundations in its policies and plans; the Kingdom registers births, gives legal identity to all citizens, makes essential information available to all and protects freedoms in a manner consistent with national laws and international conventions;
- Goal 17 (Partnerships to achieve the goals): Expertise gained is exchanged between the public sector, private sector and civil society to promote efforts to guarantee and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)

Reply to paragraph 32

133. The Human Rights Commission enjoys corporate personality and full independence in the exercise of its duties as stipulated in its charter. With a view to strengthening its independence and activity, Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 237 (5 Jumada II 1437 AH/ 14 March 2016) introduced a number of amendments to the Commission's charter. In particular, the Commission now reports directly to the King, whereas it was previously a part of the executive branch.

134. Under article 5 of its charter, the board is the Commission's governing body and responsible for the management of its affairs. It currently consists of a chairperson, deputy chairperson and 28 members, highly qualified in human rights-related fields and recognized for their impartiality, competence and experience. They are drawn from various groups and sections of society. It should be noted that the board, currently in its third term of office, has six female members. Membership of the board is for a period of four years, renewable.

135. The Human Rights Commission offers advice, recommendations and proposals to the Government on all human rights-related issues and prepares annual reports on the human rights situation in the country. It monitors the implementation by government bodies of human rights-related laws and regulations and exposes violations and transgressions. It expresses its view on the legitimacy of bills and current legislation, as well as the international human rights instruments to which the Kingdom has acceded. The Commission is the body which supervises the Kingdom's contractual reports and reports under the Universal Periodic Review.

136. As regards financial resources, article 17 (1) of its charter stipulates that the Commission shall have an independent budget, prepared and published in accordance with general budget procedures and disbursed in accordance with the instructions thereof. The Commission's funds are comprised of the following:

- Allocations in the state budget;
- Income generated from the Commission's mandated activities;
- Gifts, subsidies, grants and bequests accepted by the Commission in accordance with the rules set out by the board;
- Other resources that the board decides to add to the Commission's funds.