



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Summary record of the 764th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 6 March 2025, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Makni (Vice-Chair)

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Mr. Makni (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by Parties to the Convention under article 35

(continued)

Initial report of Viet Nam (CRPD/C/VNM/1; CRPD/C/VNM/Q/1; CRPD/C/VNM/RQ/1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Viet Nam joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Viet Nam**, introducing his country's initial report (CRPD/C/VNM/1), said that Viet Nam was home to more than 7 million persons with disabilities, who accounted for just over 7 per cent of the population over the age of 2 years. Almost 29 per cent of that group was classed as having severe or very severe disabilities. Women and children made up 58 per cent and 28.3 per cent of persons with disabilities, respectively. His Government had always paid special attention to persons with disabilities; the Constitution provided for the equality of all Vietnamese citizens before the law and guaranteed their exercise of a range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to social security.
3. Viet Nam was committed to meeting its international obligations, including those under the Convention, which had been ratified by the National Assembly in 2014. The country had demonstrated its determination to eradicate discrimination against workers with disabilities by becoming a Party, in 2019, to the International Labour Organization Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159). In 2022, it had acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled. Viet Nam was a responsible and active contributor to the work of the United Nations in the area of human rights and attached great importance to the universal periodic review. It was also involved in regional efforts to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, spearheading bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the matter.
4. The Law on Persons with Disabilities had been passed by the National Assembly in 2010. The Government had implemented a number of programmes to protect persons with disabilities, support their integration into the community, guarantee their enjoyment of all human rights and ensure their access to education, vocational training, jobs, preferential loans, housing, healthcare, information and transport. The National Committee on Disability had been established to assist the Prime Minister in addressing issues affecting persons with disabilities. Efforts were constantly being made to expand social security coverage and improve the policies in place to support persons with disabilities. Some 1.6 million persons with severe disabilities were entitled to receive monthly benefits. Health insurance cards had been issued to 96 per cent of persons with disabilities, and all general hospitals had rehabilitation departments. Support was provided to children with disabilities so that they could attend inclusive schools. Those who were unable to participate in inclusive education studied at special education institutions. Vietnamese Sign Language and Braille had been standardized across the country. Persons with disabilities were entitled to free or discounted tickets for public transport, recreational facilities and cultural and historical sites.
5. While significant achievements had been made in giving effect to the rights of persons disabilities and reducing the multidimensional poverty rate, which had fallen from 60 per cent in the 1990s to around 5 per cent in 2023, the fact remained that Viet Nam was a lower-middle-income country and, as such, faced resource constraints and socioeconomic difficulties that hampered efforts to support persons with disabilities and help them compete in the labour market. Those efforts had also been affected by the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which had had a serious impact on the country's socioeconomic development. In view of that situation, his Government hoped that the Committee, international organizations and other States Members of the United Nations would continue to support its work to implement the Convention by providing the necessary resources and technical assistance and sharing good practices relating to the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, thereby ensuring that no such person would be left behind as Viet Nam continued on the path of socioeconomic development.

6. **Ms. Boresli** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that it had been brought to the Committee's attention that civil society organizations had not been invited to participate in the preparation of the State Party's report and replies to the list of issues (CRPD/C/VNM/RQ/1). The Committee was concerned that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations continued to face rights violations and exclusion despite the State Party's adoption of an action plan and a law to address those issues. The fact that the State Party had not yet signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention was an additional concern.

Articles 1–9 and 31–33

7. **Ms. Kim Mi Yeon** (Country Task Force) said that she wished to know whether the State Party planned to incorporate clear definitions of the key concepts outlined in the Convention, including communication, language, reasonable accommodation and universal design, into national law. It would be helpful to learn what steps the State Party was taking to address the failure of most provincial authorities to establish their own plans and committees to deal with disability issues and ensure the implementation of the Convention. She wondered whether the national action plans on social assistance, community-based rehabilitation and vocational training for persons with disabilities, which had been due to end in 2020, had been renewed and updated. The delegation might wish to explain how disability data were gathered and monitored and outline the reasons behind the discrepancies between the disability data provided in the State Party's report and those compiled by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). It would be useful to know whether there were plans to translate the Law on Persons with Disabilities into the Indigenous languages spoken in the State Party and to more closely align the definition of "persons with disabilities" contained in the Law with the definition set out in the Convention.

8. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that the Law on the Promulgation of Legislative Documents provided for a consultation procedure through which members of the public could give their opinion on draft laws and policies. Consultations were thus held as part of the development process for all instruments focused on persons with disabilities. Campaigns to inform such persons of the holding of consultations were run in the mass media and on social networks. Lawmakers welcomed all input provided by persons with disabilities and made sure to carefully review their comments.

9. The Law on Persons with Disabilities had been developed with support from experts from a number of world-renowned universities. Steps had been taken to ensure that the Law was closely aligned with the Convention and took into account the Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals. The Government was about to launch a review of the Law, with a view to adapting it to the country's current reality and strengthening the measures in place to support persons with disabilities in the coming period. It was hoped that such efforts would open up more opportunities for persons with disabilities and enhance their access to healthcare, social services, employment, political life and cultural activities.

10. While the Government continued to run some programmes specifically for persons with disabilities, its current focus was on the implementation of three major national plans covering poverty reduction, support for ethnic minorities and the development of mountainous and remote areas. Those plans provided for a number of initiatives that would benefit persons with disabilities by facilitating access to housing, employment and education and improving infrastructure.

11. **Ms. Kim Mi Yeon** said that she would like to know whether the State Party planned to establish formal mechanisms through which organizations representing persons with disabilities could be consulted on an ongoing basis, including on matters such as the implementation of the laws and policies designed to give effect to the Convention.

12. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that the Law on Persons with Disabilities established an obligation on the competent authorities to seek feedback on its implementation from persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. The delegation would be happy to share the text of the Law and the related decrees and circulars, all of which had been translated into English, with the Committee.

13. **Ms. Kim Mi Yeon** said that she wished to know what measures were being taken to strengthen the enforcement of laws prohibiting disability-based discrimination and to ensure access to legal remedies for persons with disabilities whose rights had been violated. She wondered what was being done to combat discriminatory attitudes that prevented persons with disabilities from being fully included in their families and communities and in workplaces and institutions. Given the fact that only a small proportion of municipalities and districts had recorded complaints about rights violations, it would be interesting to know whether complaints were not recorded because formal complaint mechanisms had not been established or because persons with disabilities were discouraged from filing complaints by the complexity of the procedure or by social barriers.

14. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that the Constitution provided that no one should be subjected to discrimination in social, political or cultural life. National laws on disability provided that persons with disabilities must receive the support they needed to participate equally in society and integrate into their communities. National policies placed great emphasis on supporting persons with disabilities to live independently, and the Government had implemented a range of programmes for that purpose. In addition, a large number of committees at the national and local levels provided support to persons with disabilities. A specific law regulated the handling of complaints from persons with disabilities, which were referred to the appropriate agencies at the national and local levels so that action could be taken.

15. **Ms. Kim Mi Yeon** said that it was still not clear what measures were being taken to tackle disability-based discrimination. In particular, she wondered what was being done to strengthen the penalties for such discrimination, to improve reporting and redress mechanisms and to raise awareness of disability-based discrimination and the mechanisms established to combat it.

16. She would be interested to know whether the needs of women and girls with disabilities were adequately addressed and prioritized by the Gender Equality Department and in the programmes referred to in the State Party's report (CRPD/C/VNM/1, para. 191). She also wished to know whether programmes and policies designed to promote gender equality explicitly included measures relating to women and girls with disabilities. She would be grateful for specific examples of how organizations of women with disabilities were supported and empowered to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes, particularly in connection with policies relating to women and disability. She wondered to what extent women and girls with disabilities had taken part in shaping national laws, policies and programmes, how many legislative and policy initiatives they had been involved in formulating and what those initiatives were. She would welcome details of any efforts being made to raise awareness of gender inequality, particularly the unequal distribution of tasks in the home, and any steps taken to challenge social norms that put women and girls with disabilities at a disadvantage.

17. It would be useful to know whether any laws specifically provided for the protection of children with disabilities and ensured their right to non-discrimination, inclusion and access to essential services and whether any specific mechanism enabled children with disabilities to voice their opinions in decision-making processes, including in educational, social and legal settings. Lastly, she would like to learn what support was in place for children with disabilities who were victims of violence.

18. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that discrimination against women, children, persons with disabilities and members of other vulnerable groups was strictly prohibited under the Constitution and other national laws. Acts of discrimination were punishable under the Criminal Procedure Code and the Criminal Code. Efforts were made to raise awareness of the penalties to which perpetrators of discrimination were liable. Complaints of discrimination could be submitted by organizations of persons with disabilities or by members of the public, including the families or neighbours of persons with disabilities. All such complaints were reviewed very carefully.

19. Efforts were being made, including through the media, to raise awareness of disability issues and to promote respect for the rights of persons with disabilities. A number of national laws contained provisions on gender equality and a national plan and strategy to promote

gender equality had been established. The Government had adopted a law on the prevention of domestic violence and domestic abuse. Women's and children's associations were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the drafts of all policies relating to women and children.

20. The Constitution established that the right to housing was a fundamental right. The Government had adopted a number of laws and policies to give effect to that right and had recently set the goal of building 1 million social homes for persons on low incomes and disadvantaged persons, including persons with disabilities. It had also developed a programme to construct 200,000 temporary houses, using resources from the private sector and the people. Authorities at all levels had been instructed to survey temporary and run-down homes with a view to eradicating them.

21. Persons with severe or very severe disabilities had access to social protection and State-run social assistance centres similar to those found in Sweden, Canada or Singapore. A dedicated State fund had been set up to support vocational training for persons with disabilities and to help them find employment.

22. An inclusive educational system was implemented from the primary to the higher secondary levels. No tuition fees were payable for State schools. A total of 150 specialized schools catered to children with disabilities who were unable to attend mainstream schools. The Government was working to set up more such schools and to improve the facilities, equipment and quality of teaching in existing ones. Representatives of the Government had visited schools for children with disabilities in Sweden, the United State of America and other countries in order to learn about best practices. The Government also reviewed teaching programmes for children with disabilities in other countries. All children with disabilities had the right to attend school.

23. **Ms. Kim Mi Yeon** said that she wished to know what steps were being taken to ensure that campaigns to raise awareness of disability issues used media and methods that were accessible to persons with disabilities, including sign language, Braille, Easy Read and accessible digital media. She wondered what was being done to guarantee access for all persons with disabilities, including those in remote and rural areas, to information about their rights under the Convention.

24. She would be grateful for information on any measures being implemented to bring public buildings and facilities into line with national building codes and accessibility requirements. She would also welcome details of any enforcement mechanisms in place in that regard.

25. It would be useful to know what was being done to expedite the introduction of accessible public transport across the country and ensure that transport operators provided persons with disabilities with the benefits to which they were entitled, such as discounted fares. She would be interested to hear about any steps being taken to make the rail network accessible to persons with disabilities. She would also appreciate details of the timeline for making all airports in the country, including smaller local airports, accessible to persons with disabilities.

26. Information on any plans to increase the use of sign language interpretation and closed captioning in television programmes would be welcome. Lastly, she wondered what action was being taken to enforce accessibility standards for all public sector websites and digital services.

27. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that the Government had increased investment in technology, including information and communications technology. Sign language interpretation was used to make television programmes accessible, but more could be done to increase the accessibility of technology and the media for persons with hearing impairments. Persons with disabilities who wished to learn about laws and policies relied on radio broadcasts, sign language interpretation and information from friends and family members. Plans were in place to increase investment in public transport. Under the Law on Persons with Disabilities, all new buildings were required to comply with accessibility standards. Older buildings were renovated to bring them into line with such standards.

28. **Ms. Kim Mi Yeon** said that she wished to know whether the Government provided sufficient support to persons with visual impairments, including by providing them with books in Braille or other accessible formats. It would be interesting to know how many fines had been issued for failure to comply with accessibility regulations. Lastly, she wondered whether any legal safeguards were in place to prevent persons with disabilities from being subjected to discrimination in the criminal justice system.

29. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that, in line with the Marrakesh Treaty, the Ministry of Education and Training had introduced textbooks for persons with visual impairments, including textbooks that had been converted into Braille. Steps had been taken to ensure access to textbooks for other persons with disabilities who were enrolled in courses of study. With the advancement of technology, the Government would be better able to provide rapid and effective access to resources in Braille, in compliance with accessibility principles. The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs and other ministries had applied administrative penalties in the form of significant fines with the aim of ensuring compliance with accessibility laws and regulations. The provinces and towns of Viet Nam carried out annual compliance review programmes.

30. In addition to the Constitution, the Law on Persons with Disabilities and the Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents included articles that prohibited discrimination against persons with disabilities. An association for the protection of persons with disabilities, programmes for the protection of children with disabilities and other initiatives were operated at the local level using resources from domestic and foreign donors.

31. **Ms. Kim Mi Yeon** said that she would be interested to learn whether books in the languages of Indigenous Peoples were made available in Braille or other accessible formats.

32. She would like to know whether the findings of the first national study on persons with disabilities in Viet Nam had been widely disseminated among the general population and organizations of persons with disabilities. It would be useful to receive an explanation of the mechanism that was in place to ensure that such organizations played a meaningful role in determining how funding from relevant international cooperation was allocated. She would be grateful to learn whether organizations of persons with disabilities participated officially in the National Committee on Disability and, if so, whether they received adequate support for their participation. She would welcome details about the participation of the Viet Nam Federation on Disability in monitoring conducted under article 33 of the Convention and about any measures taken to strengthen oversight of the implementation of laws and policies related to persons with disabilities by organizations of such persons.

The meeting was suspended at 4.25 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.

33. **Ms. Fefoame** said that she wished to know what steps the Government would take to ensure that the hotline it operated for children and families was accessible to all children with disabilities. She wondered what disaggregated data the Government was able to consult with a view to better understanding how that service was used and scaling it up to reach all children and young people with disabilities.

34. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that, as the State Party had no inclusive, extensive and comprehensive definition of disability or any mechanism to prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities, including denial of reasonable accommodation, he was curious to learn how it upheld the right to non-discrimination of persons with disabilities. It would be useful to hear whether the State Party had followed up on the recommendation issued by the Human Rights Committee in 2019 that it should establish a national human rights institution that complied with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) (CCPR/C/VNM/CO/3, para. 8). Had the State Party at least developed plans and a time frame in that regard?

35. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she would be interested to know what steps the State Party would take in the medium term to improve the accessibility of transport and ensure that public information was made accessible through audio description and sign language interpretation, and what budget would be allocated for such measures.

36. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she would be grateful to receive more information about the accessibility of watercraft and other infrastructure that formed part of inland

waterborne and maritime transport services. She would welcome confirmation that all new social housing would comply with accessibility standards and be accessible to persons with disabilities. More information on the process for obtaining access to assistive devices would be appreciated. What were the costs of such devices and who paid them? Were training and repair services available?

37. **Mr. Nwanoro** said that he wished to know what the State Party had done to make inclusive education available to children with disabilities and to provide them with instructors in subjects such as Braille and sign language. He wondered what steps had been taken to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in politics. In that connection, he would be interested to know how many persons with disabilities were members of the National Assembly and how many held a position in the Government or were otherwise involved in decision-making.

38. **Mr. Corporán Lorenzo** said that he would be interested to learn whether, as part of its ongoing efforts to implement the Convention, the State Party planned to compile reliable statistics, pursue the goal of universal accessibility and prioritize access to employment for persons with disabilities, and how much it planned to invest in ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community.

39. **Ms. Gamio Ríos** (Country Task Force) said that she would be grateful to hear the delegation's reaction to reports that, since the adoption of Decree No. 56/2020/ND-CP on the management and use of development assistance and loans of foreign donors and Decree No. 114/2021/ND-CP on the management and use of official development assistance and concessional loans of foreign donors, the operations of civil society organizations and their ability to receive foreign assistance had become subject to even more stringent control and restrictions, and that, together with the detention and conviction of members of civil society organizations, the decrees had discouraged members of civil society from engaging in human rights-related activities.

40. **Ms. Dondovdorj** said that she wished to know whether the State Party planned to clarify how organizations of persons with disabilities should engage with the Government in monitoring the implementation of the Convention and whether it would develop any regulations regarding the role of such organizations in that regard. It would be useful to learn to what extent accessibility-related matters had been taken into account in the development of public procurement requirements.

41. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that the children's hotline could receive both calls and text messages, thousands of which had been sent to it via the Zalo messaging application. Many children who had contacted the hotline about cases of trafficking in persons had received psychological support. The Government had comprehensive data about the operation of the hotline and the handling of calls.

42. The Ministry of Construction had issued a circular providing that residential, commercial and public buildings in urban areas must meet accessibility criteria and undergo renovation if they did not. While reasonable accommodation and universal design were not yet explicitly defined in Vietnamese law, those concepts had informed the development of new laws aimed at preventing discrimination against persons with disabilities. For example, the Labour Code of 2019 included amendments prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment and, under future amendments to the Railway Law, train stations would be made accessible to persons with disabilities through the introduction of new requirements regarding pathway elevations.

43. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that the Ministry of Public Security had been instructed to coordinate with relevant agencies and with Vietnamese and international experts regarding the possibility of establishing a national human rights institution, and studies on possible models for such an institution had been conducted. There were already agencies tasked with monitoring and protecting human rights, such as the National Committee on Disability and the National Committee for the Advancement of Women. Plans for the establishment of a national human rights institution must be based on careful research and take into account international experience as well as the political and socioeconomic situation in Viet Nam. Such an institution would supplement, rather than replace, the existing agencies

in the country's political system that were responsible for promoting and upholding human rights.

44. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that provisions on the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention had been included in the National Action Plan to Support Persons with Disabilities. The National Committee on Disability, the lead entity for work relating to persons with disabilities, had provincial and municipal offices with which it coordinated its efforts.

45. In recent years, the Government had invested heavily in transportation infrastructure, including for the purpose of increasing accessibility. There were regulations to ensure that facilities such as airports and seaports were accessible. All newly built social housing must be accessible to persons with disabilities.

46. Data on budget allocations for persons with disabilities were unavailable, but a significant portion of the amounts allocated was used for cash allowances and healthcare. Disaggregated data on transportation- and education-related budget allocations for persons with disabilities were not yet available. Budget proposals were prepared at the local level and put forward to the central Government. All budget-related information was made public.

47. Hearing aids and mobility aids were the most common assistive devices in use. Organizations in countries such as Australia and the United States of America helped to supply mobility aids. Assistive devices were generally maintained and repaired by the users' family members and neighbours.

48. There were some 2.1 million children with disabilities in Viet Nam, and the Government ensured that they had access to education. Braille textbooks and sign language teaching had been introduced in schools. As a Party to the Marrakesh Treaty, Viet Nam had access to international support in the conversion of textbooks into Braille.

49. The country's laws encouraged the participation of groups such as women and persons with disabilities in political decision-making. Training was provided to women to help them effectively participate in elections and policymaking. A target of 30 per cent had been set for women's representation in the National Assembly and the local people's councils, but it was proving difficult to achieve at the local level. The delegation would be interested to learn about best practices in other countries.

Articles 10–20

50. **Ms. Gamio Ríos** said that she would be grateful for a response from the delegation to her earlier question concerning two recent decrees that reportedly restricted the ability of civil society organizations to receive foreign assistance and thus their human rights-related activities.

51. Regarding articles 10–20, she wished to know whether any person with a disability had ever been sentenced to death in the State Party, how the State Party involved persons with disabilities and their organizations in the planning and implementation of activities related to disaster risk reduction, whether the State party planned to amend the Civil Code provisions whereby the civil rights of persons with mental or physical disabilities who were unable to exercise those rights themselves could be exercised by others, whether the State Party planned to replace systems of substitute decision-making with supported decision-making regimes, whether training had been provided to law enforcement officers, healthcare providers, community leaders and judicial officers on the risk of violence against persons with disabilities and whether the accommodations provided during court proceedings were age- and gender-sensitive.

52. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that information on the participation of civil society organizations in the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities had been provided in the initial report of Viet Nam, its replies to the list of issues in relation to its initial report and the delegation's responses thus far. Freedom of association was recognized as a fundamental right under the 2013 Constitution. There were more than 70,000 associations in the country, with more than 600 operating nationally; some 430 international non-governmental organizations provided assistance to Vietnamese

citizens and communities. No associations had been denied establishment. Regulations were in place to ensure transparency in how associations and their finances were managed.

53. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that thousands of associations were formed each year, with many undertaking impressive initiatives to mobilize resources to support persons with disabilities.

54. The lessons learned from the reviews being conducted of programmes whose five-year cycles were expiring in 2025 would be applied in the development of the programmes for the next cycle. No persons with disabilities had received sentences of capital punishment. The Criminal Code provided for exemptions from criminal responsibility for persons with disabilities, including persons with mental illness. The need for guardianship would depend on the disability. For example, persons with certain types of mental illness, such as schizophrenia, would need a guardian. He would welcome input from the Committee on new approaches to the issue.

55. **Ms. Gamio Ríos** said that she had yet to hear a response to her question on civil society organizations. The delegation might also comment on reports that psychiatric hospitals in Viet Nam were used to punish political opponents rather than to provide care. It would be helpful to have information on measures taken by the State party to ensure that persons with disabilities were not isolated or abused in their own homes. The delegation's response to reports that there were persons in the State Party who had acquired disabilities as a result of torture would be appreciated. She would welcome disaggregated data on persons with disabilities who had been victims of abuse, particularly sexual abuse. She wished to know what steps the State Party was taking to adopt legislation that specifically addressed the prevention of gender-based violence against women with disabilities, to compile and publish disaggregated data on cases of violence, negligence or abuse involving women with disabilities and to ensure that women with disabilities who were victims of gender-based violence received timely support from local authorities. Lastly, she would like to find out whether any mechanisms were in place for detecting cases of violence, abuse and exploitation involving children and whether the children's law adopted in 2016 specifically addressed children with disabilities.

56. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that the Constitution of 2013 protected persons against torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Viet Nam was a Party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and had established an independent mechanism to monitor its implementation, in which a range of stakeholders, including members of the National Assembly and the Vietnamese Fatherland Front, participated.

57. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that it was difficult to respond in the abstract to Ms. Gamio Ríos's question concerning civil society organizations; it would be helpful if examples of specific cases could be cited. The procedure for establishing an association set out specific criteria and standards. It was unlawful for the competent agency to fail to reply to a request to form an association. There was no evidence of involuntary segregation of persons with disabilities living with their families. There were specific legal provisions that addressed the neglect of children, particularly children with disabilities.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.