

Statement

by

**Ms. Lampersbach, Ministerial Director,
Head of Directorate General
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**

in the

**Fourth Session of the Conference of State Parties
to the Convention**

on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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(check against delivery)

Mr. President,

Germany aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the best known of the international Human Rights Conventions in Germany. Some even call the CRPD the “Constitution of Persons with Disabilities”. You will hardly hear or read anything about the issue of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities without the CRPD being mentioned!

Germany ratified the Convention and the Optional Protocol without any interpretative statement or reservation. The Convention and the Optional Protocol have been legally binding in Germany since 26 March 2009.

Both the Convention as well as German legislation and policy for persons with disabilities aim at improving and securing the opportunities for persons with disabilities not only to participate in society, but also to be fully included in society. Therefore, the convention constitutes an important reference document and a roadmap for new developments in this field of policy.

Germany is glad to notice that much of what is stipulated by the CRPD has already been achieved in Germany in the past decade. Notwithstanding national achievements such as our Social Code Book Nine on rehabilitation and integration of persons with disabilities, we remain ambitious in continuously implementing the Convention in Germany.

The implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is yet another step taken by Germany towards an inclusive society which is characterized by the indispensable recognition of every person’s human dignity. It therefore also requires any future political measures to be oriented towards the requirements and objectives set out in the Convention. Nevertheless some gaps still exist for people with disabilities between their theoretical legal rights and what is actually done in practice. All political projects and legal initiatives, including our development aid programs increasingly take account of the special interests and needs of persons with disabilities from the very outset (“Disability Mainstreaming”).

In order to meet the requirements of the CRPD today and in the future, the Federal Government issued a National Action Plan for the implementation of the Convention on 15 June 2011: In addition to a review of what has been achieved so far, the National Action Plan compiles the German government's objectives and measures concerning the implementation of the Convention into an overall strategy for the next ten years.

The Action Plan is a package of measures rather than a legislative package. It is aimed at closing existing gaps between the legal situation and practice. More than 200 plans, projects and activities show that inclusion is a process that includes all areas of life. Measures extend from an inclusive training and employment program (so called "Initiative Inclusion") to the elimination of problems arising in the implementation of assistance for children, young people and parents with disabilities, to a concept for barrier-free medical practices or eased conditions for helping persons with severe disabilities. This also includes a broad public-relations campaign for an inclusive society. Furthermore, the German government's Disability Report will be redesigned. It will be based on indicators and drawn up by independent experts. The report is intended to provide solid data describing the actual situation of persons with disabilities and to be a sound basis for the implementation of the Convention. Because, after all, it is not that Germany lacks good and model laws and provisions, but rather, what is frequently lacking is the implementation and realization of existing rights.

Inclusion is a task for society at large. It needs people with and without disabilities. From the very beginning, people with all forms of disabilities have been integrated into the process of drawing up the National Action Plan (March 2010 to June 2011). In addition discussions with disability organizations as well as responsible ministries, federal states and other stakeholders of civil society, government initiated conferences have been held where visions, guiding principles and objectives included in the fields of action were worked on. The results of this participation process contributed to the draft of the government's National Action Plan.

The Convention is directed at all government agencies obliging them to implement the Convention. The realization of the CRPD requires further government, but also private, initiatives because it addresses and affects all

areas of political, economic, cultural and social life. That is why we are working on further initiatives and action plans to be supported by the federal states, municipalities, social partners, associations and institutions.

With the National Action Plan, the German government has created an instrument to systematically boost the implementation of the UN Convention in the next ten years. It thereby wants to launch a process that will not only have a major influence on the lives of persons with disabilities but also on the lives of all people. This is the only way to gradually make an inclusive society a reality.