



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Sixth session

New York, 17-19 July 2013

Report of the sixth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

I. Introduction

1. In accordance with article 40 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the sixth session of the Conference of States Parties was held in New York from 17 to 19 July 2013. The theme of the session was “Ensuring an adequate standard of living: empowerment and participation of persons with disabilities within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”.¹

2. The Conference held four formal meetings. At the 1st meeting, on 17 July, the President and other officers of the Conference were elected. Two round tables, one on economic empowerment through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies and the other on disability-inclusive development in national, regional and international processes, were held at the 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 17 and 18 July, respectively. The 4th meeting, on 19 July, included an interactive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention. There was also an informal panel on the afternoon of 18 July to discuss community-based rehabilitation and habilitation for an inclusive society.

3. The President’s summary of the session can be found in annex II to the present report.

¹ More than 950 participants, including 650 delegates representing 85 Governments and more than 300 participants from non-governmental organizations and United Nations entities attended the session. In addition, 26 side events were held during the session.



II. Opening of the meeting and general debate

4. The 1st meeting was called to order by the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, who opened the session on behalf of the Secretary-General.

5. Under agenda item 2, Kenya was elected President of the Conference and Bangladesh, Bulgaria, El Salvador and Israel were elected Vice-Presidents, by acclamation.

6. Immediately following the election, the President took the chair. The Conference then adopted the provisional agenda (CRPD/CSP/2013/1).

7. Pursuant to rule 25, paragraph 5 (c), of the rules of procedure, 18 non-governmental organizations were accredited to the Conference by consensus (see annex I).

8. Opening statements were made by the President, the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, speaking first on behalf of the Secretary-General and then of the Department, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights. In addition, three civil society organizations were present at the podium: Disabled People's International, the International Disability Alliance and Rehabilitation International. The President of the European Disability Forum and Chair of the International Disability Alliance made remarks at the end of the opening segment on behalf of the wider civil society, Disabled People's International, Rehabilitation International and the International Disability Alliance.

9. The Conference then proceeded to agenda item 5 (a), "Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: general debate".

10. Under that item, statements were made by 66 States parties (12 at the ministerial level).² Statements were also made by one signatory³ and three observers, including representatives of national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations.⁴ The statements informed the Conference of progress made in the implementation of the Convention, in particular on initiatives undertaken and advances made in ensuring adequate standards of living by supporting the empowerment and participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development.

11. A written statement was received from one State party.⁵

² Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, European Union, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Peru, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

³ Japan.

⁴ International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Rehabilitation International and Disabled People's International.

⁵ Mauritius.

III. Round-table discussions

12. On the afternoon of 17 July and the morning of 18 July, the Conference held round tables 1 and 2, followed by interactive discussions.

Round table 1: Economic empowerment through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies

13. Round table 1, on economic empowerment through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies, was chaired by the representative of Bangladesh. Presentations were made by five panellists: the representative of the National Advisory Commission for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities of Argentina, the representative of the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government of Kenya, the representative of the International Labour Organization, the representative of Disabled People's International and the representative of the Center for Financial Inclusion at Accion. The panellists highlighted the importance of inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies in empowering persons with disabilities in economic aspects of life and society.

Round table 2: Disability-inclusive development in national, regional and international processes

14. Round table 2, on disability-inclusive development in national, regional and international processes, was co-chaired by the representatives of Israel and El Salvador. Presentations were made by six panellists: the representative of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of Sweden, the representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic, the National Secretary for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of Brazil, the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the representative of the Pacific Disability Forum (Fiji) and the representative of the Centre for Disability in Development (Bangladesh). The panellists discussed the barriers facing persons with disabilities and strategic recommendations to mainstream the disability perspective and the concerns of persons with disabilities in development in national, regional and international processes, including in processes leading to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, to be held in New York on 23 September 2013 pursuant to General Assembly resolution [66/124](#).

IV. Informal panel discussion on community-based rehabilitation and habilitation for an inclusive society

15. On the afternoon of 18 July, an informal panel discussion was held, co-chaired by the representatives of Bulgaria and the International Disability Alliance. Presentations were made by five panellists: the Vice-Minister of Health of El Salvador, the representative of the World Health Organization, the representative of the Beit Issie Shapiro Center (Israel), the representative of the Rehabilitation International and the representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia. The panellists discussed experiences and good practices in community-based rehabilitation and habilitation that worked to promote inclusive development.

V. Interactive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention by the United Nations system

16. The 4th meeting, chaired by the President, was held on the morning of 19 July. The participants considered agenda item 5 (e), “Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: interactive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention”. Presentations were made by the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, the representative of the United Nations Children’s Fund, the representative of the United Nations Development Programme, the representative of the World Bank and the Deputy Special Representative of the World Tourism Organization to the United Nations.

17. Following the presentations, the Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development provided updates on work carried out under their respective mandates.

VI. Other matters and closure of the session

18. In addition to the provisional agenda, the Conference had before it background papers on economic empowerment through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies (CRPD/CSP/2013/2), disability-inclusive development in national, regional and international processes (CRPD/CSP/2013/3) and community-based rehabilitation and habilitation for an inclusive society (CRPD/CSP/2013/4).

19. Statements made at the opening of the session, during the general debate and at the round tables and other meetings, in addition to other related information, are available online (www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1606).

20. Under agenda item 6, “Other matters”, the secretariat informed the Conference about options for the seventh session, taking into account the United Nations calendar of key events and meetings and the availability of conference services.

21. In closing, the President stated that the Conference was best positioned to spearhead the mainstreaming of disability in all aspects of the work of the United Nations. He emphasized the extraordinary success of the Conference in establishing itself as a very unique global mechanism and forum to exchange experiences and new ideas for implementation of the Convention for an inclusive society and development. He noted, however, that the Conference currently stood on a precarious financial and institutional foundation. With no regular budget, the previous sessions of the Conference had been organized with services provided by the secretariat only on a “resource available” basis. He proposed that consideration should be given to strengthening the financial and institutional foundation of the Conference through clear intergovernmental mandates. He emphasized that stability was urgently needed for institutional and resource arrangements to support the work of the Conference and its important role in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and in mainstreaming disability in all aspects of development.

22. The session was closed at 1 p.m. on 19 July 2013.

Annex I

Non-governmental organizations accredited to the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at its sixth session

In accordance with rule 25, paragraph 5 (c), of the provisional rules of procedure of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and following a no-objection procedure, the following non-governmental organizations were accredited:

1. Accessibility Organization for Afghanistan Disabled
2. CBR Global Network
3. Congo Handicap
4. Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation
5. Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed
6. Disability Action
7. Disability Rights Fund
8. European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities
9. Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities International
10. Essl Foundation
11. Institute on Disability and Public Policy
12. Kéroul
13. Korea Differently Abled Federation
14. National Centre for Persons with Disabilities
15. Special Abilities Development Association (SADA)
16. Tunisian Organization for Defending the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
17. Union of Disabled People's Organizations
18. Ver Foundation

Annex II

President's summary of the sixth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Opening

1. On behalf of the Secretary-General, the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs opened the sixth session of the Conference and presided over the election of the Bureau by acclamation. The Conference elected the President (Kenya) and the Vice-Presidents (Bangladesh, Bulgaria, El Salvador and Israel).
2. The President then proceeded with the adoption of the provisional agenda under agenda item 3, followed by item 4, "Organization of work". All 18 non-governmental organizations that had applied for accreditation to the Conference were approved by consensus to participate as observers.
3. The President, in his opening remarks, stated that the Conference had become a global mechanism to exchange experiences and ideas for the implementation of the Convention and to enable practical actions for the inclusion of disability in society and development. The theme of the sixth session, "Ensuring an adequate standard of living: empowerment and participation of persons with disabilities", was central to any successful development efforts. He reiterated that, as defined by the Convention, disability was a development issue, further emphasizing that the central challenge for Member States was to translate the commitment of the Convention into specific actions and practices for tangible outcomes on the ground. For the more than 1 billion persons living with disabilities worldwide, the reality was far from the objectives striven for in the Convention. He, noting that he was also the Co-Chair of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, reiterated that his country was committed to raising the prominence of the disability perspective within the global development agenda.
4. He emphasized the significant role of the Conference in advancing a disability-inclusive development framework beyond 2015, reiterating that there was a need to strengthen partnerships among Governments, non-governmental organizations, international development organizations and persons with disabilities. In that connection, he stated that the upcoming high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, to be held on 23 September 2013 in New York, would provide more opportunities to further such global efforts.
5. During the opening segment, statements were made by the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, speaking first on behalf of the Secretary-General and then on behalf of the Department, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights. In addition, three representatives of civil society organizations participated in the opening of the session: the Global Chair of Disabled People's International, the President of the European Disability Forum and Chair of the International Disability Alliance, and the Secretary-General of Rehabilitation International.

6. The representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs delivered a message from the Secretary-General in which he reiterated the important role of the Convention and the Conference as central to achieving inclusive society and development. The Secretary-General indicated that there was a huge gap between the aspirations embodied in the Convention and the actual experiences of the more than 1 billion persons with disabilities, urging States parties and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to strengthen partnerships for a disability-inclusive development agenda beyond 2015.

7. She also delivered a statement on behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, highlighting its initiatives and current efforts, including through provision of strengthened support to intergovernmental processes, multi-stakeholder partnerships on disability and development and key research and analysis on options to promote the full participation of persons with disabilities and their empowerment in all aspects of development. She noted that the Department was currently focusing on the future and stepping up its efforts to promote the inclusion of disability as a cross-cutting development issue in the development agenda beyond 2015. In that context, it would hold the inaugural session of its forum, on dialogue on post-2015 development frameworks and disability, on 19 and 20 July 2013.

8. The Assistant Secretary-General reiterated that the Convention represented a human-rights-based approach to disability, based on human dignity. He emphasized that, although many national laws had been amended to take disability into consideration, attitudes still needed to change. He also added that the role of the Convention was crucial for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities.

9. The President of the European Disability Forum and Chair of the International Disability Alliance, on behalf of the wider civil society, Disabled People's International, Rehabilitation International and the International Disability Alliance, noted the importance of mainstreaming the rights and participation of persons with disabilities in the development agenda beyond 2015. He also highlighted the work of the civil society forum held on 16 July 2013, immediately before the Conference, which had taken stock of developments regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the development agenda beyond 2015.

Round table 1: Economic empowerment through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies

10. Round table 1 was chaired by the representative of Bangladesh. The panel discussed the current situation of persons with disabilities in society and development and presented options for improving their livelihoods through a wide range of policy measures in social protection, access to education, skills training and opportunities for employment and poverty reduction strategies.

11. The representative of the National Advisory Commission for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities of Argentina cited what she referred to as the “decade of change” in Argentina to illustrate how policy could be a transformational tool. During the decade, the Government had promoted and broadened the rights of persons with disabilities. National funding for the inclusion of persons with disabilities had increased by more than 90 per cent. The funding had supported efforts to advance the rights and economic empowerment of persons with

disabilities, including rehabilitation projects and the expansion of social security programmes, which had contributed to a reduction in poverty.

12. The representative of the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government of Kenya discussed the linkage between poverty and disability. Universal access to assistive devices and services, education and job training and programmes offering grants and small loans for economic activities were viewed as particularly instrumental in promoting participation in the labour market for persons with disabilities. The importance of national legislation for the rights of persons with disabilities was also stressed.

13. The representative of the International Labour Organization discussed action that could be taken at the national level to promote livelihoods for the 780 million persons with disabilities of working age. She stressed that there was a need for measures to promote access to education, health care, skills development and employment, in addition to basic levels of income security to enable persons with disabilities to participate fully and rise out of poverty. Those measures should be based on the guiding principles of the Convention and set out in national legal and policy frameworks. Such measures should also be complemented by initiatives to tackle stigma and marginalization in society.

14. The representative of Disabled People's International stated that there was a severe lack of accurate data with regard to disability and the situations of persons with disabilities in society and development. He called for more accurate data and analysis on disability to shape evidence-based policy for development of disability-inclusive social programmes. He stressed that education alone was insufficient to empower people and that skills development and enabling environments were also essential. The creation of opportunities for self-employment was also noted as an effective strategy for economic empowerment.

15. The representative of the Center for Financial Inclusion at Accion discussed viable options for economic empowerment of persons with disabilities and, in that context, examined the role of microfinance in providing financial support to persons with disabilities in developing countries. He highlighted the important role of social programmes in economic independence and noted that, in many countries, the belief that launching a business would strip a person of social support still existed and needed to be corrected.

16. During the dialogue with the panellists, the representatives of the Sudan and Thailand offered examples of how their Governments had created policies to improve access to employment for persons with disabilities. The representatives of Belgium and Senegal highlighted the cross-cutting nature of disability and the need for a multifaceted response. Lastly, the representative of Nigeria asked the panellists how effective inclusive policies and legislation had been if many employers had yet to adjust their policies.

17. In response to the questions raised, the representative of the International Labour Organization stressed that there was a need for a combination of incentives to prompt employers to recruit persons with disabilities, noting that there were many ways to encourage employers to implement inclusive policies without resorting to litigation. The representative of the National Advisory Commission for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities of Argentina emphasized the cross-cutting nature of disability, reiterating that mainstreaming disability in all social and

development policies was needed. The representative of the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government of Kenya addressed the question posed by the representative of Nigeria, noting that, in many States, persons with disabilities were unaware of national legislation that promoted inclusiveness and economic empowerment and that information campaigns were needed to raise awareness in that regard. Lastly, addressing the same question, the representative of the Center for Financial Inclusion at Accion stated that, even when laws were robust, they often did not reach their target populations, including persons with disabilities, making it difficult to influence employers.

Round table 2: Disability-inclusive development in national, regional and international processes

18. Round table 2 was co-chaired by the representatives of Israel and El Salvador. The panel discussed a wide range of strategies and specific measures for implementing disability-inclusive development at all levels.

19. The representative of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of Sweden highlighted a number of Swedish initiatives to align national legislation with the Convention. By recognizing disability as a cross-cutting development issue, Sweden had developed a strategy to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in nine areas, including education, health and employment. He identified regional cooperation as essential and praised the progress of the European Union in developing disability-inclusive policies.

20. The representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic outlined national plans adopted by the Czech Republic since 2000 with a focus on improving the situation of persons with disabilities in society and development. A government board for persons with disabilities had been established to deliver recommendations to the Government and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plans. He identified disability-sensitive budgeting, using specific indicators to measure progress, as vital to the success of national plans.

21. The National Secretary for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of Brazil focused his presentation on his country's "Living without limits" plan for the rights of persons with disabilities. Developed with the participation of civil society, the plan addressed a wide range of issues, including access to education and transportation, extension of social benefit programmes and accessibility and health initiatives. Since its adoption in 2011, Brazil had made progress in implementing legislation to promote equality for persons with disabilities.

22. The representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs focused on discussions currently being held regarding a development agenda beyond 2015. She stressed the importance of retaining the core values of the Millennium Development Goals, while noting that issues relating to personal security, governance, rule of law and human rights also needed to be considered. She invited stakeholders to consider how best to place issues of disability on the development agenda beyond 2015.

23. The representative of the Pacific Disability Forum outlined the work of his organization, in particular capacity-building initiatives for disabled persons' organizations and advocacy activities. He emphasized that there was a need for

strong, high-level leadership for disability-inclusive development, in addition to the central role that disabled persons' organizations should play in that regard. He called for resources to be made available for disability-inclusive development strategies, noting that Governments and disabled persons' organizations could become better partners for one another for such strategies.

24. The representative of the Centre for Disability in Development discussed the role of her organization in promoting disability-inclusive development, including through advocacy, networking and rehabilitation. A central element of its work was building capacity by training teachers, government officials, journalists and persons with disabilities. She presented specific examples of the work of the Centre, including its decentralized strategy for providing services and assistive devices.

25. The presentations were followed by an exchange of experiences and views by representatives of the World Intellectual Property Organization and States parties, including Costa Rica, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Tunisia.

Informal panel discussion on community-based rehabilitation and habilitation for an inclusive society

26. The informal panel session was co-chaired by the representatives of Bulgaria and the International Disability Alliance. Panellists offered first-hand experiences from various sectors, providing specific examples in terms of programme development and management, research and policy. The panel discussed new ideas and recognized the multifaceted approach to empowerment of persons with disabilities through various forms of community-based rehabilitation and habilitation.

27. The Vice-Minister of Health of El Salvador highlighted her country's progress in establishing policies and programmes for persons with disabilities, including those with disabilities as a result of conflict. Sharing examples of community-based strategies from her country, she spoke about the work of the "Little Angels" programme, which provided specialized training and exchange of information at the community level. A new observatory focused on disability would allow for greater resource allocation to disability issues. She observed that challenges in implementation remained, in particular in the harmonization of approaches with the Convention and the unification of the criteria for gathering data on persons with disabilities.

28. The representative of the World Health Organization noted that, while a number of changes, including those of a demographic, social and economic nature, had occurred since the introduction of community-based rehabilitation by the World Health Organization, persons with disabilities continued to face higher rates of poverty and exclusion. Community-based rehabilitation sought to address that issue, focusing on the health, education, livelihood and social sectors, including the empowerment of families, as its foundation. He emphasized that inclusive development must be community-based in order to reach the poor and rural populations, noting the importance of community-based rehabilitation in both developing and developed countries.

29. The representative of the Beit Issie Shapiro Center outlined the community-based rehabilitation model implemented by her organization and its strategy for social change, which was based on a community-oriented model that transferred

knowledge to other non-governmental organizations. Innovative services offered included the development of a first early intervention centre and the creation of an accessible and inclusive playground based on a universal design. The Center partnered with the Israeli version of *Sesame Street* to promote attitudinal changes through the creation of characters with disabilities. She reiterated that community-based rehabilitation was most effective when approached holistically.

30. The representative of Rehabilitation International discussed how community-based rehabilitation provided access to rehabilitation as a stepping stone to health, education and other basic services. She emphasized that persons with disabilities could serve as experts to identify solutions based on their first-hand experiences. Over the years, community-based rehabilitation had undergone changes and was currently a comprehensive rights-based approach. One challenge was that, because community-based rehabilitation projects were often initiated as pilot projects for non-governmental organizations, they could be financially and institutionally unstable.

31. The representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia, in his discussion on e-solutions, noted that Estonia had established a national health plan for 2010-2020 and was developing a targeted strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. E-services in social care and health included telecare and e-consultations; e-prescriptions and e-registration for physical services and distance assessment of disability; and the creation of virtual communities for sharing information. In the public sector, e-solutions could help to tackle resource constraints while empowering persons with disabilities.

32. Following the presentations, the representatives of Egypt, Ghana, Haiti, New Zealand, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Thailand addressed the factors necessary for the success of community-based rehabilitation programmes, while also offering examples of programmes in their respective countries.

Interactive dialogue with the United Nations system

33. The panellists provided overviews of relevant programmes and efforts and gave specific examples of programmes by United Nations entities to support the implementation of the Convention.

34. The representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) described efforts to mainstream disability in UNICEF policies and programmes. At the country level, in addition to supporting projects focused on children with disabilities, UNICEF was taking a systematic approach, which included supporting advocacy efforts and legislative reform. She highlighted a UNICEF report, *The State of the World's Children 2013*, which focused on children with disabilities, and the coordination of the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities undertaken by UNICEF.

35. The representative of the World Bank underscored the commitment of the Bank to eradicating extreme poverty and reducing the number of persons with disabilities living in extreme poverty. In that regard, the Bank had poverty eradication projects in more than 100 countries. She recalled the recommendations of the *World Report on Disability* to enable access to all mainstream policies, system and services; invest in specific programmes and services for persons with disabilities; adopt national strategies and plans of action; provide adequate funding

and improve affordability of services; increase public awareness and understanding of disability; improve the quality of data and statistics on disability; and strengthen and support research on disability.

36. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction reported that an evaluation of the Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters had revealed that disability had been given little attention and therefore had been identified as a priority going forward. Disaster risk management could be successful only if persons with disabilities were involved in the planning of systems designed to protect the safety of populations. In 2015, the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction would be held in Japan and it would be important to promote the inclusion of disability in new global frameworks and the outcome document of the Conference.

37. The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights highlighted the use of the Convention as a framework for action and a yardstick against which all commitments should be measured. The Convention was the highest internationally agreed standard on disability and was legally binding. The Office supported States parties, national human rights institutions, disabled persons' organizations and others in working to implement the Convention. Activities included advising on law and policy reform, supporting States parties and civil society organizations in the process of drafting reports on the Convention and providing training on its application.

38. The representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs highlighted the efforts of the Department and the Interdepartmental Task Force on Accessibility to make the premises and facilities of the United Nations system, including those used for the Conference, more accessible. A United Nations accessibility centre was being established, for which additional budgetary resources were needed. The Department had also been actively promoting disability inclusion in the development agenda. In that context, it was organizing a development forum, the first session of which would be held immediately after the current session. The forum would bring together a wide range of stakeholders to explore ways forward towards a development agenda inclusive of all, including persons with disabilities.

39. The Deputy Special Representative of the World Tourism Organization to the United Nations spoke about the potential of inclusive tourism, which could be encountered through consistent and well-prepared policies, resources, innovation and business development. He gave examples of good practices, including in relation to national parks, historical cities, hotel chains and a travel agency.

40. The representative of the United Nations Development Programme emphasized the strong commitment of UNDP to the principles of the Convention, noting that the realization of adequate living standards was central to development. UNDP was working to advance disability-inclusive development through both programmatic and human resources efforts. He presented an overview of efforts of the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its multi-donor trust fund.

41. The representatives of Colombia, Egypt, Honduras, Kenya, Morocco, Panama, the Republic of Korea, Senegal and the Sudan posed questions or offered comments during the interactive exchange.

42. The Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reported on the work of the Committee and highlighted its review of the reports of seven States parties, its formulation of 11 sets of concluding remarks, its adoption of seven sets of concluding observations and its work on general comments. The Committee had also examined individual complaints and reports on human rights violations.

43. The Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development highlighted his recent missions to Croatia and the Republic of Moldova. He spoke about one of his initiatives in mainstreaming disability in development, namely the founding of the African Disability Forum, which he hoped would serve as a strong voice in supporting States in the implementation of the Convention in Africa. He was planning to conduct a mission to Ecuador, El Salvador and Mexico later in 2013.

Other matters and closure of the session

44. Under agenda item 6, “Other matters”, the Conference was informed of options for the prospective dates for its seventh session, taking into account the United Nations calendar of key events and the availability of a venue and conference services for the session.

45. In his closing statement, the President stated that the Conference was best positioned to spearhead the mainstreaming of disability in all aspects of the work of the United Nations. Moreover, the conference was a critical building block for the upcoming high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. He expressed his concern, however, that the Conference stood on a precarious financial and institutional foundation, given that it had no regular budget and its sessions were organized with resources provided by the secretariat only on a “resource available” basis. For example, the duration of meetings of the Conference and the availability of conference services such as interpretation, including sign language interpretation, documentation, translation and other services, were contingent upon the availability of resources within the secretariat.

46. He proposed that States parties should review options for strengthening the financial and institutional foundation of the Conference through clear intergovernmental mandates to regularize conference services, interpretation, documentation, translation and accessibility, so that the uncertainties and ad hoc nature of the arrangements around the already tightly scheduled sessions of the Conference could be reduced.

47. The Conference was closed at 1 p.m. on 19 July 2013.