

# 13th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## November 30, 2020

The Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP) is one of the largest and most important global forums on disability issues. Held under the presidency of Ecuador, the 13th annual session featured remarks from the President of the General Assembly and the United Nations Secretary-General from the General Assembly, along with recorded remarks from prominent disability advocates from around the world.

### Opening Session, Day 1

#### **Maria Soledad Cisternas (Special Envoy) on the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

- She released a campaign today that is focused on Universal Accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- The Covid19 pandemic has exposed major issues with Universal Accessibility. This includes accessing healthcare centers, medicines, food, education, and many other forms of vital support. Universal Accessibility also includes informational access to technology, transportation, and other services.
- This is the 12 year mark of this convention. 182 states parties have committed to this charter and yet the legal obligation to provide accessibility has not been met by all of these states.
- She is convinced that creating a global big data program to address the situation of Accessibility during and after the pandemic is critical, especially when it comes to healthcare. This will not only assist with addressing needs of persons with disabilities, but also with other humanity issues in the future.
- Another overarching issue she is focusing on, is the situation facing women and girls with disabilities. They have disproportionately suffered the negative effects of the pandemic, such as increased violence and abuse. It is very clear that there are no protocols in place to address this situation. This is an urgent challenge to the Beijing plus 25 Review which will take place in 2021. It is for this reason that she is calling on the Status of the Commission of Women to ensure that in its resolution it focuses maximum attention on this issue.

**António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, on the 1st meeting, 13th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**

- Visibility Inclusion is very serious. Securing rights for peoples with disabilities is necessary for upholding the values and principles of the United Nations Charter.
- He launched a UN System Wide Disability Inclusion Strategy. It's goal is to bring lasting and transformative change in the organizations work on disability inclusion across it's policies, programs, and operations.
  - This strategy is having a tangible effect in Iran, 57 entities reported on their progress, as well as, 7 country teams have reported back using an accountability scorecard. The report provides the first comprehensive assessment of disability inclusion within UN systems... an honest picture of where we are and we need to improve. The system is just starting to consider disability inclusion in a comprehensive and coordinated matter. Overall, the report demonstrates that the strategy has triggered action across UN systems and organizations and that is very positive.
  - The Covid19 pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities. 1 Billion people with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty and experience more abuse. When a crisis hits this community persons with disabilities are some of the worse affected.
  - In May he issued a dedicated policy briefing in which he highlighted the UN's response and recovery to Covid19 to be more disability inclusive. This includes recognizing and protecting THEIR rights. Some of these rights include access to education, healthcare, and decent work.
  - As we move forward we must ensure persons with disabilities and their organizations are included in decision making processes.
  - Core promise of the 2030 agenda is a world where all people can have equal opportunities.

Michelle Burgess  
UN Representative, New York

