



# Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General  
22 September 2025

Original: English

---

## Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Thirty-third session

### Summary record of the 789th meeting\*

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 12 August 2025, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Makni (Vice-Chair)

## Contents

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

*Initial report of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*

---

\* No summary record was issued for the 788th meeting.

---

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section ([DMS-DCM@un.org](mailto:DMS-DCM@un.org)).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



*In the absence of Ms. Kim Mi Yeon, Mr. Makni (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.*

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

### **Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 35 of the Convention**

*Initial report of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (CRPD/C/PRK/1; CRPD/C/PRK/Q/1; CRPD/C/PRK/RQ/1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea joined the meeting.*

2. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea**, introducing his country's initial report (CRPD/C/PRK/1), said that his country had ratified the Convention in 2016 in order to boost its efforts to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, enhance its international cooperation in that area and ensure compliance with international law. During the report preparation process, details of which were set out in paragraph 4 of that document, the authorities had been pleased to see that many of the country's obligations under the Convention were already being met on the ground. The process had enabled stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of the global trends in the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities and the issues affecting the implementation of the Convention at the international level.

3. Throughout the country's history, the Government had sought to create the conditions necessary for persons with disabilities to be treated with respect and to participate actively in public and social life, on an equal footing with others. Specific provisions on the protection of the rights of such persons were contained in the Constitution and a wide range of sector-specific laws. In 2023, the previous law on disability had been replaced with the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in order to strengthen the social, political, economic and cultural rights of those persons. Under the new law, all stakeholders were obliged to guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities as fully-fledged members of society.

4. The Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities had been established in 1998 to represent the interests of all persons with disabilities and facilitate their full, independent participation in society. In 2016, the National Committee for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities had been set up to bring together representatives of relevant ministries and disability associations to discuss and address matters relating to disability rights. Targets in the areas of rehabilitation, education, employment, cultural life, personal and property rights, accessibility, access to information, disaster risk reduction and monitoring had been set under the National Strategy for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2025, which was in the final stage of implementation.

5. Persons with disabilities were guaranteed full enjoyment of political and social rights, including the right to vote and to stand in elections, the right to freedom of expression and opinion and the rights to work for public institutions, join organizations and submit complaints. Most persons with disabilities had cast their vote in the 2023 local elections in person at polling stations; those who had been unable to do so owing to severe mobility impairments had been permitted to vote from home or from medical facilities. Persons with disabilities, including women, had been elected to people's assemblies at all levels and were actively involved in the development of disability-related laws.

6. Children with disabilities were able to attend school free of charge through the universal compulsory education system. A new educational support programme for persons with disabilities was one of a number of schemes that had been introduced to ensure that they were able to receive education on an equal basis with others. Measures had been taken to facilitate their access to tertiary education, including through distance learning and work-study programmes. Rehabilitation services and prosthetics were provided free of charge through the universal healthcare system. Highly specialized rehabilitation services, including services specifically for women and children with disabilities, had been set up within a number of healthcare establishments.

7. The Government attached great importance to ensuring that persons with disabilities were able to engage in work to the best of their ability. In accordance with the Socialist Labour Law and the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, persons with disabilities were entitled to choose, on the basis of their degree of disability, gender, age and physical condition, whether to work in mainstream workplaces or in specialized factories and organizations for persons with disabilities. Such persons received disability allowances in addition to their salary. Care homes had been established around the country to provide services tailored to their needs. Their families were granted caring allowances.

8. Steps were constantly being taken to guarantee access for persons with disabilities to public transport, information and communication tools and other public services. Public spaces, infrastructure and tourist resorts were being made fully accessible. Accessible facilities had been installed in new apartment blocks, the new airport and general hospital in Pyongyang and in buildings at a new tourist resort.

9. Persons with disabilities were encouraged to participate in the sporting activities of their choice, with a view to improving their health, fostering their sense of belonging and self-respect and facilitating their integration into society. National sports tournaments for persons with disabilities were organized each year by the Korea Sports Association of Persons with Disabilities. Information on the country's participation in the Paralympic Games and other international events was set out in paragraph 225 of the replies to the list of issues (CRPD/C/PRK/RQ/1). With regard to the arts, the Korea Arts Association of Persons with Disabilities had been set up to provide training to such persons to help them realize their artistic ambitions. The Association's members had given performances at home and abroad, including on tours of Europe in 2015 and 2017.

10. Progress had been made in enhancing public awareness of persons with disabilities. Mass media outlets had played an active role in shining a light on their skills, achievements and potential. A national day celebrating persons with disabilities was held in June each year, as part of which various performances and exhibitions were organized. Events were also held to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The activities run on those two days were widely covered by leading newspapers and radio and television stations.

11. Since the country's ratification of the Convention, the Government had sought to strengthen cooperation in the area of disability with all friendly countries and international organizations. One example of such cooperation had been the visit, in May 2017, of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities. The Government was also working with international federations of persons with disabilities to address topics such as rehabilitation, education, employment and cultural life.

12. Despite such efforts, the United States and other Western countries continued to target the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through smear campaigns and fabrications designed to create a negative impression of its human rights situation. Such vicious conduct, the purpose of which was to bring about the collapse of the country's sociopolitical system, constituted a serious threat to the population's enjoyment of their rights and a heinous crime against humanity. For his country, human rights were synonymous with sovereign rights. The Government would work to thwart all action by hostile forces and further consolidate the country's people-centred socialist system. It would continue to implement policies and measures for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities and would make a positive contribution to global efforts to that end.

13. **Ms. Dondovdorj** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that the State Party's comprehensive initial report and replies to the list of issues showed that progress had been made in the implementation of the Convention at the national level. She hoped that the delegation would provide more information on the measures taken to that end, in particular those that had been adopted in response to the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities in her report on her visit to the State Party ([A/HRC/37/56/Add.1](#)), which had concerned the prevalence of a medical approach to disability, inconsistencies between national legislation and the Convention, the segregation of children with disabilities within the education system and the persistence of the guardianship system. She wished to strongly encourage the State Party to work closely with organizations of persons with disabilities in order to ensure the meaningful involvement of such persons in any relevant reforms.

*Articles 1–9 and 31–33*

14. **Ms. Jacobs** (Country Task Force) said that she would like to know whether the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities established specific procedures through which persons with disabilities who had faced discrimination could file complaints or obtain remedies, including through the courts. It would be interesting to learn what steps had been taken to give effect to article 5 of that law, under which any form of discrimination or maltreatment affecting persons with disabilities was prohibited. The delegation might explain what had been done to ensure that the State Party's disability laws and policies reflected the human rights-based model of disability and indicate whether any mechanisms were in place for the regular review of those laws and policies to ensure that they continued to be implemented in line with that model. She would welcome information on the nature of the preferential treatment afforded to certain workers and former soldiers and war veterans with disabilities. She wondered whether such treatment was consistent with the human rights-based model.

15. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that the adoption of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was representative of the shift from a medical to a human rights-based approach to disability-related issues.

16. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that the State had disseminated the Law and guides on its application to all relevant organizations and institutions. All ministries and public institutions whose work affected persons with disabilities were required to include disability-related measures and metrics in their yearly action plans. Regular labour inspections, involving desk reviews, workplace visits and interviews with persons with disabilities, were undertaken by supervisory authorities to ensure compliance with disability-related legal requirements, violations of which were punishable. The Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities carried out awareness-raising activities on the rights of persons with disabilities, thanks to which social attitudes toward disability were changing. The results of the 2025 national survey on disability showed improved indicators in the areas of employment, health and more.

17. **Ms. Jacobs** said that she would be grateful for an update on the State Party's position regarding ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention. She would also welcome further information on the activities of the Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, the implementation of the current national strategic action plan for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, including information on the allocated budget, and measures to ensure consultation with persons with disabilities in policy matters affecting them. Lastly, she would appreciate details of mechanisms for reviewing legislative, administrative and other measures intended to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities.

18. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that, while the State was favourably considering the ratification of further international human rights instruments, continued politicization, selectivity and double standards at the United Nations were a hindrance in that regard. Despite the State's fulfilment of its obligations under the conventions to which it was a party, resolutions hostile to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued to be adopted annually by the Human Rights Council and the General

Assembly. The politically motivated hostility of some countries toward his own must cease before it could become a party to further conventions.

19. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that the Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, affiliated organizations at the provincial, city and county levels and associations of persons with disabilities, such as the Korean Association of Persons with Visual Impairments, the Korean Association of Persons with Hearing Impairments and the Korean Association of Women with Disabilities, had been involved in the formulation of the national strategic action plan for the protection and promotion of the right of persons with disabilities.

20. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that persons with disabilities were involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of all policies affecting them through the Central Committee of the Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, the people's committees at the provincial and county levels and various associations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities were thus able to ensure that their interests and rights were taken into account in all relevant policies, action plans and strategies.

21. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that, while the State provided special support for certain groups of persons with disabilities, that did not imply discrimination against other persons with disabilities.

22. **Ms. Gabrilli** (Country Task Force) said that she wished to know whether there were plans to amend the Constitution to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on disability. She would welcome information on the national system for the submission of complaints by persons with disabilities or disability-related organizations, including with regard to denial of reasonable accommodation.

23. She wondered what was being done to ensure access to reproductive and maternal health services for women with disabilities. She also wished to know whether there existed gender- and disability-sensitive mechanisms to register, protect and support women with disabilities, including survivors of gender-based violence, and whether there were independent and confidential complaints mechanisms for women and girls with disabilities who faced discrimination, including in detention.

24. It would be useful to learn what steps the State Party had taken to ensure inclusive education for children with disabilities, especially those with visual, hearing or intellectual impairments. In that regard, she wished to hear about any mechanisms in place to collect data on children with disabilities, including those under 5 years of age and those living in institutions. She wondered whether the State Party planned to extend support services and programmes to children with disabilities in rural and remote areas. She also wondered whether there were accessible procedures for the diagnosis and registration of disabilities at the community level.

25. She wished to know how the State Party ensured that awareness-raising campaigns included persons with intellectual, psychosocial and other non-visible disabilities. It would be useful to learn whether there were online disability rights materials in the State Party and whether such materials were available in accessible formats, such as Braille, plain language or sign language, outside the capital. She also wished to know how information about the Convention and national disability laws was disseminated across the population, especially in rural and remote areas.

26. She would like to know what steps the State Party had taken to develop and implement national accessibility standards aligned with article 9 of the Convention, whether there was a designated national authority for monitoring and ensuring the accessibility of public infrastructure and services and how the State Party planned to make infrastructure outside the capital more accessible. She would also appreciate an explanation of how the State Party applied international universal design and accessibility standards. She wondered whether there was a time-bound plan to make existing public infrastructure fully accessible.

27. Lastly, she wished to know what legal provisions were in place to protect the right to life of persons with disabilities and how many persons with disabilities had been subjected

to forced sterilization in the State Party since its ratification of the Convention. Data in that regard, disaggregated by type of disability, age, gender and region, would be appreciated

28. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that all citizens, including persons with disabilities, had the right to lodge complaints and petitions with any institution, organization or official, including the Supreme People's Assembly, either directly or through their representatives, as long as they had valid grounds for so doing. The State had put in place effective machinery for that purpose. The investigation of complaints was deemed to have been completed only when the complainants were notified of the results. Persons who disagreed with the results were free to appeal. All institutions and organizations were required by law to install complaints boxes at convenient locations. Persons with disabilities usually filed their complaints with the Central Committee of the Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities. If a complaint was outside the Federation's remit, it was referred to the competent body, which was required to resolve the complaint within the prescribed period of time and inform the Federation of the outcome.

29. Redress was granted in accordance with the procedures prescribed in the relevant laws. Moreover, persons with disabilities who suffered personal injury or property damage could seek indemnification through civil procedures. The amount of the indemnity was usually determined by agreement between the parties concerned, but in case of failure to do so, it was left to the discretion of the court. Administrative penalties for violations of the rights of persons with disabilities were prescribed in article 74 of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. If the violations were of a particularly serious nature, criminal penalties might be applicable.

30. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that the gynaecology and obstetrics departments of urban polyclinics and rural people's hospitals were the core components of a highly developed system for the provision of information, including to persons with disabilities, on reproductive health and family planning. The Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities was making the preparations that would enable persons with disabilities to attend the training sessions on reproductive health and family planning organized by the Korean Association for Family Planning and Maternal and Infant Health. The Federation had also produced leaflets on the sexual and reproductive health of persons with disabilities and was developing a proposal for the provision of reproductive health and family planning education at the community level.

31. Forced sterilization, like forced abortion, was strictly prohibited. Medical personnel were required by law to inform their patients of treatment plans and ensure that they consented to any surgical operations. Failure to comply with those requirements was punishable by up to 5 years' hard labour or, in especially serious cases, more severe penalties.

32. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea**, noting that a number of the questions put had concerned violations or discrimination against women and girls, said that such problems had never existed in his country and could never exist. To think otherwise was inconceivable. Men and women and boys and girls had always been treated equally.

33. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that special attention was paid to ensuring that persons with disabilities in conflict with the law were treated on a basis of equality with others. Their characteristics were taken into account in sentence enforcement matters. What was more, law enforcement officials, who could not question suspects or other persons one on one, were familiarized with the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. All interrogations were recorded, and the prosecutorial authorities, who were responsible for monitoring compliance with the legal requirements for the enforcement of sentences, were allowed to make regular visits to prisons and other places of deprivation of liberty. Defence lawyers, too, were allowed regular contact with their clients. Legislative measures had been taken to ensure that prisoners could exercise their right to receive visitors and that prison guards were prevented from violating their rights. Prisoners or members of their families were entitled to lodge complaints, which the relevant correctional facility was required to address.

34. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** (Country Task Force) said that he wished to know what methods the State Party used to produce reliable statistics on persons with disabilities and whether it used

the set of questions proposed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics to elicit information from the public. He wished to know, too, whether the authorities had access to any disaggregated data on persons with disabilities in education and on the violence and other rights violations to which persons with disabilities were subjected.

35. He wondered how the State Party prioritized the steps it took in the international cooperation programmes in which it participated in support of its efforts to realize the purpose and objectives of the Convention. It would be helpful to learn, for example, which members of the disability community decided what the priorities should be. As the Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities appeared to be the only non-governmental organization of and for persons with disabilities in the State Party, it would also be helpful to learn whether any consideration was being given to allowing the establishment of other organizations broadly representative of persons with disabilities. In addition, it would be interesting to know what mechanism was used to monitor the implementation of both the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.*

36. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that the design of a survey conducted in April and May 2025, in implementation of the current national strategic action plan for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, had been informed by recommendations made by the Washington Group.

37. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that the survey, on which the Ministry of Public Health, the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities had collaborated, had reached 2.3 million people, or some 11 per cent of his country's population. Preliminary findings suggested that 6.5 per cent of the population had a disability and that women were slightly more likely than men to be living with a disability. More than a fifth of people over the age of 60 were, according to the findings, persons with disabilities. The findings also included data on persons with disabilities broken down by type of disability and place of residence, urban or rural. Nearly all school-age children with disabilities were enrolled in school, and just over 19 per cent of persons with disabilities over the age of 18 had at least some higher education. More than half of women and men with disabilities in both rural and urban areas were employed. The final results of the survey were expected by the end of the year.

38. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that, although his Government had always encouraged international cooperation with all entities that were friends of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it rejected ostensibly cooperative approaches that were really nothing other than attempts to undermine its sovereignty and the security of its people. At all events, the Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities was committed to progressive expansion of the scope of international cooperation in support of the country's efforts to implement the Convention.

39. Some of the questions that his delegation had been asked were based on allegations made by forces hostile to his country and betrayed a misunderstanding of government policy on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. The Federation's Central Committee would thus encourage the human rights treaty bodies to enhance their understanding of the country and adopt a more positive approach. In the Federation's view, international cooperation should involve technical assistance above all.

40. A number of associations of and for persons with disabilities were affiliated with the Federation. They and other entities, including subcommittees established at the provincial, county and city levels, were involved in policy formulation and in monitoring, notably of the national strategic action plan for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, and other relevant activities.

41. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that, after considerable discussion in the Government and in the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of whether to establish a separate mechanism to monitor her country's efforts to implement each of the international human rights instruments to which it was a party, it had been decided to rely instead on the monitoring mechanisms that were already in place. They included the inspection departments of the relevant ministries and supervisory agencies, which were responsible for routine inspections, and other State institutions that specialized in more comprehensive investigations. In the course of their work, the inspectors collected and perused relevant documentation, visited workplaces and interviewed employees, including persons with disabilities. The inspectors' findings, as well as the results of monitoring activities organized by the Federation, were reported to the National Committee for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, which took any action necessary.

42. **Ms. Kayess** said that she wondered what had been done to ensure that persons with disabilities who were hard to reach – those who were confined to their homes, for example, or otherwise hidden from public view – were included in the population sample that had recently been surveyed.

43. **Ms. Fefoame** said that she wished to know what steps had been taken to put an end to the discriminatory distinction between war veterans with disabilities and other persons with disabilities. She wished to know, too, how the State Party was monitoring the progress it was making towards achieving gender equality and what policies and programmes it had developed to address the specific challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities. Lastly, she asked what mechanisms were in place to ensure that data on persons with disabilities, in addition to those collected in the recent survey, were broken down by gender.

44. **Mr. Nwanoro** said that he wondered to what extent public buildings and transportation facilities were accessible to persons with disabilities. He wondered, too, whether children with disabilities had access to the assistive devices and technologies that would enable them to go to school and, once in the classroom, acquire an education. It would be helpful to learn, too, whether children with disabilities went to ordinary schools where they mixed with other children or whether they went to segregated schools.

45. **Ms. Gamio Ríos** (Country Task Force) said that she wished to know whether persons with disabilities other than people who were blind or deaf had representative organizations in the State Party. She wondered whether there were, for example, associations of little people, persons with intellectual disabilities or persons with multiple disabilities. It would be interesting to know how many persons with disabilities were members of the governing party. Lastly, she wished to recall that ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention had been one of the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities.

46. **Ms. Gabrielli** said that she would appreciate responses to her earlier questions on access to inclusive education and support services for children with disabilities in remote and rural areas. She would also like to know whether children with congenital disabilities had access to early childhood care and health services and, if so, how widely available and of what quality those services were.

47. It was still not clear to her what the State Party had done to develop national accessibility standards and how it planned to improve the accessibility of infrastructure outside the capital. It would also be interesting to learn how the State Party was addressing the accessibility needs of persons with intellectual, psychosocial and other disabilities that were not necessarily visible.

48. **Ms. Dondovdorj** said that she would like to hear about the State Party's plans to bring its national legislation into line with the Convention by removing from it the pejorative terms for persons with disabilities, which had been noted by the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities in her report on her visit to the country. She wondered to what extent the needs of persons with disabilities and the social barriers they faced were taken into consideration by the authorities when assessing their degree of impairment. She would be glad to know whether the State Party considered denial of reasonable accommodation to be a form of disability-based discrimination and, if so, whether it was addressed in national legislation.



49. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she would welcome more information on how the State Party ensured that people who required reasonable accommodation were provided with it. She wished to know whether public services were obliged to provide reasonable accommodation; whether the numbers of requests for reasonable accommodation received and fulfilled, particularly in the public sector, were recorded; whether the public administration possessed expertise in providing reasonable accommodation; and what action the State Party took in response to complaints to ensure that requests for reasonable accommodation were fulfilled.

50. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that he would appreciate clarification as to how the State Party implemented article 8 of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which provided that the State Party was to promote exchanges and cooperation with international organizations, foreign governmental and non-governmental organizations, organizations of the country's nationals overseas and individuals in protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. In addition, he wished to know how the Government ensured that departments within ministries responsible for monitoring compliance with the Convention did so in an impartial manner. Lastly, he wondered whether any persons with disabilities had been executed by the State Party and, if so, how many.

51. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that the Government undertook to project a positive image of persons with disabilities – including persons with intellectual or mental disabilities, who were considered persons with disabilities under national law – with an emphasis on the message that they were not mere recipients of care but rights holders. To do so, it used the mass media, including television, leading newspapers and radio. In addition, the Central Committee of the Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities sponsored awareness-raising events, including seminars, workshops, artistic performances and sporting events. On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2024, events had been held in Pyongyang with the participation of many citizens from diverse backgrounds and representatives of international organizations and diplomatic missions. The events had included an artistic performance broadcast on television that had reached and impressed a large audience.

52. Articles 59–61 of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities contained clear provisions on reasonable accommodation that were in line with the Convention. The authorities had adopted a construction manual and strict standards with a view to ensuring that buildings and other facilities were accessible and barrier-free for persons with disabilities, with compliance monitored by relevant supervisory bodies in the construction and other sectors. Under article 74 of the Law, bodies operating facilities and employees working at them who failed to provide persons with disabilities with reasonable accommodation were liable to administrative and other penalties. Efforts were also being made to enhance the accessibility of communications and other technology.

53. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that his country had always valued and strived to promote sincere international dialogue and cooperation in the area of human rights. While his Government took a positive view of cooperation with international bodies that observed the principles of respect for national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, impartiality and objectivity and were willing to make tangible contributions to its citizens' enjoyment of their rights, it rejected any attempts by such bodies to side with hostile forces in sully the country's image.

54. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that he greatly appreciated the sincere exchange of views that was being conducted with the aim of helping the Committee to gain a better understanding of and make constructive recommendations regarding the situation of persons with disabilities in his country and government policies for upholding their rights. However, he had noticed that some of the questions asked had their basis in allegations of human rights violations that had been made by forces hostile to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and in no way reflected the situation of persons with disabilities or related government policies. Such questions ran counter to the principles of respect for national sovereignty, objectivity and impartiality, based on which the current dialogue must be conducted. It was regrettable that certain forces were politicizing and weaponizing human rights as a means of putting pressure on independent States. United

Nations human rights bodies must exercise increased vigilance against such practices, which were detrimental to genuine efforts to protect and promote human rights. There had never been, nor could there be, any human rights violations of the kind alleged in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where human rights were guaranteed in law and fully enjoyed in practice. He hoped that the Committee's remaining questions – and its concluding observations – would comply fully with the principles just enumerated.

55. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that he wished to affirm that the questions asked by the Committee reflected the laws of the State Party and the documents submitted by it and were intended to increase understanding of the rights of persons with disabilities in law and in practice.

#### *Articles 10–20*

56. Given that the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities did not appear to contain any provisions on access for persons with disabilities to emergency services, including in disaster situations, he would welcome details of any inclusive national strategies in that regard developed in consultation with persons with disabilities.

57. In the light of article 21 of the Civil Law, which provided that persons with physical disabilities were to conduct civil legal affairs through a guardian, and articles 53 and 54 of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which contained provisions on guardianship, he wished to know what arrangements were in place, including supported decision-making, to ensure that persons with disabilities were able to fully exercise their legal capacity. Article 430 of the Criminal Procedure Law provided that the enforcement of sentences of compulsory labour was to be suspended in the event that convicts were suffering from temporary mental illness; he wondered whether any similar provisions applied to the enforcement of the death penalty. He wished to know how organs that dealt with complaints and petitions ensured, pursuant to article 15 of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, that persons with disabilities were able to lodge them. Lastly, he would welcome details of any mechanisms that had been established to ensure that all stages of investigations and trials were fully accessible to persons with disabilities, including through the provision of sign language interpretation and the implementation of appropriate measures to facilitate communication with persons with intellectual disabilities.

58. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that, following her visit, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities had recommended that the Government should transition to a supported decision-making approach. Relevant provisions of the Family Law had been amended and the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had been drafted with the recommendation in mind. Guardianship was now put in place only at the request of the persons with disabilities concerned, as a supported decision-making measure to ensure that they made appropriate decisions for themselves and their families. The Government would continue to comply with international requirements related to the provision of supported decision-making arrangements to the best of its ability. Further information about complaints mechanisms available to persons with disabilities would be provided in writing.

59. **A representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea** said that article 62 of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provided that organizations were to take measures to prioritize the rescue, treatment and assistance of persons with disabilities in emergency situations such as natural disasters and epidemics. The National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction for the period 2019–2030, developed by the Emergency Disaster Commission, contained provisions related specifically to persons with disabilities. Relevant provisions could also be found in the Law on the Prevention of Disasters, Rescue and Restoration. In the event of imminent natural disasters, warnings were broadcast on television and radio stations and sent to mobile phones and sirens installed at the district level were sounded. Once designated officials operating locally, including heads of neighbourhood units, had been alerted, they checked lists of vulnerable persons, which included persons with disabilities, children and older persons, and visited their homes to arrange their evacuation or other appropriate measures. Rescue teams

prioritized search and rescue operations for vulnerable persons on the basis of such lists and medical teams prioritized their treatment.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*