

**13th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on
the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Statement for the Segment on the Interactive Dialogue with the
United Nations System
by
Under Secretary-General Mr. Liu Zhenmin
3 December (3-3:30pm)**

Introduction

Excellencies
Colleagues
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to be part of this Interactive Dialogue segment with the UN system. Our mandate centers on the development pillar of the United Nations, cutting across all aspects of the global agenda. We believe in inclusion and participation and for this we work very closely with persons with disabilities as well as with all our stakeholders from the private and public sector and civil society. DESA, as the focal point on disability for the whole UN system, in its leading role in mainstreaming disability in the 2030 Agenda aligns its work with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We live in a multilateral world where we can win if we work in a harmonious and holistic manner to succeed in removing barriers and prejudices on disability – related matters and make our achievements sustainable.

Overview of the Conference and response to COVID 19

COSP has become in recent years one of the largest and important international fora on disability issues that takes place in the UN. This year, in spite of this new challenging way of working due to the COVID 19 pandemic our collaboration across the UN system demonstrated our capacity to work united and to “build back better” with a vision looking at the future. While waiting for better times to have in person meetings hosting this Conference through virtual platforms makes it even more accessible to a larger number of participants by providing the space to persons with disabilities and their representative organizations to lead programme coordination and accessibility and spur global action. Together, we have built upon the

Convention forging partnerships for global action and promote sustainable development for the well being of all.

COVID-19 Crisis and UNDESA's response

In response to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic, let me share with you a couple of examples of actions UNDESA took . One was the launch of the *policy brief on the COVID-19 crisis from the disability and gender lens* on 6 May 2020 to support Member States and other stakeholders to address the situation of persons with disabilities under the COVID-19 crisis to leave no one behind. UNDESA's policy analysis concluded that COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequalities, including for persons with disabilities, in particular for those who experience intersecting forms of discrimination, such as women and girls with disabilities.

UNDESA was also a key contributor to the Secretary-General's *Policy Brief on COVID-19 and persons with disabilities* endorsed by **more than 140 Member States and observers**.

Another action oriented example in DESA was taken by the Division for Inclusive Social Development, as a co-chair and lead of the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, that initiated the UN system-wide knowledge repository on the UN Enable website (as has been designated as the site of the UN system) and collaborated with other UN entities for organization and coordination for knowledge creation, management and dissemination to address the disability-inclusive UN response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with an additional positive note on COSP. It presents extraordinary opportunities to engage States Parties and other stakeholders in a substantive discourse, exchange experiences and share good practices, develop new innovative solutions and networks, as well as create enabling environments for furthering inclusive development for all. The role of the Conference, in this context, is crucial for “building back better” for, by and with persons with disabilities by looking at “transformative ways of resilience” as we commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities this very day.

Working together with all partners, UNDESA will continue to address disability inclusion through its analytical and programmatic work in support of the goals and the objectives of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the implementation of the disability-inclusive SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. We look at the future by providing thought leadership on strong policies frameworks that will

facilitate the implementation of the Convention toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable world for all people of all ages and abilities.

Thank you.