



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Fifth session

Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 12 September 2012, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Grunditz (Sweden)

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

Opening of the Conference of States Parties

1. **The President** declared open the fifth session of the Conference of States Parties and said that there were now 119 States parties and 153 signatories to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and 72 States parties and 90 signatories to the Optional Protocol; he urged States that had not yet done so to consider ratifying the latter instrument.

2. He recalled that the theme of the conference was “Making the CRPD count for women and children with disabilities”. Women and children with disabilities faced aggravated forms of discrimination and other obstacles in life and their considerable talents were often wasted. The two round tables would focus on accessibility and technology and on children with disabilities, respectively; women with disabilities would be the subject of an informal session. Mr. Sinhaseni (Thailand), Vice-President, would be replaced at the fifth session of the Conference by other members of his delegation as Acting Vice-President.

3. **Mr. Wu Hongbo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the seven athletes with disabilities who had competed at the 2012 Olympic Games exemplified the achievements of thousands of persons with disabilities. The topic of children with disabilities was particularly important as investment in children would ensure further progress in the future. Significant steps had been taken in recent years: international legal instruments had been strengthened, Governments had taken measures to empower persons with disabilities and businesses were becoming increasingly committed to equal opportunities. However, persons with disabilities were still far more likely to be living in poverty and to lack social services and employment.

4. Development could not be inclusive or sustainable when over one billion persons with disabilities faced the risk of exclusion. It was therefore encouraging that the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) entitled “The future we want” (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex) underscored the importance of accessibility in strategies for sustainable development. The High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed

development goals for persons with disabilities, to be held in New York on 23 September 2013 on the theme “The way forward: A disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond”, would provide an opportunity to renew that commitment.

5. With the target date of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) only three years away, the international community had a historic opportunity to promote a disability-inclusive development agenda beyond 2015. The Conference was a unique opportunity to share new ideas and experiences, promote good practices and ensure that the goals and objectives of the Convention became a reality.

6. **Mr. Moreno** (Ecuador) said that becoming a wheelchair user some fourteen years previously had changed his perspective both literally, by changing his field of vision, and figuratively, by making him aware of realities that most so-called “normal” people overlooked, particularly the daily assault on persons with disabilities, who were permanently excluded from the right to development and the pursuit of happiness. As Vice-President of Ecuador, he had made a commitment to ensuring that all Ecuadorians with disabilities, many of whom lived in remote areas and relied on neighbours for their sustenance, could fully enjoy their rights.

7. With assistance and expertise provided by Cuba, his Government had launched the Manuela Espejo Solidarity Mission, which assisted persons with disabilities in the most inaccessible parts of the country. The Mission, named after an eighteenth-century precursor of Ecuadorian independence who had devoted her life to caring for the victims of epidemics and earthquakes, relied on the cooperation and enthusiasm of citizens, public and private institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the media. Prosecutors’ offices had been made accessible in every province in order to enable persons with disabilities to assert their rights, and wheelchairs, prosthetic limbs and hearing, visual and other aids were imported by or produced in Ecuador. Private-sector companies were required to ensure that at least 4 per cent of their workforce consisted of persons with disabilities. The Government regularly monitored the implementation of that provision and it was hoped that within a year, there would be full employment of all persons with disabilities who were willing and able to work.

8. In order to assist the relatives of persons with disabilities, many of whom made extraordinary efforts to provide care while working long hours at other jobs, the Mission had introduced caregivers' vouchers equivalent to the minimum wage. Medical assistance, physiotherapy, self-esteem counselling and nutritional advice were also available. Fully accessible housing was being built for 15,000 persons with severe physical and mental disabilities since a home fostered a sense of family unity. The Mission was drawing growing numbers of visitors and was becoming a model for other countries; for example, Ecuador and the World Bank had agreed to cooperate on a similar project in Haiti. However, progress for persons with disabilities in the areas of sport, culture and education had been slower and social resistance remained a concern.

9. It was often said that the Mission helped persons with disabilities to recover their dignity, but nothing could be further from the truth: it was society, which had shamefully rejected them, that was recovering its dignity. Solidarity between equals could not be conflated with charity from a superior to an inferior. Like the variety of climates, languages and cultures, disability was part of the world's diversity and society must learn to benefit from it.

10. **Mr. Mokhiber** (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized the inherent dignity of all members of the human family without distinction. All of the rights enshrined in the core human rights instruments applied equally to persons with disabilities and to others. The Convention had been adopted as a reaction to the invisibility and neglect that such persons faced and had marked a shift from a charitable or medical approach to a rights-based approach. He urged States parties to take the recognized competence and human rights experience of candidates into consideration in electing new members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

11. Owing to entrenched cultural norms and stigmas, women, children and older persons with disabilities were often at greater risk of exclusion, poverty, abuse and exploitation. Women, in particular, faced disadvantages in the areas of employment, literacy and family and reproductive rights. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had submitted to the Human Rights Council a thematic study on the issue of violence against women and girls and disability (A/HRC/20/5), which found that such

violence remained largely invisible and that current legislative, administrative and policy efforts often failed to link gender and disability in a meaningful way; it recommended a holistic approach aimed at eliminating discrimination, promoting autonomy and addressing specific risk factors.

12. Children with disabilities were among the most marginalized groups; they often lacked health care and social protection and their births were sometimes not registered, leaving them isolated from society. Their rights, as well as the medical procedures that they underwent, were often not adequately explained to them. The Conference should seek to find ways to address those issues and to allow all persons with disabilities to enjoy their full rights. The slogan "nothing about us without us" called on States to consult those persons in enacting and monitoring legislation and policies to implement the Convention. OHCHR and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had complementary roles to play in promoting implementation of the Convention at the national level with the common goal of advancing the freedom and inherent dignity of all people.

13. **Mr. Vardakastanis** (International Disability Alliance) said that persons with disabilities were being denied the exercise of their rights on the unjust basis of a global economic crisis for which they bore no responsibility; women and girls with disabilities, in particular, faced dual discrimination and exclusion. Member States, particularly those in the global South, should therefore renew their commitment to promoting the rights set out in the Convention. States parties should attach particular importance to building the capacity of civil society organizations working on disability-related issues.

14. Those rights should be mainstreamed into the programmes and policies of the United Nations system at the global and country levels and persons with disabilities should be involved in all stages of programme planning and implementation. The United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 should take the Convention fully into account and should involve persons with disabilities, who had been excluded from the process of setting the MDGs. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities required additional meeting time and the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons

with disabilities should ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities and derive its agenda from the Convention; he called on States parties and representatives of the private sector to offer their support in that regard. Implementation of the Convention depended on successful partnerships between the United Nations system, States, persons with disabilities and civil society.

Adoption of the agenda (CRPD/CSP/2012/1)

15. **The President** recalled that a list of NGOs requesting accreditation to the Conference had been circulated to States parties on 13 August 2012. If there was no objection, he would take it that the States parties wished to accede to those requests.

16. *It was so decided.*

17. **The President** said that while he was pleased that national human rights institutions were once again participating in the Conference as observers, the provisional Rules of Procedure of the Conference made no reference to that category of participants. He therefore suggested that the next Bureau might consider amending the Rules to envisage the participation of such institutions.

18. It had also been proposed that item 4 of the provisional agenda should be amended to include a general debate and to change the order of the proposed round tables. Agenda item 4 would thus read:

“Matters related to the implementation of the Convention:

- (a) General debate
- (b) Round table 1: Accessibility and technology
- (c) Round table 2: Children with disabilities
- (d) Interactive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention by the United Nations system”.

19. *The agenda, as orally amended, was adopted.*

Election of members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD/CSP/2012/CRP.1 and Add.1 and 2)

20. **The President** invited the Conference to elect by secret ballot nine members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to fill the vacancies that would occur on 31 December 2012. He drew

attention to the curricula vitae of the candidates nominated by States parties (CRPD/CSP/2012/CRP.1 and Add.1) and noted that, as indicated in documents CRPD/CSP/2012/CRP.1/Add.1 and Add.2, respectively, two candidates, Shaik Duaij Khalifa Bin Juaif Al Khalifaas of Bahrain and Dr. Sudha Kaul of India, had been withdrawn. He also drew attention to the election procedure and other relevant provisions set out in article 34 of the Convention.

21. *At the invitation of the President, Ms. Dupriez (Belgium), Mr. Bonkougou (Burkina Faso), Ms. Johnson (Jamaica) and Mr. Kyaw (Myanmar) acted as tellers.*

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

Number of ballot papers: 117

Number of valid ballots: 117

Number of representatives voting: 117

Required majority: 59

Number of votes obtained:

Mr. Monthian Buntan (Thailand)	84
Ms. Diane Mulligan (United Kingdom)	84
Ms. Safak Pavey (Turkey)	80
Ms. María Soledad Cisternas Reyes (Chile)	79
Mr. László Gábor Lovász (Hungary)	79
Ms. Ana Pelaez Narvaez (Spain)	72
Ms. Silvia Judith Quan Chang (Guatemala)	68
Mr. Martin Mwesigwa Babu (Uganda)	58
Mr. Mohammed Al-Tarawneh (Jordan)	57
Mr. Michel Archange Péan (Haiti)	51
Mr. Alexander Kellman (El Salvador)	49
Ms. Fatiha Hadj Salah (Algeria)	46
Mr. Coomara Pyaneandee (Mauritius)	45
Ms. Sebenzile Joy Patricia Matsebula (South Africa)	43

Mr. Isaú Joaquim Meneses (Mozambique)	29
Mr. Basharu Umaru Danlami (Nigeria)	26
Mr. Ahmad Salih Alsaif (Saudi Arabia)	22
Ms. Hatouma Gakou Djikine (Mali)	21
Mr. Nahid Mohamed Khairy (Sudan)	17
Mr. Moussa Housseini Katabani (Niger)	15

22. *Having obtained the required majority, Mr. Buntan (Thailand), Ms. Cisternas Reyes (Chile), Mr. Lovász (Hungary), Ms. Mulligan (United Kingdom), Ms. Pavey (Turkey), Ms. Pelaez Narvaez (Spain) and Ms. Quan Chang (Guatemala) were elected members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2016.*

23. **The President** said that as two vacancies remained to be filled, a second round of voting, restricted to the four candidates who had received the highest number of votes while not obtaining the required majority, would be held.

24. *At the invitation of the President, Ms. Dupriez (Belgium), Mr. Bonkougou (Burkina Faso), Ms. Johnson (Jamaica) and Mr. Kyaw (Myanmar) acted as tellers.*

25. *A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

Number of ballot papers: 115

Number of valid ballots: 115

Number of representatives voting: 115

Required majority: 58

Number of votes obtained:

Mr. Martin Mwesigwa Babu (Uganda)	66
Mr. Mohammed Al-Tarawneh (Jordan)	60
Mr. Michel Archange Péan (Haiti)	51
Mr. Alexander Kellman (El Salvador)	50

26. *Having obtained the required majority, Mr. Al-Tarawneh (Jordan) and Mr. Babu (Uganda)*

were elected members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2016.

Matters related to the implementation of the Convention

(a) General debate

27. **Ms. Traoré-Somé** (Burkina Faso) said that her delegation welcomed the focus of the fifth session of the Conference on the situation of women and children with disabilities. President Blaise Compaoré had made social protection a priority in Burkina Faso; since ratifying the Convention in 2009, the Government had adopted a number of legislative measures aimed at meeting the specific needs of persons with disabilities, including laws and decrees that had ensured their identification and protection under the law; established a multisectoral national council to oversee implementation of the Convention; provided support in the areas of health, education, employment and transportation; and created a national strategy and plan for promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

28. In addition, the Government had engaged in a consultative process with organizations of persons with disabilities and United Nations agencies that had led to a series of activities aimed at integrating the needs of persons with disabilities into development programmes, including a national advocacy campaign on the rights of women with disabilities; pilot programmes on inclusive education; the provision of psychosocial and financial support for persons with disabilities of all kinds; and a workshop on the World Health Organization (WHO) 2010 community-based rehabilitation guidelines and 2011 World Report on Disability for francophone West Africa. She urged Burkina Faso's bilateral and multilateral partners and civil society to help enhance the capacities of its Ministry for Disability Affairs.

29. **Ms. Bappoo** (Mauritius) said that the Conference was being held against the bleak backdrop of the global economic crisis and with the 2015 target for achieving the MDGs fast approaching. The focus on the situation of women and children with disabilities was particularly pertinent as they were subject to multiple forms of discrimination at all levels and deserved the added protection that the Convention extended to them as a result of the decision, taken in 2006 by the Ad Hoc

Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, to include separate articles on women and children with disabilities.

30. Mauritius was a welfare State with a comprehensive social safety net, including free public transport for persons with disabilities. In its agenda for the period 2012 to 2015, the Government had undertaken to provide training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and her Ministry was currently drafting a bill on disability in line with the provisions of the Convention. The country's legal and institutional framework allowed all citizens, including those with disabilities, to enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms. Those rights had been reinforced by recent amendments to existing legislation and the adoption of new laws to provide persons with disabilities with access to training and employment, free education and financial assistance and allowances. Domestic law also protected those persons from discrimination and abuse and ensured their participation in elections. Other steps taken in order to empower persons with disabilities included publication of the first volume of the Mauritian sign language dictionary; the development of a Government database on disability as a policy- and decision-making tool; the creation of a forum for women with disabilities; the launch of a Disability Watch to monitor the safety and welfare of persons with disabilities throughout the country; the creation of a performing arts school for persons with disabilities; and the development of an inclusive education policy and strategy.

31. She urged the international community to provide funding to help the least developed countries turn the dreams of their citizens with disabilities into reality, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. The region was in the grip of debt and social vulnerability, coupled with rising demand for public services, but the global economic crisis should not jeopardize the important effort to protect and promote the rights of all persons with disabilities.

32. **Ms. Bogopane-Zulu** (South Africa) called on all States to provide more rapid access to education for the millions of unenrolled school-age children with disabilities. The implementation of inclusive education policies should be accelerated and safe environments that were conducive to learning should be created in

order to ensure that children with disabilities grew up to become active contributors to the growth and development of their countries rather than objects of pity. Greater commitment, effort and investment in universal access and design were needed from Governments, the private sector and civil society.

33. The world had become a global village but for persons with disabilities, particularly those from developing countries, that village remained as vast and rural as ever. Trade barriers, intellectual property laws and the exclusion from national industrial development strategies of many products aimed at persons with disabilities perpetuated monopolies and limited innovation. States should mainstream disability considerations into all trade and bilateral negotiations in order to bring down prices and provide access to new information and communications technologies to even the poorest citizens with disabilities.

34. "Nothing about us without us" was a reality in South Africa. As a rural woman with a disability, the mother of two children with disabilities and her country's Deputy Minister for Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities, she could confirm her Government's adherence to the principle of self-representation, demonstrated by the 21 persons with disabilities who had been elected members of parliament and the many others who were employed at different levels in the public and private sectors.

35. **Ms. Setthakorn** (Thailand) recalled that in 2001, her country had received the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Award for its progress in recognizing the rights and ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Under the Constitution and legislation focusing specifically on integrating persons with disabilities into the labour force and empowering them, those persons had an equal right to education, employment and health and welfare services and were entitled to a monthly disability allowance, personal assistance and care, sign language interpretation services and home modifications. The Fund for Promotion and Development of Life Quality of Disabled Persons provided access to financial loans and women with disabilities were encouraged to participate fully in all community, provincial and national activities. A community-based approach enhanced access to services for persons with disabilities, especially in rural areas. The Fourth National Plan on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities 2012-2016 emphasized the empowerment

of such persons, their families, and organizations of persons with disabilities and the promotion of a barrier-free society.

36. Thailand had helped to draft the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Strategic Framework for Social Welfare and Development (2011-2015), emphasizing the issue of persons with disabilities, and had suggested that 2011-2020 should be proclaimed the ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities in order to promote disability-inclusive development in the region. However, despite the significant progress towards ensuring equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities around the world, much remained to be done in order for them to live with dignity and enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms.

37. **Mr. Lewis** (Australia) said that his Government had introduced significant reforms to the national income support system in order to foster the participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market. The National Disability Strategy for the period 2010 to 2020 sought to ensure that persons with disabilities had the same job opportunities as the rest of the population and to strengthen support for those who were unable to work. In addition, the Government had committed 1 billion dollars over four years to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which provided persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers with the care and support that they needed in order to participate in education, employment and community life. The Scheme, which complemented the 7.6 billion dollar National Disability Agreement between the national and territorial Governments, took a lifetime approach, allowing beneficiaries to control when, where and how they received support depending on their changing needs.

38. His country was a committed international contributor, in terms of both funding and policy, in the field of disability-inclusive development; it made significant donations to the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Disability Rights Fund and the Pacific Disability Forum, in addition to providing assistance to persons with disabilities in its partner countries.

39. **Ms. Bersanelli** (Argentina) said that, in recent years, her country had taken important steps towards putting the Convention into practice in its public policies, moving away from previous approaches that

had isolated, stigmatized and stereotyped persons with disabilities. Efforts to implement the Convention included the Audio-visual Communication Services Act, under which many television broadcasts were accompanied by closed captioning, sign language interpretation and audio description; a digital terrestrial television decoder had been developed in order to give persons with disabilities equal access to television and encourage them to produce and broadcast their own programmes. The National Institute of Industrial Technology had introduced a programme to develop medical technologies for the benefit of such persons and the Ministry of Education had launched the Conectar Igualdad (Connect Equality) programme to give students with disabilities access to education and relevant technologies. The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights had established a programme aimed at ensuring the access, equal treatment and participation of persons with disabilities in all judicial proceedings and in October 2011, the President had created the Disability Observatory, which worked to harmonize, inter alia, health, labour, education, accessibility and political participation legislation. Nevertheless, much remained to be done; as a matter of social justice, it was important that issues relating to persons with disabilities were placed on the public agenda.

40. **Mr. Kheir** (Egypt) said that he welcomed the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 66/229 entitled "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol Thereto", which had extended the meeting time of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in order to improve its working methods and efficiency. The inclusion of five references to disability issues in the Rio+20 outcome document, "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex), was a positive step and Governments should ensure that their commitments in that regard were translated into specific actions. He hoped that the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities would build on the momentum on disability issues to ensure that they became largely visible in mainstream development processes, including in the context of the MDGs.

41. He called on States that had not yet ratified the Convention to make doing so a priority and stressed the importance of international cooperation in helping

States parties to meet their commitments under that instrument. He therefore welcomed the launch of the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) by six United Nations entities with expertise in the promotion and protection of persons with disabilities with the aim of contributing to implementation of the Convention. However, it was important to ensure that activities were well coordinated in order to avoid duplication or discrepancy. To that end, he suggested that the sixth session of the Conference of States Parties should introduce a new agenda item on UNPRPD efforts to implement the Convention.

42. His Government was currently harmonizing its domestic law with the provisions of the Convention. The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health were working to integrate persons with disabilities into society and to ensure their access to facilities and services without discrimination; the details appeared in a report that would be circulated at the Conference. A National Council for Persons with Disabilities had been established in June 2012 in order to oversee policies on disability issues and to develop a national plan to improve the situation of those persons; its Executive Board comprised various Government ministers, experts and representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities. One of the many initiatives under discussion included the August 2012 signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Health in order to build new centres for the early detection of disability and to provide genetic, surgical and rehabilitation services for children under 18 with disabilities. His Government would continue to mainstream disability issues as an integral part of its national strategy for sustainable development.

43. **Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) said that President Daniel Ortega's Government was committed to upholding the rights of persons with disabilities and would honour its commitments under the Convention. It had introduced programmes, including Voices for All (Todos con Voz), established in 2010, in which teams of Cuban and Nicaraguan doctors provided medical care to persons with disabilities, supported their families and helped their communities to better understand their problems. Those teams had made 132,906 visits to persons with disabilities, who also received wheelchairs and monthly food parcels. To date, consultations and medication had been provided to 5,648 people, 115,000 dental consultations had been

conducted, 12,666 eye operations had been performed and the Miracle Mission (Misión Milagro) mobile medical unit in the Department of Río San Juan had provided care to 715 people. A national centre for the blind, which would provide services to approximately 16,400 blind and visually impaired people, would be built.

44. Nicaragua's Ministry of Labour had signed a cooperation agreement with the Nicaraguan Organization of the Blind (Organización de Ciegos de Nicaragua) to ensure compliance with Act No. 763 on the rights of persons with disabilities, which established that 2 per cent of all employees must be persons with disabilities. The Government had also signed an agreement with the Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities (Asociación de Padres de Familia con Hijos Discapacitados, "Los Pipitos") with a view to providing employment opportunities to the Association's young people regardless of their physical and mental limitations. The aforementioned measures had been recognized by the Office of the Ombudsman for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Ministry of the Family, Adolescence and Childhood provided education and medical care to children with physical disabilities through its Children's Centres and new public transport vehicles were accessible to persons with disabilities as well as to the general public.

45. Nicaragua would continue to make the changes needed to create a fairer society by strengthening the National Human Development Plan, which, combined with his Government's Christian values, socialist ideals and practical solidarity, would allow it to reduce poverty, guarantee education and free health care and empower women, young people and other vulnerable sectors of the population and to develop a culture of peace with social justice and solidarity among all Nicaraguans.

46. **Mr. Khan** (Indonesia) said that his delegation was participating in the Conference for the first time as a State party to the Convention. With the 2012 Paralympic Games in mind, he welcomed the opportunity to discuss how persons with disabilities could be empowered to live full lives and improve their societies. The current session's focus on women and children underlined the need to serve those who were particularly vulnerable to discrimination and denial of rights. Of the one billion people worldwide who were living with a disability, women and children were often

the most marginalized; they suffered from exclusion, neglect and physical abuse and often lacked access to essential social services.

47. Indonesia had ratified the Convention, which it had played an active part in drafting, in November 2011. Even before then, however, it had taken steps at the national level to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, adopting new legislation and harmonizing existing laws that would have a positive impact on their lives with the aim of creating an enabling environment. His Government had launched the Indonesia National Plan of Action of Disabled People 2004-2013, provided financial and technical support to NGOs that assisted persons with disabilities and made efforts to give women and children greater access to institutions and social services.

48. At the regional level, Indonesia had been implementing the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, the Biwako Plus Five towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific and the Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community, adopted at the Nineteenth Summit of ASEAN, held in Bali in 2011, at which 2011-2020 had been proclaimed the ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities.

49. However, despite the progress achieved, attitudes must still be changed, even within families, so that people did not equate disability with inability. Persons with disabilities required even greater access to essential services, and programmes to benefit such persons needed more funding. His Government was taking action on those matters.

50. **Mr. Sajdik** (Austria) said that the high number of ratifications of the Convention demonstrated its success; it had contributed to a paradigm shift and to the adoption of legislative and policy measures designed to improve the situation of persons with disabilities. His Government had taken steps to implement the Convention in conjunction with civil society, which had participated in the drafting of Austria's first report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and of the National Action Plan for People with Disabilities 2012-2020, adopted in July 2012, which was the main framework for Austria's disability policy. The Plan contained an overview of the situation of persons with disabilities

and set out policy goals, concrete measures with timelines and Government responsibilities.

51. With regard to the theme of the current session, "Making the CRPD count for Women and Children", he drew attention to his delegation's written contribution, submitted before the Conference, and, in particular to the adoption in 2011 of the Federal Constitution Act on the Rights of the Child, which provided protection and welfare guarantees to children, including those with disabilities; the Youth Coaching project, which supported early school leavers with specific employment requirements and was an example of good practice in assisting children with special educational needs by easing the transition from school to work through expert individual support; and his Government's public-awareness-raising in the area of violence against women, in particular those with disabilities, and support for projects to enhance their self-reliance and empowerment. The Government's implementation of the Convention also took account of the European Disability Strategy and the Council of Europe Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society.

52. **Ms. Hendricks** (Jamaica) said that her Government was committed to issues relating to persons with disabilities and had made progress in that area since the last session of the Conference of States parties; the drafting process that would allow it to implement the legislative framework for promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities was at an advanced stage.

53. The Government remained convinced that persons with disabilities should be given every opportunity to maximize their full potential. It had amended the Road Traffic Act to allow persons with physical disabilities to obtain a driver's licence as deaf people had been able to do since 2009 and, with the help of a disability expert, was conducting a needs assessment and gathering social and economic data on persons with disabilities with a view to the creation of a database that would be essential to national planning, especially during crises and in disaster preparedness. The Government had also engaged a specialist to produce a five-year communication plan in order to increase public awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities; the resulting public education programme was intended to encourage the national registration of such persons.

54. The Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities had established the National Disability Awards, to be inaugurated in November 2012, with the aim of recognizing those who had removed barriers and created access for persons with disabilities and supported the national agenda for inclusive development. Her Government was committed to the advancement and implementation of the Convention and to improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities. She encouraged States that had not yet signed and ratified the Convention to do so as a matter of urgency.

55. **Mr. García González** (El Salvador) said that his delegation welcomed the theme of the session, “Making the CRPD count for Women and Children”, because of the universal importance of those two vulnerable groups and because the theme established the need to address the question of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities comprehensively. The composition of his delegation reflected that approach; it comprised representatives of the Government, the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman and organizations of persons with disabilities.

56. His Government attached great importance to implementation of the Convention and took every opportunity to make progress on that issue in the international forums in which it participated, including in its capacity as 2011 Chair of the Organization of American States (OAS) Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities. Under El Salvador’s leadership, the Committee had made progress in the areas of the right to legal capacity, the generation of data and statistics and the appointment of a special rapporteur for the production of a manual of good practice. The Committee and the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had also held discussions in order to identify areas for cooperation.

57. The Government was currently bringing its domestic law into line with the Convention and had presented its first report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in January 2011. The National Council for Comprehensive Care for Persons with Disabilities, El Salvador’s governing body for public policy in that area, had updated its mandate in 2010, broadening the participation of civil society organizations in line with the Government’s focus on social inclusion. It was developing a new

national care policy for persons with disabilities, which it expected to implement as from 2013. The Salvadorian Institute for Comprehensive Reintegration, which provided services at eight specialized centres, had assisted over 88,000 persons with disabilities.

58. His Government was also broadening the democratic participation of persons with disabilities. The Electoral Code had been amended in 2011 in order to allow such persons to stand for public office and at the most recent municipal and parliamentary elections, held in 2012, persons with visual disabilities had been given a Braille guide, temporary ramps had been set up at certain polling stations and sign language interpretation had been provided on national television. Mr. Alexander Kellman, who had just been elected a member of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, had been chosen, for the first time, through a broad consultative process involving El Salvador’s Government and organizations of persons with disabilities. His Government had thus made progress in implementing the Convention in the spheres of education, health, employment and social security, public works, housing and transport.

59. According to the most recent national census, held in 2007, there were more than 235,000 persons with disabilities — 4.1 per cent of the population — in El Salvador and 36 per cent of that group were aged 65 and older. The convergence between the needs of older persons, particularly older women, and those of persons with disabilities demonstrated the importance of caring for that doubly vulnerable population group by adopting an international convention on the rights of older persons. With respect to older women, he stressed the need for the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council to promote coordination in matters relating to vulnerable groups within the framework of the Commission for Social Development and for the Commission on the Status of Women to address the issue of violence against women with disabilities at its fifty-seventh session.

60. His Government had the political will to continue its implementation of the Convention and was confident that the discussions at the current session of the Conference would provide useful input into the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities.

61. **Prince Al-Hussein** (Jordan) said that the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities gave continuing proof that, given equal opportunities, persons with disabilities could shape their own future and formulate international policies. States parties must continue to emphasize that economic development could be inclusive only if disability was taken into account at every stage. His delegation was proud that Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan had been appointed in July 2012 to the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the development agenda beyond 2015, although it regretted that no persons with disabilities had been included in the Panel. He encouraged the United Nations to reflect in its staffing the diversity of the world that it represented.

62. The principle of inclusion should also be better reflected by Governments; in Jordan, the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities ensured the inclusiveness of its staffing and working methods, thereby ensuring that sensitive and even taboo issues were addressed. Since its creation in 2008, the Women's Committee of the Higher Council had promoted the rights of Jordanian women with disabilities. In 2011, it had highlighted violations against the forced sterilization of women and girls, working to change the perception that sterilization was a violation only when committed against men and boys. Following a 2012 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) report on violations committed against children with intellectual disabilities in Jordanian private care centres, King Abdullah II had ordered the formation of an investigative committee to examine the allegations. The Higher Council was a member of that committee and its sub-committees, which were conducting site visits to centres throughout Jordan; it believed that the BBC report underscored the need to de-institutionalize all Jordanians with intellectual disabilities so that they could take their rightful place in society as functional citizens, although the road ahead would be long.

63. The Higher Committee had taken steps to ensure that Jordan's legislative framework upheld the right to functional citizenship; those steps were set out in the written statement that his delegation had submitted to the Conference. That enabling environment should, however, be complemented with nationwide awareness-raising policies, particularly in private care centres, and capacity-building for those implementing the policies. While Jordanian innovation had led to

achievements in the areas of accessibility and technology, the limited resources available were an obstacle to further progress. Further support for efforts to meet the challenges to physical and communication access would be welcome since access was an essential first step towards an inclusive society.

64. The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games had been a celebration of unity and of the athletes' courage. His delegation took a dim view of the alleged violations in connection with those events and would condemn the actions of the three Jordanian athletes accused of sexually assaulting a minor before the Paralympics if they were proved guilty. Although those allegations had cast a shadow over Jordan's participation, his delegation drew comfort from the statement by Lord Coe, Chair of the London Organising Committee of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, that the Paralympic Games had "had a seismic effect in shifting public attitudes" towards disability. That message should be replicated in all areas of life in order to achieve true inclusion.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.