



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Fifth session

Summary record (partial)* of the 2nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 11 April 2011, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. McCallum

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Cooperation with other United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and other competent bodies (*continued*)

* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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The public part of the meeting was called to order at 4.50 p.m.

Cooperation with other United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and other competent bodies (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Jourdan** (Association of World Citizens), speaking on behalf of those closest to autistic children around the world, for the most part their mothers, who had been driven to despair by the inaction of certain countries that provided neither education for autistic children nor support for their families, deplored the growing number of suicides, marital breakdowns and siblings leaving home within those families. The autistic community, unlike other population groups such as the deaf or the hard of hearing, lacked recognition. The families of autistic children wanted them to be recognized as a group in their own right, and policies, services and funds to be dedicated to their cause. Young people with complex disabilities, which made them particularly vulnerable, were in need of greater support than other autistic persons. The families of autistic children faced many hardships, such as poverty, which neither the community nor society could help shoulder. In order to foster a better understanding of their situation, a round-table conference was scheduled to take place in May 2011 with the support of the World Health Organization. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities might consider organizing its own round-table conference during its next session, to present a clearer picture of what autism is and its symptoms, which were not always readily discernible. In her capacity as a doctor working chiefly with foreign nationals and people from minorities, she had witnessed the many difficulties such individuals encountered in accessing care, especially in the context of workplace injuries suffered in the host country. The issue of equal rights for those people should be addressed in legislation.

2. **Ms. Maina** expressed an interest in participating in the round-table conference on autism, especially given the need to improve diagnostic accuracy, in order then to provide targeted care. Governments should take into account all aspects of the problem, from the political to the legal.

3. **The Chairperson** said that the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was deeply concerned by the fate of disabled children and wished to reassure autistic persons and those closest to them that the Committee had taken on board the message of the Association of World Citizens.

The public part of the meeting rose at 5 p.m.