**Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**19th Session, 14 February – 9 March 2018**

**Room XVII Palais des Nations, Geneva**

**Oral Statement by Christine Löw, Director, Liaison Office Geneva**

**United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)**

**14 February, 3:00 pm**

Thank you, Chair.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide a brief update of UN Women’s work on the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities and gender equality since our last oral statement at its 17th session.

UN Women has undertaking a high number or initiatives and measures to **increase the visibility of women and girls with disabilities and amplify their voices**. Please let me highlight a few:

* UN Women co-sponsored and/or participated in more than ten side events during the 10th session of Conference of States Parties.
* To inform policy, and promote disaggregation of data by disability, sex and age on the occasion the 2017 High Level Political Forum, UN Women developed [the Issue brief: Making the SDGs count for women and girls with disabilities](http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/6/issue-brief-making-the-sdgs-count-for-women-and-girls-with-disabilities). UN Women’s new global monitoring report *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, [to be launched today in New York](http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/2/media-advisory-un-women-launches-flagship-report-turning-promises-into-action), includes information and evidence on women and girls with disabilities.
* **To support joint action**, in 2017, for the third round of funding [United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD)](http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/RPD00), UN Women participated in 11 joint United Nations expressions of interest, 8 of which were invited to submit full-fledged project proposals, and 6 were selected[[1]](#footnote-1) for funding. The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, managed by UN Women, in its [21st funding cycle in 2017](http://untf.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/grant-making/application-guidelines), included a special window on addressing violence against women and girls with disabilities. UN Women contributes to/participates in the [IASC Task Team on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-inclusion-persons-disabilities-humanitarian-action), which is tasked with developing guidelines on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action.
* UN Women continues to **strengthen collaboration with women with disabilities and their representative organizations** and UN Women’s websites and knowledge portals increasingly include stories, information tools and resources on women and girls with disabilities.

UN Women welcomes that **intergovernmental outcomes** increasingly address the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls with disabilities and the full realization of their human rights and their inclusion in society.

The **Agreed Conclusions** on “Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work,” adopted during the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women called for the promotion and respect of women’s and girls’ right to education throughout their life cycle at all levels, especially for those who are the most left behind, including by adopting measures that promote, respect and guarantee the safety of women and girls in the school environment and that support women and girls with disabilities at all levels of education and training.

It further calls for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls with disabilities and the full realization of their human rights and their inclusion in society, and measures to ensure that women with disabilities have access to decent work on an equal basis with others in the public and private sectors, and to increase employment of women with disabilities and eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including recruitment, retention, promotion, and safe, secure, and healthy working conditions, in consultation with relevant national mechanisms and organizations of persons with disabilities.

Un Women is very pleased that the **Resolution on the “Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto: situation of women and girls with disabilities”** ([A/RES/72/162](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/72/162)) adopted by the General Assembly last December ([more information](https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/news/news/unga72-adopted-a-new-resolution-on-the-implementation-of-crpd.html)) focused on the situation of women and girls with disabilities. It is a great step forward that a GA Resolution recognizes that women and girls with disabilities are faced with multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination which poses barriers in all aspects of life, and that it names a number of key issues critical to realizing their rights on the equal basis with others.

**UN Women’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021** provides a strong basis over the next four years for UN Women to support women with disabilities to reach decision-making positions and gender responsive disability programming; and to continue to strengthen its special relationship with women’s organizations, and networks and pay special attention to those representing specific groups, such as organizations of women with disabilities.

To systematize these efforts, UN Women develops a ***Strategy for the Empowerment of Women and Girls with Disabilities: Towards Full and Effective Participation and Gender Equality.*** The Strategy aims at providing entry points for the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in all areas of UN Women’s work, and mainstreaming gender perspectives in disability specific work.

As part of the consultation process, in December 2017 we invited selected partners to provide input/feedback on draft the strategy. We have received over 20 responses from Member States, UN entities, individual experts, the private sector, and civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities and organizations of women and girls with disabilities.

Chair, before I conclude, let me briefly look ahead:

In 2018, UN Women is chairing the **Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (IASG)**. We will host the annual meeting of IASG from 22-23 March in New York, during the second week of the Commission of the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women (12 – 23 March 2018). During in its flagship side events to the Commission, UN Women we will feature women activists with disabilities.

2018 will further help catalyze change towards the full and effective participation of women and girls with disabilities. UN Women looks forward to working with all stakeholders to continue advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and put a particular spotlight on “women and girls with disabilities”.

Thank you for your attention.

1. Malawi, Pakistan, Timor Leste, Serbia, Macedonia (FYR), and Uruguay. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)