**Statement by OHCHR’s human rights and disability team delivered by Victoria Lee**

**18th Session of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**14 August 2017 – Room XVII, Palais des Nations**

Chairperson, Members of the Committee, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here on behalf of OHCHR’s team on human rights and disability.

This morning we would like to take the opportunity to share with you some main developments that have taken place since the last session concerning OHCHR’s mandate to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

*Human Rights Council*

We are currently working on the annual study which focuses on the right to access to justice in accordance with HRC resolution 31/6 and will be presented at the annual panel on the rights of persons with disabilities in March 2018. We are open to receive contributions from the Committee and we encourage the Committee to further consider issues connected with this right in the present session.

*Conference of States parties*

During the last COSP10 OHCHR continued its advocacy to increase gender and regional parity in this Committee. We raised this issue in all possible environments, including panel presentations, meetings with the Group of Friends of the CRPD and in a specific side-event organised with this treaty body. We thank the participation of Jorge Araya and Ms. Degener in this event. We will continue to call on States parties to consider innovative measures for nominations at the national level and elections at the global level in order to restore balance within the Committee, for example proposing a majority of women at the next elections.

We would also like to reiterate our message to this Committee to actively engage with States parties in this sense and closely monitor the processes that lead to the presentation of candidacies to the Committee at country level to uphold the principles of gender and regional balance contained in the UN Charter and the Convention itself. OHCHR also encourages the Committee to continue bringing a gender perspective in its work, to ensure that the lack of women represented in the Committee does not result in neglecting nor diluting the achieved standards regarding women and girls with disabilities.

We look forward to continuing our close cooperation with the Committee and its Secretariat team and we wish you a very fruitful 18th session.