

## **DECLARATION**

### **Summary Presented at:**

#### **Women with Disabilities in Political and Public Leadership: Towards Beijing+25**

**UN Women, United Nations, New York, 12 June 2019**

*We, as women with disabilities with extensive public and political experience,*

*Reaffirming* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which enshrines principles of non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of political rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Article 25 which stipulates the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, to vote and to be elected and to have Access to public service;

*Guided* by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which legally binds all States Parties to fulfill, protect and respect women's human rights, and which requires, *inter alia*, that States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country;

*Recalling* General Recommendation 18 (1991) of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), "Disabled Women", which, *inter alia*, recommends that States parties adopt special measures to ensure that they can participate in all areas of social and cultural life;

*Recognizing* the UN General Assembly Resolution 66/130 on Women and Political Participation, which calls on Member States to all States to enhance the political participation of women;

*Guided* by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol adopted on December 13, 2006, as well as General Comment 3 of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which aim to ensure full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities and places responsibility with States to eliminate barriers by adopting the necessary measures against discrimination against women and girls with disabilities and all possible measures for the development, advancement and empowerment of women with disabilities;

*Affirming* the inclusion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as a standalone goal, signaling its importance to meeting all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets;

*Recalling* that according to the 2011 World Report on Disability of the World Health Organization (WHO), women, those in the poorest wealth quintile, and older people have higher prevalence of disability;

*Stressing* the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities, particularly older women, women and girls who live in institutions, and those with intellectual disabilities;

*Reaffirming* the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in various areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which refers to the Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", which commit States Parties to accelerate and take strategic action in 12 areas of critical concern, which are matters of fundamental importance;

*Recognizing*, however, that measures put in place by States parties have been insufficient to achieve the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for women and girls with disabilities, or their enjoyment or full participation in the gains of sustainable development;

*Emphasizing* that the general principles and various provisions of the CRPD can inform the 25<sup>th</sup> review and appraisal of the implementation of Beijing to be held in the year 2020, particularly on its critical areas of concern on inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels;

Recalling that, globally, women are unrepresented in all spheres of political decision-making due to differential impact of electoral systems, prejudices based on perceived inferiority or superiority of either sex and stereotypes of gender roles, violence against women in politics and structural barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against women;

***The co-signers of this Declaration:***

**1. *Call upon all Member States to strengthen efforts to empower women and girls with disabilities and enhance their participation and promote leadership in society, particularly to:***

(a) Ensure the full and equal participation of women and girls with disabilities in decision-making, through the formulation of national laws and policies, consistent with their exercise of legal capacity, equal protection under the law and prohibition of discrimination;

(b) Promote and protect the human rights of women and girls with disabilities with respect to power and decision-making from early childhood, recognizing that decision-making is a process that develops throughout life and is reflected in everyday life, beginning from the family, where opinions of women and girls with disabilities must be considered in individual, family and collective decisions;

(c) Take measures to address the multiple barriers faced by women with disabilities that prevent them from exercising their political rights, including as voters and candidates;

(d) Adopt zero tolerance policies for violence against women with disabilities in politics, including psychological violence perpetuated by prejudices and stereotypes that women with disabilities are incapable of having independent opinions about public affairs and policies or the knowledge of their equal political rights;

(e) Strengthen institutional and environmental support for women with disabilities, most of whom lack the necessary supportive and enabling conditions for developing a political career, even when they are interested and qualified;

(f) Promote political participation of women with disabilities in all policy matters, including by demonstrating and valuing how their experiences, perspectives and expertise enrich whole societies when they are reflected in policy outcomes;

(g) Promote the visibility of various women with disabilities who currently occupy high-level leadership positions and whose leadership positively impacts on the lives of women, girls, men and boys as a result of their merits, abilities and skills, who can serve as role models for millions of women and girls with disabilities in the world; and

(h) Provide equal opportunities for civic education and political leadership training to encourage women with disabilities to pursue decision-making positions.

The Declaration, guided by international normative frameworks, also addresses areas of life essential for women with disabilities to participated in political and public life.