



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Thirty-second session

Summary record of the first part (public)* of the 757th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 3 March 2025, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Fefoame

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* The summary record of the second part (closed) of the meeting appears as document CRPD/C/SR.757/Add.1.

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

Opening of the session

1. **The Chair** declared open the thirty-second session of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Opening statement by the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

2. **Mr. Ori** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) said that the Committee's new composition meant that it had one of the highest proportions of women members of all the treaty bodies. Since the Committee's previous session, Eritrea had acceded to the Convention and Ireland had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention, bringing the number of States Parties to 192 and 107, respectively.

3. In September 2024, the General Assembly had adopted the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations, which contained a number of commitments relevant to persons with disabilities, including the commitments to seize opportunities provided by new and emerging technologies to empower and advance equity for persons with disabilities, to enhance inclusion and eliminate all barriers that hindered young persons with disabilities from attaining and maintaining maximum autonomy, inclusion and participation in all aspects of life, to ensure accessibility and disability inclusion at the United Nations and to increase the availability, accessibility and affordability of digital technology platforms, services, software and educational curricula in diverse languages and formats.

4. The General Assembly had also adopted resolution 79/149 on inclusive development for and with persons with disabilities, in which it called for women and girls with disabilities to be involved in the design and implementation of policies and programmes to fulfil their rights, for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to be implemented in a manner inclusive of and accessible to women and girls with disabilities and for the rights, participation, perspectives and needs of persons with disabilities to be mainstreamed in disaster risk reduction and response.

5. At its fifty-seventh session, the Human Rights Council had adopted several resolutions relevant to the rights of persons with disabilities. For example, in resolution 57/23 on national human rights institutions, the Council encouraged all States Parties to the Convention to consider designating or including national human rights institutions as part of independent monitoring mechanisms under article 33 of the Convention; in resolution 57/16 on promoting accessibility for the full enjoyment of all human rights by all, it invited the Office to continue to provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to States in developing and implementing accessibility policies and programmes; and, in resolution 57/18 on the elimination of domestic violence, it called on States to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, educational and other measures to protect persons with disabilities from all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse, both in and outside the home.

6. The Office had continued its work on human-rights-based care and support systems. In January 2025, it had issued a report on the rights of persons with disabilities and digital technologies and devices. Building on the 2024 report, the report addressed the topic of assistive and digital technologies and examined each from a human rights perspective, emphasizing their role in enhancing the independence and autonomy of persons with disabilities and their importance as essential components of rights-based care and support systems. In February, the Office had issued a report on the human rights dimension of care and support, which analysed relevant international human rights standards, highlighted challenges and promising practices and made recommendations for promoting human rights in care and support systems.

7. On 2 and 3 April 2025, in Berlin, Governments, multilateral agencies, the private sector, academia, civil society organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities would gather for the Global Disability Summit, with a focus on invigorating global efforts to realize disability inclusion. The next Conference of States Parties to the Convention would take place in New York, from 10 to 12 June 2025, under the theme "Enhancing public

awareness of the rights and contributions of persons with disabilities for social development leading up to the World Social Summit”, and would focus on the topics of enhancing social development policies through innovative financing, using AI as a tool for supporting social inclusivity and recognizing and addressing the rights of Indigenous persons with disabilities. At the current session of the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities would introduce her report “Thirty years of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: its potential for women and girls with disabilities”; she had made a call for submissions on the topic “Care and support for children with disabilities within the family environment and its gendered dimensions”.

8. In addition to chronic resource constraints, the liquidity crisis continued to hamper the planning and implementation of the treaty bodies’ work – a point that the Chairs of the treaty bodies had communicated forcefully at meetings with Member States and other interlocutors in New York. While the Office was doing its utmost to ensure that the Committee and other treaty bodies could implement their mandates, there was every indication that the difficult liquidity situation would persist for the foreseeable future.

9. The treaty body strengthening process nonetheless continued, having reached a key moment with the adoption by the General Assembly of the biennial resolution on the human rights treaty body system in December 2024. In the resolution, the Assembly invited the treaty bodies and the Office to continue working on coordination and predictability in the reporting process and to increase their efforts to further use digital technologies; however, it had not endorsed certain detailed proposals made by the Chairs, such as the proposed eight-year predictable calendar of State Party reviews. At an informal meeting organized by the Geneva Human Rights Platform, the Directorate of International Law of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Office in December 2024, the treaty body Chairs and focal points on working methods, along with Member States and other stakeholders, had sought to identify ways forward to improve harmonization of procedures. The Chairs and focal points had also had a rich exchange with the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures on practices regarding issues of common concern, such as the independence of experts and conflicts of interest, and on ensuring an “all mechanisms” approach to the many challenges facing the United Nations human rights system.

Solemn declaration by the newly elected members of the Committee

10. **The Chair** invited the new members of the Committee, whose mandates had commenced on 1 January 2025, to make the solemn declaration provided for in rule 14 of the Committee’s rules of procedure.

11. **Mr. Corporán Lorenzo, Ms. Gabrilli, Ms. Guala Beathyate, Mr. Nwanoro, Ms. Placencia Porrero and Mr. Tamon** made the following solemn declaration: “I solemnly declare that I will perform my duties and exercise my powers as a member of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities honourably, faithfully, impartially and conscientiously.”

Report of the Chair on activities undertaken between the thirty-first and thirty-second sessions of the Committee

12. **The Chair** said that she had been actively involved, through meetings with several permanent missions in New York, in promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the texts of the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations. As part of the ratification campaign launched by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in connection with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Bureau had met with ambassadors and permanent representatives of both signatory and non-signatory States. The joint efforts had resulted in seven new ratifications of the Convention, which now had the second largest number of States Parties among the human rights treaties; three additional States had ratified the Optional Protocol.

13. During her two years in office, she had twice represented the Committee in dialogues with the Third Committee of the General Assembly and had also actively promoted the Committee’s engagement with entities of the United Nations system, in particular the United

Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

14. Under her leadership, the Committee had contributed to the treaty body strengthening process and had emphasized the need to take account in that process of accessibility and reasonable accommodation for treaty body members and other persons with disabilities. In its own work, the Committee had introduced a new methodology for dialogues with States Parties, resulting in more interactive discussions with delegations, had made the simplified reporting procedure the default procedure for periodic reports and had amended its rules of procedure to reflect those and other changes, including to its methods of work relating to individual communications.

15. Lastly, together with the Bureau, she had taken part in many online meetings and in-person discussions on matters relevant to the work of the Committee, including the delicate issue of the situation of persons with disabilities affected by conflict in specific countries.

Cooperation with other United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, organizations of persons with disabilities and other competent bodies

16. **A representative of the Committee on Victim Assistance under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction** said that, at the Fifth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, held in November 2024, States Parties had adopted the Siem Reap – Angkor Action Plan 2025–2029, in which they reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the full, equal and effective participation of mine victims in society on the basis of respect for human rights, gender equality, equity, diverse needs, inclusion and non-discrimination. The Action Plan contained several commitments relating to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including three explicit references to the Convention, and included 10 actions specifically concerning assistance for mine victims. For example, States Parties were called upon to ensure the safety and protection of mine survivors in situations of risk and emergency, in line with article 11 of the Convention; to strengthen national implementation mechanisms, including by designating focal points, promoting interministerial and intersectoral coordination, and implementing national strategies; and to bolster efforts to provide rehabilitation services and assistive technology, as well as healthcare, psychosocial support and socioeconomic services. Emphasis was also placed on the participation and inclusion of mine survivors and their representative organizations.

17. The Committee on Victim Assistance had noted an increase in the efforts of States Parties to both Conventions, in particular those with mine victims under their jurisdiction or control, to implement the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. She looked forward to continued cooperation with the Committee, including within the framework of its two draft general comments on article 11, on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, and encouraged Committee members to discuss the situation of landmine survivors during their reviews of States Parties at the current session. Some of those States Parties had obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention to provide assistance to victims. The Committee on Victim Assistance and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit stood ready to provide support in that regard.

18. **Ms. Quiñones** (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) said that, as part of its commitment to the rights of women and girls with disabilities, UN-Women was mainstreaming disability inclusion and intersectionality across all areas of its work. Disability, gender and discrimination were closely interlinked: one in five women faced disability-related exclusion. Through its corporate strategy on the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities, UN-Women provided normative guidance, integrated policy advice and operational and technical support, with a view to improving gender responsiveness and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities. It had, for example, issued a joint statement, with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, on ending sexual harassment of women and girls with disabilities, emphasizing the links between gender and

disability inclusion. UN-Women had also contributed extensive inputs to the declaration of the upcoming Global Disability Summit, which it was also helping to organize, with a focus on gender and disability inclusion and intersectionality.

19. The work of UN-Women on those issues also supported internal knowledge and capacity development, as well as inter-agency coordination. For instance, UN-Women led the United Nations Evaluation Group working group on gender equality, disability inclusion and human rights. It had also joined forces with other United Nations entities and organizations of persons with disabilities to promote the leadership and participation of women and girls with disabilities. Among its joint initiatives were a programme for women with disabilities in relation to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic response and recovery; a project aimed at addressing stigma and discrimination against women and girls with disabilities in four countries; and a programme on mainstreaming a disability-inclusive humanitarian response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. Given that many national laws and frameworks were not yet aligned with regional and international norms and standards that called for the inclusion and empowerment of women and girls with disabilities, UN-Women remained committed to efforts to improve the gender responsiveness and inclusion of normative frameworks.

20. **Ms. Halil Lövblad** (World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)) said that the Accessible Books Consortium was a public-private partnership created by WIPO to help in the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled, which provided for the production and distribution of accessible books across national borders. The Consortium, which included organizations of persons with disabilities, libraries for blind persons and organizations representing authors and publishers, had commemorated its tenth anniversary in 2024, marking a decade of action on and delivery of accessible books in Braille, audio and e-text to persons with print disabilities worldwide.

21. The Consortium took a three-pronged approach to fulfilling its mission of turning aspiration into action and getting accessible books into the hands of the persons who needed them. First, it had established the Global Book Service, an international catalogue of over 1 million accessible titles, available in 80 languages, to some 145 participating libraries for the blind, more than half of which were located in low-income countries. In 2024 alone, participating libraries had delivered 225,000 accessible books from the catalogue to persons with print disabilities; in 2025, the catalogue would be made available through a free of charge application, Dolphin EasyReader, to persons with print disabilities living in States Parties to the Treaty. Second, the Consortium provided training, technical assistance and funding to equip organizations in low-income countries with the skills and techniques needed to produce educational materials for students with print disabilities. As a result, some 22,000 textbooks had been made available to date in over 40 countries, thereby improving access for thousands of young people. Third, the Consortium promoted, through its Accessible Publishing Initiative, the production of “born accessible” books, which would be usable straight away by persons with print disabilities. It was also raising awareness of the European Accessibility Act (Directive 2019/882), pursuant to which digital publications were required to be accessible by June 2025.

22. Notwithstanding the accomplishments of the past decade, much remained to be done. While many countries had ratified the Treaty, it was critical to ensure that its provisions were incorporated into national law so that persons with print disabilities could benefit fully. WIPO stood ready to work with interested partners and with Member States wishing to become Parties to the Treaty, including to provide any legislative advice they might need.

23. **A representative of the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention on Cluster Munitions**, providing an overview of that Convention, said that it was a landmark humanitarian disarmament treaty aimed at addressing the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of the use of cluster munitions and prohibiting the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of those weapons. Influenced by its precursor, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and by the rights-based approach of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on Cluster Munitions had set the standard for other such treaties by making its provisions on assistance for victims legally binding as opposed to recommendatory, a historic achievement. Those provisions had, moreover, had a tangible

impact on the lives of those affected, in particular persons with disabilities. For example, article 5 established an obligation on States Parties to provide assistance, including medical care, rehabilitation and psychological support, to cluster munition victims in areas under their jurisdiction or control and to facilitate the socioeconomic inclusion of those persons. By contrast, article 6 (3) of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention established such an obligation on those States Parties that were in a position to discharge it.

24. The Convention on Cluster Munitions was groundbreaking in a number of other ways, including its broad definition of cluster munition victims. The definition addressed the wide-ranging impacts of cluster munitions on individuals, their families and the wider community and encompassed not only physical injury but also the impairment of rights. Other features included the emphasis on the inclusion of affected individuals and their representative organizations in decision-making processes; the requirement of non-discrimination against or among cluster munition victims, including in addressing their medical, rehabilitative, psychological and socioeconomic needs; and the focus on ensuring that victim assistance was aligned with international humanitarian and human rights law. The importance of the rights-based approach was further emphasized through a specific reference, in the preamble, to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as through the use of rights-based terminology.

25. Victim assistance programmes under humanitarian disarmament and human rights conventions, such as those established under the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, were based on a mutually reinforcing relationship. By way of illustration, the rights-based approach of the latter Convention had helped to link humanitarian disarmament treaties with human rights and to shape the understanding of victim assistance, thus providing for a more progressive and holistic framework. More generally, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had helped to advance the inclusion and rights of persons with disabilities in practice.

26. **A representative of the International Disability Alliance**, welcoming the new members of the Committee, said that the Committee's commitment to diversity and inclusion was clear to see in the improved gender balance, linguistic diversity and regional representation of its membership. Nevertheless, he was deeply concerned at reports that sign language interpretation might not be provided during the Committee's constructive dialogues with States Parties at the current session. If confirmed, such a development would represent an unacceptable practice, breaking with not only 14 years of tradition but also a long-standing commitment to ensure the full participation of all Committee members and organizations of persons with disabilities. Moreover, it would prove that, at a time when disability rights and inclusion should be promoted, efforts and investments to secure the full participation of persons with disabilities were instead being reduced. It was regrettable that the Alliance, the World Federation of the Deaf and the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters had received no reply to a joint letter on the matter addressed to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. It was to be hoped that, at the current session, the Committee and OHCHR would commit to the continued promotion of sign language interpretation.

27. The Alliance was dedicated to helping as many organizations and representatives of persons with disabilities as possible to attend the sessions of and engage with the Committee and other human rights treaty bodies. It had sponsored representatives from various countries in 2025 and was committed to ensuring that dialogues between the Committee and organizations of persons with disabilities were truly representative and included all voices from the disability movement.

28. He welcomed the opportunity to participate in the day of general discussion on article 29 of the Convention and wished to commend the Committee for continuing the production of its general comments, which were essential for advancing towards the full implementation of the Convention. The general comment on article 29 would provide a clear way forward for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in political and public life. While he appreciated the progress made on the draft general comments on article 11 of the Convention, further work was needed to ensure that persons with disabilities did not face discrimination and were not left behind in situations of armed conflict. He wished to express his deep solidarity with the persons with disabilities who were affected by the ongoing

conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in particular. Lastly, he recalled that promoting dialogue between the Committee and organizations of persons with disabilities was key for advancing and monitoring the implementation of the Convention.

29. **A representative of the World Federation of the Deaf**, speaking in a pre-recorded video message, said that his organization comprised national associations of deaf persons from 137 countries. Over 70 million deaf persons around the world used more than 200 distinct national sign languages, which were protected under the Convention and allowed those persons to receive information, express their opinions and make decisions on an equal basis with others. While the Federation congratulated Mr. Tamon on his election to the Committee, it strongly condemned the lack of interpretation in the sign language of his choice during official meetings and informal interactions with other Committee members and civil society at the current session. Sign language interpretation was crucial to enable Mr. Tamon to participate on an equal footing with other Committee members and the failure to provide it would hinder his ability to fulfil his mandate.

30. He recalled that, in accordance with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and articles 9 and 21 of the Convention, events and meetings must be accessible for deaf persons, who had the right to communicate in national sign languages when interacting with representatives of the United Nations and to fully and effectively participate in decision-making processes affecting them. Committee members must be able to use a national sign language of their choice, and international sign language interpretation must be provided for all events or meetings intended for a broad regional or international audience. The preferences of deaf persons concerning their sign language interpreters must be taken into account to ensure equal participation. Denying reasonable accommodation for deaf persons marginalized them and constituted discrimination. The World Federation of the Deaf was prepared to provide the Committee with recommendations and guidance on how to fully realize the rights of deaf persons.

31. **Representatives of Peace Inclusion Piece**, delivering their statement jointly, said that their organization served as a forum for international cooperation with a view to building an inclusive society in which everyone supported each other, regardless of country, culture, disability or economic status. Ms. Gamio Ríos shared the organization's philosophy and had been invited to be its honorary president. Through its global full inclusion declaration and an international summit for persons with disabilities, the organization aimed to create an inclusive society in every field, including education, employment, welfare and the economy, and to break down every barrier in society. As the traditional economic model had left people behind, the organization intended, over the coming decade, to help build an economy in which everyone could participate and thrive. It had held an exhibition at a Berlin airport to promote its vision of the future.

32. **A representative of the Universal Rights Group** said that the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the Universal Rights Group were undertaking a project to assess the implementation of recommendations concerning the rights of persons with disabilities made by United Nations bodies. As part of the first stage, an analysis had been conducted of all such recommendations made by the treaty bodies, special procedure mandate holders and Member States during universal periodic reviews. The information had been categorized according to the main issuing mechanisms, issuing States, and receiving States and regions. In a second stage, which would begin in the near future, the implementation of measures at the national level would be examined, along with the level of support provided to the implementing States by the United Nations.

33. Almost 13,000 recommendations concerning the rights of persons with disabilities had been identified, of which over half had been issued by the human rights treaty bodies, around 40 per cent had been made during universal periodic reviews and just 5 per cent had been issued by special procedure mandate holders. Of the recommendations issued by the treaty bodies, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities accounted for over 50 per cent, the Committee on the Rights of the Child some 20 per cent, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 15 per cent and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 7 per cent. Of the recommendations made during universal periodic reviews, Asia-Pacific States accounted for 30 per cent, African States 20 per cent and Western European and other States 18 per cent. Those States had received

roughly the same proportion of recommendations as they had issued, while Latin American and Caribbean States had received the fewest recommendations overall. Unsurprisingly, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities had issued the most recommendations, followed by the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons; the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences. Almost 2,500 recommendations concerning the rights of persons with disabilities focused on access to education, and 1,600 centred on the alignment of national legislation with the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto. Other areas included women and children with disabilities; protection from violence, abuse and exploitation; health and well-being; accessibility and reasonable accommodation; and the right to work and employment.

34. The Universal Rights Group had undertaken similar studies on women's rights in cooperation with UN-Women, on sexual and reproductive health rights in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund and on children's rights in conjunction with the United Nations Children's Fund. One of the key aims of the current project was to understand why progress in the implementation of the Convention had fallen behind that of the other human rights treaties and what measures could be taken to remedy the situation.

35. **A representative of United for Global Mental Health**, speaking in a pre-recorded video message, said that United for Global Mental Health was a global policy and advocacy organization that supported Member States and national associations in ensuring that everyone, including persons with disabilities, had access to mental healthcare without stigma or restrictions. The organization served as the secretariat for the Global Mental Health Action Network, which comprised over 5,500 members from more than 165 countries.

36. Approximately 8.4 million people worldwide received inpatient treatment at mental hospitals every year, and countless others were in various types of institution, including prisons, rehabilitation centres and prayer camps. According to a report by Human Rights Watch, persons with psychosocial disabilities continued to be shackled and chained in 60 of the 100 countries surveyed. Globally, approximately two thirds of countries' limited mental healthcare budgets was allocated to institutions, and many persons with psychosocial disabilities were unable to receive adequate care and support in their communities. Persons with disabilities in institutions were often stripped of their legal capacity and faced neglect, unsanitary living conditions and physical, psychological and sexual abuse. On returning to their communities, many continued to experience stigma and discrimination.

37. He wished to urge the Committee, at the current session, to take steps to address institutionalization and strengthen primary, secondary and community-based mental healthcare and social care; ensure that mental health legislation and policy conformed fully with the Convention and other international human rights standards; address the stigmatization of and discrimination against persons with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities, in line with the Committee's general comment No. 6 (2018) on equality and non-discrimination and general comment No. 8 (2022) on the right of persons with disabilities to work and employment; ensure that persons with lived experience of mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities were able to participate fully in society and make decisions on matters affecting them, including their treatment; and advocate for the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities at the World Health Assembly in May and the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases in September 2025. United for Global Mental Health stood ready to support the Committee in achieving those goals.

Adoption of the agenda (CRPD/C/32/1)

38. *The agenda was adopted.*

The public part of the meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.