



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Concluding observations on the initial report of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the initial report of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea¹ at its 789th and 790th meetings,² held on 12 August 2025. It adopted the present concluding observations at its 800th meeting, held on 19 August 2025.
2. The Committee welcomes the initial report of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which was prepared in accordance with the Committee's reporting guidelines, and thanks the State Party for its written replies³ to the list of issues prepared by the Committee.⁴
3. The Committee appreciates that it had the opportunity to engage with a high-level delegation, which included representatives of the relevant government ministries, and the additional information submitted by the State Party in writing following the dialogue. However, the Committee is disappointed by the State Party's allegations that it conducted the dialogue in a biased manner and by the State Party's lack of response to questions raised during the dialogue. The Committee also regrets that it did not have an opportunity to engage with representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities from the State Party.

II. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State Party to implement the Convention, including:
 - (a) The adoption of amendments to the Constitution, the Criminal Law and the Criminal Procedure Law, in 2024, to remove derogatory terms referring to persons with disabilities;
 - (b) The completion of a programme for converting Korean written language into Korean Braille, in 2019;
 - (c) The visit of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities to the State Party, in May 2017;
 - (d) The removal of barriers to access in multiple workplaces from 2016 to 2020;

* Adopted by the Committee at its thirty-third session (11–26 August 2025).

¹ [CRPD/C/PRK/1](#).

² See [CRPD/C/SR.789](#) and [CRPD/C/SR.790](#).

³ [CRPD/C/PRK/RQ/1](#).

⁴ [CRPD/C/PRK/Q/1](#).



- (e) The organization of training sessions for senior officials and ministry focal points on the Convention and barrier-free environments, in December 2016 and February 2017.

III. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

A. General principles and obligations (arts. 1–4)

- 5. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) National legislation and policies, including the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, are not fully harmonized with the Convention and the human rights model of disability and continue to reflect medical and charity-based approaches;

- (b) The Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has not been fully implemented, particularly in rural and remote areas;

- (c) Key concepts of the Convention, such as reasonable accommodation and universal design, are not clearly defined in legislation, leading to inconsistent application;

- (d) There is insufficient close consultation with and active involvement of independent organizations of persons with disabilities in developing, implementing and monitoring disability-related laws and policies;

- (e) Accessible, effective and independent complaints mechanisms are lacking for persons with disabilities, including those in detention;

- (f) The ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention is still under consideration;

- (g) There is no time-bound plan, with clear targets, indicators and allocated budgets, at the national, provincial, district and county levels, for implementing the strategic national action plan for the rights of persons with disabilities, including outside the capital.

6. **Recalling its general comment No. 7 (2018) on the participation of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

- (a) **Conduct a comprehensive review of all disability-related legislation and policies, including on the disability determination process, to eliminate medical and charity-based elements and ensure full alignment with the human rights model of disability;**

- (b) **Fully implement the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including in rural and remote areas;**

- (c) **Introduce clear legal definitions of key concepts such as reasonable accommodation and universal design in all relevant laws and policies, to strengthen their consistent application and enforcement;**

- (d) **Establish mechanisms to ensure close consultation with and the active involvement of the full diversity of persons with disabilities, including persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and persons of short stature, through their representative organizations, in all stages of the design, implementation and monitoring of disability-related laws and policies;**

- (e) **Put in place an accessible and effective complaints mechanism for persons with disabilities to report incidents of discrimination, provide persons with disabilities who have been subjected to discrimination with redress, compensation and rehabilitation and ensure that perpetrators are sanctioned;**

- (f) **Provide a clear timeline for the ratification of the Optional Protocol;**
- (g) **Develop and fund a time-bound plan for implementing the strategic national action plan for the rights of persons with disabilities at all administrative levels, ensuring that resources are allocated nationwide.**

B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)

Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

7. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) The Constitution does not explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of impairment or guarantee equality for persons with disabilities, including protection from multiple and intersectional discrimination, and domestic law does not recognize the denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of discrimination;

(b) There is no comprehensive anti-discrimination law covering both the public and private sectors; the persistence of stigmatization and negative societal attitudes, rooted in cultural ideals of physical strength and productivity, result in the exclusion, concealment and institutionalization of persons with disabilities; and the State Party takes a two-tiered approach, whereby veterans with physical impairments receive differentiated treatment while others, particularly in rural areas, are excluded from services, although veterans with physical impairments also face barriers to access to services;

(c) The national system for addressing complaints and petitions from persons with disabilities or their representative organizations, including in cases of denial of reasonable accommodation, is unclear and ineffective, and there are no mechanisms to address multiple and intersectional discrimination.

8. **The Committee recalls its general comment No. 6 (2018) on equality and non-discrimination and targets 10.2 and 10.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals and recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Amend the Constitution to explicitly guarantee equality and non-discrimination on the basis of impairment, and recognize the denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of discrimination in its legislation;**

(b) **Adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law applicable to all sectors, prohibit direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of impairment, ensure that denial of reasonable accommodation is explicitly recognized as a prohibited form of discrimination, ensure that all persons with disabilities, whether or not they are veterans, enjoy equal access to services and benefits, address disparities between urban and rural environments, and combat stigmatization and harmful stereotypes through awareness-raising campaigns, inclusive education and training for officials;**

(c) **Strengthen and clarify the national complaints and petitions system to ensure accessible, effective and timely remedies for all persons with disabilities, including in cases of denial of reasonable accommodation and multiple or intersectional discrimination.**

Women with disabilities (art. 6)

9. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) Sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls with disabilities are not fully accessible, inclusive or rights-based, especially in rural and underserved areas, and there is insufficient mental health support and information and no gender-responsive budgeting or tracking of resources benefiting women with disabilities;

(b) Women and girls with disabilities face significant barriers to inclusive education, employment, social welfare and leadership opportunities, compounded by underrepresentation in decision-making and lack of disaggregated data on participation;

(c) Women and girls with disabilities are subjected to violence, including gender-based and sexual violence, coerced marriage, abduction, trafficking and rape, and there is a lack of adequate investigation of cases, enforcement of legislation prohibiting such violence and information on prevention and protection measures.

10. The Committee recalls its general comment No. 3 (2016) on women and girls with disabilities, and targets 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Provide inclusive, rights-based sexual and reproductive healthcare, including mental health support, ensuring availability in rural and underserved areas, and establish gender-responsive budgeting and expenditure-tracking systems using data disaggregated by gender and disability;**

(b) **Ensure equal access for women and girls with disabilities to inclusive education, employment and social welfare, promote their participation in leadership and decision-making roles through targeted measures and outreach, and collect and publish disaggregated data on their participation;**

(c) **Prohibit, prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls with disabilities, including gender-based and sexual violence, coerced marriage, abduction, trafficking and rape, and ensure that all cases are promptly and impartially investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished and that victims receive protection and redress.**

Children with disabilities (art. 7)

11. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Accessible, stigma-free and community-based paediatric screening services for the early identification, diagnosis and registration of disabilities are lacking, particularly in rural and remote areas, increasing the risk of isolation from society and seclusion at home, particularly for children with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities;

(b) The registration system for children with disabilities is inadequately implemented outside Pyongyang, with insufficient legal frameworks to ensure coordinated support, and the State Party has not provided information on the measures taken so that children with disabilities who are socially isolated, including those confined to their homes and in rural and remote areas, are registered;

(c) National data systems are not used to collect or analyse disaggregated data on children with disabilities, especially those under age 5, living in institutional care or outside Pyongyang, or to report on the availability or reach of support services;

(d) Children with disabilities living with their families in rural and remote areas face limited access to services and support, resulting in social exclusion and unequal opportunities.

12. With reference to the joint statement of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the rights of children with disabilities (2022), the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Establish accessible, stigma-free community-based paediatric screening and early diagnosis services nationwide, and take measures to prevent the social isolation of children with disabilities by promoting their inclusion in the family, education, community and public life;**

(b) **Implement a transparent, nationwide registration system, supported by a legal framework, ensuring coordinated services, support and protections for children with disabilities, particularly outside Pyongyang;**

(c) **Develop and maintain systems to collect, analyse and publish disaggregated data, covering age, gender, disability type and geographical location, on children with disabilities, including those under age 5, living in institutions and in rural and remote areas, to inform policy and programmes;**

(d) **Expand and provide adequate resources for services and support for children with disabilities living with their families in rural and remote areas to ensure equal opportunities and full inclusion.**

Awareness-raising (art. 8)

13. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Awareness-raising efforts remain limited, do not systematically reach a wider public, fail to challenge persistent stigmatization of and misconceptions, harmful attitudes and derogatory language towards persons with disabilities and do not represent the full diversity of persons with disabilities, including persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, persons with invisible disabilities, persons of short stature, deafblind persons and persons with multiple disabilities;

(b) Awareness-raising materials on disability rights are not widely disseminated through the domestic intranet (Kwangmyong), radio, schools, healthcare centres, community events or other national communication platforms or in accessible formats, especially outside the capital.

14. **The Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities and women and girls with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Develop and launch nationwide, inclusive and disability-sensitive awareness-raising campaigns, accessible through the domestic intranet, the media and community platforms, to challenge stigmatization, harmful stereotypes and discriminatory language and reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities;**

(b) **Disseminate awareness-raising materials broadly through the domestic intranet, radio, schools, healthcare centres, community events and other platforms, including in accessible formats, ensuring that they reach beyond the capital.**

Accessibility (art. 9)

15. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Comprehensive accessibility legislation is lacking and national accessibility standards for public and private infrastructure, transportation, and schools, hospitals and other buildings have not been fully adopted or implemented, particularly in rural and remote areas, or been aligned with international standards. The State Party has not provided information on whether universal design approaches are systematically applied to all products, environments, programmes and services;

(b) No national authority with the power to consider complaints regarding the lack of or insufficient accessibility has been designated;

(c) Accessible means, modes and formats of information and communications are lacking, as are sign language interpretation, tactile or auditory systems, mobility aids and other assistive devices in public service settings.

16. **With reference to its general comment No. 2 (2014) on accessibility and to Sustainable Development Goal 9 and targets 11.2 and 11.7, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Adopt, implement and enforce national accessibility legislation and standards, developed in accordance with international standards and universal design principles, in relation to all new construction and upgrades, and develop time-bound plans to make hospitals, schools, housing and transport systems accessible, including in rural and remote areas;**

(b) **Establish a designated national authority mandated to consider complaints about lack of or insufficient accessibility;**

(c) **Guarantee access to information and communications in accessible means, modes and formats and to sign language interpretation, tactile and auditory systems, mobility aids, assistive technologies and accessible digital platforms.**

Right to life (art. 10)

17. The Committee is deeply concerned about:

(a) Credible reports of infanticide against children with disabilities, including accounts of killings carried out in medical facilities with official consent, and the State Party's failure to provide any data or information on preventive measures;

(b) The fact that domestic legislation does not explicitly guarantee the right to life for persons with disabilities, including in detention and healthcare settings, where they face heightened risks of systematic denial of medical care, starvation and abuse, without independent oversight;

(c) Credible reports that eugenic and discriminatory medical policies and practices based on the notion of "disability prevention" persist;

(d) The legality and practice of the death penalty in the State Party, which disregard the limits recognized under international law, and the lack of information provided on the question of its application to persons with disabilities.

18. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Take effective measures to end infanticide against children with disabilities, investigate all allegations of such acts and punish perpetrators with proportionate penalties;**

(b) **Amend domestic laws to explicitly guarantee the right to life of persons with disabilities in all contexts, including detention and healthcare, and establish independent monitoring bodies with unrestricted access to places of detention;**

(c) **Prohibit eugenic and discriminatory medical policies and practices, particularly those framed as "disability prevention";**

(d) **Abolish the death penalty and immediately cease imposing and carrying it out in the case of persons with disabilities, in accordance with the limits established under international law and in line with relevant recommendations emanating from the universal periodic review.**

Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11)

19. The Committee welcomes article 62 of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, according to which persons with disabilities should be first to be rescued and provided with treatment and assistance in times of emergency. However, the Committee is concerned that persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, are not closely consulted or actively involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and humanitarian response plans, contrary to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, and goal 7 of the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

20. **The Committee recommends that the State Party closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including women and girls with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the design, implementation and evaluation of all disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and humanitarian response plans at the national and local levels, in line with the Sendai Framework, Sustainable Development Goals 11 and 13, the Guidelines of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Incheon Strategy.**

Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)

21. The Committee is concerned about article 21 of the Civil Law, which provides that persons with disabilities “in physical function” must conduct civil procedures through their parents or guardians, and articles 53 and 54 of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on guardianship.

22. **Recalling its general comment No. 1 (2014) on equal recognition before the law, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, abolish guardianship regimes and all forms of substituted decision-making and adopt supported decision-making frameworks that respect the will and preferences of persons with disabilities.**

Access to justice (art. 13)

23. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The absence of accessible legal services, support mechanisms and procedures to ensure access to justice for persons with disabilities in the State Party, including procedural accommodation, accessible formats and physical accessibility of court and administrative facilities;

(b) The lack of positions within the justice system filled by persons with disabilities and of information provided on the measures taken to promote the recruitment, training and retention of persons with disabilities in the legal profession.

24. **The Committee recalls the International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities, developed in 2020 by the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility, and endorsed by the Committee, and target 16.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals and recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Adopt and implement comprehensive measures to ensure access to the justice system for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, including through the provision of free legal aid, information in accessible formats and gender-sensitive and age-appropriate procedural accommodation;**

(b) **Develop specific measures and inclusive policies to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in the justice sector, including as lawyers, judges, court staff and advisers, and provide ongoing capacity-building for all justice actors on the rights enshrined in the Convention.**

Liberty and security of person (art. 14)

25. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and persons of short stature, are subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention, including in psychiatric recovery centres and segregated communities, often without warrant, charges, legal representation or judicial oversight;

(b) The State Party has not provided disaggregated data on the number of persons with disabilities in prisons or other places of deprivation of liberty or information on their conditions of detention or cases where they have challenged the lawfulness of their detention.

26. **The Committee recalls its guidelines on the right to liberty and security of persons with disabilities and recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Take measures to prevent and punish, in law and in practice, the arbitrary arrest and detention of persons with disabilities, including in psychiatric recovery centres, requiring that arrests of persons with disabilities be based on judicial warrants, ensure access to legal counsel in all proceedings and establish independent judicial oversight and monitoring mechanisms with full, unrestricted access to all facilities;**

(b) **Collect and publish disaggregated data on persons with disabilities in all places of deprivation of liberty, including on sex, age, type of impairment, location and detention conditions.**

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

27. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Persons with disabilities in detention are subjected to degrading treatment, including solitary confinement for perceived disobedience or “non-productivity”, denial of access to medical care and basic necessities and confinement in conditions incompatible with human dignity, or have acquired secondary impairments due to their conditions of detention;

(b) Credible reports indicate that medical and scientific experiments are conducted on persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities.

28. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Take effective measures to prevent instances of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of persons with disabilities in all settings, including by ensuring full compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities, and end practices such as solitary confinement for perceived disobedience or “non-productivity”;**

(b) **Prohibit all medical and scientific experiments on persons with disabilities.**

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

29. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) Persons with disabilities are subjected to violence, abuse, physical punishment and physical or chemical restraints for failing to meet forced labour quotas or on the grounds of their disabilities, including in prison facilities and upon return from abroad;

(b) There is a lack of accessible and safe avenues for reporting exploitation, violence and abuse, including gender-based violence, insufficient independent monitoring of places of detention and inadequate victim support, legal aid and rehabilitation services, particularly for women and girls with disabilities;

(c) The State Party does not keep strict records of compliance with and monitoring of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women, which prohibits the abduction, trafficking, rape or gang rape of a woman.

30. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Criminalize and effectively prosecute all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse against persons with disabilities, including forced labour, physical punishment and abuse in detention facilities;**

(b) **Establish accessible and independent complaints and reporting mechanisms in all settings, ensure regular monitoring of detention facilities by independent bodies, including organizations of persons with disabilities, and provide adequate support, legal aid and rehabilitation services to victims;**

(c) **Establish a monitoring and oversight mechanism, with the participation of organizations of persons with disabilities, that is authorized to receive and follow up on complaints of exploitation, violence or abuse, including sexual abuse, against persons with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities, and ensure that statistics are available and that restorative justice is provided to victims.**

Protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)

31. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) According to credible information, women with disabilities are subjected to forced abortion and forced sterilization;
- (b) Legislation does not prohibit coercive medical practices, such as forced treatment and the use of physical and chemical restraints, or provide adequate safeguards to protect the physical and mental integrity of persons with disabilities.

32. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

- (a) **Enact and enforce legal provisions prohibiting forced abortion and forced sterilization, and establish accessible complaints mechanisms for victims;**
- (b) **Introduce and enforce a legal ban on coercive medical practices, such as forced treatment and physical and chemical restraints, and establish independent monitoring, including by ensuring the participation of organizations of persons with disabilities, to safeguard the physical and mental integrity of persons with disabilities and to prevent such violations.**

Liberty of movement and nationality (art. 18)

33. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The lack of a mechanism to ensure that all children with disabilities are registered at birth;
- (b) Restrictions on freedom of movement through checkpoints and the requirement to obtain advance travel clearance, which disproportionately affect persons with disabilities, who may face additional barriers to mobility, including when trying to access services;
- (c) The lack of information regarding practices limiting the freedom of residence of persons with disabilities, particularly persons of short stature.

34. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

- (a) **Establish a mechanism to ensure that all children with disabilities are registered at birth;**
- (b) **Ensure that persons with disabilities can travel throughout the State Party without restriction on an equal basis with others;**
- (c) **Take all measures necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities made to live in specific areas are allowed to reside elsewhere, inform them of this right and facilitate any such moves according to their wishes and preferences and on an equal basis with others.**

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

35. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) Persons with disabilities have limited freedom to choose their living arrangements, with credible reports of institutionalization, including the placement of persons of short stature and other groups in isolated settlements where movement is restricted and participation in mainstream education or employment is denied;
- (b) The lack of information provided by the State Party on measures taken in respect of children with disabilities who have been abandoned and measures to transition from residential care institutions to family- and community-based forms of childcare.

36. **Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, its guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies, and the report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with**

disabilities on the transformation of services for persons with disabilities,⁵ the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:

(a) **Prohibit institutionalization and segregation of persons with disabilities, remove restrictions on their freedom to choose where and with whom they live, and ensure full deinstitutionalization by adopting a clear strategy, specific goals, benchmarks and time frames, to transition from institutional care to community-based services;**

(b) **Establish support mechanisms for families of children with disabilities to prevent abandonment, replace segregation measures with measures to promote the adoption of children with disabilities or placement in foster care and ensure that foster families receive the requisite support for their care.**

Personal mobility (art. 20)

37. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of specific mechanisms to provide mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies to persons with disabilities;

(b) The lack of information provided by the State Party on the accessibility of transport, particularly in rural and remote areas, beyond the existence of a taxi service for persons with disabilities;

(c) The lack of information provided by the State Party on technical training in personal mobility that includes persons with disabilities.

38. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Establish, implement and provide adequate resources for specific mechanisms to ensure the timely provision, maintenance and replacement of affordable mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies for all persons with disabilities, taking into account individual requirements and preferences;**

(b) **Systematically collect and publish disaggregated data on the accessibility of public and private transport, including in rural and remote areas, and take targeted measures to ensure that all transport services are physically and technologically accessible and affordable so that persons with disabilities can use them on an equal basis with others;**

(c) **Develop, provide resources for and implement accessible technical training programmes on personal mobility for persons with disabilities, ensuring their meaningful participation in the design, delivery and evaluation of such programmes.**

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

39. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of laws and policies that promote and protect the freedom of expression and opinion of persons with disabilities, including persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and disability activists;

(b) Credible reports of general inaccessibility of information, including a lack of captioning and sign language interpretation on news and other television programmes and in other mass media events, the unavailability of screen readers, the insufficiency of documentation in Braille, and the inaccessibility of information on charges and procedures for persons with hearing or visual impairments in detention and of online services and digital platforms.

⁵ [A/HRC/52/32](#).

40. **The Committee recalls its general comment No. 7 (2018) and recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Recognize the role of civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, as human rights defenders;**

(b) **Prohibit any reprisals against individuals and organizations and take effective measures to protect the free exchange of ideas in the civic space.**

41. **The Committee also recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Revise its national policies in accordance with general comments No. 34 (2011) and No. 37 (2020) of the Human Rights Committee and adapt accordingly the jurisprudence of all administrative bodies and courts in which those policies have been applied;**

(b) **Enact legislation and policies that guarantee the right to freedom of expression and opinion and access to information of persons with disabilities, particularly persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and disability activists, including measures against surveillance, censorship and acts of reprisal;**

(c) **Take all legislative, policy and other measures necessary to ensure that all public information, including television and media services, government websites and digital platforms, are accessible to all persons with disabilities, for example by complying with accessibility standards, such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium or equivalent;**

(d) **Provide accessible means, modes and formats of information and communications, such as Braille, interpretation for deafblind persons, sign language interpretation, Easy Read, plain language, audio description, captioning and subtitles, and allocate adequate funding for their development, promotion and use, ensuring access to information and communications technology appropriate for the diversity of persons with disabilities, including in places of detention and rural and remote areas.**

Respect for privacy (art. 22)

42. The Committee is concerned that persons with disabilities in detention are subjected to strip-searches and groping under the guise of hygiene checks, without privacy, explanation or justification.

43. **The Committee recommends that the State Party prohibit and prevent any form of invasive physical searches or hygiene checks in detention unless strictly necessary for a legitimate purpose and carried out in accordance with the principles of dignity, autonomy, privacy and non-discrimination.**

Respect for home and the family (art. 23)

44. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) According to credible reports, persons with disabilities face restrictions on marriage and stigmatization continues to discourage marriage where one of the persons has disabilities;

(b) Persons with disabilities are denied the opportunity to be adoptive parents or guardians of children, and it is unknown whether parents of children with disabilities are provided with financial support, counselling and personal assistance to ensure that their children enjoy the universal rights outlined in national laws;

(c) There is no mechanism to monitor the implementation of provisions of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities concerning the right of persons with disabilities to respect for home and the family.

45. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

- (a) **Conduct public awareness-raising campaigns to foster understanding that persons with disabilities have the right, on an equal basis with others, to marry the person of their choice, regardless of whether that person has disabilities, and to have or adopt children, if they so wish;**
- (b) **Ensure that laws, policies and practices protect the right of parents with disabilities to raise their children on an equal basis with other parents, and establish comprehensive support services, including financial assistance, personal assistance, counselling and care, to enable families to remain together;**
- (c) **Take the legislative measures necessary to ensure the monitoring of the right of persons with disabilities to respect for home and the family.**

Education (art. 24)

46. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The promotion of a segregated learning environment in the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- (b) Insufficient progress in the provision of inclusive education, including the transition from segregated special education to inclusive education and the lack of quality inclusive education, particularly due to inadequate allocation of resources and the lack of reasonable accommodation on the basis of individual requirements, leading to the seclusion of children with disabilities;
- (c) Insufficient training of teachers and non-teaching staff in the right to inclusive education, Braille, sign language and disability-inclusive modes of teaching;
- (d) Limited accessible materials and adaptive learning environments and lack of sign language interpretation and of alternative and augmentative modes and methods of communication;
- (e) The challenges faced by persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial and persons with multiple disabilities, in obtaining access to tertiary education and reasonable accommodation;
- (f) The lack of accurate and reliable data, disaggregated by age, sex, school level and type of impairment, on students with disabilities in segregated education, in both urban and rural areas.

47. **Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, and targets 4.5 and 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities, and learners with disabilities and their families:**

- (a) **Review its legislation and policies in the field of education, including the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to bring them into line with the Convention, and ensure the participation of persons with disabilities, including children and youth with disabilities, in their implementation and evaluation;**
- (b) **Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy, with clear targets, indicators and a concrete time frame, for the effective implementation of inclusive education policies, by reviewing existing strategies, ensuring adequate budgetary allocations and mobilizing technical and human resources to provide reasonable accommodation and individualized support to all students with disabilities at all levels of education; the strategy should include a detailed plan to phase out segregated learning environments through the implementation of transition programmes that facilitate the systematic transfer of children from special to inclusive schools;**

(c) **Ensure the training of teachers and non-teaching personnel in mainstream schools in inclusive education and raise their awareness about the human rights model of disability;**

(d) **Provide students with disabilities with learning support on the basis of their individual requirements, including classroom support, accessible learning environments, inclusive teaching methods and learning materials in alternative and accessible formats, such as inclusive digital access, and other modes and means of communication, including Easy Read, communication aids and assistive information technology;**

(e) **Take measures to ensure the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in tertiary education, including through the provision of inclusive curricula, reasonable accommodation and accessible physical environments and by implementing targeted programmes aimed at expanding and diversifying vocational training and employment opportunities beyond traditional or stereotypical fields; particular attention should be given to the requirements of deafblind persons, women with disabilities, persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and persons with multiple disabilities;**

(f) **Establish a comprehensive data-collection system to gather accurate information on the educational participation of persons with disabilities at all levels, disaggregated by type of schooling (such as mainstream school, special school, rehabilitation centre and homeschooling), age, sex, type of impairment, education level and geographical location, with a view to informing inclusive education policies and monitoring their implementation.**

Health (art. 25)

48. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The persistence, despite the State Party's commitment to universal and free healthcare, of systemic barriers to healthcare for persons with disabilities, including inaccessible facilities and information, lack of reasonable accommodation, persistent prejudice among healthcare professionals, uneven policy implementation between urban and rural areas and the high cost of certain treatments, due to ineffective implementation and inadequate monitoring;

(b) The lack of access to essential medication, including antibiotics, anaesthetics, pain relief drugs and contraceptives, for persons with disabilities, particularly in rural areas;

(c) The limited measures to ensure access, on an equal basis with others, to quality, age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health services and sex education for all persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities;

(d) The lack of information on healthcare budget allocations for persons with disabilities.

49. **Recalling targets 3.7 and 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to ensure access to quality, free universal healthcare services for all persons with disabilities, including in rural and urban areas, by implementing accessibility standards and regular monitoring and ensuring the provision of reasonable accommodation by public and private healthcare providers, and eliminate financial barriers to healthcare by covering the cost of essential medical treatment, particularly for low-income persons with disabilities;**

(b) **Take urgent measures to ensure the availability and affordability of essential medication and the accessibility and easy identification of its packaging as well as the accessibility of healthcare services, including in rural areas, and ensure non-discriminatory access to life-saving treatment;**

(c) **Ensure that high-quality, age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sex education are inclusive of and accessible to all persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities, and that healthcare professionals are trained in the human rights model of disability and the right of persons with disabilities to decide whether to give their free and informed consent for any medical treatment;**

(d) **Allocate, in a transparent manner, adequate resources for the provision of inclusive healthcare that meets the requirements of persons with disabilities, including through accessible services, assistive devices, inclusive programmes and staff training.**

Habilitation and rehabilitation (art. 26)

50. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The underfunding and limited capacity of rehabilitation centres for persons with disabilities, particularly outside of Pyongyang, which results in unequal access to rehabilitation services across the State Party;

(b) The lack of assistive devices, including wheelchairs, walkers, hearing aids and other devices and technologies designed for persons with disabilities, to promote their maximum independence and fullest physical, mental, social and vocational development.

51. **Recalling the link between article 26 of the Convention and target 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party take measures to secure access for persons with disabilities to comprehensive and cross-sectoral habilitation and rehabilitation services, programmes and technology, in their community, including in rural and remote areas. It further recommends that the State Party take measures to make available all rehabilitation equipment, assistive devices and mobility aids and services, including their repair, on the basis of individual requirements, to promote the maximum independence and social inclusion of persons with disabilities.**

Work and employment (art. 27)

52. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) Persons with disabilities are often confined to segregated “light labour” workshops on the basis of type and degree of impairment, frequently in rural areas, which limits opportunities for inclusion in mainstream employment and reinforces stigmatization, and barriers to access to education, discriminatory societal attitudes and the absence of effective mechanisms to guarantee reasonable accommodation further restrict equal access to employment;

(b) The employment rate of persons with disabilities remains low, particularly among women and persons whose disabilities were not acquired in a military context, and there is insufficient disaggregated data, inadequate workplace accommodation and no accessible independent mechanisms to address complaints of employment-related discrimination or rights violations.

53. **Recalling its general comment No. 8 (2022) on the right of persons with disabilities to work and employment, and in line with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Transition from segregated workshops to inclusive, accessible and freely chosen employment opportunities in the open labour market, dismantle educational and training barriers to access to employment and promote inclusive workforce policies in both the public and private sectors;**

(b) **Collect and publish disaggregated data on the employment of persons with disabilities, disaggregated by sex, age, type of impairment and region, ensure workplace**

accommodation in all sectors and establish accessible, independent complaints and monitoring mechanisms to address employment discrimination and rights violations.

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

54. The Committee notes with concern that:

(a) According to credible information, large segments of the population, including persons with disabilities, are affected by food insecurity, malnutrition and a lack of access to basic services;

(b) According to credible reports, entitlements such as rations, assistive devices, housing support and social protection benefits prioritize “honorary soldiers” with disabilities acquired through military service, while excluding other persons with disabilities;

(c) There is a significant gap between the living standards of persons with disabilities living in urban environments and those living in rural and remote areas.

55. Recalling the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to empower and to promote the economic inclusion of all persons, irrespective of disability status, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Assess the number of persons with disabilities affected by food insecurity, malnutrition and lack of access to basic services, and adopt a strategy to reallocate resources to meet basic needs;**

(b) **Ensure equal access for all persons with disabilities, regardless of cause or category of impairment, to all social protection entitlements, and remove discriminatory eligibility criteria;**

(c) **Take measures to ensure an adequate standard of living for all persons with disabilities in the State Party, including in rural and remote areas.**

Participation in political and public life (art. 29)

56. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The absence of specific information regarding persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, who hold decision-making positions or public office, including in the Supreme People’s Assembly, and the lack of accessible opportunities to participate in policymaking processes that affect them;

(b) The lack of measures to ensure the full accessibility of polling stations and voting materials for persons with disabilities.

57. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Take specific steps to increase the representation of persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, in decision-making positions and political bodies, including the Supreme People’s Assembly;**

(b) **In close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, take measures to provide reasonable accommodation and to ensure the full accessibility of polling stations, voting materials and information for the full diversity of persons with disabilities, particularly persons with autism, persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and persons with physical disabilities.**

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

58. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The fact that cultural, recreational and sport activities are accessible to only a small group of persons with disabilities living in Pyongyang, meaning that the majority of persons with disabilities are excluded;

(b) The lack of a concrete plan to effectively implement the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.

59. **The Committee recommends that the State Party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:**

(a) **Develop and implement a strategy, with benchmarks, indicators and adequate resources, to guarantee equitable access to cultural, leisure and sport opportunities for all persons with disabilities, including those living outside Pyongyang and those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds;**

(b) **Adopt a plan for the effective implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled.**

C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)

Statistics and data collection (art. 31)

60. The Committee welcomes the use of the Washington Group short set of questions on functioning in population censuses with the aim of creating a database on persons with disabilities. However, the Committee is concerned about the lack of publication of reliable, disaggregated data on persons with disabilities, including by type of impairment, age, sex, gender, geographical location and socioeconomic status.

61. **The Committee recommends that the State Party use the policy marker on the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, promote inclusivity and improve disability data-collection systems so as to have data disaggregated by age, sex, gender, ethnicity, urban or rural location and migrant, refugee or asylum-seeking status. The Committee also recommends that the State Party strengthen institutional data-collection and analysis capacity, develop and publish comprehensive, disaggregated and rights-based data on disability, in line with international standards, and ensure the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in all stages of data collection and analysis.**

International cooperation (art. 32)

62. The Committee is concerned about the limited scope of international cooperation strategies and programmes and the lack of information provided by the State Party on the participation therein of persons with disabilities, including women and girls with disabilities, through their representative organizations, and on budget allocations for such participation, including in relation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

63. **The Committee recommends that the State Party adopt concrete measures to ensure close consultation with and the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in international cooperation agreements and programmes, specifically in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals at all levels. The Committee also recommends that the State Party take measures to strengthen its cooperation for the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032 and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.**

National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)

64. The Committee is concerned that the Korean Federation for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities does not operate as an autonomous institution in line with principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). The Committee notes with deep concern the absence of formal mechanisms

to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention.

65. Recalling its guidelines on independent monitoring frameworks and their participation in the work of the Committee, the Committee recommends that the State Party establish an independent monitoring mechanism in accordance with the Paris Principles, ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations. Noting the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to support the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions, the Committee encourages the State Party to seek the Office's support and advice in this process.

IV. Follow-up

Dissemination of information

66. The Committee emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. With regard to urgent measures that must be taken, the Committee would like to draw the State Party's attention to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 14, on awareness-raising, 18, on the right to life, and 47, on education.

67. The Committee requests the State Party to implement the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. It recommends that the State Party transmit the concluding observations for consideration and action to members of the Government and parliament, officials in relevant ministries, local authorities and members of relevant professional groups, such as education, medical and legal professionals, as well as to the media, using modern social communication strategies.

68. The Committee requests the State Party to disseminate the present concluding observations widely, including to non-governmental organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities, and to persons with disabilities themselves and members of their families, in national and minority languages, including sign language, and in accessible formats, including Easy Read, and to make them available on the government website on human rights.

69. The Committee strongly encourages the State Party to involve civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, in the preparation of its periodic report.

Next periodic report

70. The combined second to fourth periodic reports are in principle due on 2 January 2031, under the simplified reporting procedure. The Committee will establish and communicate the exact due date of the combined periodic reports of the State Party in line with a future clear and regularized schedule for reporting by States Parties⁶ and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting for the State Party. The combined periodic reports should cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

⁶ General Assembly resolution 79/165, para. 6.